



Erasmus School of Economics

M.Sc. in Marketing

## MASTER THESIS

The impact of travel website characteristics on consumers' attitude towards  
Intention to purchase and recommend

Name: Alexios Foukis

Student Number: 372629

Supervisor: Prof. Benedict Dellaert

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to examine the effect of Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and Ease of use on Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend a tourism related website. The dissertation starts with the review of the available literature, following by the research methodology, the data analysis, the main findings and the overall conclusions. In addition, the managerial implications, limitations and the future research are presented.

Two websites (Booking.com and Hotelguide.com) were assessed by the respondents in order to make comparisons and identify the factors that have an impact on Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend. For that reason, a primary research with the use of a questionnaire was conducted and 112 customers of those two websites participate on the research. The results among others show that there is a strong positive relationship between Usefulness (of information) of the website, positive aesthetic elements, Ease of use of the website and the Intention to recommend the website to others and the Intention to purchase.

Finally, the findings from the primary research show that Usefulness, Aesthetics and Website\_Booking are predictors of Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend apart from Ease of use. Furthermore, it was found that Booking.com presents higher mean scores than Hotelguide.com.

Those findings have various implications and they can be used by online booking companies in order to improve and optimize their websites with the ultimate goal to maximize their profits and effectiveness.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and context

Internet is one of the latest technological developments for the transfer of information and communication. Because today's consumers want quick solutions to save time, the internet has become an important tool for gathering information and purchasing products and services. Especially in the tourism market, tourism products and services have found fertile ground in the internet due to their specific characteristics.

Throughout the past decade, the development of the internet as a marketing tool has become a worldwide trend. Because of the fast growth of e-commerce, the internet has become a vital business means for selling products and services (Corbitt et al., 2003). Therefore, the relationship between internet marketing and consumer behaviour is interesting to investigate, since people use the internet more and more for the purchase or for their decisions on purchases.

The way in which tourists ensure information, planning and book their holidays in recent years has undergone profound changes. The rapidly increasing use of the internet means that millions of people in the world have the opportunity now to purchase travel from their computer at office or at home, and make reservations or buy tickets for flights or book a room in a hotel.

The growth of commercial activities on the Internet has a major influence on the business environment. Changes were so great as to create a new channel and a new market with new data on trade, supply and demand. The Internet enables the consumer to gather knowledge and information, at a rate that would not be possible with traditional media.

It is obvious that technology plays an important role in all stages of the purchasing process. The steps are the same except that consumers shopping online pass from one stage to another faster and easier.

Tourism is an industry based on the information. Ex ante evaluation of a tourism product or tourism service is impossible. Tourists must go away from their daily environment to consume the product. At the time of decision-making, only an abstract product model is

available and based on a series of information that are collected through a numerous set of channels like the Internet, informational brochures, friends, etc.

Today, tourists exhibit a more dynamic behaviour and ask for more and better information. Although tourism travel-packages are still the norm, tourism ‘do it yourself’ grows more and more.

Tourism was the first and remains one of the key services developed on the Internet. The services offered via the Internet are almost all those offered by traditional travel agencies, booking and buying tickets to ensure accommodation and entertainment. The internet, however, offers extra services such as travel advice from people who have experienced specific experiences (e.g. problems with visa), online travel magazines, compare tickets prices, travel guides, calculations for exchange rate, international travel and new addresses markets travel books and chat-rooms.

The advantages of tourism services via the internet for tourists are huge. The volume of free information is very large, and this information is available any time from any place. Someone who is available for searching can find very good deals and discounts. Moreover, the direct sale saves customer money that would be paid to the intermediate.

Websites are an all-inclusive marketing tool. Since they were launched in the early 1990s, many researchers have distinguished their potential in promoting businesses and communicating with the audience, advocating incorporating internet into tourism industry (Jung & Baker, 1998; Clyde & Landfried, 1995). Tourism industry has been completely changed due to the fast evolution of information technology and the Internet (Ho & Lee, 2007). It is extensively acknowledged that the Internet can be used as an effective marketing tool in tourism industry (Buhalis, 2003; Buhalis & Law, 2008). ‘It is a valuable tool for both suppliers and consumers for information dissemination, communication, and online purchasing’ (Law, R., Qi, S., & Buhalis, D. 2010). For businesses in the travel sector in particular, e-business models are more and more adopted to accomplish their organizational goals. Therefore, it is important to identify those website characteristics that-compared to other industries attract and affect consumers.

## 1.2 Research questions

The Usefulness of content, the graphical outline and the Ease of use are three fundamental elements of a website. By Usefulness content we mean the value and content of information accessible in a website, while by graphical outline we mean the way the website is manufactured and the way data is displayed. Ease of use is the way a person interacts with the website and how easy it is to learn using it. The main concern of this thesis is to determine the variables for the Intention to purchase or Intention to recommend travel products / services via websites. Specifically, the author of this thesis seeks to study the literature and empirically research factors that constitute the criteria for the evaluation and selection of the considered services and products, with a focus on online booking websites. The main research questions are:

- Is there a relationship between the website's Usefulness (of information) and Intention to purchase?
- Is there a relationship between the website's Usefulness (of information) and Intention to recommend?
- Is there a relationship between the website's Aesthetics (visual appeal) and Intention to purchase?
- Is there a relationship between the website's Aesthetics (visual appeal) and Intention to recommend?
- Is there a relationship between the website's Ease of use and Intention to purchase?
- Is there a relationship between the website's Ease of use and Intention to recommend?
- How well do Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and Ease of use predict Intention to purchase?
- How well do Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and Ease of use predict Intention to recommend?

## 1.3 Managerial relevance

As it has already been said, these days, there is a fast growth of Internet practices. More individuals visit travel websites either to collect information or buy products / services. Organizations ought to exploit this situation and grow their business on the internet. Therefore, if they want to become successful online, they should create effective websites. The primary

elements of a powerful website are site characteristics and consequently it is vital for companies to comprehend and analyze consumer's attitude to these elements in order to increase their profits.

The current dissertation, aims to contribute to the existing knowledge and shed light on the impact of certain factors like Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and Ease of use regarding 'purchase intention' and Intention to recommend of tourism related websites.

## **1.4 Research method**

This research begins with the literature review of existing papers. After that, taking into account this review, the hypotheses will be formulated and presented in a conceptual model. To gather the data and test these hypotheses, I will use two online booking websites (Booking.com and Hotelguide.com). An online questionnaire will be distributed to quantify the variables. In addition, before starting the final distribution, a pretest was conducted in order make any necessary changes and meet the requirements of the investigation. Different methods are going to be used to analyze the data obtained from the online survey. Firstly, the questionnaire will be tested for its validity and reliability in order to ensure the reliability of the constructs. Then Pearson correlation is going to be used to test how strong is the relationship between the variables, then multiple regressions are going to be done to test which of the factors determine Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend in an online booking website and finally t-tests are going to determine the differences between the websites.

## **1.5 Research structure**

This research consists of seven chapters. In the introduction part, the reason and the idea of the current research is presented. What is more, it includes the problem statement and the research questions that need to be answered. The second chapter consists of the literature review of this research. It begins with a broad theoretical background in e-commerce and tourism followed by the review of each variable and arguments that lead to the relationship of independent with dependent variables. The third chapter consists of the conceptual model of the research followed by the methodology used for the research, the participants of the online survey and the construct management for each variable. Chapter four, the data analysis is presented and more specifically data collection / cleaning, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Chapter five, continues



with the presentation of the results and hypotheses testing while chapter six includes the conclusions of the research, the discussion of implications, the limitations of the study and the fields for further future research. Chapter seven presents the bibliography used to conduct this research.

## **2. Literature review**

In this chapter, the theoretical background of this research will be discussed as well as the variables examined will be presented and described. Then, based on arguments of literature review, the hypotheses of this research will be formulated.

### **2.1 Travel websites and E-commerce**

Businesses in both service and product related industries are using e-commerce to enhance sales. Along with pricing, electronic service quality now plays a major role in consumers' responsiveness (Lee & Lin, 2005). Since a website is a component of the relationship between a company and its customers, it is apparent that it must mirror the quality efforts that are in place throughout the company (Van Iwaarden et al, 2004).

The significance of assessing website effectiveness has long been discussed by academic researchers. 'Lu and Yeung (1998), who were pioneers in the field, proposed a framework for evaluating website performance, in which the Usefulness of a website is estimated based on its functionality and usability' (Law, R., Qi, S., & Buhalis, D. 2010).

There have been several studies on the impact of website characteristics on consumer behaviour, like playfulness or web quality and visual appeal, technical adequacy, information content etc. (Ahn, Ryu & Han, 2007).

Consumer behaviour in online environments (as well as offline) is related to customer satisfaction and loyalty, which are also factors that affect purchase intention or recommendation (Shankar, Smith & Rangaswamy, 2003), which in turn are affected by the characteristics of the websites themselves mentioned previously.

In that way, in order to satisfy tourism demand and survive in the long run there is no choice but to incorporate technology and enhance the interactivity with the marketplace (Buhalis et al, 1997). The use of internet and travel websites is thus inevitable.

Moreover, research by Kim and Fesenmaier (2008) reveals that inspiration and usability are parameters that affect customers' judgement on first impressions concerning travel websites.

It seems that the process of information search for travel planning using the Internet can be distinct in 3 phases: (1) search, (2) primacy, and (3) elaboration. Online travel planners often start their exploration with search engines (i.e., Excite, Google, etc.) to discover and decide on sources (Pan and Fesenmaier, 2006; Wöber 2006).

The study by Kim and Fesenmaier focuses on factors that affect the persuasiveness of travel websites which also include: credibility, inspiration, reciprocity, usability and informativeness.

## **2.2 Definition of tourism and tourism marketing**

Tourism is a global economic, social and cultural activity that occurs from time immemorial. Despite all scientific research on the phenomenon of tourism is very recent, the definitions given are different depending on the approach. Here are the most representative definitions given for tourism.

The first definition is given by Professor W. Hunziker and K. Krapf in Bern in 1942 who defined tourism as "the set of events, which are born from the stay of foreigners, when it covers the most part of some employment speculative form". A second definition is given by the same scholars is that "tourism is the set of events generated by a trip and stay in one place, by people who are not permanent residents, as long as they do not get a residence permit there and do not take part in any work -event in the region".

In 1954 Joshke approaches tourism as consumption, while in 1974 Walterspiel focuses on the economic impact of tourism and sets the shift in purchasing power. In 1975 Kaspar approached tourism as a system and appointed it as the set of relationships and phenomena resulting from a journey and people staying in a place which is not their main and permanent residence and work.

In 1979 Leiper defines tourism as a system involving the voluntary transition and temporary stay of a person in a different place from the place of residence. He also focuses on the economic dimension of tourism, as he refers to tourism as a national industry which includes a wide range of synthetic cross-sectional activities, such as transport, accommodation entertainment, catering and other related services.

A special feature of the tourism product that makes it different from any other industrial product is its intangible nature. The tourist product is resulting from the combination of all sectors of the tourism industry mentioned above and is not something tangible. Also a test before the purchase is not possible.

No matter how good the information a traveler has before visiting a tourist destination, they cannot obtain the final impression if they do not go there.

A second feature of the tourism product is its heterogeneity. Due to the fact that it lacks physical and technical characteristics, there cannot be a method of mass production which will produce a standardized product quality. The human factor plays a critical role.

Based on the above it is understood that the provision of a quality tourism product requires the cooperation of many actors and their coordination by a single entity. Also maintaining a high level of quality requires constant effort and training of personnel. Finally, to promote the product in the global market requires the development of a particular marketing industry on the tourist destinations.

Modern technologies and especially internet technologies come to assist in the task of promoting and ensuring the quality of the tourism product offering new possibilities.

Tourism, like any other product is affected by the rule of supply and demand. For its development there should be a balance between these two sectors. The increase in supply without a corresponding increase in demand has resulted in lower prices in order to introduce competition resulting in reduced turnover of the tourism industry. Conversely, the increase in demand without a corresponding increase in supply, results in disgruntled guests and preferably another tourist destination where visitors will be able to cover their needs.

On the supply side we have the travel and tourism industry, which is trying to maintain and increase the demand for tourism products and services. The primary tourist offer consists of natural resources (mountains, sea, beaches) and human resources (local customs, historical monuments). The secondary tourist offer includes all infrastructure and companies created to exploit the primary supply.

On the demand side, the travelers-consumers are found who are looking for tourist products and services that will meet their specific needs. The tourism marketing is the transaction process between the two sides (Pike, 2005). According to Kotler (2001) in marketing 10 types of entities are involved: goods, services, experiences, events, persons, places, properties, organizations, information and ideas. It is readily understood that all such entities are involved in tourism.

With regard to consumers, marketing seeks to understand the needs and desires of current and potential buyers (why buy), choose which products, when, in what quantities and prices and how often. Also it is interested in how consumers are informed about promotions and from where they draw their impressions after the consumption of products.

With regard to producers, marketing focuses on what products they are producing and why, especially new products. Also deals with quantities, prices, by when promotions should be given to consumers and what means should be taken to inform the public about these offers.

According to Pike & Ryan (2004) the tourist destination management organizations identify potential or tourists, communicate with them to influence their needs and motivations at a local, national and global level. Then they adapt the tourism product accordingly to achieve greater satisfaction of tourists.

In other words, the tourist marketing can be seen as the process of matching funds of a tourist destination with the opportunities arising in the global environment (Pike, 2004). The tourism industry is part of the global economy in the services sector. A peculiarity is that in this area coexist harmoniously both multinationals and SMEs, and each of them plays an important role in shaping the final product.

With regard to demand, the tourism marketing has to face periodicity. There are periods of time when the tourism demand is great and other times when tourist traffic is minimized (Witt & Moutinho, 1994).

Another special feature taken into account by the tourism marketing is the high inflexible costs of tourism services. These costs relate to transport, maintenance facilities, energy costs, administrative costs, etc. These costs are fixed and not affected by the increase in demand resulting in an increase in the lower limit at which prices can be driven for a tourist product.

Finally every visitor during a visit to a tourist destination combines a multitude of services from travel and accommodation to fun. All these areas are interlinked so that the marketing options in the transport sector for example, affect the marketing in the accommodation sector (Witt & Moutinho, 1994).

The response of tourism marketing in this multidimensional tourism product is the constant search for the needs of visitors and adapt to them, without excluding the development of a long-term tourism strategy.

### **2.3 Development of new technologies for the promotion of a tourist destination**

The intangible nature of the tourism product results in the tourist industry to be based on the most durable and accurate information. Information and communications technology play an important role in promoting tourist destinations and inform potential tourists before they choose a destination (Buhalis, 2000).

The model of mass tourism-based packages that travel agencies prepare and aims to attract as many tourists, is replaced in recent years by the alternative or thematic tourism which visitors prefer, making their own pack their holidays online (Go & Govers, 2000).

Electronic commerce is a fast growing economic activity sector and the tourism industry could not stay out of this development. More and more tourism businesses develop web services by exploiting the global dimension on the internet. This area of business is called e-tourism (Stockdale, 2007).

The electronic tourism provides advantages both for tourism industry and travelers – consumers.

The advantages for tourist destinations are (Sebastia et al, 2009):

- The ability to promote the destination at a worldwide level.
- The possibility of promoting new and thematic tourism destinations as the Internet can find all the individual groups of populations in which these destinations are addressed.
- Reduced advertising costs.
- Improved services.

The benefits for tourism businesses are:

- Access the tourism business in international markets.
- Requirement of less capital for the enterprise.
- Reduced communication costs and access provided to more providers.
- Better understanding of the needs of potential customers, as well as via the internet it is possible to draw useful information on market trends.
- Direct access to travelers - consumers without the intervention of third parties.

Travelers-consumers on their side enjoy the following benefits (Sebastia et al, 2009):

- Access to a wealth of information for any tourist destination or service any time within 24 hours with no cost and from anywhere.
- More choices and direct comparison of services.
- Interact with fellow travellers consumers through WEB 2.0 technologies, to exchange views and experiences.

However apart from the advantages there are disadvantages that prevent the adoption of e-tourism in all tourist destinations and visitors. Regarding tourism businesses, the disadvantages are (Hjalager, 2002):

- The required fixed costs for the acquisition and the maintenance of the technological infrastructure, the amount of which can prevent a compact tourist business from adopting such a strategy.

- The continuous development of technology increases costs above fixed as periodically required both the renewal of the technological equipment and upgrade of software used.
- To exploit the new possibilities of technologies requires the continuous training of personnel.
- In many tourist areas there is no adequate range provided in the telecommunications area to support modern electronic services.
- The difficulty of acceptance and adaptation to new technologies particularly from the older tourist staff.

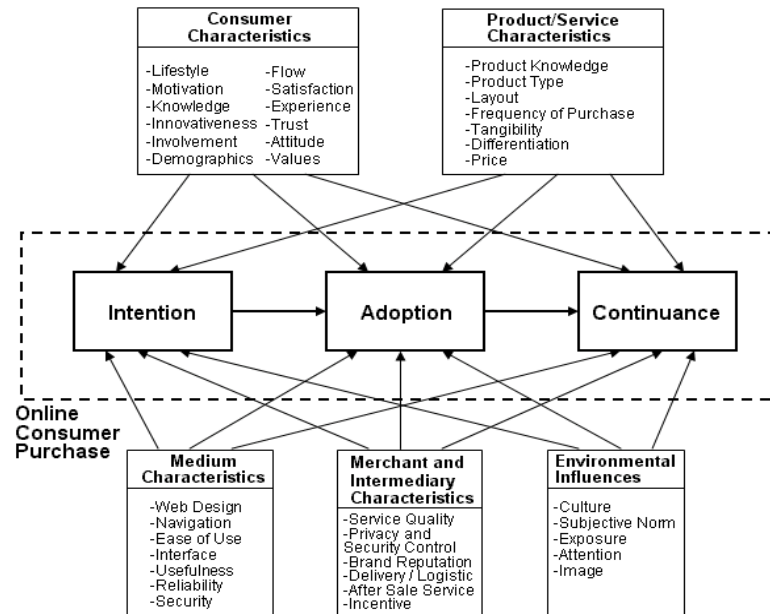
The disadvantages with regard to visiting consumers are (Hjalager, 2002):

- Lack of face to face contact of electronic services, poses many times the feeling of insecurity to guests who feel more confident when discussing something with their travel agent.
- The possible lack of security and trust in electronic transactions.
- The use of e-destination services requires some knowledge of prospective visitors, who are often in social groups that do not have good relationship with technology (e.g. the elderly).

