



Influence of trust and perceived value on the intention to purchase travel online: Integrating the effects of assurance on trust antecedents



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HIGHLIGHTS

- We analyze the effects of assurance on trust antecedents in travel website.
- Trust depends on perceived information quality and perceived security.
- Security is mainly affected by reputation, investment, third-party assurance seals.
- Online purchase intention is influenced by perceived value and trust.

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a model for the formation of online purchase intention based on perceived value, trust and the antecedents of perceived security and privacy, using the model proposed by Ray, Ow, and Kim (2011) extended to cover third-party assurance seals and related constructs, and examines the influence on trust of consumers' perceived information quality, privacy, and security. A total of 451 individuals participated in an experiment. The partial least squares technique was applied to data collected via a questionnaire to test the proposed model. The results indicate that online purchase intention depends on perceived value and trust. The main predictors of perceived trust are perceived information quality and perceived security. Consumers' perceived security depends on vendor reputation, website investment, third-party assurance seals, understanding of third-party seals, privacy and security policies, familiarity with the website, Internet privacy concerns, and disposition towards third-party certification.

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1. Introduction

The Internet and information communication technology are leading to great developments in the tourism industry (Buhalis & Law, 2008). The Internet is ideal for the tourism industry because of the characteristics of tourism products (McCole, 2002): 1) they are intangible, 2) their production and consumption cannot be separated, 3) they are perishable, and 4) they are seasonal. Moreover, the Internet is used in the tourism industry when users search for information and enter into online transactions (Kim, Chung, & Lee, 2011). Internet technology allows suppliers of travel products to sell their products anywhere and at any time (Bernstein & Awe,

1999; Connolly, Olsen, & Moore, 1998; Law & Wong, 2003; Llach, Mariomon, Alonso-Almeida, & Bernardo, 2013). Online transactions represent a new stage in the tourism industry, which is working to develop better commercial practices (Kim et al., 2011). Some of the attributes associated with e-commerce that have brought about a modification of commercial transactions are convenience, economic cost, and product diversity (Yoon, 2002).

Although the number of Internet users has substantially increased, many users do not make purchases online. They are reluctant to provide personal information and/or transactional information for electronic payments online because they do not trust e-commerce (Kim et al., 2011; Kim, Ferrin, & Rao, 2008). A study of e-commerce showed that more than 87% of users were concerned about security and privacy protection in online shopping (Ray, Ow, & Kim, 2011). In addition, the lack of perceived privacy and security protection is a major reason why many consumers choose not to shop online; trust therefore plays a relevant role in online transactions (Kim et al., 2011; Wu & Chang, 2005). In this general context, previous studies have analyzed trust in e-commerce

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together with other factors (Cyr, 2008, 2013; Cyr, Kindra, & Dash, 2008; Harris & Goode, 2004; Jin, Park, & Kim, 2007; Kim et al., 2008; Kim, Xu, & Gupta, 2012; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Wu, Hu, & Wu, 2010). Previous research in e-commerce has examined the antecedents of perceived privacy and/or perceived security (Li, 2014; Lowry et al., 2011; Ray et al., 2011). Ray et al. (2011), besides studying these antecedents, analyzed the influence of perceived privacy and security on consumers' perceived trust in online transactions.

In the tourism context, trust has also been proved to be one of the most relevant variables that makes e-business successful in the travel industry (Kim et al., 2011), the accommodation industry (specifically hotels and resorts) (Fam, Foscht, & Collins, 2004), and the air travel industry, both in general (Kim, Kim, & Shin, 2009) and for low-cost carriers (LCCs) and in particular (Escobar-Rodríguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2014). Kim et al. (2011) tried to examine the factors influencing trust (navigation functionality, perceived security, and transaction cost) and the effect of trust and satisfaction on loyalty in online shopping for travel products in South Korea. Escobar-Rodríguez and Carvajal-Trujillo (2014) examined the factors influencing the intention to use LCC e-commerce websites to purchase tickets in Spain, analyzing, among other variables, the influence of perceived privacy, perceived security, and information quality on consumer trust in the website. Kim et al. (2009) studied the determinants of e-commerce on airline e-commerce websites, on the basis of the technology acceptance model (TAM), and trust and subjective norms in South Korea.

