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Website Quality and its Impact on Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Intention in the E-Commerce Sector in India

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Abstract: "E-commerce is on the rise both in India and abroad as the economy is becoming digital and consumers are using online platforms to search for information and for making purchases of different types of services and products. Retail e-commerce sales were 5.2 trillion Dollars approximately worldwide in 2021. It is forecasted that this figure will grow by 56 percent over the next few years, and reach 8.1 trillion dollars by 2026. (as per Global retail e-commerce sales 2014-2026, Published by Stephanie Chevalier, Sep 21, 2022). Websites are an important component of the rapidly growing E-commerce market. In the overall marketing communication mix, the websites complement the direct selling activities, helps to improve the corporate image and provide basic information about the company to its customers using an online platform. There is a need to study the measures of Website designs which help to improve their quality as well as the customer satisfaction towards the website design of the company, which may also lead to purchase intention of the consumer. Customer reaction to the website has been studied by the author taking into consideration the Amazon India and Flipkart websites as they are comparable names. Study was conducted in Delhi-NCR and data was gathered from 658 respondents out of which 300 were from Delhi 358 were from NCR covering the areas – Gurgaon, Noida, Ghaziabad, Faridabad etc. The construct used to collect the data was a standard construct – WebQual^{tm}, a measure of Website quality. 12 dimensions of WebQual^{tm} were taken into consideration to study the satisfaction of customers towards the Website Quality of Amazon and Flipkart. Another linkage that was studied was whether this customer satisfaction towards Website quality led to purchase Intention among the Customers or not. PLS-SEM was used for analysing the hypothesized relationship among the constructs and was found that Website Quality significantly influenced the Customer Satisfaction which in turn leads to Purchase intention of the customer."

Keywords: *Website quality, Customer satisfaction, Purchase intention, Online shopping, PLS*

1. INTRODUCTION

Technological information and communication are rising promptly in this global period; hence, for doing business, society depends more upon the Internet. Websites are one of the most influential tools in the current times to help people get what they require. A collection of interlinked web pages with a common domain name is called a website (Jauhari et al., 2019). Assessment of site quality is still a challenging area for researchers. Retail e-commerce sales were approximately 5.2 trillion dollars worldwide in 2021. As per the forecasts, this figure will grow by 56 percent over the next few years, and reach 8.1 trillion dollars by 2026 (Global retail e-commerce sales 2014-2026, Published by Stephanie Chevalier, Sep 21, 2022). Websites are the source of conventional communication and interaction with the user of the website. This interaction leads to the factors of care, commitment, courtesy, helpfulness, flexibility, and friendliness. Hence, offering good website quality or encompassing excellent particular web factors have been the prominent aspects for elevating user satisfaction (Manasra et al., 2013).

With the increasing use of Information technology in transforming and developing e-commerce, there is a need to study the online players – Amazon and Flipkart in expanding their e-business in India. Both Amazon and Flipkart are e-commerce platforms and they are doing business through their website or mobile applications. A lot of earlier studies in other fields like travel and tourism, health services, etc where the website Quality's positive influence on customer satisfaction, which leads to purchase intention have been done by numerous scholars (Ali, F. 2016; Chen and Cheng, 2009; Wang et al., 2015; Bai et al., 2008). No study has been done where any attempt has been made to find out the association between the website quality of big players like Amazon and Flipkart and CS which in turn leads to PI. It has been observed that online purchasing is rising because websites as a platform provide every information that is needed by the consumers and can be accessed by them online, thereby adding to the convenience of the consumers and also helping businesses to accomplish their business objectives by relying on e-commerce solutions (Freemantle,2002). In this light, Website Quality assumes importance and helps its users with complete information about the goods and services they would like to purchase.