## 2.4 Online consumer behavior

Consumers use the Internet mostly in two ways to interact with businesses. They either want to look for information or buy a product / services online. Companies should have the ability to comprehend the way customers behave in a website with the goal of creating an effective websites.

In light of existing literature, Cheung et al. (2003) distinguished five noteworthy space regions of significant components influencing online behavior such as consumer characteristics, product / service characteristics, medium characteristics (where Usefulness, Aesthetics and Ease of use are included), merchant and intermediary characteristics and environmental influences (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Consumer Behavior model by Cheung et al. (2003)**

According to Jarvenpaa and Todd (1996), price, quality, and product type compose the three key elements in shaping consumers' perception. What is more, traditional IS attributes such as Ease of use, quality, security and reliability and also web specific factors such as ease of navigation, interface and network speed are included in medium characteristics. Hoffman and Novak (1996) and Spiller and Lohse (1998) have recommended components like service quality, privacy and security control, brand/reputation, delivery/logistic, after sales services and incentive as merchants and intermediary characteristics. Lastly, environmental elements like culture, social influence, peer influence, and mass media play also a fundamental role in affecting consumer purchasing decisions (Engel et al., 2001) and appear to be relevant also in the setting of online consumer behavior.

The phases of aim, selection and continuation, which are the determinants of consumer online behavior, are incorporated in the basic model by Cheung et al. (2003). Intention refers to consumer's mood to buy a product / service online, adoption is the result of consumer's satisfaction and the retention of the consumer indicates consumer's intention to visit the website again in the future and repurchase.

Fishbein's attitudinal theoretical model (Fishbein, 1967) was integrated by Cheung et al. (2003) as well as the expectation-confirmation model (Oliver, 1980), to add in their base model these three components together.

In this research, the main focus is on website characteristics and more specifically medium



characteristics that affect online consumer behavior such as Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and Ease of use with the objective of determining how these features affect online consumer behavior at the essential phase of Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend.

### **2.4.1 Communication with the Website**

The existence of accurate, fast and easy access to information through the two way communication with the company are factors that can persuade customers to make a purchase or recommend the company to others. Through that process the company has the opportunity to overcome any risk related doubts and make the potential customer to trust the store / website and make a purchase. The necessary information that is going to be transferred to the customer during the communication process can have various forms (e.g. reviews from other customers, third party evaluation) which add value to the service or product and act as an antecedent of purchase intention (Ganguly, Dash & Cyr, 2009). Moreover, according to Ribbink et al. (2004) communication with the clients is connected to their satisfaction, which positively affects the intention of the customers to recommend the company or its products to other potential customers.

### **2.4.2 Trust and Purchase Intention**

Purchase Intention refers to the willingness of the customers to purchase products or services online. According to Wen (2012) purchase intention is an outcome of a number of factors. The trust of the customers to the web page is a major factor that can affect the customer's willingness to buy a product or service and several studies have shown this positive relationship (Dash & Saji, 2008; Kim & Stoel, 2004).

## **2.5 Hypotheses Development**

The first contact the prospective visitor has with a tourist destination is the home page of the website of the destination management organization. According to World Tourism Organization (2005), the qualitative data to be found in a home page of a tourist destination are:

- Accessibility and readability
- Content
- Attractiveness

- Identity and Trust
- Interactivity
- Ease of navigation /Usability
- Quality of Service
- Technical excellence

For the purposes of this research the hypotheses will test mainly the traits of Usefulness, Aesthetics / attractiveness and Ease of use.

### **2.5.1 Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend**

The act of purchase is the main target for a profit driven organization and all marketing and business plans have as their main goal to increase purchases of products or services and as a result to increase the profits of a company (Mpinganjira, 2014). Online purchases and specifically online purchases of tourist services can be affected by several factors (Hsu, Chang & Chuang, 2015). Besides the factors that are related to marketing actions, there are factors regarding the actual presence and design of the web page of the company. These factors can strongly affect purchase intention of the clients as well as their Intention to recommend the company to other potential clients in their social cycle. Some of those factors are going to be analyzed below in terms of their importance and relationship with purchase intention and intention to make a recommendation.

According to Kim et al. (2009), three concepts can describe consumer's e-loyalty. The first one is the retention to the website. Secondly, the intention to repurchase from the website and the third one is the Intention to recommend the website to others. Taking into account previous literature, we come to the conclusion that consumers are willing to be loyal, repurchase, reject other offerings from competitors and generate word of mouth when they are satisfied. (Anderson and Sullivan 1993; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

In addition, (Randall et al., 2005) claimed that loyal consumers buy more themselves, as well as recommend the favored websites to other possible consumers. Therefore, these new clients can be an important amount of future other faithful consumers who in turn, are going to recommend the website to others and so on. One fundamental characteristic of the internet is that information and word of mouth can be spread extremely fast which makes a website more effective. Additionally, Brown et al. (2005), link consumer loyalty with the word of mouth arguing that

consumers who are not satisfied from the purchase of a product / service find it difficult to build a strong relationship with the company and recommend it to others.

### **2.5.2 Intention to purchase / recommend – Usefulness (of information)**

The last twenty years the use of internet has hugely increased and become vital for the companies and their marketing efforts. Nevertheless, due to perceived risk on online purchase (Pires et al., 2004) and a lack of choice to test the product before use (Choi and Lee, 2003) had a slow adoption of online purchases.

In order to overcome these problems, providing appropriate information content may be one way out. Peterson and Merino (2003) claimed that the Usefulness of information in a website has a fundamental impact on consumer's purchase intention. Albeit very little research has shed light on how amount of information available in a website impacts consumer's shopping reactions, as per Li et al. (1999) the accessibility of information and content are critical elements for online shopping. Furthermore, Park and Stoel (2005) claimed that Intention to purchase increases when there is more information on the website, even though their analysis did not show an influence of amount of information on intention to buy. Moreover, as indicated by Blackwell et al. (2001) amount of information available in a website can lead consumer's to Intention to purchase or repurchase online.

There is little evidence for the elements which make a website more effective. Information available in a website has been isolated as a crucial reason for shopping online and can be seen as one of the main criteria that influence the level of service quality delivery through a website (Kuo, 2003). Researchers Ranganathan and Ganapathy (2002) examined the key features of a commercial website as perceived by electronic consumers. Specifically they studied the intention of consumers to buy from an e-shop as affected by the information provided for the store content. The study, amongst other things, concluded that the content provided from the website such as the type of information, their quality, their presentation and the way they are organized, was a key-factor and have a positive impact on their Intention to purchase. According to Mithas and his colleagues (2007), highly relevant information that is being updated regularly can generate customer loyalty. Moreover, the design and the availability of information in a web page are connected to the trust that the customer show to the website and the company it presents. Furthermore, according to Szymanski and Hise

(2000), there is a direct positive effect of Usefulness (of information) on consumers' overall satisfaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Usefulness (of information) available is a significant element in determining the success or failure of e-commerce (Yang, 2001). Based on that, it is more likely that a customer who trusts a company and its services to recommend it to other customers.

According to Ballantine (2005) consumer's overall satisfaction is positively affected by the amount of information on online retail setting. What is more, Supphellen and Nysveen (2001) claimed that consumer intention to be loyal and revisit a website is also determined by giving the opportunity to consumers to have access to important information and high quality content on a website. According to Brown et al. (2005), consumer loyalty is linked with the word of mouth arguing that consumers who are not satisfied from the purchase of a product / service find it difficult to build a strong relationship with the company and recommend it to others. Hence, we can assume that Usefulness of information has an impact on consumer's Intention to recommend a website.

Consequently, hypotheses H1 and H2 are formed as follows:

*H1: Usefulness (of information) has a positive impact on Intention to purchase.*

*H2: Usefulness (of information) has a positive impact on Intention to recommend.*

### **2.5.3 Intention to purchase / recommend – Aesthetics**

The visual appearance of the website refers to a category of factors which are mentioned in the literature as Aesthetics and it includes anything related to the design of the website such as graphics, colors, photographs, and fonts.

According to Foxall's (1997), aesthetic elements of an online environment play a significant role in evoking emotional reactions and drives consumers to navigate, assess and purchase the product / service. Likewise, Smith and Sherman (1993) referred "managerial effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional states in the buyer that influence the probability of purchase". According to Allen (2000), extended product information and numerous pictures played an essential role for online purchase intentions. Likewise, Park et al. (2005) argued that Intention to purchase is not affected by product image size, however product motion did. Also, Ranganathan and Ganapathy (2002) indicated that information content,

design, security and privacy, the four key dimensions of B2C websites, have an effect on purchase intention.

In addition, Coyle and Thorson (2001) indicated that consumers shape a stronger attitude towards the website when it has vivid Aesthetics. Finally, Ho and Wu (1999) proposed that the presentation structure of a website is determining consumer loyalty and satisfaction. All in all, it can be assumed that aesthetic elements of a website can have an impact on consumer's Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend the website to others.

As reported by Ganguly, Dash & Cyr (2009) and Cyr (2008), aesthetic elements are positively connected to trust and from that point they can lead to purchase intention. Users make decisions of the visual appearance of a Website very quickly and those decisions appear to be in time. Lindgaard, et al., (2006) found that Website impressions were reliably formed within 50 seconds, were reliably consistent between people, and were held consistent over time. Aesthetic elements and the perception of them are closely related to the emotional impact of the product and as the Website likeability and credibility increases so does the likelihood of purchasing from the site. Additionally, perceived content quality and visual attitude towards the website enhance trust and intention to visit and recommend the website.

Taking into account the above, hypotheses H3 and H4 are formed as follows:

*H3: Aesthetic elements have a positive impact on Intention to purchase.*

*H4: Aesthetic elements have a positive impact on Intention to recommend.*

#### **2.5.4 Intention to purchase / recommend – Ease of use**

The design of customer navigation on the website is a factor which refers to the Ease of use of the website by the visitor. According to Cyr (2008) if the customer cannot find easily the information that he needs in order to make a purchase, it is more likely to leave without making a purchase. Moreover, Harridge-March (2006) and Yoon (2002) state that ease of navigation on the website is strongly connected with trust and therefore it can lead to purchase intention.

In spite of the fact that Internet shopping is accepted to have beneficial results, yet the act of using the communication medium (i.e. website) could turn out to be overwhelming for some consumers. In other words, the Ease of use is connected with the "user-friendliness" of the

website. In case that the act of using the website happens to outweigh the advantage of buying through the net, then potential Internet consumers would turn to purchase through traditional channels. Long download time is one of the issues that turns into the unfriendliness of some websites. Furthermore, ineffectively outlined websites cause potential e-customers to lose control of their carts and purchases. To put it simply, these obstacles decrease the perception of Ease of use on online purchasing leading consumer's to develop a negative attitude and dissatisfaction which in turn leads to unwillingness to engage in online purchasing. Thusly, this prompts Internet customer's unwillingness to take part in Internet shopping. As indicated by Ramayah, T., and Joshua Ignatius (2005) "There is a positive influence of perceived Ease of use on the intention to shop online". This proposes that the Ease of use of technology and the degree in which the customer is satisfied by the online shopping experience are fundamental in determining potential consumer's purchasing intentions. As a result, creating a web interface that is easy to be used suggests a higher impact on satisfaction and therefore to Intention to purchase and recommend.

With respect to internet usage, Chen, Gillenson, and Sherrell (2002) equate Usefulness to consumers' perceptions that using the Internet will enhance their shopping and information seeking experience while Ease of use refers to the amount of effort involving in online shopping such as in clarity and navigation on the web pages. Also, Davis, Fred D. (1989), argued that perceived Ease of use, refers to "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort". During the past few years the perceived Usefulness of a website has been studied extensively in the literature in order to explain purchase intention. A number of studies mention that the willingness of the customer to finally make an online purchase is strongly connected to the amount and the Usefulness of the available information (Kuan, Bock & Vathanophas, 2008; Chen, Hsu & Lin, 2010). Additionally, the Ease of use of a web page is another factor that is connected to purchase intention, however only few studies have mentioned and focused on its importance and its connection with purchase intention (Diren, 2012). Finally, according to Finn, Adam, Luming Wang, and Tema Frank (2009), Ease of use is significantly related to overall online customer satisfaction and consequently to word of mouth and Intention to recommend.

Therefore, hypotheses 5 and 6 are formed as follows:

*H5: Ease of use has a positive impact on Intention to purchase.*

*H6: Ease of use has a positive impact on Intention to recommend.*

### **2.5.5 Website\_Booking**

This independent variable (dummy) is created to capture all those characteristics- variables that have an impact on Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend which I did not include in my research such as intuitiveness, ease of ordering, security, responsiveness, reliability, familiarity with the website, personalization, customer support and others, so as to reduce the omitted variable bias. In this way, I will have a more realistic interpretation of the impact of Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and Ease of use.

This variable takes the value of '0' when the observations refer to the Hotelguide.com website and the value of '1' when the observations refer to the Booking.com website.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The current chapter presents the methodology that used to conduct the primary quantitative research. The process of the primary research is discussed along with the sampling techniques, data collection and data analysis methods. Moreover, an assessment of external validity and reliability is going to be done.

The quantitative research method aims in discovering relationships amongst variables and quantifying the factors of interest, so that the study comes to valid conclusions (Pickard, 2012).

Two online booking websites will be analyzed (www.Booking.com and www.Hotelguide.com), via a questionnaire that assesses their separate characteristics. These two websites were chosen on purpose since Booking.com is considered to be a very effective online booking website whereas Hotelguide.com is considered to be a weak website. The reason is that I wanted to include two websites with a variation in quality and to examine if the results would stay consistent between a "good" and a "bad" website.

This quantitative research aims to analyze the factors affecting consumer purchase intention and Intention to recommend of travel products through websites. Moreover, by taking into careful consideration the findings from the literature review and in accordance with the research objectives, the following research hypotheses were formed.

### *Research Hypothesis*

H1: Usefulness (of information) has a positive impact on Intention to purchase.

H2: Usefulness (of information) has a positive impact on Intention to recommend.

H3: Aesthetic elements have a positive impact on Intention to purchase.

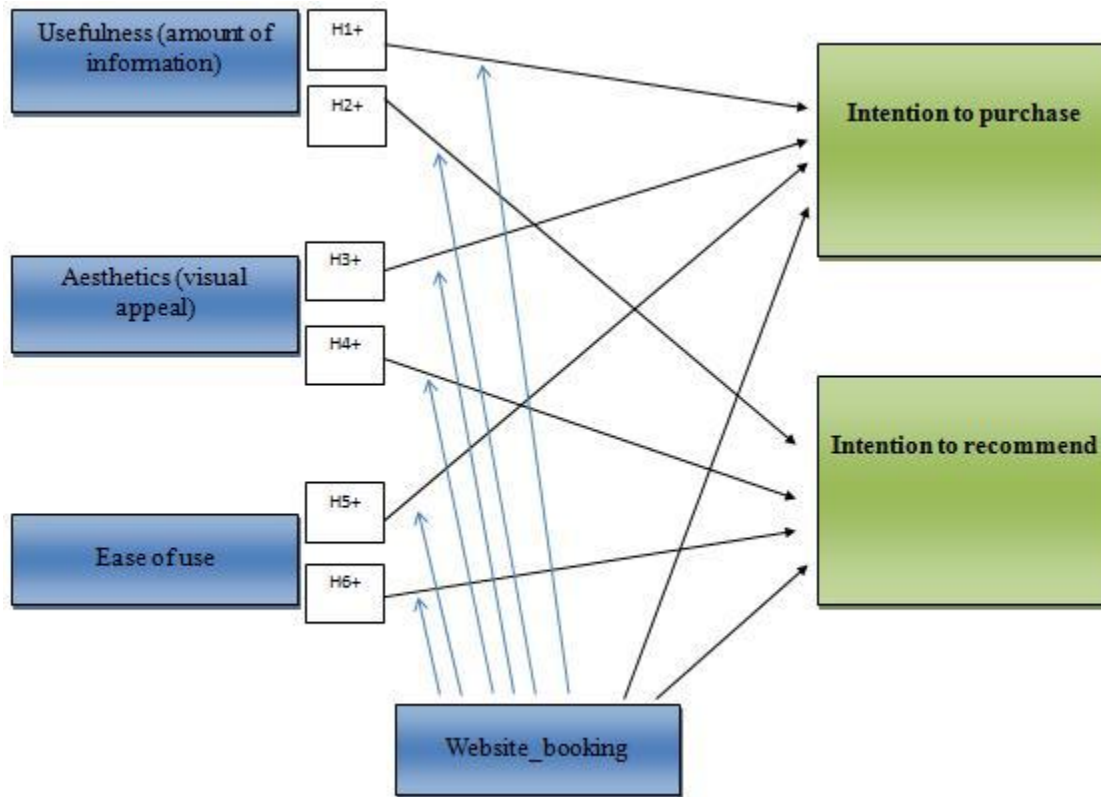
H4: Aesthetic elements have a positive impact on Intention to recommend.

H5: Ease of use has a positive impact on Intention to purchase.

H6: Ease of use has a positive impact on Intention to recommend.

