Consumer Search Behaviour and Adoption of Online Booking of Travel Services in Saudi Arabia

Khald Alatawy

Supervised by

Dr. Anne Broderick and Dr. Suha Omar

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De Montfort University

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, wife, children, brothers and sisters for all the love, support and encouragement they have always given me on my journey through life.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my truthful thanks and deep appreciation to my supervisors, Dr Anne Broderick and Dr. Suha Omar for their guidance, priceless input, assistance, encouragement, insightful suggestions, and endless patience towards the end. Their brilliant contributions and effective review of the work are also gratefully acknowledged.

My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, he believed in me. I wish to thank him from the bottom of my heart. Mothers are the sweetest gift from God to us. There is no way I can ever really thank my mother for all she does for me. Thanks for all the things you have done for me.

To my wife and children, no man succeeds without a good woman behind him, thanks for being such a wonderful wife to me and also for being the mother of my wonderful children.

To all my brothers and sisters, there is no time like the old times, when you and I were young, thanks for the warm love you have given me.

Special thanks to all the participants for agreeing to participate in the study and for devoting so much of their time to answering my questions and completing questionnaires.

Thank you to you all.

Abstract

The main aim of this study was to investigate current search behaviour among Saudi consumers of travel services, to establish their attitudes towards, and adoption of online search and booking processes. It also aimed to explore current experiences within travel agencies of the adoption of online booking systems in the Saudi Arabian market. The study relied on a multi-method research design, with a focus on using both qualitative and quantitative data across three sequentially organised phases of data collection. Phase one centred on in-depth interviews with Saudi travel agents; phase two adopted a combined approach, using observation and semi-structured interviews, with a focus on getting a comprehensive insight into Saudi consumer search behaviour. In phase three, the researcher undertook a survey of internet adoption and search behaviour with a cross-section of Saudi consumers, located in the UK (N=481).

Findings from the first phase demonstrated that Saudi Arabian travel firms continue to rely on offline booking methods and have been relatively slow to adopt online systems. Key factors influencing the adoption of online travel booking technology included attitudinal and cultural factors and an absence of customer trust, security and privacy. The second phase results indicated that information search and evaluation emerged as a single highly integrated process, however behavioural elements within the process varied across individuals, according to their search strategy and level of prior experience. In phase three, the key relationships in the conceptual model were examined, notably the relationship between search constructs and purchase intention. Only a few past studies have examined information search and evaluation in relation to purchase in emerging markets. This study offers a more in-depth perspective on search intention and information search and evaluation in the pre-purchase stage for online travel products. Key insights have emerged on the nature of the relationship between search intention, information search and evaluation and purchase intention through the development of a more comprehensive conceptual framework than in prior studies. The qualitative research demonstrated a) how search ability and search strategies were reflective of confident and well-established search behaviour on the part of Saudi consumers and b) gender and regional variations c) that the nature of information search and evaluation is shaped by behavioural differences at an individual consumer level. The study also offers a deeper understanding of the challenging perceptions that exist with regards to the slow adoption of online travel processes among Saudi Arabian travel firms.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction....2
1.1 Brief Theoretical Overview of Thesis....2
1.1.1 Sector Focus of Research....4
1.2 The Significance of Research on Travel in the Saudi Arabian Context....4
1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Research....7
1.4 Potential Contribution of the Research....7
1.5 Thesis Outline....8

Chapter Two: Research Context

2.0 Introduction....13
2.1 The Internet and the Online Travel Market....13
2.2 Overview of Tourism in Saudi Arabia....15
2.3 Technology Challenges in the Saudi Arabian Travel Market....18
2.3.1 Technology Adoption in Saudi Arabia....18
2.3.2 Challenges to technology adoption in Saudi Travel Market....19
2.4 Internet Usage for Travel Among Saudi Arabian Consumers....23
2.4.1 Focus of this Research....26
2.5 Summary....26

Chapter Three: Literature Review of Key Theories

3.0 Introduction....29
3.1 The Theories of Technology Adoption....29
3.1.1 Rogers's Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DOI)....30
3.1.1.1 The Users of Technology Categories....31
3.1.1.2 Lead Users and Early Adopters....31
3.1.1.3 The Early Majority, Late Majority and Laggards....33
3.1.1.4 Gap between Early Adopters and Other Users....34
3.1.2 Diffusion of an Innovation Process....34
3.1.2.1.1 Features of the Innovation....36
3.1.3 Challenges in Aspects of Diffusion of Innovation Theory....37
3.1.4 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)....38
3.1.4.1 The Technology Acceptance Theory II (2)....40
3.1.4.2 Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology....41
3.1.4.3 The Technology Acceptance Theory III (3)....42
3.1.4.4 Evaluation of the TAM model....43

3.2 Behavioural Perspectives Theories on Customer Adoption of the Internet....45
3.2.1 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)....45
3.2.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)....47
3.2.2.1 Evaluation of the Theory of Planned Behaviour....48
3.2.3 The Extension of Theory of Planned Behaviour....49
3.2.3.1 Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour (DTPB)....49

3.2.3.2 Pavlou and Fygenson's Work on the Theory of Planned Behaviour.....50
3.2.3.3 Chen and Tung's work on the Theory of Planned Behaviour.....51
3.3 Search Intention and Evaluation.....52
3.3.1 Search within the Traditional Decision Making Process.....52
3.3.2 Definition of Search Intention.....54
3.3.3 Search Intention in Past Online Studies.....55
3.3.4 Information Search and Evaluation.....56
3.3.4.1 The Transition from Traditional/Offline Information Search and Evaluation Processes to Online Versions.....56
3.3.4.2 Influence of Information Search and Evaluation on Consumer Purchase Intention.....59
3.4 Summary.....60

Chapter Four: The Development of a Conceptual Framework

4.0 Introduction.....63
4.1 Introduction to Preliminary Conceptual Framework 64
4.1.1 Use of TPB and TAM as integrated behavioural perspective.....65
4.1.2 Key Constructs in framework.....66
4.2 Attitude.....67
4.2.1 Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU).....69
4.3 Subjective Norms.....71
4.4 Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC).....73
4.5 Perceived Convenience.....75
4.6 Perceived Trust.....77
4.6.1 Perceived Risk.....78
4.6.2 Perceived Security.....80
4.6.3 Consumer Privacy.....81
4.7 Search Intention.....83
4.8 Information Search and Evaluation.....85
4.9 Purchase Intention.....87
4.10 Potential Moderating Variables.....87
4.10.1 Demographic Factors.....88
4.10.2 Past Experience.....89
4.10.3 Lifestyle: role of internet in daily life.....90
4.11 Summary.....91

Chapter Five: Research Methodology

5.0 Introduction.....94
5.1 Research Aims and Key Objectives.....94
5.2 Research Philosophy.....95
5.2.1 Value of Pragmatism in Travel Search Studies: Versatility.....97
5.3 Nature of Inquiry.....99
5.3.1 Inductive and Deductive Reasoning.....99
5.3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Research.....102
5.1 Research Design and Strategy(Multiple Method Approach).....104

5.3.3 Past Travel Studies used Multiple Research Approach.....105
5.4 Data Collection Methods, Sampling and Research Instruments.....107
5.5.1 Secondary Research.....107
5.5.2 Phase One: Semi-Structured Interviews with Travel Managers.....108
5.5.2.1 Interview Planning.....110
5.5.2.2 Respondent Sample and data collection: Phase One.....112
5.5.3 Phase Two: Observation and Interview.....113
5.5.3.1 Online Search Task Followed by Semi-Structured Interview.....114
5.5.3.1.1 Observation Sheet.....115
5.5.3.1.2 Semi-structured Interview Schedule.....117
5.5.3.2 Respondent Sample - Phase Two.....119
5.5.4 Phase Three: Survey on Search Behaviour.....120
5.5.4.1 Questionnaire Design 122
5.5.4.2 Respondent Sample - Phase Three.....133
5.5.5 Pilot Study.....134
5.6 Anticipated Ethical Issues of Data Collection.....135
5.7 Data Analysis Procedures.....137
5.8 Summary.....138

Chapter Six: Research Findings from Phase One and Phase Two

6.0 Introduction.....141
6.1 Key Research Findings: Phase One.....141
6.1.1 Level of Internet Technology Adoption.....142
6.1.1.1 Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use.....142
6.1.1.2 Contextual Challenges factors.....144
6.1.2 Customer Experience of Booking and Demographic Influences.....146
6.1.3 Summary of Phase One Findings: Implications for later phases of research...149
6.1.3.1 Lack of perceived usefulness.....149
6.1.3.2 Patterns Relating to Privacy and Security of Online Booking.....149
6.1.3.3 Level of Engagement of Saudi Consumers in Online Travel Activities.....151
6.1.3.4 Social Pressures (Norms) that Influence Adoption of Internet Booking.....151

6.2 Key Research Findings: Phase Two.....153
6.2.1 Data Collection Process.....153
6.2.2 Search Strategies determined by search ability.....154
6.2.2.1 Search Strategy of Simplification.....155
6.2.2.1.1 Impact of Consumer Recommendations.....157
6.2.2.2 Empowered Consumers: Use of Online and Offline Channels.....159
6.2.2.3 Variation between Travel Process in the KSA and the UK.....160
6.2.2.4 Information search and Evaluation patterns.....161
6.2.2.5 Individual Search Variations.....162
6.2.2.5.1 Education, Age, Gender and regional variations.....162
6.2.2.6 Summary of Phase Two Findings : Implications for Phase Three.....164

6.2.2.6.1 Patterns Relating to Respondent Skill Level and Perceived Behavioral Control.....165
6.2.2.6.2 Simplification of Search Strategies: Implications for Search intention construct.....166
6.2.2.6.3 Implications for Information Search and Evaluation construct…….....167
6.2.2.6.4 Potential Moderating Variables of Saudi Consumers.....169
6.3 Summary.....170

Chapter Seven: Research Findings from Phase Three

7. Introduction.....173
7.1 Response Rate and Sample Characteristics.....174
7.2 Data Screening.....177
7.3 The Structure of the Research Tool: Principal Component Analysis.....178
7.4 Scales Reliability Analysis.....184
7.5 Normality and Intercorrelation in Scales.....185
7.6 Association between Respondent characteristics and research dimensions.....187
7.6.1 Respondent categorical variables and research dimensions.....187
7.6.1.1 Gender differences.....188
7.6.1.2 Regional differences.....189
7.6.2 Respondent ordinal variables and research dimensions.....189
7.7 Proposed Research Model.....192
7.8 Regression Model Analysis.....193
7.8.1 Introduction and method choosing.....193
7.8.2 Confirmation of Hypotheses.....195
7.8.3 Multiple Regression analysis.....198
7.8.4 Results from Moderating variables.....200
7.9 Summary.....204

Chapter Eight: Discussion and Contribution of Study

8.0 Introduction.....208
8.1 Discussion of Findings.....208
8.1.1 Current technology adoption patterns in the Saudi travel context.....209
8.1.1.1 Research Objectives of Phase One.....209
8.1.1.2 Attitudinal and Cultural factors with impact on technology adoption.....209
8.1.2 Issues to Emerge in Relation to Search Behaviour.....211
8.1.2.1 Research Objectives for Phase Two.....211
8.1.2.2 Importance of user skills in online in search patterns of Saudi consumers.....212
8.1.2.3 Gender variations in Approach and Opportunities.....213
8.1.2.4 Contradictory perspectives towards the use of online Technology between Saudi travel firms and consumers.....215

8.1.2.5 Information search and evaluation as an interconnected process....216

8.1.3 Examination of Relationships in the Conceptual Framework....217
8.1.3.1 Research Objective for Phase Three....217
8.1.3.2 Relationship between Online Search Intention, Information Search and Evaluation and Purchase Intention....218
8.1.3.3 The Role of Perceived Convenience....219
8.1.3.4 Perceived Trust....220
8.1.3.5 The Role of Attitudes, Perceived Behavioural Controls and Subjective Norms....223
8.1.3.6 The Role and Strength of Independent Factors Contributing to Search Intention....225
8.1.3.7 The Role of Moderating Variables....227
8.2 Key Contribution of this Study....227
8.2.1 Theoretical Contribution....227
8.2.2 Contribution to Practice....231

8.3 Managerial Implications for Travel Agents in Saudi Arabia....232
8.4 Research Limitations....235
8.5 Directions for Future Research....236

9.0 References....238
10.0 Appendices....277

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Internet Growth and Population Statistics.....22
Table 4.1: The Effect of Moderators.....91
Table 5.1: Key Research Objectives.....95
Table 5.2: Strength and weakness of qualitative and quantitative research.....103
Table 5.3: Interview Questions: Phase One.....111
Table 5.4: Interview Questions: Phase Two.....118
Table 5.5: Brief Overview of Key Sources.....123
Table 5.6: Measurement items designed for Attitude.....124
Table 5.7: Measurement items designed for Perceived Usefulness.....124
Table 5.8: Measurement items designed for Perceived Ease of Use.....124
Table 5.9: Measurement items designed for Perceived Behavioural Control.....125
Table 5.10: Measurement items designed for Trust.....126
Table 5.11: Measurement items designed for Security.....126
Table 5.12: Measurement Items designed for Privacy.....126
Table 5.13: Measurement items designed for Risk.....127
Table 5.14: Measurement items designed for Search Intention.....127
Table 5.15: Measurement items designed for Purchase Intention.....127
Table 5.16: Measurement items designed for Subjective Norms.....128
Table 5.17: Measurement items designed for Perceived Convenience.....129
Table 5.18: Measurement items designed for Information Search and Evaluation.....130
Table 6.1: The search intention construct's items.....167
Table 7.1: Sample Characteristics.....175
Table 7.2: Internal Consistencies for Key Constructs.....182
Table 7.3: Reliabilities (Internal Consistencies) for Key Constructs.....185
Table 7.4: Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables.....186
Table 7.5: Scales Correlation Coefficients.....187
Table 7.6: An Independent-Samples U-Test 188
Table 7.7: An Independent-Samples H-Test 189
Table 7.8: Kendall's Tau-B Correlation Coefficients for Ordinal Variables 191
Table 7.9: Key research hypotheses.....193
Table 7.10: Predictors for Search Intention.....199
Table 7.11: Potential Moderators used in this study.....201
Table 7.12: Results of Moderation (Age).....202
Table 7.13: Results of Moderation (Education).....203
Table 7.14: Results of Moderation (The level of internet usage experience).....204
Table 7.15: Results of Moderation (Online Travel Experience).....204

List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Diffusion of Innovations Model.....30
Figure 3.2: The Users of Technology Categories.....31
Figure 3.3: Crossing the Chasm: The Gap between Early Adopters and Other Users….....34
Figure 3.4: Diffusion of an Innovation Process.....36
Figure 3.5: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).....39
Figure 3.6: The TAM and Three Popular Extensions.....39
Figure 3.7: The Technology Acceptance Theory II.....40
Figure 3.8: Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology.....41
Figure 3.9: The Technology Acceptance Theory III (3).....42
Figure 3.10: The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA).....45
Figure 3.11: Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).....47
Figure 3.12: Theory of Planned Behaviour with Beliefs Decomposed.....49
Figure 3.13: Pavlou & Fygenson's Extension of Theory of Planned Behaviour.....50
Figure 3.14: Chen and Tung's Extension of Theory of Planned Behaviour.....51
Figure 4.1: The Preliminary Conceptual Framework.....67
Figure 4.2: Linkages between Online Purchase Behaviour Variables.....86
Figure 5.1: Observation Sheet.....115
Figure 5.2: The Conceptual Framework.....122
Figure 7.1: Proposed Research Model.....192
Figure 7.2: Predictors of Search Intention.....….....199
Figure 8.1: Final Research Framework Discussion.....218

Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

- **1.1** Brief Theoretical Overview of Thesis
  - **1.1.1** Sector Focus of Research
- **1.2** The Significance of Research on Travel in the Saudi Arabian Context
- **1.3** Aims and Objectives of the Research
- **1.4** Potential Contribution of the Research
- **1.5** Thesis Outline

1.0 Introduction

Section 1.1 gives a brief outline of the theoretical overview of the thesis, followed in Section 1.2 by an indication of the significance of the research in the Saudi Arabian travel context. Subsequently, Section 1.3 sets out the aims and objectives of the study. Section 1.4 addresses the potential contribution of the study and, finally the structure of the thesis is outlined in Section 1.5.

1.1 Brief Theoretical Overview of the Thesis

This study initially drew on two well-established strands of research: firstly, behavioural theories, such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985) and secondly, theories of technology Acceptance (TAM) (Davis, 1989), and Rogers's (1983) Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI). The TPB, introduced by Ajzen (1985), has been considered one of the most persuasive theories (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005) for explaining customer behaviour. The TPB can predict actions based on behaviour control, examining the relationship between attitudes, beliefs, behavioural intention and behaviours across different domains (e.g. healthcare, marketing). The TPB states that attitudes relating to behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (PBC) combine to influence behavioural intention and action. The TPB has been found to be an effective tool for predicting customer behaviour, relative to online shopping, leading to actual search/purchasing (Ajzen, 1991; Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009; Shim et al., 2001; Taylor & Todd, 1995).

The TAM was developed to determine users' acceptance of modern technologies (Davis, 1989). It is used to predict user acceptance and usage; thus, users will accept and adopt online services if they perceive the system is easy to use and useful for conducting planned online activities. Many authors have used the TAM to investigate the acceptance and usage of new technologies (Celik, 2009; Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003; Wixom & Todd, 2005). A parallel theory, the DOI model, can be used to predict why, how, and the rate at which organisations and individuals will accept new ideas and technology (Roger, 1995). Davis (1989) states that previous studies on these theories proved that, in order to maximise customers' utility, the newest technologies should ultimately replace older technologies. Similarly, the technology adoption lifecycle (TALC), explains DOI

through the marketplace, in particular for technology-oriented products and technical solutions (Rogers, 2005). These studies demonstrate that the adoption of technology is a progressive process and individual perception towards technology can influence actions.

One context where the adoption of technology is very significant is in online services. Since the creation of the World Wide Web (WWW), the internet has become an important source of information for consumers worldwide. Shoppers can use the web as a tool for searching for information about a product, process or service; websites offer both small enterprises and large companies the opportunity to develop online shopping sites offering simple purchasing procedures (Borgman, Hirsh & Hiller, 1996). Accordingly, most service transactions can be executed online and customers have distinct preferences and motivating factors in play as they make online purchase decisions (Foxall et al., 2009; Solomon et al., 2010); this is true for all product and service categories, although with varying degrees of importance. Some past research studies have focused on conceptual frameworks that seek to understand consumer motivation in adopting online technology, (e.g. TAM, TPB, perceived e-readiness model (PERM) (Brdsee, Corbitt & Pittayachawan, 2011). Other past studies have sought to link technology adoption, behavioural patterns and perceived readiness with purchase intention (Shim et al., 2001, Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Huang et al., 2011; Lee, 2009; Amaro & Duarte, 2014).

A more limited number of past studies have acknowledged the importance of search patterns in technology adoption. Search intention has direct impact on consumer choice for given products (Bargiela, 2009) and search strategies used by consumers vary significantly (Ho, Lin & Chen, 2012). Greater experience in shopping may inform the effectiveness of information search and the nature of information search may be evaluated in relation to the actual purchase (Darley et al., 2010; Hawley & Xiao, 2011). Search strategies are important in studying online search behaviour (Bradlow & Schmittlein, 2000) and research remains at an early stage in identifying the nature of search behaviour prior to purchase (Bargiela, 2009; Chorus et al., 2010; Ho, Lin & Chen, 2012; Jani et al., 2011; Xiang & Pan, 2009).

No study to date has examined technology adoption elements (as in TAM), behavioural intention elements (as in TPB), and the link to search intention and information evaluation prior to actual purchase. This study addresses the theoretical links between these areas in the online travel context, as shown in the framework on page 67.

1.1.1 Sector Focus of Research

With respect to how the theoretical focus links to the context, travel services can encompass different levels of technology adoption by individuals, (Bukhari, Ghoneim & Dennis, 2012; Lan, 2012). Customers may exhibit different degrees of e-readiness, (Brdsee, Corbitt, Pittayachawan & Alsaggaf, 2012; Kassem & Nassoura, 2012), and there could be variation in behavioural expectations with regards to level of engagement in search (Mansoor & Jalal 2011; Mills & Law, 2013), and in the perceived value of online search (Al Rasheed & Mirza, 2011; Kassem & Nassoura, 2012). The purchasing context of travel is likely to encourage a range of search behaviour that varies from routine search patterns for repeat decision-making for a low cost online flight, to a two-week family holiday that involves a more complex decision-making, greater evaluation of alternatives and more extensive search behaviour. Thus, the chosen sector should be information–rich and the context should enable a good variation in individual search behaviour to emerge, offering representative patterns that might link customer attitudes to behavioural norms, to search intention, information search and evaluation and finally to purchase intention.

1.2 The Significance of Research on Travel in the Saudi Arabian Context

Saudi Arabia is located in the South-eastern part of the Asian subcontinent and it has a population of close to thirty million people, over six million of whom are non-Saudis (Hobbs & Dolan, 2008). The country as a whole is establishing itself as technology-friendly, especially in view of the national e-Government program which was launched in 2005 (Godart et al., 2009). Central government in Saudi Arabia seek to link technology with raising the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector, providing better, faster public services and ensuring accurate information gathering and dissemination, which indicates a high degree of acceptability of technology in general within the region. This

view is also supported by Salkowitz (2010), who observes that Saudi Arabia is unusual in being rich, at the same time as being young (a developing country), and therefore possessing the wherewithal to use technology effectively and make its benefits available to all citizens. Accordingly, Godart et al. (2009) highlight distinct differences within Saudi communities with regard to technology adoption for basic day-to-day activities, such as online travel booking. The digital divide within Saudi Arabia is large, with a gap between those who have access to, and a good knowledge of, technology and others who are not affluent or knowledgeable enough to possess this ability. Nonetheless, the adoption of internet technology is seen as potentially transforming Saudi Arabian society; the internet is credited as enabling information processing and sharing, and further enabling social networking, as well as online commerce (Alrashid, 2012). Increased spending on Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Saudi Arabia has been noted. The Business Monitor International (BMI, 2009 and 2012) recorded that a surprising 40% of spending on ICT came from the Saudi government, noting a technological shift in Saudi Arabia wireless technology.

These developments have led to calls for studies seeking to empirically record the impact on the Saudi Arabian individual consumers, in comparison to other developed and developing countries. The interest in such studies is, in part, led by the growing interest in the influence of culture on consumer attitudes towards the use and adoption of a service that the consumer participates in (Donthu & Yoo, 1998; Lin, 2010; Zhang & Neelangkavil, 1997). The decreasing effect of geographical borders, the desire among consumer services firms to expand into overseas markets, and the support for consumerist culture, have all contributed to strong cultural influences on consumer choices (Chao & Spillane, 2010; Hofstede & Bond, 1984). Such studies are further given impetus by the realisation that Saudi Arabia has a steadily growing population that is using the internet. Al Rasheed and Mirza (2011) cited tabulations by the World Internet Users and Population Stats; which establish that 22.7% of the Saudi population were using the internet, while a survey by the Arab Advisors Group revealed that 39% of Saudi internet users purchased products online.

Studies have tried to identify factors that link internet adoption and online search behaviour (Longhi, 2011). Alrashid (2012) outlines how customer purchase patterns for well-known tourism destinations are changing as result of the internet and Marcussen (2009) notes the popularity of travel products in online search and purchase patterns. It is argued that the internet has a key role in shaping the travel industry through information accessibility. Al Rasheed and Mirza (2011) also suggest that the internet is transforming tourism, evident in the emergence of e-tourism and e-travel services.

Both practitioners and researchers now seek to further understand the online behaviour of Saudi consumers (Al Rasheed & Mirza, 2011). Past studies have addressed online technology adoption in Saudi Arabia; Al-Maghrabi (2010), for example, studied the factors that drive online shopping; Al-Shohaib and Frederick (2010) investigated the influences on internet adoption; Al-Somali, Gholami and Clegg (2009) examined the acceptance of online banking; Almogbil (2005) studied the challenges facing online banking adoption and Al-Shohaib and Frederick (2010) investigated factors that influence internet use in Saudi Arabia. However, in tourism, most research on the impact of the Internet on tourism has relied on findings from the Western countries, more specifically in the US and Europe. Alrashid (2011), noted that little was known about the effects of the internet as a driving force in tourism in the Gulf countries, suggesting this as a limit to internet adoption benefits due to cultural differences.

Few studies to date have explored technology adoption in Saudi Arabian tourism from the customer perspective and no study to date has fully examined search intention and information evaluation and the relationship to consumer final purchase. To fill this gap, this study initially briefly examines Saudi travel agency experiences of online booking systems and internet adoption. Thereafter, through in-depth observational research, the study investigates the online search behaviour that Saudi travel consumers engage in prior to purchase. Finally, the study investigates, in a large cross-sectional sample of Saudi consumers, the relationship between consumer attitudes towards use of the internet for information search, perceived behavioural norms towards internet usage, search intention and information evaluation prior to purchase, and the link to purchase intention.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Research

The main aim of this study is to investigate the current search behaviour of Saudi consumers of travel services and to establish their attitudes towards, and adoption of, online booking, search and purchase processes. From this, several research objectives emerge.

	Objectives	Method
Phase One	• To investigate the current pattern in internet technology adoption in the Saudi travel sector. • To discover contextual factors in the Saudi travel market that may influence the adoption of online booking systems.	(Based on interviews)
Phase Two	• To obtain in-depth understanding of the search behaviour and search strategies of selected Saudi travel consumers. • To assess the applicability of the selected scale items for the search intention and information search and evaluation constructs	Based on observations and interviews with Saudi consumers)
Phase Three	• To investigate consumer perception and attitude towards internet adoption in travel choices online. • To gain insight into search intention and search information and evaluation patterns. • To examine the relationships between the key constructs in the preliminary conceptual framework.	(Based on cross-sectional survey of Saudi consumers)

1.4 Potential Contribution of the Study

The potential theoretical contribution of the research is theory building; firstly, to offer a more extensive understanding of search intention and information search and evaluation in online travel booking. This study should offer further insight into the dimensions that moderate and shape online search and purchase intention. Secondly, it hopes to develop a combined theoretical framework to bring together key elements of TAM, of TPB and search intention as an integrated set of constructs and to include factors that may determine search intention, and may influence information search evaluation and subsequently purchase intention.

A limited amount has been written on the subject of customer adoption of online processes and search behaviour in the Saudi Arabian travel sector. It is therefore hoped, at a contextual level, to offer some useful insight into the contextual developments that are occurring in the travel sector in Saudi Arabia with regards to the adoption of online travel booking. In trying to achieve this contextual understanding, it is hoped that the research can offer insight into the nature and variation in online search behaviour and how these factors influence Saudi consumer purchase patterns. In practical terms, the results of the research should also offer travel agency managers a well again thoughtful of the issues that are important to Saudi consumers as they engage in online travel search.

1.5 Thesis Outline

This thesis includes eight chapters, as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter One begins with a statement of the theoretical positioning of the study in Section 1.1, and an indication of the significance of the research in the Saudi Arabian travel context in Section 1.2. Thereafter, Section 1.3 sets out the aims and objectives of the study. The potential contribution of the study is noted in Section 1.4 and, finally the structure of the thesis is outlined in Section 1.5.

Chapter Two: Research Context

The second chapter offers a contextual overview of the study. Section 2.1 covers the internet and the online travel market; Section 2.2 examines tourism in Saudi Arabia; Section 2.3 addresses the changes in technology, barriers to adoption in the Saudi Arabian travel market and identifies contextual challenges to the adoption of online booking systems. The final section (2.4) identifies current customer characteristics in adoption patterns- and clarifies the focus of this study.

Chapter Three: Literature Review of Key Theories

An extensive literature review of academic sources was undertaken in three areas in this study: a) technology adoption theories, b) theories on reasoned action and planned

behaviour,and c) past studies relating to online search intention and search evaluation. The chapter begins with a critical review of the published literature on technology adoption (3.1), incorporating in Section 3.1.1 a brief overview of technology adoption theory, and a brief explanation of Rogers's (1983) Theory of DOI. Thereafter, key theories on behavioural perspectives are discussed in Section 3.2; including the TRA in 3.2.1, the TPB and alternatives in 3.2.2, and extensions of the TPB in Section 3.2.3. Finally, in Section 3.3, an overview of search intention and evaluation patterns is offered, including an analysis how search is integrated in decision making processes in Section 3.3.1; the motivational factors that influence search intention in Section 3.3.2, an outline of how past studies have addressed online search in Section 3.3.3 and finally information search and evaluation is outlined in Section 3.3.4, including the transition from offline to online information search and evaluation and an overview of links to purchase intention.

Chapter Four: The Development of a Conceptual Framework

Chapter Four sets out the theoretical dimensions of the research, with an extensive review of the available literature on these dimensions. Thirteen key constructs are presented in the conceptual framework on page 67 and the research hypothesis relating to each of the constructs is identified at the end of each section. Key constructs include:

- Attitude
- Perceived usefulness (PU)
- Perceived ease of use (PEOU),
- Perceived Trust,
- Perceived Security,
- Consumer Privacy,
- Perceived Risk,
- Perceived convenience,
- Subjective norms, perceived behavioural control (PBC),
- Search intention,
- Information search and evaluation,
- Purchase intention.

This chapter discusses each key construct in detail, noting the hypothesised relationships established in this conceptual framework and outlining researcher expectations of how

the proposed model may predict those variables that affect search intention and the factors influencing information search and evaluation and purchase intention.

Chapter Five: Research Methodology

This chapter sets out the methodology adopted in the study and the procedures that have been used in the collection and analysis of the data. Initially, Section 5.1 outlines the main aim and objectives of the study. Section 5.2 identifies the underlying research philosophy, that of pragmatism, by defining it, considering the value of pragmatism as a philosophy and finally highlighting past studies that have adopted a pragmatist philosophy to address research in the travel sector. Section 5.3 identifies the nature of the inquiry, including both deductive and inductive reasoning and a quantitative and qualitative approach, discussing challenges the researcher faces when using a combined approach. Section 5.4 outlines the research design and strategy, noting the multi-method approach in the three phases of data collection in the study. Section 5.5 identifies the different phases of data collection and notes the method used, the sampling approach and the research instrument adopted. The anticipated ethical issues of data collection follow this in Section 5.6. Finally, Section 5.7 sets out the data analysis process for the study.

Chapter 6: Research Findings from Phase One and Phase Two

This chapter has two major sections as detailed below. The first section (Section 6.1) will focus on reporting the findings for the first phase of this study, which is designed to investigate current experiences with online travel services among Saudi travel firms. Key findings cover technology adoption aspects, evidence of factors affecting customer adoption of online search and an outline of how these findings infomed phase two. Section 6.2 presents phase two findings regarding online information search behaviour of Saudi travel consumers, including the patterns observed in online scenarios, (search intention and evaluation patterns) and respondents' own narratives around their online search behaviour. Implications of the findings from phase two for phase three of the research (the cross-sectional survey of Saudi consumers) are noted.

Chapter 7: Research Findings from Phase Three

Chapter Seven presents the findings of the main data collection in the study - a questionnaire that was completed by 400+ respondents. This phase of data collection investigated each construct and each of the hypothesised relationships of the conceptual framework that was proposed on page 67. Initially Section 7.1 of this chapter discusses the response rate obtained for the survey and the characteristics of the sample. The approach to data screening and the justification for the use of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) rather than Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) are noted in Sections 7.2 and 7.3 respectively. Section 7.4 reports on the reliability analysis of the scales used in the survey and the normality testing procedures are outlined in Section 7.5. Section 7.6 reports on findings relating to respondent characteristics (e.g. gender, age) and how they relate to key research dimensions. Finally, Section 7.7 presents the proposed research model and Section 7.8 explains the regression model analyses that have been undertaken, including the choice of method, the confirmation of hypotheses, and the effect of moderators.

Chapter Eight: Discussion and Contribution of the Study

Chapter Eight begins by presenting a discussion of key findings for each phase in Section 8.1. Section 8.1.1 discusses key issues to arise in relation to current technology adoption patterns in the Saudi travel market (based on phase one findings). Section 8.1.2 outlines key patterns that relate to search intention, with a focus on individual variations in search processes and evaluation that emerged from phase two findings. Section 8.1.3 will examine findings that emerged in the testing of key relationships within the conceptual model (based on phase three findings). Section 8.2 presents the key theoretical and practical (contextual) contribution of the study followed by the implications for management for Saudi Arabian travel agents in Section 8.3. Finally, Sections 8.4 and 8.5 present both the limitations of the study and the directions for future research.

Chapter Two: Research Context

2.0 Introduction

2.1 The Internet and the Online Travel Market

2.2 Overview of Tourism in Saudi Arabia

2.3 Technology Challenges in Saudi Arabian Travel Market

2.3.1 Technology Adoption in Saudi Arabia

2.3.2 Challenges to Technology Adoption in Saudi Travel Market

2.4 Internet Usage for Travel Among Saudi Arabian Consumers

2.4.1 Focus of this Research

2.5 Summary

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a contextual overview of the current study. Initially, in Section 2.1, there is a discussion of the significance of the internet to the travel industry and Section 2.2 offers and overview of the tourist industry in Saudi Arabia. Thereafter, an examination of the adoption of technology in Saudi Arabian tourism is offered in Section 2.3, noting key barriers to adoption. In Section 2.4, customer characteristics in the Saudi Arabian tourist sector that are relevant to the focus taken in this study are outlined.

2.1 The Internet and the Online Travel Market

According to Homayooni (2006), the internet can be defined as a set of interrelated networks, which link several computers allowing exchange of information at high speed. Tan and Teo (1998) identify the internet as a revolution that has transformed the means of communication and access to global information. The internet enables communication via electronic mail and discussion groups, either asynchronously or synchronously. In light of the continued trend towards globalisation, governments and industries know the advantages of linking networks, thus have invested in internet and communication infrastructure (Comin & Mestieri, 2010). Internet applications in tourism are expanding due to new electronic interfaces for defining services, from both supplier and consumer perspectives (Standing, Tang-Taye & Boyer, 2014). The internet also enables new customers to be easily reached- leading to an expansion of the customer base (Chen, Shang & Li, 2014). Changes to the structure of tourism have occurred due to the opportunity to sell online by agents, hoteliers and airlines. These processes are replacing traditional agencies and this impact has been felt strongly by travel agents (Hung & Law, 2011). Some tourism organisations that manage destinations have successfully used the internet to provide pre-trip, as well as in-trip, information to tourists, therefore promoting their destination. This is helpful in the promotion of products by medium and small-sized tourism enterprises (Abou-Shouk, Lim & Megicks, 2013).

According to El-Gohary (2012), customers for travel products have changed their buying habits with the development of internet applications and travel agencies or third party

suppliers now offer complementary services through the internet or apps. Customers appreciate accessibility, the reduced time needed and the convenience that has arisen due to the number of firms that can now specialise in varied tourism products (El-Gohary, 2012). Developing countries seek to invest in the internet in order to realise infrastructure benefits, but also to gain from opportunities for improved productivity, and low cost participation in global markets. The facilitation of e-business activities can benefit both SMEs, larger private firms and the public sector (Abou-Shouk, Lim & Megicks, 2013).

Turban, King, Liang and (2010) argue that technology is an agent of change or transition for any organisation. Organisations and consumers have, through ICT, adopted communication tools arising from Web 2.0, thus becoming digital in nature (Friedman, 2005). The internet is particularly significant in the marketing of travel related services (for booking airplane tickets, web check-in and selection of seats, as well as the hotel booking). Candrilac (2012) cite the Centre for Regional and Tourism Research report in Denmark, which sees proportional growth – with 50% of leisure trips and 40% of business travel being booked online. The internet can bring down travel costs, as availability of information leads to competitive low price travel packages; but there remains some risk perceptions about online payment among potential customers. In terms of search behaviour, individual travel planning is reported to have grown in 2012, at the time of this research, figures from New Media Trend Watch (see Candrilac, 2012) suggest that 85% of leisure travellers and 78% of business travellers engage in online travel planning.

Thus, the significance of the internet to the travel industry has been enormous. Kassem and Nassoura (2012) note the extensive information available and Brdsee, Corbitt, Pittayachawan and Alsaggaf (2012) demonstrated how internet adoption by airlines has led to a simplification of ticket booking and scheduling. Currently, customer booking options go beyond simple transactions, offering point-to-point air and hotel reservations. Lan (2012) describes the consumer travel planning process as dreaming, followed by planning and finishing with booking. Search engines provide information on destinations that suggest certain experiences that may motivate consumers (dreaming); the act of gathering information on the web, where customers may become informed about

alternative trips and routes leads to planning. Good examples of sites that facilitate travel planning are: travelspermarket.com and Expedia- booking can be done online via the destination website, while visitors use the internet via social media to tell stories, post and share pictures of their trips- which may stimulate interest in different future trips. Kassem and Nassoura (2012) note how computerised technology also enables hotel owners to manage room bookings effectively to permit customer choice. The internet is a key promotional platform, where suppliers advertise travel packages; consumers can compare offers and book travel options that best suit them.

2.2 Overview of Tourism in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is the largest Arab state in Western Asia, and has a population of close to 30 million, over six million of whom are non-Saudis (Hobbs & Dolan, 2008). Saudi Arabian tourism is the third largest industry in the country after energy and manufacturing, and the second largest in terms of foreign exchange earnings. According to the World Bank, in 2012 Saudi Arabia received about 14.3 million visitors making it the 19th the most visited country in the world; inbound tourism expenditure was 25.643 million SR, whereas domestic tourism expenditure was 31.324 million SR, with an average 6.7% growth per annum projected until end of 2015. Domestic visitors were estimated at 23,912 million in 2012, and since then, the KSA has experienced an increase in travellers who visit other regions.

Tourism development in Saudi Arabia is aimed at creating job opportunities - good job opportunities stem from national tourism; both Saudis and non-Saudis comprised a total of 1.126 million direct and indirect employees in this sector and in 2013, 27.1% of the total number of direct jobs in the economy occurred in tourism. It is expected that the number of jobs will increase to over 1.7 million by 2020 (Saudi Commission of Tourism and Antiquities, 2013). The Saudi Commission of Tourism and Antiquities (2013) stated that in Saudi Arabia there are 1.126 million employees in tourism, but that only 27.1% of that population are Saudis, as the KSA depends on other countries for labour. Tourism accounts for 6% of total employment in the KSA.

In considering the nature of tourism, Brdsee et al. (2011) state that Saudi Arabia is attractive to both religious and adventure tourists. The major tourist areas in the KSA include historical sites, coastal areas and areas of natural beauty. Brdsee et al. (2012) note that religious tourism account for seven million visitors annually; typically for the Umrah and Hajj festivals and Government expenditure has promoted religious tourism in Mecca and Medina. In 2014, an estimated 16.7 million inbound tourist arrived in Saudi Arabia, up from 13.025 million in 2012, based on the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) figures. Despite religious tourism being the foundation of the KSA's tourism industry, it was also reported that business travel was increasing owing to Saudi Arabia's status as the largest oil exporter. The BMI forecast for hotel rooms was also cited to be 178,870 by 2017, with 63% occupancy per annum.

In considering drivers of growth, a key influence is government policy. Recent development of the domestic tourism industry is a result of government plans to enhance tourism infrastructure throughout the country; this includes the development of luxury hotels and accommodation that provide high quality facilities, and the promotion of religious and cultural landmarks. According to the Business Monitor International (2013), despite the KSA's strict visa policies, tourist figures increased by a margin of 7% to 17.3 million by the end of 2013. In December 2013, the country announced a policy for issuing tourist visas; the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs approved the regulations governing the issuing of visas by the Supreme Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, as entrusted by the Council of Ministers (The Economist, 2014). This more open policy is designed to attract 88 million travellers by the year 2020. In order to increase religious tourism, the government has allocated $120 billion dollars to the two holy cities of Medina and Mecca.

The Hotel Summit Saudi Arabia (2012) established that Saudi Arabia is an attractive hospitality market particularly in light of the open policies adopted to allow international hotel chains to invest in the KSA. On the supply side, Collier International Tourism (2011), notes investment in the form of support for entertainment, sports, and Saudi cultural and heritage events. Thirty-two tourist festivals took place across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the total number of visitor arrivals was 130,025 in 2012 (Saudi

Commission of Tourism and Antiquities, 2012). Additionally, approximately 40 private museums have been licensed to establish high technology to showcase Saudi's antiquities and heritage attraction development. Contracts valued at US $89 million have been awarded for the construction of five regional museums in Hail, Tabuk, Dammam, Al Baha and Asir; this policy was cited as a great boost for the tourism industry in Saudi Arabia. Other sectors such as adventure tourism, ecotourism and shopping tourism are being developed, which matches the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities' Vision 2020 goals where it aims to create about 900,000 new jobs in the industry.

However, it is expected that competition from international companies will become stronger and domestic investment capital has been increasing, in particular, in the light of the priority placed on cultural and heritage tourism. Saudi Arabia has also encouraged private sector investment and partnership in the quest to establish tourism facilities and attractions of international quality in the KSA.

Some years ago, Shoult (2006) noted that because the KSA discouraged international tourists from visiting, the Saudi Arabian travel market was dominated by business travel and religious pilgrimage, with little or no inbound international tourism. However, this has evolved as the KSA seeks to expand its economy and diminish its dependency on the oil economy. Tourism in Saudi Arabia can progress though a focus on history, culture and the natural environment. Harper, Subanthore and Gritzner (2007) argue that the integration of these three is the foundation of future growth in the KSA tourist industry; noting the development opportunity of the coastal resorts along the Red Sea. Other sites include the historical site in the north of Medina, as well as the archaeological remains of the Madain Saleh, which are deemed to be similar to the monolithic sculpture found in Petra and Jordan. Such features are identified as future attractions for European visitors, already increasing in numbers in newly constructed resorts such as Movenpick on Al Nawras Island, which is off the coast near the city of Jeddah.

On the demand side, the youthful, growing population allied to rising disposable income and greater levels of education were cited as significant in the continued growth of the tourism industry in the KSA. Salkowitz (2010) observes that Saudi Arabia is unusual in

that the population is both young and rich (oil-rich); almost 71% of the Saudi population is under 29, and many belong to a wealthy class that travels internationally (The World Bank Group, 2014). Some travel figures bear this out- Estimo (2013) reports that Saudi Arabia remains the leading airline destination in the Arab region, in both travel and air traffic volume; air travel was also noted to be the most popular method of travel among tourists. It was noted that when pilgrimages are taking place, Emirates Airline add more than 60 flights during the season. According to the Trade Arabia Network (2013), as of June 2013, the Saudi market is facing a shortage of 2 million seats in relation to air travel. The General Authority Civil Aviation (GACA) links this to an increase in domestic passengers with 14.5 million domestic passengers recorded in 2012, surging beyond 15.5 million by the end of 2013. According to Rice (2004), a changed mindset is occurring in the tourism sector- moving from selling standard products to greater customer targeting (Visionlink, 2002). Increased tourism flows, more attractions, car rentals, better travel routes and accommodation and improved retail facilities were all noted to be key elements contributing to the strong emergence of tourism in Saudi Arabia (Euromonitor International, 2013).

2.3 Technology Challenges in the Saudi Arabia Travel Market

2.3.1 Technology Adoption in Saudi Arabia

We often measure how long a country takes to adopt technology on the basis of technology readiness - swiftness or delay is dependent on the investment allocated. Brdesee, Corbitt and Pittayachawan (2011) state that in the year 2009 Saudi Arabia was ranked 46 out of 70 countries, in terms of its e-readiness program, a rating of 5.23 out of 10 demonstrated a solid acceptance for new technologies across industries. More recently, in 2012 the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) conducted a survey across 190 countries assessing e-government programs. Saudi Arabia was positioned 41st for e-government development. Saudi Arabia is the leading country for delivery of e-government services but the use of e-government services in Saudi Arabia is generally low, as identified in their report. Nonetheless, about 60% of all e-government services and transactions can be accessed via e-government sites (UNDESA,

2012). The Saudi Arabian Government has made efforts to use technology to raise the effectiveness of the public sector and to ensure accurate information gathering through accepting new technology. The country has established itself as technology-friendly, especially in view of the national e-Government program, launched in 2005 (Alshehri, Drew & Alfarraj, 2012). Saudi Arabia accounts for 40% of ICT spending in the whole of the Gulf region (Brdsee, Corbitt & Pittayachawan, 2011).

Since 2005, the government has decided to approve the application of controls in terms of e-Government and issued guidance to clarify the need to rely on technology to link institutions, government agencies and citizens- the first adoption of this technology was in the health and education sectors (Saudi e-Government Program, 2009; Alghathbar & al-Qahtani, 2008). Most of the work that has been prepared since 2005 is on the application of e-Government. Projects such as Government Channel Integration (GSB) and the National Portal of e-Government have generated 300 electronic services provided by 75 government agencies. The government has also shown a keen interest in information security, confidentiality and customer privacy (Alghathbar & al-Qahtani, 2008; Saudi e-Government Program Report, 2009). In 2008, the government brought in measures for the safe activation of e-payments, and for the adoption of the Anti-Crime Act in 2007. At the 10th European Conference for e-Government in June 2010, Saudi Arabia was identified as offering the best experience of government activity in Asia, in terms of transition to e-Government (Brien, 2010). Business Monitor International (2009) noted the measures adopted to liberalise and to bring in the private sector in attempts to increase the levels of internet usage, identifying policies on the adoption of the use of computer technology in all financial and accounting operations (Saudi e-Government Program Report, 2009). Ramady (2010) notes how the e-service policy has been directed further into telecommunications and IT sectors.

2.3.2 Challenges to Technology Adoption in Saudi Travel Market

In considering developed countries, the use of Web 2.0 features and applications has led to greater customer interaction and more online planning of holidays (Milano, Baggio & Piattelli, 2011). Social media has been a good source of information for C-to-C

experience; it has also influenced travel planning and provided a sense of belonging to individuals in the virtual travel communities (Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013). In 2012, at the time of this research, at least 700 billion minutes a month were spent on Facebook, one billion tweets were posted weekly by 175 million Twitter users, more than 3 billion videos were viewed daily by YouTube users, and more than 170 million bloggers were estimated to be present worldwide. 82% of US online consumers considered online reviews, online feedback or blogs, when making travel related decisions in 2012. Trip Adviser, the leading consumer review website for travel, served over 50 million monthly users seeking travel plan advice, as well as hosting over 50 million reviews and opinions on travel (Fotis, Buhalis & Rossides, 2012)[1].

Given the investment levels in the Saudi tourism the open market policy, and the wider global developments noted here in the use of interactive consumer technologies; there appears to be a clear opportunity to develop online customer travel services in Saudi Arabia. Yet the integration of online marketing strategies with the existing business and marketing strategies creates a challenge for companies. We have seen above that the Saudi Government has invested heavily in seeking to establish a technology-ready infrastructure. How has this filtered down to organisation and consumer levels? Bilgan, Okumus, Nusair and Cabanoglu (2011) argue that to identify the potential barriers to implementation of information technology projects, it is essential to investigate: a) the generic change and strategy implementation, and b) information technology implementation at firm level.

In considering generic change and strategy of organisations, Heung (2003) investigates the barriers to the performance of e- service in the travel industry and finds them to be the cost of implementation, lack of well-trained staff, hard to manage travel data, and security concerns. Heung (2003) also classifies four varied factors as contributing to obstacles in the implementation process. Brdsee, Corbitt and Pittayachawan (2012), in adopting a similar view, argue that organisations in emerging economies are faced with

[1] All these number have increased in the intervening years.

economic, social, political and cognitive challenges in their mission to adopt e-business procedures. Issues such as financial security, legal and cognitive barriers relating to skill, knowledge, and confidence in the utilisation of information systems were noted as some of the common challenges in Saudi Arabia. In the Saudi Arabian context, e-commerce usage is limited to minimal services, such as the use of websites for information access, or for business-to-business transactions. Tourist organisations that are seeking to move their business services online cited insufficient ICT infrastructure in the country as a challenge. Secure online financial support from local banks was also noted to be insufficient, with regards to full online processing of funds. Inefficient understanding of the travel industry by regional web developers was also cited as a challenge, thus explaining poor online promotion materials (Brdsee, Corbitt & Pittayachawan, 2011). This parallels the work of Alshehri, Drew and Alfarraj, (2012) who note problems with IT implementation, such as a lack of knowledge or partner participation and technical issues. Alrashid (2012) argues that despite the increased benefits to the adoption of ICT across industries, using it to the fullest potential is reserved to government actions, and in the Saudi Arabian context, the government still restricts the free flow of information.

In terms of the implementation of IT at firm level, it could be argued that competition itself is limited- competition among travel agents occurs between five government-approved Saudi tour operators, giving a monopolistic competition structure. Such government protection has kept new entrants from entering this business, but travel companies, it is argued, are efficient competitors with each other (Saudi Commission of Tourism and Antiquities, 2012). The level of competition is beginning to change, but some obstacles still remain. Brdsee et al. (2012) argue that the availability of technological knowledge in the online platform of the tourism sector is not being used to its fullest potential, due to the existence of barriers that obstruct technology adoption. Similarly, Alrashid (2012) shows that the internet adoption in the development of the tourism sector in the KSA was slow when compared to other economies in the Gulf Region. In investigating the implementation of information technology in Saudi Arabia, Al-zharani (2009) finds a lack of trained personnel with sufficient ICT knowledge and skills to manage the use of information systems, a lack of available technology training programs, as well as a lack of coordination among organisations that seek better ICT in

the KSA. Brdsee, Corbitt and Pittayachawan (2011) indicate that the substandard ICT infrastructure negatively impacts upon the tourism industry in Saudi Arabia, due to an inability to compete in the global online commercial environment. It is further noted that the absence of dependable local e-commerce providers prevents Saudi travel agencies from seeking innovation.

Other barriers relate less to infrastructure, or to company IT strategy, and more to the social processes that surround business practices. Alateyah, Crowder and Wills (2013) highlight distinct differences within Saudi communities that could act as obstacles, in terms of technology adoption for basic day-to-day online activities. One critical element is the digital divide within Saudi Arabia- in 2010, only around 3.1 million people, or 12% of the total population, used the internet. The digital divide in Saudi Arabia makes the use of the internet to display information related to travel services less useful as some people cannot access it (Johnson, 2010).

Nonetheless, in 2010, users of e-commerce in Saudi Arabia spent approximately US $3 billion on transactions relating to goods and services through established e-commerce. Furthermore, it has been identified that in Saudi Arabia, the e-information technology sector is growing at a rate of 9.3% annually (Al Rasheed and Mirza, 2011). There has been an increase in the % of users who can access the internet over the five year period from 2009 to 2014 from 27.1% to 65.9%. See Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Internet Growth and Population Statistics

YEAR	Users	Population	% Pop.	Usage Source
2000	200,000	21,624,422	0.9 %	ITU
2003	1,500,000	21,771,609	6.9 %	ITU
2005	2,540,000	22,595,634	10.8 %	C+I+A
2007	4,700,000	23,069,943	19.5 %	ITU
2009	7,761,800	24,686,633	27.1 %	ITU
2014	18,300,000	27,752,316	65.9%	ITU

Source: Internet World Stat Website, 2015

According to Assad (2006), consumerism has already spread to the Arab countries, and particularly to the Gulf States; he notes the proceeds of oil wealth that have led to the increase in the KSA's national income, subsequently expanding individual income and the ability to consume. Ward and Neumann (2012) support this, arguing that changes in

real incomes between the emerging countries and the developed world will change preferences and spending patterns. Assad (2006) argues that much of the consumption behaviour in Saudi Arabia is driven by simulation of Western countries.

However, Business Monitor International (2012) found that visa regulations limited the growth potential of tourism and that dependence on expatriate labour means that the travel industry may not be able to get enough Saudi Arabian staff and is reliant on a young population that lacks marketable skills. According to Canty (2012), although travel firms in the KSA are seeking to capitalise on the potential offered by the increase in the outbound travel sector, there is a challenge in finding Saudi nationals who are willing to take up jobs in the travel sector. Saudi nationals are noted to decline jobs in the travel industry owing to poor wages, as well as the fact that travel is not a traditional career among Saudi nationals. Nonetheless, some transition towards adoption of technology is apparent. Al Rasheed and Mirza (2011), report that the KSA is ranked first in relation to the sale of personal computers in the Arab world. The use of e-commerce services is noted to be rapidly increasing, with 3.5 million internet users engaging in e-commerce transactions. Such results indicate that the KSA is a good market for e-commerce activities. A survey conducted by the Arab Advisors Group (2011), suggested that 29% of Saudi Arabian Internet users purchase and pay for products and services online using e-commerce platforms. However, even in cases where online search and booking services are used by travellers, lack of expertise led to less knowledge about the typical navigation process that is followed by online travel consumers (Zuhur, 2011). Furthermore, Brdsee et al. (2012) found that attitudes, social pressure, trust, and management competency influenced technology adoption negatively in Saudi Arabian tourism.

2.4 Internet Usage for Travel among Saudi Arabian Consumers

The use of online search can provide customers with significant information leading to a decision whether or not to make a purchase (Pink & Zimmer, 2008). Information search has multiple forms; Al Rasheed and Mirza (2011) note multiple points of internet contact in the purchasing of airline tickets and the interaction of consumers with service providers. The web links available on travel sites give information to consumers on the

way of life and culture of their destination. Mills and Law (2013) state that in travel and tourism, the internet is a critical medium for gaining information and customer evaluation may include consideration of value, cost and degree of differentiation. For consumers, the internet reduces dependency on traditional agencies. Keynote (2014) in the UK, for example, states that in 2012 independently booked holidays were in the majority (93%), whereas package deal trips comprised only 7% of the market. Online booking of trips accounted for 46% of all holidays; online booking for short breaks was higher (47%) in comparison to longer holidays (44%).