Few studies in the field of tourism and e-commerce analyze the antecedents of perceived privacy and/or perceived security. Although studies have examined consumers' perceived value and purchase intentions (Llach et al., 2013), and their trust and purchase intentions (Kim et al., 2011), none have examined the effect of perceived trust on perceived value in the field of e-commerce and tourism. Furthermore, Kim et al. (2011) noted that there is little research regarding online consumers' perceived trust in travel products. In this study, we analyze the antecedents of perceived security and privacy, extending the model proposed by Ray et al. (2011) by adding a new factor, consumers' perception of third-party assurance seals, and two constructs related to this, the disposition towards third-party certification and the understanding of third-party seals. In addition, using the model proposed by Kim et al. (2012), we examine the influence of trust on perceived value, and the influence of these two factors on purchase intention.

We have extended the model to include third-party assurance seals and the related constructs following the recommendations of Özpolat, Gao, Jank, and Viswanathan (2013); these authors stated that there are very few studies examining the role of third-party mechanisms in helping to increase trust in e-commerce, unlike the position for the third-party certification mechanisms that exist in offline settings. Among the few studies that address the issue, Xu, Teo, Tan, and Agarwal (2010) in the general context, and Lee and Cranage (2011) in the context of tourism and e-commerce, concluded that the use of privacy seals, such as TRUSTe, increases reliability in relation to privacy protection and information disclosure. Lee and Cranage (2011) analyzed how privacy assurance and personalization affect both consumers' perceptions of value and their privacy concerns, in the context of travel websites. They found that privacy assurance statements and the use of security symbols increase perceived privacy protection and perceived trust.

In this study, we used the model proposed by Ray et al. (2011) for three reasons. First, it presents a current integrated framework to study the influence of signals such as third-party assurance seals on travel websites and the influence of different consumer predispositions on perceived security and privacy protection in online transactions. Second, Ray et al. (2011) suggest further

research to determine whether the personal predispositions included, but not found to be significant, in their model, could influence perceived security and privacy if they are analyzed together with other predispositions. Third, Ray et al. indicate the need to research whether signals from websites influence online services other than the general retail websites that they analyze.

With this in mind, this study aims: 1) to examine the influence of perceived trust and perceived value on the intention to use e-commerce websites when shopping for travel products; 2) to analyze the influence of privacy and security signals and the personal predispositions of consumers on perceived privacy and perceived security; and 3) to assess the effect of information quality, perceived security, and perceived privacy on consumer trust in a website.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we provide a literature review and propose our working hypotheses. Following that, we describe the research methodology. The results are then presented, and finally we provide our conclusions and the implications for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1. Perceived trust, perceived privacy, perceived security, information quality, and the relationships between them

Trust in websites plays an important role in e-commerce, because consumers are unlikely to shop online if they do not trust the seller's website on which they are shopping (Gefen, 2002; Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, Saarinen, & Vitale, 1999; Kim et al., 2008, 2011). Studies have analyzed the factors that can influence consumers' perceived trust, and these help tourism product managers to design their websites in such a way that consumers perceive the transactions to be reliable. In this research, we examine, in relation to travel websites, the antecedents of trust that, according to Kim et al. (2008), are related to consumers' perceptions, such as security protection, privacy protection, and the quality of the information given on the website. We analyze these factors for travel websites because only a few previous studies have examined the antecedents of trust (Escobar-Rodríguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2014; Kim et al., 2008, 2011). Escobar-Rodríguez and Carvajal-Trujillo (2014) confirm that previous studies have indicated that these antecedents are very relevant for e-commerce (Au Yeung & Law, 2003; Flavian & Cuñaliu, 2006; Kim et al., 2011; Wong & Law, 2005). In e-commerce, it is difficult to gauge whether online sellers will meet their commitment to protect the privacy of consumers' personal information (McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002) and/or the security of online transactions (Kim et al., 2008). Additionally, the content of sellers' websites can affect consumers' perceived trust (Vila & Kuster, 2011). Hence, it is relevant for online sellers to establish trusted transaction processes so that consumers place trust in them and consequently form an online purchase intention (Grabosky, 2001).

The definition of trust is complicated because it is an abstract and complex factor. The literature gives various definitions of trust (Corbitt, Thanasankit, & Yi, 2003; Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). In the field of e-commerce, according to Pavlou (2003), trust is the belief that renders consumers vulnerable to the good faith of online sellers after learning of their characteristics. Gefen (2000) conceives of trust in a very similar way, as a general belief in an online seller that results in a behavioral intention. Another definition of trust in this context is provided by Kim et al. (2008); they define trust as the subjective belief that the online seller will fulfill its transactional obligations, as those obligations are understood by the consumer. In this paper, we use this last definition.

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