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Website can be seen as a group of interconnected pages that are used to show silent or moving images, sounds, animations, text and a combination of both dynamic and static giving the visitors a pleasing feel and complete satisfaction on their visit and revisiting (Jauhari et al, 2019.). In this study, customer reaction to the website has been studied taking into consideration Amazon India and Flipkart websites as they are comparable names. The study was conducted in Delhi-NCR and data was gathered from 658 respondents. The empirical validation of the features of website quality and the impact on PI and CS concerning Flipkart and Amazon is provided by the present study. The present study has used WebQualtm – a measure of Website quality scale (Loiacono et al,2012). The scale has used 12 constructs to measure the website quality which are Informational Fit to task (Info), Tailored Communications (TC), Trust, Response Time (RT), Ease of Understanding, Intuitive Operations (Intuit), Visual Appeal (VA), Innovativeness (Innov), Emotional Appeal (EA), Consistent Image (Image), On-line Completeness (OC), Relative Advantage (RA). The description of these constructs is given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Description of the constructs of website quality

	Constructs	**Description**
1	Informational Fit to task	Information available on the website is updated and accurately meets their needs
2	Tailored Communications	Communication from the website can tailored to meet user's needs
3	Trust	Secure communication and user information is kept private
4	Response Time	Time taken by the website to give response to a user request or interaction
5	Ease of Understanding	Ease of reading and understanding
6	Intuitive Operations	Ease of operation and navigation
7	Visual Appeal	Visual aesthetics of the website
8	Innovativeness	The uniqueness and creativity of the website
9	Emotional Appeal	The intensity of involvement of the user while using the website and if there is any emotional impact
10	Consistent Image	The image in the mind of the user is consistent with that projected through the media by the firm
11	On-line Completeness	At least the necessary transactions can be completed online
12	Relative Advantage	Website is a good mean to interact with the company

Source: Author's creation

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study has three major constructs – Website Quality (WQ), Customer Satisfaction (CS) and Purchase Intention (PI).

Website Quality

Website quality has obtained substantial attention from practitioners and academicians as the website plays a vital role in developing CS and in turn online PI showing the excellence and effectiveness of the website in conveying a deliberate message to its viewers and audience (Ali, 2016). To engage, sustain and gain customers through e-business Quality of the website plays a very important role in the success of the website (Rasli et al, 2018). The Quality of the website is a key determinant in deciding whether the consumers will be inspired to purchase or not (Liao et al., 2009). Supporting this (Kane, 1999) found that to generate satisfying shopping experiences websites fail. (Kearney, 2001) establishes that 82 percent of online buyers without completing the transactions drop out of their shopping carts.

Many more studies in this direction have emphasized the importance of Website quality. From the perspective of e-commerce website quality is considered as a notable internal factor for buyers to examine whether website characteristics meet customer needs. (Gefen et al., 2003) the shopping website is not only an information system but also an interface between customers and e-retailers. (Aggarwal and Aakash, 2018) highlighted that e-commerce websites that give superior flexibility, reliability, accessibility, functionality, usability and stability to online buyers could be referred to as websites of superior quality. (Jeong et al., 2003) stated website quality as the "overall excellence or effectiveness of a [website] in delivering intended messages to its audience and viewers". To measure the website Quality a large number of scholars have proposed various dimensions (Chang and Chen, 2008; Wang et al., 2015; Hernandez et

al., 2009). In this view, (Au Yeung and Law, 2004) the design of the website is surrounded by its functionality and usability. This is in line with the assessment of website quality-related writings from 1992 to 2007 directed by Hernandez et al. (2009), which says that the quality of system, information and ease of use are important parts of website design. As per Lowry et al. (2014), WQ can be defined as the features of a website that help attain CS and is a critical element for retailer success because the website is a first impression on every buyer.

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has been described as the satisfaction of the consumer concerning his or her evaluating experience with the specified e-commerce firm's website Anderson and Srinivasan (2003). CS from a website is nothing but an evaluation concerning the user experience and features of a website. Oliver (2010) stated CS is "an assessment based on his/her personal experience relevant to his/her needs and expectations from the website."

In the online environment, buyers are careful during the decision-making process about the information they get from the website. Well-designed websites reduce time in searching for information and make it easy for the consumers to navigate for information adding to CS. Therefore, the assessment of the quality of information is measured by the extent of its informativeness, accuracy, relevancy and timeliness of information displayed by the website leading to CS (Lin, 2013, Kuo & Chen, 2011). The features of the Website design like icons, menus, links (Computer factors), graphics, music and colours (Human factors) enhance usability and therefore lead to CS (Song and Zinkhan, 2003, Chen and Wells, 1999).