The use of the internet for promoting holidays has increased significantly in recent years. In May 2014, Keynote suggested that online booking were worth approximately £3bn in the UK. The web permits the promotion of tailored options and Moutinho (2011) argues for gradually replacing the traditional classification of holidays according to location and demographics, with qualitative and subjective criteria, including interests, personal preferences and the usage of advanced technology. Travel organisations are able to assemble information from online questionnaires, responses to promotional campaigns and website navigation patterns, comparing them with actual behaviour data obtained and effectively, collect vital information on consumers whenever consumers log into the system (Moutinho, 2011).

Whereas there has been a considerable amount of research undertaken concerning the adoption of the internet in Western countries, for example, in Europe and the US (Crespo & Bosque, 2010; Slowlkowski & Jarratt, 2007; Straub, 2009), there is more limited research focus on the adoption of technology in the Middle East and Africa (Alateyah, Crowder & Wills, 2013: Alshehri, Drew & Alfarraj, 2012). Yet, Al-Mousa (2011), states that the population of Saudi Arabia is slowly transforming when it comes to the challenges of globalisation, particularly among college-age individuals. Some Saudi consumers, particularly those living in cities such as Riyadh and Jeddah, are now global consumers. As the KSA expands its economy and pays more attention to tourism, the industry needs to understand customers who are technologically confident and seek online travel services.

One important aspect of the use of technology for travel is the information search behaviour of individuals. Previous studies have identified that the ways in which information is accessed and used is less straightforward in Saudi Arabia than it is in the West. Saudi Arabia is noted to be slow in adopting technology to advertise its core tourist attractions. Furthermore, the level of trust in Saudi Arabian society concerning e-tourism services is relatively low; this is due to the fact that much of the documentation and registering of tourists is still done through the traditional physical processes (Alrashid, 2012). Barriers still exist, such as lack of personnel with internet training and skills in the management of online information systems. In the past, the lead time between deciding upon a holiday destination and the actual trip was considerably shorter, which in turn allowed for far less time to plan the holiday and the related search for information (Al Rasheed & Mirza, 2011). The inclination is to check with relatives and friends who may have previously visited the area for information concerning the proposed destination (Mowalad & Putit, 2012). It is still common in Saudi Arabia for travellers to use a single travel agency for individual and family bookings. Travel agents influence ticketing arrangements, assisting with hotel bookings, particularly through informal links with destination hotels (Arab Advisors Group, 2011).

This is gradually changing due to the younger Saudi generation, who have lived or studied aboard (e.g. in the UK and USA) and prefer to adopt the Western practice of booking their own holidays online. These young people are influenced by Western culture, lifestyle and the easy access to, and usage of, information in the West. Therefore, the majority of Saudis who have lived or studied aboard are adopting the Western practice of booking their holidays online, where travellers typically decide upon holiday destinations for leisure travel well in advance and go about their search for information associated with the chosen destination in a systematic manner (World Tourism Organisation, 2009). The search for information is mostly undertaken online, aided by dedicated search from generic search engines, such as Google, and vertical travel websites, such as Ebooker and Expedia (Keynote, 2014).

2.4.1 Focus of this Research

This chapter has identified that Saudi consumers represent a group of emerging market consumers, with the spending power to engage with online technology in their travel consumption. However, we have also seen in Section 2.3 and in Section 2.4 that, for Saudi Arabian consumers, the adoption of technology, attitudes towards online technology and norms of behaviour towards the internet may be complex. Many factors can affect the adoption of technology in tourism and where these patterns are very important is in information search online. Al-Mousa (2011) also suggests that, in order for Saudi Arabia to be able to meet the needs of global customers, more empirical evidence is required.

However, no studies to date have investigated in detail the ways in which Saudi consumers are changing their travel search and booking habits, as they gain increased access to technology. This research study addresses this gap by focusing on the tourism sector in Saudi Arabia and consumer adoption of online travel booking. An examination of Saudi consumer adoption patterns, which reflect the patterns of global consumers, will lead to a greater understanding of important changes in consumer online behaviour in tourism. This study will focus in particular on the online search behaviour of Saudi consumers, as they begin to change their travel booking habits after having lived in the UK, where there are few barriers to online travel booking. Key behavioural aspects to be addressed in the study include attitudes of Saudi consumers to online search and booking; any subjective norms related to online search, the nature of search intention and search strategies in use by Saudi consumers, who have experience of online booking and the approaches to information search and evaluation being adopted.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has offered an overview of the significance of the internet to the travel industry and the ways in which the role of the internet in the travel industry has changed consumer behaviour in travel. Thereafter, the chapter has examined key developments in the Saudi travel market in terms of government priorities, level of investment and supply-side trends. Technology challenges to the adoption of internet technology in the Saudi travel market have been outlined and the emergence of new consumer segments with

more propensity to adopt online booking has been outlined. Finally, the chapter has identified the need for more research into the demand side of the tourist sector, in particular, the nature of consumer changing behaviour. How this research seeks to address this gap through an in-depth examination of the online search and booking behaviour of Saudi consumers is finally outlined.

In the next chapter, this study will address some of the key theoretical elements of the study. An examination of consumer attitude towards internet technology, behavioural intention and search intention in travel services will encompass different theories. Chapter three will seek to draw out the underpinning arguments in technology adoption theories (Diffusion of Innovations Theory; Technology Acceptance Model); behavioural perspectives on the adoption of technology (Theory of Reasoned Action; Theory of Planned Behaviour) and theory underpinning search intention and information search and evaluation.

Chapter Three: Literature Review of Key Theories

3.0 Introduction

3.1 The Theories of Technology Adoption

3.1.1 Rogers's Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DOI)

3.1.1.1 The Users of Technology Categories

3.1.1.2 Lead Users and Early Adopters

3.1.1.3 The Early Majority, Late Majority and Laggards

3.1.1.4 Gap Between Early Adopters and Other Users

3.1.2 Diffusion of an Innovation Process

3.1.2.1.1 Features of the Innovation

3.1.3 Challenges in Aspects of Diffusion of Innovation Theory

3.1.4 Technology Acceptance Model

3.1.4.1 The Technology Acceptance Theory II (2)

3.1.4.2 Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

3.1.4.3 The Technology Acceptance Theory III (3)

3.1.4.4 Evaluation of the TAM model

3.2 Behavioural Perspective Theories on Customer Adoption of the Internet

3.2.1 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

3.2.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

3.2.2.1 Evaluation of the Theory of Planned Behaviour

3.2.3 The Extension of Theory of Planned Behaviour

3.2.3.1 Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour (DTPB)

3.2.3.2 Pavlou and Fygenson's Work on the Theory of Planned Behaviour

3.2.3.3 Chen and Tung's work on the Theory of Planned Behaviour

3.3 Search Intention and Evaluation

3.3.1 Search within the Traditional Decision Making Process

3.3.2 Definition of Search Intention

3.3.3 Search Intention in Past Online Studies

3.3.4 Information Search and Evaluation

3.3.4.1 The Transition from Offline to Online Information Search and Evaluation Processes

3.3.4.2 Influence of Information Search and Evaluation on Consumer Purchase Intention

3.4 Summary

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of previous research on technology adoption models, behavioural perspectives theories on customer adoption of the internet and theories on search intention, search information and evaluation and purchase intention. This Chapter is split into three main sections: Section 3.1 presents a critical analysis of research on technology adoption, incorporating a brief overview of technology adoption theories and noting both diffusion of innovations theory and theory of technology acceptance (TAM). Section 3.2 discusses key theories on behavioural perspectives; including the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA); the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and extensions of TPB. Section 3.3 offers an overview of key thinking in relation to how search is integrated in the decision making process (Section 3.3.1), identifies motivations for search intention (Section 3.3.2); outlines how search intention was adapted in previous online studies (Section 3.3.3) and examines the concept of information search and evaluation and how it links to purchase intention in Section 3.3.4.

3.1 The Theories of Technology Adoption

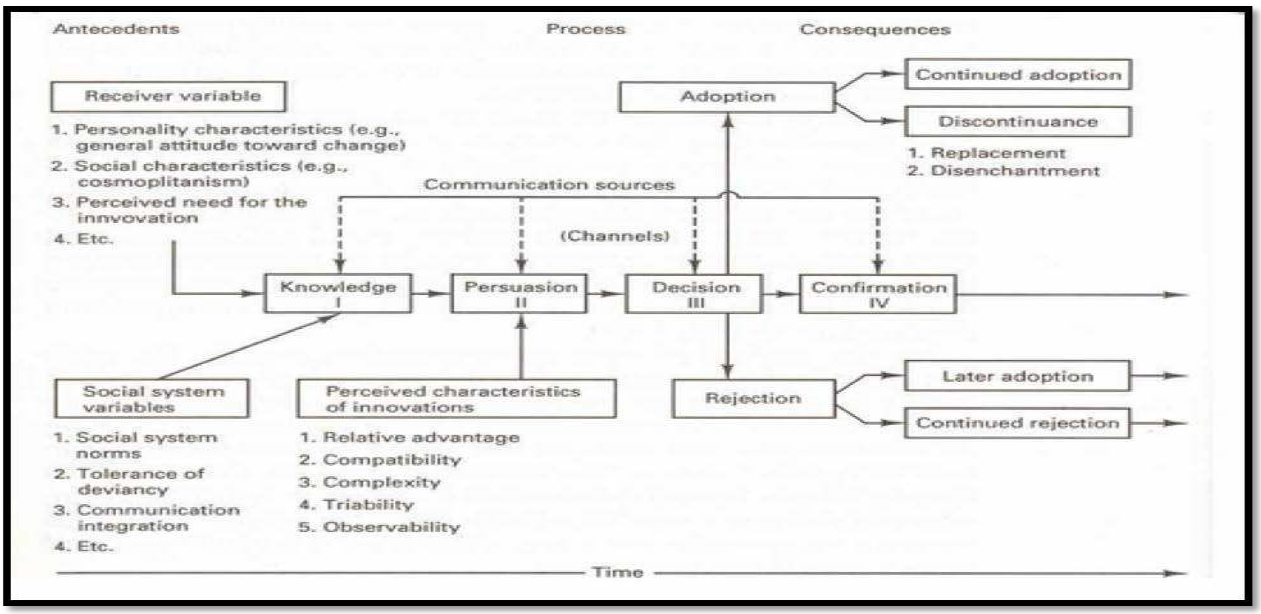
The adoption of technology is a developmental process; reflecting complexity in how individuals build their own awareness of technology that impacts on their decision-making. As Straub (2009) notes, the adoption of technology is concerned with contextual, cognitive and emotional issues. Slowlkowski and Jarratt (2007) assert that most sociological studies have analysed the acquisition of technology by concentrating on how potential users of such technology are affected. In 1989, Davis argued that previous studies of technology adoption theories took for granted the fact that, for the utility-maximizing customer, the latest technology ultimately replaces older technology. Kim (2009) suggests that marketing research should concentrate on how innovative technology is perceived by customers in addition to how their responses to technology may change with time and experience. Generally, the literature on acquisition of technology suggests a multidimensional process in which the user is concerned with a wide range of conditions (Pries-Heje, Venable & Bunker, 2010). The following sections evaluate three main areas: a brief overview of technology adoption theory (Section 3.1.1);

an explanation of Rogers's (1983) Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DOI) (Section 3.1.2) and coverage of the Theory of Technology Acceptance (TAM) (Section 3.1.3).

3.1.1 Rogers's Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DOI) is concerned with studying how, why and at what rate, the spread of technologies (inventions) occurs between different cultures and countries. First published by Everett Rogers in 1962, it is based on 508 diffusion studies, where diffusion is described as "*the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels, over time, amongst the members of a social system" (Rogers, 2003, p. 5).* Moreover, the adoption of a technology process is a mental process that passes through the individual, from the time of hearing about the innovation, to knowledge of the innovation, which ends up being the final stage of the adoption (Rogers, 1995).

Figure 3.1: Diffusion of Innovation Model.



Source: Rogers (1995) Diffusion of innovations.

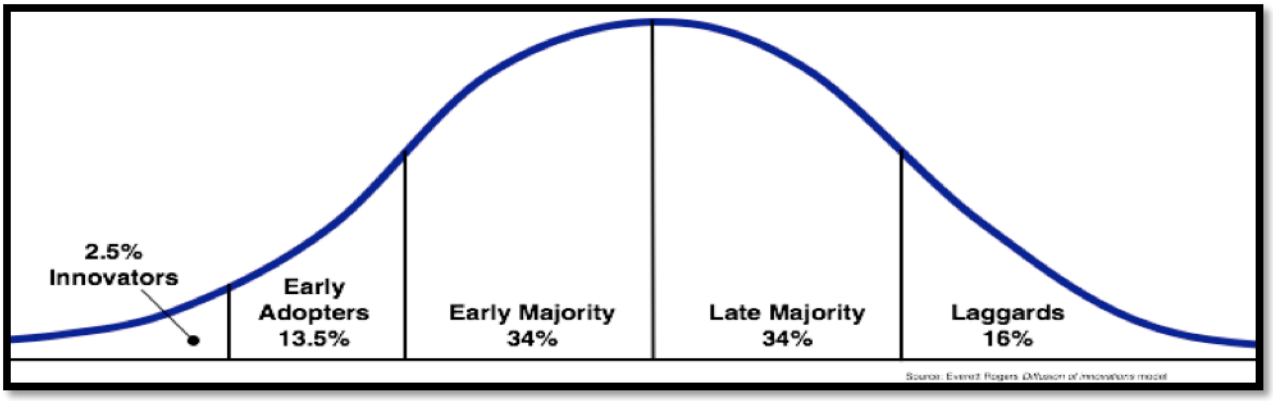
Innovation, communication channels, time and a social system are the basics that might affect the spread of a new idea (Rogers, 1995). The initial element is an innovation, which may be described as practice, and an idea that can be recognised as new by a

person. A communication channel is the second element and this refers to the concept of messages being passed among people (Rogers, 1995), whereas time refers to the innovation assessment period, which may be the length of time necessary to account for the process of an innovation decision. Finally, as Rajagopalan, Hillison, Calantone and Sambamurthy (2010) note, a social system may be described as the context in which a common difficulty is addressed, in order to achieve a purpose.

3.1.1.1 The Users of Technology Categories

Humans vary when it comes to adopting technology and can be divided into a range of categories that differ according to the extent that a person will go to in order to adopt and embrace ideas. Using the time factor for the diffusion, adopters divide into categories based on their location on the diffusion curve. Rogers (2003) classifies the users of technology into five categories: innovators, early adopters, the early majority, the late majority and laggards. The adoption rate relates to the speed that others can perceive the innovation; those who are part of the social system accept this rate. The slope of the curve depends on the type of innovation (optional, authoritative, or even collective), the channel of communication (interpersonal/ mass media/social media) and the nature of the context (standard of the network and interconnection).

Figure 3.2: The users of technology categories.



Source: Rogers (2003) Diffusion of innovations. (5th Ed.)

3.1.1.2 Lead Users and Early Adopters

Lead users or innovators are technology enthusiasts who aggressively follow technical products and solutions and often seek out solutions in automation and technology, even

before they are formally launched (Trott, 2008). In the case of travel and tourism, innovators are those who seek to automate processes that take place within their on-going business. Early adopters follow these users and they are not simply enthusiastic about technology; rather, they have insights into matching emerging technology with strategic opportunities (Costigan & Gold, 2007). Innovators have the ability to implement their knowledge and deal with the levels of uncertainty that are related to innovation. Early adopters play an essential role in generating ideas in the social environment and are seen as the gatekeepers when the new ideas occur. This category consists of the greatest opinion leaders to whom potential adopters can go, if they need information or advice regarding the new ideas; they are role models in the social system and can influence the mass when they adopt the innovations (Rogers, 1995, 2003). In the travel sector, innovators may utilise advanced travel technology, such as travel websites and smart phone travel applications, before it becomes more widely used to search for travel information and purchase holidays online. Whereas early adopters may follow the lead of the innovators and adopt advanced technology after serious consideration.

Kolb (2006) illustrates this when he argues that innovators will always attempt to adopt a new idea or practice. This may be evident in destination choice, as innovators are more likely to visit a new destination and, along with early adopters, make judicious choices when deciding to visit a destination. However, innovators and early adopters are considered to be only a small proportion of the potential tourist market (McCabe, 2010).

3.1.1.3 The Early Majority, Late Majority and Laggards

The next target users are the early majority and the late majority. In mapping these groups directly on to travel services, the early majority consumers are those who are comfortable incorporating new technology within their operations. They are driven by a sense of pragmatism (Daniel, 2008). Although these consumers are low risk-takers, they represent the overwhelming majority of any typical target segment that a technical solution aims to serve. In the travel market, the early majority (34%) are those who utilise advanced travel technology, such as travel websites and smart phone travel applications, because of information received about them from friends and relatives. Similarly, with regard to destination, Kolb (2006) establishes that early majority tourists will start

visiting a destination once the early adopters have visited. The early majority is considered to be a large number of people who pay attention to promotional messages in order to reduce the risks attached to vacation time and spending money on the unknown. Thereafter, these destinations become established as well known, popular tourist destinations and the late majority start visiting them.

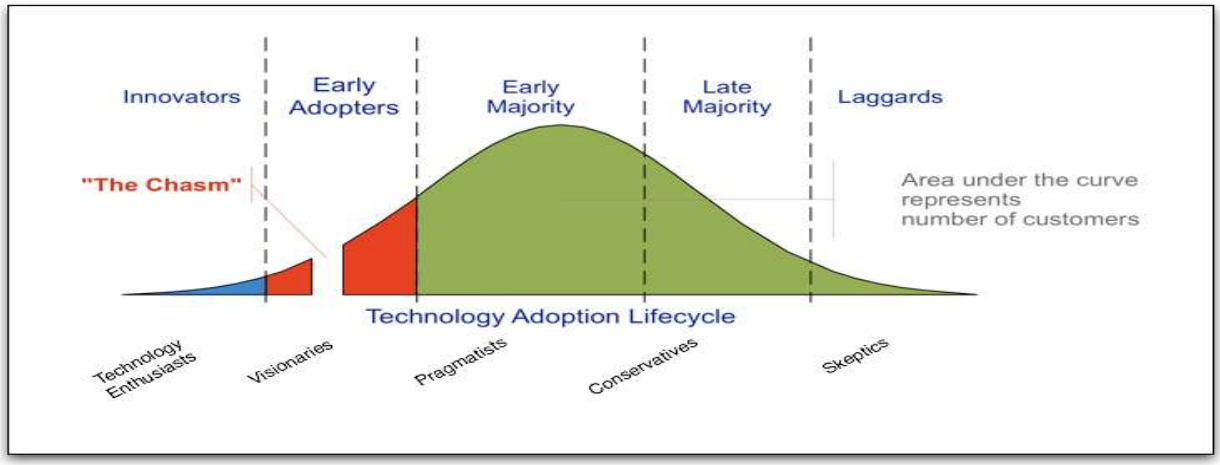
The difference between the early and the late majority consumer is that the latter tend to wait for technical solutions in travel services to an established standard before they buy such solutions from established providers (McCabe, 2010). For example, in the travel market, once the early majority start using advanced travel technology, e.g. travel websites and smart phone travel applications, these technologies become established and well known. In this case, the late majority prefer to wait until someone they trust has used the advanced travel technology that they are interested in. Thus, late majority users benefit from lower costs of development and find more support available when adopting a new process (Bridgeland & Zahavi, 2008). The late majority do not take any risks when deciding to visit a destination, and may not rely solely on promotional messages and advertisements; they may only trust the opinion of someone they know who has previously visited a particular destination. Conversely, by this time the innovators and early adopters are no longer interested in these destinations and will have progressed to visiting new ones (McCabe, 2010).

Finally, laggards are the most sceptical of new technology and are highly risk-averse. As a result, they often tend to rely on technology that is one generation older than contemporary technical solutions and practice (Butje, 2005). In the travel sector, laggards (16%) are those who rely on traditional travel agency services – some may be part of an older generation that is accustomed to using local travel agencies, rather than contemporary online travel services. Laggards typically use traditional travel services year after year, as they trust the repetition and find it comforting. Furthermore, laggards are even less likely to risk attempting a new destination, because they view adopting a new experience as inconvenient rather than interesting. Laggards are typically more likely to travel to the same destination more frequently (Kolb, 2006).

3.1.1.4 The Gap Between Early Adopters and Other Users

In an extension to Rogers's (1989) framework, Moore (2006) suggests that between innovators and the early adopters, a perceptible gap (chasm) exists. According to Dowling (2005), early adopters sample products in the introductory phase, until the point at which acceptance surges to the growth stage. At this point, the majority of the markets including the early and late majorities as well as the laggards are incorporated.

Figure 3.3: Crossing the chasm: the gap between early adopters and other users.



Source: Moore, G. (2006) Crossing the chasm: marketing and selling high-tech products to mainstream customers.

3.1.2 Diffusion of an Innovation Process

Five stages have been identified as representing the diffusion of innovation process.

Knowledge: When an individual or a decision-making team find out about an innovation they seek to comprehend how everything works. This consists of *awareness-knowledge*; or looking for confirmation that an innovation is already in place. In relation to travel, consumers might be aware of advanced technology, e.g. using smart phones that provide online travel activities and get some idea of how these applications function. It also involves *principles-knowledge*, which underlies how things occur. While adoption of innovation may occur without principles-knowledge, but there exists the risk of not properly exploiting a new idea; if someone misses the knowledge prior to the adoption it

can lead to refusal or even interruption (McGrath & Zell, 2001; Rogers, 2003). The principles-knowledge is also educational (Martins, Pereira & Vicentea, 2009).

Persuasion: This occurs when the person adopts a positive position towards the innovation and looks for information in order to make decisions, translate messages, etc. People may even hunt for information from peers, in order to reduce the uncertainty of others. In some cases a person's attitude is important and may drive a person to adopt or refuse a particular innovation (Rogers, 2003).

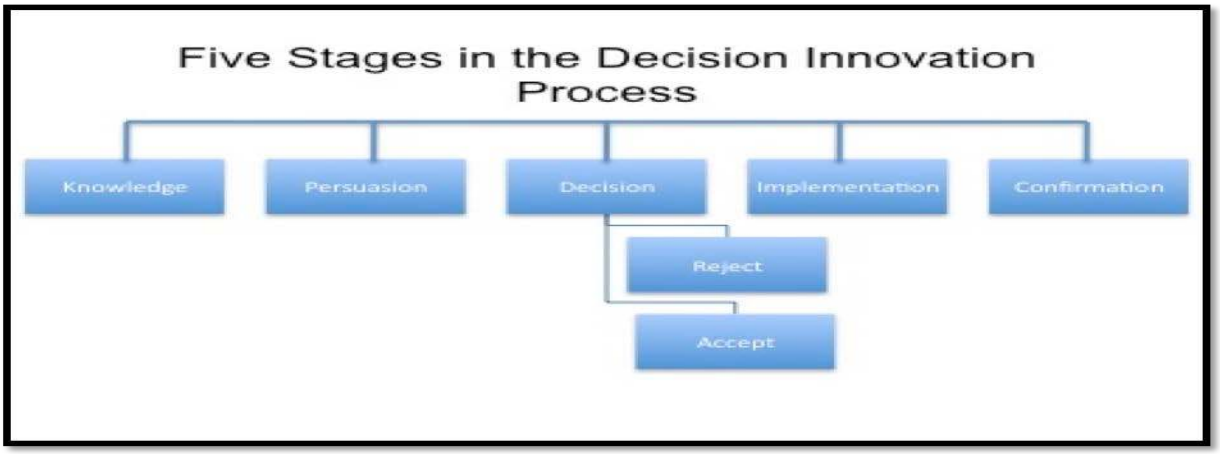
Decision Making: At this stage an individual decides whether to reject or adopt the new technology (Di Benedetto, 2010); most individuals use the innovation to a limited extent before actually deciding to accept/refuse it. A refusal can occur during any phase of the decision-making process (Rogers, 1995). Rogers classifies the rejection into two types: active rejection occurs after the individual has used the innovation for a trial period whereas passive rejection, which is also referred to as non-adoption, occurs when an individual is not concerned with adopting the innovation in any way whatsoever.

Implementation: This occurs when a person puts the innovation into practice on a trial basis, which modifies the innovation (McGrath & Zell, 2001). Due to factors such as technical support during the commencement of an innovation, the idea is capable of being re-projected. Re-inventions offer benefits for the adopters, such as flexibility, which can decrease the amount of errors and stimulate innovations in varying environments. A person (decision-maker) may actively assist in the process of diffusion (Rogers, 1995).

Confirmation: During the confirmation phase, the person strengthens their commitment to the adoption. However, dissonance can be linked to the new idea. If a decision is taken to adopt the new idea, some risks may be involved that lead to conflict. At times, there may be discontinuance, or even a refusal of the entire idea, despite the initial adoption (Rogers, 2003). Similarly, Nutley et al. (2002) argue that "*passage through the stages of the adoption process are influenced by prior conditions, such as previous practice and innovativeness, and also mediated by characteristics of the decision-making unit, the*

perceived characteristics of the innovation, the communication channels involved, and the role of change agents and opinion leaders in promoting an innovation".(p. 11).

Figure 3.4: Diffusion of an innovation process



Source: Rogers (2003) Diffusion of innovations. (5th Edition)

3.1.2.1 Features of the Innovation

Some characteristics of the innovation are regarded as important (Di Benedetto, 2010; Oldenburg & Glanz, 2008; Rogers, 1995). These characteristics are capable of being interrelated, but they are, in their own way, uniquely based on their fundamentals and universality (Rogers, 1995): a) Relative advantage is understood to be the degree to which innovation replaces previous ideas, b) compatibility is the extent to which the necessities of adopters and their past experiences are related to innovation, c) complexity is the level to which the general public understand innovation, and d) trialability is the degree to which other individuals are able to test the innovation. In explaining the rate of adoption of an innovation, the attributes of an innovation are significant. According to Rogers (2003), these incorporate: a) the type of innovation-decision, b) the nature of the communication channels circulating the innovation at various stages in the innovation-decision process, c) the nature of the social system in which the innovation is diffusing, and d) the extent of the change agents' efforts to promote and disseminate the innovation. It has also been suggested that conceptualising innovations as having attributes is: "*a common heuristic that people employ when they are judging something new. However, this tendency serves to obscure the importance of human perception in the diffusion of*

innovations: what is new to one person may be old to another. Moreover, the decision to adopt and/or use the innovation is based on individual perceptions of the innovation's worth relative to other ways of accomplishing the same goal: what is easy for one person to use may be exceedingly difficult for another" (Greenhalgh et al., 2004, p. 598).

3.1.3 Challenges in Aspects of Diffusion of Innovation Theory

DOI theory attempts to provide an explanation of the innovation decision process, the elements establishing the adoption rate, and the types of adopters. It aids in forecasting the most probable adoption rate of an innovation (Di Benedetto, 2010). However, it also has limitations; firstly, Rogers (2003) himself highlights that there are a large number of conditions attached to the theory, such as the personal limitations of potential users and outside barriers, including unsuccessful communication channels, which may cause problems. Secondly, the theory does not offer demonstration of the way in which attitudes grow into accepting/refusing decisions, and the way in which innovation features match this (Chen et al., 2002; Karahanna et al., 1999). The refusal of a decision can occur during any part of the decision making process**.** Rogers (1995) states that people may not be aware when a stage ends and another commences; thus, a sharp difference between each phase cannot be captured. Moreover, innovation-decisions fluctuate regarding time consumption. Distinctions that occur in the adoption length have to do with the attributes of the innovators themselves and their attention to innovation differences. Rogers (1995) notes the potential for over-simplification by describing innovation in common terms and the difficulty of measuring the contribution of an idea.

One serious weakness in DOI theory occurs in the user categories. Specifically, the five categories of technology user defined by Rogers (innovators, early adopters, the early majority, the late majority and laggards) are not realistic, since some technology users may display the features of innovators or early adopters, yet they may not adopt the new technology quickly (Oldenburg & Glanz, 2008). For example, an individual who is rich, well educated and willing to take risks might not adopt a new innovation relating to online travel services. This might not because he/she is a laggard, as defined by Rogers,

but because they believe the internet connection quality is unreliable. This is particularly likely to occur in developing countries such as Saudi Arabia.

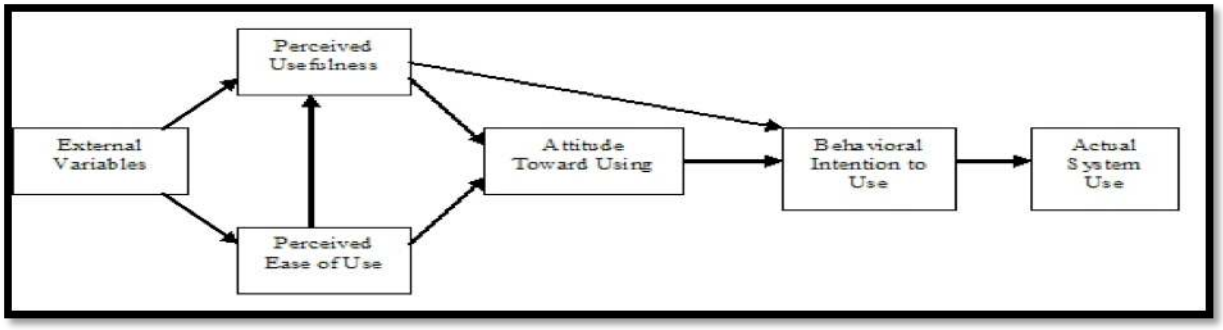
Thirdly, the categories of adopters are neither realistic, nor even capable of generalising the way in which positive or negative behaviours may relate to adoption phases and categories of adopters (Rogers, 2003). Wixom and Todd (2005) assert that DOI theory can be useful as a describing tool, but it is less useful in predicting findings. MacVaugh and Schiavone (2010) find that the majority of the work is based on the theories drawn from new product development (NPD) and marketing, where the use of new technology is assumed to be about maximising benefits associated with such technology. In contrast, the sociology literature states that this is not so and that consumers often employ a new technology as a passing fashion that maximizes their social orientation. Accordingly, "*Innovation diffusion may be influenced by social, learning and technological 'conditions'*, *whilst operating in the background 'domain' of the consumer community*" (MacVaugh & Schiavone, 2010, p. 202). MacVaugh and Schiavone (2010) also argue that the phases of innovation adoption are not separate from each other, but often interfere with each other. The stages of innovations adoption are not consecutive or successive, for example, the individual may jump to the stage of full adoption directly without going through other stages. For instance, in the travel sector, individuals might instantly adopt online travel services, without going through the other stages. This is acknowledged by Rogers (2003), that innovators may jump without having enough knowledge, or receiving information from peers in order to reduce uncertainty. Baskerville and Pries-Heje (2003) also argue that the actual adoption is limited by the speed with which an innovation is noticed. Low-cost innovations may be quickly implemented, for example, in the travel sector, instead of printing out boarding passes on paper, smart phone boarding passes can be adopted, which can make travel easier and simpler, due to the facility to keep all the required information in one small device.

3.1.4 Technology Acceptance Model

In the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Davis (1986) addresses individual acceptance of technology. The focus is on two key constructs: a) Perceived Usefulness (PU) how well the person thinks that using a technology would increase efficiency;

Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU); how easy a person thinks that using a technology is in practice (Davis, 1989). He sets out the relationship between these constructs and how they affect subsequent behaviour and behavioural intention. The TAM also assumes that the behavioural intention is determined by individual attitude to using a new technology.

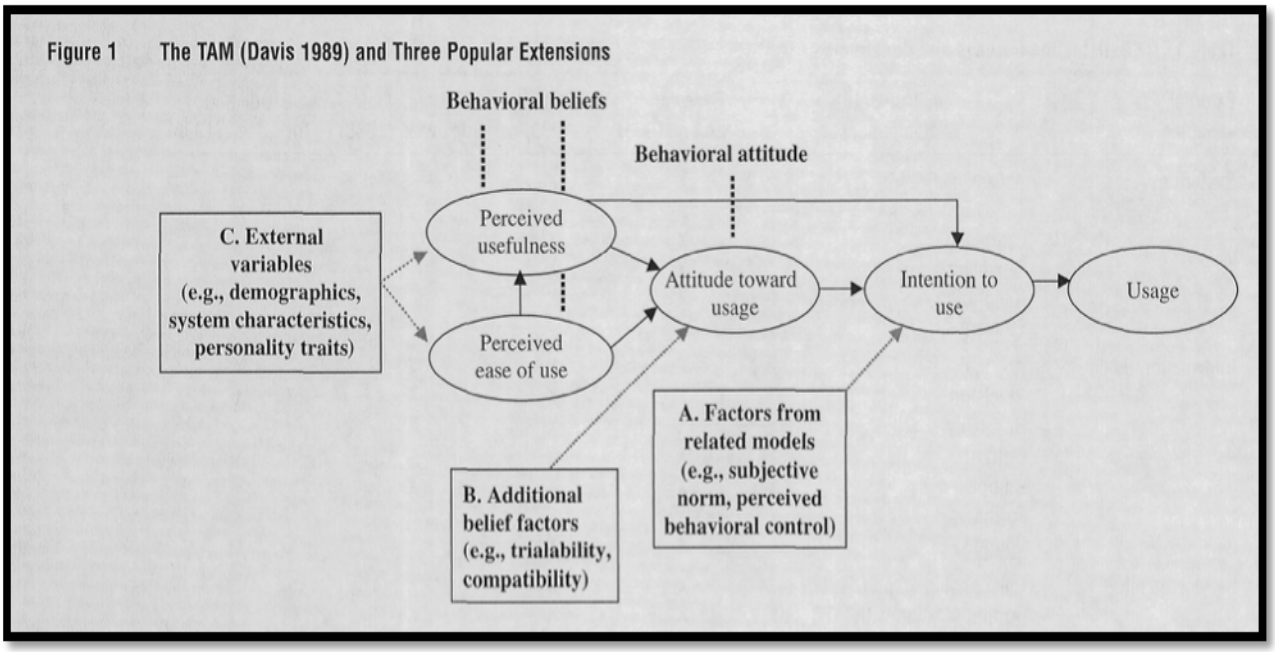
Figure 3.5: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).



Source: Davis (1989) User acceptance of computer technology.

TAM has expanded beyond the original concept over the past twenty years. Han (2003) notes three stages of evolution from extension to validation to adoption.

Figure 3.6: The TAM and Three Popular Extensions.

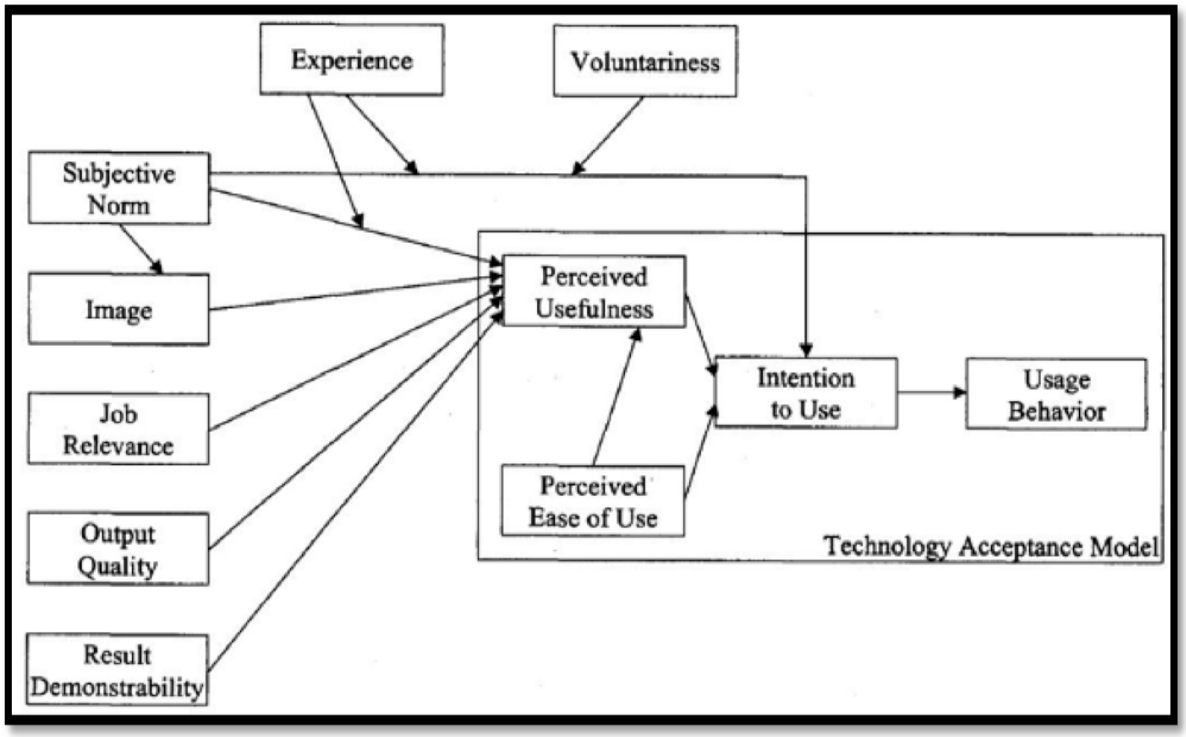


Source: Wixom & Todd (2005) A theoretical integration of user satisfaction and technology acceptance.

Todd and Wixom (2005) evaluate the extensions to TAM and identify three elements; firstly, the incorporation of factors from associated models, such as the TPB - for example, self-efficacy, perceived behavioural control (PBC) and subjective norms. The inclusion of extra or substitute belief aspects also come from the TRA. Secondly, they note efforts to examine innovation presumptions, such as trialability, visibility, consistency, or the capability of proving outcomes that are all derived from DOI theory. Thirdly, they cite the examination of external variables, which affect PU and PEOU, such as demographic features and personality traits. As TAM has grown, new variables have entered in the form of external variables, which affect behavioural intention (BI), PEOU, PU, and present use and behaviour (Venkatesh, Morris & Davis, 2003).

3.1.4.1 The Technology Acceptance Theory II (2)

Figure 3.7: The Technology Acceptance Theory II.



Source: Venkatesh, V. & Davis, F. D. (2000). "Theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: four longitudinal field studies

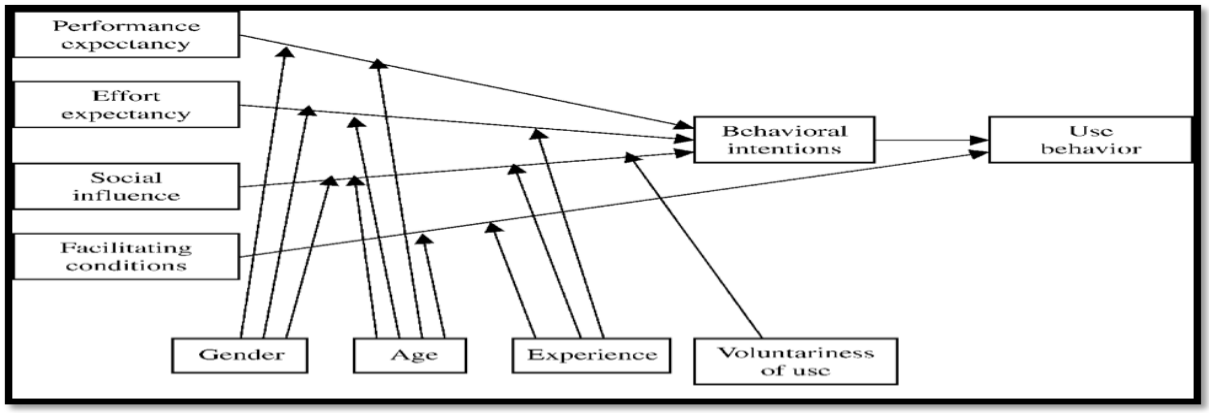
Venkatesh and Davis (2000) introduce the Technology Acceptance Theory II (2) model, which synthesises the earlier hard work and reflects a demand for the amplification of the

model. Technology Acceptance Theory II defines variables such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, subjective norm, image, job relevance, output quality, result demonstrability, experience and voluntariness. Subjective norm refers to the impact of social environment on behaviour intention. For example, the individual reference group may encourage or deter you from adopting the technology. Image is concerned with the extent to which the use of innovation can enhance social status. Job relevance is a person's understanding of how the system is associated with his/her job. Output quality denotes how well a person thinks that the system performs its tasks. Result demonstrability is concrete results from the innovation. Finally, voluntariness refers to the extent to which people can adopt the innovation, without seeing it as compulsory.

3.1.4.2 Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

Venkatesh, Morris and Davis (2003) state that the purpose of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology to explain user intention to make use of the information system and change usage behaviour; it has evolved from the Technology Acceptance Model II (2). Four main constructs are regarded as influential in this theory: facilitating conditions, social influence, effort expectancy and performance expectancy. These factors can directly determine the usage of intention and behaviour. Voluntariness of use, experience, gender and age are hypothesised to act as go-betweens for the main four constructs, as they influence intention of actual usage.

Figure 3.8: Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

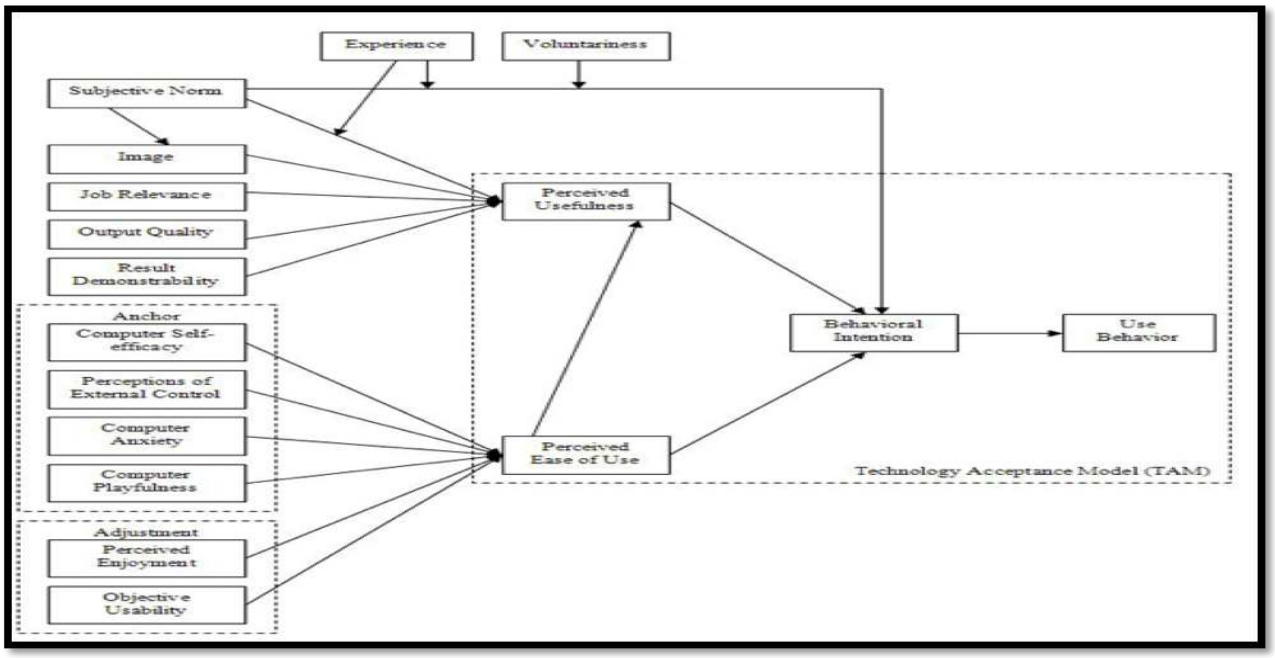


Source: Venkatesh, Morris & Davis. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: towards a unified view.

Facilitating conditions refer to the extent to which a person believes that the use of a system is supported by organisational/technical infrastructure. Social influence is the extent to which people, according to others' beliefs, perceive a new system might be used. Performance expectancy means the extent to which a person sees that employing the system would help to achieve better job performance. Finally, effort expectancy refers to how easily it is linked to system usage. However, there are some drawbacks to this theory. For example, Bagozzi (2007) argues that the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology model is less powerful than Acceptance Model 1 and Technology Acceptance Model 2, since the coefficient of determination (R^2) would be high and achievable when moderating main relationships would be equal to four variables[2].

3.1.4.3 The Technology Acceptance Theory III (3)

Figure 3.9: The Technology Acceptance Theory III (3).



Source: Venkatesh & Bala. (2008). Technology acceptance model 3 and a research agenda on interventions.

[2]It should be noted that, statistically, "the coefficient of determination" could be employed in the framework of statistical models, in order to predict the future results based on other related information (framework constructs, factors, variables).

The Technology Acceptance Theory III (3) model, established by Venkatesh and Bala (2008), brings in additional variables such as experience, computer self-efficacy, perceptions of external control, computer anxiety and computer playfulness, perceived enjoyment and objective usability. Perceived enjoyment is concerned with an individual's pleasure with a system's usage, regardless of the performance outcomes. Objective usability refers to systems comparison, which depends on a real level of effort to carry out particular tasks. Computer self-efficacy concerns individual ability to use computer skills in completing work and the perception of external control refers to the extent to which a person believes that a system usage is supported by technical resources. Computer anxiety reflects individual concern with computer upgrades. Finally, computer playfulness refers to 'cognitive naturalness' towards microcomputer interactions.

Venkatesh and Bala's findings demonstrate that PEOU determinants have no impact on PU. Experience moderates PEOU with respect to PU, which would be through an increase in experience in terms of using a system, which helps the individual to obtain information about the extent of the difficulty, or ease of usage of a system. Moreover, experience significantly moderates computer anxiety, in terms of PEOU. Through an increase in experience, the impact of computer anxiety on PEOU would be reduced. The impact of PEOU on behavioural intention would be moderated by experience; in this case, the impact of PEOU on behavioural intention would be weaker when experience increases (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008).

3.1.4.4 Evaluation of the TAM Model

Despite being widely employed in research, like any other model TAM theory has its limitations. One of the major restrictions on TAM theory is its limited explanatory and predictive power, and the lack of any practical value as noted by Chuttur (2009). The literature on TAM theory raises several criticisms. Bagozzi (2007) argues that TAM focuses too much attention on the concepts of PU and PEOU, in conjunction with other factors, in order to explain how individuals decide to use a new technology, and ignores the fundamental social processes of technology implementation and development.

However, Adams, Nelson and Todd (1992) observe five dissimilar applications that incorporate the use of TAM (spreadsheets, word processors, graphics, v-mail and e-mail) and find that the TAM maintains its stability and validity, in terms of clarifying the information system recognition of behaviour of users. In addition, Hubona and Cheney (1994), conduct a comparative study between the TAM and the TPB, through user satisfaction surveys, and observe that the TAM is simple to employ and an influential model in clarifying users' technology acceptance. However, both TAM and the TRA have strong behavioural fundamentals. In the Technology Acceptance Theory, the most important measure of implementation is the achievement of the proposed use of information technology. The TAM does not involve attitude build up because it has not mediated the effect of PEOU on beliefs, while the link between PU and BI looks a lot more meaningful (Davis et al., 1989). The TAM posits that PEOU affects PU – the perceived ease of use of a technology will encourage a perception of usefulness.

There are also some limitations to TAM. Venkatesh and Davis (2000) find that the theory might fail to measure actual usage. In terms of measurement problems, Agarwal and Prasad (1998) state that the limitations of the theory come from the poor validity of more recent measures, with regards to using single item scales that are self-reporting with attempts to generalise traits; for example, when integrating readiness to change with the adoption measure, both could have separate impact on accepting or rejecting innovations. Igbaria, Zinatelli, Cragg and Cavaye (1997), note that the TAM may also be unsuccessful in sufficiently clarifying causation, in terms of small variance scores. Gefen and Straub (1997) also find some limitations with the theory, such as the small sample size, little experience with the modern information system, and only a brief consideration of cultural dissimilarity. Todd and Taylor (1995b) find that (TPB) and the Decomposed Theory of Predicted Behaviour (DTPB) offer an improvement over TAM, but urged caution in decoding the findings due to the trade off among the complexity of demonstrations and its power. The TAM is more financial and economical than DTPB, which involves a higher number of variables (+8). Davis et al. (1989) compare TAM with TRA and found that the TAM rationalised the idea of the individuals more than TRA could. The most regular referenced restriction of the TAM is provided is measurement accuracy- taking

respondents' self-provided report and accepting that the self-reported usage indicates present usage. Another restriction is associated with the list of respondents, or even the sample option. In a few studies, it was found that a sample of professional or student users meant that it was difficult to form generalisations (Legris et al., 2003). Another deficiency can be seen in the idea that the TAM only provides restricted direction concerning how usage is impacted through implementation or design (Todd & Taylor 1995; Venkatesh et al., 2003).

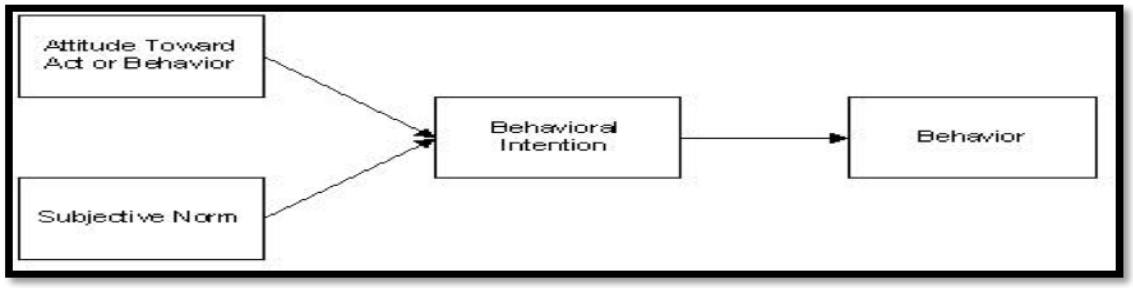
3.2 Behavioural Perspective Theories on Customer Adoption of the Internet

This Section (3.2) discusses key theories on behavioural perspectives. This includes the theory of reasoned action (TRA) in Section 3.2.1; the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and alternatives in Section 3.2.2, and extensions of TPB in Section 3.2.3.

3.2.1 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

TRA is a model to forecast attitude and behaviour. As described by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), it comprises a combination of theories concerning attitudes, such as learning theories, theories of expectancy values, and theories covering attribution, balance, and cognitive dissonance. Their aim was to create a theory that would be capable of predicting, influencing, and justifying behaviour (Ajzen, 1985; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980).

Figure 3.10: The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA).



Source: Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) Understanding attitudes and predicting social behaviour.

Ajzen and Fishbein initially presented the TRA in 1967, and it has been retested, developed, and re-projected over time. The theory confirms the belief that individuals act rationally, and technically utilise the information accessible to them before acting. People

consider suggestions associated with their actions before they make a choice about whether to engage, or otherwise, in a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The TRA states that an important feature of a person's choice is behavioural intention. The objective of an individual's behaviour can be understood as a combination of attitudes concerning action and subjective standards. One of the features of the TRA is attitude and how it relates to behaviour. The performance of the behaviour is valued as either negative or positive. A set of thoughts might also be weighted by judgments of outcomes (Ajzen, 1991; Taylor & Todd, 1995). Ajzen (1985) ensures that the attitude of an individual toward a subject could be forecast with a high level of accuracy. An example of this could be individual attitudes towards online travel services, based on the belief that online travel services are simple to use, and that online travel services provide many advantages. This belief may foster a strong intention to use online travel services.

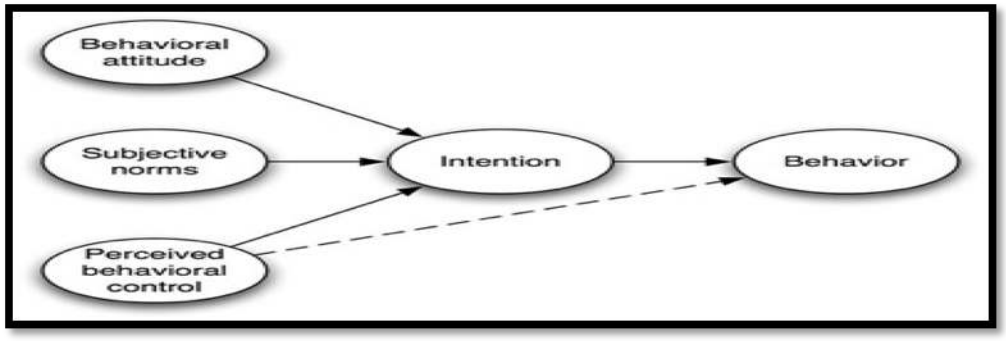
Individual attitudes concerning online travel services can influence behaviour; subjective norms are also influential. Subjective norms represent the influence - a perception that comes from others - when people that are very important to them consider that they should or should not act. The TRA identifies how subjective standards are linked to groups, and determine a person's encouragement to conform to a waiting period. According to the TRA there are two determinants of behavioural beliefs, which are attitudinal (personal) and normative (social) variables (see Ajzen, 1980, 1985). Ajzen (1985) notices some new features, such as attitudes and beliefs, which have to be included according to the time frame; these are the target, action, context, and also specificity (Sheppard et al., 1988). One of the biggest restrictions on this theory is the fact that it applies only to intentional behaviour. Decisions that are not regular, or any behaviour that is not knowingly thought out, cannot be justified by the TAM. Sheppard et al. (1998) disagree with the theory, identifying some exceptions to specific situations where belief directs behaviour, noting voluntary performance and behavioural measures in terms of performance, context, target, specificity, and timeframe. For instance, there could be problems that might impact on your behaviour and beliefs. There is certainly a difference between what an individual expects to do and they actually do. It has also be suggested that to-date, the model used in the majority of research understands the actions

in a way in which the model was not originally designed for (Sheppard et al.,1988). The model performs well when predicting activities and goals that involve overt choices between alternatives. Sheppard et al. (1988) are able to conclude that the model has strong predictive capabilities, even in cases where situations or activities do not conform to the boundaries of the conditions specified in the model. This does not mean that improvements and modifications are unnecessary when the model takes into consideration choice and goal domains. According to Hale et al. (2003), there are some exceptions associated with the theory - explanatory features include behaviours that may be impulsive, routine, or naturalistic, and needs are not sufficiently considered (Bentler & Speckart, 1979; Langer 1989). These behaviours are not included because they may not require voluntary actions or conscious decisions to be made by the individual.