Moreover, the following chart presents the independent and dependent variables and a figure of the conceptual model (Figure 2). The model is based on the hypotheses developed in the literature review section. The used independent variables in our study are the following: Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics (visual appeal of the website) and Ease of use. Furthermore, the dependent variables I use in my study are the following: Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend.





**Figure 2**

### 3.2 Purpose of research

The goal of this study is to collect data about consumer’s attitude towards online booking websites in order to examine the relationship of website characteristics and see how they affect online consumer’s behavior.

Particularly, this study aims to find out the relationship and impact of Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and Ease of use of an online booking website on certain aspects of online consumer behavior, such as Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend the website.

### 3.3 Data collection method

The recruitment of participants in the primary research took place from the 28th of May till the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2015. In the beginning, a pretest was conducted. The first eight (8) questionnaires were considered as pilot questionnaires and the responses were not included in the data analysis

of the research. The purpose of the pretest was to make any necessary changes and meet the requirements of the investigation.

The pilot questionnaires showed that the questionnaire was easy to read, navigate and understand, as well as very interesting as a research topic for the participants.

All questionnaire items were extracted from well-established scales with high validity that were used in previous studies. Particularly, the different sections of the questionnaire were formed based on the academic articles of Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003), Yoo and Donthu's (2001), and Maxham and Netemeyer (2002a, 2002b, 2003).

The questionnaires were completed by the respondents electronically through the use of Qualtrics.com platform. This method was chosen because as Creswell (2003) mentions, questionnaires allow the researcher to collect a large volume of responses which is characterized by the speed and low cost, while it touches high-tech lovers. Moreover, the questionnaire contained a short description for the respondents which clarified the procedure and the format. Additionally, they were informed by the researcher that the questionnaire is anonymous and the information that is going to be provided is confidential. The questionnaire which was distributed to the participants is shown in Appendix A.

The distribution of the questionnaires was made mainly through social networks such as Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn but also emails. The purpose was that social networks are very popular nowadays and the chances to get responses were much higher.

As already said, Qualtrics.com was used to create the online questionnaire since I had the opportunity to include images and distribute the survey by randomly appearing the two websites (Booking.com and Hotelguide.com). A total number of 219 emails and messages were sent asking recipient's participation leading to 112 responses overall.

### **3.4 Sample size**

Tabachnick and Fidell (2001, p. 117) give a formula for calculating sample size requirements, taking into account the number of independent variables that you wish to use:  $N > 50 + 8m$  (where  $m$  = number of independent variables). Therefore, in this case we have 3 independent which means that we need more than 74 responses.

The sample of the study consists of 112 individual frequent and infrequent travelers that use the internet for planning their accommodation.

Based on similar previous studies, the sample size can give reliable information and have a positive impact on external validity.

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Type of analysis</i>
H1: Usefulness (of information) has a positive impact on Intention to purchase.	Multiple Regression
H2: Usefulness (of information) has a positive impact on Intention to recommend.	Multiple Regression
H3: Aesthetic elements have a positive impact on Intention to purchase.	Multiple Regression
H4: Aesthetic elements have a positive impact on Intention to recommend.	Multiple Regression
H5: Ease of use has a positive impact on Intention to purchase.	Multiple Regression
H6: Ease of use has a positive impact on Intention to recommend.	Multiple Regression

**Table 1: Overview of hypotheses and type of analysis**

### 3.5 Construct measurement

As already mentioned, the instrument to measure the variables of this thesis is a questionnaire. In order to acquire valid and accurate results, proven construct measurements from existing literature have been used. More specifically, the construct measurements for demographics, Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics, Ease of use, Intention to recommend and Intention to recommend have been selected as follows:

### 3.5.1 Demographics

The questionnaire begins with section 1 which consists of five general questions to gather demographic data. More specifically the participants are asked to submit their gender (q1), their age (q2), their nationality (q3), their level of education (q4) and how often they travel q(5).

### 3.5.2 Usefulness (of information)

Questions 6-9 measure website's Usefulness and a five point likert scale was chosen. Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003) did not indicate the likert scale design but it appears the typical *agree/disagree* verbal anchors along with a five or seven point scale would be appropriate). Four items are used to measure a person's beliefs as far as the usefulness of information provided at a website. "The scale was called information content perceptions by Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003). They implied that the scale was based on work by Deshpande and Zaltman (1982; 1987). Since the latter did not have any scales similar to the one shown here, the former seem to have developed the scale based on inspiration received from the latter's work." Bruner, G. C., Hensel, P. J., & James, K. E. (2001).

### 3.5.3 Aesthetics

Questions 10-12 measure website's aesthetic design and a five point likert scale was chosen. Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003) did not indicate the likert scale design but it appears the typical *agree/disagree* verbal anchors along with a five or seven point scale would be appropriate). "The scale has three questions that are used to measure the degree to which a person enjoys the way things look at a website. The scale was called *graphic style perceptions* by Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003). They implied that the scale was based on work by Baker, Grewal, and Parasuraman (1994). While there are conceptual similarities with a few of the latter's scale items, it is probably best to consider this new scale to be original to Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003)." Bruner, G. C., Hensel, P. J., & James, K. E. (2001).

### 3.5.4 Ease of use

Questions 13-16 measure website's Ease of use and a five point likert scale was chosen. Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003) did not indicate the likert scale design but it appears the typical *agree/disagree* verbal anchors along with a five or seven point scale would be appropriate). Four questions are used to measure a person's beliefs regarding the ease with which

a person can find things at a website and move around in it. “The scale was called *navigation structure perceptions* by Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003). The scale seems to be original to Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003) though the general construct come from the work of Davis (e.g., 1989).” Bruner, G. C., Hensel, P. J., & James, K. E. (2001).

### 3.5.5 Intention to purchase

Questions 17-22 measure consumer’s Intention to purchase from the website and a likert-type scale with five levels (1 Strongly disagree to 5 Strongly agree) was employed according to Yoo and Donthu's (2001). Four statements are used to capture a person’s attitude in terms of buying a product / service in a website. The scale of online purchase intention was adopted from the study of Limayem, Khalifa, and Frini’s (2000).

### 3.5.6 Intention to recommend

Questions 23-25 measure Intention to recommend and for the purpose of the data analysis I used a five point likert scale (although the authors did not indicate the likert scale design, it appears that the typical *agree/disagree* verbal anchors along with a five or seven point scale would be appropriate) by Maxham and Netemeyer (2002a, 2002b, 2003). The scale consists of three questions that are used to measure a customer’s expressed likelihood of suggesting to others that they buy from a particular business (company or retailer) in the future. In the studies by Maxham and Netemeyer (2002a, 2002b, 2003) the scale was called *word-of-mouth*. “The items are similar to some that have been used in a variety of past measures, especially those related to shopping intention and store loyalty. However, in total, this is a different measure and should probably be viewed as original to Maxham and Netemeyer (2002a, 2002b, 2003)” Bruner, G. C., Hensel, P. J., & James, K. E. (2001).

Questions	Variables	References	Scale
1. Gender		Demographic	closed question
2. Age		Demographic	closed question
3. Nationality		Demographic	open question
4. Education		Demographic	closed question

5. Frequency of traveling			closed question
6. This website provides the information necessary to make informed decisions	Usefulness (independent)	Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003)	5 point likert scale
7. This website provides me with useful information.	Usefulness (independent)	Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003)	5 point likert scale
8. Information on this website is accurate.	Usefulness (independent)	Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003)	5 point likert scale
9. Information on this website is up-to-date.	Usefulness (independent)	Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003)	5 point likert scale
10. I like the look and feel of this website.	Aesthetics/Visual appeal (independent)	Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003)	5 point likert scale
11. This website is an attractive website.	Aesthetics/Visual appeal (independent)	Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003)	5 point likert scale
12. I like the graphics on this website.	Aesthetics/Visual appeal (independent)	Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003)	5 point likert scale
13. It is easy to find what I am looking for on this website.	Ease of use (independent)	Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003)	5 point likert scale
14. This website provides a clear directory of products and services.	Ease of use (independent)	Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003)	5 point likert scale
15. It is easy to move around on this website.	Ease of use (independent)	Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003)	5 point likert scale
16. This website offers a logical layout that is easy to follow.	Ease of use (independent)	Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003)	5 point likert scale

17. I will definitely book accommodation from this website in the near future.	Intention to purchase (dependent)	Yoo and Donthu's (2001)	5 point likert scale
18. I intend to book accommodation through this website in the near future.	Intention to purchase (dependent)	Yoo and Donthu's (2001)	5 point likert scale
19. It is likely that I will book accommodation through this website in the near future.	Intention to purchase (dependent)	Yoo and Donthu's (2001)	5 point likert scale
20. I expect to book accommodation through this website in the near future.	Intention to purchase (dependent)	Yoo and Donthu's (2001)	5 point likert scale
21. The likelihood that I would actively book a tourism product is very high.	Intention to purchase (dependent)	Yoo and Donthu's (2001)	5 point likert scale
22. The probability that I will spend more than 50% of my spectator tourism budget on this website is very high.	Intention to purchase (dependent)	Yoo and Donthu's (2001)	5 point likert scale
23. It is likely to spread positive word of mouth about this website.	Intention to recommend (dependent)	Maxham and Netemeyer (2002a, 2002b, 2003)	5 point likert scale
24. I would recommend this website for accommodation booking to my friends.	Intention to recommend (dependent)	Maxham and Netemeyer (2002a, 2002b, 2003)	5 point likert scale
25. If my friends were looking for accommodation booking, I would tell them to try this website.	Intention to recommend (dependent)	Maxham and Netemeyer (2002a, 2002b, 2003)	5 point likert scale

**Table 2: Questionnaire's references**

Due to that fact that the questionnaire for this research was quite long, for questions 6 to 25, where scales were used, a 5 point scale was chosen instead of the 7 point scale, because the 5-point scale would facilitate the participants in order to select the level that indicated best their answers.

## **4. Data analysis**

This chapter presents the empirical results of the research. Firstly, the data cleaning process and the respondents' profile are described and then the validity and the reliability of each construct is tested.

### **4.1 Data cleaning**

An online questionnaire (can be found in Appendix A) was created to test the stated hypotheses. A total number of 219 emails and messages on social networks such as Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn were sent out asking recipient's participation leading to 154 responses overall. This response rate was around 70%. But from these completed questionnaires there were some missing answers in 42 of them and consequently were not included in the data analysis. As a result the final number of responses for data analysis was 112. The questionnaire was distributed between 28<sup>th</sup> May and 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

### **4.2 Statistical method**

The analysis of the data will be made by with the statistical software for data analysis IBM SPSS Statistics 20. Before doing the data analysis, factor analysis and reliability check will be conducted in order to purify data further and develop constructs out of, before finally using tools like multiple regressions so as to find relationship between various constructs. Then descriptive statistics will be used to illustrate the answers of the respondents on every question while inferential statistics and more specifically Pearson correlation tests, multiple regressions and t-tests were used to identify any relationship between the different variables and answer on the research hypothesis.

### **4.3 Questionnaire design**

The questionnaire which was used to provide the researcher with data regarding factors affecting consumer purchase intention and Intention to recommend travel products through websites



consists of two (2) sections. When participants click on the link for the questionnaire, they are randomly assigned to navigate either to Booking.com and then to Hotelguide.com or firstly to Hotelguide.com and then to Booking.com. The beginning of the questionnaire is used to present the researcher and inform the respondents about the procedure of the questionnaire.

Section one consists of the demographic variables (5 questions: gender, age, nationality, education, and frequency of travel). Section two is repeated for each of the two websites. Half of the respondents (55) were shown Booking.com first and then Hotelguide.com while the other half (57) respondents firstly navigated to Hotelguide.com and then to Booking.com. Specifically, section two consists of 20 questions for each website which are measured with a 5-point likert scale where 1= “Strongly disagree”, and 5= “Strongly agree”. The respondents were urged to navigate on the two websites and try to compose their preferred holiday. After this exposure participants were asked to answer questions regarding the Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and Ease of use of the two websites as well as the Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend them.

In the last page, participants are asked to submit their email if they would like to win a 25 euro gift card as it was initially stated in the survey in order to give them an incentive to answer the questionnaire.

## 4.4 Descriptive Statistics

### *Section 1*

At the beginning of the questionnaire demographics such as gender, age, nationality and educational level were asked. Among the 112 respondents, 52 were male (46.4%) and 60 were female (53.6%). Regarding the age of the participants at the primary research, 59 respondents (52.7%) were from 26 to 35 years old, following by 37 participants between 18-25 years old (33%), 6 were from 36-45 years old (5.4%), 6 were over 46 years old (5.4%) and finally 4 people were under 18 years old (3.6%). Furthermore, regarding the nationality of the participants, 51 respondents which was the majority of the population (45.4%) were from Greece, following by 18 from The Netherlands (16.1%), and 6 from Bulgaria (5.4%). In addition, as far as the highest educational level of the participants is concerned, the population of 69 (61.6%) holds a masters degree, following by 30 with a bachelor degree (26.8%), 12 have finished high school (10.7%)

and 1 that has a PhD degree (.9%). Finally, there was a question regarding the frequency of travelling of the respondents in order to see how associated they are with travelling. The majority of respondents (45) which is 40.2% travel from 4 to 5 times per year, while 35 (31.3%) travel from 2 to 3 times, 16 of them (14.3%) once per month on average and 14 (12.5%) once a year on average. There was also one participant (.9%) who answered “Once a week or once every 2 weeks” and another one (.9%) who answered “Less than Once a year”. Therefore, the sample was somewhat biased towards people from Greece with a relatively higher education in the age group of 26-35. An overview of the demographics information can be found in Table 3 below.

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<i>Male</i>	52	46.4%
	<i>Female</i>	60	53.6%
<b>Age</b>	<i>Under 18</i>	4	3.6%
	<i>18-25</i>	37	33.0%
	<i>26-35</i>	59	52.7%
	<i>36-45</i>	6	5.4%
	<i>Over 46</i>	6	5.4%
<b>Nationality</b>	<i>Australian</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Azerbaijani</i>	2	1.8%
	<i>British</i>	3	2.7%
	<i>Bulgarian</i>	6	5.4%
	<i>Chinese</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Czech</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Danish</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Dutch</i>	18	16.1%
	<i>Dutch/Bulgarian</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Estonian</i>	2	1.8%
	<i>French</i>	4	3.6%
	<i>German</i>	2	1.8%
	<i>Greek</i>	51	45.5%
	<i>Greek-American</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Hungarian</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Iceland</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Ireland</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Israeli</i>	1	.9%
<i>Italian</i>	2	1.8%	

	<i>Lithuania</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Russian</i>	1	.9%
	<i>S. Korea</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Serbian</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Slovak</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Slovenian</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Spanish</i>	4	3.6%
	<i>Swedish</i>	1	.9%
	<i>Tasmanian</i>	1	.9%
<b>Level of education</b>	<i>High school</i>	12	10.7%
	<i>Bachelor degree</i>	30	26.8%
	<i>Master degree</i>	69	61.6%
	<i>Doctoral degree</i>	1	.9%
<b>How often do you travel?</b>	Once a week or once every 2 weeks	1	.9%
	Once per month on average	16	14.3%
	4-5 times a year	45	40.2%
	2-3 times a year	35	31.3%
	Once a year on average	14	12.5%
	Less than Once a year	1	.9%

**Table 3: Demographics**

## *Section 2*

Section two consists of 20 questions for each website which are measured with a 5-point likert scale where 1= “Strongly disagree”, and 5= “Strongly agree”. After this exposure participants were asked to answer questions regarding the Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and Ease of use of the two websites as well as the Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend them. Below, I will represent the descriptives of the most important questions and an overview of all the descriptives of the questions can be found in Appendix B.

- I will definitely book accommodation from this website in the near future.

Figure 3 presents the answers of the respondents on the statement “I will definitely book accommodation from this website in the near future” for both online booking websites that have been assessed in the primary research. Specifically, 46.4% for Booking.com answer that they agree with the statement while 34.8% for Hotelguide.com that they disagree.

- I intend to book accommodation through this website in the near future.

Figure 4 presents the answers of the respondents on the statement “I intend to book accommodation through this website in the near future” for both online booking websites that have been assessed in the primary research. Specifically, 56.2% for Booking.com answer that they agree with the statement while 33.9% for Hotelguide.com that they disagree.

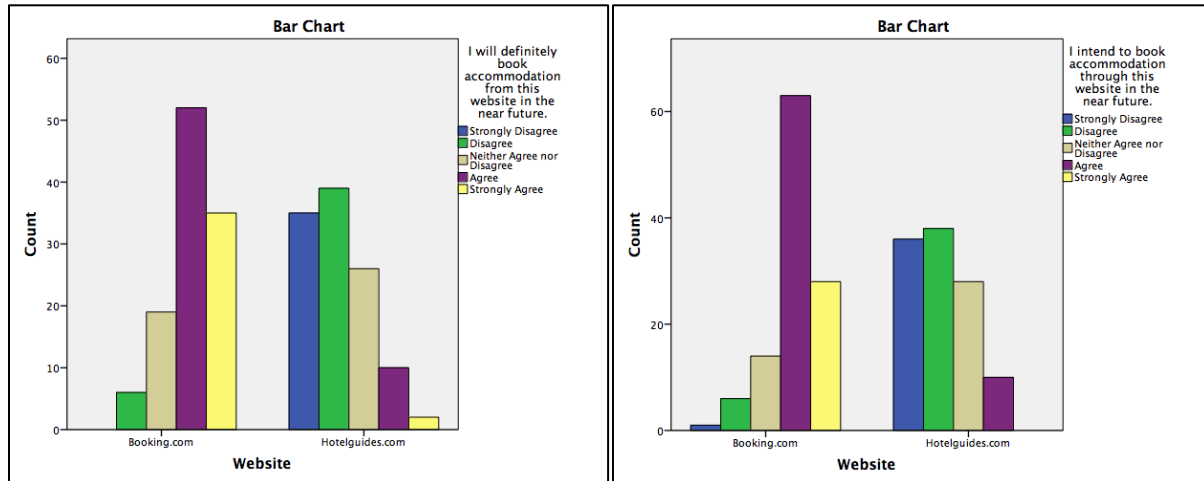


Figure 3

Figure 4

- It is likely that I will book accommodation through this website in the near future.