E-commerce sites that can tailor offerings made to online consumers are considered to be better websites and therefore increase CS Saxe and Weitz (1982). The study on customer satisfaction has been done by many academicians mostly for offline purchases and very few studies have been undertaken concerning e-customer satisfaction. E-satisfaction can be better perceived as a continuing assessment of surprise built-in in a product purchase and/or consumption experiences Anderson and Srinivasan (2003, p. 125). The work of Szymanski and Hise (2000) found that the design of websites helps to encourage satisfactory buying experiences. Similarly, Kim and Eom (2002) found that in achieving user satisfaction the usability of a website is of critical importance. Further, the work of Maditinos and Theodoridis (2010) mentioned that both the quality of information as well as quality of interface provided to buyers (2 main aspects of website usability) have a notable impact on the degree of user satisfaction. (Bridges and Florsheim, 2008) One of the main motivations of buyers online purchasing is to make the purchase easier and simpler. Therefore, when visiting the website, buyers anticipate finding a medium whose attributes facilitate selection, payment and post-purchase actions which in a way increases e-CS and depends upon the ease of use of the website (Shankar et al.,2003).

The scale used to measure the CS of the websites Amazon and Flipkart is based on the promise of its usability and ease of use.

Purchase intention

Online Purchase Intention is defined as the buyer's decision-making process while purchasing from an online shopping website after evaluating every component that they found to be relevant. Hsu et al 2012. Devaraj et al. (2002) in their study measured that in the e-commerce context, the key determinant of PI is buyer satisfaction. In the present study, the final dependent variable is PI which uses the items used by Poddar et al. PI is defined as the chance that a user buys from a website (Chen and Barnes, 2007; Zhang et al., 2007; Yoo and Donthu, 2001) as a proxy for actual behavior.

More Recently, Researchers have Established that PI towards online Shopping is positively affected by satisfaction (Chiu et al., 2009) and promotes the use of internet portals (Lin et al.,2005), e-services (Liao et al, 2007) as well as online communities (Liu et al.,2010). Hence it is anticipated that with the prior use of a website online users attain certain degrees of satisfaction and their reusage intentions will be influenced by the perceptions of this satisfaction (Oliver, 1999; Kim et al 2009).

PI is allegedly correlated to real behaviour (Oliver and Bearden, 1985; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) and this relationship has been experimentally tested in tourism and hospitality businesses (Ajzen and Driver, 1992; Buttle and Bok, 1996). Research done by (Jeong et al. (2003) where 1743 hotel customers and online shoppers were electronically surveyed found that the important factor of online behavioural intentions is buyer's information satisfaction and for information satisfaction WQ is essential. Similarly, Law and Hsu (2005), found that when buyers were searching for premium quality accommodations, WQ influenced their PI. All from perceived risk paper and Chinese online visitors (bai)

Zeithaml et al., 2006) told that a huge amount of literature on Purchase Intention in an offline environment is available and (Hsu et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2015) pointed out that discussions to understand purchase intention in offline mode can form the basis to understand PI in online mode. For this study, the important outcome variable is online PI which is referred to as the purchaser's willingness and intention to engage in an online deal based on their assessment of WQ and information.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