3.2.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The TPB links behaviour and beliefs and incorporates perceived behavioural control (PBC); it is considered to be one of the most predictive theories of persuasion (Ajzen, & Fishbein, 2005). The theory states that attitude, as related to behaviour, subjective norms, and PBC, has an influence on behavioural intention and behaviour. Nevertheless, due to the limitations of the TRA, Ajzen (1985) suggests planned behaviour theory. The TRA states that the main determinant of a person's intention is the decision to adopt a certain kind of behaviour, but in the TPB we see more complexity.

Figure 3.11: Theory of Planned Behaviour.



Source: Ajzen. (1991) The theory of planned behaviour.

Behavioural beliefs impact on attitudes toward a particular behaviour; they are subjective and few behavioural certainties are achievable in a given period in time. Normative

beliefs relate to perceived activities that may influence a person. Beliefs may merge with motivation and referents in order to attain existing subjective norms. Therefore, motivation will be brought into line with subjective norms and beliefs that an individual may adopt towards respective activities. Control beliefs deal with a presence that can obstruct performance. The perceived level of control is related to existing factors that influence human behaviour and the weighing of the strength of these factors. PBC refers to the degree of skill, resources, and external influences before adoption. According to Ajzen (1985), a behavioural plan requires effort and control over determinants, for example, information, willpower, abilities, existence of mind, skills, and opportunities. PBC deals with a being's perception of his/her capacity to perform in a certain way. If perception were precise, then it would tend to reflect real control over behaviour (Ajzen, 2006). The TPB and PBC relate to expectations of an individual to the extent that they are able to adopt a certain type of behaviour.

Ajzen (2006) acknowledges issues with PBC measurement; to simplify, the concept of PBC can be understood to mean perceived control over performance. The fact is that the TPB is quite different from the TRA, because the extensions on imposed activities are controlled in situations where a person has less control over specific behaviours. This can change in accordance with different contexts (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB uses PBC to depict the relationships between behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, and intentions. PBC is necessary to influence behaviour and intention and it impacts on behaviour in a manner that is either interactive or directive (Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006). When a person has control over their behavioural activities, intention lead to performance (TRA). According to Ajzen (1991), behavioural intention is not significant in some instances and activities that are predicted from intention can be obstructed through volitional control.

3.2.2.1 Evaluation of the Theory of Planned Behaviour

This theory may include an individual's non-volitional behaviour, which cannot be justified using the TRA. The scope of a person's behaviour cannot be the only factor to consider when an individual's control of that behaviour is not complete. Through the use of PBC, TPB can justify the connection between current behaviour and intention. Many studies show that TPB would be of more use for forecasting health related behaviours

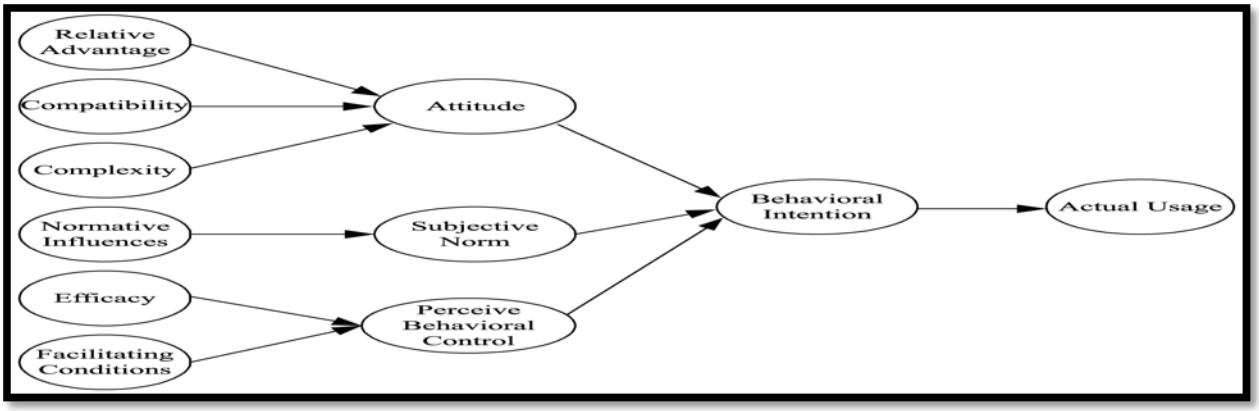
than the TRA (Ajzen, 1988). Due to the TPB, intention relates to predictability in health domains, such as diet and exercise. In addition, the TPB is like the TRA because it can justify a person's social behaviour by regarding the 'social norm' as a significant variable. TRA and TPB models have been criticised. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) prove that factors such as moral responsibility, self-identity, and habit may forecast the behaviour or intention, independent of the TRA model. TPB emerges as a replacement for the TRA, which does not reveal what people are planning, or how planning mechanisms link to TPB. According to Taylor and Todd (1995), the TRA and TPB offer affirmation, according to which models demand a person become highly motivated to take on a specific behaviour. However, this assumption is not always robust in belief patterns of respondents - it is not possible to forecast behaviour and pre-judgment.

3.2.3 The Extension of Theory of Planned Behaviour

3.2.3.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour with Decomposed Beliefs (DTPB)

As an extension to the TPB, Todd's study develops TRA, so that the DTPB extends the TPB by comprising diffusion of innovation constructs (as summarised in Figure 3.12).

Figure 3.12: Theory of Planned Behaviour with Beliefs Decomposed.



Source: Taylor & Todd. (1995). Decomposition and crossover effects in the theory of planned behaviour: A study of consumer adoption intentions.

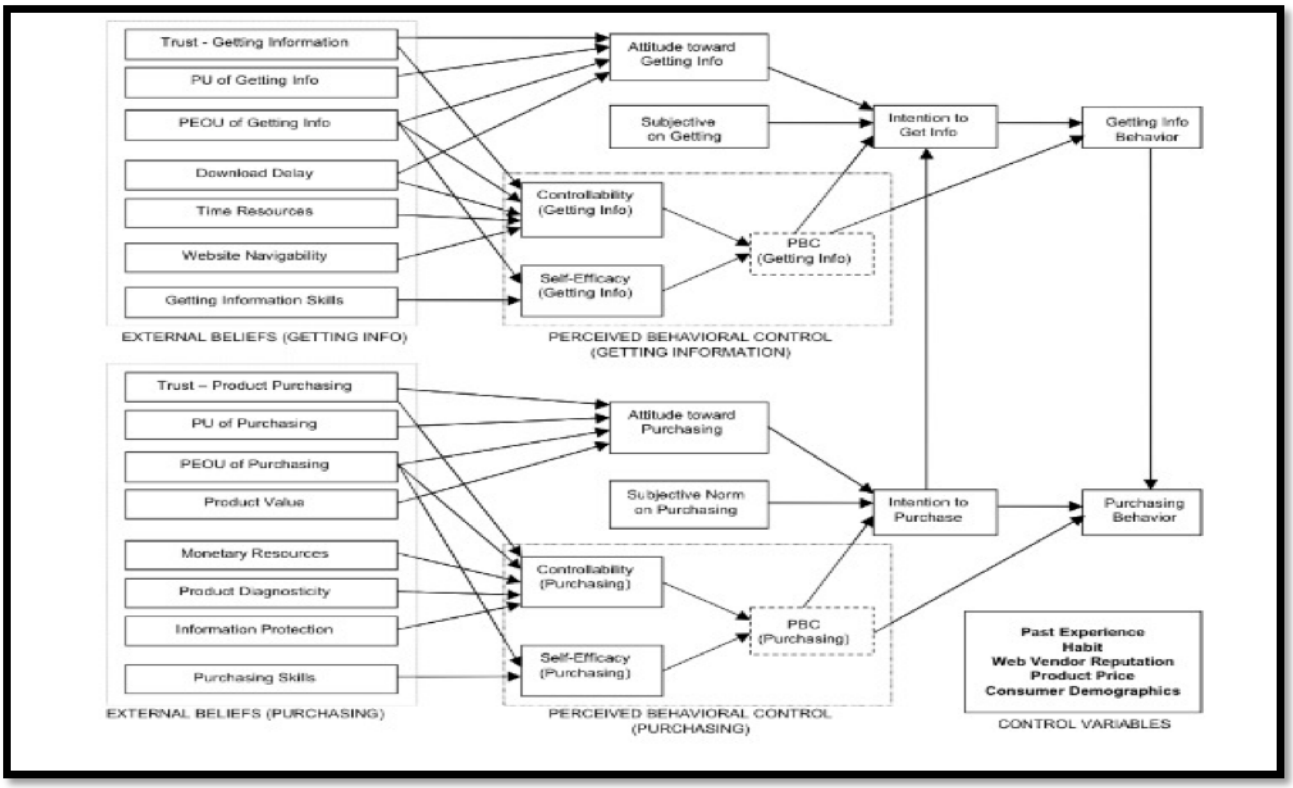
Taylor and Todd's (1995) study focuses on the suitability of the TPB and the DTPB to forecast customer behaviour. They argue that to gain insight into the relationship between belief structures and behavioural intention, antecedents must be understood to decompose attitudinal beliefs. It is also argued that the DTPB model uses constructs from the DOI,

by introducing three attitudinal beliefs and the salient characteristics of an innovation that can have an impact on technology adoption. There are relative advantages, but also complexity and compatibility issues. It also pays more attention to PBC and subjective norms by decomposing them into identifiable dimensions. Results from Taylor and Todd's (1995) study indicate that the TPB fits the data well.

3.2.3.2 Pavlou and Fygenson's Work on the Theory of Planned Behaviour

This study expands Ajzen's (1991) TPB, to provide an explanation detailing the process of e-commerce implementation, by carrying out a longitudinal study with 24 internet shoppers. The framework used is shown in Figure 3.13 below.

Figure 3.13: Pavlou and Fygenson's Extension of Theory of Planned Behaviour.



Source: Pavlou & Fygenson. (2006.) Understanding and predicting electronic commerce adoption: An extension of the theory of planned behaviour.

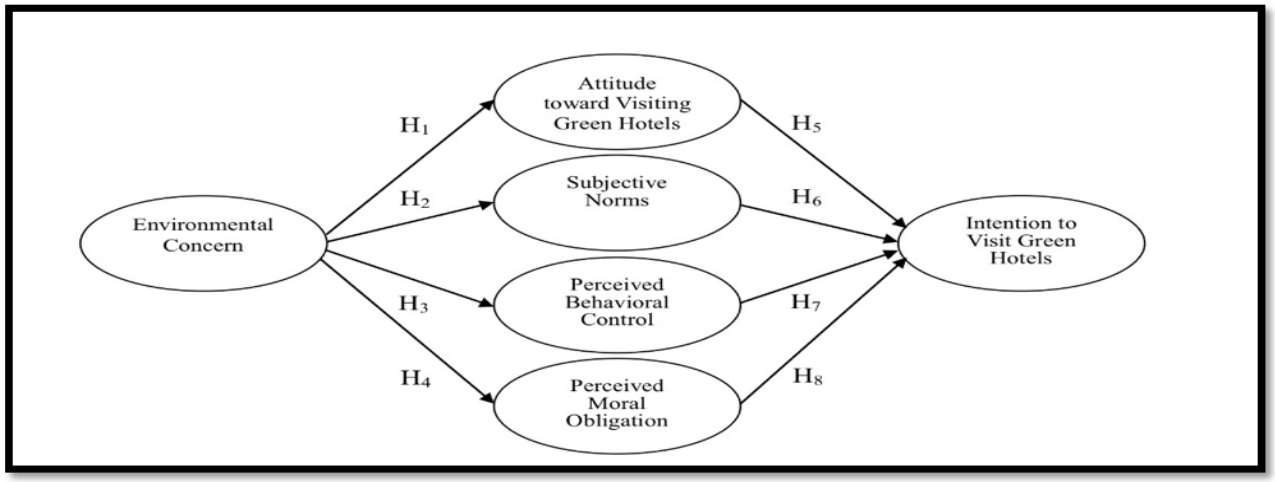
Pavlou and Fygenson employ a determinative structure to deconstruct perceived behavioural control and a variety of antecedent factors are used to explain the main elements of the theory of planned behaviour. Although this was seen as a second–order factor it was shaped by the first-order dimensions of self-efficacy and controllability. In

addition, trust is seen as a major feature associated with belief and behaviour when buying and receiving information. Trust is seen as a control belief in two separate components, whereas the product value is added to the purchase model as an additional consideration. The TAM's constructs of PEOU and PU are positioned as the attitudinal beliefs. The outcome of this study is aligned with the TPB and validates its measurements and items, as well as supporting its successful application.

3.2.3.3 Chen and Tung's Work on Theory of Planned Behaviour

The aim of Chen and Tung's (2014) study is to examine customers' intention to book and visit green hotels. This study aims to develop and extend the TPB model by including new dimensions to the model to predict customers' intention, including environmental concerns and perceived moral obligation.

Figure 3.14: Chen and Tung's Extension of Theory of Planned Behaviour.



Source: Chen & Tung. (2014.) Developing an extended theory of planned behaviour model to predict consumers' intention to visit green hotels.

The findings of their structural equation modelling demonstrate that environmental concerns have a positive impact on customers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural attitudes toward green hotels. It also finds that customers' perceived moral obligations have an impact on their intention to visit green hotels. These findings confirm the success of the extended TPB model, with good explanatory strength.

3.3 Search Intention and Evaluation

Section 3.3.1 presents definitions of search and identifies how search is integrated in the traditional decision making process. Section 3.3.2 identifies how the concept of search intention is defined and considers the value of motivational factors that influence search intention. Section 3.3.3 outlines how search intention was developed in previous online studies. The final section (3.3.4) considers the concept of information search and evaluation, noting the transition from offline to online information search and evaluation processes and the association with purchase intention.

3.3.1 Search within the Traditional Decision Making Process

The term 'search' refers to the information and data retrieval process. In a marketing context, this involves identifying fundamental information relating to a particular product, place or process. Search is a problem-solving activity, as it seeks to identify required information for a particular problem (Rose et al., 2012). Search can also refer to individual behaviour regarding sources and channels of information; including both active information seeking, which refers to customer tendency to look for information directly for a purpose and passive information seeking, where provided information is not acted upon (Punj & Moore, 2009). Furthermore, Xie, (2009) defines search as the action of trying to achieve information in both human and technological contexts.

Solomon (2009) stated that the information gained is used in determining whether or not to search for more information, in order to make informed purchasing decisions. Consumers usually conduct two types of information search to solve a problem or to meet their needs; firstly, internal search that is based on consumers' memories of past experience, and secondly, an external search which refers to outside information that can be used, such as advertisements and reference group information. Consumer perception, their perceived need for information, their existing knowledge and the degree to which they care about receiving information are the main influences on the level of information search (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2006). After having recognised their need, customers typically start to search for information that can satisfy their needs; this is

regarded as the second step in consumer decision-making models (Darley et al., 2010). At this stage, Grant et al. (2007) argue that satisfying information requirements regarding a product or service is the major motivator for their search for information. Shaver (2007) echoes this and finds that consumers engage in pre-purchase information seeking in order to make better decisions, increasing the possibility of satisfaction with the purchase.

Customers use information obtained from online sources to plan their methods of shopping (Jani et al., 2011). Spink and Zimmer (2008) stated that the use of online search can provide customers with significant information that may well lead to a decision about whether to purchase or not. Customers view the internet as an influential tool when searching for information and marketers are now trying to understand the connection between online information search and the choice of channel for purchase (Solomon, 2009).Through online shopping avenues, both marketers and buyers interact and share information relating to goods and services. Marketers can create awareness about their products and show the range of products they offer; on the other hand, consumers make enquiries about the products available via online avenues to ensure they purchase the ideal goods to satisfy their needs (Clarke, 2008).

The extensive nature and reliability of the online information search has contributed to an increase in the number of online shoppers. With the knowledge of increased web page visitors, organisations have been forced to promote and market their products to online consumers (Boone & Kurtz, 2011). As a result, there has been a growth of interactive product sites where both marketers and buyers exchange information regarding goods and services. Marketers advertise their products through online platforms, such as search engines, with the goal of encouraging online shopping (Budeva, 2010). The popularity of online shopping is derived from different forms of convenience for consumers (Angeline, 2012), and the search facility is important to these forms of convenience, for instance, the ability to check and assess product knowledge and to make more informed decisions about products that are suggested by marketers. Search platforms also contribute to consumer efficiency and effective selection of products to satisfy current needs when compared to other methods of making purchases (Bailey, 2012).

Online search is convenient, as customers do not spend much time searching products physically (Briggs & Brooks, 2011) and it is far easier to search a variety of products online. Unlike online shopping platforms, traditional retail stores may not stock the full range of products (Boone & Kurtz, 2011). Most products and services can be accessed via online avenues (Yoo, Su & Lee, 2002) and several web search engines have facilitated the growth and adoption of online shopping platforms. Through online search, consumers seek for product specifications and they view the variety of products and services that can be purchased via online platforms (Abou-Shouk, Lim & Megicks, 2013). The availability of several search sites has promoted the credibility of online shopping, as each site attempts to ensure that the products it lists are of high quality.

Many consumers today who use online shopping can see the advantage of several payment systems (El-Gohary, 2012; Laudon, 2009), such as Visa and PayPal. Through search on online shopping platforms, customers can easily rank similar products, but this is preceded by the level of potential choices that are identified through search. This enables firms to integrate the ideas of customers and improve the services offered online (Angeline, 2012). Advances in internet media have transformed the brand relationship between service/product providers and consumers (Bailey, 2011; Darley, Blankson & Luethge, 2010) and encouraged consumers to become informed online information seekers and purchasers, who are confident in online decision making.

3.3.2 Definition of Search Intention

Intention is described as a specific plan that leads individuals to reach a set of intention goals, resulting in the final decision to perform or not perform the behaviour (Gollwitzer, 1993). Briggs & Brooks, (2011) define search intention involves the development of a specific search goal and the pursuit of avenues to realise the goal. Search intention is also defined as a plan that seeks to achieve a desired set of goals regarding a particular problem/issue that necessitates the provision of more data (Verma, Stock & McCarthy, 2012). Search intention encompasses some personal elements, notably a) the motivating factors behind individual search for information regarding a given service (Chiao et al., 2009), or b) the basis for identifying solutions to problems that an individual is

experiencing. In this regard, search intention occurs in line with the expectations of a given behaviour (Gordon, Ahmad & Martin, 2009). Search intention is not just functional- it is also associated with the expectations of individuals (Xiang et al., 2008). Motivational factors that influence behaviour link to customer intention and such factors are indications of how prepared individuals are to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). Klein (1998) suggests that the motivation for information search online should be viewed as a critical predictor of consumer search behaviour, and that the customer's pre-purchase online information search is the foundation for making purchase decisions.

Bargiela (2009) believes that the search intention of consumers is linked to the lack of physical effort in obtaining information leading to preference for online travel search. Offline travel search relies on information provided by a travel guide/agency pertaining to available airlines and hotels, in relation to their flight and accommodation rates (Darley, Blankson & Luethge, 2010). In contrast, online travel search enables the identification of the most affordable and preferred travel specifications, such as identifying flight charges from one destination to another in a matter of a few minutes (Dennis et al., 2013). Online travel search has gained popularity as the most preferred travel search method, as it utilises less time, fewer resources in comparison to traditional offline travel methods (Mills & Law, 2013). Nonetheless, some consumers still use offline travel search by incorporating the use of travel agents in flight and accommodation reservations- some travellers prefer this channel as it involves direct payment for transactions and it provides a traveller with an avenue to ask questions in relation to the available flights and hotels (Al Rasheed & Mirza, 2011). Moreover, offline travel booking has remained popular as a) it limits the possible amount of online fraud and b) it can overcome a lack of consumer knowledge about online flight bookings and hotel reservation process (Angeline, 2012).

3.3.3 Search Intention in Past Online Studies

Several past online studies highlight search intention. One study on online search in relation to shopping was conducted by Chang (2003) and sought to establish where online shoppers get their information. The study establishes that 90% of online shoppers

carry out search before purchasing online; enquiring from family members and friends who have experience of purchasing a given product online. On the other hand, the study also established that 60% of shoppers use search engines and sites to gather information when shopping online (Chang, 2003). Kim, Lee and Kim (2004) studied factors that might affect online search intention; noting factors that might shape online search intention, such as the utilitarian value of Internet information search; the perceived benefits of Internet shopping; the hedonic aspects of the search process; the online purchase experience and the perception of security risk when shopping on the Internet. In addition, online search intention was found to positively affect online purchase intention. Law and Bai (2008), in examining online shoppers, identified a link between search intention, level of confidence in search completion through the internet.

There have also been numerous studies of the tourism sector, one of which was conducted by Gibson (2007), who noted how tourists use online search to identify their destinations. Destinations received more attention if they have an online presence. In noting a connection between destination and the technology platform used (Gibson, 2007), established that tourists with a high intention to search online were often up-to-date with current platforms. Availability of information is thus critical, as customers make decisions based on the provided information; the more the information, the easier the decision-making process. Search intention will be further examined in depth in the following chapter (Section 4.8).

3.3.4 Information Search and Evaluation

3.3.4.1 The Transition from Offline to Online Information Search and Evaluation Processes

Information search and evaluation techniques are now in transition from offline search modes, to online information search and evaluation. In traditional thinking, Guthrie et al. (1991) undertook preliminary work on the cognitive processes involved in locating specific information; determining how searchers select relevant information by applying five components to inform individual search behaviours. He identified a sequence of steps, notably and goal formation which involves individuals identifying the goal of the

search task; text selection, where the most appropriate text is identified; information extraction and integration; the linking of the information extracted to prior knowledge and evaluating the information. In another major study, Kuhlthau (1999) argues that information search evaluation consists of seven steps with each step linking components from one or more of the three domains: emotions, cognition and action.

Brand-Gruwel, Wopereis and Vermetten (2005) analysed the information problem solving process in both novices and experts, suggesting that information search evaluation comprises six steps; including task definition, information seeking, location and accessing, utilisation of information, synthesis and evaluation. A similar focus on sequence is noted by David, Song, Hayes and Fredin (2007), who argued that information search behaviour passes through three stages: preparation (starts with menu selection by user); exploration (exploring results of text selection); consolidation (after discovering and processing information, search results are evaluated against the search goals).

To define search information evaluation as gathering, manipulating, storing, retrieving, and classifying of recorded information is a traditional understanding, as expressed by Kuhlthau, Heinström and Todd (2008). Information evaluation has been regarded as a set of single items of a process where the intention of the consumer is realised through the final purchase intention. Whilst these are important considerations, a substantial proportion of literature in recent times about information search and evaluation has enabled in-depth discussion of limitations in this process. In this context, Moon (2004) establishes that online search for information is affected by characteristics of consumers (i.e. their level of internet experience and demographics). Pookulangara, Hawley and Xiao (2011) support the view that the quality and relevance of online information are significant criteria in the information evaluation process, which can lead to a potential purchase. Connaway, Dickey and Radford (2011) further the view of Pookulangara, Hawley and Xiao (2011), claiming that examination of the choice of information source reveals the importance of convenience. The ease of use/convenience constructs, which will be discussed further in chapter four are included in the conceptual model as key influences on the search and evaluation process.

Lazonder and Rouet (2008) note the influence of: 1) contextual variables (such as time, material and equipment), 2) resource variables (such as interface and the number of websites) and 3) individual variables (such as the level of domain knowledge, procedural knowledge, and language skills) on information evaluation. The contextual, resource and individual variables all play a significant part in the concept of information evaluation. So, if by using the contextual variable, the consumer is unable to locate his/her choice within a specified timeframe, it is likely that he/she may curtail the search process. If resource variables fail- i.e. there is no suitable interface portal, or the system is slow or poorly designed, this may also lead to a limited search process. On the subject of individual variables, some dependence on the skills and abilities of the individual occur in the search activity; a failure in any part of his/her skill base may cause loss in confidence and discourage the individual from pursuing their search intention.

In online contexts it becomes more difficult to identify this highly sequenced process- online information search and evaluation are highly connected processes, whereby one activity, i.e. the opening up of a results page, automatically leads to the evaluation of those page results. Subsequent search and evaluation episodes follow the same process until the consumer feels they have enough information. For instance, Verma, Stock and McCarthy (2012) explain how the online search process involves the identification of necessary websites and the iterative analysis of data from websites. De Mooij (2010) supports this, arguing that the search evaluation process is connected-it is apparent that when opening a page, some search and evaluation process occurs, that influences further search, rendering it more effective (Dennis et al., 2009). Rose et al. (2012) note that consumer search for information involves several search methods, including the use of search engine tools, and extraction of data from social media platforms. Consumers adopt these methods in a non-linear way. Ho, Lin and Chen (2012), see five intertwined elements in search processes: a) utilising a search engine, b) using a landmark website, c) using keywords, d) comparing search results, and e) browsing. They conclude that these elements of information evaluation may occur simultaneously and can lead travellers to make their decision to purchase relatively easily without following a particular sequence.

Schiffman et al. (2008) identifies the shortcuts, routines and guidelines that are adopted to make search processes simpler; such informed evaluation may lead more quickly to an online purchase. Again Schiffman et al. argue that when attempts are made to shortcut the system to reach the final step (purchase), this can improve confidence levels and create a sense of appreciation that that consumer is able to navigate his/her way to purchase in an organic way. Xie (2009) supports this view- in examining the extent to which individuals are engaged in search tasks, he considers a) the nature of the task and b) user familiarity with the task. Thus while Schiffman et al. (2008) talks about shortcuts in the search process by finding or learning quick solutions; Xie, (2009) examines degree of familiarity with the process, which can reduce the time-consuming search activity through familiar heuristic methods. With the onset of online search platforms, the search process has developed into a shorter more connected process where initiating information search and evaluation of information occurs in the same time period, i.e. the act of opening a page of search results automatically leads to the evaluation of results when browsing. How this integrated process of information search and evaluation fits with other key constructs is further discussed in chapter four (Section 4.9).

3.3.4.2 Influence of Information Search and Evaluation on Consumer Purchase Intention

According to Blackwell et al. (2001) purchase intention focuses on "what we think we may purchase", and they argue that information evaluation may increase consumers' intention to purchase via the internet. Lin (2001) argues that searching for information online is supposed to be the basis for making decisions on how to shop. Similarly, a study by Kim and Lennon (2000) looked at the effect on purchase intention through information evaluation, proposing that the amount of product or service information given when assessing the information, relates positively to purchase intention. Spink and Zimmer (2008) stated that the use of online search and evaluation can provide customers with significant information that might lead to a decision as to whether to purchase or not. Research by Morrison et al., (2001) suggests customers who book online travel services exhibit a greater interest in maintaining positive attitudes to search for information online, whilst also using these searches more frequently. It has been

mentioned that a primary motive for undertaking information search is to enhance the quality of the purchase decision. Tapscott (2009) supports this view finding that online customers engage in information evaluation to help confirm their purchase decisions.

Chorus et al. (2010) emphasise the importance of understanding travellers' choices when faced with knowledge limitations and difficulties in information accessibility. Pan and Fesenmaier (2006) argue that customers regard travel as a high-risk purchase, as they cannot evaluate the products before purchasing; therefore, customers may seek information from experienced travellers in order to decrease those risks. Fesenmaier et al. (2010) support this observation and find that travel customers engage in information seeking to reduce uncertainty, for instance in social risk and also to develop the value of their decisions. Jani et al. (2011) note how travellers that are more likely to participate in information evaluation are also more likely to do so to improve purchase decisions.

Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that information search and evaluation would have a significant influence on purchase intention. The majority of earlier research has focused on the relationship between online search and evaluation and the customer purchase decision (Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Crespo & Bosque, 2010; Huang et al., 2011; Lee, 2009; Shim et al., 2001). For example, it has been suggested that a customer's search intention has a direct relation to the final purchase decision. (Shim et al, 2001). However, what these studies have not illuminated is the relationship between the constructs of search intention, information search and evaluation before the intention to purchase. The conceptual framework that has been developed and presented in chapter four takes the relationships between these key constructs further.

3.4 Summary

The main purpose of this chapter was to discuss and evaluate a) theories of technology adoption, including Rogers' (1983) Diffusion of Innovations Theory and the Theory of Technology Acceptance; b) behavioural perspective theories, including the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, and alternatives. c) theories relating to search, including search intention and search information and evaluation.

The theoretical links between technology adoption theories and behavioural perspectives theories were explored. Many recent studies have concentrated on integrating TPB and TAM in order to examine IT usage and e-service acceptance. This is mainly because these two models are considered to be complementary, but it is also because the combination of the two models has arguably demonstrated good investigative power, when compared to the utilisation of TAM and TPB individually (Chen et al., 2007; Lee, 2009; Lu, Huang & Lo, 2010; Wu & Chen, 2005). The primary focus of this study is the current search behaviour of Saudi consumers, including search intention and information search evaluation that consumers of travel services engage in prior to purchase. In order to facilitate an examination of Saudi customer adoption of online information search for travel products, a comprehensive set of factors will be included. The integration of elements of the TPB and the TAM, together with the introduction of key influencing factors, such as perceived trust, perceived convenience and more specifically search intention and information search and evaluation should offer a clearer understanding of overall online search behaviour. How these elements relate to each other is discussed in detail as part of the conceptual framework in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: The Development of a Conceptual Framework

4.0 Introduction
- **4.1** Introduction to Preliminary Conceptual Framework
  - **4.1.1** Use of TPB and TAM as integrated behavioural perspective
  - **4.1.2** Key Constructs in framework
- **4.2** Attitude
  - **4.2.1** Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use
- **4.3** Subjective Norms
- **4.4** Perceived Behavioural Control
- **4.5** Perceived Convenience
- **4.6** Perceived Trust
  - **4.6.1** Perceived Risk
  - **4.6.2** Perceived Security
  - **4.6.3** Consumer Privacy
- **4.7** Search Intention
- **4.8** Information Search and Evaluation
- **4.9** Purchase Intention
- **4.10** Potential Moderating Variables
  - **4.10.1** Demographic Factors
  - **4.10.2** Past Experience
  - **4.10.3** Lifestyle: role of internet in daily life
- **4.11** Summary

4.0 Introduction

This chapter begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research, and carries out an extensive review of the available literature on each dimension. Thirteen key constructs are presented in the conceptual framework and each is explained in detail in the following pages. The research hypothesis relating to each of the constructs is identified at the end of each section. The key constructs include:

- Attitude;
- Perceived usefulness;
- Perceived ease of use;
- Perceived trust;
- Perceived security;
- Perceived risk;
- Consumer privacy;
- Perceived convenience;
- Subjective norms;
- Perceived behavioral control;
- Search intention;
- Information search & evaluation;
- Purchase intention.

4.1 Introduction to Preliminary Conceptual Framework

The aim of this study is to investigate the current search behaviour of Saudi consumers, including search intention and information search evaluation that consumers of travel services engage in prior to purchase. The objectives of study will be further discussed in detail in the following chapter (methodology). The framework draws upon elements from the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model, which was introduced in 1980 as the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The concept was proposed to describe behaviours over which an individual has control. The TPB theory was applied when researching relationships between attitudes, beliefs, behavioural intention and behaviours in domains including public relations, healthcare and advertising. The theory states that attitude, as related to behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (PBC), has an influence on behavioural intention (Ajzen, 1980, 1985, 1991, 2006; Fishbein, 1980; Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006; Taylor & Todd, 1995a). This is important when considering search intention for travel services, especially if there is a need to link behavioural intention elements (as noted in TPB), and behaviour, prior to the actual purchase. According to Ajzen (1991), the TPB covers a number of factors that jointly signify an individual's genuine control over the behaviour of consumers. These factors are:

- Attitude - the level to which an individual has positive or negative assessment of the behaviour of concern. It involves a consideration of the consequences of undertaking such behaviour.

- Subjective Norm (social norms) - the belief of the user about whether most individuals favour or disfavour the behaviour. It identifies whether individuals of significance to the person think he or she should undertake the behaviour. Social norms emerge that are known as normative of a set of people who are relevant to the decision maker.

- Perceived Behavioural Control - This relates to an individual's ability to carry out a given behaviour. PBC differs according to individual circumstances - an individual has changing perceptions of behavioural control subject to the situation.

- Behavioural Intention - This relates to motivational elements that have an impact on behaviour, where the stronger the intention to accomplish the behaviour, the more probable the behaviour will be accomplished (Ajzen, 1991, 2006).

TPB elements are appropriate to include in a study on technology adoption. Since the introduction of TPB, it has been employed in several technology adoption settings to forecast and describe a person's behavioural intention, in addition to actual self-reported behaviour, both from the managerial and customer standpoint (Chen, 2005; Chen et al., 2007; Gefen, Karahana & Straub, 2003; Reigner, 2008; Wu Bosnjak et al., 2006). The TPB has been widely validated in prior studies (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Lu, Zhou & Wang, 2009; Montano & Kasprzyk, 2008) and found to be an effective tool for predicting customer behaviour in the domain of online shopping that leads to actual purchase (Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009; Shim et al., 2001; Taylor & Todd, 1995). The TPB has also been applied to online activities around, information search and purchase (Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Crespo & Bosque, 2010; Huang et al., 2011; Lee, 2009; Lin, 2010; Shim et al., 2001). This has been particularly noted with some beneficial results in tourism studies (Lee, 2009; Quintal, Lee & Soutar, 2010; Tsai, 2010).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) has been well used in information technology studies (Celik, 2009). Elements of the TAM are also included in the conceptual framework of this study and, in particular, TAM has become an innovative framework in explaining internet-based transactions. TAM elements, such as Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) have been used to forecast a person's response relating to the utilisation of a technology system. PU is the degree to which the person thinks that using a specific technology could be useful or progress one's work or life, while PEOU is the level to which an individual thinks that utilising a certain information system or information technology will be easy (Gefen, Karahana & Straub, 2003). Both of these elements have been included in prior studies on internet adoption and are discussed further in section 4.2.1.

4.1.1 Use of TPB and TAM as Integrated Behavioural Perspective

TPB and TAM models have been thoroughly tested in a range of technology perspectives and diverse settings, and deemed to be powerful predictors of employing technology acceptance behaviour (Ali & Qing, 2008; Davis, 1993; Hsu et al., 2006). In a wider technology based transactional setting, e-commerce is a field of study where researchers

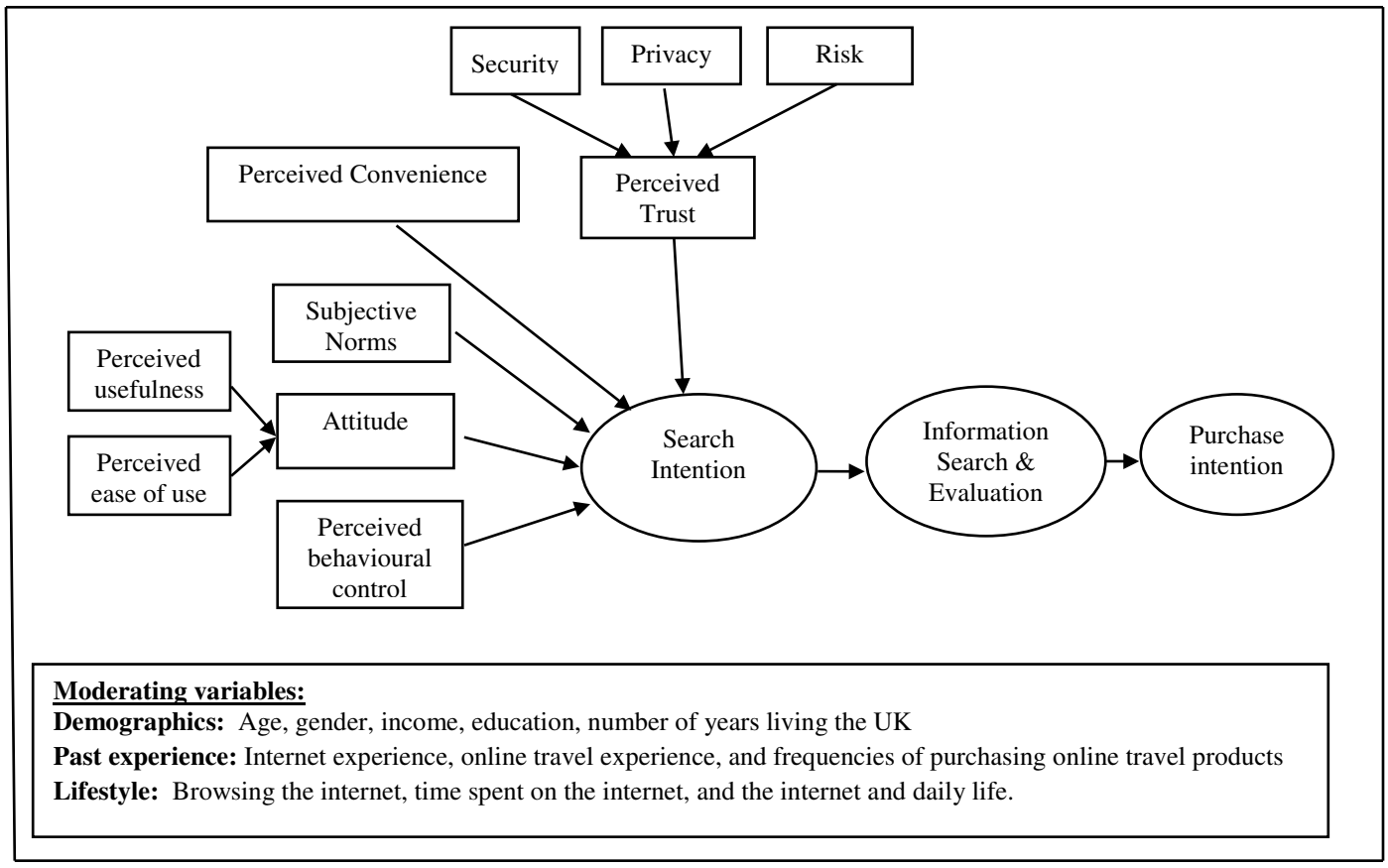
are able to evaluate either TAM or TPB, or the combined model, in order to understand online purchasing behaviour. TAM can be less complicated to apply, but it only offers information on user opinions about a system. TPB, on the other hand, offers more detailed information concerning their behaviour and responses. If elements of TAM and TPB are combined, there is a major advantage in the ability to observe the impact of key variables on system adoption. They have a parallel predictive influence in illustrating a person's intention and behaviour (Bosnjak et al., 2006; Chen et al., 2007; Gefen, Karahana & Straub, 2003; Wu & Chen, 2005). In the online travel sector, it is anticipated that similar benefits can be derived from a combined model approach.

Recent studies recently have sought to examine IT usage and e-service acceptance in order to integrate TPB and TAM, as both models complement each other. It has been argued that compared to the individual use of TAM and TPB, integrating the models is shown to result in better investigative power (Chen et al., 2007; Lee, 2009; Lu, Huang & Lo, 2010; Wu & Chen, 2005). As the emphasis of this study is on online travel service adoption and online information search, for our conceptual framework to be comprehensive, combining TAM and TPB is necessary, in order to effectively examine the current search behaviour of Saudi consumers of travel services and to establish their attitudes towards, and adoption of, online booking, search and purchase processes.

4.1.2 Key Constructs in Framework

There are thirteen proposed constructs in our research model, which have influential roles in the way that Saudi customers view online travel services; this is set against the more traditional form of travel purchasing experiences from a physical location, such as a travel agent. The following sections explain each construct and hypothesis in detail, so that we are able to enhance both the perception and actual experience of Saudi consumers of travel services. The conceptual framework underpinning the research is set out below in Figure 4.1

Figure 4.1: The Search intention, Information Search, and Evaluation Conceptual Framework.



4.2 Attitude

Attitude is defined as a way of feeling or thinking with respect to something, which is reflected in individual behaviour (Solomon, 2009). This definition tends to focus on the internal aspects, in terms of feeling and thinking, without considering the external effect, for instance, the social component. Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2006) provide a more comprehensive definition, describing it as a complicated mental process that involves beliefs, feelings, values and character to act in specific ways. It is also described as a person's tendency, at either individual or group level, that has a positive or negative impact on individual response (Armstrong & Kotler, 2011). These definitions enhance our understanding of the significant role that attitudes play in customers' actions. Substantial research has been conducted on attitude; for instance, Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) see it as the sum of the beliefs regarding a particular behaviour that is measured

by evaluation of these beliefs. They think that the classic view of attitude does not distinguish between attitude, belief, subjective norms, behavioural intention and actual behaviour. Thus, they demonstrate that these key elements should be divided, as each has a separate and significant role in the prediction of actions.

Klein (1998) looks at attitudes toward internet shopping and proposes that attitude to online services can positively predict customer intention to use the internet for product information search. However, one weakness of the study is that Klein offers no explanation for any link between attitude and intention to search. Shim, Eastlick, Lotz and Warrington (2001) argue that their data supports Klein's (1998) view on the relationship between customer attitude, search intention and purchase intention through the TPB. Their findings suggest that customer attitude would have a positive impact on intention to utilise the internet for information search. The work of Blackwell et al. (2006) enhances these views, as their findings show that consumer attitudes toward online shopping certainly influence their information search behaviour. Moreover, both Seock and Norton (2007), who examine the impact of attitudes and online information, and Watchrave, Sringkan and Shim (2003), who attempt to discover variables associated with online information search and shopping intention among computer users, establish that the use of the internet for information search can be positively influenced by customer attitude. Chang et al. (2009), echo these views as they use TRA and TPB to look at customer information-seeking intention, and find that positive attitudes toward online information appear to lead to a greater intention to seek information and buy.

Recently, studies demonstrate how individual attitude towards online shopping positively affects consumer intention to act in online contexts (Huang et al., 2011). In a tourism context, Laohapensang (2009) investigated the factors that influence online travel shopping by applying the TPB as the theoretical foundation. Their findings indicated that the difficulty of using online channels for travel shopping is regarded as an influencing factor on customer attitude, and attitude has a key influence on purchase intention.

As Ayeh, Au and Law (2013) note, a customer's favourable attitude towards a product means that consumer search more for the product online. On the other hand, an unfavourable attitude involves either little search, or the entire avoidance of the product. Based on their attitudes, customers who search online for information on travel services can be viewed as problem solvers. The attitude of these consumers on the effectiveness of online travel services is what drives their intention. Consumers who derive pleasure from online booking are motivated by the customer experience in online booking systems. The impact of attitude on customer online search intention can be classified into two parts: benefits and enjoyment. Problem-solving customers are described as seeking benefits. In this case 'benefits' refers to the PU and the PEOU of the online travel searching and purchasing services. On the other hand, customers who want excitement as well as service are described as seeking 'enjoyment' (Close, 2012).

According to the TPB and the TAM, the intention and attitude of the customer can be predicted. In their research, Safeena et al. (2013) observe that both the online behavioural intention, and actual behaviour, of customers are influenced positively by attitude. It is argued that attitude is a multi-construct comprising of the principal constructs of PU and PEOU (Taylor &Todd, 1995). The perception that an online system is easier and offers some usefulness to the customer positively influences customer intention. Thus, it can be concluded that:

Hypothesis 1: *Attitude towards using the internet for searching information on travel products will have a significant impact on customers' search intention.*

4.2.1 Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

Amongst the multiple variables affecting attitudes when using a specific system, PU and PEOU are significant. The TAM includes PU and PEOU as one of the extensions of Ajzen and Fishbein's TRA (Davis, 1989). Furthermore, PU was defined by Davis as the level at which individuals think that using new technologies increases job performance. In the past, PU was defined by research as the perception of an act of carrying out behavior to achieve specific rewards (Venkatesh et al., 2003). More recently, in the

context of online travel communities, Casaló, Flavián and Guinalíu (2011) provide a new definition of PU, suggesting it to be the level to which individuals consider participating in the travel community online. Without participating in this network, it may difficult for individuals to obtain certain benefits. Thus, the level of participation seems important.

Davis (1989) was apparently the first to use the term PEOU, as defining the degree to which an individual thinks that the use of a new technology can be free of effort. The term PEOU has come to be used to also refer to the ease with which individuals can make use of a particular tool or system, so as to accomplish a specific objective (Venkatesh, 2000). According to a recent definition by Featherman, Miyazaki and Sprott (2010), the emphasis is on how natural it is to use a function (in this context, advanced media technology) with the absence of effort and difficulty.

The role of PEOU and PU, as determinants of customer attitude, has been addressed in past studies. For instance, Davis (1989) finds that PU is affected by PEOU, but the easier it is to employ advanced technology, the more useful it is perceived. Gefen and Keil (1998) confirm this view arguing that the PU and PEOU of using online services are major determinants of customer attitude. Similar to Lu and Su (2009), Kim (2007) shows how the relationship between PU and PEOU may determine customer attitude to online services. Chang, Yan and Tseng (2012) echo this view demonstrating that PEOU and PU are antecedent factors that have impact on attitude toward using online mobile services.

Numerous studies have attempted to explain the impact of PU through customer attitudes towards the use of online travel activities. For instance, Bhattacherjee (2001) examines cognitive beliefs and affect that influence individual intention to continue using online services. He argues for the significance of PU on the pre- and post-acceptance stages, with regard to online services. On the other hand, PEOU shows an inconsistent effect on consumer attitude during the early stages of using e-services. Xu at el. (2010) support these findings with their investigation of the relationship between the PU of travel information, its PEOU, and trust in travel information. Recent evidence offered by Peng, Xiong and Yang (2012) also gives insight into the factors that determine tourists'

acceptance of online services. Their findings indicate that PU and PEOU drive customer attitudes towards the use of online travel services.

It can be argued that using an online booking service will be free from effort - what is described as 'ease of use' (Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013). It refers to easiness of the internet as a means of accessing travel products, and for searching and purchasing. According to Luis et al. (2010), ease of use influences the attitude of customers to shop online and this seems relevant to online search for travel products. Thus, the more effortless the technology, the higher the likelihood of online travel services being used by customers. Thus, it can be hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 2: *The PEOU of the internet when searching for information on travel products will have a significant impact on customer attitude.*

The customer perception of the usefulness of the internet for searching for travel information also has an impact on their attitude. Usefulness is defined as the users' subjective view on the probability that utilising a particular system will increase his or her task performance (Li & Liu, 2014). In this context, the customer perception of using the internet for online travel search, in order to improve their performance, could be regarded as usefulness. We might assume that the use of online travel technology will improve their search and purchase experience. Previous research by Au and Law (2012) indicates that the PU of online services influences the attitude of the customers towards online services. Thus, it can be hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 3: *The PU of the internet when searching for information on travel products will have a significant impact on customer attitude.*

4.3 Subjective Norms

It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by subjective norm, which refers to a person's perception of social normative pressures, such as those created by family, peers, friends, and others' beliefs (Taylor & Todd, 1995). According to subjective norms, social influence is the perception held by a person of what people who are significant to them,

think their behaviour should be like (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). The term normative belief is generally understood to mean the possibility that important individuals or groups who make referrals, agree or disagree about performing a given behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norms have been found to be associated with salient control beliefs, in relation to the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The justification for the effect of subjective norm on intention is that an individual might choose to carry out a particular behaviour if s/he believes that a person who is important to them would encourage them to fulfil this behaviour (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Taylor and Todd (1995) see normative belief as an individual perception, which is affected by the judgement of significant others (parents, peers, and friends). George (2004) also finds that a belief about subjective norms and social pressure, regarding purchasing, would have a positive influence on online intention to act. In addition, Chang et al. (2009), and Delafrooz, Paim and Khatibi (2011), find that subjective norm positively predicts information-seeking intention and it has been established that subjective norms have a positive influence on intention when purchasing food online (Alam, and Sayuti, 2011). On the other hand, some research has suggested that the intention to purchase online is affected by a combination of past related experiences and attitude towards online services and that subjective norms may have less or no influence (Huang et al., 2011).

In terms of online travel services, studies have attempted to explain the impact of subjective norms on customer intention to use online travel activities, information search and purchase. For instance, Bamberg, Ajzen and Schmidt (2003) apply the TPB as it shows the choice of travel method is a decision that might be influenced by subjective norms. Similarly, Laohapensang (2009) investigate factors that influence online travel shopping, and identify that consumer intention to carry out internet travel shopping is affected by attitude, subjective norm, and PBC towards the service. Quintal, Lee and Soutar (2010) echo this view and show that subjective norms significantly influence intention. This is supported by Tsai (2010), who analyses the behaviour patterns of independent travellers; her findings show that reference to group opinion had impact on customer intention to use online travel services.

In this research context, subjective norms refer to consumer perceptions regarding the use of online services, as influenced by the opinion of the referent group (such as family, colleagues or friends). Past research indicates that subjective norms have a significant influence on the behavioural intention of the customer (Liang et al., 2013). In the context of travel services, family and friends are influential in the decision-making process regarding the use of online travel services, including search and purchase. An individual wishing to search for travel information may be encouraged to use an online booking service because of the advice they received from a family member, friend or colleague. According to Matei et al. (2010), information from friends and close people significantly influence the search and purchase decisions of those using online travel services. We may conclude theoretically that subjective norms are likely to have a significant impact on customer search intention. Thus, it can be predicted that:

Hypothesis 4: *Subjective norms, relating to use of the internet for information search for travel products, will have a significant impact on customer search intention.*

4.4 Perceived Behavioural Control

The first serious analysis of perceived behavioural control (PBC) as a factor of planned behaviour theory emerged in the 1980s. In his seminal article, Ajzen (1985) defines PBC as the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the particular behaviour, whereas, in a later study, Ajzen (2006) redefines PBC as an individual's belief about how simple or hard the performance of the behaviour is expected to be. Similarly Armitage and Conner (2001) define PBC as how hard individuals are prepared to work and how much effort is required to perform the behaviour.

More recently, Limayem, Khalifa, and Frini (2000) investigate the factors affecting online shopping and find that PBC is a determinant of online shopping intention. Keen et al. (2004) argue that their findings support the view of Limayem, Khalifa and Frini (2000) highlighting that choice of online channel over others is determined by the amount of perceived control during the search /purchase process. Taylor and Todd (1995) note how the level of confidence that adopters have in their ability to utilise the innovation

was positively linked to behavioural control. Similarly, Herrero Crespo and Del Bosque (2010), identify the PBC is an influential factor on customer intention to use online services. Huang et al. (2011), note that PBC has a positive influence on consumer intention to act in online contexts. Delafrooz, Paim and Khatibi (2011) demonstrate that PBC can positively affect consumers' intention to search/purchase online; a similar finding to that of Alam and Sayuti, (2011), who demonstrate how factors (PBC, subjective norms, and attitude) influence online food search and purchase intention.

In terms of travel online shopping, several attempts have been made to explain the impact of PBC on customer intention regarding the use of online travel activities, including information search and purchase. For instance, Lam and Hsu (2006) use the TPB's core constructs (attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control) with the addition of the past behaviour variable, in order to test the applicability on behavioural intention of choosing a travel destination. Similarly, Laohapensang (2009) finds that user intention to carry out internet travel booking is affected by PBC, which can significantly influence the intention to shop online. This view is echoed by Quintal, Lee and Soutar (2010) who look at the factors influencing intention to use travel websites, noting that PBC influences intention, and that subjective norms influenced PBC and attitudes. From the analysis, PBC refers to an individual's control over performing behaviour and recognises the need to consider situational obstacles in predicting the behaviour. The PBC is a construct of the TPB and it reflects a person's skills and resources, which are required in implementing behaviour (Huang et al., 2011). The relationship between PBC and the intention, when using the internet for searching information on travel services, is based on two factors. First, there may be a potential increase in behavioural intention and, second, the probability of a stronger search intention towards (Amaro & Duarte, 2014).

The TPB notes that PBC influences individual behavioural intention. When a person believes that significant situational obstacles exist related to behaviour, the confidence in that behaviour weakens. As a result, the individual intention reduces so as to avoid disappointment (Quintal, Lee & Soutar, 2010). In the context of travel, the instability of the online system to serve many customers may be seen as a barrier to the use of online

travel services. As such, when using the internet for information search, the PBC may have a significant impact on customer search intention. For instance, when customers have the required skills to use the internet for travel information search, the intention to utilise the service is potentially increased; thus, the PBC could have a significant impact on customer search intention. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 5: *When using the internet for information search for travel products, perceived behavioural control (PBC) will have a significant impact on customers' search intention.*

4.5 Perceived Convenience

Recent developments in online consumer behaviour have heightened the need for investigating consumer convenience, in terms of buying and adopting online services. Berry, Seiders and Grewal (2002) argue that the demand for convenience is strong and that marketers have to develop more accurate thinking on the concept. Convenience is recognised to be progressively more significant to customers, yet only a few studies have examined or defined convenience (Berry, Seiders & Grewal, 2002). Morganosky (1986) describes customers who are convenience-oriented as wanting to achieve a task in with the least amount of energy used, in the shortest time possible. Brown (1989) attempts to define the concept of convenience by proposing a conceptual framework using five dimensions: time dimension, place dimension, acquisition dimension, use dimension, and execution dimension. Brown (1989) argues that saving time and effort is the benefit of a convenient service.

In their research on internet shopping, Szymanski and Hise (2000) argue that there are positive relationships between convenience and intention to search. Similarly, Ernst and Young (2001) identify convenience as a significant factor influencing customers' online shopping intention. Furthermore, it was found that convenience is a factor driving customers to search more over the internet (Doolin et al., 2005). Shim et al. (2001) find that the overall speed of process, ease of finding what one wants, time-saving, and the instant ability to get items are components of perceived convenience. Torkzadeh and Dhillon (2002) see convenience as a factor that has impact on e-commerce success. Berry, Seiders and Grewal (2002) for instance, find that customers' evaluation of waiting

time influences their attitude and intention to act. They suggest more comprehensive measures of convenience in the online services context: 1) decision convenience whereby consumers need to make a decision as to how to obtain a particular service; 2) access convenience whereby consumers start service delivery; 3) transaction convenience refers to consumers' need to have security; 4) benefit convenience involves consumers' experience of the benefit of the service and 5) post-benefit convenience is the post service interactions with the provider.

