# An Exploration of e-satisfaction in B2B2C Website in the e-tourism Strategic Alliance Network

**Liew Mook Lam**

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## ABSTRACT

E-service is the integration of technologies, procedures, tools, business processes, policies and users' efforts to involve both unassisted and assisted internet customer services and the associated networks. In leveraging e-services, many e-service providers have successfully created new revenue opportunities with lowered costs, higher customer satisfaction and generated a promising database of new customers. However, the efficiencies and success of e-service greatly depends on its associated service quality and the perceived level of customers' satisfaction when they interact with these systems. Currently, there is limited empirical research on e-services quality and e-satisfaction. This thesis is aimed to investigate the factors of e-service quality in the content to e-tourism industry and their potential effects on e-satisfaction, e-retention and e-loyalty of the e-customers.

Electronic Service Quality (e-SQ) has always been a popular and developing research field because of its strategic importance in obtaining customers in the e-market space. It is known that e-customer behaviour is in fact very different from that of the offline physical world. Hence, it is very essential for e-service providers to understand and meet e-customers' satisfaction. With respect to research in the area of e-Service Quality in e-tourism, not much work has been done and therefore there is need for further empirical study. With growing role of e-tourism website for their customer and service provider interaction, e-tourism service providers are realising the need to use a website as an important strategy to attract e-customers. Although e-services are effective in reaching more customers at a relative low cost but user frequently find them impersonal. Thus, it is very necessary for e-service providers to ensure that customers are satisfied with the e-service quality pertaining to the particular website, as this will positively impact e-loyalty and e-retention towards the website

This research employ quantitative paradigm to tackle the various research problems such as

- *The factors that have an impact on tourism website e-service quality;*
- *The effect of e-service quality factors on customers' satisfaction;*
- *The effect of customers' satisfaction on retention and loyalty of e-tourism customers.*

Research data is collected via web-based survey from Malaysian public and were analysed using the multivariate data analysis techniques. The study identified six

dimensions of e-SQ in tourism websites, namely easy use, reliability, design, assurance, responsiveness and customisation. The results indicated that two e-SQ factors of easy use and customisation significantly affect e-satisfaction and e-satisfaction significantly influences e-retention and e-loyalty. Analysis also indicates that the customer demographics significantly affect their perceptions of e-SQ dimensions and e-satisfaction. The contribution of the study lies in identifying the e-service quality of e-tourism websites, and the factors affecting e-customers' satisfaction, retention and loyalty. This research contributes theoretically to e-satisfaction in the e-tourism environment. Since e-satisfaction positively influence e-loyalty and e-retention, e-service provider's website that intends to foster long-term customer loyalty, must ensure that their websites to provide the e-customers with great value. Such e-service providers must also ensure that all the associated marketing activities and practices are geared and customers consistently perceive great quality and added services. The proposed model in this study suggests that these expectations can be based on the e-SQ dimensions which act on satisfaction level. Understanding of e-service quality components has the following managerial implications. First, the easy use dimension shows us the need to develop user-friendly websites which ease consumer purchasing and searching, thus creating a suitable framework for the generation of higher satisfaction and loyalty levels. Second, the customisation dimension suggests that the website manager should enhance service loyalty, customer sensitivity, personalised service and a quick response to complaints.

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