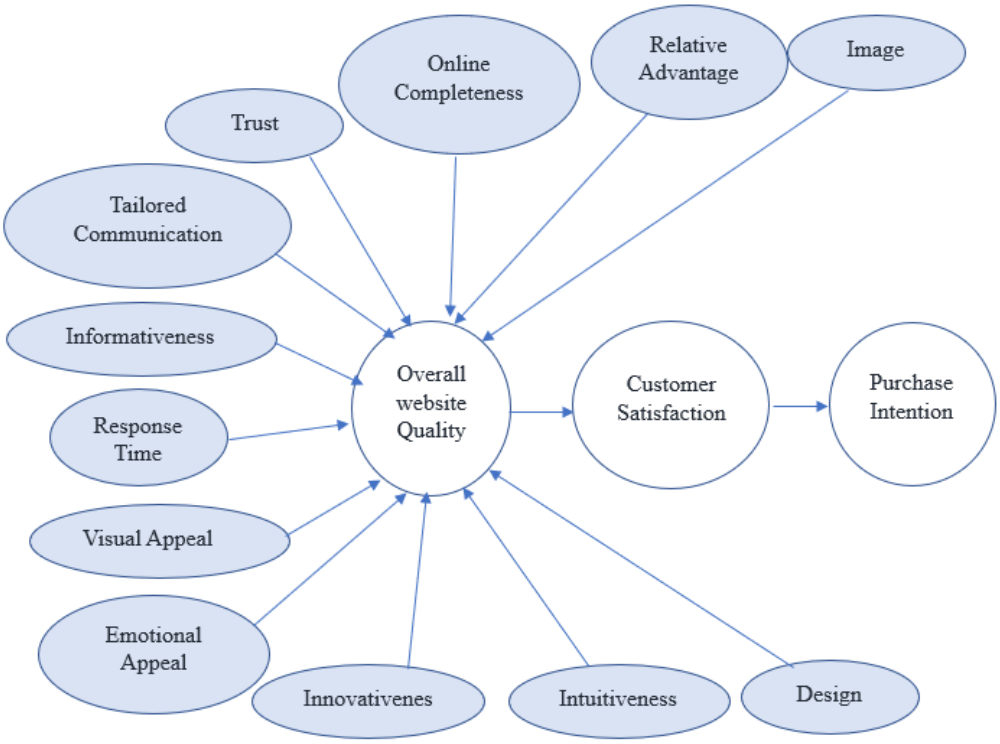

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's Creation

A theoretical model showing the relationship between WQ, CS and PI relating to the websites of Amazon India and Flipkart was conceptualised based on the literature (Figure 1).

The model depicted that a website that is found of good quality by the user will add to their CS and this satisfaction would subsequently lead to behavioural or online purchase intention. The relationships drawn in the form of linkages were related to an online environment related to the websites of Amazon and Flipkart in India.

Website quality (WQ) is an independent variable whereas online purchase intention and customer satisfaction are dependent variables of the study. Demographic characteristics are also taken as independent variables. The variable of primary interest in this research is online purchase intention as a dependent variable. The relationship shows that the independent variables of this research are the variables that have either positive or negative impacts on dependent variables. For example, if the level of perceived WQ increases, then the consumer's satisfaction will also increase. Similarly, if the consumer's satisfaction level towards a website increases, the consumer's online PI to buy from that website will also increase.

Using the above proposed model, the following hypothesis were formed and tested in the study:

H1: CS has a positive effect on PI

H2: Ease of understanding has a positive effect on WQ

H3: EA has a significant effect on WQ

H4: Image has a significant effect on WQ

H5: Informational Fit to task has a positive effect on WQ

H6: Intuitive Operations has a positive effect on WQ

H7: OC has a positive effect on WQ

H8: RA has a significant effect on WQ

H9: RT has a positive effect on WQ

H10: TC has a positive effect on WQ

H11: Trust has a positive effect on WQ

H12: VA has a significant effect on WQ

H13: WQ has a positive effect on CS

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To test the research hypothesis a descriptive research methodology was employed. The data was collected using a survey instrument, a well-designed questionnaire. This study was done in Delhi-NCR where non-probability purposive sampling was used to choose the respondents.

The questionnaires that were distributed were around 800 out of which 658 (82%) were found to be valid and were subject to analysis. The collected data was analysed using Smart PLS (version 3) and the research instrument used

was tested using a pilot study. For conducting this, a sample of 90 respondents was taken and the research instrument was found to be reliable having the reliability statistics in the form of Cronbach Alpha

Table 2

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CS	0.884	0.884	0.604
Ease of Understanding	0.833	0.833	0.625
EA	0.84	0.842	0.641
Image	0.823	0.823	0.607
Informational Fit to task	0.854	0.854	0.662
Innovative Appeal	0.839	0.839	0.635
Intuitive Operations	0.831	0.833	0.624
OC	0.781	0.78	0.541
PI	0.899	0.898	0.689
RA	0.805	0.805	0.579
RT	0.801	0.802	0.574
TC	0.788	0.789	0.554
Trust	0.862	0.862	0.676
VA	0.87	0.87	0.691
WQ	0.858	0.859	0.606