Several attempts have been made to investigate the impact of perceived convenience on intention to adopt online services; for instance, Jih (2007) looks at the impact of convenience on consumer intention to shop via smart phone devices. The result demonstrates a strong relationship between convenience and consumer intention. Studies by Prasad and Aryasri (2009) and Kuo- Chan (2010) suggest that convenience has a positive impact on consumer intention. This view is supported by Izquierdo-Yusta and Schultz, (2011) who look at cost savings and time benefits, noting that the significance of internet convenience reveals that it seems essential that customers perceive the internet as saving them time and effort, which positively influences their intentions to use. Recent evidence from Chang, Yan and Tseng, (2012) suggests that perceived convenience is an antecedent factor that affects intention to use and continuance of intention to use.

Perceived convenience is defined in terms of time-saving effects and the removal of both location and geographic constraints. The removal of these obstacles creates search and purchase convenience, especially for online travellers (Hung et al., 2013). From a marketing perspective, this convenience comprises five dimensions: time, place, acquisition, use, and execution as noted earlier by Brown (1989). If the customer perceives online travel information search as time saving, or that ticket booking can be done at any time and place, his or her behavioural intention to search and purchase is likely to be positively influenced. Further, if the customer experiences execution convenience (e.g. having holiday packages arranged and provided by online travel sites) their intentions to use the internet to search for online booking services will be increased.

It can be argued that, if an online travel service offers different forms of convenience, the customer intention to search for information on travel products will be increased. On the other hand, if online booking services consume time, are complex, with transactional inconvenience and no perceived benefits, the customer intention may reduce significantly. Thus, customers' perceived convenience of booking services has an impact on their search intention. Thus, we conclude by hypothesising that:

Hypothesis 6: *Perceived convenience will have a significant impact on customer search intention when using the internet to search for information on travel products.*

4.6 Perceived Trust

Trust is a fundamental relationship concept that demands explanation since researchers working across academic disciplines have defined it in multiple ways (McKnight & Chevron, 2002). Each discipline considers trust in accordance with its own unique requirements. For instance, psychologists observe trust as a characteristic exhibited by individuals, while sociologists perceive it to be linked to social structure (Lewicki et al., 2006). The term trust has come to be used to refer to an individual's belief that their requests will be satisfied in the future by the actions carried out by another party (Lewicki et al., 2006). Therefore, in the context of the online marketplace, it can be defined as a belief about the convincing characteristics exhibited by a seller and the potential behaviour of that seller in the future (Ganesan, 1994). Fung and Lee (1999) provide a new definition of trust as a willingness to believe a variety of attributes about the other party, e.g. fairness, goodness, strength, ability, benevolence, honesty and predictability. Trust is usually developed based on the repeated use of a site; as the user gains experience, they increasingly believe in what is presented when his/her expectations are met during visits (Bart et al., 2005).

Perceived trust in online search and purchase of travel services is a multi-dimensional concept (Casaló, Flavián & Guinalíu, 2007; Shin, 2010). It arises from key antecedents of risk, security and privacy. Trust is a set of beliefs emerging from these antecedents and it combines many aspects into one (Gefen, 2000). Preliminary work on a conceptual model of purchase intention and perceived trust, undertaken by Lloyd et al. (2010), argues that trust is critical - online trust can be positively associated with both search intention and

purchase intention. Izquierdo-Yusta, and Schultz (2011) also echo this as they look at the relationship between online purchasing and trust. These results are consistent with Bianchi and Andrews (2012), who demonstrate that perceived trust in online vendors has a positive direct influence on their intention towards continuing to purchase online.

Increased perceived trust associated with buying from the internet can increase consumer willingness to search online. Trust in online shopping affects the willingness to search (Harris & Goode, 2004; Jarvenpaa et al., 2000; Yu-Hui Chen, 2007). Jarvenpaa et al. (2000) show that higher customer trust towards online stores helps reduce the perceived risks associated with online purchase. Harris and Goode (2004) also identify a strong association between consumer online trust and intention - perceived trust has a direct impact on intention to act in online contexts. Wen (2009) shows how trust plays a significant role in search processes. Hong and Cho's (2011) work on the criteria affecting trust highlights how, in the context of online use, trust influences customer search intention to use online services. The growth of trust influences customers' intention to search online; Palvia (2009) finds that trust could positively influence search intention. It can be hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 7: *Perceived trust will have a significant impact on customer search intention when using the internet to search for information on travel products.*

Key antecedents of trust are included on the conceptual framework, notably, perceived risk, perceived security and consumer privacy.

4.6.1 Perceived Risk

Perceived risk refers to customers' belief regarding the potential negative outcomes that might result following online transactions (Kim et al., 2008). Sweeney, Soutar and Johnson (1999) define perceived risk as "the subjective expectation of a loss" (p. 81) and they suggest a number of risk dimensions, the principal ones being financial and performance risk. Financial risk can be defined as the monetary loss that a customer may experience if a product requires repair, replacement or if a purchase price is lost (Sweeney, Soutar & Johnson, 1999). Stone and Gronhaug (1993,) also refer to "potential

loss of status in one's social group as a result of purchasing a product or service, looking foolish or untrendy" (p. 107). Risk might also be loss of control over personal information, such as personal being used without your knowledge or permission (Jarvenpaa & Todd, 1997).

A large number of published studies describe the role of risk in the online context. For instance, in a major study of online/offline risk, Andrade (2000) finds that those consumers who feel comfortable with the web are more likely to use it. Kim et al. (2008) in work on the importance of risk to purchase decision, note that consumer perception of risk varies; those unwilling to purchase on the Web experience a stronger sense of risk when compared to the traditional mode of shopping; this perception of risk can also be affected both positively and negatively by the quality of information as well as perceived privacy and security protection. A subsequent study undertaken by Crespo et al. (2009) demonstrates that intention to shop online is significantly affected by risk. Kim and Prabhakar (2000) look at trust in information technology in e-commerce, noting how perceived trust emerges from perceived risk. Jøsang and Presti (2004) note how risk and trust have a mutual influence.

Perceived risk in online information search and purchase can be seen as a subjectively determined expectation of a loss by the internet shopper (Forsythe & Shi, 2003). In their research, Bhatnagar et al. (2001) note that perceived risk is considered to be a primary barrier to engaging in online transactions by online information seekers. Amaro and Duarte (2014) further indicate that customer perception of risk significantly decreases their trust in online search and purchase. Perceived risk has a significant effect on the perceived trust of the customers. Online customers of travel services may perceive various forms of risk, ranging from personal to economic and performance risk. Depending on the risk type, and the value of that risk to the customer, their level of trust changes considerably. Online customers who have suffered personal and economic risks are more likely to have less trust in the site causing the risk. Further, trust is also a function of perceived risk. Online booking services that ensure the protection of customer data, especially on financial matters, are likely to be favoured by customers. This is

because the service actively demonstrates the absence of risk and gives the customer the perception that their data and information will be safe. As a result, it is likely that customers may develop both an in-depth trust and the intention to search for more travel information on that particular site. Thus, it can be hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 8: *Perceived risk is significantly related to perceived trust when using the internet to search for information on travel products.*

4.6.2 Perceived Security

In 1985, Rempel, Holmes and Zanna used the term security to describe the sensation of feeling safe, assured and comfortable about the prospect of depending on a trustee. The term perceived security relates to a customer's belief that his or her financial information will not be shown, saved and/or stolen during e-commerce (Flavian & Cuinaliu, 2006). Kolsaker and Payne (2002) see that perceived security online relies on the reliability of payment methods and procedures of data transmission and storage. Security can be dependent on the consumer perception of the quality of processes for online communication. Salisbury et al. (2001) use the term security to refer to the belief that the Internet is a place that is secure enough for data and sensitive information to be sent.

An increasing amount of literature on perceived online security has emerged, with Salisbury (2001) showing that perceived security has an influence on intention to purchase online. Other studies have sought to separate the impact of security and privacy on online trust levels (Flavian & Cuinaliu, 2006). Several attempts have been made to study the existing relationship between perceived trust and security, and the role they play in online contexts. Chen and Barnes (2007) show that perceived security is an important antecedent to perceived trust and that perceived trust in online searching had a positive impact on purchase intention. Roca, García and Vega (2009) also find that perceived security and perceived privacy are the components of perceived trust. Özgüven's (2011) recent study confirms the existence of a relationship between the security offered on a company website and consumer trust in the online services of the company. Perceived trust is determined to some degree by perceived security, according to Ray, Ow and Sung (2011).

Security is a significant factor in online travel services. Customer perception of the ability of online travel services providers to perform secure transactions influences their perception of the capability of the service provider (Arthur, 2009). If the customer perceives the provider as competent, they are likely to tend to trust the provider and to be more prepared to search for information. However, studies suggest that it cannot work on its own as a customer incentive, especially in online travel services (Ponte, Carvajal-Trujillo & Escobar-Rodríguez, 2014). Security builds up the trust of the customer, which in turn is reflected in the customer willingness to engage in online search. Customer perception of security in online search and booking is critical to the search intention of customers. Security ensures that customers obtain a better experience as they navigate online services, without having fear of losing sensitive personal and financial information (Arthur, 2009).

Customers who have had initial positive experience with the security of an online travel service tend to perceive the service as secure and thus develop trust towards it. Such customers develop positive search intention and tend to use the service more frequently. In contrast, customers who have suffered some violation of their security in online travel services may stop their search activities. The impression of trust is not there, thus leading to hesitant customer behaviour. Thus, it can be concluded that:

Hypothesis 9: *Perceived security is significantly related to perceived trust when using the internet to search for information on travel products.*

4.6.3 Consumer Privacy

The term privacy refers to the ability to control the level and extent to which personal information is utilised (Metzger, 2004). Privacy of information can be described as the extent to which individuals can determine themselves when, how and what information about them is communicated to others (Chai et al., 2009). For Liu et al. (2005), protection of one's privacy means the rights of an individual to be left alone and permitted to control the release of his or her personal information. Alternatively, Goodwin (1992) has suggested that when sharing information behaviourally or intellectually, one should have control over the level, timing and circumstances of that information.

In the online context, the sharing of personally identifiable information can include sharing one's name, birth date, social security number and financial information. Internet privacy has been described as the desire for privacy with respect to transactions, or the transmission of data via the internet (Nadim & Noorjahan 2007). Published studies describing the role of customer privacy are extensive. In a seminal article, Goodwin (1992) highlights that one reason for customers' desire for privacy is linked to control over intrusion and disclosure. Control over intrusion includes: 1) avoidance of behavioural responses from others, 2) avoidance of embarrassment and 3) avoidance of evaluation by others. Control over disclosure includes: 1) protection of enjoyment, 2) protection of information about the self, 3) protection of the self-image and 4) protection of the undesired self. People do not always seek privacy in consumption activities; indeed, some people are completely open with one reference group (Goodwin, 1992).

It has been established in past studies that perceived privacy and perceived security are antecedents of perceived trust (Roca, García & Vega, 2009). Liu et al. (2005) address the relationship between perceived privacy and customer trust, finding that internet privacy concerns are negatively linked to trust and willingness customer perception of privacy as a component of trust could influence his or her intention towards online transactions. Nadim and Noorjahan (2007) support these findings and note that trust, security, and privacy should be recognised as multidimensional constructs. It has been shown that perceived trust has a positive impact on intention and that security and privacy are fundamental aspects of that perceived trust (Yu-Hui Chen and Barnes, 2007).

In the context of online travel, customer perceived privacy could be viewed in terms of controlling and protecting the use of his or her personal information. Customers tend to look for indicators of privacy on travel websites and when they find it their trust for that particular site grows. Such customers are described as cognitive-based clients (Kautonen, 2008). The trust of cognitive-based customers is mainly one of first impressions and occurs rapidly. However, most customers of online travel services perceive a lack of control over the privacy of their information (Binder, 2013). As a result, some may be

unwilling to engage in a trusting relationship when using the internet to search for information on travel products (Ponte, Carvajal-Trujillo and Escobar-Rodríguez, 2014). Customers are sometimes unwilling to use online booking services, as they perceive that others may know their travel plans, thus losing the element of privacy. The loss of privacy causes the customer to lose trust in the online service, as it does not satisfy them. Additionally, the loss of trust may cause the search intention of the customer to decrease. We can therefore hypothesise that:

Hypothesis 10: *Consumer privacy is significantly related to perceived trust when using the internet to search for information on travel products.*

4.7 Search Intention

The internet is regarded as an influential tool that enables consumers to search for information and shape their intention to search (Xiang, Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2008). The relationship between online search intention and information evaluation is currently under investigation by marketers (Huang et al., 2010; Jani et al., 2011). Ajzen (1985) addresses behavioural intention, explaining how customer intention acts as a motivational factor and a particular plan leading to fulfilment of the intention. Furthermore, Xie (2002) defines search intention as the probability that consumers will search for a particular product or service. Klein (1998) also suggests that the motivation for information search online should be viewed as a critical predictor of search behaviour, and that the customer pre-purchase search intention can be a foundation for making purchase decisions.

Consumer intention is a key influencer and the nature of the internet experience can shape consumer intention (Bargiela, 2009; Shim et al., 2001). The more complicated the internet system may appear, the less excited the consumer may be to continue his/her search. In contrast, Shim et al. (2001) suggest a slightly different variation to this concept and argue that the customer purchase decision is influenced by his/her search limitations, which can influence their search intention. Jani et al. (2011) state that customers use information obtained from online sources in order to plan their methods of shopping.

Past research suggests that different benefits are believed to drive search intention. Enjoyment value from information search concerns the enhanced knowledge of a particular product that customers are interested in. In Yoo and Chung's (2002) study, the idea of enjoyment (fun) while carrying out information search is linked to purchase activity: the more enjoyable the search activity is, the more likely it is to lead to a purchase. A significant number of researchers agree with Chorus et al.'s (2010) focus on the importance of understanding the intention of travellers before search; highlighting the importance of functional components that will ensure positive search intention is likely. Some functional benefits relate to the effectiveness of information gathering (e.g. product knowledge, utility). Xiang, Gretzel and Fesenmaier (2008) and Jani (2011), argue that the use of particular portals might automatically lead the consumer to more effective search. However, it is equally possible to suggest that travel products are intangible and not easy to evaluate prior to consumption (Ren & Du, 2013).

The behavioural intention of the customer towards search can be classified as attitudinal (personal) or normative (social) (see Chen, Shang & Li, 2014). Customers who attitudinally search online for information on travel products tend to use personal attributes to evaluate the search process according to prior experience (Chen, Shang & Li, 2014). If the customer has prior experience, his or her ability to identify, during the search process, relevant options that meet his or her requirements will be high. On the other hand, when normative customers search online for information about travel products, their search may be based on the social references acquired from other parties. Among the factors that may have a key influence, Abd Aziz et al. (2010) note how intention has impact on information search and evaluation. Whether customers are motivated by attitudinal or normative motivations in search, their individual search intention is likely to shape the information search and evaluation process. Thus, it can be hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 11: *Search intention will have a significant impact on information search and evaluation when using the internet to search for information on travel products.*

4.8 Information Search and Evaluation

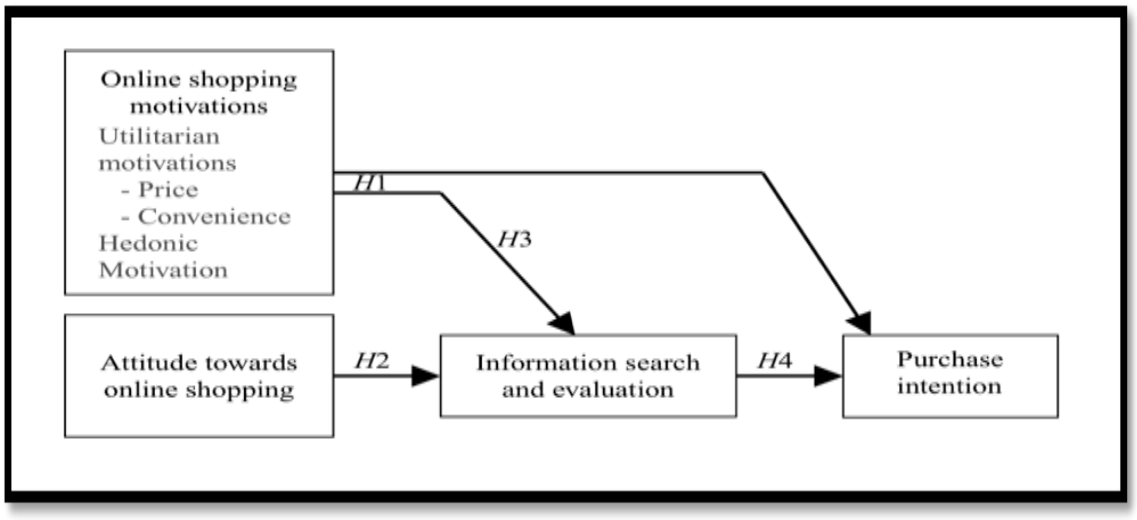
Kulkarni, Ratchford and Kannan (2012) investigate differences in specific information types for online and offline consumers, noting differences in the information sources consulted and time allocated to the process. Consumers use sources that accurately match the criteria and/or cost of accessing data – frequent online searchers place importance on ratings, whereas frequent offline searchers place importance on personal recommendations. Kulkarni, Ratchford and Kannan's study (2012) places importance on the quality of information source and the value that the information source appears to have for the consumer. Ho, Lin and Chen (2012), in their consumer travel information search study, identify the key processes that users describe in their search activity and show it as an accumulation of previous travel knowledge and search experience, which can positively enhance online information search outcomes. They see five integrated elements in search processes: a) utilising a search engine, b) using a landmark website, c) using keywords, d) comparing search results, and e) browsing. They conclude that these elements of information evaluation may occur simultaneously- there is no hierarchy of steps in their proposed process.

Searching for information online and evaluating the information relies on interdependent factors that can be useful reference points for purchase intention. Mills and Law (2013) note how a consumer may experience challenges when deciding on the final decision whether to purchase or not. Through observational research, they noted how customers are likely to get information from different online tourism companies offering different packages when they are searching for information. These packages may differ as to how current, complete and comprehensive the information is. Depending on the customer requirements, he or she will select an option based on information evaluation. In considering the elements identified by Ho, Lin and Chen, as described earlier, some elements may be consecutive (e.g. using keywords and comparing search results) but other elements will be iterative (e.g. browsing). In some studies, there is an expectation that the user will have a consistent and competent level of skills, experience and ability to complete the process without obstacles. However, if we take on board Mills and Law's (2013) opinion that the process of usage and evaluation of the information are two sides

of the same coin, this shows that in online information search there is often less consistency, less sequenced and more organic forms of evaluation occurring. According to Al-Maskari and Sanderson (2011), experienced and non-experienced information seekers take almost the same time to find relevant outcomes.

Research conducted by Vazquez and Xu (2008) on customers shopping experience finds that information search and evaluation is an important element of online shopping, and they view information search and evaluation is a single construct, as illustrated in their hypothesised shopping framework.

Figure 4.2: Linkages between online purchase behaviour variables



Source: Vazquez and Xu. (2009). Investigating linkages between online purchase behaviour variables.

This view was noted in chapter three, which identified that recent thinking on information search and evaluation represented this as a single integrated process (McCarthy, 2012; De Mooij, 2010). Noh (2008) also considers information search and evaluation as a single process, where constant on-going appraisal is undertaking that offers continuance evaluation, depending on the depth of the customer intention, the information evaluation maybe as extensive as he/she wishes.

In the relationship between information search and evaluation and purchase intention, the majority of previous researchers have focused on the relationship between online search and customers' final decision (Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Crespo & Bosque, 2010; Huang et al., 2011; Lee, 2009; Shim et al., 2001). For instance, Amaro & Duarte, (2014) examined

determinants of customer intention to purchase travel online. However, this study examines the relationship between information search and evaluation and purchase intention. Thus it can be hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 12: *Information search and evaluation has a significant impact on consumer online purchase intention.*

4.9 Purchase Intention

The term purchase intention is understood to mean the likelihood with which customers may purchase a particular product or service (Lu & Su, 2009). In some cases, it is defined as the likelihood of making a purchase linked with an intention category, which results in the percentage of customers that would in fact purchase a product (Whitlark, Geurts & Swenson, 1993). Customer purchase intention is defined as the evaluation of individual attitudes towards purchasing a particular product (San Martín & Herrero, 2012). Previous studies often consider purchase intention, rather than actual behaviour, as intention has wider implications and would often have a positive effect on an individual action (Hung et al., 2011; Poddar, Donthu &Wei, 2009). Wayne Talarzyk and Widing (1994) identify key dimensions of purchase intention, finding that a feeling of comfort with the information search process had a positive association with a higher purchase intention. Laroche, Kim and Zhou (1996) see purchase intention as the way in which individuals intend to purchase a specific product. Pavlou (2003) notes how online purchase intention implies purchase readiness and Chen, Hsu and Lin (2010) show that online purchase intention is a predictor of actual buying behaviour. Al-Maghrabi et al. (2011) use an online survey of internet shoppers in Saudi Arabia to understand the factors that influence e-purchase intention, finding that customer attitudes drive e-consumer purchase intention.

4.10 Potential Moderating Variables

A moderating variable is a variable that influences or affects the relationship between two other variables (Pallant, 2010). When considering the search intention and evaluation of consumers, it is important to identify moderating factors. This study considers three individual customer characteristics that might moderate search intention and evaluation. These elements are: demographics, past experience and role of internet in lifestyle.

Section 4.10.1 explains the demographic characteristics, including age, gender, income and level of education. Section 4.10.2 addresses the role of past experience as a moderating variable, followed by [internet] lifestyle aspects in Section 4.10.3.

4.10.1 Demographic factors

The demographic characteristics of customers refer to population or customer patterns, such as age, income, gender, occupation, education and marital status (Sulaiman & Mohezar, 2008). Demographic characteristics may have an impact on customer intention whether offline or online (Ratchford, 2009). For instance, Wu's (2003) preliminary work found that demographic characteristics have an important impact on intention toward online services; men are more likely to use online services than women, customers between the ages of 36 to 40 years old had the highest positive intention to shop online, as did customers with higher incomes. Wu (2003) argues that intention toward online shopping is significantly influenced by such customer characteristics. Afizah, Ghani and Said (2009) support this view, finding that gender can play a major function in shaping attitude towards online shopping, noting key differences in attitude towards online shopping according to age, and that customers with higher income are more likely to shop online in comparison with customers on lower income. Data presented by Sulaiman and Mohezar (2008) supports the views of Wu (2003) and Afizah, Ghani and Said (2009), that intention to use online services is significantly influenced by customer demographics. Suleiman and Mohezar (2008) demonstrate that demographic factors of age, education, income and gender are considered to have a major impact on customers' intention towards online activities. The higher the customers' socio-economic status, as measured by education, occupational status and income, the more positive are customers' attitudes towards online purchasing relative to offline purchasing. Hassan and Abu Samah (2011) examine socio-demographic factors that influence intention towards ICT usage, identifying that these factors positively influence intention. In contrast to earlier findings, however, Hernández, Jiménez and Martín (2011) find that such factors did not moderate customer intention towards online services.

The above discussion suggests that intention toward online travel activities, including information search and purchase, may be moderated by customer demographics, as is

corroborated by the findings of researchers such as Wu (2003), Afizah, Ghani and Said (2009), Sulaiman and Mohezar (2008) and Hassan and Abu Samah (2011).

4.10.2 Past Experience

Doolin et al. (2005) demonstrate that past internet shopping experience was connected strongly with intention and works as a moderator of online shopping intention; noting a positive relationship between online shopping experiences and the number of purchases completed. Customers who pay attention to the perceived benefits of online shopping are aware of the loss of social interaction associated with internet shopping and yet also have a greater propensity to purchase online (Doolin et al., 2005). Wi-Suk Kwon and Mijeong Noh (2010), note that customer attitude and purchase intention are moderated by previous online shopping experience. Ling, Chai and Piew (2010) demonstrate that customer online experience has influence on future purchase intention to shop online. As experienced shoppers they are more likely to have clearer intention about online shopping. Tong (2010), in examining US and Chinese consumers, note that a positive prior purchasing experience, influenced customer intention in a positive manner.

The above studies establish that online experience appears as a predictor of online purchase - the more experience an online purchaser has the more positive the attitude toward online shopping is likely to be. In terms of online travel experience, a study conducted by Jensen (2012) demonstrated that there is a positive association between previous experience and search ability, as those consumers who have previous experience can, without difficulty, find and process purchase related information. Those travellers with significant experience need less information before buying their vacation and perceive less risk when doing so. It also finds that prior travel experience is positively associated with online search and purchase of travel products. Ho, Lin and Chen (2012) provide a conceptual framework of online travel users' engagement in travel information search. They find that previous knowledge and past travel search experience can positively enhance online travel information search. Customers with a high level of experience are more likely to plan ahead in their search behaviour, and information seekers with web experience are more likely to be proficient in locating websites

compared with beginner web users. Prior experience and knowledge, both of web users' web page search and travel destinations, can be influential in search intention towards travel information. Furthermore, the frequency of purchasing online travel products increases this influence of past experience on information search and evaluation (Bughin et al., 2011). These findings are consistent with Mohammadian and Ghanbar's (2014) who reveal that frequency of purchasing online travel services increases the confidence of consumers in online purchase. It can be argued that intention toward online travel activities, including information search and purchase, may be significantly moderated by past level of internet experience and level of prior online travel purchase experience.

4.10.3 Lifestyle: Role of Internet in Daily Life

Wu (2003) examines the way that customer lifestyle may affect their intention toward online purchase and Suleiman and Mohezar (2008) examine customer perspectives towards e-ticketing, taking lifestyle into account. Both findings demonstrate that buying decisions are strongly moderated by lifestyle. Kim et al. (2012) argue that their data supports Wu's (2003) and Suleiman and Mohezar's (2008), who believe that lifestyle (which may include the internet to a greater or lesser extent, as with millenials) has an impact on customer intention. Kim et al. (2012) demonstrate how customer attitudes towards online search are positively influenced by their [internet-based] lifestyles and Liang and Lim (2011) also show that lifestyle plays an important role as a moderator in such a service, linked to a stronger intention to purchase online. In terms of discovering the impact of customer lifestyle on search behaviour, Moon (2004) finds that consumer characteristics include internet usage skills, which significantly influence online information search, which leads to online purchase. The findings also demonstrate that consumers who have embraced new technology, are more likely to employ the internet for their information search. In this research, it is not proposed to address the majority of lifestyle characteristics that have been addressed in prior research, but selective characteristics that relate to the role or use of the internet in the daily life of the respondent are included, in line with Hsing Shen and Lin (2012).

The effect of moderators used in this study are summarised in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1. The Effect of Moderators

Age will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.
Gender will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.
The level of education will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.
The level of income will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.
The length of stay in the UK will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.
The level of online travel purchase experience will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.
The level of internet usage experience will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.
Purchase frequency of online travel products will moderate the relationships among the proposed model constructs
Customer internet lifestyle will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.

4.11 Summary

This chapter has explained the conceptual framework for the study, outlining 13 proposed constructs in the conceptual framework. Each construct has been discussed in detail and the study has set out the hypothesised relationships that represent the relationship between factors in the theoretical model. Past research studies have focused on conceptual frameworks that seek to understand technology adoption online, ranging from the TAM to the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (Ali & Qing 2008; Hsu et al., 2006; Venkatesh & Bala, 2008). Other theoretical frameworks have included the TPB (Alam & Sayuti; Crespo & Bosque, 2010; Huang et al., 2011; Lee, 2009; Lin, 2010; Shim et al., 2001). A few past studies have sought to link technology adoption and behavioural patterns.

However, to date, no study has examined technology adoption elements (such as in TAM), behavioural intention elements (as in TPB), and the link to search intention and information search and evaluation prior to purchase. Most studies in the field of online search and evaluation have only focussed on the final step purchase; a few previous studies have dealt with search intention or information search and evaluation separately. However, limited attention has been paid to information search and evaluation processes

as important factors that shape the relationship between search intention and purchase intention. Thus, this hopes to offer insight into the nature of the relationship between search intention, information search and evaluation and purchase intention.

In this chapter, the preliminary conceptual framework has been presented, with the key constructs being outlined and discussed at length.

An analysis of previous research looking at specific measurement scales for each construct and how the most relevant items have been drawn out to represent each construct will be considered in Chapter Five. Chapter 5 offers a clear outline of the research methodology of the research, initially offering an overview of the philosophical paradigm, the use of both inductive and deductive techniques, and the incorporation of both qualitative and quantitative phases of research in a multi method design. The sampling approach, the research instruments used and the proposed data collection and analysis are then outlined.

Chapter Five: Research Methodology

5.0 Introduction

- **5.1** Research Aims and Key Objectives
- **5.2** Research Philosophy
  - **5.2.1** Value of Pragmatism in Travel Search Studies: Versatility
- **5.3** Nature of Inquiry
  - **5.3.1** Inductive and Deductive Reasoning
  - **5.3.2** Qualitative and Quantitative Research
- **5.4** Research Design and Strategy (Multiple Method Approach)
  - **5.4.1** Past Travel Studies used Multiple Research Approach
- **5.5** Data Collection Methods, Sampling and Research Instruments
  - **5.5.1** Secondary Research
  - **5.5.2** Phase One: Semi-Structured Interviews with Travel Managers
    - **5.5.2.1** Interview Planning
    - **5.5.2.2** Respondent Sample and data collection: Phase One
  - **5.5.3** Phase Two: Observation and interview
    - **5.5.3.1** Online Search Task Followed by Semi-Structured Interview
      - **5.5.3.1.1** Observation Sheet
      - **5.5.3.1.2** Semi-structured Interview Schedule
    - **5.5.3.2** Respondent Sample - Phase Two
  - **5.5.4** Phase Three: Survey on Search Behaviour
    - **5.5.4.1** Questionnaire Design
    - **5.5.4.2** Respondent Sample - Phase Three
  - **5.5.5** Pilot Study
- **5.6** Anticipated Ethical issues of Data Collection
- **5.7** Data Analysis Procedures
  - **5.7.1** Data Analysis for Phase One and Two
  - **5.7.2** Data Analysis for Phase Three
- **5.8** Summary

5.0 Introduction

Salkind (2010) describes a research methodology as a combination of conceptual frameworks, data collection techniques, and methods of analysis, for the collected data that then provides the basis for scientific study. This chapter sets out the methodology adopted in the study and the procedures that have been used in the collection and analysis of the data. Initially, Section 5.1 outlines the main aim and objectives of the study. Section 5.2 identifies the underlying research philosophy, that of pragmatism, by defining pragmatism, considering the value of pragmatism as a philosophy and finally highlighting past studies that have adopted a pragmatist philosophy to address research in the travel sector. Section 5.3 identifies the nature of the inquiry, including both deductive and inductive reasoning, and the adoption of a quantitative and qualitative approach, discussing challenges the researcher faces when using a combined approach. Section 5.4 outlines the research design and strategy, noting the multi-method approach in the three phases of data collection in the study. Section 5.5 identifies the different phases of data collection and notes the method used, the sampling approach and the research instrument adopted, followed by the anticipated ethical issues of data collection in Section 5.6. Finally, Section 5.7 sets out the data analysis process for the study.

5.1 Research Aims and Key Objectives

The study aims are twofold: a) to describe selected Saudi travel firms' perceptions and experience of online booking systems through exploratory research, and b) to gain insight into the online search behaviour of Saudi consumers in relation to travel services, through exploratory and explanatory research, with a focus on their search behaviour prior to purchase. Data for the exploration of Saudi travel agent perspectives will be gathered through semi-structured interviews. The data for the consumer research (exploratory) will initially be collected through a small-scale observation of selected Saudi consumer search patterns, in tandem with semi-structured interviews. Finally, through explanatory research (a survey), the study will examine specific consumer perceptions and attitudes, search intention, and information search and evaluation in online booking prior to purchase. It is hoped that specific focus on the online search intention and search

evaluation that Saudi consumers engage in prior to purchase can enable us to better understand information search and evaluation processes. This data will be gathered using a survey method in the final phase of data collection.

Table 5.1: Key Research Objectives of Study

	Objectives	Method
Phase One	• To investigate the current pattern in internet technology adoption in the Saudi travel sector. • To discover contextual factors in the Saudi travel market that may influence the adoption of online booking systems.	(Based on interviews)
Phase Two	• To obtain in-depth understanding of the search behaviour and search strategies of selected Saudi travel consumers. • To assess the applicability of the selected scale items for the search intention and information search and evaluation construct.	(Based on observations, interviews with Saudi consumers)
Phase Three	• To investigate consumer perception and attitude towards internet adoption in travel choices online. • To identify search intention and search evaluation patterns. • To examine the relationships between the key constructs in the preliminary conceptual framework.	(Based on cross-sectional survey of Saudi consumers)

5.2 Research Philosophy

According to Uda (2003), philosophy involves the search for knowledge or wisdom, while for some it is understood to be the examination of factors underlying the thought process, knowledge, conduct and nature of the universe (Carter, 2012; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011).There are many potential approaches to research philosophy that could be adopted for this study, ranging from positivist thinking to an interpretive approach and critical realist philosophy, and each was considered. It would have been possible to adopt a positivist approach (Carter, 2012; Chen, Shek & Bu, 2011; Creswell, 2008) by focusing fully on the development of one conceptual model to address the behavioural elements of consumer search, using prior studies as the basis and developing potential determinant relationships between selected constructs. It might equally have been useful to use focus groups and interviews to conduct an in-depth exploratory study of the current experiences

and perspectives of individual Saudi consumers of travel services, with an emphasis on their lived experience, thus adopting an interpretive approach (Creswell, 2008; Saunders & Thornhill, 2007). However, from the outset, the researcher was interested in examining a context that has not been well researched before in Saudi Arabian studies, and in gaining the perspectives of both firms and consumers, with regards to the actual adoption of the internet in travel services. Neither the positivist or the interpretive approach were, of themselves, seen to be the most appropriate to sufficiently capture the situational aspects of a sector that: a) is still emergent in the Saudi economy, and b) where the more recent and varied experience of individual online search behaviour is occurring among Saudi nationals who live abroad, where there is greater open access to internet services.

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005), in identifying key schools of thought arising from quantitative or qualitative approaches, note the philosophical position of pragmatists. Pragmatism can be defined as the tendency to determine the meaning and truth of all concepts by their practical consequences (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). A pragmatist approach favours the development, creation and application of knowledge drawn from observation of everyday affairs and practice. McDermid (2006), notes that within pragmatism a proposition is linked to concrete observation and has practical consequences, which can generate their own truth. Pragmatism seemed appropriate to this study, which seeks to observe the pattern of internet adoption in Saudi travel firms, at the same time as gaining insight into the current, actual search and online booking activities of Saudi consumers.

Pragmatists do not acknowledge that either qualitative or quantitative approaches are better; consequently, they have been accused of inflexibility for the purpose of making ideas have a cash value that benefits the researcher (Macy, 2003). It is also argued that pragmatic philosophy attempts to describe concrete action, as well as investigating conceptual elements. By failing to recognise that quantitative and qualitative methods stem from different epistemological and axiological assumptions, the pragmatist approach includes traditions that are incompatible, while seeking to understand how the world is viewed (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Furthermore, Stuhr (1997) argues that

there is a challenge in identifying the pragmatic conception of subjectivity and the way that it ignores realist disputes. In rebutting this idea, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) note how pragmatic researchers argue that a false split exists between qualitative and quantitative methods of research, and that quantitative methods may not be entirely positivist, nor qualitative methods necessarily interpretive. Thus, pragmatists support the integration of both methods within a single study, offering the opportunity to utilise the strengths of both approaches to better understand the social phenomena under examination (Macy, 2003). In this PhD study, there are several phenomena under examination, such as the perception and experience of Saudi travel firms in terms of adopting online booking and purchasing systems, the understanding of actual search intention and behaviour in practice, the quest to understand the online search behaviour of Saudi consumers of travel services, and the link between search activities and purchase intention. The flexibility offered by a pragmatist approach is therefore of value.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) note two shortcomings of pragmatism, which a researcher using the method should consider: a) whether elements relating to basic research are given enough attention, as well as the more applied research, and b) whether the researcher can offer transformative elements, as well as any pragmatic solutions. Both of these shortcomings are considered in this PhD study. Firstly, the initial conceptual framework, set out in Chapter four, clearly follows a basic, rather than applied research approach, where it is derived from prior studies and preliminary research. Measurable variables are developed that are subsequently tested with a large-scale representative data set, in line with classic scientific tradition. Secondly, the implications of the research, and how they generate insights for the Saudi travel sector into online search behaviour of consumers, offer transformative elements, where the statistical patterns to emerge suggest some new areas for firms to take action.

5.2.1 Value of Pragmatism in Travel Research Studies – Versatility

In his paper, Godkuhl (2008) identifies that in research involving information systems, pragmatism may be applicable in three different ways: a) functional pragmatism - identified as knowledge for action, b) referential pragmatism - identified as knowledge

about action, and c) methodological pragmatism - identified as knowledge through action. Functional pragmatism contributes to both local and general practice, methodological pragmatism was noted to lead to active participation in testing and exploring new ways of working, whereas referential pragmatism explains and theorises actions and local practices. This PhD research study focuses on both functional and referential pragmatism - referential pragmatism is evident in the direct observation of online behaviour of selected Saudi consumers of travel services (phase 2), whereas the overall aim of the study reflects functional pragmatism, as it seeks to gain insight (knowledge) that can then lead to future action. Goldkuhl (2008) identifies that within pragmatism research objectives do not need to be closely associated - they can, if required, be treated separately. In this study, the early phase of research with Saudi travel agents reflects a context that is in some ways separate from that of the later phases. Within a pragmatist approach, such loosely associated objectives can be pursued.

According to Kaag, Anderson and Lally (2011), the principal challenge to pragmatism is explaining how experience is situated in relation to human understanding. Lagsten (2011) addresses this to some degree; his standpoint emphasises the positive changes that not only improve knowledge in information systems but also contribute to actual change within them. Similarly, Pansiri's (2005) study recognises pragmatism as the most flexible methodology for producing better research insights in the tourism sector. Drawing from the pragmatists the idea that knowledge claims arise out of situations, actions and consequences that are socially constructed by the processes of socialisation of both travel managers and consumers, Pansiri (2005) examines decisions among stakeholders around strategic association, choice of association partners and their evaluation (tour operators, travel agencies, taxi transport, motor vehicle hiring, accommodation, air and water transport, cafes etc.). His findings show that pragmatism helps in gaining understanding of the associations that can be developed and their consequences. In this PhD research, the pragmatist approach echoes the stakeholder view, albeit on a more limited basis (just two perspectives are taken); and can explain in a similar way, perspectives that are drawn from a combined understanding of, on the one hand, the firm view, and the other the

consumer view. As Langsten (2011) suggests, this should enable insight into patterns of online booking, and the consequences of changing consumer behaviour to engage.

Mintz (2004) notes the flexibility of the pragmatist approach in encompassing a research context with different viewpoints. Macy (2003) believes that adopting a pragmatic position helps improve the integration of constructs from different paradigms, therefore providing a rich platform for advancing knowledge. Finally, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) note how the strengths of pragmatism lie in the argument that differences in epistemological nature, such as difference in beliefs, do not limit a qualitative researcher from utilising data collection methods that are essentially related to quantitative research and vice versa. Pragmatism and multi-method research offer a significant middle position methodologically, and philosophically which lead to the practical outcomes. Thus the pragmatic philosophy matches a multi-method research design.

5.3 Nature of Inquiry

5.3.1 Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

In research there are essentially two broad methods of reasoning - inductive and deductive approaches. Laird (2009) sees the advantages of deductive reasoning as objectivity, and the ability to predict and allow comparisons, all of which are powerful in terms of testing and building hypothesis. Babbie (2012) discusses that in market research, deductive reasoning enables the researcher to develop ideas from existent studies, thus adding to the theoretical foundations. The noun ‘deduction’ is defined as the process of making use of reasoning for the purpose of reconstructing arguments. The development of a deductive theory starts with the re-examination of existent literature, thus serving to add to the knowledge base of the phenomena under study. As such, deduction explains the observations made in a study in a manner that makes it possible to make predictions. Creswell (2008) outlines the disadvantages of deductive reasoning as limiting the ability to allow different thinking, a lack of capability to emphasise problem solving, and a failure to increase creativity. Additionally, deductive reasoning has been noted to be narrow in nature. Ormerod (2010) indicates that in recent times the priority of logical

deductive thinking has been questioned in cognitive disciplines, in particular, an inability to help researchers provide a sufficient explanation as to the way people think.

In contrast, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) argue that the strengths of an inductive approach in a research study allow the researcher to make more informed decisions about the research designs that they are going to adopt, and to provide for the limitations that may emerge during the research activity. Inductive reasoning enables the development of preliminary assumptions, allows creativity and, being initially embedded in experience, it seeks to reveal emergent associations. Fox (2008) argues that inductive reasoning helps to remove the reliance on measureable observation; instead it allows statements of reality though utilising previous experiences that often have reasonable levels of certainty when it comes to informing the future. Cargan (2007) identifies that inductive logic involves reasoning from experience, or observing a phenomenon, that leads to the general construction of theory. A theory is constructed based on the data collected, leading in some consumer studies to the idea of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

On the other hand, Fox (2008) indicates that the problem of induction is that its outcome is never binding, as a contradictory case may always be introduced, thus overturning the generalisation that has been made. This causes a problem for researchers, especially if their adopted theory is challenged. With inductive reasoning, as Creswell (2008) notes, different individuals draw different meanings from one variable - time consuming - and it may be hard for a researcher to use it to explain certain ideas. Ormerod (2010) states that the problem of induction is that the conclusions drawn cannot always be justified.

Despite the drawbacks of each approach, the solving of cognitive problems often needs the interaction of both the deductive and inductive approaches, especially in multiphase data collection, as is proposed in this study. This research will use both inductive and deductive elements, as it seeks to gain understanding of both grounded, everyday experience (of internet technology adoption patterns) from the perspective of firms and consumers, and to distinguish specific patterns of search intention and evaluation, as they pertain to a sample population of Saudi travel customers. In contrasting both approaches,

the term inductive suggests reasoning from the general to the particular; the term deductive may be defined as reasoning from the particular to the general, for the purpose of testing or linking a relationship. The inductive approach, on the other hand, proceeds in a bottom-up manner that begins with observation, pattern, tentative hypothesis, and finally development of a theory (Gulati, 2009).

The proposed research addresses characteristics of both approaches. Babbie (2012) explains that in market research inductive reasoning helps the researcher to use observations to generate preliminary patterns, leading to the generation of current themes that describe market behaviour. In the first phase of this study, the researcher notes the current situation with regards to internet adoption in travel services in Saudi Arabia and describes the consequences of internet adoption among travel firms. This leads to emergent themes that can clarify the existence of patterns of internet adoption that may have been noted in prior studies of other sectors, but which may be varied in this sector, and can break down the actual experience of internet adoption into descriptive themes. In phase two of the research, the researcher seeks to clarify, though a micro-focus, the actual search intention and information search and evaluation behaviour of a selected sample of Saudi consumers. The inductive approach (through participant observation and interviews), enables the researcher to draw conclusions from direct observation, thus offering new information that extends understanding in previous studies (as in Saunders & Thornhill, 2012), and leads to the refining of the conceptual framework (thus theory building).

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) argue that deduction is essential in the testing of theory as it has the ability to explain relationships between given variables in a research study, and allows for the quantitative measurements of variables. These characteristics are part of what is proposed in phase three of this PhD study, where a preliminary conceptual framework is developed and tested through hypotheses, with particular focus on the relationships between attitudes to internet search and booking, search intention, information search and evaluation, and purchase intention.

5.3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Research

According to Hancock (2002), qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations in the context of social phenomena. As such, the aim of qualitative research is to help in the comprehension of the world we live in. Merriam (2009), notes that qualitative research focuses on the discovery and understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the subjects under study. The differences noted between the two approaches to research (qualitative and quantitative) include their philosophical basis, empirical methods and scientific productivity. Remenyi (2004) sees quantitative research as mathematical representation and manipulation of the observation for purposes of describing, as well as explaining phenomena reflected in the observations. Creswell (2004) defines quantitative research as the kind of research that clarifies phenomena by gathering data that is examined mathematically. Robertshaw (2007) states that there are limitations in the search for all empirical knowledge in consumer research and that precise outcomes do not simply exist. It might, therefore, be impossible to discover the whole truth through numerical analysis. He also notes issues such as: the inseparability of the research participants and the researcher, context dependence because consumer behaviour cannot be restricted to laboratory conditions, the challenge of sampling research participants in ways that cannot account for their attitudes and personality, varied measurement systems can deliver varied results, and the fact that empirical data is changeable and cannot always be replicated.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2010), the greatest strength of quantitative studies is the platform for description, allowing a researcher to capture larger user population data. Data in numeric form allows the application of statistical analysis, which lets researchers derive important facts or conclusions, in terms of difference between groups. Quantitative methods are noted to result in better generalisability and objectivity (Polit & Beck, 2004). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) highlight the chance to gain distinctive variations across groups within the population, and to quantify behaviours and attitudes.
On the other hand, Hancock (2002) outlines several strengths of qualitative research, such as the ability to produce subjective data based on the experiences, opinions and feelings of individuals, which facilitates the holistic understanding of a situation and helps

develop theories and concepts that explain the social world. Stake (2010) argues that qualitative research studies can provide the researcher with details such as human behaviour, personality and emotional characteristics that cannot be realised from quantitative data. Some characteristics are outlined in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

	Strength	Weakness
Qualitative	• Uses simple methods of calculation. • Easier to understand for both the readers and the researcher. • Makes the analysis process easier. • Helps develop theories and concepts that explain the social world. • Descriptive. • Narrative style.	• The evaluation of the phenomena under study is primarily subjective. • There may be unsatisfactory differentiation in the study findings. • The results are dependent on the quality of the researcher. • The data collection methods are time consuming to capture and analyse. • Difficult to summarise and compare systematically. • Viewed as less reliable than quantitative method.
Quantitative	• Accurate due to reliable measurement. • Replicability. • Control through design and sampling. • Statistical analysis that allow complicated analyses. • Providing objective results. • Improves the levels of data integrity and confidentiality.	• The process of calculation can be extremely difficult for the researcher to implement without the help of an automatic tool. • There exist no standards of acceptance in implementation of this method. • The values outcomes of the research might be subjective. • The process is time consuming. • The results are presented in numerical values and as such may be hard to be understood by those without experience.

Sources: Ramona (2011); Robertshaw (2007); Hughes (2006).

This study combines both quantitative and qualitative methods in the collection of data. Creswell (2008) suggests that a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches requires a good balancing of the two methods to address the research questions and offer well-integrated results. In this study, the methods are used sequentially, the first phase seeks to discover and describe Saudi travel firm attitude to and experience of online technology. The semi-structured interview method is used to

collect data for this objective. The second phase seeks to observe how Saudi travellers browse web pages, what kinds of sources they use and how they evaluate online travel information. It also explores the applicability of the selected items for the search intention and information search and evaluation constructs. This type of data is collected first through observation of selected Saudi consumer behaviour, in relation to online search behaviour for travel services, and then followed by semi-structured interviews.

The qualitative approach is applied in the first and second phases of the study. Silverman (2010) sees the qualitative approach concerned with building and developing concepts that help to understand the social world. This can help to generate a solid theoretical framework that will be tested in the third phase of this study, which focuses on investigating online search behaviour for travel products. Data will be collected using the survey method to test the research hypothesis and offers the capability to explain relationships between given variables.

5.4 Research Design and Strategy (Multiple Method Approach)

Essentially, a research design is a plan for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. Lund and Oslo (2012) argue for three options in selecting research design - qualitative, quantitative, and mixed or multi-method. A multi-method approach represents a combination of two or more methods. The multi-method approach is characterised by pragmatic attitudes and a high priority is accorded to empirical research questions. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), multiple research design uses either more than one method to collect data, or more than one worldview.

According to Nykiel (2007), multiple research design faces objections from researchers due to a lack of academic strictness. However, if different research methods are pursued rigorously, there should not be a methodological problem with the multi-method approach. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) identify that in multiple-method design, qualitative data may lose flexibility and depth once it is quantified. They also note how qualitative codes are multidimensional, while quantitative codes are one-dimensional. In this PhD, qualitative data was gathrered as a parallel means of understanding more fully

the nature of search on the part of consumers; the lack of either kind of data was not an issue. Other challenges include the solid grounding of multiple methods that is needed on the part of the researcher, in order to effectively build up the findings that have emerged (Creswell, 2008). Time and resources come into play in a multiple method design – it was considered in this study whether there was sufficient time and resources to use two or more methods (Johnson & Christensen, 2010). In this study, phase two was kept to a small scale to cut back on time and financial help was made available from the Saudi Embassy to support the cross-sectional data collection.

Venkatesh, Brown and Bala (2013) argue for the need for some current methodological diversity in social science research, but acknowledge that there is a shortage of research in the social sciences that employs a multiple method approach. Creswell (2008) suggests that multiple method studies can be hard to trace in the literature, due to their being very recent. Creswell and Clark (2008) note different forms of mixed method designs that include: 1) triangulation, which essentially merges quantitative and qualitative data in answering the research questions, 2) embedded, whereby the research questions are answered with either quantitative or qualitative data, but one method is predominant, 3) explanatory, where quantitative data can explain earlier qualitative results, and 4) exploratory, where qualitative data is collected to help test and explain patterns based on quantitative data. This PhD study brings in elements of both triangulation and explanatory design; on the one hand, both qualitative (phase two) and quantitative (phase three) data offer some comparative understanding of the nature of search behaviour; on the other, the survey is to some extent predominant in terms of the amount of data and explanatory power of the data.

5.4.1 Past Travel Studies Using Multiple Method Approach

Some past studies have effectively combined different methods in past research - many studies use quantitative and qualitative methods, either independently of each other, concurrently, or sequentially. Ang and Slaughter (2006) illustrate this by using the multi-method approach in a study that seeks to understand the differences in work attitudes, performance and behaviours across two groups of IT professionals. Pavlou and Fygenson

(2006) use the multi-method approach to study the use and adoption of e-commerce. When e-commerce was an emerging phenomenon it was initially helpful to conduct an exploratory study using qualitative data where issues of security, privacy and website capabilities were relatively under-researched; later, the authors developed a set of factors in a research model for e-commerce adoption and tested the model through confirmatory quantitative research. Similarly, Pan, Zhang and Smith (2011) used a mixed method approach, which includes eye tracking methods to study information search strategy during an online task. Additionally, pre- and post-experiment surveys were also part of the study, where demographic information, as well as travel and internet use experiences, were investigated. Kuilboer's (2010) study on service levels for senior travellers initially collects data by asking participants to record in their diary their six worst and six best service encounters over a period of three weeks. This method offers a rich source of information through participant observation, as they have the freedom to express experiences without any researcher bias. This method is supplemented with a survey. Finally, Kim and Yang (2012) used two phases- the first involved interviews the first phase of their focus group, across London, Paris, Frankfurt and Milan, using mobile phones. The second phase involves online surveys of 210 respondents, with a focus on key factors relating to consumer attitudes towards mobile phones. Similarly, in travel services, Ho, Lin and Chen's (2012) study involves three phases of a multi-method design: initial survey, observation of online search and, finally, in-depth interviews.

Creswell (2008) notes the practicality of having methods that fit the research objectives well, allowing researchers to combine both deductive and inductive reasoning skills in recording behaviour and the encouragement of what he calls an encompassing paradigm of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

This study adopts a multi-method research design, which offers the researcher flexibility. As this study will seek to describe Saudi travel firm perceptions, and their experience, of online systems though qualitative research (semi-structured interview) in phase one, it should encourage the collection of problem-centred information, and focus on real world practice orientation. In seeking to explain the online search behaviour of Saudi

consumers in relation to travel services, the triangulation involved in getting both direct observation data in phase two, and large scale structured survey data in phase three should offer more comprehensive and potentially generalisable findings (in line with Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

5.5 Data Collection Methods, Sampling and Research Instruments

This section initially outlines the secondary data collection. Then, it explains how the data collection proceeds in three phases, with each phase having a distinctive method of research. Phase one will adopt semi-structured interviews, phase two will utilise observations followed by semi-structured interviews and phase three data will be collected by the survey method.

5.5.1 Secondary Research

Grinyer (2009) argues that secondary research is the additional analysis of existing data, with subsequent interpretation taking a different form from the original research. Whereas, McQuarrie (2011) defines secondary market research as the data collected for one purpose by a single party, and then put to a second use by other secondary parties. Sutehall, Sque and Addington-Hall (2010) note other functions of secondary analysis; namely, that it is multidimensional, providing descriptions of historical and contemporary behaviour, and attributes of individuals, groups, societies and organisations, as well as providing case material for teaching and advancing methodological development.

The value of secondary research in this PhD study is that it helps to clarify the research questions. As Collins (2010) notes, this permits the researcher to derive important facts and patterns from prior research (Kamins, 1993), and uncover areas where less research has been undertaken. Thus, it helps to define the initial research agenda. Housden (2005), notes that secondary data can be cheap, free of charge and saves effort and time. Equally, Collins (2010) sees secondary research as a route with easy access to ‘desired’ knowledge.

