

Determinants of Repurchase Intention in Accommodation Services: The Moderating Effect of Gender

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Abstract

The present study endeavors to elucidate the determinants of repurchase intention within the dynamic digital landscape, specifically focusing on the online hotel and resort reservation sector. In this research, the moderating effects of website quality and personality are investigated, together with the gender-specific variations in their influence on repurchase intention. A quantitative study is conducted in this work using PLS-SEM methodologies. Customers that make non-probability-based hotel and resort reservations are the research's target demographic. Findings from our study reveal the salience of both website quality and personality in shaping repurchase intention among consumers. It seems from the probability of purchase that higher repurchase intentions need a high level of overall website quality and character. Furthermore, our study reveals a gender-specific distinction, as female consumers exhibit a heightened level of responsiveness to the personality and quality aspects of websites compared to their male counterparts. In the future, studies may look at websites for other for-profit or non-profit businesses, as well as an accommodation extension of the repurchase loyalty idea.

Keywords: Website Quality, Website Personality, Repurchase Intention, Gender, Accommodation Services

Introduction

Accommodation plays a pivotal role in the tourism sector, providing essential lodging options for travelers seeking comfort and rest during their journeys. Business lodging, as highlighted by Webb (2016) and Xu and Zhang (2022), represents a significant subset within the lodging industry, catering specifically to the needs of business travelers. The scale and offerings of lodging establishments vary considerably based on factors such as location and amenities, tailored to meet the preferences of diverse clientele. In response to growing awareness of environmental issues like global warming, there is increasing emphasis on sustainable tourism development among national and international tourist groups (Tuan et al., 2019). Many countries have implemented regulations requiring corporations to meet minimum environmental sustainability standards before commencing operations in the tourism sector.

Travel is an economic, cultural, and social activity. Their movement might have a commercial or professional purpose. According to Huang, Dai, and Xu (2020), these people might be tourists, hikers, travellers, or inhabitants who are recognised as visitors because of the activities they engage in. A few of the things they provide recommend making travel-related purchases, including lodging or meals. Travel would be incomplete without lodging since it provides the foundation for travellers to participate in all activities at a place (Hu & Kim, 2018). The biggest and most pervasive subsector in the tourist industry is accommodation, or lodging.

Travellers must, with a few exceptions, sleep and reside throughout their visit (Rahman & Chen, 2018). Furthermore, several researchers showed a keen interest in website reviews of lodging services and the potential effects of marketing (Filiari & McLeay, 2013); online reviews were also found to affect room sales (Khan et al., 2024; Fotis et al., 2012) and to influence passengers' loyalty and trust in travel websites and lodging services. The high rate of Internet penetration in Malaysia presented a huge opportunity for online hospitality service marketing. Malaysia reported over 24.6 million internet users in 2016, according to Internet statistics. Although repurchase intent is readily apparent to online sellers, many are unaware of the impact a client might have on a website (Jasmine, 2011; Sullivan & Kim, 2018). Additionally, some individuals are unsure of how to move customers around. Studies by Flavian, Gurrea, and Orus (2009), Bebbler et al. (2016), and Angeloni (2021) discovered that a poorly designed website may deter visitors from intending to return and make another purchase. Consequently, from the very beginning of interaction, client retention shouldn't be evaluated just based on transaction or repurchase satisfaction (Garett et al., 2016; Biswas et al., 2023). Compared to a significant number of research (Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalú, 2007; Punyatoy, 2018) analysing consumer intentions for the repurchase of a website previously or continuously patronised, it is less frequent to evaluate customer retention during the first encounters. Website visitors cannot be turned into prospective customers by marketers; instead, they must be understood to draw in new customers and encourage existing ones to make repeat purchases. Consequently, it is important to identify the elements affecting Malaysian customers' intentions to repurchase lodging services.

Studies like Bem (1981), Meyers and Maheswaran (1991), Putrevu (2004), Richard et al. (2010), Huang et al. (2016), and Cortes et al. (2018) have all examined the role of gender in a variety of professions. Gender has been employed as a key demographic component in the segmentation of market objectives, as observed by Prince, Yaprak, and Cleveland (2020). The focus of gender studies has been on the influence of gender on leadership teams, corporate governance, and career choices (Teodosio & Madaleno, 2021). In earlier gender-related studies, such as those on brand population (Jamid & Zillur, 2017), reciprocity (Natalia & Tim, 2009), brand consumption (Friedmann & Brueller, 2018), and buying intention (Zhen et al., 2019; Akinci & Aksoy, 2019), the impact of gender on consumer perception and behavioural outcomes has been examined.