Figure 5 present the answers of the respondents on the statement “It is likely that I will book accommodation through this website in the near future” for both online booking websites that have been assessed in the primary research. Specifically, 61.6% for Booking.com answer that they agree with the statement while 34.8% for Hotelguide.com that they disagree.

- I expect to book accommodation through this website in the near future.

Figure 6 present the answers of the respondents on the statement “I expect to book accommodation through this website in the near future” for both online booking websites that have been assessed in the primary research. Specifically, 54.5% for Booking.com answer that they agree with the statement while 37.5% for Hotelguide.com that they disagree.

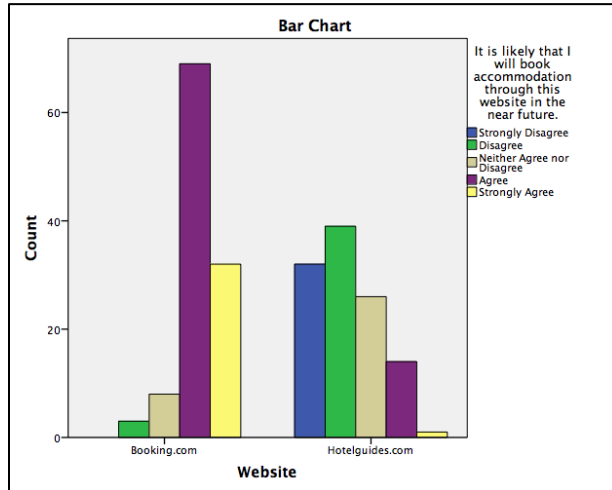


Figure 5

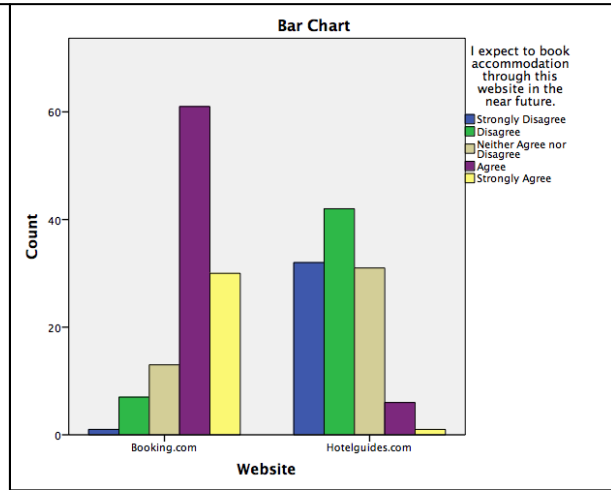


Figure 6

- The likelihood that I would actively book accommodation is very high.

Figure 7 present the answers of the respondents on the statement “The likelihood that I would actively book accommodation is very high” for both online booking websites that have been assessed in the primary research. Specifically, 48.2% for Booking.com answer that they agree with the statement while 35.7% for Hotelguide.com that they disagree.

- The probability that I will spend more than 50% of my spectator tourism budget on this website is very high

Figure 8 present the answers of the respondents on the statement “The probability that I will spend more than 50% of my spectator tourism budget on this website is very high” for both online booking websites that have been assessed in the primary research. Specifically, 38.4% for Booking.com answer that they agree with the statement while 48.2% for Hotelguide.com that they strongly disagree.

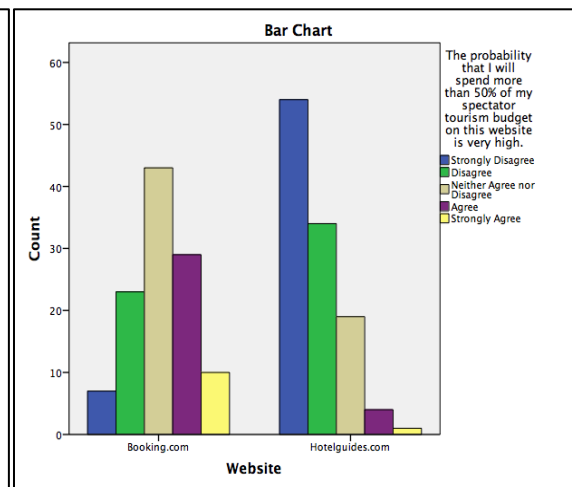
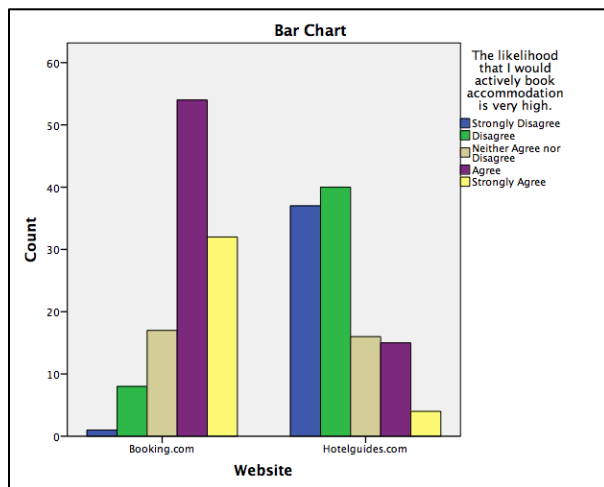


Figure 7

- It is likely to spread positive word of mouth about this website

Figure 9 present the answers of the respondents on the statement “It is likely to spread positive word of mouth about this website” for both online booking websites that have been assessed in the primary research. Specifically, 42.9% for Booking.com answer that they agree with the statement while 31.2% for Hotelguide.com that they disagree.

- I would recommend this website for booking a hotel to my friends.

Figure 10 present the answers of the respondents on the statement “I would recommend this website for booking a hotel to my friends” for both online booking websites that have been assessed in the primary research. Specifically, 41.1% for Booking.com answer that they agree with the statement while 33.9% for Hotelguide.com that they disagree.

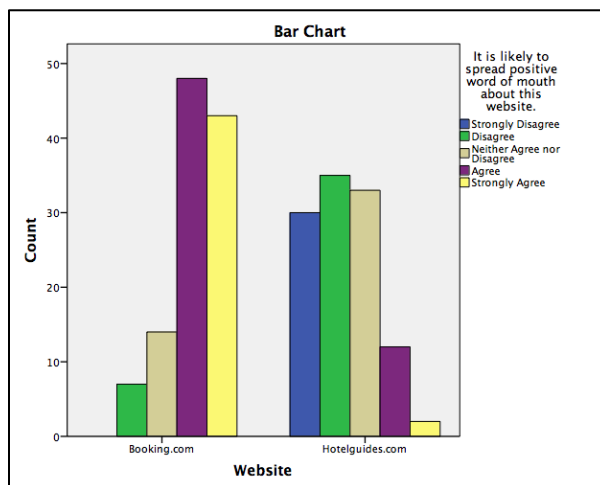


Figure 9

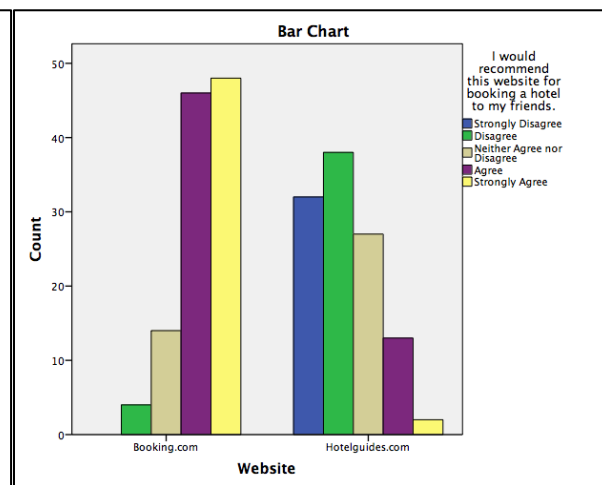


Figure 10

#### 4.5 Validity and reliability of constructs

In order to do the data analysis, firstly factor analysis is going to be used with the statistical program IBM SPSS Statistics 20. Factor analysis is a procedure which serves to distinguish groups or clusters of variables with the goal to decrease their number. In this way variables are grouped into factors, since the dimensions that explain the correlations between a set of variables are named (Malhotra and Bricks, 2007).

For the purpose of this thesis, two factor analyses are going to be run; One for the independent variables of the Booking.com website and another one for the independent variables of the Hotelguide.com website. The decision to do separate factor analyses was chosen since there were

problems in the results of one factor analysis including both websites (Booking.com probably was seen as so much attractive. Therefore one factor captures almost exclusively the difference between the websites and it should be better in this case to run the factor analysis for each website separately, then this effect should disappear).

Using this method, the independent variables will be grouped into factors and, then, their capacity to measure every component and their relationships will be considered. The most important objective is to guarantee that the items measure a discrete underlying variable. What is more, the internal consistency of every factor will be checked by using Cronbach's  $\alpha$ . It should be mentioned here that " $\alpha$ " is satisfactory when  $\alpha > .7$  (Kline, 1999).

Overall, factor analysis and reliability check are means of purifying data further in order to develop constructs out of, before finally using tools like multiple regression so as to find relationship between various constructs.

#### **4.5.1 Factor analysis and reliability check (Booking.com)**

In the first factor analysis, 3 factors are needed and should be extracted: Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and Ease of use. All the 11 items measuring these independent variables were included in the factor analysis so as to get more precise and consistent results. A principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted on these items with a fixed number of four (4) factors to extract (this option was chosen because at the value of three (3) the results were problematic). Finally, oblique rotation (direct oblimin) was also used. KMO value was  $.923 > .5$  which is great and verifies the sample adequacy for the analysis Hutcheson & Sofronou (1999). Additionally, Bartlett's test of Sphericity ( $p < .05$ ,  $\chi^2 = 2521.390$ ) shows that correlations between items were sufficiently large for PCA. Thus, according to the output of the factor analysis, the items are loading at the same components are; items 3 and 4 of Usefulness are loading on component 3 and represent the Usefulness (of information) of the website, items 1,2 and 3 of Aesthetics are loading on component 4 and represent the Aesthetics of the website and items 3 and 4 of Ease of use are loading on component 2 and represent the Ease of use of the website. In contrast, items 1 and 2 of Usefulness and item 2 of Ease of use are deleted since they are loading on the same component (1). Finally item 1 of Ease of use is deleted because it loading on components 1 and 2.

Moreover, the Cronbach's alpha tests showed that the internal reliability of these components was great. To be more specific, the alpha coefficient for Usefulness is .844, for Aesthetics is .969 and for Ease of use is .852 (Appendix C). Along these lines, all measurements can be used for further data analysis. An overview of the factor analysis and the reliability tests can be found in Table 4.

Factor	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Usefulness	Usef_3_booking	.791	.844
	Usef_4_booking	.962	
Aesthetics	Aes_1_booking	-.893	.969
	Aes_2_booking	-.944	
	Aes_3_booking	-.969	
Ease of use	Eou_3_booking	.841	.852
	Eou_4_booking	.785	

**Table 4: Results of factor analysis and reliability tests for independent variables**

#### 4.5.2 Factor analysis and reliability check (Hotelguide.com)

In the second factor analysis, again 3 factors are needed and should be extracted: Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and Ease of use. All the 11 items measuring these independent variables were included in the factor analysis so as to get more precise and consistent results. A principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted on these items with a fixed number of four (4) factors to extract (this option was chosen because at the value of three (3) the results were problematic). Finally, oblique rotation (direct oblimin) was also used. KMO value was  $.844 > .5$  which is great and verifies the sample adequacy for the analysis Hutcheson & Sofronou (1999). Additionally, Bartlett's test of Sphericity ( $p < .05$ ,  $\chi^2 = 942.473$ ) shows that correlations between items were sufficiently large for PCA. Thus, according to the output of the factor analysis, the items are loading at the same components are; items 3 and 4 of Usefulness are loading on component 3 and represent the Usefulness (of information) of the website, items 1,2 and 3 of Aesthetics are loading on component 1 and represent the Aesthetics of the website and items 3 and 4 of Ease of use are loading on component 2 and represent the Ease of use of the website. In contrast, items 1 and 2 of Usefulness and item 2 of Ease of use are deleted since they are loading on the same



component (4). Finally item 1 of Ease of use is deleted because it loading on components 2 and 4.

Moreover, the Cronbach's alpha tests showed that the internal reliability of these components was great. To be more specific, the alpha coefficient for Usefulness is .785, for Aesthetics is .946 and for Ease of use is .797 (Appendix C). Along these lines, all measurements can be used for further data analysis. An overview of the factor analysis and the reliability tests can be found in Table 5.

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>
Usefulness	Usef_3_hotelgd	.792	.785
	Usef_4_hotelgd	.928	
Aesthetics	Aes_1_hotelgd	.846	.946
	Aes_2_hotelgd	.942	
	Aes_3_hotelgd	.984	
Ease of use	Eou_3_hotelgd	.899	.797
	Eou_4_hotelgd	.799	

**Table 5: Results of factor analysis and reliability tests for independent variables**

❖ Usefulness

Construct reliabilities of .86 (Study 1) and .83 (Study 2) were reported for the Usefulness scale according to Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003) which means that the scale has good internal consistency. In the current research the Cronbach alpha coefficient was reported .844 for Booking.com website and .785 for Hotelguide.com website which also means high internal consistency and reliability.

❖ Aesthetics

Construct reliabilities of .89 (Study 1) and .87 (Study 2) were reported for the scale according to Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003) which means that the scale has good internal consistency. In the current research the Cronbach alpha coefficient was reported .969 for Booking.com website and .946 for Hotelguide.com website which also means high internal consistency and reliability.

#### ❖ Ease of use

Construct reliabilities of .91 (Study 1) and .84 (Study 2) were reported for the scale by Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewal (2003) which means that the scale has good internal consistency. In the current research the Cronbach alpha coefficient was reported .852 for Booking.com website and .797 for Hotelguide.com website which also means high internal consistency and reliability.

### 4.5.3 Intention to purchase

The validity of this scale was confirmed by the fact that all scales and constructs are an outcome of the theoretical analysis and they have been used by previous studies in the same or similar topics Limayem, Khalifa, and Frini's (2000).

Construct reliabilities of .96 was reported for the scale by Limayem, Khalifa, and Frini's (2000) which means that the scale has good internal consistency. In the current research the Cronbach alpha coefficient was reported .963 for Booking.com website and .948 for Hotelguide.com website which also means high internal consistency and reliability (Appendix C).

### 4.5.4 Intention to recommend

For both of their studies, Maxham and Netemeyer (2002a) tested a measurement model including the items in this scale as well as those intended to measure six other constructs. The model fit very well. In addition, the scale met a stringent test of discriminant validity. Likewise, Maxham and Netemeyer (2003) entered the items in this scale along with 25 others, representing eight constructs in total, into a confirmatory factor analysis. Several tests of convergent and discriminant validity were apparently conducted and provided support for the each scale's validity.

Alphas of .92 and .90 were reported for the version of the scale used by Maxham and Netemeyer (2002a) with bank customers (Study 1) and new home buyers (Study 2), respectively. An alpha of .93 was found for the version used with customers of an electronics dealer in the study by Maxham and Netemeyer (2003). In the current research the Cronbach alpha coefficient was reported .972 for Booking.com website and .944 for Hotelguide.com website which also means high internal consistency and reliability (Appendix C).

In conclusion, it can be stated that the questionnaire and all the constructs show high reliability since the values of the constructs are greater .70.

An overview of the factor analysis and the Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  can be found in Appendix C.

#### 4.6 Inferential statistics

Pearson correlation test was chosen because all variables are measured in interval scale, as well as, the variables follow normal distribution.

##### ❖ *Usefulness (of information) on the website / Intention to purchase*

The following Pearson Correlation test was carried out to examine the relationship between Usefulness (of information) on the website and Intention to purchase.

The correlation coefficient is  $.693 < .7$ , which can be considered as medium (close to high though) while the associated sig. is  $.000$  which is lower than  $(.05)$ . Given that we conclude that there is a moderate positive correlation between Usefulness of the website and Intention to purchase.

		Usefulness	Int_purchase
Usefulness	Pearson Correlation	1	.693
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	112	112
Int_purchase	Pearson Correlation	.693	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	112	112

**Table 6: Correlations (Usefulness – Intention to purchase)**

##### ❖ *Usefulness (of information) on the website / Intention to recommend*

The following Pearson Correlation test was carried out to examine the relationship between Usefulness (of information) on the website and Intention to recommend.

The correlation coefficient is  $.704 > .7$ , which can be considered as high while the associated sig. is  $.000$  which is lower than  $(.05)$ . Given that we conclude that there is a strong positive correlation between Usefulness of the website and Intention to recommend.

		Usefulness	Int_recommend
<b>Usefulness</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.704
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	112	112
<b>Int_recommend</b>	Pearson Correlation	.704	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	112	112

**Table 7: Correlations (Usefulness – Intention to recommend)**

❖ *Aesthetics of the website / Intention to purchase*

The following Pearson Correlation test was carried out to examine the relationship between positive aesthetic elements of the website and Intention to purchase.

The correlation coefficient is  $.879 > .7$ , which can be considered as high while the associated sig. is  $.000$  which is lower than  $(.05)$ . Given that we conclude that there is a strong positive correlation between Aesthetics of the website and Intention to purchase.