The first step of the literature review was to develop key words and search terms from reading through articles on customer search behavior and adoption of online travel services in reviewed journals and management textbooks. The initial search strategy was broad and used key words, such as online marketing, online services, adoption of technology, travel experiences, and Saudi Arabian travel/tourism. Access to online journals was gained through De Montfort University's e-learning portal (My DMU), which has a rich collection of journals from credible databases such EBSCO, Business Source Complete, Sage, and Emerald. This included applied reports that highlighted current consumer patterns in tourism studies and academic sources. As the process deepened, the selection of sources focused on areas of specific academic interest, such as online search intention, online purchase intention, online information search and evaluation, and the information search process. Some criteria for selection of key articles was that the study should have reported on search behaviour and adoption of online travel services, all selected articles had to be written in the English language, and the majority of selected academic studies should cover the ten year period from 2002 to 2012 (a time period when internet adoption by consumers in travel has been most evident). In addition to recent articles, the theoretical foundations to emerge in earlier work were also identified and carefully reviewed; this included seminal authors, such as Ajzen (1985, 1991), Davis (1989), Gefen and Pavlou, (2006) and Shim et al. (2001).

5.5.2 Phase One: Semi-Structured Interviews with Travel Managers

Kvale (1996) argues that the best way to understand people is by listening to them, seeing how they view their world and live their lives; thus, the interview method is a rich tool for in-depth data collection. Essentially, an interview is a conversation where individuals talk about their lived world, state their opinions in their own words, and express views on a given phenomenon. Stake (2010) explains that a qualitative interview tries to understand the world of the research participant, whereas Merriam (2009) defines an interview simply as a spoken research method. In more academic terms, an interview is a conversation between two people for the purpose of identifying relevant research information that is guided by specified research objectives (Saunders et al., 2012).

There were three main reasons for using an interview method in phase two of this study. First was the flexibility which a structured questionnaire cannot give; it allowed the interviewer the freedom to investigate and question responses, feelings and ideas given by the person being interviewed. Also, solely written responses, as in those gathered in surveys, do not take account for the human aspect of questioning such as the facial expression, tone of voice, hesitation etc. This was important when working with professionals in the Saudi context, where implicit knowledge is needed. Whilst a response in an interview may be clarified, responses from a questionnaire must be taken at face value (Bell, 2005). Second, Phellas, Bloch and Seale (2011) note the way that an interview offers the opportunity to clarify the question for the respondent when it is not understood – in this case it helped to get specific answers from identified respondents (such as managers of Saudi travel firms), who gave relevant information on their perception and experience of using online booking and purchasing systems. The interview method helped the researcher to shape the context and the environment within which the interview took place. Stake (2010) notes how interviews have a high response rate and are versatile in allowing for both different types of questions and the clarification of respondent answers, in addition to researcher ability to easily change the sequencing of questions. Third, Connaway and Powell (2010) identify the value as the gaining of a large amount of information and interaction with the research topic within a limited period. The semi-structured interview method in the first phase of this research investigates Saudi travel firms' perception of, and experiences with, online booking and purchasing systems. Little data about this existed in the context of the Saudi Kingdom in 2011/2012; hence, there is a need for detailed information to understand the phenomenon. According to Gill, Treasure and Chadwick (2008), the main purpose of research interviews is to explore the experiences, views, motivations and beliefs of individuals on a specified research problem. The choice of interview technique served two major functions: the description of relevant events around technology in the Saudi travel sector and in-depth exploration of user experience. Findings from the interview enabled the researcher to refine the conceptual framework, as presented in Chapter Four.

5.5.2.1 Interview Planning

David and Sutton (2004) describe semi-structured interviews as non-standardised; essentially, the researcher develops a list of key questions, issues and themes to be covered as an initial flexible guide. Ambiguity and unfinished answers through follow-up (Gillham, 2005). Corbetta (2003) explains that in semi-structured interviews the order of topics and wording is left to the researcher's discretion so as to best get sufficient information. Subsequently, more questions are often added as probes, in order to seek clarification or get more details An initial research instrument was developed, which involved a set of interview questions and is set out below in Table 5.3.

Introduction

My name is Khald Alatawy; I am a doctoral research student at De Montfort University in the UK. I would like to thank you for finding the time for this interview. This is a study about the adoption of online purchase of travel services in Saudi Arabia. This study aims to examine the current experience within travel agencies of internet purchases (online booking) and online information search in the Saudi Arabian market. I am really interested in learning about your experience of this and I am sure it will make a valuable contribution to this study. I would like to point out that the interview is purely for academic purposes - all responses are strictly confidential and will be anonymised. The data is recorded for accuracy only. I hope that is acceptable to you. If you have any further questions or concerns about this please feel free to ask. This session will take about 25 to 30 minutes.

Key Objectives

- To investigate the current pattern in internet technology adoption in the Saudi travel sector.
- To discover contextual factors that might influence the adoption of online booking in travel services

Table 5.3: Interview Questions: Phase One

Question	Probes	Follow Up	Dimensions
1. How long have you been in this business?	Could you please tell me more about your business?		Firm Background
2. Can you tell me about the package holidays that you offer?	Could you give me some examples?	What is most popular destination chosen by customers?	Service background & Scope
3. How do you see the competition in the tourism market both locally and internationally?	How do you rate your competition?		Firm type, positioning
4. In what way has your business changed in the last three years?	Could you tell more about this change?	Could you give me some examples?	Past experience
5. How do you evaluate your company as a technology user?	Could you please give me some reasons for low or high (based on answer) use of technology?	How important is technology in your company?	Firm life cycle in adopting technology
6. Could you tell me about the value and the benefits that you expect to obtain from online activities?	Could you please give me some examples?		Perceived usefulness
7. It is easy to adopt online services in tourism. Do you agree or disagree?	Why is that?		Perceived ease of use
8. Some travel companies are not comfortable with adopting online services in their business. What is your opinion about this?	For your own company would you prefer to rely on a traditional or an online service? Or both?	Why is that?	Attitude towards using online services
9. What are your expectations in the online activities continuation for future use of technology?	Could you tell me more about your thinking on using online service in regular basis in the future?		Behavioural intention to use
10. What are the factors that delay the adoption of technology in travel agencies?			Factors that obstruct
11. What percentage of customers uses online searching and booking?	Are you surprised with these percentages?		Online users
12. What age groups are likely to use online activities?	Why do you think this is so?		Age
13. Can you tell me about the gender differentiations, if there are any?	Why is that?		Gender
14. Can you tell about the impact of the customers' education on the use of online activities?	Why is that?		Education
15. What about the impact of customer income differentiations?	Why is that?		Income
16. Can you please tell me about any regional differences in customers with regard to online/offline activities?	Why is that?		Cultural impact
17. Do you get any feedback from customers with regard to your online activities?	Please, tell me more about the feedback?		Experience in booking and search
18. Do you think that customers have the skills for online search and booking?	Could you tell me more about this?		Domain expertise
19. How do you see the future for the tourism sector?	How company plans ahead in the next five years?		Future vision

Follow up questions often chase the implications of answers to the main questions, and may examine central themes (Bell, 2005). Rubin and Rubin (2000) support this view, arguing that follow-up questions are concerned with completing a partial story and learning the meaning of a main idea or concept. Furthermore, an interviewer can follow up by asking the interviewees' opinions about an idea that a different interviewee has suggested (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Identifying any feelings and emotions of the interviewee can make interviews truthful (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003).

The interviewer sought to probe deeper into the actual experience of travel agents; thus, as Table 5.3 shows, probes were also prepared, although some may emerge naturally in conversation. Probes communicate that an interviewer is paying attention to their conversational partner and this can encourage more specific information. Elaboration probes were used, for example, to ask for further details, such as, "Could you please tell me more about this?" Clarification probes also enabled better understanding, for example, "Could you give me some examples of skills that you require for your online tourism information search?" Evidence probes asked participants to show knowledge, for example.

5.5.2.2 Respondent Sample and Data Collection: Phase One

Non-probability (non-random) sampling was used to achieve the research objectives in phase one. Sampling was purposive, based on level of technology used and the current experience of online travel services, because the researcher needed to know before visiting whether the firm was using internet systems occasionally, in a limited fashion or extensively. Purposive sampling concentrates on the specific characteristics of a population that are of interest to best enable a researcher to answer the research questions (Stake, 2010).

In terms of sample criteria, women are excluded from the phase one sample, as they are not allowed to work. Thus, the sample included men who work in the public sector (the tourism authority) and in the private sector (travel agencies), as managers and staff. Seventeen interviews were conducted - representative of region, of size of travel firm, and of public and private sector; three interviews were with managers in the public sector

(or government) and nine interviews were with managers and staff in the private sector (travel agents). Each interview was planned from 20 to 30 minutes, based on the level of interaction between the interviewer and the participants. The interviews were audio recorded with the agreement of respondents. (See Appendix C: Interview Participant Characteristics for Phase One)

5.5.3 Phase Two: Observation and Interview

According to Koib (2008), observation can lead to more in-depth awareness of the subject matter and this was important in comprehending more individual approaches. For Denscombe (2007), observation "*draws on the direct evidence of the eye to witness events first hand. It is based on the premise that, for certain purposes, it is best to observe what actually happens"* (p. 206). The observation approach can offer data on in-depth individual perspectives and experiences (Stake, 2010), and concerns a process of observing something or someone carefully, with the purpose of gaining information and data on a phenomena being investigated (DeWalt, 2010). Past studies have used observation effectively. Fidel et al. (1999) gained insight into the web searching behaviour of high school students though direct observation, while Al-Maskari and Sanderson (2011) investigated how user characteristics link to search effectiveness. In tourism, some past research has used simulated online search tasks to investigate search behaviour in tourism, through a comparison of online and offline processes (Ho and Liu, 2005).

In phase two of this study, observation of respondents was conducted with Saudi travel website users, as they undertook a given online search task and short follow-up interviews were conducted with the same participants. The objective of the observation was to gain knowledge of how Saudi travellers engage in search behaviour. A secondary objective was to explore how clearly the selected scale items for search intention and for information search and evaluation were understood by respondents and could represent their search experience, in order that scales could be taken forward in phase three.

Participant observation focuses on everyday interaction; According to Mac and Ghaill (1994) and Babbie (2012), it involves discovering participants' interpretation of the situations they are involved in. Kothari (2009) argues that, at the same time, participants are pushed to make use of their own language and everyday concepts, in order to explain what is going on, in terms of the phenomena being investigated. The observer (researcher) in this case gathered data by sitting beside the respondents and participating in the actual behaviour, through asking questions, encouraging action, and encouraging them to clarify their train of thought. The data gathered could be regarded as reliable, since the researcher is able to see and watch what is being done (Stake, 2010).

5.5.3.1 Online Search Task Followed by Semi-Structured Interview

In order to gain insight into the search process that selected Saudi customers go through when using the internet for online travel choices, participants were given an online task scenario. This was as follows:

You will be travelling to Spain within the next three to six months.
Your task is to book yourself a "ticket and hotel" holiday package online

This phase sought to identify the range of online search behaviour that Saudi consumers of travel services engage in prior to purchase. Data was recorded during each observation and the observation sheet below was developed to record the observed data. By observing the actual search behaviour as it happened, the data provided direct evidence of the search process and allowed the researcher to observe individuals in a way that parallels everyday interaction. Opportunities were taken to probe the search approach of the respondent- see probes in Figure 5.2 Observation Sheet. Clarification probes were also used during the task.

Figure 5.1: Observation Sheet

Background Questions

1. **Please rate yourself on a scale of 1-7 in having experience with internet usage**
   Please circle one number only

I am not a very experienced user: _1_:__2_:__3_:__4_:__5_:__6_:__7__: I am a very experienced user

2. **Please rate yourself on a scale of 1-7 in terms of level of travel knowledge.**
   Please circle one number only

Poor _1_:__2_:__3_:__4_:__5_:__6_:__7__ Excellent

3. **Please indicate your age range. Tick One**

Age Range 18-28) ☐ Age Range (28 – 40) ☐ Age Range 41-60 ☐

4. **Please indicate your gender:**

Female ☐ Male ☐

5. **Please indicate your level of education:**

Bachelor Degree ☐ Masters Degree ☐ PhD Degree ☐ Other ☐

6. **Please indicate your marital status:**

Married ☐ Single ☐ Other ☐ (Please Specify) ……..

7. **Please indicate your annual income range:**

£15.000 or less ☐ Between £15.001 and £50.000 ☐ Between £60.001 and £100.000 ☐

More than £100.001 ☐

8. **Please indicate your No. of years in the UK:**

Less than 1 year ☐ 1 to 3 years ☐ 4 or more years ☐

Name of participant:	**Date:**	
Period of observation:		
Observation themes		**Seen**
Searching ability ----------	**Evidence of experience with internet usage** Appears Very inexperienced **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** Appears very experienced **Evidence of online travel knowledge** Appears Very limited **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** Appears very extensive	
Search Strategies ----------	Search Engine Use	
	Visiting known sites	
	Visiting known forums	
	Social media check	
	Image search	
	Other (Please Specify):	
	Basic (using one keyword)	
	Medium (using 1 to 3 keywords)	
	Advanced (using advanced search tools)	
	Other (Please Specify):	
Information Evaluation Approach ----------	Browsing search results	
	Exploring search results.	
	Selectiveness (gathering information pertaining to the focus)	
	Comparison and evaluation of the search results	
	Is the participant Involved in: Current information	
	Is the participant Involved in: Comprehensive information	
	Is the participant Involved in: Information recommended by others	
	Is the participant Involved in: Other (Please Specify):	
Final comments:		

Observer: Khald Alatawy **Signature**

5.5.3.2 Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

After the participants had completed the online search task, short interviews were conducted to discuss their search approach, how effective they felt their search had been and to probe their own information evaluation processes further. A selection of questions from the interview schedule below (not all) were used with respondents. Some questions were based on the online search task outcomes; other questions were about the 'typical' search behaviour of respondents. The researcher wanted the interview to remain flexible so that other important information could arise (Dawson, 2009). Indications of respondent opinions/feelings about internet use were also explored, as can be seen in follow-up questions to clarify the context (Gillham, 2005), allowing. where possible, unexpected data and respondent own narratives to emerge. As the interviews included Saudi women, it was hoped to capture indications of search behaviour that may not readily be apparent elsewhere, after they felt relaxed about the task.

Interview Schedule

Introduction

My name is Khald Alatawy, Thank you for coming to this interview. This is a study examines the range of online search behaviour that Saudi consumers engage in prior to purchase. In particular, today we are looking at how Saudi travellers browse web pages, what kinds of sources they use, and how they evaluate this information. I am really interested in learning about your experience of this. This is purely for academic purposes and all responses are fully confidential. The data is recorded for accuracy only. I hope that is acceptable to you. If you have any further questions or concerns about this please feel free to ask. This session will take about 25 to 30 minutes.

Objectives

- To obtain in-depth understanding of the search behaviour and search strategies of selected Saudi travel consumers.
- To explore the applicability of the selected scale items for search intention and information evaluation constructs

Table 5.4: Interview Questions: Phase Two

Potential Question	Probes	Follow Up	Dimensions
1. Did you previously use traditional travel agent services to book your holiday?	If Yes, how many times? If No, why is this?	Did you enjoy their services? Why is that? Tell me more.	Travel experience and variation between online and offline channel (KSA VS UK
2. Can you tell me about your experience the first time you booked your holiday online?	Do you remember when this happened? How was it? Here or in Saudi Arabia? Why did you use online channels?	Is that since arriving in the UK? Tell me more.	
3. Some people I have spoken to think that all Saudis who live or study abroad may be using online travel services, others do not, what do think?	Why do you think that? Do you think that the Saudi culture would encourage using online travel services?	That is interesting, tell me more. Why do you think that?	
4. Can you tell me about the importance of getting advice from your family and friends to decide whether to use the internet or traditional travel agencies? What about online communities such as travel website, forums and social media?	Do you think that your family, friends or relatives are expecting you to use the internet for travel purposes?	Why is this?	
5. Can you please tell about your last holiday that you booked, whether online or offline?	Did you face any challenges? Did you involve anyone in your decision when deciding to go for a holiday? Who?	Why is that? Tell more, please. Can you give me examples?	
6. If you were in Saudi Arabia now, would you book your holiday online or offline?	Why is this? When you see others around you using this service, does this have an impact?	What do think of the difference between the two processes?	
7. Can you describe your feeling about using the internet for travel purposes?	Why is this? Would you consider yourself as an experienced user of online travel services?	Could you give me some examples? Tell more, please.	Searching Ability
8. How do you rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 in possessing the required skills, travel experience of using the internet for your online tourism information search?	Why is this?	Could you give me some examples of internet usage skills?	
9. During your online searching task do you think that the number of keywords that you used was sufficient for finding the tourism information that you were looking for?	Why is this?		
10. Do you use advanced search tools? 11. In your opinion, how important is it to use advanced search tools?	Why is that? Some people I have spoken to think that using advanced search tools for travel purposes might be complicated, others don't, and what do you think?	Tell me more about this. Could you please give me some reasons for this?	
12. During your online searching task do you think that the number of keywords that you used was sufficient for finding the tourism information that you were looking for?	Why is this?		
13. How did you feel about the search you have just done?	Could you please give me some reasons for feeling this way?	Tell me more about this.	

14. Did you find what you were looking for?	How important was the information that you found?	Why?	
15. How do you rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 regarding finding the necessary amount of information that you needed in order to make your decision?	When do you feel 'ok now that I have enough information'? Why?		Evaluation of the information
16. Please tell me what you think about factors that are usually considered when evaluating the information? (Current information, comprehensive /information reviewed and recommended by others).	Why?		
17. Some past studies mentioned that the internet might break down some social restrictions. What so you think ? 18. Men and women may differ in how they search and process information. What do you think about this?	Why do you feel this way?	Could you give me some examples?	Individual search variations
19. Some suggest that the use of the internet to search for tourism information may give Saudi women more freedom to make travel decisions. What do you think about this?	Why do you believe this?	Could you give me some examples?	
20. Some past studies mentioned that the internet might break down some social restrictions, especially for the female side. What do you think about this?	Why is this? Could you give me some examples of social restrictions, if there are any?	Can you tell me more?	
21. As a Saudi woman, would you prefer to find information online or through the use of an offline channel?	Why?	Could you give me some examples?	
22. Some suggest that marital status may affect the choice and use of online information channels. What do you think about this?	Why is this?	Could you give me some examples?	
23. Some suggest that young travellers usually choose to take the simplest approach to finding online information, what do you think about this? 24. Some past studies that mentioned age may affect the choice and use of online information channels, what do you think about this?	Why is this case?	Could you give me some examples?	
25. Some suggest that the educational level of the individual may affect the choice and use of online information channels, what do you think about this?	Why is this?	Could you give me some examples?	

5.5.3.3 Respondent Sample: Phase Two

Non-probability sampling, using a purposive approach was adopted and the researcher concentrated on specific characteristics of Saudi travellers (a range of gender, of internet experience and of education). A total of eight participants were recruited for the online search tasks from the Saudi community in Leicester, in order to clarify the range of

online search behaviour that Saudi consumers of travel services engage in prior to purchase. The sample included: different levels of education, different age group (18-28)/ (28 – 40)/ (41-60), and variation in gender and marital status. Levels of experience and domain knowledge (knowledge of online travel processes) were checked before starting, in order to ensure that respondents could offer insights, and that they had some experience (see Appendix E: Observation Participant Characteristics for Phase Two). All participants had online travel experience. Variety in terms of length of stay in the UK was sought (some respondents had spent less than one year in the UK, in this way, they might comment on cultural attitudes to the internet (which, in phase one findings, was reported by travel agents to be more conservative than that of Saudi consumers abroad). Other respondents had spent more than a year in the UK and thus might be able to comment on their comparative experiences of the KSA and the UK. A recruitment message was placed through the Saudi community email group in Leicester. The duration of the task and follow-up questions was planned not to exceed 45 minutes. The location of the search task was in a quiet office in De Montfort University, Hugh Aston building, where the respondent could relax. A desktop computer was provided and all participants used the same computer. The online search task and its interactions, as well as the interviews, were audio recorded, which helped the researcher to review the observations many times before the analysis stage. Silverman (2009) sees audio recording as enabling the interviewer to listen and respond more quickly to the real time interactions, knowing that a record is being made. While, in some cases, this could make an interviewee nervous and less inclined to respond (Reis & Judd, 2000), respondents in this case were given had plenty of time to become accustomed to the setting and to relax.

5.5.4 Phase Three: Survey on Search Behaviour

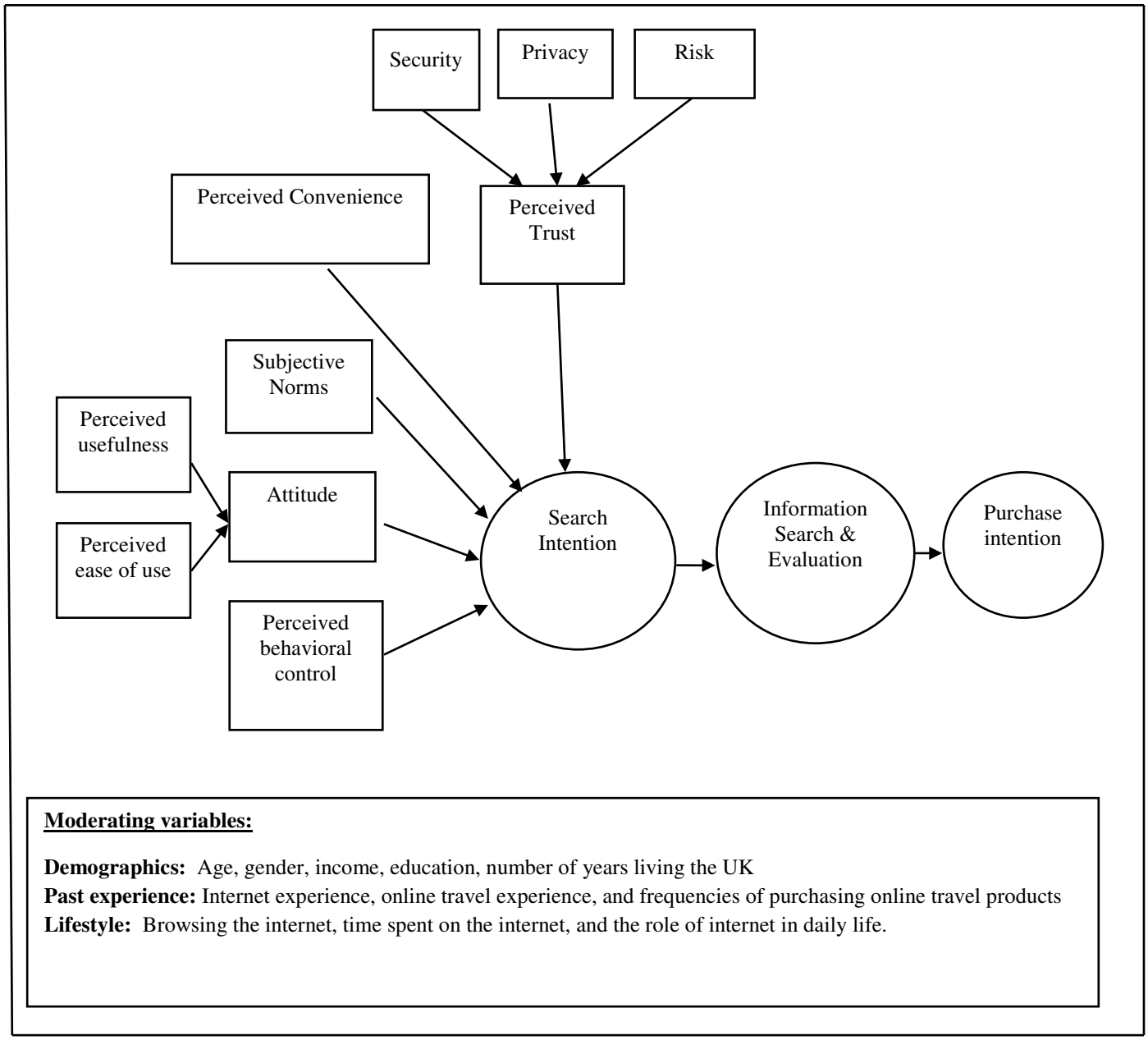
Powell and Hermann (2000) define a survey as a method of collecting information directly from people in a standardised and systematic way. Mathiyazhagan and Nandan (2010) echo this view and speak of a procedure in which data is systematically gathered from the population, or a sample of the population, through some form of direct solicitation. In addition, Groves et al. (2013) see the survey as directed towards constructing quantitative descriptors of attributes of the wider population. Both Babbie (2012) and Wiid and Diggines (2010), argue that the survey method allows the researcher

to gather more information, when compared to other methods, and that it is economical when sampling an entire population. In measurement terms, researchers see the consistency of data collected, the possibility of being administered in remote location through the use of telephone or e-mail, the standardisation of data, and the higher reliability as important (Marsden & Wright, 2010).

Creswell (2008) notes different forms of administration of surveys (online, telephone, mail, and face to face). This study adopted a face-to-face administration of the survey. For Walliman (2006), in order to formulate more complex questionnaires, it is necessary that a level of face-to-face participation exists, especially in the in the collection of questionnaires. Leeuw (2002) defines face-to-face survey administration as delivery to research participants within a restricted period of time, and in the presence of the respondent. Powell and Hermann (2000) indicate that face-to-face surveys often yield the best results and are suitable in a research context that has no sample frame, or list of the population to be studied, and where some questions may need further clarification. The face-to-face survey is also useful when the researcher seeks to study the general target population - in this case it was Saudi consumers who utilise travel services. Many types of survey are possible; in this case, the survey gathered cross-sectional data at one point in time from the population of Saudi online travel users in the UK. Marsden and Wright (2010) note that survey research should be quantitative and be impartial, contemporary, representative, replicable and theory based. The detailed survey plan shown below demonstrates that these characteristics have been addressed. In this PhD study, piloting took place to eliminate any ambiguous or unclear questions and the face-to-face administration meant that the researcher could clarify any queries or misunderstandings of the respondents. Undertaking face-to-face administration of the questionnaire was time consuming for the researcher, but it enabled a better response rate and a higher completion rate. Key objectives in phase three of this research were:

- to investigate consumer attitudes towards adoption of internet in travel search online
- to gain insight into search intention and information search and evaluation patterns
- to examine the relationships between the key constructs in the preliminary conceptual framework.

Figure 5.2 Preliminary Conceptual Framework



5.5.4.1 Questionnaire Design

Key constructs were outlined and discussed at length in Chapter Four, which presented the preliminary conceptual framework. This section discusses the items that were selected for the measurement of each construct. Construct items have been chosen initially based on a comprehensive review of relevant academic studies, then adapted for the online travel context. The researcher has undertaken a critique of the specific measurement

scales for each variable in past studies and has drawn out the most relevant items to represent that construct (see Appendix F). Table 5.5 offers an overview of the key sources for the principal constructs.

Table 5.5: Brief Overview of Key Sources

Key Sources from which items are selected	Variable/Construct
(Ajzen, 1991; Davis, 1989; Casaló, Flavián & Guinalíu, 2011; McCole, Ramsey Williams, 2010; Venkatesh et al., 2003).	Customer Attitude to Technology
(Ajzen, 1985; Darley et al., 2010; Delafrooz1 et al., 2011; Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006.)	Behavioural Perspectives on customer adoption of the internet
(Chiao et al., 2009; Ho, Lin & Chen, 2012; Klein, 1998; Lu et al., 2004; Shim et al., 2001; Tina Du &Evans, 2011; Xie, 2002; Xie & Joo, 2012).	Information search, evaluation and search intention of customers

5.5.4.1.1 Example of how the Construct Attitude was Developed

One illustration of how the scale items were derived for the questionnaire is shown for the construct attitude in this section. Measurement items designed for attitude construct and its antecedents were adapted and modified from Ajzen, (1991), Wixom, and Todd, (2005), and Taylor, and Todd, (1995). They have been widely validated (Armitage and Conner, 2001; Montano and Kasprzyk, 2008; Lu, Zhou and Wang, 2009; Rivis, Sheeran, and Armitage, 2009), and found to be effective for predicting customer attitude leading to actual purchase (Ajzen, 1991; Taylor and Todd ,1995; Shim, et al , 2001; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009). These items have also been used in online contexts, including how they link to information search and purchase (Shim, et al, 2001; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009; Lin, 2010; Huang, et al, 2011; Crespo and Bosque, 2010). This study proposes the use of these items, taking account of the fact that they have been validated across different cultures (Ndubisi and Sinti, 2006; Lean, et al 2009; Aloud and Rathur, 2009; Lam and Hsu, 2004). As shown below in Tables 5.6 to 5.8, the key items for attitude include key items for perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use and more general attitude statements regarding search.

Table 5.6: Measurement Items Designed for Attitude

Construct	Measure	Author
Attitude	Q1. I think the use of the internet for information searching for travel products, would be good for me.	(Adapted and modified from Ajzen, 1991)
	Q2. I think the use of the internet for information searching for travel products, would be beneficial for me.	(Adopted and modified from Ajzen, 1991)
	Q3. I am pleased with using the internet for information searching for travel products.	(Adapted and modified from Taylor & Todd, 1995)
	Q4. Overall, using the internet for information searching for travel products would be a pleasant experience.	Adapted and modified from Wixom &Todd, 2005)

Table 5.7: Measurement Items Designed for Perceived Usefulness

Construct	Measure	Author
Perceived usefulness	Q1. I find using the internet for information searching for travel products to be useful.	(Adapted and modified from Davis, 1989)
	Q2. Using the internet improves my effectiveness in searching for travel products.	
	Q3. Using the internet for information searching for travel products allows me to get my work done quicker.	
	Q4. Using the internet to search for travel products can improve my ability to make good decisions.	

Table 5.8: Measurement Items Designed for Perceived Ease of Use

Construct	Measure	Author
Perceived ease of use	Q1. Learning to use the internet for information searching for travel products would be easy for me.	(Adapted and modified from Davis, 1989)
	Q2. I find using the internet for information searching for travel products easy.	
	Q3. Using the internet for information searching for travel products requires little effort from me.	
	Q4. Using the internet for information searching for travel products is clear and understandable.	

Sun and Spears (2012), note that customer motivation in information search is about securing key benefits and Cho, (2008) identified how the process of information seeking is determined by individual intention. Overby and Lee (2006) distinguished between hedonistic and utilitarian motivation information when searching online. As per the utilitarian outlook, customers seek to buy products in an effective way (Poyry et al., 2012) for a specific purpose. The hedonic value of online information search may be linked to the enjoyment of the search experience (Haas & Kenning, 2014). In the above table, some items can be seen to reflect, on the one hand, elements of hedonic motivations for online search, for instance Q4 on Table 5.6 while other items such as Q2 on Table 5.6 may reflect utilitarian motivation for search. This illustrates how the scale items for Attitude were developed.

Most other scales developed for other key constructs have, in a similar way, used items that have been validated in previous studies and adapted for the online travel context, as shown in Appendix G. Now the selected items for each remaining construct in the conceptual framework are outlined. In most cases, the measurement items designed for each construct were adapted from specified studies, as noted in the final column of the tables set out below. Frequently, the selected measures have been previously applied in tourism studies and used successfully where cultural variations apply and exist. The chosen scale and items have been previously validated and found to be robust. The wording of items has been modified in order to be relevant to the research context of online travel search for this PhD thesis. See Appendix G for a full breakdown of the 13 constructs, the chosen items for each construct and the studies they have been drawn from. Table 5.9 to 5.15 below outline key constructs and the associated past studies.

Table 5.9: Measurement Items Designed for Perceived Behavioural Control

Construct	Measure	Author
Perceived behavioural control	Q1. I think that I am able to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	(Adapted and modified from Ajzen, 1991)
	Q2. I think that using the internet for information searching for travel products would be entirely within my control.	
	Q3. I think that I have the knowledge to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	
	Q4. I feel comfortable using the internet for information searching for travel products on my own.	

Table 5.10: Measurement Items Designed for Perceived Trust

Construct	Measure	Author
Perceived Trust	Q1. Online travel sites want to be known as sites that keep commitments.	(Adapted and modified from Grazioli & Jarvenpaa, 2000)
	Q2. Online travel sites are trustworthy.	(Adapted and modified from Grazioli & Jarvenpaa , 2000)
	Q3. I find the information on online travel sites is realistic.	(Adapted and modified from Bart, Shankar, Sultan & Urban, 2005).
	Q4. Compared to other web sites, online travel sites are reliable.	(Adapted and modified from Chen & Barnes, 2007)

Table 5.11: Measurement Items Designed for Perceived Security

Construct	Measure	Author
Perceived Security	Q1. Online travel sites present enough online security for users	(Adapted and modified from Chen & Barnes, 2007)
	Q2. I am confident that the private information that I provide to online travel sites will be secure.	(Adapted and modified from Shin, 2010).
	Q3. I think online travel sites show concern for the security of transactions	(Adapted and modified from Flavián & Guinalíu, 2006)
	Q4. Overall, Online travel sites are a safe place to send out sensitive information.	(Adapted and modified from Cheng, Lam & Yeung, 2006)

Table 5.12: Measurement Items Designed for Consumer Privacy

Construct	Measure	Author
Consumer Privacy	Q1. The personal information that I provide on online travel sites is well protected.	(Adapted and modified from Chen & Barnes, 2007)
	Q2. I am concerned that online travel sites will use my personal information for other purposes without my authorisation.	(Adapted and modified from Juan Carlos Roca, Juan José García & Juan José de la Vega, 2009)
	Q3. I think online travel sites show concern for the privacy of its users.	(Adapted and modified from Flavián & Guinalíu, 2006)
	Q4. I think online travel sites only collect personal data that are necessary for the activity.	(Adapted and modified from Casaló, Flavián & Guinalíu, 2007).

Table 5.13: Measurement Items Designed for Perceived Risk

Construct	Measure	Author
Perceived Risk	Q1. I feel the risk associated with purchase from online travel sites is high.	(Adapted and modified from Cheng, Tsai, Cheng and Chen, 2012).
	Q2. I think it is risky to consider the information from online travel sites as valid.	
	Q3. I believe that booking a holiday from online travel sites is risky because services delivered may fail to meet my expectations.	(Adapted and modified from Corbitt et al., 2003; Chang and Chen, 2008).
	Q4. Booking a holiday from online travel sites would involve more financial risk (i.e. fraud, hard to refund) when compared with more traditional ways of booking.	(Adapted and modified from Kim, Ferrin and Rao, 2008)

Table 5.14: Measurement Items Designed for Search Intention

Construct	Measure	Author
Search Intention	Q1. I intend to search online for information about travel products in the future.	(Modified and adapted from Ajzen, 1991)
	Q2. If I want to book a holiday, I intend to use the internet to search for travel information.	(Modified and adapted from Lin, 2010)
	Q3. I expect my use of the internet for information search for travel products to continue in the future.	(Modified and adapted from Casaló, Flavián & Guinalíu, 2011)
	Q4. I plan to increase my use of the internet for information search for travel products in the future.	(Modified and adapted from Wixom &Todd, 2005)

Table 5.15: Measurement Items Designed for Purchase Intention

Construct	Measure	Author
Purchase Intention	Q1. I intend to purchase online travel products in the future.	(Modified and adapted from Ajzen, 1991)
	Q2. Given that I have access to the internet, I predict that I would purchase online travel products.	(Modified and adapted from Venkatesh & Davis, 2000),
	Q3. In the future, I intend to regularly purchase online travel products.	(Modified and adapted from Shim et al., 2001).
	Q4. I expect my purchasing of online travel products to increase in the future.	

In a few cases, new scale items were developed and these are now explained and outlined in Tables 5.16 to 5.18.

- **Subjective Norms**

When considering subjective norms, three items have been adapted from validated scale items identified in Ajzen (1991), and Venkatesh and Davies (2000). In addition, three new items have been generated that relate to the potential subjective norms that were felt to be relevant in terms of Saudi culture. These emerged in part from indicators of customer cultural patterns that were referred to by the Saudi travel agents in phase one, but also emerged in the semi-structured follow-up interviews with eight respondents in phase two. These indicators have not been used before in studies of online adoption of online technology among Saudi respondents. It emerged in the findings of phase one and two that social pressures in Saudi Arabia were challenging the adoption of technology and appearing to have impact on the use of online travel service. Three new items have been generated to address this. Firstly, whether Saudi culture would encourage Saudis to use the internet for information searching for travel products. Secondly, whether or not British culture has affected the mindset of Saudis, and whether or not they have felt encouraged to use online travel services since they have moved to the UK. After moving to the UK, and seeing friends/host families using such services, they may have been encouraged to also use these services. The third item addressed how this may encourage Saudis to promote online travel services to people they know, once they return to Saudi Arabia and adopt the use of the internet for travel products.

Table 5.16: Measurement Items Designed for Subjective Norms

Construct	Measure	Author
Subjective Norms	Q1. People who are important to me (e.g. family) would approve if I used the internet for information searching for travel products.	(Adapted and modified from Ajzen, 1991)
	Q2. People who influence my behaviour (e.g. friends) would think that I should use the internet for information searching for travel products.	(Adapted and modified from Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).
	Q3. People I know would expect me to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	(Adapted and modified from Ajzen, 1991)
	Q4. The Saudi culture I came from would encourage me to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	New item
	Q5. Since coming to the UK, I feel encouraged to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	New item
	Q6. When I return to Saudi Arabia, I will encourage people I know to use the internet for information search for travel products.	New item

- **Perceived Convenience**

Measurement items for the perceived convenience construct were adapted and modified from Brown (1989). The reasons for adopting such a measurement tool are that they have been widely used in online contexts, tourism markets and validated and tested across different cultures, as well as being flexible to modify (Jih, 2007; Skallerud, Korneliussen & Olsen, 2009; Vu & Ngoc-Cam, 2011; Yoon & Kim, 2007; Zhang & Jun Li Helen, 2011). Just four dimensions from Brown's work are adapted - time dimension, place dimension, acquisition dimension and execution dimension. Brown's 'use dimension' is not included, as it would cause some duplication with PEOU, which already a full construct is derived from the original TAM incorporated into this study. Therefore, the use dimension is excluded from this study. Instead, one new item is added for this research, which offers a more general concept of convenience – that of the general convenience of the internet. This was felt to be relevant as it might reflect the view of Saudi respondents who had less experience of the internet and who might not be able to distinguish the time, place, and other dimensions of convenience. It arose partly as a result of the observation phase of the research.

Table 5.17: Measurement Items Designed for Perceived Convenience

Construct	Measure	Author
Perceived convenience	Q1. I can search for travel information at any time by using the internet.	New measurement items based on the dimensions definitions, Brown, 1989
	Q2. I can search for travel information at any place by using the internet.	
	Q3. Using the internet for information searching for travel products gives me convenience in booking my holiday.	
	Q4. Paying over the internet when booking my holiday will make it easier for me financially.	
	Q5. I find the holiday packages (e.g. flight & hotel) arranged by online travel sites are convenient for me.	

- **Information Search and Evaluation**

In addressing information search and evaluation, which is a relatively new construct for studies in Saudi Arabia, eight measurement items were adapted and modified from past studies (Brand-Gruwel, Wopereis & Vermetten, 2005; Hawley & Xiao, 2011; Ho, Lin & Chen, 2012; Kuhlthau, 1999; Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006; Pookulangara, Tina Du & Evans,

2011; Rowley, 2000; Shim et al., 2001). Such items have been widely validated and investigated (Kuhlthau, 2005; Kuhlthau, Heinström & Todd, 2008; Jayawardhena, 2004; Li, Pan, Zhang & Smith, 2009). These items have been found to be effective for predicting customer information search and evaluation; some have been successfully applied to past tourism studies (Jensen, 2012; Khare & Khare, 2010; Xiang, Wöber & Fesenmaier, 2008) and tested across different cultures (Alsajjan & Dennis, 2010; Cheng, Lam & Yeung, 2006; Frías et al., 2012). In addition, three new items were added to this construct, which arose from phase two findings of the study. The first item regarded image search, which provides images relating to the destinations and hotels. The second item identified the accurate and up-to-date travel information. This leads to the third item, which was concerned with travel information and reviews, based upon other travellers' experiences. These indicators (three items) have not been used before in studies regarding the adoption of online technology amongst Saudi respondents.

Table 5.18: Measurement Items Designed for Information Search and Evaluation

Construct	Measure	Author
Information Search and Evaluation	Q1. The internet provides a rich amount of travel information that would help me to book my holiday.	(Modified and adapted from Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006).
	Q2. Search for online information about travel products is an important step for anyone before booking.	(Modified and adapted from Rowley, 2000)
	Q3. The quality of online travel information provided is the most important criteria in the process of information evaluation.	(Modified and adapted from Pookulangara, Hawley & Xiao, 2011)
	Q4. I frequently browse for travel information online before booking my holiday.	(Modified and adapted from, Shim et al., 2001)
	Q5. My search for travel information includes investigation of search results that I then consider before purchasing on the internet.	(Modified and adapted from Kuhlthau, 1999)
	Q6. I would evaluate the information in the search results before booking my holiday.	(Modified and adapted from Brand-Gruwel, Wopereis & Vermetten, 2005).
	Q7. When searching, I would usually use multiple search approaches (e.g. search engine, forums, websites).	(Modified and adapted from Tina Du & Evans, 2011)
	Q8. My online past travel searching experience would not encourage me to spend time evaluating travel information.	(Modified and adapted from Ho, Lin & Chen, 2012)
	Q9. When evaluating the information I would consider an image search to gain more details (i.e. hotel, location, and destination).	New item
	Q10. When evaluating the information I would look for accurate and up-to-date travel information.	New item
	Q11. When evaluating the information I would consider the travel information reviewed and recommended by others before purchasing on the internet.	New item

With the research instrument consisted of nine sections and was accompanied by a cover letter (See Appendix H). Key Sections in questionnaire are; background questions (Section 1); attitude (Section 2); perceived behavioural control (Section 3) subjective norms (Section 4); perceived trust (Section 5); perceived convenience (Section 6); search intention (Section 7): information search and evaluation (Section 8) and purchase intention (Section 9). Some respondent characteristic variables were also included in the questionnaire (Section 1).

- **Previous Experience**

This variable refers to the respondent level of experience when using the internet in general, and the use of the internet to search for, or purchase, online travel product. Q9 – Q10 of Section One covers the experience of using the internet for online travel products and knowledge by including a question measuring internet travel experience in years and the past frequency of purchase of online travel products.

- **Demographics and Internet in daily life**

Demographic variables refer to gender, education, marital status, age, income. A variable reflecting length of time in the Uk and the use of the internet in daily life was included. These variables are covered in Q1- Q8 of Section 1 and may yield moderator effects in the study in term of impact on other research dimensions.

- **Attitude (including PEOU and PU)**

This variable and its components (i.e. PEOU and PU) measure participants' beliefs regarding the use of the internet when searching for information on travel products. Statements 1-10 of Section Two measures this variable and its components by use of the seven point Likert scale, ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree'.

- **Perceived Behavioural Control**

This variable measures participant perceived control and expertise using the internet to search for online travel information. Statements 1-3 of Section Three measures this variable by using the seven point Likert scale, ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree'.

- **Subjective Norms**

This variable covers a measure to capture relevant social influences (e.g. from family, peers and friends) on users when using the internet to search for online travel information. Statements 1-5 of Section Four measure this variable using the seven point Likert scale, ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree'.

- **Perceived Trust (including perceived security, perceived risk and consumer privacy)**

This variable seeks to measure participant trust in online travel services when using the internet to search for online travel information In addition to expectations of consumer, privacy, perceived security and perceived risk when using use the internet to search for online travel information. Statements 1-17 of Section Five measure this variable using the seven point Likert scale, ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree'.

- **Perceived Convenience**

This variable measures the perceived convenience of using the internet to search for online travel information. Statements 1-4 of Section Six measure this variable using the seven point Likert scale, ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree'.

- **Search Intention**

This variable measures participant intention to use the internet to search for information on travel products. Statements 1-4 of Section Seven measure this variable using the seven point Likert scale, ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree'.

- **Information Search and Evaluation**

This variable measures the manner and approach of participants when searching for and evaluating online travel information. Statements 1-11 of Section Eight measure this variable using the seven point Likert scale, ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree'.

- **Purchase Intention**

This variable measures participant intention to use the internet to purchase travel products. Statements 1-4 of Section Nine measure this variable using the seven point Likert scale, ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree'.

5.5.4.2 Respondent Sample : Phase Three

It is sometimes argued that non-probability sampling techniques might not be appropriate when relating a sample to the general population (Babbie, 2012). In this case, a probability sample was not possible as there was no sampling frame from which to draw a sample. The target population was Saudi nationals who were staying in the UK and who engaged in online travel search and selection. Because of the large geographical distribution of Saudi nationals in the UK, it was regarded as more economical and time-efficient to conduct face-to-face administration of surveys at the premises of the Saudi Arabian Cultural Bureau in the UK, which has an average of 100 student visitors per day. Since this base of consumers is widely spread, this study applied a purposive sample technique (see Cresswell, 2009).

Non-probability, purposive sampling is regarded as a valid and accurate sampling technique at this stage of the study. Walliman (2006) suggests that in order to make accurate hypothesis based on a sample, it necessary for the sample to be as representative of the population as possible. Student samples have been criticised and researchers have recognised that they may not be an appropriate alternative for a normal sample, since they are often younger, and better educated (Butcher, Graham & Ben-Porath, 1995). In this study, the use of students may limit the generalisability of the findings to some extent, as they are likely to be a well-informed segment of the population with significant experience of using the internet. Individual characteristics were considered as part of the selection basis (Vander Stoep & Johnston, 2009), in order to generate some representativeness. Of course, some elements of convenience sampling occurred, as it depended on who attended the Cultural Bureau on a given day. In this case, Saudi nationals (students) and their family members are relevant respondents – they have come from their own Saudi culture (with the specific contextual conditions that were noted in phase one), but are now resident in the UK and are more exposed to open access to

internet services than in Saudi Arabia. Thus, they represent a population that can comment in an informed way about their experience of internet adoption in online search behaviour.

The aim was to distribute over 500 questionnaires among the Saudi community in the UK, in order to get a range of patterns of attitudes towards using online booking and purchasing options when selecting travel services. The sample size has been calculated as follows: first, it was important to establish the confidence interval. This can be achieved by entering the following data into a sample size calculator: 95% of confidence level, sample size, population of 15000 Saudi students in the UK and percentage of 50%. Calculations found the confidence interval to be 4.31, which needs to be considered in the next step. Second, a confidence level of 95%, a confidence interval of 4.31 and a population of 15000 Saudi students in the UK was entered into the sample size calculator. It was found that 500 participants were needed as a sample size in this study.

The sample also included a balance in the gender proportion of the population, a reasonable coverage of different age groups, the inclusion of different levels of education (Master's level, PhD level and undergraduate level), variation in levels of income (if possible), differences in number of years residence in the UK, variation in the level of prior experience of the internet, and a range of individual characteristics as means of checking that representative respondents were approached and selected for the survey. All participants were Saudi customers with some experience of searching for online travel information and purchase. Respondents were approached inside the Saudi Arabian Cultural Bureau in the UK during the summer of 2013. Face-to-face completion of the questionnaire was planned because the researcher can "*explain the purpose of the study and in some cases questionnaires can be completed on the spot*" (Bell, 2005, p. 148).

5.5.5 Pilot Study

Before conducting the actual study the importance of pre-testing or piloting was considered. The purpose of pre-testing is to ensure that the design of the questionnaire works correctly in practice and also serves to identify and modify any problematic questions and eliminate problem areas (Hair et al., 2011). Bell (2005) states: *the purpose of a pilot exercise is to get the bugs out of the instrument so that respondents in your*

main study will experience no difficulties in completing it. It also enables you to carry out a preliminary analysis to see whether the wording and format of questions will present any difficulties when the main data are analysed (p. 147). Piloting also aims to identify any problems concerning the content, wording, layout, length, and instructions, which are consequently amended (Bryman, 2012). A further advantage of piloting is that this may also enable the researcher to calculate with far greater accuracy the time required to perform the actual questionnaire. Walliman (2006) argues that it is necessary to "test a pilot study on people of a similar type to those in the intended sample (in order) to anticipate any problems of comprehension or other sources of confusion" (p. 90).

A pre-test stage for the research instruments was conducted by this study. Postgraduate students from different disciplines (including Computer Science, Business, and Engineering) at De Montfort University were given Questionnaires. The participants were all users of online travel services and came from Saudi Arabia. The questionnaire was carefully explained ensuring participants understood the construct measurement and that the statements were understandable. Informal conversations took place between the researchers and the participants in order get feedback from participants about the Questionnaire. Some areas of confusion arose such as difficult questions from the original research instrument that required re-wording. Most notably:

1) Statements B and C of Q11 in Section One. It appears the questions are duplicated leading to the suggestion that statement C of Q11 should be deleted.
2) Q3 of Section Five. There is a misunderstanding of the word 'credible'. This has now been replaced with 'realistic'.
3) Q17 of Section Five. There is a misunderstanding of the word 'genuine', leading to the suggestion that it should be replaced with 'valid'.

5.6 Anticipated Ethical Issues of Data Collection

In all phases of the research, this study took into consideration key factors that might influence the research ethics. As Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010) note, researchers need to be aware of these issues and to respond to them properly. The first issue was researcher honesty and integrity. This research aimed for truthfulness with regard to

scientific communications - in particular, openness with respondents about the aims of the study. According to Cohen (2000), ethical considerations note how the distribution of findings should be discussed with relative sensitivity, honesty, and fairness. The study findings would therefore be founded as confidential through academics channels outlay. Researcher integrity was addressed in the commitment to maintain agreements to abide by the ESOMAR code of conduct and to abide by De Montfort university rules.

The second issue is that no harm should occur to research subjects; subjects should take part freely and must take part on the basis of informed permission (Veal, 2006). Informed consent was relevant in the observation task. Participants have a right to know why they are being asked questions, and how the information will be used. Each interview, observation and survey contained a cover letter offering an explanation of the purpose of the study, and demonstrated that participation was voluntary and that responses would be treated confidentially.

The third issue across all three phases was respect for the privacy of respondents and ensuring a lack of intrusion. Walliman (2004) states: "*whenever dealing with other people, you must be sensitive to issues of privacy, fairness, consent, safety, confidentiality of information [and] impartiality as participants have a right to know why you are asking them questions and to what use you will put the information that they give you. Explain briefly before interviewing and add an explanatory introduction to questionnaires"* (p. 149). . Respect for participant willingness to engage without pressure to respond was important. It has been suggested by Walliman (2004) that their needs to be sympathy towards issues of consent, privacy, security and confidentiality of information. At all points of this research, the requirements for lack of intrusion were considered together with the supervisors. The contact details of the researcher and the University were provided to all participants and the participants were able to withdraw during all phases of the research in case respondents had any ethical concerns. Participants answered questions without any pressure to change their answers in order to adopt a different view.

A final issue was respect for confidentiality of the actual data. Confidentiality refers to the right of participants to not discuss his or her information with others, and the

reporting of the research findings will ensure that individuals cannot be recognised (Berg & Lune, 2004). In phase one of the research with travel agents, the researcher sought to maintain a high level of confidentiality in reporting data from interview transcripts with participants. The researcher was careful to keep communications confidential in interview transcripts in both phases one and two.

The Arabic language has been employed in the interview questions and answers, since the interviews were conducted in Saudi Arabia (phase one). To tackle this issue, the interview questions were sent to a translation agent in London (Rosetta Translation), which is approved and authorised by the British government to act as a third party in translating English into Arabic, and vice-versa. A certificate of authenticity, as well as a stamp on each page was provided. Once the interviews were conducted, they were sent back to the agent in London, who then translated the answers into English as well.

5.7 Data Analysis Procedures

5.7.1 Data Analysis for Phase One and Two

Data for phases one and two of the study were analysed using qualitative content analysis method. Content analysis follows qualitative interpretative steps of analysis and records transcripts of interviews and data from observations (Stake, 2010). Content analysis is also described as the analysis of texts of a variety of types including, writing, images and also the study of recorded human communications (Hancock, 2002). The key idea of the content analysis process is to defend and transfer further develops to qualitative interpretative steps of analysis and recorded communication such transcripts of interviews, and protocol of observations (Stake, 2010). The analysis process began with transcripts of interviews, coding, and categorising all of the data. Afterwards, critical analyses were conducted to discover similarities and differences in the data, aimed at finding out the actual meaning of the data. The themes used in the interviews and observations are reported in the findings chapters (Saunders & Thornhill, 2007).

The data collected through the qualitative analysis was analysed using Nvivo version 10 - qualitative data analysis designed for capturing "*rich text based, where deep levels of analysis on small or large amount of data are required*" (Edhlund & McDougall, 2013, p. 29). (Please see Appendix B for interview coding example).

5.7.2 Data Analysis for Survey

The data collected through the quantitative analysis was analysed using IBM Statistics SPSS version 21, which is the software used for data screening and data analysis. Descriptive statistics were generated along with principal components analysis and regression analysis. Preliminary analysis examined the response rate obtained for the survey and data screening. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the normality of the distribution of results and the reliability of the measurement scales used was reported (using Cronbach's Alpha). The characteristics of the sample and descriptive statistics for key constructs were analysed. Principal component analysis is considered to be a useful statistical tool for exploratory data analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014). The suitability of the data to be used in principal component analysis was analysed and with a varimax factor rotation. Subsequently, single regression analysis was conducted to investigate consumer attitudes towards the use of the internet for information search/ purchase of travel services, enabling each key dimension to be regressed separately (Stevens, 1996). Finally, a multiple regression analysis was performed to investigate the variables (attitude, convenience, subjective norms, trust and PBC) that display the strongest contribution towards explaining consumer search intention when regarded as a dependent variable in this study. The purpose of applying the multiple regression technique is to explore variables that display the most robust unique contribution in terms of explaining the dependent variable (search intention). It enabled the significance of each independent variable in the model to be assessed along with an examination of the overall fit of the model to the data (Pallant, 2010).