Literature Review

Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention expresses a person's desire to use the same product, retailer, or service provider. A customer's prior experiences often impact their intention (Zhang et al., 2017). Pee (2018) provides support for this idea, pointing out that repurchase intention is often impacted by an individual's assessment of whether they would want to buy a service from the same supplier given their own preferences. Moreover, repurchase intention indicates the degree to which a consumer may be inclined to make another purchase from the same merchant (Rezaei et al., 2014; Pee, 2018). Reviews and word of mouth may have an impact on a buyer's propensity to repurchase. Online review sites are a useful tool in the Internet era for disseminating trustworthy information that may encourage consumers to repurchase a commodity or service (Kammash & Griffiths, 2011; Xu et al., 2018). Accordingly, the legitimacy of the evaluations significantly influences the likelihood that users will return to the website (Chang & Backman, 2016; Park & Kim, 2011; Wu et al., 2015). Customers' desire to repurchase is more likely when they perceive a website to be of greater quality (Shin et al., 2013; Razak et al., 2016; Chiu, 2021). According to Mbango (2018), it is crucial for researchers and practitioners to ascertain repurchase intention. Only a few studies have examined the structural model based on a validated structure, and Anshu et al. (2022) found that previous studies have largely fragmented the intention of customers to repurchase. Other studies have focused on defining the context of the intention to repurchase (Ali et al., 2014; Pandey & Srivastava, 2016; Bebbler et al., 2017).

Website Quality

Hennessey et al. (2016) assert that the quality of a website significantly influences user behavior. In the realm of electronic commerce, websites serve as crucial tools for attracting and retaining clients, as noted by Ranganathan and Ganapathy (2002) and Pavlova (2018). Shin et al. (2013) highlight the importance of accommodation quality in distinguishing a tourist website and enhancing its competitiveness. Liang et al. (2015) and Xiao (2022) suggest that well-designed online platforms attract more visitors and foster repeat purchases.

Studies such as those by Sutcliffe (2022) emphasize the need for website designers to prioritize both aesthetics and functionality to create a positive user experience. Despite being seemingly minor, aspects like website design can significantly impact user engagement, as noted by Poddar et al. (2009). Research has demonstrated that various dimensions of website quality influence consumer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty (Chu et al., 2012; Liang, 2012;

Chang & Chen, 2009; Flavián et al., 2006; Jasmine, 2011). Furthermore, the effect of website quality extends to word-of-mouth promotion (Ha & Im, 2012; Tarkang et al., 2022), initial purchase intention (Kuan et al., 2008), and repeat usage (Kuan et al., 2008; Zhou et al., 2009). Previous studies have also explored how website quality impacts relationship benefits and switching costs (Siu et al., 2010; Chang & Chen, 2009).

Brand Personality in the Online Context: Website Personality

Numerous studies have investigated brand personality in a variety of contexts, including online shopping. Previous research has looked at a variety of brand personality areas, including online personality (Okazaki, 2006; Poddar et al., 2009). Meanwhile, different research by Vallette et al. (2011) investigated whether, in the context of French society, culture impacts brand personality scores and dimensions. Additionally, based on three aspects of American culture, Aaker et al. (2001) carried out comparison research to determine the cultural differences between Spain and Japan. Muller and Chandon (2003) investigated how customers' perceptions of a brand's personality are affected when they are compelled to visit its website. Coupland et al. (2003) expanded on the research by proposing a relationship between brand image and brand experience, which includes the personality qualities of a website and how closely online-based interactions resemble in-person interactions.