		Aesthetics	Int_purchase
<b>Aesthetics</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.879
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	112	112
<b>Int_purchase</b>	Pearson Correlation	.879	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	112	112

**Table 8: Correlations (Aesthetics – Intention to purchase)**

❖ *Aesthetics of the website / Intention to recommend*

The following Pearson Correlation test was carried out to examine the relationship between positive aesthetic elements of the website and Intention to recommend.

The correlation coefficient is  $.892 > .7$ , which can be considered as high while the associated sig. is  $.000$  which is lower than  $(.05)$ . Given that we conclude that there is a strong positive correlation between Aesthetics of the website and Intention to recommend.

		<b>Aesthetics</b>	<b>Int_recommend</b>
<b>Aesthetics</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.892
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	112	112
<b>Int_recommend</b>	Pearson Correlation	.892	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	112	112

**Table 9: Correlations (Aesthetics – Intention to recommend)**

❖ *Ease of use of the website / Intention to purchase*

The following Pearson Correlation test was carried out to examine the relationship between Ease of use of the website and Intention to purchase.

The correlation coefficient is  $.593 < .7$ , which can be considered as medium while the associated sig. is  $.000$  which is lower than  $(.05)$ . Given that we conclude that there is a moderate positive correlation between Ease of use of the website and Intention to purchase.

		Ease_of_use	Int_purchase
<b>Ease_of_use</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.593
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	112	112
<b>Int_purchase</b>	Pearson Correlation	.593	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	112	112

**Table 10: Correlations (Ease of use – Intention to purchase)**

❖ *Ease of use of the website / Intention to recommend*

The following Pearson Correlation test was carried out to examine the relationship between Ease of use of the website and Intention to recommend.

The correlation coefficient is  $.624 < .7$ , which can be considered as medium while the associated sig. is  $.000$  which is lower than  $(.05)$ . Given that we conclude that there is a moderate positive correlation between Ease of use of the website and Intention to recommend.

		Ease_of_use	Int_recommend
<b>Ease_of_use</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.624
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	112	112
<b>Int_recommend</b>	Pearson Correlation	.624	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	112	112

**Table 11: Correlations (Ease of use – Intention to recommend)**

❖ *Regression analysis (Intention to purchase / Usefulness, Aesthetics, Ease of use, Website\_Booking)*

A multiple linear regression with four independent variables was carried out in order to determine the strength of the association between “Intention to purchase” and Usefulness, Aesthetics, Ease of use and other website-specific characteristics of the two websites, to identify the relative importance of each of the factors in predicting the Intention to purchase.

Table 12 below indicates that 80.7% of the variation in the dependent variable ‘Intention to purchase’ may be explained by the variation in the independent variables included in the model which is regarded more than satisfactory and does not give rise to any overfitting concerns (see ‘R Square’, also referred to as the ‘coefficient of determination’). It is however better to look at the ‘Adjusted R Square’ which increases only if the independent variables improve the model more than would be expected by chance. After all, the ‘R Square’ would continue to increase purely through the addition of independent variables to the regression model. In this case, the ‘Adjusted R Square’ amounts to 80.3% which is almost identical to ‘R Square’ value and, thus, confirms the high goodness-of-fit of our model.

<b>Model 1</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>	<b>Durbin-Watson</b>
	.898	.807	.803	.52753	1.838

Predictors: (Constant), Usefulness, Aesthetics , Ease\_of\_use, Website\_Booking

Dependent Variable: Int\_purchase

**Table 12: Model Summary**

It is recommended to perform the interpretation of the ‘Adjusted R Square’ after the procedure for the p-value (Sig.) in the ‘ANOVA’ (Table 13) below. This p-value provides an insight into the need to reject or accept the following null hypothesis:  $H_0: \text{‘Adjusted R Square’} = 0$ , or in other words  $b_0=b_1=b_2=b_3=b_4=0$ . If the p-value is greater than .05, then the null hypothesis is valid resulting in the model not being meaningful. A further interpretation of the ‘Adjusted R Square’ (Table 12) and the ‘Coefficients’ (Table 14) is in that case unnecessary.

Table 13 (ANOVA) below illustrates that p-value is  $.000 < .05$ . Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which means that the model is meaningful. In other words, a good fit is present between the model and the data, and further interpretation is allowed. More specifically, out of the total sum of squares of variance 315.126, and in accordance with the estimated value of ‘R Square’ (80.7%), the 254.181 can be explained by the independent variables.

<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Regression	254.181	4	63.545	228.341	.000
Residual	60.946	219	.278		
Total	315.126	223			

Dependent Variable: Int\_purchase

Predictors: (Constant), Usefulness, Aesthetics , Ease\_of\_use, Website\_Booking

**Table 13: ANOVA**

We proceed to examine each of the regression coefficients.

<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Unstandardized</b>		<b>Standardized</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>Coefficients</b>		<b>Coefficients</b>		
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
(Constant)	.336	.196		1.714	.088
Usefulness	.216	.058	.157	3.713	.000
Aesthetics	.543	.045	.642	12.068	.000
Ease_of_use	-.014	.053	-.011	-.261	.794
Website_Booking	.440	.107	.186	4.112	.000

Dependent Variable: Int\_purchase

**Table 14: Coefficients**

The p-value of Usefulness, Aesthetics and Website\_Booking (all .000) are less than the critical alpha value of .05. Thus, it can be concluded that the regression coefficients for these factors (or independent variables) are not zero and can explain the variation in the dependent variable.



Therefore, Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and website are the determining factors for the overall consumer’s ‘Intention to purchase’. However, the Ease of use variable is highly statistically not significant (.794) at the 5% significance level.

The size of B’s, which is an indication of the impact on the consumer’s overall Intention to purchase, shows that the Aesthetics variable has the greatest impact (.543) and the Website\_Booking variable follows (.440). The Usefulness (of information) has the lowest impact (.216), albeit significant impact on the Intention to purchase.

Moreover, from the histogram below it can be stated that there is normality of the values. This is confirmed by the P-P plot whose shape indicates a normal distribution.

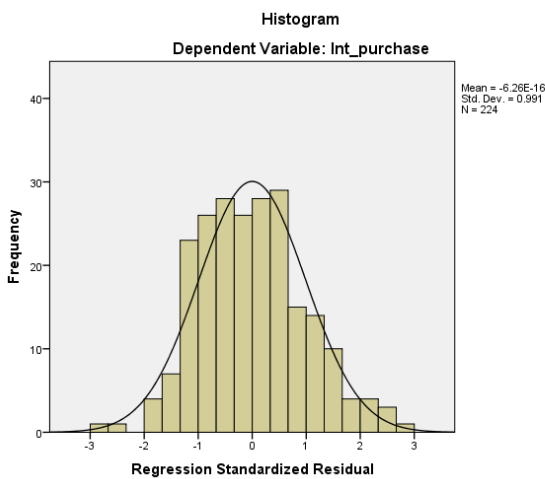


Figure 11

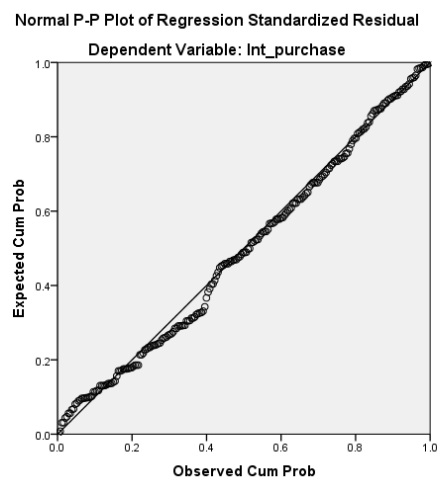


Figure 12

❖ *Regression analysis (Intention to recommend / Usefulness, Aesthetics, Ease of use, Website\_Booking)*

A multiple linear regression with four independent variables was carried out in order to determine the strength of the association between “Intention to recommend” and Usefulness, Aesthetics, Ease of use and other website-specific characteristics of the two websites, to identify the relative importance of each of the factors in predicting the Intention to purchase.

Table 15 below indicates that 82.3% of the variation in the dependent variable ‘Intention to recommend’ may be explained by the variation in the independent variables included in the model which is regarded more than satisfactory and does not give rise to any overfitting concerns (see ‘R Square’, also referred to as the ‘coefficient of determination’). It is however better to look at the ‘Adjusted R Square’ which increases only if the independent variables improve the model more than would be expected by chance. After all, the ‘R Square’ would continue to increase purely through the addition of independent variables to the regression model. In this case, the ‘Adjusted R Square’ amounts to 81.9% which is almost identical to ‘R Square’ value and, thus, confirms the high goodness-of-fit of our model.

<b>Model 2</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>	<b>Durbin-Watson</b>
	.907	.823	.819	.56759	1.637

Predictors: (Constant), Usefulness, Aesthetics , Ease\_of\_use, Website\_Booking  
 Dependent Variable: Int\_recommend

**Table 15: Model Summary**

It is recommended to perform the interpretation of the ‘Adjusted R Square’ after the procedure for the p-value (Sig.) in the ‘ANOVA’ (Table 16) below. This p-value provides an insight into the need to reject or accept the following null hypothesis:  $H_0: \text{‘Adjusted R Square’} = 0$ , or in other words  $b_0=b_1=b_2=b_3=b_4=0$ . If the p-value is greater than .05, then the null hypothesis is valid resulting in the model not being meaningful. A further interpretation of the ‘Adjusted R Square’ (Table 15) and the ‘Coefficients’ (Table 17) is in that case unnecessary.

Table 16 (ANOVA) below illustrates that p-value is  $.000 < .05$ . Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which means that the model is meaningful. In other words, a good fit is present between the model and the data, and further interpretation is allowed. More specifically, out of the total sum of squares of variance 397.617, and in accordance with the estimated value of ‘R Square’ (82.3%), the 327.065 can be explained by the independent variables.

<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Regression	327.065	4	81.766	253.810	.000
Residual	70.552	219	.322		
Total	397.617	223			

Dependent Variable: Int\_recommend

Predictors: (Constant), Usefulness, Aesthetics , Ease\_of\_use, Website\_Booking

**Table 16: ANOVA**

We proceed to examine each of the regression coefficients.

<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Unstandardized</b>		<b>Standardized</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>Coefficients</b>		<b>Coefficients</b>		
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
(Constant)	.044	.211		.208	.836
Usefulness	.248	.063	.161	3.974	.000
Aesthetics	.636	.048	.669	13.120	.000
Ease_of_use	.043	.057	.029	.748	.455
Website_Booking	.342	.115	.129	2.971	.003

Dependent Variable: Int\_recommend

**Table 17: Coefficients**

The p-value of Usefulness, Aesthetics and Website\_Booking (.000, .000 and .003, respectively) are less than the critical alpha value of .05. Thus, it can be concluded that the regression coefficients for these factors (or independent variables) are not zero and can explain the variation in the dependent variable. Therefore, Usefulness (of information), Aesthetics and website are the determining factors for the overall consumer's 'Intention to recommend'. However, the Ease of use variable is highly statistically not significant (.455) at the 5% significance level.

The size of B's, which is an indication of the impact on the consumer's overall Intention to recommend, shows that the Aesthetics variable has the greatest impact (.636) and

Website\_Booking variable follows (.342). The Usefulness has the lowest impact (.248) albeit significant impact on the Intention to recommend.

Moreover, from the histogram below it can be stated that there is normality of the values. This is confirmed by the P-P plot whose shape indicates a normal distribution.

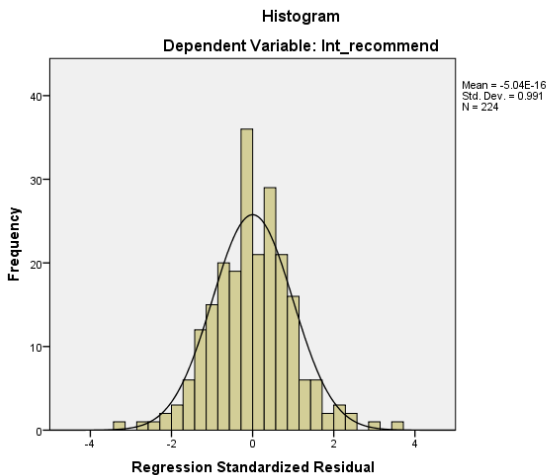


Figure 13

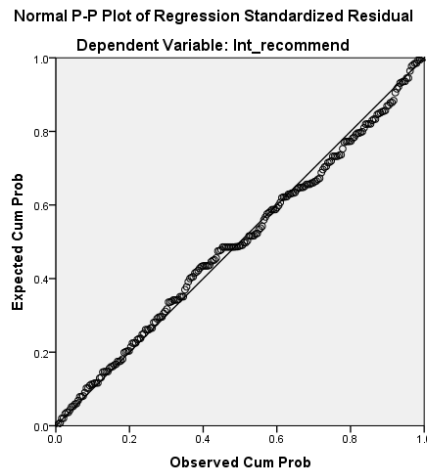


Figure 14

❖ *Regression analysis with interaction effects (Intention to purchase / Usefulness, Aesthetics, Ease of use, Website\_Booking, Usefulness\*Website\_Booking, Aesthetics\*Website\_Booking, Ease of use\*Website\_Booking)*

A multiple linear regression with the independent variables plus the interaction effects with Website\_Booking was carried out in order to determine the strength of the association between “Intention to purchase” and Usefulness, Aesthetics, Ease of use, Website\_Booking and the interaction effects, to identify the relative importance of each of the factors in predicting the Intention to purchase.

Table 18 below indicates that 81.5% of the variation in the dependent variable ‘Intention to purchase’ may be explained by the variation in the independent variables included in the model which is regarded more than satisfactory and does not give rise to any overfitting concerns (see ‘R Square’, also referred to as the ‘coefficient of determination’). It is however better to look at the ‘Adjusted R Square’ which increases only if the independent variables improve the model more than would be expected by chance. After all, the ‘R Square’ would continue to increase

purely through the addition of independent variables to the regression model. In this case, the ‘Adjusted R Square’ amounts to 80.9% which is almost identical to ‘R Square’ value and, thus, confirms the high goodness-of-fit of our model.

<b>Model 3</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>	<b>Durbin-Watson</b>
	.903	.815	.809	.51963	1.834

Predictors: (Constant), Usefulness, Aesthetics , Ease\_of\_use, Website\_Booking, Website\_Usef, Website\_Aes, Website\_Eou

Dependent Variable: Int\_purchase

**Table 18: Model Summary**

It is recommended to perform the interpretation of the ‘Adjusted R Square’ after the procedure for the p-value (Sig.) in the ‘ANOVA’ (Table 19) below. This p-value provides an insight into the need to reject or accept the following null hypothesis:  $H_0: \text{‘Adjusted R Square’} = 0$ , or in other words  $b_0=b_1=b_2=b_3=b_4=0$ . If the p-value is greater than .05, then the null hypothesis is valid resulting in the model not being meaningful. A further interpretation of the ‘Adjusted R Square’ (Table 18) and the ‘Coefficients’ (Table 20) is in that case unnecessary.

Table 19 (ANOVA) below illustrates that p-value is  $.000 < .05$ . Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which means that the model is meaningful. In other words, a good fit is present between the model and the data, and further interpretation is allowed. More specifically, out of the total sum of squares of variance 315.126, and in accordance with the estimated value of ‘R Square’ (81.5%), the 256.803 can be explained by the independent variables.

<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Regression	256.803	7	36.686	228.341	.000
Residual	58.324	216	.270		
Total	315.126	223			

Dependent Variable: Int\_purchase

Predictors: (Constant), Usefulness, Aesthetics , Ease\_of\_use, Website\_Booking, Website\_Usef, Website\_Aes, Website\_Eou

**Table 19: ANOVA**

We proceed to examine each of the regression coefficients.

<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>		<b>Standardized Coefficients</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
(Constant)	.367	.237		1.548	.123
Usefulness	.138	.074	.100	1.868	.063
Aesthetics	.628	.053	.742	11.950	.000
Ease_of_use	.002	.064	.002	.035	.972
Website_Booking	.422	.465	.178	.907	.366
Website_Usef	.211	.118	.389	1.793	.074
Website_Aes	-.286	.100	-.514	-2.853	.005
Website_Eou	.043	.114	.078	.373	.709

Dependent Variable: Int\_purchase

**Table 20: Coefficients**

In model 3 where the interaction effects have been included, the p-values of both Usefulness and the corresponding interaction effect with website (Website\_Usef) are slightly more than the critical alpha value of .05 (.063 and .074, respectively), which means that these variables are statistically insignificant at the 5% confidence level but definitely not negligible since they are

both statistically significant at the 10% level. The p-values of both Aesthetics and Website\_Aes are smaller than alpha value of .05 (.000 and .005, respectively) and they are highly statistically significant. However, the p-values of both the Ease of use and its corresponding interaction effect with website (Website\_Eou) are much larger than the alpha value of 5% (.972 and .709, respectively), which was expected since the former variable was not significant in model 1. Finally, Website\_Booking (contrary to model 1) is not significant in model 3 at any conventional level of significance (p-value=.366). Overall, we conclude that Usefulness, Aesthetics, Website\_Usef and Website\_Aes are the determining factors for the overall consumer's 'Intention to purchase'.

The size of B's, which is an indication of the impact on the consumer's overall 'Intention to purchase', indicates that the Usefulness, Aesthetics and Website\_Usef variables have a positive impact (.138), (.628) and (.211) respectively, whereas the Website\_Aes variable has a negative impact (-.286); the higher the Aesthetics when the website is the Booking.com the smaller the effect on the Intention to purchase.

Moreover, from the histogram below it can be stated that there is normality of the values. This is confirmed by the P-P plot whose shape indicates a normal distribution.