5.8 Summary

This chapter focused on detailing the research philosophy, giving particular emphasis to pragmatism and identified past exemplary studies that had also adopted a pragmatic philosophy, with particular relevance in the travel sector. The key research decisions- the adoption of a quantitative as well as quantitative approach, the use of a multi mehtod design that incorporates inductive as well as deductive logic- all decisions are clearly justified in this chapter form Sections 5.1 to 5.4 above. In Section 5.5, the three phases of

research are outlined, the sampling approach adopted for each phase and the research instruments developed for each phase are set out in detail. Finally, the ethical issues that could arise in the research and the varied approaches to data analysis (NVIVO, SPSS) are outlined.

The focus now moves to reporting the findings from the different phases of data collection. Findings to emerge from the semi-structured interviews with travel agents (phase one) and from the participant observation and semi-structured interviews (phase two) are reported in Chapter Six. Findings from the statistical analysis of the survey data from phase three are presented in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Six: Research Findings from Phase One and Phase Two

6.0 Introduction

6.1 Key Research Findings: Phase One

- **6.1.1** Level of Internet Technology Adoption
  - **6.1.1.1** Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use
  - **6.1.1.2** Challenging Contextual Factors
- **6.1.2** Customer Experience of Booking and Demographic Influences
- **6.1.3** Summary of Phase One Findings: Implications for later phases of research
  - **6.1.3.1** Lack of perceived usefulness
  - **6.1.3.2** Patterns Relating to Privacy and Security of Online Booking
  - **6.1.3.3** Level of Engagement of Saudi Consumers in Online Travel Activities
  - **6.1.3.4** Social Pressures (Norms) that Influence Adoption of Internet Booking

6.2 Key Research Findings: Phase Two

- **6.2.1** Data Collection Process
- **6.2.2** Search Strategies determined by search ability
  - **6.2.2.1** Search Strategy of Simplification
    - **6.2.2.1.1** Impact of Consumer Recommendations
  - **6.2.2.2** Empowered Consumers: Use of Online and Offline Channels
  - **6.2.2.3** Variation Between Travel Process in the KSA and the UK
  - **6.2.2.4** Information Search and Evaluation Patterns
  - **6.2.2.5** Individual Search Variations
    - **6.2.2.5.1** Education, Age, Gender and regional variations
  - **6.2.2.6** Summary of Phase Two Findings: Implications for Phase Three
    - **6.2.2.6.1** Patterns Relating to Respondent Skill Level and Perceived Behavioral Control
    - **6.2.2.6.2** Simplification of Search Strategies: Implications for Search intention construct
    - **6.2.2.6.3** Implications for Information Search and Evaluation construct
    - **6.2.2.6.4** Potential Moderating Variables of Saudi Consumers

6.3 Summary

6.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two main sections; the first (Section 6.1) reports the findings for the first phase of this study, which is designed to investigate and examine current experiences of internet technology adoption among Saudi travel firms, notably technology adoption elements, challenges to internet technology adoption and reflections on the contextual factors that influence customer propensity to adopt online travel search. How the findings from phase one were taken forward in phase two and phase three research is also outlined. The second section (6.2) presents the findings for phase two of the study, and patterns to emerge in relation to the nature of search behaviour, the level of search intention and the approach to information search and evaluation of selected Saudi consumers are reported. How the findings from phase two were taken forward in phase three is also outlined.

6.1 Key Research Findings: Phase One

The main purpose of the exploratory research in phase one was to gain real life insight into patterns of internet technology adoption amongst Saudi travel firms. The respondents were managers of travel firms- the rationale for conducting the interviews with managers was because of their direct experience of the travel sector (Vogan, 2006), which enabled them to offer insight into the current usage of online travel systems in Saudi Arabia. Seventeen interviews were conducted, three interviews with managers in the public sector (government), and fourteen interviews with independent managers in the private sector (travel agencies including large and small firms). Key findings are reported in Section 6.1.1 and 6.1.2. Section 6.1.1 reports on overall technology adoption, with specific consideration of respondent perceptions of both perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) and an outline of the contextual challenges that exist when seeking to develop online travel further. Section 6.1.2 outlines customer factors that appear to influence engagement with online technology. Section 6.1.3 indicates how these findings are taken further in phase two of the data collection.

6.1.1 Level of Internet Technology Adoption

The majority of travel firms in the sample believe that their use of technology is acceptable at this stage of their development. Only a few respondents acknowledged that the use of technology was at a low level, outlining that they used it to update links with airlines and hotels booked on the supplier side, but had not implemented any systems for online customer services. Some respondents mentioned that the sector is only in the development stage and that the Saudi tourism authority needed to promote more effective technology use in the tourism sector. R6 commented, *"The government should encourage and promote the use of online activities"*.

Many of the agencies interviewed still rely on traditional offline methods for communicating with customers and see no reason to innovate. Respondent R10 stated that his firm did not depend on technology to provide online booking and purchase options, suggesting that Saudi customers would prefer to use traditional services instead of adopting online travel services. As R10 noted:

> "*The site is inactive because our customers prefer to use the traditional service. For example, some customers are not convinced by the e-tickets, which are sent to mobiles*."

Findings suggest that Saudi travel agents do not use technology in an optimal way and this pattern aligns with previous studies. Ozturan and Roney (2004) also argue that travel agencies in Saudi Arabia do not use the internet to its maximum capacity. The findings in this study are also in agreement with Al-Zharani (2009), who identifies issues regarding the use of technology, such as a lack of interest in integration of information technology in firms.

6.1.1.1 Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

This section discusses the findings on PU and PEOU. Many travel firms stated that they expected to receive benefits from adopting online travel services. Potential benefits noted were reduced costs and a reduced amount of effort. As R12 put it *"Yes, I think there are many benefits to be gained, such as the ability for greater accuracy, for it to be safer and less expensive."*

Some respondents expected the benefits from adopting online travel technology to come in the future; none anticipated any immediate improvement, believing that the majority of customers do not currently have the ability to use e-services. Others felt that using the internet to make online travel information available was not useful as many Saudis were unable to access this information. As R15 stated:

> *"Actually, I don't expect any benefits compared with traditional methods or face-to-face service. For instance, if we reactivate our website, the results will be lower profits, because if customers come to our agency, we are able to take 10% commission from him, compared with only 5% commission from the internet. Thus, it is hard to compete with e-companies over the internet, since they provide discounted prices".*

It appears that one rationale for not expecting to have any benefits currently is that the number of internet users in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is still a relatively low proportion of the population. Nonetheless, figures in Table 2.1 in Chapter Two indicate that 65.9 percent of Saudi population now have internet access. This suggests that travel firms are not fully acknowledging change.

In terms of PEOU, some interviewed firms think that, if some requirements are met, the use of online travel services can require little effort. Requirements include, in particular, trained staff. One firm stated that there is no PEOU with regard to online travel services, as a lot of effort is needed to manage the process. According to R12

> "*It is not an easy job to have this kind of service because it is too expensive. For example, the program will cost us many thousands. It is also very time consuming.*"

This view corresponds to that of Mauricio et al. (2010), who argue that PEOU influences the adoption of online services, particularly where technology users may lack skills.

To sum up, Saudi travel firms see the use of online travel technology as beneficial (PU), as they recognise the necessity of offering online booking services but fail to see present benefits. The firm size was not a factor- comments were spread across different sized

firms, but the firm's market position seemed relevant- those travel firms with a good market position were more likely to identify PEOU in terms of adopting the technology. A mixed picture emerges, suggesting that contextual factors are expected to play a big role in future internet technology adoption.

6.1.1.2 Challenging Contextual Factors

Two key context-specific patterns were notable. Firstly, attitudinal barriers emerged as significant and as a key challenge to future online booking systems development. According to the Saudi travel firms perspective , here is a possible negative attitude with regard to the significance of technology implementation.

This is illustrated by R10:

> *"Because of the customers, they trust the advice and recommendations they are given by our employees. Many customers do not trust the information and recommendations they find online. Thus, for instance, we employ specialists who provide tourist consultations as part of the service we provide for our customers"*

The size and position of travel firms had no impact on this attitude, most had a relatively negative attitude towards using online services. Their opinion seemed to be based on poor information communication technology (ICT) infrastructure in Saudi Arabia in travel, implementation and technical problems, lack of training and perceived security issues.

Only a few respondents expressed potentially positive attitudes, as R15 stated:

> *"I am pleased when I find a customer via my website and I know I will benefit from that. For instance, instead of selling products to 10 customers a day in person, we can sell products to 50 or more customers a day via the e-service. Also, no effort is required, it is self-service"*

Of those prepared to invest in online systems, firms would prefer to adopt both online and offline services, with a heavier reliance on offline services (traditional travel services). They feel that they could then meet all customers needs, whether online or offline. This is illustrated by R12 stating "*traditional services mean that you have to interact with*

customers and you cannot ignore this factor; at least the final stage should by through traditional services."

A similar, slightly negative pattern emerged in relation to future intentions of firms. Key influences on future intention to adopt online travel services centred on a lack of market readiness in the sector: a) travel agencies not acknowledging that they are not ready to adopt online travel services, b) Saudi cultural barriers in the travel context, and c) customers not involved in advance planning for vacations. Some respondents identified that it is difficult to develop online services in the near future because it was such a slow journey to get to an effective level, as noted by R7: *"We proactively develop our website to ensure all new services are available on it. However, establishing a website is not enough by itself."* While some of the firms intend to use e-services, they see government support as a prerequisite, as reflected in R15's observation*, "I hope we will get some government support to ensure that those travel offices operating without a license, whether online or offline, are officially closed."*

These findings further support the work of Godart et al. (2009), who noted how Saudi Arabian travel agency operations lacked digital elements and that a considerable proportion of the consumers are not in a position to access information through the internet.

Secondly, social factors appearted to have impact on adoption. Some respondents suggested that current social influences affected the introduction of online travel services; in particular, peer influence. Social norms as a potential obstacle were regarded as important, as identified by R4 *"Customer culture is an issue, since they have not yet adopted the new technology in earnest"* Many respondents also identified low levels of trust and perceived security as obstacles to adopting online travel systems in the Saudi tourism market; citing customer resistance to change from offline to online payment. However, no strategies have been implemented by agencies to increase perceptions of either trust or security among customers. R8 commented on this as follows:

"See, many customers do not trust the internet services. Some customers do not feel secure and they do not want to give their card information because of fraud. Also, even if the website is secure, customers do not have the confidence to participate in online activities".

A few respondents identified barriers in the implementation process, such as the absence of trained personnel with sufficient ICT skills to manage the use of information systems. They also cited a lack of availability of technology training programs. Some respondents question the support and encouragement of central government itself, but the president of the tourism authority, R11, identified a lack of funds as a critical obstacle:

"Basically, our budget is very low and the government has not financially supported us much, when compared with the industrial sector. We are always blamed because within tourism, citizens are not always satisfied and require good service and prices.

To sum up, while travel firms recognised the necessity of offering online services, including online booking; they did not appear to be proactively involved in moving things forward. These results are consistent with some earlier studies. They suggest perhaps that online travel service providers in Saudi Arabia may need, in the first instance, to base their strategy around trust and security, as these factors have a major impact on customer willingness to engage in online search and purchase (Kim, Chung & Lee, 2011). For instance, Riggs and Brooks (2011) argues that an e-payment system infrastructure is required with availability of secure financial systems.

6.1.2 Customer Experience of Booking and Demographic Influences

This section discusses reported demographic influences on technology adoption, based on customer feedback that travel firms had gathered. Many firms stated that they received minimum online feedback and suggestions from customers. According to R6 "*Most complaints are regarding the lack of direct assistance available when they use our website. There are also some customers who give feedback on return from their holiday."* Many respondents believe that customers are not fully engaged with online activities, such as booking, because of the absence of online direct available support, and

the inability to use Arabic instead of English during the online payment process. This is reflected is R16's observation: *"maybe because our website is not written in the Arabic language, so that makes it difficult for our customers."* Lack of customer trust and security can negatively influence online users, as R8 observed, "*I estimate that 80% of customers have the necessary skills to use the internet for booking, but I think they do not use it because they are afraid of fraud and do not feel secure." and* R16 echoes this *"Less than 20% of consumers used the online travel services, and it is normal at the present time, because many people feel that e-services are not safe."*

On the other hand, some respondents suggested that consumers might have the required skills but decide not to utilize them, because of less cultural acceptance of online booking, especially in terms of participation by women. R10 illustrated this saying *"They do have the skills, but they do not necessarily make a purchase online, it may be because the culture of purchasing via the internet is currently non-existent."*

Travel firms noted generational differences in willingness to adopt online systems, as R15 stated *"that generation are internet users, they are well-educated and they have no difficulty in accessing and using online activities."* Other respondents noted that gender plays a part, explaining the cultural norm that men, as head of the family in Saudi culture are expected to make major family decisions. As R9 acknowledged "*Most of the people who visit our site are men"* These patterns correspond with past work that identifies how more men tend to use e-services, as they are relied upon to take family decisions (Simsim, 2011). Keynote (2009) also found that men were more likely than women to use the internet for research, to compare prices and book a holiday, with their respective percentages being 63% and 47% of total online users. On the other hand, a few respondents indicated that women could, in the future, benefit most from online services, noting how cultural restrictions prevent women from going to travel agencies; and that access to online booking services would reduce restrictions, enabling search in the privacy of their home, with the potential for more decision-making input. For example, R7 noted, *"I think women will be more likely to use this kind of service because it gives privacy and confidentiality, and that will appeal to women in our society."* R12 saw that

decision may lie with women in the future, but R10 suggested that this was still an unclear area: *"There is no way of reaching women. This might be due to Saudi society's tradition of privacy."* This raised an interesting issue to be pursued in phase two - how women themselves approach and experience internet booking.

Views on the impact of education were contradictory. A number of firms felt that it had no influence; acknowledging that it was only security that mattered. R6 notes: "*I believe that those with higher levels of education are more likely to use e-services, except for purchasing. The majority of people, regardless of their education, do not trust the system enough to disclose financial information"* Only one respondent saw levels of education as having an effect on the use of online services. As R7 stated *"When customers are well-educated and knowledgeable the probabilities of them using e-services are high, as long as they have a regular income and visa"* Most respondents expected income to have a strong impact on using online services for travel products. It was believed that customers with higher incomes were more likely to use e-services, as they may be more willing to accept a greater element of risk, noted by R6 as being *"less fearful of the consequences and more likely to take a risk with e-payment."*

Clear regional differences emerged and travel firms suggested that there are considerable cultural differences in approach to online services, when comparing Dammam and Jeddah with Riyadh and Tabouk. Consumers in these cities can have more chance to utilize online activities compared to other areas. Respondent R6 noted:

> *"It is certain that customers from Riyadh and Jeddah are different from, for example, Tabouk and Jazan (small cities). Generally, customers in Jeddah, Riyadh and Dammam are more dependent on e-services, because I think the internet service is better in these regions, and they also have more cultural diversity and large foreign communities".*

Supporting this point, it was suggested by R7 that the culture in smaller cities does not frequently support using online activities. According to R8

"There are regional differences. Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam all have more open, culturally diverse populations and there are more internet users in these cities compared to other cities, such as Tabouk and Qassim."

6.1.3 Summary of the Phase One Findings: Implications for later phases of research

In the first phase of this study, the researcher was able to gain a useful overview of the current situation with regards to internet usage in Saudi travel agencies. It should be noted that little data about this existed in the travel context of the Saudi Kingdom in 2012. In addressing the first research objective, to identify current adoption of internet technology, two interesting issues emerged:

- *Lack of perception of perceived usefulness of internet technology in travel firms*
- *Patterns relating to privacy and security where travel agents noted these as potential barriers.*

6.1.3.1 Lack of perceived usefulness

In considering perceived usefulness, it appears that Saudi travel firms are not using online technology as a strategic tool, but rather as a tactical one. The benefits (PU) were not always recognised, which was surprising in a global travel market in the twenty-first century. Despite the potential advantages of online approaches, for Saudi travel firms there was more concentration on offline models of business. For travel firms, PU and PEOU had an attitudinal impact on travel agent online activities and seemed to negatively affect future intention to expand online travel services. However, this needs to be investigated further from the individual consumer perspective – this can be done in phase three. The findings confirm the need to maintain PU and PEOU as key factors that form part of the attitude construct in the conceptual framework to be tested in phase three.

6.1.3.2 Patterns Relating to Privacy and Security of Online Booking

According to travel agents in phase one interviews, within traditional Saudi society privacy and security were seen as central obstacles to adopting online travel services. Evidence suggested that customer resistance to the usage of online services was greater

due to the fear of online financial transactions and concerns about sharing personal information. This was reported by R16, who suggested that it was *"because many people feel that e-services are not safe."*

On the other hand, offline services were accepted as more secure from fraud, as well as giving protection to personal financial transactions. This was noted by R8 saying, "*Some customers do not feel secure and they do not want to give their card information because of fraud. Also, even if the website is secure, customers do not have the confidence to participate in online activities.*" The factors relating to privacy and security for users of online travel services were an important indication of their willingness to utilise new technology that would allow greater levels of efficiency when using online travel related services. As this seemed to be potentially significant, these elements were taken forward in phase two in two ways. In the observations there were opportunities for respondents to comment on the security of any transactions (comments were transcribed). In the interviews in phase two some questions were included (see Q3 and Q18 interview questions on pages 118-119).

This also confirmed that it was appropriate to include perceived trust and the antecedents of consumer privacy, perceived risk and perceived security as key constructs in the research model to be tested in phase three. Factors relating to privacy and security for users of online travel services were an indication of willingness to utilise new technology that would allow greater levels of efficiency when using online travel related services.

In addressing the second objective, that of identifying contextual elements that had impact on the adoption of online technology, two implications were noteworthy:

- *The surprising indications from respondents in phase one that Saudi consumers are not actively engaged in online travel activities.*
- *Issues that arise from some social pressures and cultural expectations of Saudi consumers that seem to influence internet booking adoption.*

The following sections will address the key themes in detail, noting how these were taken forward in phase two.

6.1.3.3 Level of Engagement of Saudi Consumers in Online Travel Activities

One unexpected finding in phase one was that a number of travel agents suggested that Saudi customers are not engaged with online travel activities. R12 suggested this even more strongly saying, "*Still the majority of people prefer offline transactions because they feel more satisfied and if anything goes wrong, they want to have face to face interaction"* This clearly is different to the responses that were anticipated from travel agents in a more developed country, as shown in studies by Alrashid (2012), and Mowalad and Putit (2012). This also contradicts past studies which suggest that much consumer behaviour in Saudi Arabia is driven in a similar way to Western countries, which attempt to drive technological development to increase volume of business (Assad, 2006; Moutinho, 2011). However the Saudi Government recognises that technology is important for development purposes and, therefore, they have sought to upgrade social and economic infrastructure systems to meet their growing needs for the future (Ward & Neumann, 2012).

This data was hard to evaluate because, within these patterns, there were differences between travel agents in Riyadh, Jeddah and Tubouk, and such comments only represented the travel agent view. It was therefore important in phase two to investigate the actual level of internet engagement directly with Saudi customers. This issue, therefore, was explored in depth in phase two interviews, by examining the actual level of experience of respondents in detail in Q1 to Q5 (see the interview schedule on page 118). In the observation schedule (see page 115). This was addressed by encouraging the Saudi respondents to comment on their search ability, their experience with internet usage, and their online travel knowledge.

6.1.3.4 Social Pressures (Norms) that Influence Adoption of Internet Booking

One factor that can delay the adoption of online travel technology, according to travel agents in phase one, is the existence of cultural/social perceptions in Saudi culture about using the internet. These social aspects were reported as influential in discouraging customers from actively engaging in online travel services. R4 suggested that the

customer culture is not ready: *"Customer culture is an issue, since they have not yet adopted the new technology in earnest"* Another travel agent identified that although skills exist, there is not a culture of using those skills for internet purchases. According to R10 *"They do have the skills, but they do not necessarily make a purchase online, it may be because the culture of purchasing via the internet is currently non-existent."* This parallels the work of Alateyah, Crowder and Wills (2013), who note distinct differences within Saudi culture that could act as obstacles in terms of technology adoption for basic day-to-day online activities. It may not be a lack of existing skills; it is possible that some consumers do not have good internet access and therefore less experience.

In phase two interviews, Q5 to Q8 were designed to explore how respondents use online/offline travel agencies in their cultural context and the researcher examined their experience, skills and feelings about online search experiences. One interesting pattern noted in phase one was whether women could use online systems. R10 identified some problems, noting *"There is no way of reaching women. This might be due to Saudi society's tradition of privacy."* In contrast, R7 felt that the internet offered more opportunities saying, *"I think women will be more likely to use this kind of service because it gives privacy and confidentiality, and that will appeal to women in our society."*

In the past, cultural norms and social traditions within the Kingdom have restricted women from using traditional travel services on their own. Much of this is because of the nature and expectation of gender roles within cultural prohibitions in Saudi society. Some key cultural elements were noted as relevant –some respondents saw future opportunities for women to become more active in travel decision-making due to access to online systems. In phase two, the researcher planned to explore this by including Q17, Q18, Q19, and Q20 in the interview schedule (see page 119) and ensuring that there was an equal number of men and women in the sample of respondents.

One further contextual factor that was noted by travel agents in phase one was age. According to the travel agents, the older generation may struggle to use internet travel

services due to its perceived complicated nature, or not fully understanding how to use it due to limited experience. R7 noted that younger customers are *"willing to take risks and experiment, unlike the older age groups. There are many older people who still do not use credit cards and when they need money they go to the bank."* A number of potential individual characteristics relating to age perceptions were followed up in phase two interviews (Q20 on page 119).

6.2 Key Research Findings: Phase Two

Section 6.2.1 discusses the data collection process, while Section 6.2.2 outlines search strategies, including search ability and search strategies of simplification (6.2.2.1); the emergence of empowered consumers through use of online and offline channels (6.2.2.2); variation between travel booking in KSA and UK (6.2.2.3); information search and evaluation patterns (6.2.2.4) and individual search variations (6.2.2.5). Finally, a summary of findings and implications for Phase Three is outlined in Section 6.2.2.6.

6.2.1 Data Collection Process

The purpose of the online task scenario was to provide insight into the process that the respondents go through when searching the internet for travel information. The method of observing how participants complete a given online task, and then discovering any follow-up actions, is a logical approach to this type of research (Al-Maskari & Sanderson, 2011; Ho, Lin & Chen, 2012). A total of eight participants were observed in order to clarify the range of online search behaviour. They were selected from the Saudi community in Leicester, with respondents studying at De Montfort University and Leicester University, and were recruited by email through the Saudi community email group in Leicester; those who responded were screened for their level of internet use. Study participants were Saudi travel website users with different demographic variables, levels of experience and travel related knowledge (see respondent sample in Appendix E). Variation in length of stay in the UK was built into the sample; for instance, some respondents had spent less than one year in the UK, and so they might reflect some of traditional Saudi cultural attitudes. Other respondents may have spent more than a year in the UK, and might have been influenced by the different attitudes towards internet

adoption in the UK. The online search task, followed by the semi-structured interviews, took place in a quiet office in De Montfort University, so the chance of being interrupted or overheard was reduced. A computer desktop was provided so all the participants had the same search experience. The observation stage was followed by short interviews conducted with the same participants. As part of this research, the preliminary set of items for the construct information search and evaluation was discussed with each participant.

After conducting the online search task scenario, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the same participants. The biggest advantage of the interview method in this case was the way it enabled participants to talk about their own experience, in their own words, and to elaborate on any areas of particular importance to them (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010). Respondents could, because of the relaxed setting, elaborate on their search actions and explanation of their actions. Travel experience, variations between online and offline services, search ability, search strategies, evaluation of information and individual search variations were all investigated during the semi-structured interviews (see the full interview schedule in Chapter Five, on pages 118-119). Attention was paid to the impact of subjective norms or cultural expectations on the use of the internet for travel purposes.

6.2.2 Search Strategies Determined by Search Ability

The majority of respondents reported confidence in their search ability. They were familiar with the tasks in the online scenario. According to R3 it is "*because I know how to use it, and I've only used it 3 or 4 times so you can be judged that well when you have only done it so few times"*. A few respondents reported that increased travel experience requires individuals to add in more knowledge when undertaking online flight booking, room reservation systems and selecting travel information. When considering experience in relation to internet usage, it was found that there were no differences between males and females in the search task. On the other hand, confidence in search approach emerged as relevant. Respondents were asked to rate themselves on a scale from 1 to 7, self-assessing their level of experience of internet search, where 1 refers to a not very experienced user and 7 to a very experienced user. In their assessment of their experience

in travel search, females rated themselves only at 3, whereas the four males rated themselves 5 and above. For those with prior purchase experience of online travel products, the continuous search activity and online booking of holidays further developed their ability to use online travel services with ease. R2 noted that online travel services offer a range of choices to enable travellers to select the most preferred services, saying:

> *"I feel that I can do it by myself. Like, if you go to a travel agent, you just ask them to do everything for you, and they do it. However, when I do it online, I feel happy because I know I can do it on my own. I feel independent and it makes me happy".*

Most respondents identified that knowledge of English was important, most travel websites are not available in Arabic, and therefore require a good command of English to improve understanding of the travel choices. As R5 noted *"I think language is a very important skill, because not all websites are available in Arabic, so you need to understand everything it's saying, in English."* Likewise for R3 *"English is a universal language. Even if you search for Turkey or Dubai or something, they all use the English language system, so it's important"*. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Jensen (2012), who demonstrates a similar positive relationship between prior experience and information search ability, noting how consumers with more online product experience could, without difficulty, process purchase related information. In this case, those respondents with significant experience appeared to need less information before making their decisions. Ho, Lin and Chen (2012) also find that previous knowledge and past travel search experience positively enhance online travel information search processes at individual level.

6.2.2.1 Search Strategy of Simplification

Simplification of search processes was evident among respondents in the sample, evident in a) use of Google, b) non-use of advanced search options; c) use of known sites and d) use of image search. The majority of respondents used Google search engines to find travel information to complete the online search task given to them. Most respondents cited Google as the most preferred search engine- respondents think that Google's popularity among Saudi travellers is attributed to its ease of use due to the simplistic display; identifying Google web pages as having a wide range of information, which

makes the search process easier and offer more choices. For R7 this was because *"on my computer, Google is the homepage and Google advertises a lot, and it's more well-known worldwide, I think that's why."* Google's credibility as the top search engine encouraged utilisation – as illustrated by R3:

> *"For example, in the morning, you check the news. Instead of going to all different websites, you can click on the news button on Google and it will give you sub-headings of news, like Sport, or Business etc. And it gives you news from different sources, not just their own".*

These results are consistent with those of other studies which have suggested that online search is usually a dedicated search from generic search engines, such as Google (Keynote, 2014). Furthermore, search engines offer the customer control over the search process, for example with regard to time spent and what might be saved as favourite webpages to be examine later (Ringel et al., 2010; Vuylsteke et al. (2010), thus leading to perceived behavioural control.

No respondent looked beyond the first page of Google search results. Respondents typically used from two to five key words to start their search task (e.g. package to Spain; travel to Spain; flight to Spain); only one female respondent used advanced search tools to specify her search task more precisely. The respondent who utilised advanced tools within their online search task stated how this helps access relevant data, in terms of search terms identified. As R2 noted, "*I don't think it will be complicated. I think it will modify your search to your preferences. Also, it will reduce the time you spend searching, and you'll find what you want very quickly."* Most respondents did not use advanced search options in their approach and, when asked, they believed them to be complicated. These findings differ from those of Ratchford and Kannan (2012) who argue that customers recognise the importance of incorporating advanced search options within the search process.

Visiting known sites was the second most popular option after Google search. Respondents were familiar with various sites, which were used as reference points and therefore did not use the search engines to find more sites. As R2 noted:

"Because I'm already familiar with travel websites, why should I waste my time doing research about something I already know? But if I didn't find a good deal on my chosen websites, I would use search engines to find the best deal"

Respondents with more travel knowledge went directly to known sites without visiting Google first, such as Expedia, booking.com, Trip Advisor, and holiday-hyper-market. On the other hand, many respondents undertook image search. Female respondents paid more attention to images during the search than males, including hotel appearance, furniture in rooms and the location. A few respondents believed that image search provided clear pictures of the travel destination, and of the accommodation that was being paid for, as shown by R1, "*Image! It gives you a broad idea. Not broad, maybe a detailed idea about what the place looks like."* A few respondents noted that pictures might be misleading, whereby the images might not accurately depict the situation. R2 observed, *"Sometimes you do see something else. For example, some pictures only show the room when it's extremely clean, and when you get there, its dirty, therefore different to the picture."*

The present findings show that previous experience of booking travel products online had an impact on search strategy; such experience led respondents to a confident simplification of the search process to achieve the search task. This use of individual search strategies, such as selective image search is consistent with patterns in past research (Ho, Lin & Chen, 2012; Jensen, 2012).

6.2.2.1.1 Impact of Consumer Recommendations

Social media use in Saudi Arabia has been identified as increasing, with six million active Facebook users and three million active Twitter users, together with over 90,000,000 daily YouTube views in Saudi Arabia (Saudi e-Government program, 2013). Regardless of the high number of social media users within the region, the majority of respondents did not use social media data to gather travel information. This is not just attributable to a lack of knowledge about using social media for travel, in comparison to the high number of individuals using Google as the main search engine for travel

information. It also expresses concerns about the genunineness of such consumer to consumer conversations. According to R8:

> *"I don't trust Twitter or Facebook or social networks, because you don't know anyone who's using that social network. With Google, if you search, you have pictures and information from websites and it tells you the address and everything of the place"*

On the other hand, known travel forums were seen as important as they provide an avenue for potential travellers to get more ideas and options for new travel destinations. R4, stated *"I think that is very good because with reviews and recommendations, people won't lie. They will be completely honest, so you can find out a lot about the hotel or the place by reading what they say."*However, many respondents were not open to joining forums, as they distrusted the organisers and the packages, and therefore chose to stick to traditional methods of identifying possible travel destinations. As R1 noted "*I do not trust them because ...first of all... I do not know where these forums are... I mean, who is behind these forums... maybe someone is just trying to... You know... Spoil or... I do not know."* However, a few respondents were becoming open to travel forums and espouse enthusiasm upon attending Arabic travel forums. This was shown by R6 who reported *"Sometimes, if I have time, I will go on the Arabic travel forums."*

It was noted that females consulted known forums more than males. They seemed interested in reading other customer experiences and advice offered; however, it was apparent that they only trusted Arabic travel forums. Most respondents in phase two did not search for social media data or seek recommendations from other customers online – this is potentially different to what we might expect as a search strategy in Western countries, where a look at Tripadvisor may be the first source of information to be sought. Only one respondent used social media to find travel information to complete his travel task. The remainder of respondents expressed a distrust of social media when compared with known travel websites. Such findings do not support previous work by Ringel et al. (2010), who found that social media was a significant tool when searching for information.

6.2.2.2 Empowered Consumers: Use of Online and Offline Channels

Some respondents stated that the use of online travel services enhanced identification of the most affordable travel options (flight charges) in a matter of a few minutes. Moreover, through using online travel sites, respondents were able to check through a lot of airline and hotel offerings – this provided many choices to choose from, depending on one's specifications. Some respondents felt that they would integrate the use of traditional travel agents when making flight and accommodation reservations. They believe that information provided by the travel guide is useful. Even when customers search for information through the internet, purchase might still be conducted through offline channels. Some respondents think that travellers within Saudi Arabia prefer this channel of travel, as it involves direct payment for the transactions and provides a traveller with an avenue to ask questions relating to the travel process. This was illustrated by R6:

> *"Yes I have. I went to a travel agent in Saudi Arabia. We had never used the internet before to book a holiday, so we just went to the travel agent and he gave us different ideas of places we could go. Then they gave us different offers, but we went to different travel agents and compared the offers and then chose one".*

This pattern is echoed in a report from the Arab Advisors Group, (2011) who find that in developing countries like Saudi Arabia, customers often had one single travel agency that they always went to for any bookings for themselves and their families. The travel agent may influence the ticketing arrangements and have informal tie-ups in the hotels at the destination.

The majority of respondents stated that although the offline channel is popular among Saudi Arabian customers, the channel has many disadvantages in comparison to online travel: a) offline travel requires visits to various travel agents in order to identify good deals on travel (more time consuming), and b) it limits a customer to the travel destinations provided by the travel agents, thus leading to fewer options. Some respondents believe that customer knowledge of internet and of online search and

booking process has improved online travel. They noted identification of online security for visa cards and the increased convenience from online searching and booking activities. This is illustrated by R7:

> *"Yes, I used to go to Saudi agencies to book my whole package, especially in Saudi. It was in 2007, but at that time, I didn't trust doing anything on the internet, and I didn't feel comfortable using my VISA card online, so I just went to agencies all the time. But now, for the last three years, since I've come to the UK, I feel more confident using my card online and with the internet"*

Findings in the current study are consistent with those of Moon (2004), and Pookulangara, Hawley and Xiao (2011) who note that the quality of the online information provided, along with its relevance, is significant.

6.2.2.3 Variation Between Travel Process in the KSA and the UK

When in Saudi Arabia, respondents mostly chose to book offline travel and indicated that they had limited knowledge about using online search in order to make flight reservations and hotel bookings. Since coming to the UK, the majority of Saudi travellers use online services for flights and hotel reservations. Some respondents attributed this to acculturation – learning from the differences as British friends, peers, classmates and host families use online services for flight reservations etc. This has encouraged many Saudi students in the UK to be familiar with, and to use, online channels. This was illustrated by R1, who stated, *"I want to learn about how you can do everything on the internet. Like, when I lived with a host family, they all did everything online."*Respondents see this as a benefit for Saudi students in the UK, as they have been required to learn processes of online travel to ensure that they can make flight bookings and search for information on their own. For R5 "*when I was in Saudi, before coming here, I hadn't used these websites before, so when I came here, like I told you, the first time I booked my ticket to Saudi, I went online."* This is particularly evident in shopping, as most Saudi respondents make daily online purchases of a range of products; groceries, clothing, electronics and automobiles while in the UK. This identifies the emergence of an alternate customer lifestyle- many Saudi consumers studying in the UK have incorporated changes within their own daily life to incorporate online websites via internet or Smartphone as a key source for information search and evaluation leading to purchase. This is illustrated by

R4 who stated, "*Well when I lived in Saudi before, I didn't use the internet at all really. But now that I live here, my lifestyle has changed a lot and I use the internet for everything, and I also use the internet when I go back to Saudi now."*

Some respondents noted that using online services enhanced individual independence, a part of enhancing cultural adaptability to foreign countries, as noted by R6:

> *Yes, and I think that the way things are in Saudi is wrong. When I came over here, if I had a problem, I could not manage them myself because I did not know what to do. So my life over here was very difficult when I first moved here, but now it's made me a stronger person.*

6.2.2.4 Information Search and Evaluation Patterns

Respondents see online sources as critical in identifying relevant information on preferred travel destinations. They feel that they can view websites, can easily assimilate information on the quality of the desired destination. The majority of respondents incorporated combined search methods: when questioned, they found it quite hard to remember the different sources they had accessed, offering a clear picture of a relatively organic process. This is illustrated by R6:

> *"I'd go on Google, and search different destinations and hotels in different places. Then I would look at the reviews for these places and decide how long I want to stay in that city. Then I would click on the link that will take me to the page where I buy my ticket, and then check the price and compare the price with other websites, and then choose the one that suits me the most".*

A relatively contracted search and evaluation process seemed to be emerging, which encouraged some consumers to move quickly to payment, where they can deal with booking, payment and travel documentation without obstacles. As R2 *described "I've found the information that I needed, and I'm satisfied with that. I've got my VISA card, and I know how to use the system, so I'll book it now because I've got what I need."*

Respondents commented on the ease with which they were able to combine search, evaluation and payment in one process, enhanced by their search skills and personal confidence to proceed to purchase. This is reported by R1 who noted, *"I found enough*

information and I think that's where I want to go and there is nothing left to do except making the payment." The study outcomes are supported by earlier studies where Ho, Lin and Chen (2012) note how users see the search process as an iterative cycle of activity. In phase two observations, the respondents appeared to search various websites and associated links as one integrated activity, until such time as they felt able to satisfactorily make a booking decision. The move towards a purchase decision was not sequenced or predictable - it was dependent on the individual search strategy.

6.2.2.5 Individual Search Variations

6.2.2.5.1 Education, Age, Gender and Regional Variations

Respondents believed that educational differences do not play a major part in online travel and that if an individual is interested in the process they will learn how to use it, regardless of the educational level or experience. For instance, R5 stated, "*What I'm trying to say is that there isn't a difference between the PhD holder and the undergraduate holder, because the task isn't difficult (travelling wise), it just depends on the skills of the person.* They did, however, feel that age differentiates behaviour-findings here repeat the pattern of phase one, where respondents believe that the older generation may not be interested in adopting online travel processes, but continue traditions. According to R7:

> *Yes, in general, I think younger people use it more now. But for elderly people, because they find it hard to move around a lot, their booking is very simple, because they only want to go to one destination and that's it. They don't like going out much or anything, so they have limited criteria. But for adults, they have many criteria because they want to go and see everything.*

Other respondents stated that young travellers have fully accepted the use of online systems in travel due to their belief that it is fast, convenient and offers more choices and opportunities. R2 demonstrated this as follows:

> *"I think it depends on the person. It's not about the age; it's more about the education, the knowledge, the experience, etc. For example, if one has travelled a lot with his father and he is only 16 or 17 years old, then you'll find that this boy has a lot of experiences with travelling".*

In relation to gender, the majority view was that travel decisions are dominated by males. It was regarded as the man's responsibility to identify a favourable travel destination that is family friendly. This suggests that the man will be the one to approach a travel agent and makes the necessary flight and hotel reservations. Most respondents identified the decision as wholly left to the man, as noted by R3:

> *I think men always consider themselves as responsible. For example, if you go out with your family, you are responsible, not the mother, and that's in all cultures. So the man will always plan ahead and think of things that could go wrong and think of emergencies and things that could happen.*

Some respondents justified this by stating that the majority of men in Saudi Arabia are working. It appears that the woman assists the man in making relevant decision regarding travel destinations but, in most instances, the overall responsibility is left to the man. Typically, the man has the final word on the majority of decisions made within his household. As R7 noted "*I would say that 80% or something is the man's decision when travelling. The wife may have some input, but it's his decision most of the time."*

Nonetheless, this view was moderated by regional variations, where varied rules governing women's freedom and rights exist, as noted in phase one. For instance, in some regions, such as Riyadh, women are not allowed to talk to male strangers, or travel on their own without a male relative, which restricts their capability to go to travel agents. In other regions within Saudi Arabia women are not allowed to travel abroad without family approval, thus limiting their involvement in travel arrangements. According to R8 *"Women in the south are conservative. There are some rules they have which even I find hard to believe and I'm from Saudi!"*

In other regions, the situation is more open-minded, women may take up careers, and are allowed to make travel arrangements. They have the freedom to meet with travel agents, and make necessary travel decisions. At times women take the family on vacations, as they utilise their savings or their salaries on the trip. According to R2:

> *The women in Jeddah are more open-minded than the women in Riyadh. Jeddah is a very multicultural city, whereas Riyadh is not. For example, in*

Jeddah, you can find women sitting in a coffee shop alone - but in Riyadh, I don't think so.

A few respondents note that in a city like Jeddah, husbands and wives make joint decisions relating to preferred travel choices, as illustrated by R3:

For example, in Jeddah, the decision will be joint, and the man won't mind the woman going to the travel agent, and that's just part of their culture. But in some other areas/regions, they will definitely mind, and the man will always take the decision, and do what HE thinks is right.

Respondents stated that utilisation of the internet in making travel arrangements provides women with more freedom to enhance communication activities with strangers, without requiring physical presence. As R1 put it *"Yes, indeed. Most of our travel agencies are men and our women do not like to interact with men, so this is one of the major criteria."* A few respondents noted that some cities (such as Jeddah) provide women with more freedom in relation to associations. According to R6:

First of all, our women do not talk to foreign men. Second thing, women are not allowed to communicate within the city on their own, women in our country are not allowed to travel outside the borders without one of their relatives ... so of course yeah...it gives me more freedom, and freedom makes everything more convenient and you feel more comfortable. In my City, in Jeddah though, there are not really any restrictions/barriers. Even if you're online, or with a travel agent, for women there isn't much restriction. So we already have our freedom. Using online websites has just made it easier for women; it is quicker and you can use the internet when it's convenient for you, and not when it's convenient for the travel agent. But in some cities, the woman may not be allowed to leave the house.

6.2.2.6 Summary of Phase Two Findings: Implications for Phase Three

The first objective of the second phase was to gain in-depth insights into the nature of the search strategies, the information evaluation approach of Saudi consumers. The data for phase two was initially collected through a small-scale observation of selected Saudi consumer search patterns, worked in tandem with semi-structured interviews. This enabled the researcher to draw conclusions from direct observation, and also enabled new

information to emerge that extended previous studies, which led to the refining of the search intention and information search and evaluation construct. Three patterns are worth consideration in terms of phase three research.

- *Patterns relating to Respondent Skill Level and Perceived Behavioral Control*
- *Simplification of Search strategies and impact on Search Intention*
- *Information Search and Evaluation Patterns*

6.2.2.6.1 Patterns Relating to Respondent Skill Level and Perceived Behavioral Control

We noted in the transition from phase one to phase two that there was a need to examine the actual levels of experience and engagement of individual consumers. In phase two, when considering the skills and experience in relation to online travel usage, it was found that expertise in search approach emerged as a relevant factor. The respondents rated themselves between 4 and 6 when self-assessing their experience with internet searching, (where 1 refers to a not very experienced user and 7 to a very experienced user). It was also noted, through the observations, that the respondents had a good level of past experience in online travel activities and that they were familiar with the tasks in the online scenario. Patterns in phase two suggest not only confidence, but a clear sense of perceived behavioural control was identified by some respondents. R5 expressed how happy he was when he booked his holiday without the help of anyone:

> *I feel that I can do it by myself. Like, if you go to a travel agent, you just ask them to do everything for you, and they do it. But when I do it online, I feel happy because I know I can do it on my own. I feel independent and it makes me happy.*

Some respondents noted that they were able to process purchase related information more easily, and those respondents (R5 and R2) with more advanced skills seemed to need little or no support from the researcher in their search task.

Confidence and skills are considered to be key components that can influence information search and evaluation, and purchase intention. These components have been included in the original conceptual model on page 67. Phase two findings above have

confirmed their importance and the items taken forward in the PBC construct includes skills and confidence (see Section 3 - Q1 to Q4 - in the questionnaire on page 310).

6.2.2.6.2 Simplification of Search Strategies: Implications for Search Intention Construct

In terms of search intention, individual search strategies emerged before consumers began conducting the online task scenario. A number of search intention items were tested directly by asking the respondents to complete a short questionnaire that included preliminary scale items for search intention to be used in phase three of the study. Some interesting patterns arose in the phase two interview findings that also related to search intention. First, it appeared that those Saudi consumers in the sample who had studied abroad were more likely to have a positive intention to use online search engines and make their own search and bookings. This is shown when R5 stated *"Because when I was in Saudi, before coming here, I hadn't used these websites before, so when I came here, like I told you, the first time I booked my ticket to Saudi, I went online."*

Second, a few respondents commented on how much they enjoyed being able to search. Respondent R6 identified that the intention to use the internet for online travel activities was becoming positively valued by Saudi users;

> *Well when I lived in Saudi before, I didn't use the internet at all really. But now that I live here, my lifestyle has changed a lot and I use the internet for everything, and I also use the internet when I go back to Saudi now.*

It seems clear from the above comments that exposure to Western culture had led to search intention related to the internet becoming quite typical for some Saudi respondents. The search intention construct first developed for the original conceptual model on page 67 had six potential items. After the interviews were completed in phase two, the search intention construct with the six items was piloted with each respondent. The researcher, when discussing the items in detail with the respondents, noted significant duplication across item two, and some difficulty in clearly completing the

scales for item five of the original six. The following Table explains the retained and non-retained items for the study.

Table 6.1: the Search Intention Construct Items

Search Intention Item	Action
1. I intend to use the internet for information when searching travel products for the next six months.	Retained
2. In the future, I intend to regularly search for tourism information online.	Removed because of the duplication
3. I plan to increase my use of the internet for information search for travel products over the next year.	Retained
4. If I want to book a holiday, I intend to use the internet to search for tourism information.	Retained
5. I will not use the internet to search for tourism information in the next 6 months.	Removed because of the difficulty in clearly completing
6. I expect to use the internet to search for tourism information in the next 6 months	Retained

As a result, in section 7 of the phase three surveys, a four-item construct was retained for search intention (see questionnaire on page 312, Section 7, Q1 to Q4).

6.2.2.6.3 Implications for Information Search and Evaluation construct

One interesting pattern noted in phase two was that information search and evaluation for the travel products on the internet, seemed to be a highly integrated process. For example, R4 suggested that his approach to information search and evaluation all happens simultaneously. As he put it *"I just go on the internet and find out which place attracts me the most, evaluate the deals and then book it at the same time."* Several respondents considered their search and evaluation as a connected process, where one activity of opening a page of search results automatically led to evaluation of the results as they read them. Subsequent search and evaluation episodes followed the same process until respondents felt they had enough information. R3 described this search and evaluation process as follows:

> *"when you Google your search, and you go through all the relevant results, and then eventually, you find that you're looking at the same result as you were looking at before, that's when I feel I've done enough research".*

What does vary in the search and evaluation process is the depth and length of time spent on online search because consumers may undertake various search strategies, such as accessing the search engine, going to a direct travel website, logging into a travel forum, undertaking an image search. These elements were considered in the final information search and evaluation construct and are reflected in scale items. All respondents reported that they engaged in frequent browsing and evaluation of online information before holiday booking. They also suggested that evaluation was important to their search, noting that this was also true of the Saudi people in their family and friendship groups in the UK (see Q15 and Q16 in interviews schedule, on page 119). The researcher concluded that it was relevant to keep these elements (frequency of browsing, level of evaluation, and relative importance of search strategy) as part of the information search and evaluation construct.

The respondents seemed to incorporate individually developed criteria in the evaluation process. As noted in past studies by Tina Du and Evans, (2011) and Xie & Joo (2012), the interviews in phase two confirmed in their observation task and interviews that richness and quality of information were important; respondents specifically commented that they checked for accurate and up-to-date information when browsing and evaluating search results (particularly flight prices). Thus, the item on richness of data and quality of information in evaluation was retained in the information search and evaluation construct, and one new item was added to capture how accurate and up-to-date criteria were part of evaluation.

Past studies by Jani et al. (2011) and Ho, Lin and Chen (2012) include items on multiple search approaches, as part of search and evaluation, and this was confirmed as relevant in phase two observaitons, as a number of respondents seemed to adopt multiple searches in their task. This item was thus retained as part of the information search and evaluation construct. However, an interesting pattern noted in phase two, which was not present in earlier studies, was the use of image search. Respondents in the search task used image

search and this seemed to enhance the search and evaluation process for particular travel packages/hotels. A few respondents noted that they had searched and evaluated reviews and recommendations by other travellers (such as comments on flight prices and accommodation rates). R6 noted, *"Because that's the only way I can see reviews and look at everything properly and compare it ... it's also important to keep updating the information."* As a result of these emergent patterns from phase two observations and interviews, two new items were developed and added to the information search and evaluation construct; an item on image search as part of information search evaluation, and an item on evaluating reviews of other customers.

To summarise, on the basis of phase two observation and interviews, information search and evaluation emerged as a single highly integrated process. Nonetheless, behavioural elements within the process varied from one customer to another according to their search strategy and evaluation criteria. After the interviews were completed in phase two, the information search and evaluation construct was piloted with each respondent, using the original eight items that were presented in the conceptual framework on page 67. The researcher, in discussing the items in detail with the respondents, was satisfied that there was clear understanding and no difficulty in completing the scales for the original eight items. As proposed above, three new items (items 9 to 11) were added:

Item 9: image search, which provides descriptions of the destinations and hotels
Item 10: accurate and up-to-date travel information and updating travel requirements
Item 11: travel information and reviews, based upon travellers' experiences

The amended scale is shown in the methodology chapter on page 142 and is available in the questionnaire in page 307.

6.2.2.6.4 Potential Moderating Variables of Saudi Consumers

Phase two offered some valuable insight into variations, with regards to gender, age, level of education, and how these individual characteristics seemed to influence the confidence shown by respondents in searching, and the different emphasis in their evaluation. The customer demographic characteristics appeared to affect confidence in online searching.

This was evident in the observations and the interviews. For instance, R5 felt that young travellers have fully accepted using online search for information on travel:

> *"People between 18-55 will be able to use the online system, as they won't find it complicated. People over 55, I don't think they will find it easy to use the online system, because they won't understand the technology"*

In terms of age, past studies note the pattern whereby young people are more able to use new technology communication, whereas older users may find some barriers to ease of use (Abu Samah, 2011; Jiménez & Martín, 2011). Some of these considerations related to generational differences, but equally some considerations are connected to group characteristics, depending on the regions of world where people come from. In Saudi Arabia, older users were less likely to use technology for online purchases (Al-Mousa, 2011). However, in the West those percentage differences are likely to be narrower because of the more powerful technology based infrastructure (Keynote, 2014). In addition to age differences, gender may also play a role in online information search and evaluation (Kulkarni, Ratchford & Kannan, 2012; Maskari & Sanderson, 2011). This study also identified some gender differences in online information search, as identified by R8 who stated, **"***If I use me and my husband as an example, he looks at everything in detail, but I don't."* Age, gender, and a number of other individual characteristics, were included in the phase three questionnaire (see Section1 - Q1 to Q6 - on page 308).

To summarise, this chapter has shown how the qualitative approach, including observation and semi-structured interview method, was applied in phase two enabling some considerable insights to emerge on consumer search behaviour, that helped establish the nature of search intention, the importance of individual search ability and search strategy and the boundaries of information search and evaluation. Phase two enabled refinement of key searchconstructs in order to refine the research instrument for phase three.

6.3 Summary

This chapter has analysed the findings of phase one and phase two. Phase one was designed to investigate current adoption of internet technology by Saudi travel firms and

to identify contextual aspects that are likely to impact further adoption across the sector. Both attitudinal factors relating to travel firms and cultural elements relevant to Saudi consumers emerged as potentially influential on online travel booking. Phase two findings demonstrated, on the one hand, how search ability and search strategies were reflective of confident and well-established search behaviour on the part of respondents; and, on the other, identified gender and regional variations and clarified the nature of information search and evaluation on the part of individual consumers.

Patterns noted in phase one and two helped to look at the applicability of the selected items for the search intention, and information search and evaluation constructs. Phase two also offered insight into search variations with regards to gender, age, level of experience, and how these factors could influence online search behaviour; such elements were then considered in the questionnaire construction.

The focus in chapter seven is on the research findings for the survey (phase three), which investigates the relationship between the key constructs in the proposed conceptual framework. Details on the SPSS statistical tests undertaken are initially outlined and key findings are presented.

Chapter Seven: Research Findings from Phase Three

7.0 Introduction

- **7.1** Response Rate and Sample Characteristics
- **7.2** Data Screening
- **7.3** The Structure of the Research Tool: Principal Component Analysis
- **7.4** Reliability Analysis
- **7.5** Normality and Intercorrelation in Scales
- **7.6** Association between Respondent characteristics and research dimensions
  - **7.6.1** Respondent categorical variables and research dimensions
    - **7.6.1.1** Gender differences
    - **7.6.1.2** Regional differences
  - **7.6.2** Respondent ordinal variables and research dimensions
- **7.7** Proposed Research Model
- **7.8** Regression Model Analysis
  - **7.8.1** Introduction and Choice of Method
  - **7.8.2** Confirmation of Hypotheses
  - **7.8.3** Multiple Regression analysis
  - **7.8.4** Results from Moderating variables
- **7.9** Summary

7.0 Introduction

The purpose of the first phase of this study is to describe the perceptions of Saudi travel companies and their experience of online booking and purchasing systems. The data collection method selected to achieve this objective was semi-structured interviews and findings have been reported in chapter six (See Section 6.1). Thereafter, phase two of the study sought to examine the online search behaviour of Saudi consumers in relation to travel services. Two data collection methods were employed to achieve this objective; firstly, observation of the Saudi consumers' behaviour in relation to online searching for travel services, followed by semi-structured interviews and key findings are reported from phase two in chapter six (Section 6.2). The findings from phase one and two make a considerable contribution and feed into the third phase of this study. The objective of phase three is to investigate the relationships between the key constructs in the conceptual framework, noting the association between consumer attitudes towards use of the internet for information search, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, perceived convenience, trust, search intention and search information and evaluation and the link to final purchase intention. During this third and final phase of the study, the data was collected using the survey method.

This chapter presents the findings from the third phase of the study, reporting on a survey questionnaire that was completed by over four hundred respondents. This phase of data collection investigated each construct and each of the hypothesised relationships of the conceptual model that was proposed on page 67. The data collected through the survey was analysed using SPSS version 21, and test results are presented at the statistical significance level of $p<.05$. Initially, Section 7.1 of this chapter discusses the response rate obtained for the survey and the characteristics of the sample. The data screening is noted in Sections 7.2, followed by an explanation of the structure of the research tool which is principal component analysis in Section 7.3. Section 7.4 reports on the reliability analysis and the normality testing procedures used in the study and intercorrelation in scales are addressed in Section 7.5. This is followed in Section 7.6 by an analysis of respondent characteristics and how they are associated with the key research dimensions; notably gender and regional variations, in addition to variations linked to respondent characteristics such as length of time in the UK and level of prior internet experience.

Section 7.8 presents the proposed research model. Finally, Section 7.9 and 7.10 explain the findings in relation to both single regression and multiple regression noting the choice of method, the confirmation of hypotheses, the summary of regression analysis results and the effect of moderators.