Another study by Park et al. (2005) discovered that their online brands are seen as analytical, bold, friendly, and smart. It did this by using visual features to target e-brand personalities for online services. Okazaki (2006) found that online brands radiate popularity and devotion along with a sense of expertise, sophistication, and excitement comparable to the qualities described in Aaker (1997). Opoku, Abratt, and Pitt (2006) investigated the websites of business schools in South Africa to determine the kinds of brand personalities that each institution exhibited using Aaker's (1997) dimensions. Opoku et al. (2007) examined whether franchisees of small to medium-sized restaurants exhibit a distinct brand identity on their websites. Only a few studies have focused on websites that provide services (Rezaei et al., 2016). This demonstrates the paucity of research on the use of brand personality in the context of lodging services.

Gender Roles

Gender, as defined by Siddiq and Scherer (2019), encompasses a set of characteristics distinguishing men and women. Understanding and quantifying gender disparities hold potential for policymakers in crafting more effective policies. Bem's (1981) gender schema theory, which examines gender's significant impact on consumer behavior, posits that it transcends mere biological traits to encompass psychological constructs. Additionally, research by Ahuja (2002) and Venkatesh and Morris (2000) has revealed variations in decision-making processes between genders. Wilson (2002) and Garcia (2020) define gender as the physiological and genetic manifestations of being male or female. Research on gender spans diverse fields including marketing, psychology, and behavioral studies (Bem, 1981; Richard et al., 2010), underscoring its multifaceted nature. Marketers, as noted by Darley and Smith (1995), consider gender a crucial demographic factor.

Gender inequalities form a significant component of gender studies, with research such as that by Francoeur et al. (2006) exploring gender variations and disparities in

management, career choices, and corporate governance. Huang et al. (2016) emphasize the importance of achieving gender balance for societal development, suggesting that a gender-balanced society or organization may enhance organizational effectiveness.

The Relationship between Website Quality and Repurchase Intention

The Internet has undeniably revolutionized marketing practices, with a growing preference among consumers for repurchasing goods and services online, underscoring the importance of website quality and repurchase intention (Pee, 2018; Friedrich et al., 2019). Xu et al. (2018) examined the impact of online channel repurchase quality, affirming its moderating effect on vacation experiences and highlighting the role of website quality in stimulating repurchase behavior.

One of the most important requirements to be fulfilled while creating a website is system quality. Online users value simple, uncomplicated navigational tools that facilitate site surfing and enable them to locate content quickly (Wang & Emurian, 2005a, 2005b; Kitapchi et al., 2014). Furthermore, there should not be any broken links or missing images, since this might discourage users from exploring the website further. Sites are also used for visual density, grouping, and margining. Locations are set up. A growing number of websites are creating basic but consistent designs with a congested interface and irregular font and graphic sizes because of the globalized modernist and minimalist movements of recent years (Nielsen, 1998).

Research indicates that the interactivity and system design quality of tourist websites significantly impact their success (Liu, 2005; Xu et al., 2018). Companies can gain a competitive edge by offering real-time responses and services to encourage frequent customer visits (Luo & Seyedian, 2003). Furthermore, online marketers can enhance repurchase intentions by providing high-quality hotel services (Grönroos et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2019). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Website quality has a direct positive influence on repurchase intention.

The Relationship between Website Personality and Repurchase Intention

Theron (2008) elucidates the irrational and subconscious reaction of website users to certain human attributes. According to Torres et al. (2017), users of websites instinctively perceive the human aspects of the website and react to them similarly to face-to-face interactions, which encourages users to reaffirm their intentions. If customers recognize that, when they first visit a website, it emanates positive aspects of human nature, they will likely see their interactions with the website as similar to their experiences with an offline salesperson. As a result, there is an increasing conviction in making the most of future visits in terms of duration, frequency, and depth (Gillespie et al., 1999; Lin et al., 2014). Positive recommendations for websites are also bought back and shared with others (Liu et al., 2004; Abdullah et al., 2016). Therefore, even on a first visit, the characters on the website might affect visitors' experiences (Abdullah et al., 2016). Nilsson and Wall (2017) found that brand personality has a direct impact on three primary behavioral outcomes on tourist websites: trust, buying, and repurchasing. Therefore, the argument made here is that:

H2: Website personality has a direct positive influence on repurchase intention.