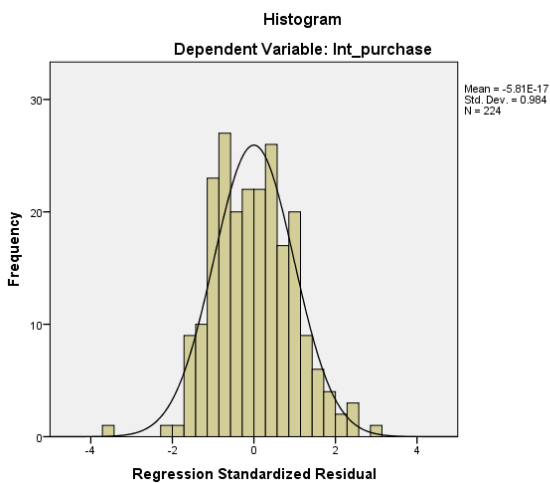


Figure 15

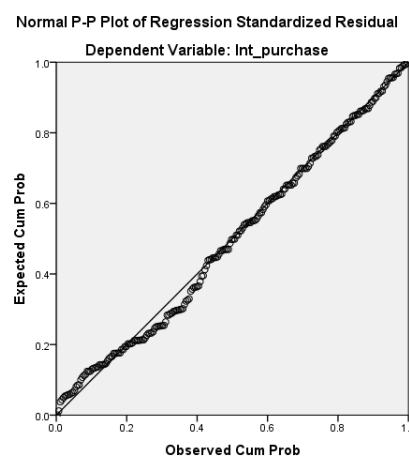


Figure 16

❖ *Regression analysis with interaction effects (Intention to recommend / Usefulness, Aesthetics, Ease of use, Website\_Booking, Usefulness\*Website\_Booking, Aesthetics\*Website\_Booking, Ease of use\*Website\_Booking)*

A multiple linear regression with the independent variables plus the interaction effects with Website\_Booking was carried out in order to determine the strength of the association between “Intention to recommend” and Usefulness, Aesthetics, Ease of use, Website\_Booking and the interaction effects, to identify the relative importance of each of the factors in predicting the Intention to recommend.

Table 21 below indicates that 82.8% of the variation in the dependent variable ‘Intention to recommend may be explained by the variation in the independent variables included in the model which is regarded more than satisfactory and does not give rise to any overfitting concerns (see ‘R Square’, also referred to as the ‘coefficient of determination’). It is however better to look at the ‘Adjusted R Square’ which increases only if the independent variables improve the model more than would be expected by chance. After all, the ‘R Square’ would continue to increase purely through the addition of independent variables to the regression model. In this case, the ‘Adjusted R Square’ amounts to 82.3% which is almost identical to ‘R Square’ value and, thus, confirms the high goodness-of-fit of our model.

<b>Model 4</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>	<b>Durbin-Watson</b>
	.910	.828	.823	.56235	1.578

Predictors: (Constant), Usefulness, Aesthetics , Ease\_of\_use, Website\_Booking, Website\_Usef, Website\_Aes, Website\_Eou

Dependent Variable: Int\_recommend

**Table 21: Model Summary**

It is recommended to perform the interpretation of the ‘Adjusted R Square’ after the procedure for the p-value (Sig.) in the ‘ANOVA’ (Table 22) below. This p-value provides an insight into the need to reject or accept the following null hypothesis:  $H_0: \text{‘Adjusted R Square’} = 0$ , or in other words  $b_0=b_1=b_2=b_3=b_4=0$ . If the p-value is greater than .05, then the null hypothesis is valid resulting in the model not being meaningful. A further interpretation of the ‘Adjusted R Square’



(Table 21) and the ‘Coefficients’ (Table 23) is in that case unnecessary.

Table 22 (ANOVA) below illustrates that p-value is  $.000 < .05$ . Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which means that the model is meaningful. In other words, a good fit is present between the model and the data, and further interpretation is allowed. More specifically, out of the total sum of squares of variance 397.617, and in accordance with the estimated value of ‘R Square’ (82.8%), the 329.311 can be explained by the independent variables.

<b>Model 4</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Regression	329.311	7	47.044	148.765	.000
Residual	68.306	216	.316		
Total	397.617	223			

Dependent Variable: Int\_recommend

Predictors: (Constant), Usefulness, Aesthetics , Ease\_of\_use, Website\_Booking, Website\_Usef, Website\_Aes, Website\_Eou

**Table 22: ANOVA**

We proceed to examine each of the regression coefficients.

<b>Model 4</b>	<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>		<b>Standardized Coefficients</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
(Constant)	.122	.257		.475	.635
Usefulness	.196	.080	.127	2.460	.015
Aesthetics	.714	.057	.751	12.561	.000
Ease_of_use	.023	.069	.015	.327	.744
Website_Booking	.154	.504	.058	.306	.760
Website_Usef	.156	.127	.256	1.224	.222
Website_Aes	-.286	.109	-.457	-2.631	.009

Website_Eou	.143	.124	.232	1.152	.251
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Dependent Variable: Int\_purchase

**Table 23: Coefficients**

In model 4 that includes the interaction effects in the specification, Usefulness and Aesthetics are highly statistically significant (p-values of .015 and .000, respectively) similarly to model 2. In addition, Website\_Aes is also statistically significant at the 5% level (p-value of .009). Therefore, the regression coefficients for these variables are not zero and can explain the variation in the dependent variable. On the other hand, Website\_Booking (in contrast to model 2) and Website\_usef are insignificant (p-values of .760 and .222, respectively) and also Ease of use (similar to model 2) and Website\_eou are insignificant (p-values of .744 and .251, respectively). Overall, we conclude that Usefulness, Aesthetics and Website\_Aes are determining factors for the overall consumer’s ‘Intention to recommend’.

The size of B’s reveals that the Aesthetics has the greatest positive impact (.714) and that the Usefulness follows with (.196). On the other hand, Website\_Aes variable has a negative impact (-.286); the higher the Aesthetics when the website is the Booking.com the smaller the effect on the Intention to recommend.

Moreover, from the histogram below it can be stated that there is normality of the values. This is confirmed by the P-P plot whose shape indicates a normal distribution.

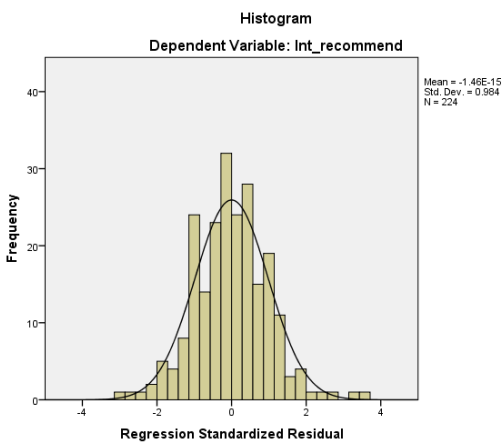


Figure 17

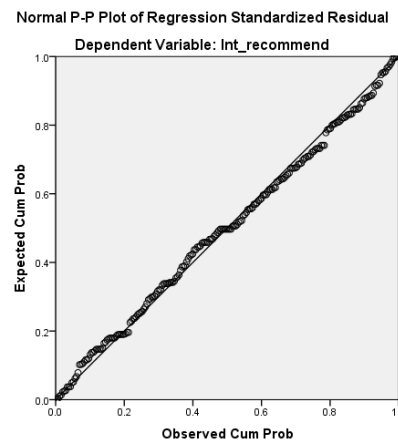


Figure 18

❖ *T-Tests*

The t-test assesses whether the means of two groups are statistically different from each other. This analysis is appropriate whenever you want to compare the means of two groups. In this study we are going to test the difference of the means of the variables between the Booking.com and Hotelguide.com websites. Below (Table 24) we can see that Booking.com presents higher mean scores than Hotelguide.com in terms of Usefulness, Aesthetics, Ease of use, Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend and that these differences are statistically significant (all p-values  $.000 < .05$ ).

	Website_Booking	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Mean	
<b>Int_recommend</b>	Hotelguides.com	112	2.2857	1.03479	.09778	.000
	Booking.com	112	4.2440	.75930	.07175	.000
<b>Int_purchase</b>	Hotelguides.com	112	2.0967	.89281	.08436	.000
	Booking.com	112	3.8765	.66620	.06295	.000
<b>Usefulness</b>	Hotelguides.com	112	3.2679	.77961	.07367	.000
	Booking.com	112	4.2857	.61040	.05768	.000
<b>Aesthetics</b>	Hotelguides.com	112	2.0268	1.07398	.10148	.000
	Booking.com	112	4.1101	.78956	.07461	.000
<b>Ease_of_use</b>	Hotelguides.com	112	3.3214	.89255	.08434	.000
	Booking.com	112	4.2277	.67746	.06401	.000

Table 24: T-Tests

## 5. Results

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis and hypothesis testing.

The sample consists of females by 53.6%, 52.7% of respondents are between 26 and 35 years old and 45.4% are from Greece. Therefore, the sample was somewhat biased towards people from Greece with a relatively higher education in the age group of 26-35. Moreover, 61.6% holds a master's degree and 40.2% travel from 4 to 5 times per year.

### ❖ *Pearson correlations*

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Usefulness (of information) of the website and Intention to purchase was .693 which is considered medium. Also the correlation was statistically significant ( $.000 < .05$ ). Therefore, it can be stated that when an online booking company increases the Usefulness (of information) of the website then the consumer's Intention to purchase from the website also increases.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Usefulness (of information) of the website and Intention to recommend was .704 which is considered high. Also the correlation was statistically significant ( $.000 < .05$ ). Therefore, it can be stated that when an online booking company increases the Usefulness (of information) of the website then the consumer's Intention to recommend the website also increases.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Aesthetics of the website and Intention to purchase was .879 which is considered high. Also the correlation was statistically significant ( $.000 < .05$ ). Therefore, it can be stated that when an online booking company increases the aesthetic elements of the website then the consumer's Intention to purchase from the website also increases.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Aesthetics of the website and Intention to recommend was .892 which is considered high. Also the correlation was statistically significant ( $.000 < .05$ ). Therefore, it can be stated that when an online booking company increases the aesthetic elements of the website then the consumer's Intention to recommend the website also increases.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Ease of use of the website and Intention to purchase was .593 which is considered medium. Also the correlation was statistically significant ( $.000 < .05$ ). Therefore, it can be stated that when an online booking company increases user-friendliness of the website then the consumer's Intention to purchase from the website also increases.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Ease of use of the website and Intention to recommend was .624 which is considered medium. Also the correlation was statistically significant ( $.000 < .05$ ). Therefore, it can be stated that when an online booking company

increases user-friendliness of the website then the consumer's Intention to recommend the website also increases.

## 5.1 Hypotheses testing

Hypotheses were tested and based on the outcomes of the data analysis leading to the appropriate interpretation of the conclusions.

Following the research hypotheses, it can be concluded that:

**Hypothesis 1:** Usefulness (of information) has a positive impact on Intention to purchase.

According to the 'coefficients' Table 14, the Usefulness (of information) is statistically significant ( $.000 < .05$ ) with a positive sign on 'B' value (+.216). Consequently, it can be stated that the more useful is the information in an online booking website, the greater the consumer's 'Intention to purchase' from the website. Hypothesis 1 is supported.

**Hypothesis 2:** Usefulness (of information) has a positive impact on Intention to recommend.

According to the 'coefficients' Table 17, the Usefulness (of information) is statistically significant ( $.000 < .05$ ) with a positive sign on 'B' value (+.248). Consequently, it can be stated that the more useful is the information in an online booking website, the greater the consumer's 'Intention to recommend' the website. Hypothesis 2 is supported.

**Hypothesis 3:** Aesthetic elements have a positive impact on Intention to purchase.

According to the 'coefficients' Table 14, the Aesthetics is statistically significant ( $.000 < .05$ ) with a positive sign on 'B' value (+.543). Consequently, it can be stated that the more aesthetic elements exist in an online booking website, the greater the consumer's 'Intention to purchase' from the website. Hypothesis 3 is supported.

**Hypothesis 4:** Aesthetic elements have a positive impact on Intention to recommend.

According to the 'coefficients' Table 17, the Aesthetics is statistically significant ( $.000 < .05$ ) with a positive sign on 'B' value (+.636). Consequently, it can be stated that the more aesthetic elements exist in an online booking website, the greater the consumer's 'Intention to

recommend' the website. Hypothesis 4 is supported.

**Hypothesis 5:** Ease of use has a positive impact on Intention to purchase.

According to the 'coefficients' Table 14, Ease of use is not statistically significant ( $.794 > .05$ ) which means that there is no impact in the consumer's 'Intention to purchase'. Consequently, hypothesis 5 is not supported.

**Hypothesis 6:** Ease of use has a positive impact on Intention to recommend.

According to the 'coefficients' Table 17, the Ease of use is not statistically significant ( $.455 > .05$ ) which means that there is no impact in the consumer's 'Intention to recommend'. Consequently, hypothesis 5 is not supported.

**Website\_Booking** (on Intention to purchase): Website-specific characteristics other than Usefulness, Aesthetics and Ease of use are captured by this indicator (dummy) variable. According to the 'coefficients' Table 14, the website dummy variable is statistically significant ( $.000 < .05$ ) with a positive sign on 'B' value ( $+.440$ ). Since this variable takes the value of '0' when the observations refer to the Hotelguide.com website and the value of '1' when the observations refer to the Booking.com website, the positive sign indicates that the latter website is associated with a higher Intention to purchase due to characteristics other than Usefulness, Aesthetics and Ease of use e.g. intuitiveness, ease of ordering, security, responsiveness, reliability, familiarity with the website, personalization, customer support and other. This variable can reduce the omitted variable bias since it captures website characteristics not have been examined in this study.

**Website\_Booking** (on Intention to recommend): Website-specific characteristics other than Usefulness, Aesthetics and Ease of use are captured by this indicator (dummy) variable. According to the 'coefficients' Table 17, the website dummy variable is statistically significant ( $.003 < .05$ ) with a positive sign on 'B' value ( $+.342$ ). Since this variable takes the value of '0' when the observations refer to the Hotelguide.com website and the value of '1' when the observations refer to the Booking.com website, the positive sign indicates that the latter website is associated with a higher Intention to recommend due to characteristics other than Usefulness, Aesthetics and Ease of use e.g. intuitiveness, ease of ordering, security, responsiveness,

reliability, familiarity with the website, personalization, customer support and other. This variable can reduce the omitted variable bias since it captures website characteristics not have been examined in this study.

## 5.2 Summary of results

<i>Hypotheses</i>	<i>Supported/Not supported</i>
H1: Usefulness (of information) has a positive impact on Intention to purchase.	<i>Supported</i>
H2: Usefulness (of information) has a positive impact on Intention to recommend.	<i>Supported</i>
H3: Aesthetic elements have a positive impact on Intention to purchase.	<i>Supported</i>
H4: Aesthetic elements have a positive impact on Intention to recommend.	<i>Supported</i>
H5: Ease of use has a positive impact on Intention to purchase.	<i>Not Supported</i>
H6: Ease of use has a positive impact on Intention to recommend.	<i>Not Supported</i>

**Table 25: Summary of all the hypotheses tested**

## 6. General discussion

This section will further discuss and analyze the findings of this thesis. Managerial implications, limitations of the research and future research will be presented.

### 6.1 Discussion and implications

The current dissertation aims to contribute to the existing literature regarding the factors that affect purchase intention and Intention to recommend of tourism related websites. The appropriate literature review was made and the research methodology was analyzed. The primary research was designed in order to answer the research questions that were set up at the methodology. The results among others show that there is a strong positive relationship between the independent variables (apart from ease of use) and the dependent variables. As a result a

company that sells tourism services online should design and optimize its website according to these factors. Specifically, the more accurate, relevant and complete information were given to the potential customers the more likely is for them to make a purchase. Additionally, the more clear and positive are the Aesthetics elements of the website the greater is the intention of the clients to proceed to the purchase of a product / service. Similarly, the easier the use of the website is, the easier for the client is to proceed to a purchase. Therefore, a tourism company which uses a website that is easy to use and contains the appropriate and necessary information in a positive and well-looking way can improve its profits. Furthermore, the findings from the primary research show that there is a strong positive relationship among Intention to recommend, Usefulness, Aesthetics and Ease of use. Therefore, an improvement of those factors can also lead to positive effects for the company such as word of mouth which in turn can lead to acquisition of new customers.

What is more, companies that depend on online booking websites should take into account that Usefulness (of information) and Aesthetics have are determinants and have an important influence on Intention to purchase and recommend and should focus more attention to these factors in contrast with ease of use which was found not to determine purchase intentions and referrals.

Finally, the results should be used with caution for reasons that will be analyzed at the limitations chapter, but they can give the reader an overview of the relationship and impact of specific factors on Intention to purchase and Intention to recommend a website.

## **6.2 Limitations and future research**

The primary research also presents some limitations that should be taken into consideration on the generalization of the findings. Specifically, the fact that the research was based on the assessment of only two tourism-related websites is one limitation of the current primary research. Therefore, our results may be biased towards these sites and a future research may include the assessment of more than two and maybe the assessment of the top market players in online tourism services. Another limitation is the small amount of website characteristics chosen for this thesis which means that researchers may include more factors to study in the future. For instance, Madu and Madu (2002) streamlined e-quality dimensions into website performance, features, structures, , reliability, storage capability, accountability, security, trust, responsiveness, product



differentiation and customization, policies, reputation, assurance and empathy. Other factors that could be examined are product information, customer service, purchasing process, product merchandizing and additional information services (Cho & Park, 2002). In addition, the sample size is another limitation since in similar research projects the size of the sample was much bigger. As a result a future research attempt should collect a greater number of questionnaires in order to produce more realistic and accurate results.

However, despite the above limitations, the primary research offers valuable insight into how online tourism websites can design their pages according to these specific factors in order to affect purchase intention and the intention of their visitors to recommend them.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Questionnaire

Subject: A quantitative analysis of the factors affecting consumer purchase intention and referrals of travel products through websites.