7.1 Response Rate and Sample Characteristics

In total, approximately 780 paper questionnaire forms were distributed (face-to-face) to Saudi students living in the UK. Of these, a total of 512 questionnaires were completed and returned to the researcher for data processing and analysis (response rate: 65.64 %). A 100% response rate is desirable in any survey, however this is rarely achieved in practice (Miller & Acton, 2009). Nulty (2008) compares the response rates between face-to-face and online surveys and finds that well conducted face-to-face surveys achieve a higher response rate (60% to 80%) than online surveys. The study response rate of 65.64% is considered a good percentage. By way of comparison, in a study carried out by Pikkarainen et al. (2004) looking at factors that predict consumer acceptance of online banking, 427 questionnaires were distributed; 286 were appropriately completed, resulting in a 63% response rate in their study. One cited reason for non-response in this Ph D research, on the part of respondents was time available to complete the questionnaire. It must also be acknowledged that the length of a questionnaire can negatively influence the response rate (Brace, 2008). In this case, the survey included elements of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the search related constructs of search intention and search information and evaluation, in addition to all the potential influencing variables (attitude, trust, perceived convenience etc). All variables were important in order to meet the research objectives of the research and were required for accurate assessment; thus, the length of the survey could not be reduced.

The chief characteristics of the 481 respondents, which included age, gender, income, level of education, the Saudi region, marital status, length of stay in the UK, internet experience, travel experience, and frequency of buying online travel products, are presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Sample Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	N	%	Chi	Sig
Age	18 to 24 years	105	21.8	253.26	< .001
	25 to 34 years	**257**	**53.4**		
	35 to 44 years	105	21.8		
	Age 45 or older	14	2.9		
Gender	Male	**303**	**63.5**	34.89	< .001
	Female	174	36.5		
Monthly Income	Less than £1,200	39	8.3	227.63	< .001
	£1,201 to £2,000	134	28.5		
	£2,001 to £3,000	**203**	**43.1**		
	£3,001 to £ 4,000	65	13.5		
	£4,001 or more	30	6.4		
Highest Level of Education Completed	Some high school	33	6.9	279.01	< .001
	College	57	12		
	Bachelor's degree	160	33.7		
	Master's degree	**203**	**42.7**		
	Doctoral degree	22	4.6		
Please indicate the Saudi region where you come from?	Eastern region	101	21.4	15.57	.004
	Northern region	73	15.4		
	Western region	**124**	**26.2**		
	Southern region	87	18.1		
	Central region	88	18.6		
Marital Status	Single	92	19.6	740.48	< .001
	Married	**365**	**77.8**		
	Divorced	11	2.3		
	Widowed	1	.2		
How long have you lived in the UK?	Less than 1 year	52	10.9	156.71	< .001
	1 to 3 years	151	31.6		
	More than 3 years	**275**	**57.5**		
Indication of experience of using the internet	Less than 1 year	7	1.5	455.35	< .001
	From 1 to less than 3	20	4.2		
	From 3 to less than 5	44	9.3		
	From 5 to less than 7	154	32.5		
	7 years or more	**249**	**52.5**		
Experience of searching the internet for online travel products	Less than 1 year	42	8.8	146.99	< .001
	From 1 to less than 3	72	15.1		
	From 3 to less than 5	136	28.5		
	From 5 to less than 7	**178**	**37.3**		
	7 years or more	49	10.3		
Frequency of buying a travel product online in the past three years	Never	15	3.2	137.16	< .001
	1-3 times	**186**	**39.3**		
	4 -6 times	149	31.5		
	7 times and above	123	.26		

As can be seen from the above table, the majority of respondents (53.4%) were in the age range of 25 to 34 years, with 21.8% of respondents aged between 18 and 24. Of the older respondents, the sample included 21.8% in the age group 35 to 44 years but only 2.9% were 45 or above. The age classification shows that the age group from 18 to 34 years made up 75% of the sample, thus comprising the majority of respondents. With regard to income, the majority (43.1%) of the sample had a monthly income level of between £2,001 to £3,000, 28.5% had an income between £1,201 to £2,000 and the remainder were divided between an income level of less than £1,200 or more than £4,001 (around 15%). The demographic analysis based on education can be divided according to three educational levels: 18.9% of respondents had some high school and college education, 33.7% held Bachelor degrees and 47.3% had Masters level or higher qualifications. Respondents were drawn from five Saudi regions, with 21.4 % from the Eastern region, 15.4% from the Northern region, 26.2% from the Western region, 18.1% from the Southern region and 18.6% from the Central region. In terms of marital status, 19.6% were single, while 77.8% were married, and the remainder were either separated or divorced (2.5%). The gender classification showed that 63.5% of the sample comprised of males, while females accounted for 36.5%.

In considering respondent characteristics that were not demographic, geographic or socio-economic, the factors centred on level of experience with the internet, level of prior online travel booking experience, number of prior online travel products purchased and amount of time spend in the UK. With regard to the length of stay in the UK: 10.9% had been in the UK less than 1 year, 31.6% are in the UK for between 1 and 3 years, and 57.5% had lived in the UK for more than 3 years. A breakdown of the level of internet experience showed that the sample respondents were experienced in using the internet (85% had more than 5 years experience), while the level of prior experience of online travel search was also substantial, with 28.7% having three to 4 years and 47.6% having five years or of such experience respectively. The frequency of buying online travel products also demonstrated knowledgeable respondents: 71% had bought online travel products from 1 to 6 times, 26% had done so 7 times and above, while only 3.2% had never bought a travel product online. Chi-square tests were used to indicate whether

differences in numbers between the subgroups were statistically significant and dominant subgroups are indicated in bold in the table.

7.2 Data Screening

Screening requires the researcher to go through all the questions in the survey or questionnaire to see if they were answered and if there were any mistakes made by respondents (Pallant, 2010). Screening helps the researcher to remove out of range values and to understand which questions in the survey were poorly constructed; it can also determine what the missing data are (Muijs, 2010). Screening can also be conducted to check the range of values given by the respondent, especially in categorical variables. The end result of screening is clean data, with which the researcher can then move forward and conduct data analysis (Miller & Acton, 2009). Survey data were initially assessed for missing values and normality, prior to performing reliability analysis of the scales and descriptive statistics, as it is important to ensure integrity of the data for accurate results. According to Croninger and Douglas (2005), missing data cause threats in terms of internal and external validity. The percentage of missing data on each scale item was initially examined using frequency analysis for all 76-scale items. Based on the initial screening results, 17 questionnaires with missing values above 50% were discarded, leaving 495 surveys. This type of missing data is called 'item non-response,' as opposed to participant non-response (Croninger & Douglas, 2005). Statisticians recommend several strategies for dealing with missing data, as it can influence the estimation of means and coefficients (Croninger & Douglas, 2005). Hair (2010) recommends a four-step process for examining the type and extent of missing data, and analysing cases and variables with missing data to decide whether to delete high levels of missing data, assessing the randomness of missing data (as non-random patterns introduce measurement bias), and then selecting an appropriate method to replace the missing data with values. Additional new strategies include the Expectation Maximisation Algorithm (EM) and multiple imputations.

To examine the type, extent and randomness of missing data in the original survey dataset (N=495) a missing values analysis was conducted on the 76 scale items. This

examined whether the pattern of missing data are random (MAR), missing completely at random (MCAR), or missing not at random (MNAR), and determines whether the percentage of missing data was below the recommended percentage of 10%. Missing patterns per case ranged from 1.5% to 100%, and Little's MCAR test result was significant (Chi-Square (4127) = 4695.79; Sig. < .001; (see Appendix J), which indicates that the pattern of missing data was MNAR. MNAR is problematic because it poses a clear threat to a study's external validity, with no clear mechanism for addressing potential bias (Croninger & Douglas, 2005). Data were individually examined by case and by variable, and 14 cases were identified with missing values above 10%. These 14 cases were deleted from the dataset, leaving 481 cases for further analysis. No further cases were deleted from the final survey dataset (N=481). Although the amount of missing data was minimal, MCAR test still showed MNAR (Chi-Square (2736) = 3212.238; Sig. < .001 (see appendix J). As Little and Rubin (2002) advise, missing data were replaced with medians for all observations in the sample. The data can therefore be considered as complete.

7.3 The Structure of the Research Tool: Principal Component Analysis

Because the key factors in the survey were based on several separate theories and questionnaires, before performing any further analysis; their consistency and the compliance of responses with theoretical concepts was checked. The questionnaire comprised of 62 items, made up of 13 theoretical areas (scales). Their consistency may be submitted in a number of ways, such as confirmatory factor analysis or exploratory factor analysis.

Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was developed as a statistical tool for exploratory data analysis at the early stages of instrument development, and it has wider applications in the analysis of survey data, often being used for identifying the structures of different components (Pallant, 2010). The purpose of the PCA technique is to produce a reduced number of linear combinations from original variables. This can be achieved in a number of ways, for example, by transforming the original variables into a smaller set of linear combinations that share the same variances (Pallant,2010). Exploratory factor analysis

may combine items of research dimensions into groups, which are separable in the theoretical model.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is a method of factor analysis used to examine whether a measure of a construct is reliable in relation to a researcher's perception of that construct or factor. Moreover, Preedy (2010) has suggested that the purpose of confirmatory factor analysis is to assess the data fit hypothesised measurement model is established on the basis of theory and/or earlier analytical research. In this case, however, there were problems with using structural equation modelling as a confirmatory technique. In the set of data collected for this research N=481), there was a certain amount of missing data, which is negligible for simple techniques. For structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis, however, the researcher should either reduce the amount of general observations (Allison, 2001), or perform data imputation (Little & Rubin, 1990). In both cases, however, it could lead to interference with the dataset that is considered to be biased (non-random), therefore violation of data structure could lead to erroneous conclusions (Rubin, 1996). Although the data complemented a simple imputation method, we already see at this stage that it can generate bias.

In addition to the theoretical reasons for not carrying out SEM, there was a critical reason why this method was rejected. In most techniques, structural equation modelling requires multi-dimensional normal distribution of data. This is not a result of the normal distribution for the individual variables but for all variables in the systems of grouped variables in the model (Bollen, 1989; Marida & Foster, 1993). Therefore, although the normality of distributions (for single variables) allows the performance of simple techniques, such as regression analysis, in the case of multi-dimensional distribution of the variables, that condition is not met. In such a distribution, SEM, based on standard measures of fit, might indicate incorrect results, which could lead to wrong conclusions. SEM is a group of techniques that allows the performing of analysis when data is not compatible with multidimensional normal distribution, but it requires a very large sample. It may be used, for example, to measure SEM-WLS, which is resistant to distribution disturbances. However, the test sample should exceed at least (N > df * 20)

of subjects (Boosma & Hoogland, 1998, 2001; Chou et al., 1991), which in this work, in this case, would be more than 2000 people. To sum up, due to the lack of normality in data distribution, it is likely that undertaking SEM analysis would not properly reflect the relationship between the variables in the conceptual model. For these reasons, a confirmatory factor approach using structural equation modelling was rejected.

A simple equivalent for confirmatory analysis may in this case, be a series of exploratory analyses that can show how consistent constructs are within individual scales. The purpose of the PCA technique is to produce a reduced number of linear combinations from original variables. This can be achieved in a number of ways, for example, by transforming the original variables into a smaller set of linear combinations that share the same variances (Pallant, 2010). Also, according to Budaev (2010), PCA is an effective way of reducing the numerous measures to a set of important summary scores. So it can be seen, just as in the case of confirmatory SEM analysis, whether the scale contains one coherent theoretical construct, or (in the case of inconsistencies) more than one, this may confirm the reasonableness of theoretical factors. This can be achieved by identifying different constituents (known as principal components), along with the maximum data variation (Ringnér, 2008). Krishnakumar and Nagar (2008) support this view and state that the use of PCA or its component combinations ensures the quality of scale results. Thus, in virtually the same as in the case of structural equation modelling, a series of exploratory analyses within the theoretical constructs will be undertaken to confirm their accuracy.

During this step of analysis, the researcher has to determine whether the data is suitable for analysis. The two major issues to consider include the sample size to be used for the population and the correlation among the variables. Different researchers over the years have used varying sizes of samples, which have been gradually getting smaller. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) review this issue and suggest, "*it is comforting to have at least 300 cases for factor analysis*" (p. 613). Stevens (1996) suggests, "*the sample size requirements advocated by researchers have been reducing over the years as more research has been done on the topic*" (p. 372). The recommended sample size for factor

analysis should be at least 300. For this particular study a sample size of 481 was used, as it is suitable to carry out principal component analysis, as recommended by both Pallant (2010) and Fidel (2007). Also, researchers such as Fidel and Tabachnick (2014) recommend the inspection of the correlation matrix coefficient of the variables in the data. The researcher should ensure that the coefficient is greater than .3, or it will not be possible to carry out principal component analysis (Fidell & Tabachnick, 2014). Pallant (2010) also supports this and argues that the correlation matrix coefficient should be greater than .3. Also, Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) argue ".32 is a good rule of thumb for the minimum loading of an item, and with further research and analysis it may be possible to reduce the item number and maintain a strong factor; if there is a very large data set" (p. 611).

Firstly, correlations were undertaken between items forming scales; then, a series of factor analyses were used, (using varimax rotation), which measures variance explained, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) coefficient allowed the assessment of the quality of the scales. Usually, SPSS is used to generate statistical measures that determine factorability in the data. These factors include KMO, which measures the adequacy of sampling and Bartlett's test of sphericity. It is a requirement that Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant ($p < .05$), in order for the PCA of the data to be considered appropriate (each of the constructs reached this value). Usually the KMO guide should range from 0 to 1; 0.6 is the recommended minimum value for a good PCA (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007). Considering these two conditions, Bartlett's critical test value for this study was always $p < .05$ and the KMO test always more than .71. Based on this, it can be concluded that each of the PCA was appropriate in this study, as shown in the Table 7.2 below. Some items in the scales in the questionnaire did not fit the theoretical concept well- as shown in the low values of correlation coefficients, low values of anti-image correlations and Cronbach's alpha sub-indices (exclusion indices). The result of this preliminary analysis was the removal of items from the construct. In table 7.2 below, those items that did not reach the required critical level were removed (these are marked with X). Correlation coefficients improved after the removal of those items (See appendix M for PCA SPSS outputs).

Table 7.2: Internal Consistencies for Key Constructs

Construct	*Items /Deleted items*	*Variance*	*KMO*	*Loading*
		71.22	**.77**	
Attitudes	ATT1 I think the use of the internet for information searching for travel products, would be good for me			.81
	ATT2 I think the use of the internet for information searching for travel products, would be beneficial for me			.89
	ATT3 I am pleased with using the internet for information searching for travel products			.86
	ATT4 Overall, using the internet for information searching for travel products would be a pleasant experience			.81
		66.76	**.80**	
Perceived Usefulness	PU1 I find using the internet for information searching for travel products to be useful			.81
	PU2 Using the internet improves my effectiveness in searching for travel products			.82
	PU3 Using the internet for information searching for travel products allows me to get my work done quicker			.81
	PU4 Using the internet to search for travel products can improve my ability to make good decisions			.82
		68.71	**.809**	
Perceived Ease of Use	PEOU1 Learning to use the internet for information searching for travel products would be easy for me			.81
	PEOU2 I find using the internet for information searching for travel products easy to use			.85
	PEOU3 Using the internet for information searching for travel products requires little effort from me			.78
	PEOU4 Using the internet for information searching for travel products is clear and understandable			.87
		69.73	**.81**	
Perceived Behavioural Control	PBC1 I think that I am able to use the internet for information searching for travel products			.84
	PBC2 I think that using the internet for information searching for travel products would be entirely within my control			.84
	PBC3 I think that I have the knowledge to use the internet for information searching for travel products			.82
	PBC4 I feel comfortable using the internet for information searching for travel products on my own			.84
		61.87	**.80**	
Subjective Norms	SN1 People who are important to me (e.g. family) would approve if I used the internet for information searching for travel products			.84
	SN2 People who influence my behaviour (e.g. friends) would think that I should use the internet for information searching for travel products			.86
	SN3 People I know would expect me to use the internet for information searching for travel products			.82
	SN4 The Saudi culture I came from would encourage me to use the internet for information searching for travel products			x
	SN5 Since coming to the UK, I feel encouraged to use the internet for information searching for travel products			.65

	SN6 When I return to Saudi Arabia, I will encourage people I know to use the internet for information search for travel products	.74
	75.53 .82	
Trust	TRU1 Online travel sites want to be known as sites that keep commitments	.85
	TRU2 Online travel sites are trustworthy	.90
	TRU3 I find the information on online travel sites is realistic	.88
	TRU4 Compared to other web sites, online travel sites are reliable	.85
	76.51 .81	
Security	SEC1 Online travel sites present enough online security for users	.87
	SEC2 I am confident that the private information that I provide to online travel sites will be secure	.89
	SEC3 I think online travel sites show concern for the security of transactions	.87
	SEC4 Overall, online travel sites are a safe place to send out sensitive information	.86
	70.39 .70	
Privacy	PRV1 The personal information that I provide on online travel sites is well protected	.84
	PRV2 I am concerned that online travel sites will use my personal information for other purposes without my authorization	x
	PRV3 I think online travel sites show concern for the privacy of their users	.84
	PRV4 I think online travel sites only collect personal data that are necessary for the activity	.83
	81.98 .86	
Risk	RIS1 I feel the risk associated with purchasing from online travel sites is high	.87
	RIS2 I think it is risky to consider the information from online travel sites as valid	.93
	RIS3 I believe that booking a holiday from online travel sites is risky because services delivered may fail to meet my expectations	.91
	RIS4 Booking a holiday from online travel sites would involve more financial risk (i.e. fraud, hard to refund) when compared with more traditional ways of booking	.91
	66.01 .86	
Perceived Convenience	PCN1 I can search for travel information at any time by using the internet	.77
	PCN2 I can search for travel information at any place by using the internet	.82
	PCN3 Using the internet for information searching for travel products gives me convenience in booking my holiday	.85
	PCN4 Paying over the internet when booking my holiday will make it easier for me financially	.82
	PCN5 I find the holiday packages (e.g. flight & hotel) arranged by online travel sites are convenient for me	.80
	71.60 .82	
Search Intention	SI1 I intend to search online for information about travel products in the future	.82
	SI2 If I want to book a holiday, I intend to use the internet to search for travel information	.85
	SI3 I expect my use of the internet for information search for travel products to continue in the future	.87
	SI4 I plan to increase my use of the internet for information search for travel products in the future	.84

	52.10 .89	
	IFSE1 The internet provides a rich amount of travel information that would help me to book my holiday	x
	IFSE2 Search for online information about travel products is an important step for anyone before booking	.73
	IFSE3 The quality of online travel information provided is the most important criteria in the process of information evaluation	.76
	IFSE4 I frequently browse for travel information online before booking my holiday	.74
	IFSE5 My search for travel information includes investigation of search results, that I then consider before purchasing on the internet	.79
Information Evaluation	IFSE6 I would evaluate the information in the search results before booking my holiday	.60
	IFSE7 When searching, I would usually use multiple search approaches (e.g. search engines, forums, websites)	x
	IFSE8 My online past travel searching experience would not encourage me to spend time evaluating travel information	x
	IFSE9 When evaluating the information I would consider an image search to gain more details (i.e. hotel, location, and destination)	.63
	IFSE10 When evaluating the information I would look for accurate and up-to-date travel information	.74
	IFSE11 When evaluating the information I would consider the travel information reviewed and recommended by others before purchasing on the internet	.77
	74.62 .83	
	PI1 I intend to purchase online travel products in the future	.86
Purchase Intention	PI2 Given that I have access to the internet, I predict that I would purchase online travel products	.85
	PI3 In the future, I intend to regularly purchase online travel products	.88
	PI4 I expect my purchasing of online travel products to increase in the future	.86

7.4 Reliability Analysis

The reliability level of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha statistics. Checking the reliability of scales helps to determine the homogeneity of the survey questions to measure the study subject; reliability of the study instrument helps the researcher to determine the repeatability of the surveys or questionnaires, and the reliability of the study instrument also helps in generalisation of the study results or findings (Miller & Acton, 2009). Cronbach's alpha is an important measure of the internal reliability of the research instrument. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 to 0.8 is an acceptable measure of the internal reliability of the research survey or questionnaire (Pallant, 2010).

Table 7.3: Reliabilities (Internal Consistencies) for Key Constructs

Constructs	Number of Items	M	SD	Range	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Reliability
Attitudes	4	5.29	1.09	1.5-7	.86	Good
Perceived Usefulness	4	5.31	1.05	2-7	.83	Good
Perceived Ease of Use	4	5.29	1.11	1.5-7	.85	Good
Perceived Behavioural Control	4	5.27	1.09	1.25-7	.85	Good
Subjective Norms	5	4.09	0.91	1.5-7	.84	Good
Trust	4	4.91	1.22	1.25-7	.89	Excellent
Security	4	4.96	1.28	1-7	.89	Excellent
Privacy	3	4.86	0.96	2-7	.79	Good
Risk	4	4.56	1.50	1-7	.93	Excellent
Perceived Convenience	5	5.43	1.04	1.5-7	.87	Good
Search Intention	4	5.48	1.05	1.25-7	.87	Good
Information Evaluation	8	5.10	0.83	2.27-6.73	.86	Good
Purchase Intention	4	5.51	1.03	1.5-7	.89	Good

Table 7.3 above presents the reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) for the key variables used in this study. Reduction in number of items occurred, and those items not meeting the 0.7 Cronbach Alpha level were removed, as shown and marked by X in Table 7.2, (notably SN4 for Subjective Norms; PRV2 for privacy, IFSE1, IFSE7 and IFSE8 for Information Search Evaluation). Overall, Table 7.3 shows that the Cronbach Alpha scores ranged from .79 to .90, indicating that all scales used in this study had good to excellent internal consistency.

7.5 Normality, Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations

Normality tests are conducted to describe if the data is normally distributed or not. Normality of the data can be determined in SPSS through either graphical or statistical methods. Graphical methods include probability and cumulative frequency plots, and statistical tests in the SPSS include skewness and kurtosis tests, among others (Pallant, 2010). The statistical test – the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the normality of the distribution of results, which is better suited a large group (Field, 2009). Statistics (*D*) and the significance of this test showed that the data distribution was not compatible with a normal distribution (see Appendix K). Non-parametric tests can be conducted if data are not normal, while parametric tests can be conducted on the normal data (Miller & Acton, 2009). The basic assumption of normality was not met for all

construct distributions in this study. Skewness values for all constructs were below, or very close to, ±1 (see Table 7.4), which the researcher considered as acceptable values in the range of normality. Some statistics indicated a slight right skewness, which is an advantage in terms of normality results higher than the expected average, but kurtosis statistics indicated a clear platykurtic, with high concentrations of results around the mean. Further visual examination of histograms and boxplot showed mild negative skewness and outliers on most variables (see all histograms in Appendix K).

Table 7.4: Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables, N=481

	Min	*Max*	*M*	*SD*	*Sk*	*Kurt*	*D*	*D(p)*
Attitude	1.50	7.00	5.29	1.09	-.78	.46	.11	*< .001*
Perceived Usefulness	2.00	7.00	5.31	1.05	-.60	.17	.10	*< .001*
Perceived Ease of Use	1.50	7.00	5.29	1.11	-.67	.18	.09	*< .001*
Perceived Behavioural Control	1.25	7.00	5.27	1.08	-.84	.72	.10	*< .001*
Subjective Norms	2.33	7.00	5.09	.91	-.58	-.03	.09	*< .001*
Trust	1.25	7.00	4.92	1.23	-.59	-.18	.10	*< .001*
Security	1.00	7.00	4.97	1.26	-.81	.30	.10	*< .001*
Privacy	2.00	7.00	4.86	.97	-.55	-.20	.12	*< .001*
Risk	1.00	7.00	4.57	1.50	-.54	-.67	.12	*< .001*
Perceived Convenience	1.60	7.00	5.43	1.04	*-1.02*	*1.11*	.11	*< .001*
Search Intention	1.25	7.00	5.48	1.05	*-1.04*	*1.26*	.14	*< .001*
Information Search Evaluation	2.27	8.73	5.10	.83	-.45	.85	.07	*< .001*
Purchase Intention	1.50	7.00	5.52	1.02	-.91	.78	.12	*< .001*

At the same time, it can be argued that participant scores are within the 1-7 Likert scale range, therefore these scores are not technically extreme scores (Field, 2009), and removing outliers and extremes, in the case of any variable, did not improve the statistics of normal distribution. Therefore, the decision was taken to leave them in the sample.

7.5.1 Intercorrelation in scales

In order to confirm the relationship between key research dimensions, correlation analysis was performed. Nonparametric Spearman's rank correlation test was used, whose properties allow for a good estimate of the correlation coefficients for the variables with a non-random distribution (Field, 2009). Coefficients shown in Table 7.5 showed high convergence between scales with exception of No. 9 the risk scale. Overall,

the level of convergence between scales seems to be consistent with the proposed conceptual thinking.

Table 7.5: Scales Correlation Coefficients, N=481

	Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Attitude													
2	Perceived Usefulness	.79**												
3	Perceived Ease of Use	.73**	.75**											
4	Perceived Behavioural Control	.75**	.73**	.69**										
5	Subjective Norms	.75**	.73**	.70**	.73**									
6	Trust	.70**	.66**	.63**	.66**	.70**								
7	Security	.71**	.70**	.70**	.66**	.73**	.79**							
8	Privacy	.54**	.51**	.52**	.46**	.51**	.53**	.60**						
9	Risk	.05	.05	.07	.03	.05	.12*	.16**	.39**					
10	Perceived Convenience	.72**	.73**	.66**	.72**	.73**	.69**	.70**	.51**	.02				
11	Search Intention	.72**	.69**	.67**	.70**	.70**	.66**	.69**	.43**	-.04	.75**			
12	Information Search Evaluation	.70**	.69**	.64**	.69**	.68**	.67**	.68**	.41**	-.10*	.75**	.77**		
13	Purchase Intention	.71**	.68**	.66**	.65**	.68**	.66**	.65**	.42**	-.02	.72**	.77**	.77**	

* $p < .05$;** $p < .01$

7.6 Association between Respondent Characteristics and Research Dimensions

7.6.1 Respondent Categorical Variables and Research Dimensions

Relevant analysis was performed in order to discover the relationship between categorical respondent variables (gender, region) and key research dimensions (attitude, PU, PEOU, perceived behavioral control (PBC), subjective norms, trust, security, privacy, risk, perceived convenience, search intention, information search evaluation, purchase intention).

7.6.1.1 Gender Differences

In order to explore whether there was any statistically significant difference between the mean scores that could be attributable to gender, the non-parametric U Mann-Whitney test was used. This was because of the unequal subgroups that were inconsistent with normal distribution results (Fields, 2009). Analysis of differences showed a distinct pattern only in one case – that of PBC (perceived behavioral control) between the groups. Males (*N* = 303; *M* = 5,34; *SD* = 1,12; *Mdn* = 5,50) males received a slightly higher PBC than females (*N* = 174; *M* = 5,16; *SD* = 1,02; *Mdn* = 5,25). Gender was not a differentiator of results across other research dimensions (see Table 7.6 below). This result was perhaps surprising, given the qualitative patterns noted in phase two, where respondents identified potential gender variation in search behaviour.

Table 7.6: An Independent-Samples U-Test (Gender * All the Research Model Constructs)

	Male (N = 303)			Female (N = 174)			Difference	
Scale	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	*U*	*p*
Attitude	5.29	1.13	5.50	5.29	1.04	5.50	26033.00	.820
Perceived Usefulness	5.34	1.09	5.50	5.23	.98	5.25	24238.00	.142
Perceived Ease of Use	5.32	1.12	5.50	5.24	1.12	5.25	25237.50	.437
Perceived Behavioural Control	5.34	1.12	5.50	5.16	1.02	5.25	23170.00	**.027***
Subjective Norms	5.18	1.12	5.40	5.16	1.05	5.20	25792.50	.694
Trust	4.96	1.21	5.25	4.84	1.27	5.00	25266.50	.449
Security	5.00	1.25	5.25	4.90	1.30	5.00	25388.00	.501
Privacy	4.86	.99	5.00	4.82	1.05	5.00	25921.00	.760
Risk	4.56	1.47	4.75	4.60	1.56	5.25	25451.00	.529
Perceived Convenience	5.43	1.05	5.60	5.42	1.03	5.60	26210.50	.917
Search Intention	5.51	1.07	5.75	5.44	1.01	5.75	25135.00	.396
Information Search Evaluation	5.19	.96	5.22	5.13	.88	5.22	25490.00	.547
Purchase Intention	5.57	1.05	5.75	5.45	.98	5.50	24322.50	.158

$p < .05$;** $p < .01$

7.6.1.2 Regional Variations

A Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test (nonparametric ANOVA test equivalent) was used in order to explore whether the region from which respondents cam differentiates the survey results for independent groups. (due to the unequal subgroups, which were inconsistent with normal distribution results, Fields, 2009). None of the comparisons were even on the borderline of statistical significance; therefore, we can say with sufficient certainty that regions did not have an impact on the research dimensions.

Table 7.7: An Independent-Samples H-Test (Region * All the Research Model Constructs)

	Region																
	Eastern			North			Western			South			Central				
Scale	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	*H*	*p*
Attitude	5.32	1.17	5.50	5.17	1.15	5.25	5.33	1.05	5.50	5.32	.90	5.25	5.27	1.20	5.38	1.05	.903
Perceived Usefulness	5.30	1.04	5.50	5.29	1.07	5.50	5.34	1.03	5.50	5.32	.93	5.25	5.27	1.17	5.38	.28	.991
Perceived Ease of Use	5.30	1.12	5.50	5.21	1.27	5.25	5.29	1.04	5.25	5.34	.99	5.50	5.27	1.18	5.50	.11	.999
Perceived Behavioural Control	5.25	1.09	5.50	5.19	1.19	5.50	5.37	.98	5.50	5.30	.91	5.50	5.19	1.23	5.25	.93	.920
Subjective Norms	5.17	1.11	5.40	5.11	1.20	5.40	5.19	1.01	5.30	5.14	.91	5.20	5.24	1.22	5.40	1.50	.827
Trust	5.00	1.17	5.25	4.97	1.41	5.50	4.90	1.20	5.00	4.95	1.11	5.25	4.76	1.25	4.75	3.17	.530
Security	5.05	1.14	5.25	4.91	1.41	5.25	4.98	1.24	5.00	5.01	1.15	5.25	4.83	1.40	5.00	.73	.948
Privacy	4.91	.92	5.00	4.73	1.12	5.00	4.89	.91	5.00	4.93	1.02	5.00	4.76	1.13	5.00	1.07	.899
Risk	4.69	1.49	4.75	4.46	1.57	5.00	4.61	1.40	4.88	4.60	1.50	4.75	4.43	1.56	4.50	1.29	.863
Perceived Convenience	5.30	1.06	5.40	5.45	1.15	5.60	5.51	.98	5.60	5.50	.83	5.60	5.37	1.13	5.60	3.05	.550
Search Intention	5.35	1.03	5.50	5.50	1.15	5.75	5.62	.97	6.00	5.50	.91	5.50	5.42	1.15	5.75	4.96	.292
Information Search Evaluation	5.11	.92	5.22	5.14	.96	5.22	5.28	.87	5.33	5.13	.81	5.00	5.11	1.04	5.22	2.61	.625
Purchase Intention	5.45	1.05	5.50	5.62	1.01	5.75	5.67	.92	5.75	5.48	.97	5.50	5.36	1.15	5.50	5.18	.269

7.6.2 Respondent Ordinal Variables and Research Dimensions

Correlation analysis was performed in order to verify the relationship between ordinal respondent variables (age, income, education level, time in the UK, internet experience, online travel service experience and number of online travel products previously bought) and the key research dimensions. The nonparametric Tau-b Kendall test of correlation was used, as it works well for ordinal data and scales of small ranges (Fields, 2009). As the table below indicates, there appears to be limited significant associations between the

respondent variables and research dimensions, and none of the correlations appear to be strong. It is therefore difficult to draw conclusive arguments from the findings. Some patterns are however, worth noting. The coefficients in Table 7.8 below indicate that age was significantly related to all research dimensions, the relationship appeared to be negative but not strong. As the age of respondents increased, the association with attitude, trust and even purchase intention appears to be more negative. This would suggest that older consumers appear to hold less positive attitudes towards online travel search and express a lower search and purchase intention. The impact of age on the key variables of search intention and purchase intention echoes some past studies (Tong, 2010; Jensen, 2012). However, it needs to be acknowledged that only 2.9 percent of the sample was in the age group 45+ and only 21.8 percent of the sample was in the age group 35 to 44. Findings might be different with a more balanced range of ages in the sample.

Of all the potential respondent variables that could impact on attitude towards online travel search, there appears to be an association between greater internet experience, higher degree of online travel experience and a more positive attitude to online travel search (b = .074; p = .045). On the other hand, figures seem to indicate that those with more internet experience, respondents also have higher perception of risk (b = .093; p = .011) and have greater concerns about privacy (b = .089; p = .018). The number of previous online travel products bought seems to have the strongest association with a more positive attitude to online travel search; which is in line with the phase two findings that the expertise of the user was an important factor in attitude to online travel booking and actual search behaviour. In this case, respondent experience of having bought online travel products previously appears relevant not only to the attitude to online search, but it is significantly correlated with other key research dimensions in Table 7.8 below. However, none of the correlations exceeded .21, thus suggesting a weak level of relationship.

A surprising finding is the pattern that, as education levels rise for respondents, their perception of perceived usefulness (b = -.073; p = .043) and trust in online travel services decreases (b = -.086; p = .016). Equally surprising perhaps is the correlation that emerges

between higher level of income and higher risk perception (b = .084; p = .019). The weak relationship strength in each of the cases might suggest that more data could perhaps identify a stronger association.

Finally, patterns show a significant association between amount of time spent in the UK and indicators for trust, security, privacy and risk in addition to PU and POUE, PBC and subjective norms. Those who have spent more time in the UK, appear to be more risk conscious. This may be explained by the greater exposure to the online travel systems available for those more experienced respondents- this is hardly a surprising result, but the correlation coefficients are, again, quite low.

Table 7.8: Kendall's Tau-b Correlation Coefficients for Ordinal Variables and Research Variables

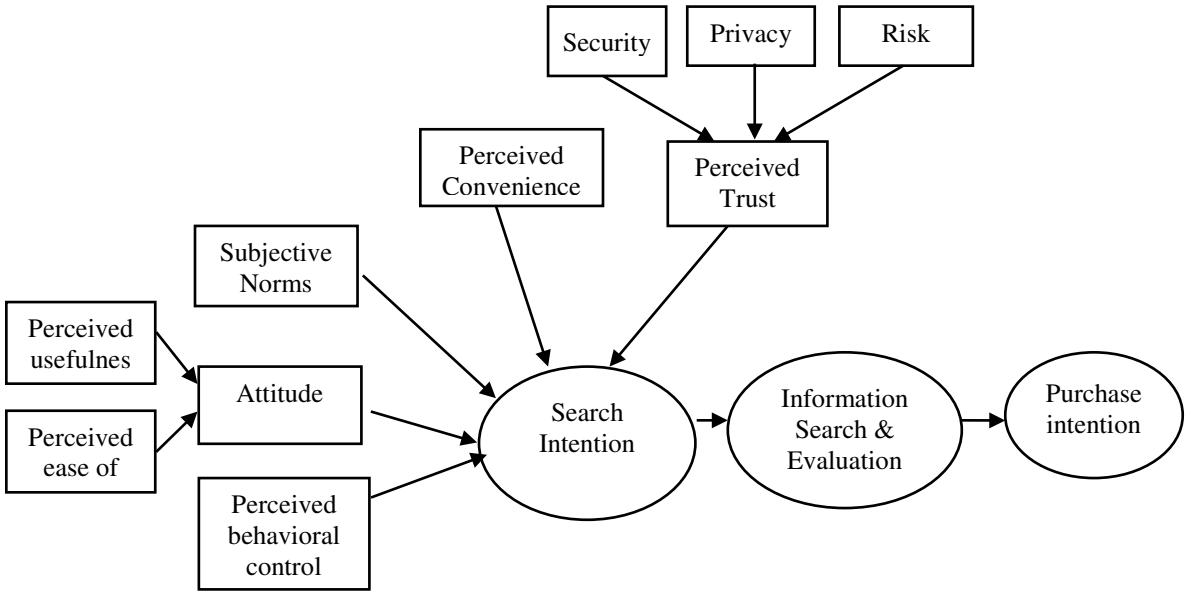
	Age	Income	Education level	Time in UK	Internet experience	Online travel products experience	No. of bought travel product online
Attitude	-.19**	-.06	-.06	.14**	.07*	.15**	.21**
Perceived Usefulness	-.15**	-.03	-.07*	.09*	.05	.15**	.17**
Perceived Ease of Use	-.12**	.01	-.02	.13**	.07	.16**	.15**
Perceived Behavioural Control	-.15**	.01	.00	.15**	.06	.15**	.19**
Subjective Norms	-.16**	-.04	-.06	.13**	.04	.09**	.13**
Trust	-.18**	-.02	-.09*	.07	-.04	.09*	.13**
Security	-.14**	.03	-.03	.10**	.01	.10**	.13**
Privacy	-.18**	-.01	-.06	.11**	.09*	.19**	.15**
Risk	-.11**	.08*	-.04	.18**	.09*	.13**	.12**
Perceived Convenience	-.17**	-.02	-.04	.04	-.03	.10**	.13**
Search Intention	-.16**	-.05	-.04	.01	-.02	.10**	.10**
Information Search Evaluation	-.09*	-.01	.00	.05	-.02	.08*	.14**
Purchase Intention	-.15**	-.05	-.07	.05	.00	.08*	.12**

* $p < .05$;** $p < .01$

7.7 Proposed Research Model

The diagram below shows the proposed research model based on the theory that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude, risk, privacy, security, trust, perceived convenience, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, information search and evaluation, purchase intention and search intention are all dependent on each other, so there is logic in the theoretical model. This model results from the mutual dependence between variables and reflects the close relationship between variables in the theoretical findings described in work.

Figure 7.1: Proposed research model.



Possible moderating variables:
Demographics: Age, gender, income, education, number of years living the UK.
Past experience: Internet experience, online travel experience, and frequencies of purchasing online travel products.

7.8 Regression Model Analysis

7.8.1 Introduction and Choice of Method

It has been proposed in Section 7.3, rather than confirmatory factor analysis (as in SEM), a series of exploratory analyses is being undertaken to verify the consistency of the theoretical model. The aim of this section is to discuss the regression model used and the findings that emerged. Regression is a worthwhile technique to utilise on a small sample and regression analysis explains how the value of the dependent variable can be altered due to deviations in any one of the independent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Similar to most statistical techniques, regression analysis requires consideration of the size, data cleaning and screening (Pallant, 2010). For the purposes of this study, single regression was utilised at this stage, because it measures direct relationships (Stevens, 1996) and it enables dependent variables to be regressed separately, alongside the independent variables (Pallant, 2010). Single regression analysis was conducted here to investigate the relationships between consumer attitude (including perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness), consumer trust (including privacy, risk and security), perceived behavioral control, subjective norms and search intention, information search and evaluation and purchase intention for online travel products. Chapter 5, Section 5.5.4.1 has described the variables and their respective items in detail, and the preliminary relationship between them is set out in the table of hypotheses below.

Table 7.9: Key Research Hypotheses

Research hypotheses
H1: The perceived ease of use of the internet when searching for information on travel products will have a significant impact on customer attitude.
H2: The perceived usefulness of the internet when searching for information on travel products will have a significant impact on customer attitude.
H3: Attitude towards using the internet for searching for information on travel products will have a significant impact on customer search intention.

H4: Subjective norms relating to use of the internet for information search for travel products will have a significant impact on customer search intention.

H5: Perceived behavioural control when using the internet for information search for travel products will have a significant impact on customer search intention.

H6: Perceived convenience will have a significant impact on customer search intention when using the internet to search for information on travel products.

H7: Perceived trust will have a significant impact on customer search intention when using the internet to search for information on travel products.

H8: Perceived risk is significantly related to perceived trust when using the internet to search for information on travel products.

H9: Perceived security is significantly related to perceived trust when using the internet to search for information on travel products.

H10: Consumer privacy is significantly related to perceived trust when using the internet to search for information on travel products.

H11: Search intention will have a significant impact on information search and evaluation when using the internet to search for information on travel products.

H12: Information search and evaluation has a significant impact on online purchase intention.

During the initial stage of regression analysis, two key issues to consider are the sample size with regard to population and the correlation among the variables. In term of sample size, the researcher must determine whether the data is suitable for the regression analysis technique. A number of conflicting published guidelines exist concerning the number of cases required for regression. For instance, Stevens (1996) recommends that "*for social science research, about fifteen participants per predictor are needed for a reliable equation*" (p. 72), whereas Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) provide a formula for calculating sample size requirements that recommends 40 cases for every independent variable to be used. There are thirteen independent variables in this study. According to

Stevens (1996), the formula for calculating sample size requirements would be 13 * 15 = 195. In contrast, according to Tabachnick and Fidell's (2007) guidance, the formula for calculating sample size requirements is 13 * 40 = 520. A sample size of 481 is used in this case, which is above the lower estimate of 195 and is within 8% of the upper estimate of 520, as recommended respectively by Stevens (1996) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). A study sample of this size is suitable for regression analysis. While the sample size allows a series of regression analyses to be performed, it would not be possible to use structural equation modelling, as identified and discussed in Section 7.4 above.

7.8.2 Confirmation of Hypotheses

The hypotheses H1 to H12 were tested using single regression analyses consistent with the theoretical model. All the analysed models have proved to be a good fit to the data, as shown by statistically significant test results ($p < 0,05$). Equation constants were found to be statistically significant ($p < 0,05$), indicating good predictive properties of the models used. The percentage of variance explained was described using the coefficient of r-squared, and in the case of models with more than one predictor, an adjusted coefficient was used.

H1: The perceived usefulness of the internet when searching for information on travel products will have a positive impact on a customer attitude.

The coefficients of regression analysis show that there is a significant positive relationship between PU and consumer attitude ($b = .81$; $p < .001$), which fully supports the first hypothesis. H1 can be confirmed. The model used explains the 74.8% variance of explained variable. (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.1)

H2: The perceived ease of use of the internet when searching for information on travel products will have a significant impact on a customer attitude.

The coefficients of regression analysis show that there is a significant positive relationship between PEOU and customer attitude ($b = .77$; $p < .001$), at 59.5% variance explained. H2 can be confirmed. (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.2)

H3: Attitude towards using the internet for searching for information on travel products will have a significant impact on customer search intention.

The coefficients of regression analysis show that there is a significant positive relationship between attitude and search intention (b = .77; p < .001), at 59.3% variance explained. This hypothesis (3) can be confirmed. (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.3)

H4: Subjective norms of using the internet for information searching of travel products will have a positive impact on customer search intention.

The coefficients of regression analysis show that there is a significant positive relationship between subjective norms and search intention (b = .68; p < .001; r2 = .46). H4 can be confirmed. (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.4)

H5: Perceived behavioural control of using the internet for information searching of travel products will have a positive impact on customer search intention.

The coefficients of regression analysis show that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived behavioural control and search intention (b = .76; p < .001; r^2 =.58). H5 can be confirmed. (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.5)

H6: Perceived convenience will have a positive impact on customer search intention in using the internet to search for information on travel products.

The coefficients of regression analysis show that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived convenience and search intention (b = .81; p < .001; r^2 = .66). H6 can be confirmed. (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.6)

H7: Perceived trust will have a positive impact on customer search intention in using the internet to search for information on travel products.

The coefficients of regression analysis show that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived trust and search intention (b = .69; p < .001; r^2 = .48). H7 can be confirmed. (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.7)

H8: Perceived risk is significantly related to perceived trust when using the internet to search for information on travel products.

The coefficients of regression analysis show that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived trust and perceived risk (b = .21; p < .001), with 44% of variance explained in the model. H8 can be confirmed. (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.8)

H9: Perceived security is significantly related to perceived trust when using the internet to search for information on travel products.

The coefficients of regression analysis show that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived trust and perceived security (b = .81; p < .001), with a total 65% of variance explained in the model. H9 can be confirmed. (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.9)

H10: Consumer privacy is significantly related to perceived trust when using the internet to search for information on travel products.

The coefficients of regression analysis show that there is a significant positive relationship between consumer privacy and perceived trust (b = .59; p < .001; r^2 = .34), and it also confirms the hypothesis. (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.10)

H11: Search intention will have a significant impact on information search and evaluation when using the internet to search for information on travel products.

The coefficients of regression analysis show that there is a significant positive relationship between information search and evaluation and search intention (b = .78; p < .001) with 60.3% of variance explained in the model. H11 can be confirmed. (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.11)

H12: Information search and evaluation will have a positive impact on online purchase intention.

The coefficients of regression analysis show that there is a significant positive relationship between information search and evaluation and purchase intention ($b = .77$; $p < .001$; $r^2 = .60$), H12 can be confirmed. (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.12)

All hypotheses were therefore confirmed.

7.8.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Although at this stage the considered model can be partly confirmed, the issue of the joint impact of a number of individual variables on one key variable, search intention has not been identified. A multiple regression analysis was performed to investigate the variables (attitude, convenience, subjective norms, trust and perceived behavioural control) that display the strongest contribution towards explaining consumer search intention, when regarded as a dependent variable in this study. The purpose of applying the multiple regression technique is to explore variables that display the most robust unique contribution (Pallant, 2010).

Table 7.10 gives an overview of the regression results. Regression analysis was used to predict the relationship amongst the proposed variables in the conceptual framework. The proposed model was a good fit to the data [$F(5, 525) = 243.85$; $p < .001$] with a constant statistically significant equation ($p < .001$). All variables significantly influenced the dependent variable in the model. If any predicting variable increased then the value of the dependent variable also increased. Dependence can be observed in the statement below (All output tables can be found in Appendix L.13).

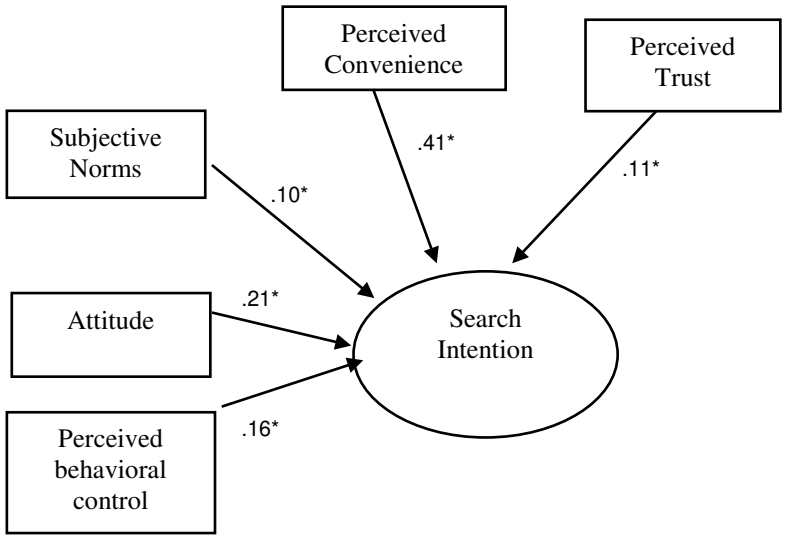
Table 7.10: Predictors for Search Intention

Predictor	*B (SE)*	*beta*
Constant	.65 (.15)	---**
Attitude	.20 (.05)	.21**
Perceived Behavioral Control	.15 (.05)	.16**
Subjective Norms	.07 (.05)	.10*
Trust	.09 (.03)	.11**
Perceived Convenience	.42 (.05)	.41**
F	*243.85***	
R^2	*.721*	

* $p < .05$;** $p < .01$

The coefficients table reveals that significant relationships exist between the independent variables (attitude, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, trust, perceived convenience) and the dependent variable (search intention), with a P value of < .05. The beta values in Table 7.10 can be used to compare the contribution of each independent variable and highlight the variables that make the strongest contribution towards explaining search intention as a dependent variable. These results demonstrate that the model does fit the data appropriately, revealing that the constructs of perceived convenience and attitude contribute most strongly towards explaining search intention.

Figure 7.2 Predictors of Search Intention



One key result to emerge from the data is the strong contribution of the independent variable, perceived convenience, with a beta value of .41. In terms of explaining search intention as a dependent variable. This is particularly interesting, as earlier research has not paid much attention to convenience when considering the contribution of independent variables to online search intention (Izquierdo-Yusta & Schultz, 2011; Shim et al., 2001;) even though this is evidently a crucial consideration for online information users in this case. Furthermore, although some research has shown how convenience in general influences online shopping and purchase (Conyette, 2012), very few studies have investigated this concept in detail, either in emerging market contexts or in the context of online travel. The results also reveal that the independent variable attitude displayed the second strongest contribution in terms of explaining search intention with a beta value of .21. These results are consistent with Amaro and Duarte's (2014), work, in which a positive attitude towards online travel services seemed to lead to an increased intention to seek information. A full discussion of these findings is offered in chapter 8.

7.8.4 Results from Moderating Variables

A moderator variable is a variable that influences or affects the relationship between two other variables. It is often referred to as an effect moderator, because it affects the association between variables (Pallant, 2010). A moderator variable can be either categorical or continuous by nature, whilst the effect on the relationship between variables can be either positive or negative. A moderator variable facilitates an understanding of the direction of the relationship (Hair et al., 2010). The effect of moderators used in this study is illustrated in Table 7.11 below:

Table 7.11: Potential Moderators used in this study

Age will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.
Gender will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.
The level of education will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.
The level of income will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model

constructs.

The length of stay in the UK will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.

The level of online travel purchase experience will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.

The level of internet usage experience will moderate the relationships amongst the proposed model constructs.

Purchase frequency of online travel products will moderate the relationships among the proposed model constructs

The proposed moderating variables for this study are aspects of the demographics, such as age, gender, and education, which are often defined as population or customer statistics (Ratchford, 2009). The socioeconomic aspects that form the focus of this study, including income, are expected to have effects as moderators amongst the proposed variables in the conceptual framework (Hassan & Abu Samah, 2011). The effect of moderation amongst the proposed variables in the conceptual framework was predicted using regression analysis. The use of PLUM-ordinal regression analysis to test the moderating effect of a variable on the relationship between variables A and B is effective when there are fewer than five categories of the independent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The assumption of the PLUM-ordinal regression analysis, when used to test the moderating effect of a variable, is that the effect of the moderating variable is the same (proportional or consistent) across the different thresholds (Pallant, 2010). Few of the proposed moderating variables appear to have significant impact. In examining the results of the Plum-ordinal regression analysis, only four significant (p-value <0.05) results emerged which are presented in the following sections (for all moderating effects result outputs, please see appendix N).

7.8.4.1 Age as a Moderating Variable

Age as a moderating factor appears to have a negative effect (-0.783) on the relationship between PU and influence on attitude at the p-value <0.05. It suggests that as one grows

elderly there is a potential decrease in the PU on the influence on attitude, as shown by Table 7.11 above. Age is also a moderating factor that appears to have a negative (-0.343) effect on the relationship between subjective norm and search intention at the p-value <0.05 (See Table 7.12). It appears that subjective norms have a more positive influence on search intention among younger participants. However, as indicated in Section 7.8.2 less than 25% of the sample were 35+, thus a conclusive outcome cannot be claimed.

Table 7.12: Results of Moderation (Age)

Moderator	Variables	Estimate	p-value
Age	PU→ ATT	-0.783***	<0.05
	SN→ SI	-0.343**	<0.05

7.8.4.2 Education as a Moderating Variable

Education as a moderating factor appears to have a positive effect (0.26) on the relationship between PU and attitude at the p-value <0.05. It suggests that when the education level increases, there might be an increase in potential PU influence on attitude as shown by Table 7.13. Moreover, education is also a moderating factor that shows a negative (-0.282) impact on the relationship between security and trust at the p-value <0.05 (See Table 7.13). This would suggest that perceived security may negatively affect perceived trust among less educated participants, as compared to those with a higher level of education. Education was found to be influential as a moderating factor in some past studies but not others (Ratchford, 2009). Overall, this is a complex issue when considering emerging economies where education levels vary - the potential moderation effect in this research is not very high, therefore more research would be needed to verify these indicators.

Table 7.13: Results of Moderation (Education)

Moderator	Variables	Estimate	p-value
Education	PU→ ATT	0.26*	<0.05
	SEC→ TUR	-0.282**	<0.05

7.8.4.3 Internet Experience as a Moderating Variable

Internet experience is a moderating factor that shows a negative (-0.405) imapct on the relationship between attitude and search intention at the p-value <0.05 (See Table 7.14). It suggests that attitude can negatively affect search intention more among those with fewer years of internet experience, as compared to those with more internet experience. Internet experience is also a moderating factor that appears to have a negative (-0.278) impact on the association between subjective norm and search intention at the p-value <0.05 (See Table 7.14). Subjective norm may negatively affect search intention more among those who have fewer years of internet experience, as compared to those with more internet experience. These potential moderating patterns are perhaps logical in the light of past studies (Ling, Chai and Piew, 2010), where level of internet experience is regarded as influential, but what does need further consideration is the link to subjective norms. If subjective norms reflect what a Saudi consumer thinks key people in his/her life expect of him/her in terms of online information search, variance in the degree of influence this may have on search intention appears to vary depending on internet experience. This might suggest that the individual has developed a stronger individual search intention as they become more used to the internet (to some degree less influenced by subjective norms). This is potentially a reflection of a gradual change in cultural norms. However, the effect is not strong, therefore further data would be needed to verify this.

Table 7.14: Results of Moderation (Level of internet usage experience)

Moderator	Variables	Estimate	p-value
The level of internet usage experience	ATT→ SI	-0.405***	<0.05
	SN→ SI	-0.278**	<0.05

7.8.4.4 Effect of Online Travel Experience as a Moderating Variable

Level of past online travel experience is a moderating factor that appears to have a positive (0.36) moderator effect on the relationship between attitude and search intention at the p-value <0.05 (See Table 7.15). This suggests that attitude positively affects search

intention more among those who have more years of online travel experience, as compared to those with no travel experience. The finding regarding level of online travel experience as being influential is in line with some past research (Jensen, 2012). However, travel experience is also a moderating factor that appears to have a positive (0.358) moderator impact on the association between subjective norm and search intention at the p-value <0.001(See Table 7.15). This indicates that subjective norm appears positively affects search intention more among those who have more years of online travel experience, as compared to those with no travel experience. This finding seems at variance with the finding above regarding the level of internet experience as moderator of the relationship between subjective norms and search intention.