The Moderating Role of Gender on the Relationship between Websites

Quality and Repurchase Intention

Quality has been defined in several ways in previous research (Reeves & Bednar, 1994). Because of the significance of high-quality information, this study bases its definition of quality on the information provided on lodging services (Rahman et al., 2018). Men tend to anticipate high-quality websites to deliver high-quality content, since studies show that they are more sensitive to information than women are (Sun et al., 2010). Zhang et al. (2000) also noted that user-friendly websites utilize recognizable iconography for basic operations, such as locating information or logging in. Men and women behave, think, and experience the world differently while interacting online, according to Chen and Macredie (2010). The online gender gap has shrunk, according to recent research by Liu et al. (2017), Nadeem et al. (2015), and Zha et al. (2014), as both sexes are increasingly accepting of attributes including system consistency, high-quality information, and high-quality service. It is thus proposed that:

H3: Gender moderates the relationship between website quality and repurchase intention.

The Moderating Role of Gender on the Relationship between Website Personality and Repurchase Intention

As a factor that may encourage or inhibit the usage of e-commerce, gender is one of the characteristics that has attracted a lot of research interest in technology adoption (Serenko et al., 2006; Allard et al., 2009; Shin, 2009; Cai et al., 2017). It has been included in several studies as an exploratory component of purchasing behavior, although the results of its usefulness are mixed (Miyazaki & Fernandez, 2001; Raijas & Tuunainen, 2001; Lu et al., 2003; Al-Somali et al., 2009; Shobeiri et al., 2013). Accordingly, users' views and actions about personality websites may alter depending on these categories (Hubona & Kennick, 1996; Chau & Hu, 2002; Carpentier et al., 2019). Chen et al. (2017) investigated the moderating influence of gender in the link between personality and intention to repurchase using a sample of 484 internet users. The research demonstrated that gender plays a significant moderating influence in the relationship between these two characteristics. Thus, this research suggests that:

H7: Gender moderates the relationship between website personality and repurchase intention.

Methodology

In this study, quantitative analysis and survey methodology were employed in accordance with Creswell (2014), as the aim was to examine the moderating role of gender on the relationship between website quality and web personality to repurchase through quantitative measurement (i.e., structured questionnaire). The research used technology for deliberate convenience sampling and included 228 female respondents and 174 male respondents. A total of 402 individuals were approved to take part in the research. The investigator employed an electronic media strategy for data collection to ensure that every question in the structured questionnaire was answered. However, since the study's sample size may be deemed limited, the evaluation method of structural equation modeling with partial least squares (PLS-SEM) was used (Hair et al., 2017; Ong & Puteh, 2017; Astrachan et al., 2014). Furthermore, the notion of bootstrapping analysis makes it feasible to assess both convergent and discriminant validity for small samples, which makes this multivariate statistical test the most appropriate approach for conducting this research (Hair et al., 2011, 2014; Ringle et al., 2013; Ong & Puteh, 2017; Hair et al., 2012, 2017).

An invariance measurement (i.e., MICOM) for composite model analysis is also feasible to evaluate the moderating impact of the categorical moderator variable by permutation analysis (Henseler et al., 2016). They state that there are three phases in this method: (1) invariance of composition, (2) invariance of configuration, and (3) equality between variances and average composite values. To assess the significant and reliable measurement of the categorical moderator variable, all three techniques are required (Henseler et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2017).

Results and Findings

Convergent and Discriminant Analysis

The three sets of sample data—the complete sample data (n = 402), the female sample data (n = 228), and the male sample data (n = 174)—have their convergent validity assessments shown in Table 1. According to the study, all indicators used to measure the targeted latent variables had loading values greater than .70, and for these three sets of sample data, the reliability analyses of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability likewise showed values greater than .70. In addition, Hair et al. (2017) found that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) assessment was greater than .50 for all types of sample data. Thus, for these three sample data sets, it can be said that the indicators utilized to measure the intended latent variables were valid in terms of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 4.1

Convergent Validity of measurement model for full sample, female sample and male sample

Latent Variable	Ind	Full samples		Female samples		Male Samples	
Website Quality	^a ASQ	.794*	CA = .925 CR = .948 AV = .819	.774*	CA = .923 CR = .946 AV = .816	.812*	CA = .927 CR = .948 AV = .822
	^a INQ	.944*		.945*		.943*	
	^a SEQ	.931*		.931*		.932*	
	^a SYQ	.943*		.952*		.934*	
Website Personality	^a SD	.846*	CA = .937 CR = .955 AV = .842	.827*	CA = .930 CR = .951 AV = .829	.863*	CA = .944 CR = .960 AV = .857
	^a PFV	.939*		.927*		.952*	
	^a KBD	.933*		.933*		.935*	
	^a SID	.949*		.949*		.950*	