#### Introduction

Hello! This survey will be part of my dissertation with topic "A quantitative analysis of travel website characteristics affecting consumers' attitude towards Intention to purchase and recommend."

I would like to assure you that all the information you provide on this questionnaire will be kept completely anonymous, so you can't be identified.

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to answer any question you don't feel comfortable with.

Last but not least, you will have the chance to win a 25€ bol.com gift card!

The survey will last around  $\pm$  8 minutes. During this time you will navigate to 2 booking websites. Firstly, you will navigate one of them followed by the answer of the corresponding questions and then you will navigate the second one followed again by the answer of the corresponding questions. Thank you in advance for your time and participation!

#### *Section 1*

1. Gender?

Male	Female
------	--------

2. Age?

a. Under 18	
b. 18-25	
c. 26-35	
d. 36-45	
e. Over 46	

3. Nationality?

4. Highest level of education

a. High school	
b. Hogeschool	
c. Bachelor degree	
d. Master degree	
e. Doctoral Degree	

5. How often do you travel?

a. Every week or once every 2 weeks	
b. Once per month on average	
c. 4-5 times a year	
d. 2-3 times a year	
e. Once a year on average	
f. Less than once a year	

## Section 2

Please, navigate to [www.Booking.com](http://www.Booking.com) website and state your agreement level with the following statements

Please state your agreement level with the following statements when 1= “strongly disagree” and 5= “strongly agree”.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
6. This website provides the information necessary to make informed decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
7. This website provides me with useful information.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Information on this website is accurate.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Information on this website is up-to-date.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I like the look and feel of this website.	1	2	3	4	5
11. This website is an attractive website.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I like the graphics on this website.	1	2	3	4	5
13. It is easy to find what I am looking for on this website.	1	2	3	4	5
14. This website provides a clear directory of products and services.	1	2	3	4	5
15. It is easy to move around on this website.	1	2	3	4	5
16. This website offers a logical layout that is easy to follow.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I will definitely book accommodation from this website in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I intend to book	1	2	3	4	5

accommodation through this website in the near future.					
19. It is likely that I will book accommodation through this website in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I expect to book accommodation through this website in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5
21. The likelihood that I would actively book a tourism product is very high.	1	2	3	4	5
22. The probability that I will spend more than 50% of my spectator tourism budget on this website is very high.	1	2	3	4	5
23. It is likely to spread positive word of mouth about this website.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I would recommend this website for booking a hotel to my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
25. If my friends were looking to book a hotel, I would tell them to try this website.	1	2	3	4	5

Please, navigate to [www.Hotelguide.com](http://www.Hotelguide.com) website and state your agreement level with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
26. This website provides the information necessary to make informed decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
27. This website provides me with useful information.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Information on this website is accurate.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Information on this website is up-to-date.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I like the look and feel of this website.	1	2	3	4	5
31. This website is an attractive website.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I like the graphics on this website.	1	2	3	4	5
33. It is easy to find what I am looking for on this website.	1	2	3	4	5
34. This website provides a clear directory of products and services.	1	2	3	4	5
35. It is easy to move around on this website.	1	2	3	4	5
36. This website offers a logical layout that is easy to follow.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I will definitely book accommodation from this website in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I intend to book accommodation through this website in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5
39. It is likely that I will book accommodation through this website in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5
40. I expect to book accommodation through this website in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5
41. The likelihood that I would actively book a tourism	1	2	3	4	5

product is very high.					
42. The probability that I will spend more than 50% of my spectator tourism budget on this website is very high.	1	2	3	4	5
43. It is likely to spread positive word of mouth about this website.	1	2	3	4	5
44. I would recommend this website for booking a hotel to my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
45. If my friends were looking to book a hotel, I would tell them to try this website.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for participation! If you would like to win a 25€ bol.com gift card, please enter your email address below. Always click on the button below in order to record your response.

## Appendix B: Descriptive Statistics

### ❖ Section 1

	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	<i>Male</i>	52	46.4%
	<i>Female</i>	60	53.6%
<b>Age</b>	<i>Under 18</i>	4	3.6%
	<i>18-25</i>	37	33.0%
	<i>26-35</i>	59	52.7%
	<i>36-45</i>	6	5.4%
	<i>Over 46</i>	6	5.4%
	<b>Nationality</b>	<i>Australian</i>	1
<i>Azerbaijani</i>		2	1.8%
<i>British</i>		3	2.7%
<i>Bulgarian</i>		6	5.4%
<i>Chinese</i>		1	.9%
<i>Czech</i>		1	.9%
<i>Danish</i>		1	.9%
<i>Dutch</i>		18	16.1%
<i>Dutch/Bulgarian</i>		1	.9%
<i>Estonian</i>		2	1.8%
<i>French</i>		4	3.6%
<i>German</i>		2	1.8%
<i>Greek</i>		51	45.5%
<i>Greek-American</i>		1	.9%
<i>Hungarian</i>		1	.9%
<i>Iceland</i>		1	.9%
<i>Ireland</i>		1	.9%
<i>Israeli</i>		1	.9%
<i>Italian</i>		2	1.8%
<i>Lithuania</i>		1	.9%
<i>Russian</i>		1	.9%
<i>S. Korea</i>		1	.9%
<i>Serbian</i>		1	.9%
<i>Slovak</i>		1	.9%
<i>Slovenian</i>		1	.9%
<i>Spanish</i>		4	3.6%
<i>Swedish</i>		1	.9%
<i>Tasmanian</i>		1	.9%



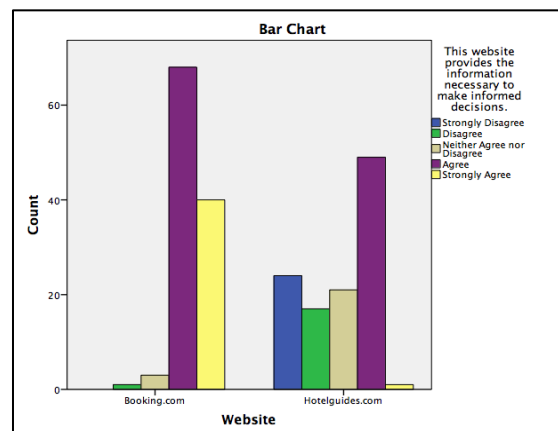
<b>Level of education</b>	<i>High school</i>	12	10.7%
	<i>Bachelor degree</i>	30	26.8%
	<i>Master degree</i>	69	61.6%
	<i>Doctoral degree</i>	1	.9%
<b>How often do you travel?</b>	Once a week or once every 2 weeks	1	.9%
	Once per month on average	16	14.3%
	4-5 times a year	45	40.2%
	2-3 times a year	35	31.3%
	Once a year on average	14	12.5%
	Less than Once a year	1	.9%

**Table 26: Demographics**

❖ *Section 2*

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	1	3	68	40	112
	%	0.0%	0.9%	2.7%	60.7%	35.7%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	24	17	21	49	1	112
	%	21.4%	15.2%	18.8%	43.8%	0.9%	100.0%

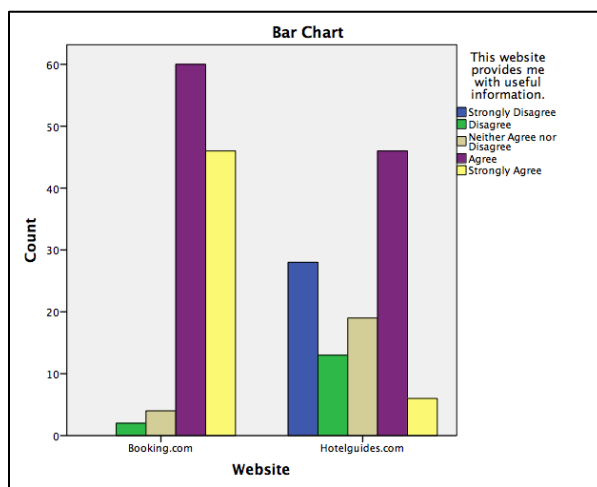
**Table 27: This website provides the information necessary to make informed decisions (Figure 19)**



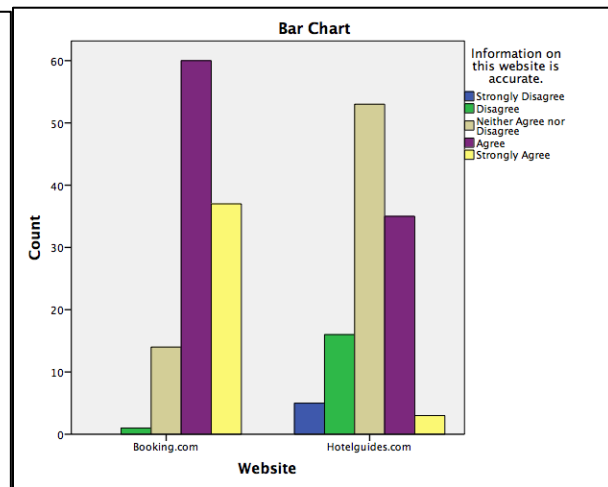
**Figure 19**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	2	4	60	46	112
	%	0.0%	1.8%	3.6%	53.6%	41.1%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	28	13	19	46	6	112
	%	25.0%	11.6%	17.0%	41.1%	5.4%	100.0%

**Table 28: This website provides me with useful information. (Figure 20)**



**Figure 20**



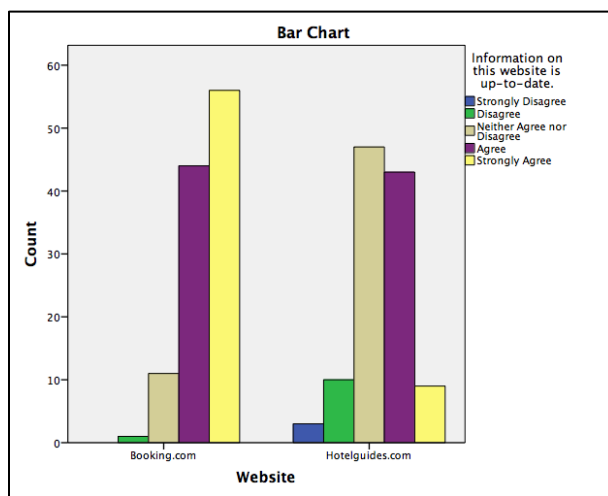
**Figure 21**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	1	14	60	37	112
	%	0.0%	0.9%	12.5%	53.6%	33.0%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	5	16	53	35	3	112
	%	4.5%	14.3%	47.3%	31.2%	2.7%	100.0%

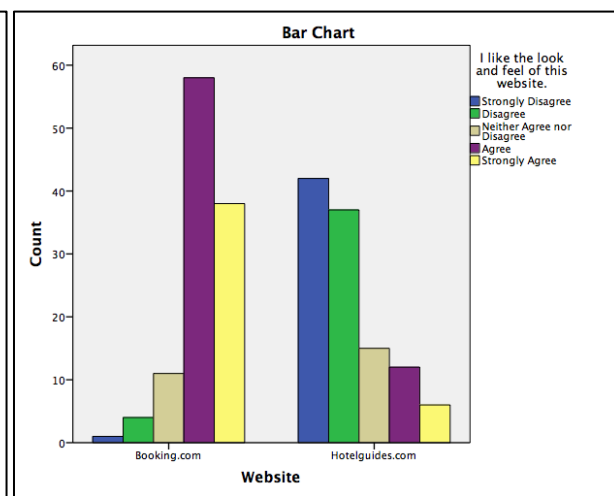
**Table 29: Information on this website is accurate. (Figure 21)**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	1	11	44	56	112
	%	0.0%	0.9%	9.8%	39.3%	50.0%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	3	10	47	43	9	112
	%	2.7%	8.9%	42.0%	38.4%	8.0%	100.0%

**Table 30: Information on this website is up-to-date. (Figure 22)**



**Figure 22**



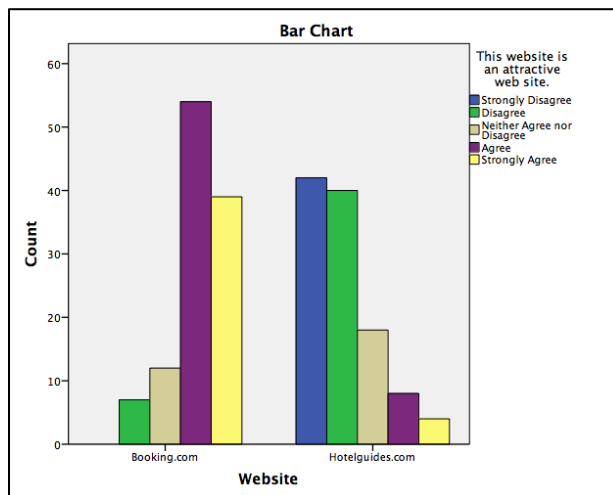
**Figure 23**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	1	4	11	58	38	112
	%	0.9%	3.6%	9.8%	51.8%	33.9%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	42	37	15	12	6	112
	%	37.5%	33.0%	13.4%	10.7%	5.4%	100.0%

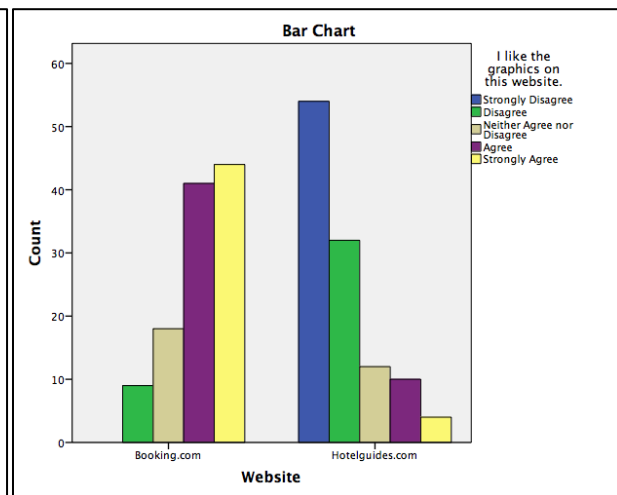
**Table 31: I like the look and feel of this website. (Figure 23)**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	7	12	54	39	112
	%	0.0%	6.2%	10.7%	48.2%	34.8%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	42	40	18	8	4	112
	%	37.5%	35.7%	16.1%	7.1%	3.6%	100.0%

**Table 32: This website is an attractive website. (Figure 24)**



**Figure 24**



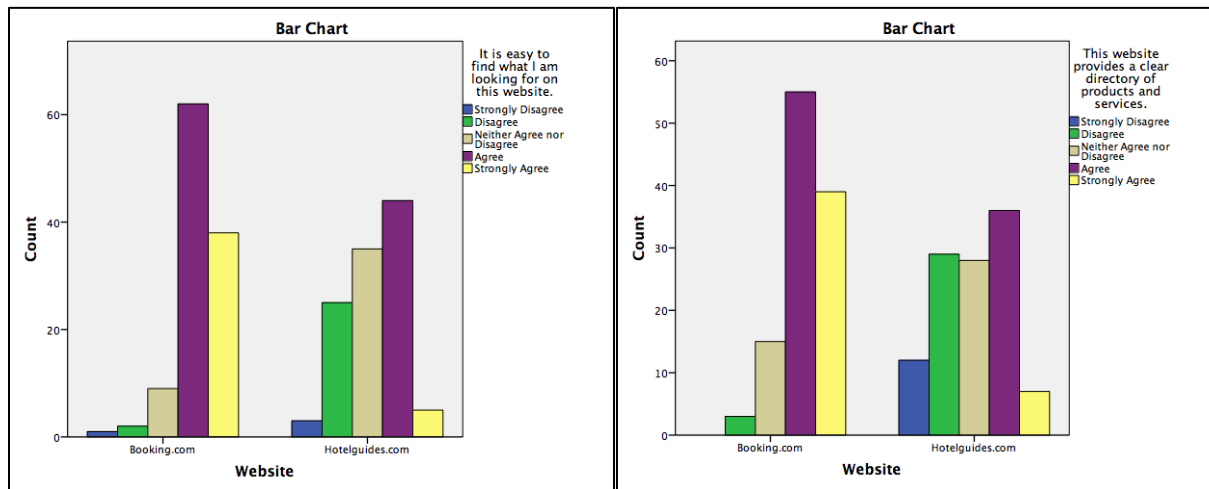
**Figure 25**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	9	18	41	44	112
	%	0.0%	8.0%	16.1%	36.6%	39.3%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	54	32	12	10	4	112
	%	48.2%	28.6%	10.7%	8.9%	3.6%	100.0%

**Table 33: I like the graphics on this website. (Figure 25)**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	1	2	9	62	38	112
	%	0.9%	1.8%	8.0%	55.4%	33.9%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	3	25	35	44	5	112
	%	2.7%	22.3%	31.2%	39.3%	4.5%	100.0%

**Table 34: It is easy to find what I am looking for on this website. (Figure 26)**



**Figure 26**

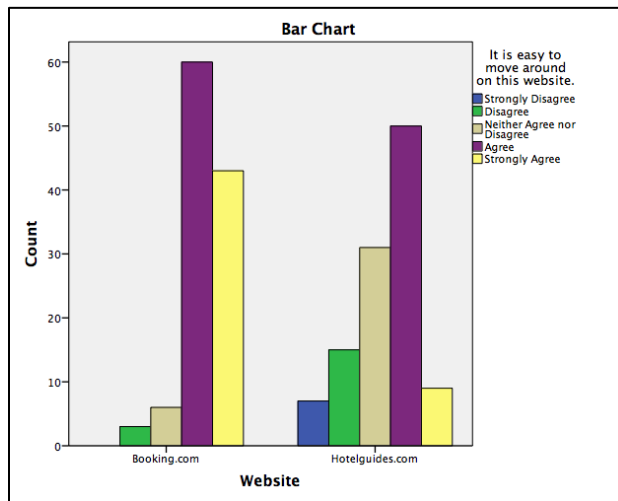
**Figure 27**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	3	15	55	39	112
	%	0.0%	2.7%	13.4%	49.1%	34.8%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	12	29	28	36	7	112
	%	10.7%	25.9%	25.0%	32.1%	6.2%	100.0%