Source: Author's creation

5. DATA ANALYSIS

This study is presented for analyzing the impact of WQ on CS and PI. Here, the methodology adopted is a non-probability sampling approach. Data that were gathered from 658 respondents in India who had utilized websites are considered. By utilizing the 5-point Likert scale, a well-structured questionnaire was prepared. For the assessment, the 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly agree", "Agree", "neutral", "disagree", and "Strongly disagree" was wielded. Moreover, the secondary data were gathered from papers, books, journals, reviews, and websites. For providing the respondents' profiles, descriptive statistics were applied. Here, for examining the hypothesized relationships among the constructs, Structural equation modeling (SEM) was also wielded. After that, the WQ towards CS and PI and the Frequency distribution of WQ were analysed. To tap the demographic variables, namely gender, age, purpose of visiting an online shopping website, hours spent on the internet and average amount spent on online shopping of the respondents, the questionnaire was intricately designed; also, the demographic variables were computed.

The main objectives of identifying the influence of WQ on CS and the influence of WQ on PI are considered by the research methodology. The following tables illustrate the respondents' demographic profiles.

Table 3: (a)

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 25 years	197	29.9%
26-34 years	273	41.4%
35-45 years	136	20.6%
More than 45 years	52	7.9%

Table 3: (b)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	361	54.8%
Female	297	45.1%

Table 3: (c)

Purpose of using an online shopping website	Frequency	Percentage
Gathering information	175	26.5%
Making transaction	167	25.3%
Entertainment	208	31.6%
Any other	108	16.4%

Table 3: (d)

The average frequency of time spent on online shopping websites	Frequency	Percentage
Once a year	24	3.6%
Once a month	53	8.05%
Once a week	75	11.3%
2-3 times a week	123	18.6%
1-2 hours a day	216	32.8%
More than 2 hours in a day	167	25.3%

Table 3: (e)

The average amount spent on online shopping	Frequency	Percentage
Up to Rs. 1000 per month	218	33.1%
Rs. 1000-10000 per month	282	42.8%
More than Rs. 10000 per month	158	24.01%

6. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Here, through the descriptive analysis of standard deviation and correlation, the data collected from the respondents is analysed and discussed. Here, the correlation coefficient between CS, Emotional Appeal (EA), Informational Fit to task, Intuitive Operations, PI, Response Time (RT), Trust, WQ, Ease of Understanding, Consistent Image (Image), Innovativeness, Online Completeness (OC), Relative Advantage (RA), Tailored Communication (TC), and Visual Appeal (VA)was analysed and discussed. After that, the construct's reliability and validity evaluation were measured and the hypothesis was generated and tested by utilizing SEM techniques.

6.1. Reliability and validity analysis

Table 4: Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CS	0.884	0.884	0.604
Ease of Understanding	0.833	0.833	0.625
EA	0.84	0.842	0.641
Image	0.823	0.823	0.607

Informational Fit to task	0.854	0.854	0.662
Innovative Appeal	0.839	0.839	0.635
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Trust	0.862	0.862	0.676
VA	0.87	0.87	0.691
WQ	0.858	0.859	0.606

Source: Author's creation

The above table analyzed the reliability and validity analyses of construct variables. The variables are CS, Ease of Understanding, EA, Image, Informational Fit to task, Innovative Appeal, Intuitive Operations, OC, PI, RA, RT, TC, Trust, VA, and WQ. Here, to test the relationship among the construct variables, the SEM was utilized. Every single construct's reliability (measured by the coefficient alpha) surpasses 0.7; hence, it reaches an acceptable level for all constructs. The Cronbach's alpha values of CS (0.884), Ease of Understanding (0.833), EA (0.84), Image (0.823), Informational Fit to task (0.854), Innovative Appeal (0.839), Intuitive Operations (0.831), OC (0.781), PI (0.899), RA (0.805), RT (0.801), TC (0.788), Trust (0.862), VA (0.87), and WQ (0.858) indicated that the constructs for these scales have acceptable reliability. The variable of PI and CS achieved the highest composite reliability value 0.898 and 0.884. Thereafter, the variable VA achieved the highest average variance extracted, which is 0.691, and the OC achieved the least average variance extracted, which is 0.541.