Repurchase Intention	Rep1	.920*	CA = .934 CR = .953 AV = .834	.914*	CA = .923 CR = .945 AV = .812	.924*	CA = .942 CR = .958 AV = .851
	Rep2	.917*		.900*		.932*	
	Rep3	.916*		.907*		.923*	
	Rep4	.900*		.884*		.912*	

Note: CA = Cronbach’s Alpha; CR = Composite Reliability; AV = Average Variance Extracted; Ind = Indicator; ASQ = Assurance Quality; INQ = Information Quality; SEQ = Service Quality; SYQ = System Quality; SD = Spreading Desire; PFV = Positive Feeling Venting; KBD = Knowledge Building Desire; SID = Social Interaction Desire; ^athe indicator was using Latent Variable Score procedure; *the indicator loadings were significant at 95% confidence level.

On the other hand, Table 2 displays the findings of the three sets of sample data used for the discriminant analysis in the HTMT discriminant analysis. It may be inferred that each latent variable was completely discriminated against the other as the HTMT ratio value was less than .90. Consequently, the indicators used to assess the intended construct were fully employed for the corresponding construct (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 4.2

HTMT discriminant assessments of measurement model for full sample, female sample and male sample

Latent Variable	Website Quality	Website Personality	Repurchase Intention
Website Quality	-		
Website Personality	.818* .793* .842*	-	
Repurchase Intention	.850* .811* .792*	.841* .809* .821*	

Note: LV = Latent Variable; *p <.05; Bold value refer to full sample analysis; Un-bold value refers to female sample analysis; Italic value refer to male sample analysis.

MICOM Moderation Analysis

The MICOM evaluation for Step 2 is shown in Table 3. Here, the composite scores between moderator groups are correlated using a statistical technique called permutation concept to determine whether the composite ratings vary statistically between the groups (Henseler et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2017). The results of the study showed that there is no

significant difference between the two composite scores since the permutation test's p-value was not significant (i.e., p-value >.05).

Table 4.3

Latent Variable MICOM (Step 2) test between female and male samples

Latent Variable	Correlation	Correlation Permutation	5% Quantile of the empirical distribution	p-value ^a
Website Quality	1.000	1.000	0.999	.647
Website Personality	1.000	1.000	1.000	.148
Repurchase Intention	1.000	1.000	1.000	.580

Note: ^aIf the value was higher than 0.05, hence the variance between two groups were equal.

The analysis moves on to Step 3 because the MICOM technique in Step 2 supports the initial measurement invariance. Using the data set's permutation concept, the analysis conducts a statistical test at this step to determine if the mean and variance are the same across composite score groups (Henseler et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2017). Given that the analysis yielded non-significant p-values, Table 4 demonstrates that the mean and variance of the composite scores between the two samples of the moderator variable were similar.

Table 4.4

Latent Variable MICOM (Step 3) test between female and male samples

Latent Variable	Mean Value				Variance Value			
	1	2	3 ^a	4 ^b	1	2	3 ^a	4 ^b
Website Quality	.134	-.001	(-.204, .200)	.193	-.225	.002	(-.243, .250)	.127
Website Personality	.122	.001	(-.199, .201)	.239	-.254	.001	(-.287, .105)	.108
Repurchase Intention	.230	.001	(-.126, .253)	.196	-.201	.002	(-.219, .119)	.119

Note: 1 = Original; 2 = Permutation; 3 = 95% Percentile Confidence Interval; 4 = p-value; ^aIf the original value include in the 95% confidence interval, hence the mean/variance between two groups were equal; ^bIf the value was higher than 0.05, hence the mean/variance between two groups were equal.

The findings of the moderation analysis utilizing permutation analysis, as recommended by Henseler et al. (2016) and Hair et al. (2017), are included in Table 5 because the MICOM analysis confirms that the model's measurement invariance was fulfilled. First, for the whole sample, repurchase intention was substantially positively influenced by both website personality ($\beta = .479, p < .05$) and website quality ($\beta = .424, p < .05$) at the same time.