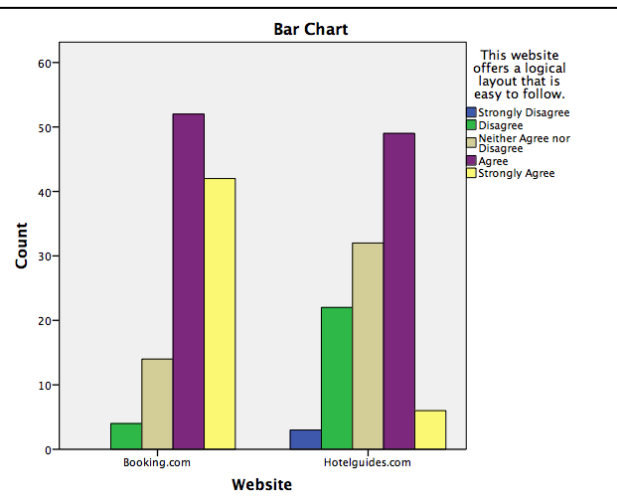
**Table 35: This website provides a clear directory of products and services. (Figure 27)**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	3	6	60	43	112
	%	0.0%	2.7%	5.4%	53.6%	38.4%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	7	15	31	50	9	112
	%	6.2%	13.4%	27.7%	44.6%	8.0%	100.0%

**Table 36: It is easy to move around on this website. (Figure 28)**



**Figure 28**



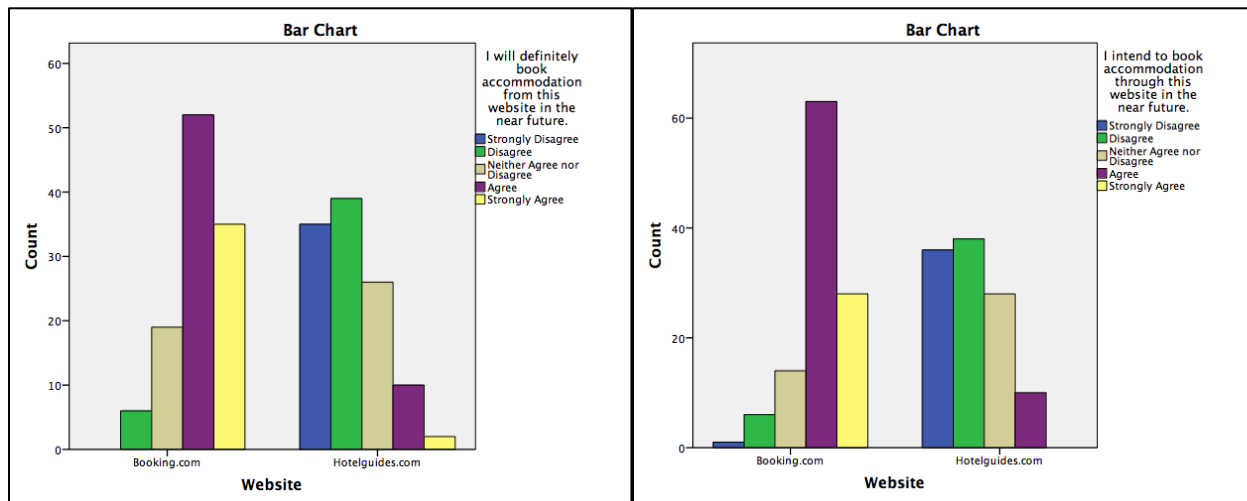
**Figure 29**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	4	14	52	42	112
	%	0.0%	3.6%	12.5%	46.4%	37.5%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	3	22	32	49	6	112
	%	2.7%	19.6%	28.6%	43.8%	5.4%	100.0%

**Table 37: This website offers a logical layout that is easy to follow. (Figure 29)**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	6	19	52	35	112
	%	0.0%	5.4%	17.0%	46.4%	31.2%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	35	39	26	10	2	112
	%	31.2%	34.8%	23.2%	8.9%	1.8%	100.0%

**Table 38: I will definitely book accommodation from this website in the near future. (Figure 30)**



**Figure 30**

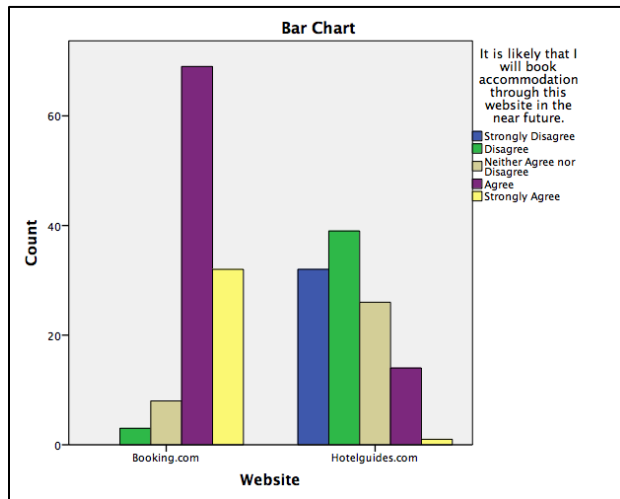
**Figure 31**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	1	6	14	63	28	112
	%	0.9%	5.4%	12.5%	56.2%	25.0%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	36	38	28	10	0	112
	%	32.1%	33.9%	25.0%	8.9%	0.0%	100.0%

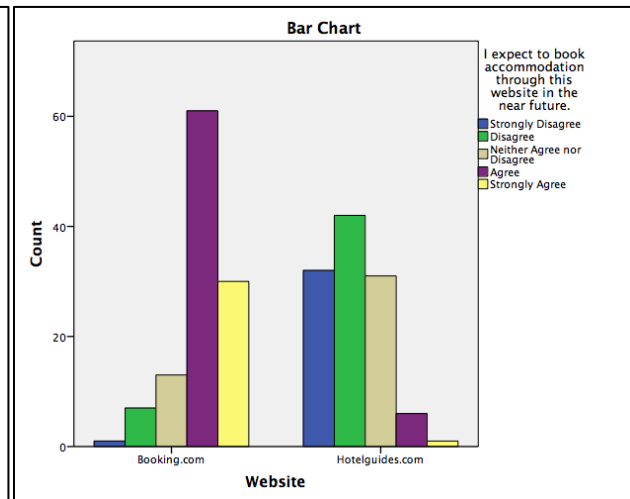
**Table 39: I intend to book accommodation through this website in the near future. (Figure 31)**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	3	8	69	32	112
	%	0.0%	2.7%	7.1%	61.6%	28.6%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	32	39	26	14	1	112
	%	28.6%	34.8%	23.2%	12.5%	0.9%	100.0%

**Table 40: It is likely that I will book accommodation through this website in the near future. (Figure 32)**



**Figure 32**



**Figure 33**

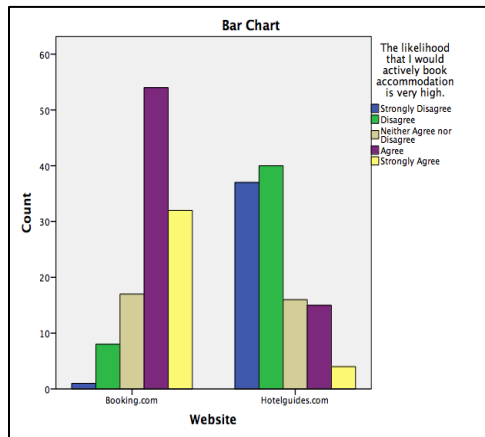
Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	1	7	13	61	30	112
	%	0.9%	6.2%	11.6%	54.5%	26.8%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	32	42	31	6	1	112
	%	28.6%	37.5%	27.7%	5.4%	0.9%	100.0%

**Table 41: I expect to book accommodation through this website in the near future. (Figure 33)**

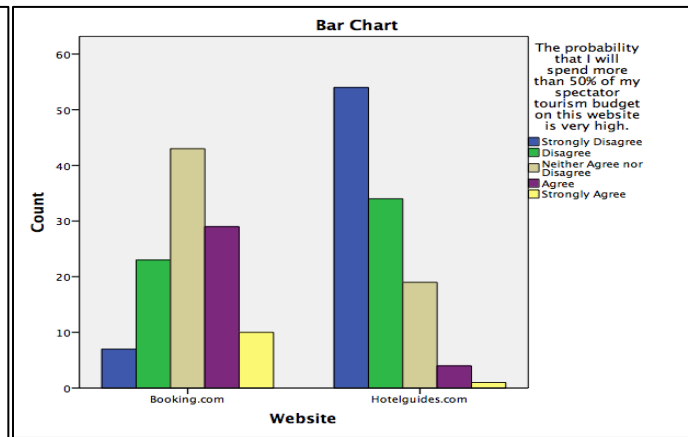


Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	1	8	17	54	32	112
	%	0.9%	7.1%	15.2%	48.2%	28.6%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	37	40	16	15	4	112
	%	33.0%	35.7%	14.3%	13.4%	3.6%	100.0%

**Table 42: The likelihood that I would actively book accommodation is very high. (Figure 34)**



**Figure 34**



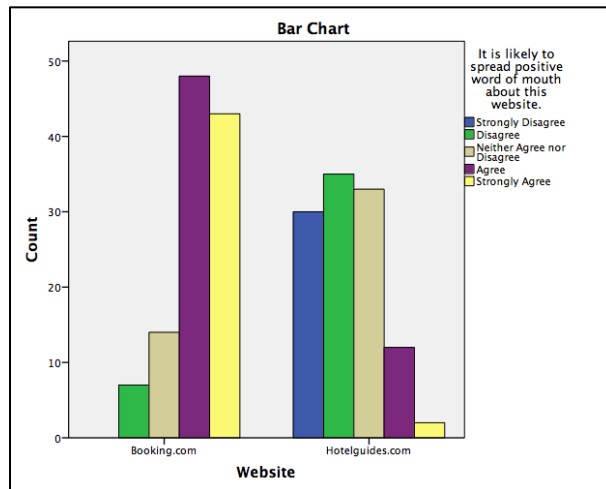
**Figure 35**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	7	23	43	29	10	112
	%	6.2%	20.5%	38.4%	25.9%	8.9%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	54	34	19	4	1	112
	%	48.2%	30.4%	17.0%	3.6%	0.9%	100.0%

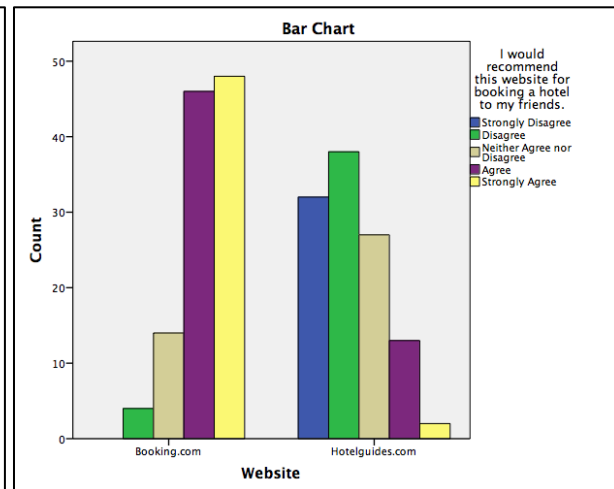
**Table 43: The probability that I will spend more than 50% of my spectator tourism budget on this website is very high. (Figure 35)**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	7	14	48	43	112
	%	0.0%	6.2%	12.5%	42.9%	38.4%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	30	35	33	12	2	112
	%	26.8%	31.2%	29.5%	10.7%	1.8%	100.0%

**Table 44: It is likely to spread positive word of mouth about this website. (Figure 36)**



**Figure 36**



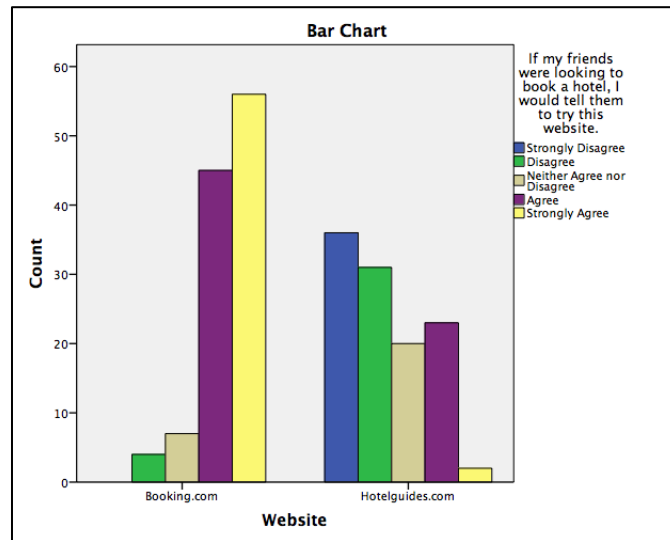
**Figure 37**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	4	14	46	48	112
	%	0.0%	3.6%	12.5%	41.1%	42.9%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	32	38	27	13	2	112
	%	28.6%	33.9%	24.1%	11.6%	1.8%	100.0%

**Table 45: I would recommend this website for booking a hotel to my friends. (Figure 37)**

Website		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Booking.com	Count	0	4	7	45	56	112
	%	0.0%	3.6%	6.2%	40.2%	50.0%	100.0%
Hotelguide.com	Count	36	31	20	23	2	112
	%	32.1%	27.7%	17.9%	20.5%	1.8%	100.0%

**Table 46: If my friends were looking to book a hotel, I would tell them to try this website. (Figure 38)**



**Figure 38**

## Appendix C: Factor analysis and reliability tests

❖ *Factor analysis and reliability check (Cronbach's alpha) for independent variables (Booking.com)*

**Table 47: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.923
Approx. Chi-Square		2521.390
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	55
	Sig.	.000

**Table 48: Pattern Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Usef_1_Booking	.758			
Usef_2_Booking	.773			
Usef_3_Booking			.791	
Usef_4_Booking			.962	
Aes_1_Booking				-.893
Aes_2_Booking				-.944
Aes_3_Booking				-.969
Eou_1_Booking	.533	.505		
Eou_2_Booking	.716	.313		
Eou_3_Booking		.841		
Eou_4_Booking		.785		

Table 49: Reliability Statistics		
	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Usefulness	Information on this website is accurate.	.844
	Information on this website is up-to-date.	

Table 50: Reliability Statistics		
	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Aesthetics	I like the look and feel of this website.	.969
	This website is an attractive website.	
	I like the graphics on this website.	

Table 51: Reliability Statistics		
	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Ease_of_use	It is easy to move around on this website.	.852
	This website offers a logical layout that is easy to follow.	

❖ *Factor analysis and reliability check (Cronbach's alpha) for independent variables (Hotelguide.com)*

**Table 52: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.844
	Approx. Chi-Square	942.473
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	55
	Sig.	.000

**Table 53: Pattern Matrix**

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Usef_1				-.858
Usef_2				-.831
Usef_3			.792	
Usef_4			.928	
Aes_1	.846			
Aes_2	.942			
Aes_3	.984			
Eou_1		.527		-.571
Eou_2				-.720
Eou_3		.899		
Eou_4		.799		

<b>Table 54: Reliability Statistics</b>		
	<b>Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Usefulness</b>	Information on this website is accurate.	.785
	Information on this website is up-to-date.	

<b>Table 55: Reliability Statistics</b>		
	<b>Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Aesthetics</b>	I like the look and feel of this website.	.946
	This website is an attractive website.	
	I like the graphics on this website.	

<b>Table 56: Reliability Statistics</b>		
	<b>Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Ease_of_use</b>	It is easy to move around on this website.	.797
	This website offers a logical layout that is easy to follow.	

❖ *Reliability check (Cronbach's alpha) for Intention to purchase (Booking.com)*

<b>Table 57: Reliability Statistics</b>		
	<b>Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Int_purchase</b>	I will definitely book accommodation from this website in the near future.	.963
	I intend to book accommodation through this website in the near future.	
	It is likely that I will book accommodation through this website in the near future.	
	I expect to book accommodation through this website in the near future.	
	The likelihood that I would actively book a tourism product is very high.	
	It is likely to spread positive word of mouth about this website.	

❖ *Reliability check (Cronbach's alpha) for Intention to purchase (Hotelguide.com)*

<b>Table 58: Reliability Statistics</b>		
	<b>Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Int_purchase</b>	I will definitely book accommodation from this website in the near future.	.948
	I intend to book accommodation through this website in the near future.	
	It is likely that I will book accommodation through this website in the near future.	
	I expect to book accommodation through this website in the near future.	

	The likelihood that I would actively book a tourism product is very high.	
	The probability that I will spend more than 50% of my spectator tourism budget on this website is very high.	

❖ *Reliability check (Cronbach's alpha) for Intention to recommend (Booking.com)*

Table 59: Reliability Statistics		
	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Int_recommend	It is likely to spread positive word of mouth about this website.	.972
	I would recommend this website for booking a hotel to my friends.	
	If my friends were looking to book a hotel, I would tell them to try this website.	

❖ *Reliability check (Cronbach's alpha) for Intention to recommend (Hotelguide.com)*

Table 60: Reliability Statistics		
	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Int_recommend	It is likely to spread positive word of mouth about this website.	.944
	I would recommend this website for booking a hotel to my friends.	
	If my friends were looking to book a hotel, I would tell them to try this website.	