6.2. Analysis of correlation

Table 5: Analysis of the correlation between the constructs

	CS	**Design**	**EA**	**Image**	**Info**	**Innov**	**Intuit**	**OC**	**PI**	**RA**	**RT**	**TC**	**Trust**	**VA**	**WQ**
CS	0.77														
Design	0.74	0.79													
EA	0.67	0.58													
Image	0.78	0.64	0.73												
Info	0.79	0.71	0.65	0.69											
Innov	0.67	0.60	0.73	0.64	0.70										
Intuit	0.75	0.90	0.60	0.64	0.71	0.60									
OC	0.79	0.70	0.59	0.78	0.70	0.59	0.76	0.73							
PI	0.89	0.63	0.64	0.66	0.69	0.54	0.66	0.68	0.83						
RA	0.74	0.63	0.55	0.75	0.62	0.52	0.67	0.9	0.63	0.76					
RT	0.74	0.74	0.70	0.70	0.84	0.71	0.77	0.77	0.64	0.67	0.75				
TC	0.77	0.69	0.761	0.73	0.88	0.73	0.72	0.75	0.68	0.72	0.84	0.74			

Trust	0.68	0.68	0.71	0.63	0.74	0.63	0.69	0.63	0.65	0.57	0.73	0.75	0.82		
VA	0.73	0.68	0.73	0.69	0.73	0.79	0.71	0.63	0.62	0.57	0.75	0.75	0.62	0.83	
WQ	0.81	0.70	0.70	0.71	0.85	0.78	0.71	0.71	0.72	0.81	0.71	0.83	0.80	0.82	0.64

Source: Author's creation

The above table illustrates the correlation relationship among the variables of CS, Ease of Understanding (Design), EA, Image, Informational Fit to task (Info), Innovative Appeal (Innov), Intuitive Operations (Intuit), OC, PI, RA, RT, TC, Trust, VA, and WQ. Here, all the construct variables are positively correlated with every single construct variable. CS has achieved the highest correlation betwixt the variable of PIs, which is 0.894. The ease of understanding was highly correlated with the intuitive operations, which is 0.90. The EA, informational fit to the task, and RT achieved the highest correlation value between the TCs (0.76), (0.88), and (0.84). Next, the image obtained the highest correlation between the variable of RA (0.75). Thereafter, the PI and trust achieved the highest correlation to the variable of WQ.

6.3. Testing of hypothesis

The hypothesis tested are as under:

H1: CS has a positive effect on PI

H2: Ease of understanding has a positive effect on WQ

H3: EA has a significant effect on WQ

H4: Image has a significant effect on WQ

H5: Informational Fit to task has a positive effect on WQ

H6: Intuitive Operations has a positive effect on WQ

H7: OC has a positive effect on WQ

H8: RA has a significant effect on WQ

H9: RT has a positive effect on WQ

H10: TC has a positive effect on WQ

H11: Trust has a positive effect on WQ

H12: VA has a significant effect on WQ

H13: WQ has a positive effect on CS

Table 5: Analysis of Hypothesis

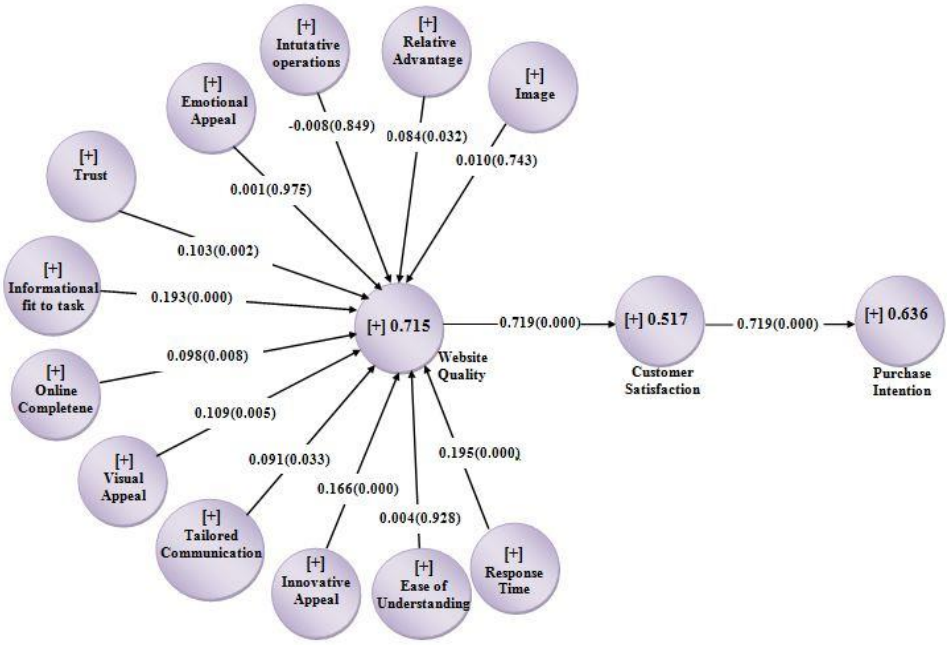
Hypothesis	Path coefficient	Standard deviation	T statistics	Q square	R square	Remark
Customer Satisfaction ->PI	0.798	0.018	44.051**	0.483	63.6%	Supported
Ease of Understanding ->WQ	0.004	0.046	0.09	0.491	71.5%	Not Supported
EA ->WQ	0.001	0.034	0.032			Not Supported
Image ->WQ	0.01	0.031	0.329			Not Supported
Informational Fit to task ->WQ	0.193	0.043	4.484**			Supported
Innovative Appeal ->WQ	0.166	0.035	4.771**			Supported
Intuitive Operations ->WQ	-0.008	0.04	0.19			Not Supported
OC ->WQ	0.098	0.036	2.711**			Supported
RA ->WQ	0.084	0.039	2.171**			Supported
RT ->WQ	0.195	0.042	4.651**			Supported
TC ->WQ	0.091	0.042	2.163**			Supported
Trust ->WQ	0.103	0.032	3.171**			Supported
VA ->WQ	0.109	0.038	2.906**			Supported
WQ ->CS	0.719	0.019	37.754**	0.351	51.7%	Supported

Source: Author's creation

By utilizing a Structural equation model, the hypothesis was generated and tested. After that, the path coefficient, standard deviation, T statistics, Q square, and R square were computed. Here, hypothesis 1 attained the highest

path coefficient value, which is 0. 798.Next, it attained a 63.6% R square value; also, its remark status is supported. Thereafter, hypothesis 7 has negative path coefficients, which are -0.008 and its remark status is not supported. Then, hypothesis 2 achieved the highest standard deviation value, which is 0.046, and hypothesis 1 achieved the lowest standard deviation value, which is 0.018. The remark statuses of the supported hypothesis are H1, H5, H6, H8, H9, H10, H11, H12, and H13, while the remaining remark statuses of the hypothesis are not supported. Figure 2 depicts the constructed model of variables.

Fig 2: Structural model



7. CONCLUSION

Websites with their rapidly developing innovative features are significantly essential for consumers, businesses and retailers. Thus, high-quality websites, which render a good online experience, were developed by organizations to attract and retain their customers, by which CS and PI could be triggered. For examining the WQ's impact on CS along with the PI, this current work was conducted. From 658 respondents in India, a data sample was gathered. In this, for the analysis, a virtual sampling technique was utilized. Then, the hypothesis was generated and tested by an SEM model. Subsequently, this approach examined the WQ towards CS and PI, along with the WQ's frequency distribution. For the generated constructs, the correlation relationships were examined. The outcome of this work deduced that a significant aspect of customer PIs and CS is the WQ. Also, CS was highly affected by the factors of service interactions and usability. Then, CS has a considerable influence on PI; also, the path coefficient value is 0.798. This exhibited that the significant variables influencing PI are WQ and CS. This result helps to develop a presence at a higher social level and encourages them to maintain trust in their websites across various online platforms by establishing a response model and permeating human elements. By considering more populations and examining how different cultural factors influence the CS with the WQ's domain, the work can be extended in the future. Reliant on these outcomes, the WQ may be innovative and up to date that permits users to communicate with each other to share their experiences, opinions, etc.

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