Table 4.5
 Path Moderation test for full sample, female sample and male sample

Path	Full	Female	Male	β (Male - Female)	Permutation	
	β	β	β		95% PCI ^a	p-value
WEQ → REP	.424*	.340*	.521*	-.181	(-.124, .202)	.034*
WEP → REP	.479*	.554*	.392*	.162	(-.198, .142)	.041*

Note: WEQ = Website Quality; WEP = Website Personality; REP = Repurchase Intention; β = Path Coefficient; PCI = Percentile Confidence Interval; * $p < .05$; ^aIf the difference value includes in the 95% confidence interval, hence the path coefficients between two groups were equal.

Gender appears to be a moderating factor in the association between website quality and repurchase intention, according to the moderator analysis. This is because the initial path coefficient difference value between the two groups for the targeted route was not included in the 95% percentile confidence interval (PCI) of the permutation analysis (95% PCI: -.124, .202). Additionally, the p-value approach supports this finding, as the p-value was less than .05 (Henseler et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2017). As a result, the study shows that, in comparison to female students ($\beta = .340, p < .05$), male students are more likely to have a strong link between website quality and repurchase intention ($\beta = .521, p < .05$). Gender was also shown to affect the link between website personality and repurchase intention. This is because the initial path coefficient difference value between the two groups for the targeted route was not included in the 95% PCI of the permutation analysis (95% PCI: -.198, .142). Additionally, the p-value approach supports this finding, as the p-value was less than .05 (Henseler et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2017). Consequently, the research shows that, in comparison to male students ($\beta = .392, p < .05$), female students are more likely to have a strong link between website personality and repurchase intention ($\beta = .554, p < .05$). Figures 1 through 3 present the summary findings of the PLS-SEM study.

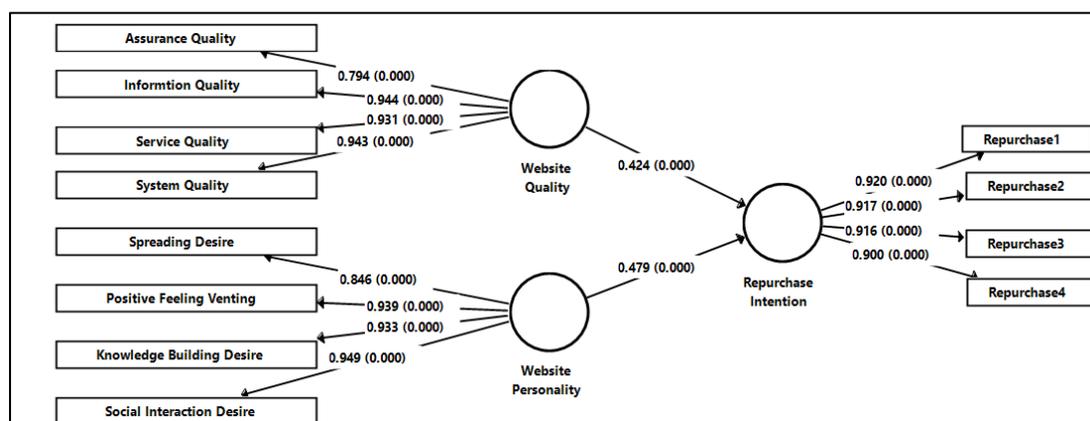


Figure 4.1: PLS SEM Analysis Output for Loading, Path Coefficient and P-Value (in bracket) for Overall Sample (n = 402)

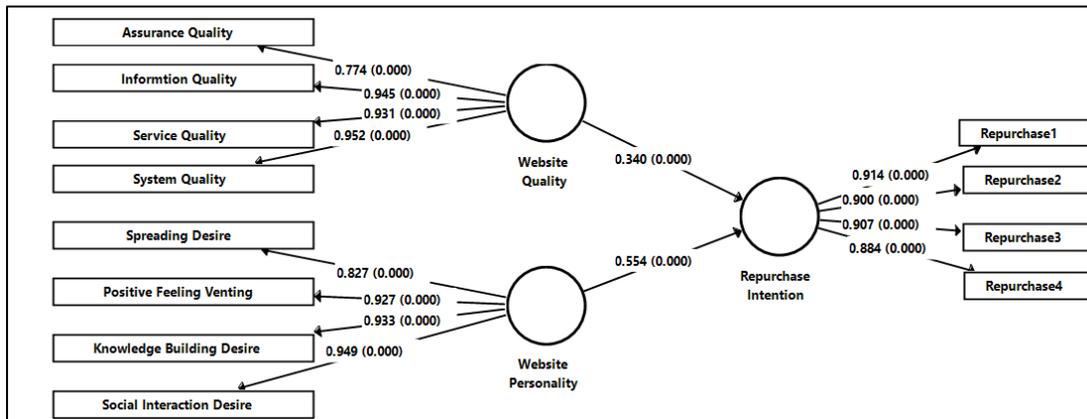


Figure 4.2: PLS SEM Analysis Output for Loading, Path Coefficient and P-Value (in bracket) for Female Sample (n = 228)

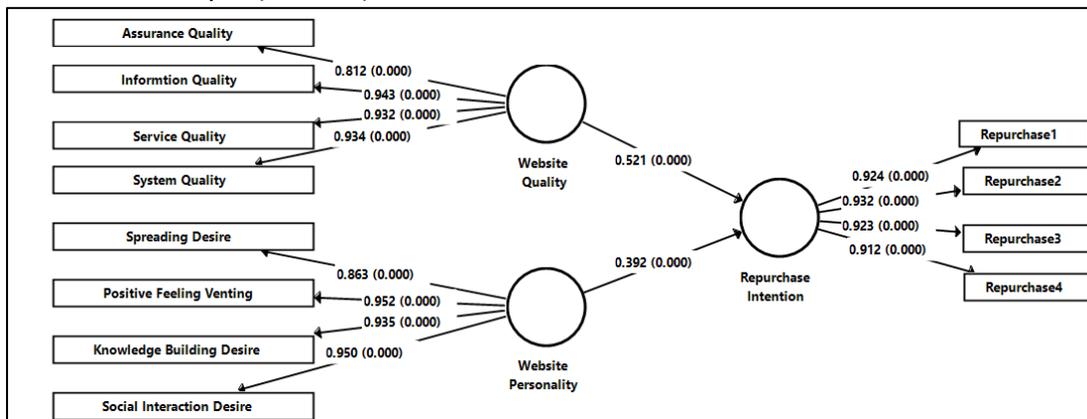


Figure 3: PLS SEM Analysis Output for Loading, Path Coefficient and P-Value (in bracket) for Male Sample (n = 174)

Conclusion

This research adds new understanding to the underlying mechanics of how moderating variables (gender) affect repurchase intention in relation to technical elements (website quality and website personality). This work may build on earlier research in several ways. This research found that the desire to repurchase accommodation services may be influenced by gender in relation to website attributes. The claim was strengthened by this research, which demonstrated that the process of repurchasing lodging services based on website features was influenced by gender. In addition to its theoretical implications, this work has many practical ramifications. The important findings that internet travel service companies may profit from are covered in this section. This research sheds light on the use of technology in the travel and tourism sector and offers implications for customer behaviour. The findings of this study will assist tourism bureaus, travel companies, and managers of hospitality in assessing if the services provided on their websites are inadequate. It has been difficult for customers to decide whether to make another purchase on the tourism website since the number of websites has grown in tandem with the development of e-commerce in recent years. The study's primary emphasis is on first interactions since the organisation observes that efforts to boost customers' intentions to make repeat purchases start at that first point. In these brief meeting moments, customers may cognitively examine the features of their website, leading to preliminary judgements of their experience and trust. These first choices would therefore have a significant impact on whether the user stays on the website.

In summary, the absence of in-person engagement platforms poses challenges for service providers during client visits. Research underscores the crucial role of gender in determining repeat purchases, while emphasizing the significant influence of website quality and personality traits on repurchasing accommodation services, particularly among first-time tourist website users. To ensure the sustainability and profitability of their platforms, service providers must stay abreast of technological advancements and online trends, as users are attracted to features like interactivity, customization, and security. Additionally, incorporating diverse static personas into popular travel websites can help attract visitors and enhance user engagement.

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