Table 7.15: The results of Moderation (Online Travel Experience)

Moderator	Variables	Estimate	p-value
Online Travel Experience	ATT→ SI	0.36***	<0.05
	SN→ SI	0.358***	<0.05

Overall, we can perhaps conclude that, given that only four separate moderator effects were uncovered from such a wide range of potential moderator effects, no distinctive pattern has emerged in the analysis of moderating variables. Apart from the potential moderating affects of age on the relationship between PU and attitude (which was 0.873), there was no other moderating effect higher than 0.5. The effect of age on PU will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

7.9 Summary

This chapter has reported on the findings of phase three of the study - the questionnaire that was completed by 400+ respondents. This analysis investigated each of the hypothesised relationships of the conceptual model that were proposed on page 67. Initially, the response rate obtained for the survey, the characteristics of the sample and the approach to data screening was set out. Thereafter, the justification for rejecting the adoption of SEM analysis, primarily on the basis of the non-normal distribution of the

data is outlined and the reasons for choosing PCA are outlined. The reliability analyses (Cronbach's alpha) of the scales, the normality testing procedures used in the study were discussed.

Analysis was presented on the potential association between key respondent variables (education, age, gender, region, income, no. of years in UK, degree of internet experience, level of prior online travel experience, past purchase frequency of online travel products) and the research dimensions in the conceptual model. Few of these respondent characteristics appeared to have a significant impact on the key research dimensions (See table 7.2); and where some significant associations were uncovered (i.e. age/number of years spent in the UK/past purchase frequency of online travel products), the relative strength of such associations appeared to be weak. Therefore, it was difficult to conclude that any specific respondent variable had an impact on the research dimensions. In particular, no clear association with search intention was identifiable. While this appeared surprising, it is acknowledged by the researcher that the sample, in the end, was more homogenous (see Table 7.1) than expected, with less variance in age, in education, in internet experience and in years living in the UK than initially anticipated at the outset.

Finally both the single regression and the multiple regression analyses are reported: the single regression analysis indicated that all research hypotheses (H1 to H12) in the proposed research model were confirmed. As indicated, the strong, significant contribution of the independent variable, perceived convenience, (beta .41) and the less strong but significant contribution of attitude (beta .21) were the main conclusive results to emerge from the multiple regression analysis. Overall, results indicate positive attitudes towards the adoption of online search for travel products among Saudi Arabian respondents. In addition, results confirm that positive and significant relationships between the variables search intention, information search and evaluation and purchase intention exist.

The next chapter discusses the key research issues to emerge from each phase of data collection, identifying how the research objectives were met. The discussion addresses a) the insights into the Saudi travel sector and technology adoption; b) the insights to emerge on the nature of online search behaviour among Saudi consumers, with consideration of gender variations and c) consideration of specific patterns to emerge from the statistical test results as they related to the initial conceptual framework. This includes the assessment of relationships between online search intention, information search, and evaluation and purchase intention, the role of perceived convenience in section, the role of perceived trust and its antecedents, the role of attitudes, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms, and the strength of independent factors contributing to search intention. Thereafter, the key contributions of this research study is outlined, as are some managerial implications.

Chapter Eight: Discussion and Conclusions

8.0 Introduction
8.1 Discussion of Findings
- **8.1.1** Current technology adoption patterns in the Saudi travel context
  - **8.1.1.1** Research Objectives of Phase One
  - **8.1.1.2** Attitudinal and Cultural factors with impact on technology adoption
- **8.1.2** Issues to Emerge in Relation to Search Behaviour
  - **8.1.2.1** Research Objectives for Phase Two
  - **8.1.2.2** Importance of user skills in search patterns of Saudi consumers
  - **8.1.2.3** Gender variations in Search Approach and Opportunities
  - **8.1.2.4** Contradictory perspectives towards the use of online Technology between Saudi travel firms and consumers.
  - **8.1.2.5** Information search and evaluation as an interconnected process
- **8.1.3** Examination of Relationships in the Conceptual Framework
  - **8.1.3.1** Research Objectives for Phase Three
  - **8.1.3.2** Relationship Between Online Search Intention, Information Search and Evaluation and Purchase Intention
  - **8.1.3.3** The Role of Perceived Convenience
  - **8.1.3.4** Perceived Trust
  - **8.1.3.5** The Role of Attitudes, Perceived Behavioural Control and Subjective Norms.
  - **8.1.3.6** The Role and Strength of Independent Factors Contributing to Search Intention
  - **8.1.3.7** The Role of Moderating Variables

8.2 Key Contribution of this Study
- **8.2.1** Theoretical Contribution
- **8.2.2** Contribution to Practice

8.3 Managerial Implications For Travel Agents in Saudi Arabia
8.4 Limitations of the Research
8.5 Directions for Future Research

8.0 Introduction

This chapter will initially present a discussion of key findings for each phase in Section 8.1. Section 8.1.1 will discuss the key issues to arise in relation to current technology adoption patterns in the Saudi travel market (based on phase one findings) and briefly identify how the research objectives were met. Section 8.1.2 will note key patterns that relate to search intention, with a focus on individual variations in search processes and evaluation that emerged from phase two findings and briefly outline how the research objectives for phase two were met. Section 8.1.3 will examine the findings that emerged in terms of the conceptual model (based on phase three findings), in particular, what the findings indicate about the relationship between online search intention, information search and evaluation and purchase intention; the significance of perceived convenience and how the antecedents of perceived trust are confirmed in this study. After a brief consideration of the role of moderating variables, an indication of how the research objectives relating to phase three were met is offered.

Section 8.2 identifies the key theoretical contributions and the contribution to practice within this study. Section 8.3 identifies some managerial implications for travel agents in Saudi Arabia. Finally, some key limitations of the study are noted in Section 8.4 and potential areas for further research identified in Section 8.5.

8.1 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses relevant issues to emerge in the research findings. Section 8.1.1 will discuss current technology adoption patterns in the context of the Saudi travel industry (Phase one), including attitudes towards the use of internet technology by Saudi travel firms and the role of cultural norms. Section 8.1.2 will note issues to emerge in search behaviour and intention (Phase two), including key insights on search patterns of Saudi consumers; gender variations in search approach, contradictory perspectives towards the use of online travel services between Saudi travel firms and consumers and the confirmation of information search and evaluation as a single interconnected process;. This is followed by the examination of key relationships in the conceptual framework (Phase Three) in Section 8.1.3.

8.1.1 Current technology adoption patterns in the Saudi travel context

8.1.1.1 Research Objectives of Phase One

Where this PhD study has added to previous research is in considering the nature of technology adoption in Saudi Arabian tourism from the travel firm perspective, a perspective that has not been adopted in prior research. The first phase of this study had two objectives: the first objective was to investigate the current pattern in internet technology adoption in the Saudi travel sector. In 2011, little data about this existed in the context of the KSA; hence the study sought to gain some in-depth insight into this aspect and the seventeen semi-structured interviews with travel agents and with tourism sector representatives in Saudi Arabia were designed to address this. Key areas were explored (see interview questions 6 to 10, as presented in Table 5.3) in order to capture insights into how technology adoption elements were adopted and the consequences to emerge from this. These included themes such as PU, PEOU and attitudes towards using online services, behavioural intention to use, and factors that might obstruct the adoption of technology. The second objective of phase one was to discover contextual factors that could impact on the adoption of online booking from the consumer perspective. The analysis of interviews conducted and presented in Chapter six with Saudi travel firms, identified some attitudinal and cultural factors affecting decisions to adopt online travel systems in their firms.

8.1.1.2 Attitudinal and cultural factors with impact on technology adoption

It has been noted that only a decade ago, a targeted campaign by the government began encouraging Saudi citizens to use online services to a greater degree (AlGhamdi, 2011). However, this has not as yet persuaded many Saudi travel firms, who remain reluctant to invest in online travel services; some firms primarily engage in offline services rather than embracing innovation (as outlined in findings in Section 6.1.1.1). This contrasts with the view of Gayle & Goodrich (2014), who suggest that the Internet is necessary for the promotion of international tourism. Ultimately, increased competition from international travel firms offering greater services may over time absorb their customers and this has not been acknowledged in the interviews with Saudi travel firms. Just one travel agent in

the sample provides a facility for online booking; and although the website has a range of packages and facilities enabling online payment are not available. This lack of online booking facilities echoes the findings of El-Gohary and Eid (2014), who assessed current online booking systems for Saudi travel firms to be insufficient for customers.

This study has found that the travel firms exerted influence on the travel sector as a whole and that decisions made by Saudi travel firms are strongly determined by their own attitudes, as shown in Section 6.1.1.2. The attitude of Saudi travel firms in the study reflected a real resistance to change in the adoption of technology and they projected these negative attitudes towards internet technology on to the general population, suggesting that there was low customer intention to use online services. Respondent firms seemed unaware of how advances in technology could be implemented in their business, noting a lack of skills; those firms that had partly adopted online service technologies did not achieve the anticipated benefits. This suggests that close attention is needed at travel agency level in order to encourage effective implementation of internet systems.

The results from this study confirm how attitude influences the adoption of technology, in line with other studies on tourism in emerging countries (Spencer, Buhalis & Moital, 2012). What distinguishes this research from other studies in this area is the focus on a specific industry in contrast to past studies which usually did not define their focus on a specific industry (Al-Hudhaif & Alkubeyyer 2011, Al-Somali et al. 2010). This helped to gain greater insight into Saudi travel firm attitudes and how they affect current development of online travel services.

Some cultural norms also emerged as potentially influential in the adoption of online technology. As outlined in Section 6.1.1.3, the existence of these cultural/social perceptions in the Saudi culture itself, particularly regarding the Internet, may delay the adoption of online travel technology generally. A view was expressed in a number of travel agent interviews that Saudi Arabian customers would not be comfortable when using a service system that lacked human interaction from start to finish. The findings have shown that very few Saudi travel firms use online methods of payment such as credit cards that elsewhere in international tourism are fundamental. One reason for the relatively low use of credit cards is that these cards charge interest which is forbidden in

the Islamic religion, which may delay the adoption of online travel services by Saudi firms- there seemed to be an assumption that traditional offline methods would be favoured by the Saudi consumers.

Regional differences amongst customers in the KSA were also potentially influential. Travel agents suggested that cultural variations exist, for example when comparing Jeddah and Eastern regions (Dammam) with Tabouk. Customers in Jeddah and Eastern cities have greater levels of exposure to more advanced online services than people in more conservative areas such Tabouk. A greater number of foreign workers who come to Saudi Arabia having used these online services live and work in Jeddah and the Eastern regions. Saudi consumers from smaller cities were less likely to meet international users of online services and therefore may be less aware of the technological benefits.

Findings suggest that social aspects were, to some degree, influential in discouraging customers from actively engaging in online travel services. Such findings confirm that social influence may be a factor in studies of Middle East based internet adoption, as noted by Baker et al. (2010). In addition, parallel conclusions from e-commerce technology adoption in the Saudi context, suggests that consumer culture may not support the spread of online technology in Saudi Arabia (Alghamdi & Drew, 2012; Sadi and Al-Khalifah 2012). However, these views contrast with phase two findings.

8.1.2 Issues to Emerge in relation to Search Behaviour

8.1.2.1 Research Objectives for Phase Two

In 2011, few extant studies had fully acknowledged the importance of understanding search patterns of individual customers in explanations of internet technology adoption and no study had focused on search patterns in online travel booking. In order to address this, the second phase of this study had two objectives; the first was to obtain in-depth understanding of the search behaviour and search strategies of selected Saudi travel consumers. The data for this was collected by observing the respondents as they undertook a given online search task. Respondents were Saudi travel website users, with different demographic variables and levels of experience. Short follow-up interviews were conducted with the same participants. Travel experiences and variations between

online and offline services, search ability, search strategies, evaluation of the information are themes that were investigated during the observation (see Table 5.4). The second objective of phase two was to explore, through piloting with the respondents, the applicability of the scale for information search and evaluation, which had been developed as part of construct development in the conceptual framework (See Section 4.8). From prior research, items relating to search intention and information search and evaluation items were carefully selected and adapted to represent those constructs in the online travel context and a short questionnaire with these items was tested with respondents in phase two. Key discussion points to emerge from Phase two findings are now addressed:

8.1.2.2 Importance of user skill in search patterns of Saudi Consumers

This study has extended past research by offering meaningful insight into how Saudi travellers browse web pages, determine sources and evaluate online travel information before making a purchase decision (See Section 6.2.2 for analysis of search strategy from observation and interviews). Findings from Phase Two suggest that online search and booking amongst Saudi respondents is fast becoming the preferred method for travel planning for those who had experienced it. The ease of use, speed and available resource in comparison to more traditional offline methods was greatly preferred. Most respondents used 'Google' in their approach to the task - this has been attributed by respondents to simplicity and ease of use, the ad-free page and the extensiveness of the information available. Respondents used key word effectively but few turned to advanced search tools to narrow search criteria. Respondents also turned to well known sites such as booking.com, Trip Advisor, holiday-hyper-market and Expedia; respondents with greater experience of online travel services used known sites without using 'Google'.

These results confirm and extend past studies in three ways: firstly, there is confirmation of customer online behavioural change – and this links to emerging customer segments- with the growth in real incomes increase in emerging economies, a change in preferences and spending patterns has been recorded (Ward and Neumann, 2012). Those using online travel services in Phase Two felt that they were able to be more selective in their

choice of airline and hotel giving them a more tailor- made service which matched their personal specification to a greater degree. A similar finding was noted by Enis & Cox (2008) who identified how the ability of consumers to create individual, tailor-made solutions added important value for consumers.

Secondly, through the observation in phase two, it was identified that respondents saw a need for high search capability in order to effectively adopt online travel booking. With the lack of use of advanced search tools noted in the findings, one future challenge will be how to effectively expand the knowledge domain for search processes. This is in line with the ideas of Al Rasheed & Mirza, (2011), who emphasised the enhancing role of high levels of experience within the search process. The study identified the fact that domain knowledge enhances the travel search process, through the easier identification of sites providing a range of travel options. Moreover, the increased levels of experience of users in this study suggest a demand for easy identification of travel destinations, together with identification of the most affordable flight and hotel rates available (Alsajan & Dennis, 2009).

A third surprising pattern was that the majority of respondents were not enthusiastic followers of the feedback provided by blogs, or on travel forums. Although respondents were interested in reviews left by other customers, the majority were suspicious of joining forums as they doubted the credibility of organisers, noting blogs or forums to be untrustworthy. The majority of respondents identified that they do not rely on opinions given in social media unless they receive a direct referral from family members and friends, who they know are experienced travellers. This is clearly quite a different pattern to what occurs in Western markets, and reflects again, distinct cultural differences in how Saudi customers are now engaging with online technology.

8.1.2.3 Gender Variations in Search Approach and gender opportunities in travel sector

In this study, it was interesting to compare and contrast the strategy and attitude adopted by both genders. Some respondents in Phase One proposed that women may benefit most from the use of online services. An example of the cultural effect on the position of

Saudi women is the division that exists throughout their public life. For example, other than in hospitals and the health sector in general, women are restricted in the public arena. Both the sharing of workplaces and the ability to drive cars are prohibited as noted by Qithami (2009). This study has also noted that males in the KSA have engaged with online travel service booking more extensively than females and have tended to make final decisions. This is in line with Al Rasheed & Mirza, (2011) who addressed specific social structures in the KSA, whereby male family members customarily make travel arrangements.

While previous studies have noted a similar influence of demographics on the level of Internet adoption usage by Saudi customers (Al Rasheed and Mirza (2011), this study offers a more specific understanding of the gender patterns in Section 6.2.2.1 with a glimpse of interesting variations in search approach, a pattern not previously reported. For instance, it was observed that whilst both male and female participants used image search, but women paid greater attention to the images and photography during the search than males, with particular reference hotel appearance, furniture in rooms and the location. In Section 6.2.3.5.1, the use of online booking appeared to have a positive impact for Saudi women in two major ways. Firstly, women respondents in phase two felt that they could have a greater involvement in travel decision making, potentially giving them the opportunity to search for and purchase holidays on their own. This group needs to be considered by Saudi travel firms who could target this new customer segment as a focus some online marketing strategies. Secondly, a greater adoption of online technology which does not require a physical, face-to-face presence with customers, may allow Saudi women to work and participate in the travel industry whilst also upholding the cultural norms in the KSA. In this regard, Saudi women could gain skills and knowledge through professional training in the travel industry, which may enable them work in a new industry without in keeping with their cultural duties. This is opening up numerous private sector opportunities for the Saudi women occupations.

8.1.2.4 Contradictory perspectives towards the use of online technology between Saudi travel agencies and consumers

It seems that within the Saudi travel context, offline methods of travel booking remain the favoured approach. This study has shown that the majority of respondents living in Saudi Arabia still use the services of traditional travel agents to make travel arrangements. The relationship with travel agents among older generations is strong; the traditional method is popular as a result of some consumers in Saudi Arabia not being skilled in how to use the Internet to make flight bookings and hotel reservations themselves. Some respondents in phase two also indicated that they trust this method more, as it involves direct payment and allowed them to ask questions directly of the agents. The findings of this study are consistent with Alateyah, Crowder and Wills, (2013), who highlighted Saudi community barriers towards adopting online services on a day-to-day basis.

Nonetheless, findings from Phase Two demonstrate how the attitude of respondents with regard to online travel services is gradually changing. The gradual increase in knowledge of the Internet is slowly resulting in a greater understanding and use of online travel methods and an increase in the level of travel arrangements made online, according to respondents in Phase Two. In the KSA a younger generation is coming through who have lived or studied aboard in countries that have a more developed infrastructure, providing for greater online services, such as the UK or USA, as noted in chapter six (6.2.3.3). This generation has been exposed to the practice of using online travel services without the use of agencies- once exposed to the practices adopted in more developed countries, such customers are more likely to use international websites to search online once back in the KSA. It would seem this younger generation is influenced and attracted by the ease of use, value for money and exposure to the quality of information that these websites provide. Previous studies have considered attitudes of Saudi consumers and concluded that the infrastructure is not reliable enough to create consumer confidence in the security of online payments (Al-Salamin, & Al-Hammad, 2014). Others like Bukhari, Ghoneim, & Dennis (2012), have looked at the purchase of air tickets online and the factors that encourage this. However, it would seem that previous studies involving the KSA have only focused on local Saudi customers. Studies have not investigated in depth the ways in

which technology is developing consumer travel search and booking habits as the younger generation travel abroad and gain greater knowledge of the functionality of the Internet. This study has extended past research by identifying how Saudi consumers are adapting travel booking habits as a result of living in countries with more established online services and the absence of technological barriers.

8.1.2.5 Information search and evaluation as an interconnected process

In addressing objective two, assessing the applicability of the scale items for search information and evaluation; while the preliminary scale items proved reasonably robust, based on the observation findings, three new items were added to the information search and evaluation construct. These items are: 1) the adoption of image search - images relating to the destinations and hotels, 2) the importance of accurate and up-to-date nature of travel information, and 3) the use of travel information and reviews, based upon other customer experiences. These items are novel to this research and were taken forward as part of the scale items in the quantitative study in phase three.

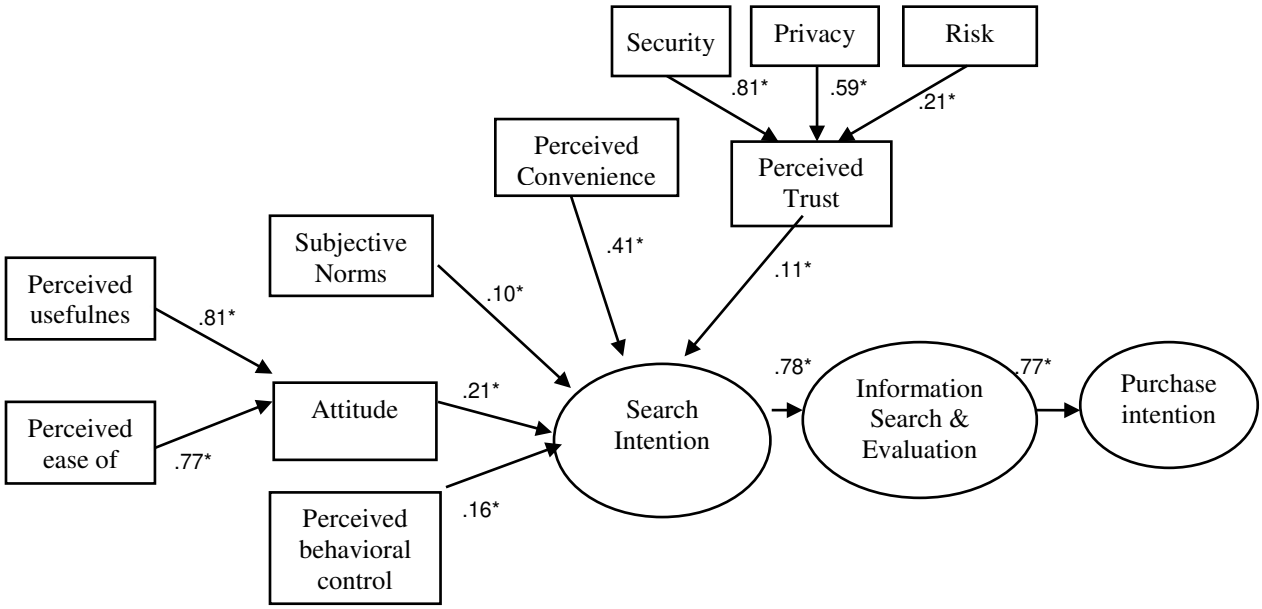
In assessing the concept of search information and evaluation to emerge from phase two, Section 6.2.3.5 findings offer insight into the nature of search evaluation, noting the utilisation of effective search strategies. Observations showed iteration in search processes, where there was some browsing, some keywords search and a few respondents worked with multiple screens. Some respondents felt able to assess different information and make their purchase quickly, due to their search skills and personal confidence to proceed to the purchase stage. These outcomes are consistent with an earlier study where Vazquez and Xu (2008) argue that information search and evaluation are conducted at the same time, noting how customers obtain and evaluate detailed information simultaneously. The interconnected nature of the evaluation process is in line with Ho, Lin and Chen (2012), who emphasized the role of previous travel knowledge and search experience, which, they argue, positively enhances online information evaluation through a cycle of search activity leading to purchase.

8.1.3 Examination of Relationships in the Conceptual Framework

8.1.3.1 Research Objectives for Phase Three

The objective of phase three was to examine the relationships between the key constructs in the conceptual framework. The study investigated, in a large cross-sectional sample of Saudi consumers, the relationship between consumer attitudes towards use of the internet for information search, subjective norms towards the internet usage, perceived convenience, trust, search intention and actual search behaviour prior to purchase, and the link to final purchase intention. The conceptual framework was developed and tested through hypotheses, with particular focus on the relationships between search intention, search evaluation and purchase intention. Few past studies acknowledge the importance of search patterns in technology adoption. What is more, no study has examined technology adoption elements (as in TAM), behavioural intention elements (as in TPB), and the link to search intention and behaviour prior to actual purchase. This study addressed the theoretical links through the development of a conceptual framework that was tested through 12 hypotheses. Section 8.1.3.2 assesses relationships between online search intention, information search and evaluation, and purchase intention, followed by an analysis of the role of perceived convenience in Section 8.1.3.3. Section 8.1.3.4 begins by discussing the role of perceived trust and its antecedents, followed by the role of attitudes, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms in Section 8.1.3.5. Sections 8.1.3.6 and 8.1.3.7 discuss the role and strength of independent factors contributing to search intention, and the role of moderating variables.

Figure 8.1: Final Research Framework



All regression coefficients are significant at p < .001

8.1.3.2 Relationship Between Online Search Intention, Information Search and Evaluation and Purchase Intention

Where this study has examined these relationships in greater depth is in the relationship between search intention and information search and evaluation. The outcomes of phase three of the current study demonstrate that search intention positively affects information search and evaluation for online travel services (b = .78; p < .001). Xiang et al. (2008) also noted the motivation aspect – seeing it as relating to information access. In this regard the findings in this PhD study take further the findings of Bargiela (2009), who noted the motivation for search but did not address the important of search intention. The outcomes of this study also corroborate the arguments of Fesenmaier et al. (2010), who assert that travel customers undertake search for the purposes of aiding the decision-making process but contrasts with the claim of Jani et al. (2011) that consumers who engage in travel-based search are more likely to engage in such activities in order to avoid risk than they are to acquire information. In this case, respondents wished to gather

information. Results seem logical - customers who have a stronger search intention are likely to perform greater information search and evaluation, in comparison to individuals with a less positive search intention.

The results of the current study suggest that online information search and evaluation significantly affect customer intention to purchase online ($b = .77$; $p < .001$).The studies conducted by Wright and Jayawardhena (2001), Shim et al. (2001), Watchravesringkan and Shim (2003) and Kim and Park (2005), relating to the impact of online information on online purchasing behaviour, all support these findings. The outcome is also in line with the results of Ratchford et al. (2003), and Lohse et al. (2000), who find that individuals who use the internet for online informaiton have a greater intention to search prior to purchase. The study also echoes Solomon (2009), who suggests that frequent internet browsing for search purposes can ultimately lead to regular online purchases.

In studies in other sectors, the positive relationship between -+search intention and online purchase intention has been identified for apparel products (Jani, Jeong & Hwang, 2011; Shim et al., 2001). Fesenmaier, Xiang Pan and Law (2010) find that satisfying customer need for information, in relation to a product or service, is a key motivation for online search. This supports the view of Huang, Chou and Lin (2010) and Ho, Lin and Chen (2012) suggested that consumers engage in pre-purchase information seeking, in order to enable them to make better decisions.

The statistics shown in Section 7.8 of this study demonstrated a significant positive relationship between search intention and information search and evaluation ($b = .78$; $p < .001$), and a significant positive relationship between information search and evaluation and purchase intention ($b = .77$; $p < .001$). Thus, it is reasonable to expect that individuals who engage in more extensive search and evaluation with regards to online travel information, are more likely to express a positive purchase intention.

8.1.3.3 The Role of Perceived Convenience

The findings of the present study show that the perceived convenience of using the internet for search and purchase of travel products positively impacts on online search intention. This appears to be the most powerful factor of influence on search intention

(beta = .41; p < .001). The results of this study confirm the findings of a great deal of previous work in this field. For example, Szymanski and Hise (2000) argue that positive associations exist between convenience and intention, in terms of online purchase. Ernst and Young (2001), support this argument, identifying convenience as a significant influencing factor on online shopping intention. Additionally, it has been found that convenience is a key factor encouraging customers to carry out further online search (Doolin et al., 2005). What this study highlights is not just the link in shopping intention but the importance of the consumer search strategy and search ability at this preliminary search intention stage. In this regard the findings take further the work of both Szymanski and Hise (2000) and Ernst and Young (2001).

This result is significant for online marketers because it identifies the importance of search as a major element when trying to predict internet purchase intention. Torkzadeh and Dhillon's (2002) work supports this result as they find that several factors, including internet product options, e-payment, internet seller trust and convenience can affect customer purchase intention. Although Torkzadeh and Dhillon's (2002) research offers a similar focus on convenience as one influencing factor, the findings of phase three identified more specifically the importance of convenience in the pre-search stage by placing attention on the link to the initial search strategy of consumer. Prasad and Aryasri (2009) and Kuo-Chen (2010) propose that consumer perception of convenience has a positive impact on willingness to search and engage in online search and purchase. In this regard the survey results reinforce those of both earlier studies, noting how perception of search process convenience can be influential. The PhD findings further corroborate the viewpoint of Izquierdo-Yusta and Schultz (2011), offering insights form triangulation of qualitative data in pahse two how consumer recognition of convenience benefits will influence intention to use internet technology.

8.1.3.4 Perceived Trust

The current study findings shows that perceived trust, in relation to using the internet for searching for travel products, positively affects online search intention (b = .69; p < .001). This finding is consistent with earlier studies, which also propose that trust is an

influential determinant of customer intention to engage in online activities, notably, Yu-Hui Chen, (2007) and Jarvenpaa et al. (2000), who established that higher levels of customer trust in relation to online retailers would lessen perceived risk of online search and purchase. Reducing perceived risk plays a central role in respondent search intention.. Considering the requirement for customers to provide their personal data, such as card-holder information and bank account details, any risk associated with customer service is critical for the online travel firm, a view shared by Manganari, Siomkos & Vrechopoulos, (2014). However, success in developing perceived trust can be illustrated; online shopping has become mainstream (Wan, Nakayama & Sutcliffe (2012), attributable to how customers have overcome initial risk concerns about online transactions. Faqih (2013) identifies the uncertain context involving high-perceived risk in online shopping, as a factor that lowers online shopping intention (Faqih, 2013).

Acknowledging the role played by perceived trust, it becomes crucial to understand the manner in which perceived trust functions, in relation to the online search intention. Ponte, Carvajal-Trujillo and Escobar-Rodríguez (2014) acknowledge the important role that trust in websites plays in e-commerce, as consumers are not likely to shop for travel services if they do not trust the online websites on which they are shopping. It becomes critical to identify how online travel providers can develop trust. Acknowledging initial trust is a significant aspect when it comes to online search intention. Zhou (2011) identifies four categories of factors that influence online initial trust. The first category entails the website characteristics, as customers are likely to rely on their perception of websites in forming their initial trust towards an online vendor. In phase two of this research, the information quality, perceived privacy, and perceived security were seen to be very important. The second category for Zhou, (2011) relates to customer characteristics, with trust propensity having a direct and moderating effect. In this PhD research, trust propensity of consumers was seen to be uncertain- with divergence between travel agent and consumer views. The third category involves online vendors and includes their reputation and brand image. As noted above, in phase two findings, respondents trusted the portals and the results obtained through Google, booking.com etc more than they trusted individual Saudi travel websites. The brand reputation was very

important. The fourth category (Zhou, 2011) is linked to third parties who need to be credible in order for users to transfer their trust. This is important as Saudi consumers who return to Saudi Arabia after their stay in the UK will be looking at local travel agent websites carefully to see what trust indicators are present. Results from phase one showed that travel agents were not progressive in this respect.

Results in this study also show that security is significantly related to perceived trust when using the internet to search for information on travel products ($b = .81$; $p < .001$). This outcome is consistent with previous studies, confirming the existence of an association between the security of a company's website and customer trust (Özgüven, 2011). Ray, Ow and Sung (2011) identify how returning consumers have perceptions of security and trust based on continued use of products, but they also continually re-assess. In this study, the finding on security is not new, it was evident across earlier phases of research - Saudi respondents were consistently wary of security and risk issues.
Nonetheless, past research suggests that experienced online shoppers exhibit less perceived risk in making online purchases, as they seek to increase convenience and innovation, which makes them less risk averse in comparison to the non-shoppers. As Kim, Xu and Gupta (2012) posit, if customers perceive an online vendor as trustworthy, the perceived trust lowers risk perception in the online shopping context. Thus, it is the perceived trust that customers have regarding a particular online vendor that affects perceived risk, which influences search and purchase intention.

In the Saudi Arabian context, the significance of the results lie in the advice to be given to newly- formed online travel firms that emerge in the next few years. Findings of this study show that risk, security and privacy are all significantly associated with perceived trust when using the internet to search for information on travel products. Results identify the need to develop clearer indicators of trust to persuade reluctant online searchers and purchasers to continue with online booking. It is critical that online travel agencies come up with trustworthy transaction processes to encourage online search intention. For Saudi consumers, trust in an online travel website is an essential factor in the success or failure of their online travel activity. Loss of personal privacy, insecure payments and

misuse of personal information were some of the concerns expressed by respondents, findings that reinforce those of Suki & Suki, (2007).

These findings link to previous studies using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Wen (2009) puts forward a conceptual framework based on the TPB, which measures the extent of the influences affecting customer online intention and finds a clear relationship between consumer attitude, trust and intention. Palvia (2009) established the fact that trust would positively influence customer intention, as those who have trust in online networks will show greater intention to utilise these channels. Furthermore, online trust is positively associated with the search and purchase intention of customers (Lloyd et al., 2010.

8.1.3.5 The Role of Attitudes and its Determinants, Perceived Behavioural Control and Subjective Norms.

From a theoretical perspective, the results of the current study indicate that PU and PEOU are determining factors of attitude, which, in turn has an impact on search intention. Findings of this study also reveal that a more positive attitude in relation to the using the internet is related to more positive search intention (b = .77; p < .001). The outcomes of the current study are considered to be consistent with the TPB, which considers attitude to be relevant to behavioural intention (Ajzen, 1991), and with Laohapensang's (2009), who found that traveller intention to engage in online purchase is mainly influenced by attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Therefore, a positive attitude towards online search seems to lead to increased intention to seek further information, consistent with the findings of Chang et al. (2009).

These results are also consistent with Amaro and Duarte's (2014) observation, in using the TRA, which suggests that individual intention tends to be the result of attitudes towards the outcome of behaviour. According to Amaro and Duarte (2014), individual feeling towards an event, issue or object tends to be the most critical part of the attitude concept when looking at online search for travel products. The rise in popularity of online shopping can be attributed to the motivation of online consumers, which can be either utilitarian or hedonic. Utilitarian motivation may be reflected in comparison of travel

information, with the aim of updating facts regarding the product that the customer is interested in, or is likely to buy another time (Grange & Benbasat, 2014). The hedonic value of online information search is linked to the experience of fun as well as enjoyment derived from the process of online searching. During an online search for information, customers are deeply involved in the activity and can be delighted with the possible interactions (Ibrahim & Gill, 2005). Findings confirm that, a positive attitude, whether from hedonic or utilitarian views of what online search can generate, is associated with a positive influence on customer intention to search for online travel information.

Huseynov and Yıldırım (2014) link such results to the TPB; arguing that attitude towards a particular behaviour is a major influence on both an individual behavioural intention and actual behaviour. In this case, if customers develop favourable attitudes towards online technology, this may impact on search and purchase intention towards online travel services.

In the findings perceived ease of use shows that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived ease of use and customer attitude ($b = .77$; $p < .001$). The results of the study align with Ayeh, Au and Law's (2013) findings, which showed perceptions of using online booking services as "free from effort". For respondents of this research the perceived usefulness was based on the expected benefits from online travel booking. The analysis of the survey shows that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude ($b = .81$; $p < .001$). These results are also consistent with Li and Liu's (2014) observations; they argue that customer perceived usefulness of the Internet for travel information search has an impact on their attitude. Furthermore, these findings are in line with Au and Law (2012), who indicate that the perceived usefulness of online travel services influences the attitude of customers towards online travel services, which influences their intention to search and purchase online. The findings in this research show that the behavioural intention that an individual develops towards using online information is likely to lead to actual search, which confirms findings of Roca, García & Vega, (2009).

The significance of these results for Saudi Arabian consumers would be in the actions that online travel firms may take to improve the perceived usefulness and perceived ease

of purchasing travel services online. In this case, establishing elements that can maximise the ease and speed of online travel search can strengthen the perceived convenience of the online booking process. Zhu, Lee, O'Neal and Chen (2011) advise online firms to develop the features of their websites that effectively meet the diversified needs of their consumers' to raise the PU of the websites selling travel services. This may result in increased positive attitudes among customers, which would enhance their information search and frequency of website use.

Finally, the findings of this study show that subjective norms positively affect online search intention (b = .68; p < .001) and there is also a significant positive relationship between perceived behavioural control and online search intention (b = .76; p < .001). This finding is consistent with Delafrooz, Paim and Khatibi (2011), who see that subjective norms and perceived behavioural control can positively affect consumer intention to search. It echoes Alam and Sayuti (2011), who note that perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, and attitude have a positive and significant influence on online purchasing intention. Quintal, Lee and Soutar's (2010) similar study examines the elements influencing intention to use travel websites; they conclude that subjective norms significantly affects intention. Findings in relation to subjective norms and perceived behavioural control also confirm the central relationships in the TPB model, being consistent with Lam and Hsu (2006), who utilise central concepts of the TPB, including attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, with the addition of past behaviour as a new variable, in order to test applicability to behavioural intention when choosing a travel destination. The findings of this PhD study indicate that the TPB is an appropriate theoretical framework for forecasting behavioural intention in online travel decisions.

8.1.3.6 The Role and Strength of Independent Factors Contributing to Search Intention

The results of this study show that there is an association linking independent variables (attitude, subjective norms, perceived convenience, trust, and perceived behavioural control) and the dependent variable search intention. From the beta values in the multiple regression analysis, results indicate that perceived convenience is most able to explain

search intention, with a value of .410. This finding is consistent with that of Izquierdo-Yusta, and Schultz (2011), who determine that perceived convenience ranks highest in its ability to explain consumers' search intention as a dependent variable. This finding is also supported by Chang, Yan and Tseng (2012) and Conyette (2012), who both conclude that perceived convenience has an effect on consumer search intention. One logical explanation for this relationship is that consumers might favour any service that they perceive to be most convenient for them, explaining the strong effect on consumer search intention.

Unsurprisingly, consumer attitude was found to make a contribution to search intention. The findings of the current study rank consumer attitude as the factor exerting the second strongest influence on the search intention of consumers, with a value of .210. This finding confirms Laohapensang (2009) in his argument that customer attitude is an influential factor affecting search intention; and that of Chen and Tung (2014), who assert that knowing the attitude of the consumer, and how it will affect their search intention, is key to ensuring the success of online travel search.

The results of this research show that subjective norms are at the lower end of the scale of factors affecting consumer search intention, with a value of .095; this is a relatively low score, when compared with perceived convenience and consumer attitude. According to Abiodun and Ismail (2013), subjective norms tend to exert a positive influence on the search intention of a consumer in online travel. Similarly, Al-maghrabi et al. (2011) find that subjective norms have the capacity to affect consumer intention, but they only consider this factor to have an average impact in terms of influence over consumer intention. The influence of subjective norms is significant but rather weak in terms of its relative influence in this study. It is perhaps difficult to generalise why this is the case. There were indications in phase one and phase two that subjective norms (a social influence) might have an impact within the Saudi context. A significant proportion of this study was male, married, and in a mature age group, and this may have had an impact-past studies have indicated a stronger impact of subjective norms on consumer intention for younger age groups.

8.1.3.7 The Role of Moderating Variables

These findings confirm those of other studies demonstrating the impact of moderating variables on the use of the internet to search and purchase travel products. The results show that no distinctive issues emerged in the moderating variables analysis, as outlined in Chapter Seven (Section 7.9.4).

Apart from the potential moderating effect of age on the relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude, no other moderating effect emerged as higher than 0.5. Age, as a moderating factor, seemed to have a negative effect both on the relationship between consumer search intention and purchase intention, and on the relationship between usefulness and attitude. Age is also found to be a moderating factor that appears to have an effect on the relationship between subjective norms and search intention, as subjective norms positively affect search intention more often among younger participants. Age also appears to have an effect on the relationship between trust and search intention, and trust is more likely to negatively affect search intention for older participants. According to the findings of this study, which echo those of Afizah, Ghani and Said (2009), as the individual ages, they are may perceive less usefulness, which in turn could impact consumer attitude. When considering age as a moderating factor and the effect on the subjective norm, past literature has identified that younger individuals are more likely to be affected by subjective norms than older individuals (Quintal, Lee & Soutar, 2010). The direction of the influence patterns for age is interesting, but the strength effect is relatively small. It is therefore difficult to offer any explanation that could offer a generalisable reason for the pattern noted.

8.2 Key Contribution of this Study

8.2.1 Theoretical Contribution

Four key areas of theoretical contribution emerged from this study. Firstly, this research has offered insight into the nature of the relationship between search intention, information search and evaluation and purchase intention through the development of a more comprehensive conceptual framework than in prior studies. Studies on online search intention in the field of marketing have raised concerns with the link between search intention and the final purchase intention (Shim et al., 2001, Alam & Sayuti, 2011;

Crespo & Bosque, 2010; Huang et al., 2011; Lee, 2009; Amaro & Duarte, 2014). A limited number of past studies focus in detail on information search evaluation (see Ho, Lin & Chen 2012). The conceptual framework in this study captures both search intention and information search and evaluation and examines the relationship between each and purchase intention. This comprehensive framework was tested through regression analysis which confirmed the relationships between the factors**.** Section 8.1.3.1 above has identified that search intention positively affects information search and evaluation for online travel services ($b = .78$; $p < .001$) and also shows that there is a significant positive relationship between information search and evaluation and purchase intention for online travel services ($b = .77$; $p < .001$).

Secondly, this study offers greater depth of focus on the construct of search intention and how it influences online travel booking behaviour in an emerging market context. This is the first study to concentrate on search intention in online travel booking behaviour in an emerging market context (Saudi market). The study has extended previous thinking in two ways- on the one hand, only a few past studies acknowledge the importance of search patterns in technology adoption (Chorus, et al., 2010; Xiang & Pan, 2009). Some limited previous research has started to identify the importance of search behaviour prior to purchase (Ho, Lin & Chen, 2012; Jani et al., 2011); nonetheless, little is known about the actual effects of the internet on information search strategies and their variations in Gulf countries (Alrashid, 2011). Unlike prior studies, this study has fully explored the factors driving search intention, noting the importance of both individual search ability and search strategy, as identified in phase two findings.

On the other hand, in terms of the nature of online search intention, the researcher noted that there was very limited prior data on search intention in the context of Saudi Arabia, and none for online travel. The researcher noted just one single study conducted by AlGhamdi & Moussa (2012) who explored the use of Internet with reference to online search information in the Saudi health sector. However, AlGhamdi & Moussa (2012) looked in only a general way at information search in general and limited links were possible between how search intention was identified in that study and prior theories on

behavioural intention (notably the TPB, TAM). While limited previous research has started to identify the importance of search behaviour prior to purchase (Ho, Lin & Chen, 2012; Jani et al., 2011), little was known about the actual effects of the internet on information search strategies and their variations in Gulf countries (Alrashid, 2011). Findings from phase two and three have offered meaningful insight into search variations with regard to gender and level of experience and Section 8.1.2.3 above has identified how these factors can influence Saudi customers in their effectiveness in online information search.

Thirdly, this study offers greater insight into the construct of information search and evaluation than any prior study. The value to emerge in this study from the development and use of the information search and evaluation construct has been addressed by

1) Proposing a number of information search and evaluation items that were carefully selected and adapted for online travel, based upon previous literature.
2) Generating a useful scale for the information search and evaluation construct that has incorporated three new items derived from the findings in phase two a) image search, which provides images relating to the destinations and hotels, b) the imprortance of accuracy in travel information, and c) the adoption of travel reviews, based upon other travellers' experiences (please see Section 6.2.5.2.2).
3) Checking the reliability of this new scale, showing it is be robust. Please see Cronbach's Alpha (α) score of .86 in Table 7.3 Reliabilities (Internal Consistencies) for Key Constructs.

The concept of information search and evaluation has been further developed by confirming this to be a single interconnected process. Past studies such as Noh (2008) considered information search and evaluation to be a single construct in online shopping, noting that search and evaluation are activities that occur at the same time: the customer search for information online, obtains information and evaluates it through a constant on-going appraisal process. This study has extended Noh's (2008) study by confirming information search and evaluation as a single construct, through data from both phase two and phase three. Phase two data offered insight by noting combined, simultaneous search

methods; by identifying how Saudi travellers browse web pages and simultaneously evaluate material, and by observing the organic, iterative search and evaluation patterns before booking. In the discussion of quantitative findings in Section 8.1.2.1 above, the PCA results identified information search and evaluation as a single construct, composed of eight items. This contribution may be theoretically applicable to other online services such as online insurance context (e.g. car and health insurance).

Lastly, two issues contribute to the uniqueness of the conceptual framework:

- While past studies in the Saudi context address general online shopping, online banking and technology adoption in Saudi Arabia, none have studied online travel booking. A few past studies on online shopping behavior in Saudi Arabia have looked at factors relating to technology adoption and intention to shop online, (see Al-Maghrabi (2010) who studied key factors (e.g. site quality, perceived usefulness, trust, social pressure, enjoyment.) that drive online shopping in Saudi Arabia. Al-Shohaib and Frederick (2010) examined the factors such as relative advantage, compatibility and complexity that influence the adoption of the internet in online shopping. However, neither study brought search elements into their conceptualization. This study has examined technology adoption elements (as in TAM), behavioural intention elements (as in TPB), and the link between search intention and behavioural intention prior to purchase. The extended model has encompassed perceived trust, perceived convenience, search intention, information search and evaluation and integrated these key factors with existing factors of the TPB model. The study offers more specific findings on relative strength of factors that may affect online booking in an emerging market context. The current study establishes a framework that could be applicable in other emerging market contexts.

- This study makes a key contribution through the focus on an emerging market context. The majority of prior studies on online shopping, online banking etc have examined technology adoption in developed economies, whereas this study has brought in some considerations that have emerged as significant in technology consumption in Arab countries. In terms of implementation, this study investigates

the practicability of the TPB model to explain online booking behaviour in a non-Western context. One issue to emerge that has been less researched previously is the online variations in search strategy and attitude adopted by both genders. Furthermore, findings indicate that the use of the internet may be providing women with a greater freedom to be involved in decision-making- through enabling search and encouraging travel decisions to be made in the privacy of their own home (please section See Section 8.1.2.3).

8.2.2 Contribution to Practice

There are two contributions to marketing practice. Firstly, the study offers a deeper understanding of the challenging perceptions that exist with regards to the slow adoption of online travel processes among Saudi Arabia's travel firms. The study reports on experiences with the uptake of online booking systems on the current approach by Saudi travel agencies to online travel services. Past authors have called for studies seeking to empirically record these transformations and their impact on Saudi Arabian individuals, in comparison to other developed and developing countries. Past studies such as Bukhari, Ghoneim, & Dennis (2012), have looked at the purchase of air tickets online and the factors that encourage this and Yusuf, (2014) noted the strengths and weaknesses of the Saudi tourism industry, but only through descriptive statistics. Neither study considered the travel agent perspective in the Saudi context. This PhD study has added to previous research by considering online technology adoption in Saudi Arabian tourism from the travel firm perspective- no previous study has examined current pattern in internet technology adoption at travel agency level.

In particular, the study has confirmed that perceived security, perceived risk and consumer privacy are important antecedents for perceived trust in the online environment. Indicators have emerged about the need for online travel companies in Saudi Arabia to address security and privacy issues and have confirmed the need for travel firms to integrate trust-building indicators into their websites, by concentrating on safety, privacy and security. Al-Somali, Gholami and Clegg (2009) investigated the impact of trading partner pressure and competitive pressure on the acceptance of online

banking in Saudi Arabia, this study finds similar sector pressures in the travel sector but extends Al-Somali et al's (2009) work by also giving in-depth qualitative insights into the specific perceptions of travel agents themselves. In presenting a clear analysis of the contextual challenges facing the incorporation of online travel processes in the Saudi Arabian context, the study highlights an economic priority.

Secondly, the study offers more insight into the social dimensions that moderate and shape online search and purchase intention of Saudi consumers. Findings extend past research by discussing the ways in which Saudi consumers are adapting their travel booking habits as a result of living in countries with more established online services and the absence of technological barriers. Data has shown that the experience of online systems for Saudi consumers is different in the Saudi Arabian travel market, where online booking systems are still rarely used and many consumers still rely on traditional travel agents. Results from the consumer search patterns can offer travel agency managers a useful understanding of the motivators that stimulate acceptability of online processes among Saudi customers. Insight has emerged on how Saudi online behavior is gradually changing, due to the emergence of a younger Saudi generation who have lived or studied abroad and who prefer to use online booking system. This was an interesting pattern that arose from the Phase One and Phase Two findings. No studies have investigated in detail the ways in which Saudi consumers are changing their travel search and booking habits as they gain increased access to technology. Thus, this study has contributed in particular to knowledge of travel information search behaviour of Saudi consumers as they begin to change their travel booking habits after having lived in the UK.

8.3 Managerial Implications for Travel Agents in Saudi Arabia

The outcomes of the first phase of the study show the current challenges for travel agencies in Saudi Arabia when switching to the use of online technology. Online technology is required for the purposes of saving on operational costs, explaining the range of activities of travel agencies to consumer and integrating the links to airline companies and hotel services, booking. At present even in the more advanced travel agencies in Riyadh, technology is not used as a strategic tool. Findings of the current study are consistent with Brdsee et al. (2012), who found that traditional marketing

strategies used by travel agencies are still dominant in Saudi Arabia, with promotions offering offline travel packages to affluent Saudi travellers both domestic and international destinations.

There are several possible explanations for the lack of progress in the technology adoption. Saudi Arabian travel agencies are influenced by the prevailing social process in booking travel products, where men make most decision and usually book through well known offline agencies. The current study finds that the travel sector, as with other industries in the KSA, faces challenges in the adoption of e-commerce, whereby the cost of implementation is very high. The present findings appear to be consistent with those of other researchers, who find that Saudi Arabia's substandard ICT infrastructure has a negative impact on the tourism sector (Alrashid, 2011). Moreover, a lack of reliable e-commerce providers in the local Saudi tourism organisations prevents the pursuit of innovation (Brdsee, Corbitt & Pittayachawan, 2011). Furthermore, Al-zharani (2009) finds other barriers to online technology implementation, such as the lack of workers who have the necessary ICT skills to manage information systems, a lack of available technology training programs, and the absence of coordination among the organisations that have so far adopted ICT in the KSA. Business Monitor International (2009) explained that the Saudi government faces challenges in implementing e-commerce technology in the private sector and this study shows that those challenges remain. The importance of generating trust in online travel websites is critical for the new generation of online travel service users. Travel sector officials should recognise that lack of consumer trust is a significant obstacle - if this barrier remains, online travel, which could be a growing source of revenue in the modern Saudi economy, may not grow adequately in the next few years- due to a slower pace of adoption of relevant technology platforms.

This raises obvious policy issues. Since the establishment of the General Commission for Tourism in 2001, a greater emphasis has been placed on developing tourism. It has been suggested by travel firms however, that more attention is required as the tourism authority lacks proper management and support. Lack of support from central government.was noted by the Chairman of the General Commission for the Tourism Ministry and this contradicts the stated economic goals of Saudi Arabia, principally

among which is the significant improvement of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The ability to stimulate the growth of GDP shows that the financial capacity is available - it is not possible to argue that the lack of support and management with respect to the tourism market is due to a low budget. These results differ from those of some past studies, such as one conducted by Collier International Tourism (2011), noting that Saudi Arabia has made significant contributions to product development and investment in the tourism industry in the recent past, by backing entertainment, sports and Saudi cultural and heritage events. These developments were not visible in the research in the travel agents in the study.

It is hard to reach target consumers, a result that is consistent with those of Saloner et al. (2008), who argue that travel companies seeking to differentiate themselves in Saudi Arabia as solutions-oriented service providers who can facilitate ease of booking; must acknowledge that they cannot target the mass market, but instead must focus on securing a majority share in niche customer groups, who have a relatively high degree of familiarity with online technology. For marketers this group could be regarded as innovators (DOI theory) and a very useful group of consumers to consult before developing online systems.

In the short term, face-to-face methods of interaction and transaction continue to dominate the tourism and travel sector, and the adoption of technology in Saudi Arabia still faces many barriers to the implementation process. However, in medium term, it suggests that the future of tourism in terms of digital technology, offers significant opportunities for new travel agents who are effective in adopting internet technology and e-service. In the KSA a younger generation is coming through who have lived or studied aboard in countries that have a more developed infrastructure, providing for greater online services such as the UK or USA. This generation has been exposed to the culture of using online travel services without the use of agencies. It would seem this younger generation is influenced and attracted by the ease of use, value for money and exposure to a mass of information that these websites provide.

8.4 Limitations of the Research

In relation to the conceptual model, the model suggested in this study has some limitations. Despite the framework establishing strong attitudinal and behavioural dimensions, it is acknowledged that other dimensions might explain the association between the concepts studied in this research. Even though the model developed in this study is based on well-established factors that influence online search intention such as attitude, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, perceived trust, and perceived convenience; other elements exist that relate more to websites themselves, notably, e-service quality (Bernardo et al., 2012; Sousa, & Voss, 2012) that can influence customer online search and purchase intention, which may come from different strands of literature. These have been noted in some prior studies on Middle-Eastern (Al-Ghaith et al., 2010) who examined the effects of e-service quality, loyalty and relative advantage on the adoption and usage of online services. It was not within the scope of this study to go into detail on website-related factors, due to the multiplicity of travel websites. It would be too difficult to include a representative range of websites in the research in phase two or to capture all factors relating to website design, navigation etc, in Phase three. Nonetheless, given that the study has been focusing on the behavioural intention of consumers, the investigator is confident that a careful and thorough consideration has been given to the most significant aspects that explain search intention and search information evaluation behaviour as it links to purchase intention for online travel.

Secondly, there are perhaps a couple of issues that need to be acknowledged in terms of generalisability of findings; a sample limitation and a contextual limitation. Representativeness of the sample for the survey could have been improved; respondents were relatively well-educated and with solid online technology expertise. It is acknowledged by the researcher that the sample, in the end, was more homogenous (see Table 7.1) than expected, with less variance in age, in education, in internet experience and in years living in the UK than initially anticipated at the outset. Where the sample was less representative was in locating Saudi consumers who were less familiar with online travel search and who would represent more clearly some of the consumers groups living in Saudi Arabia itself. Sample variance could also be improved in terms of gender-males comprised 63.5% of the sample size, while females comprised 36.5 %. And marital

status, as 19.6% were single, while 77.8 % were married. For the above reasons, the outcomes of the study may be less easy to generalise across other user groups in Saudi Arabia. As noted in some of the findings, a range of Saudi consumers may be less confident with online search and purchases, as a result of a deficiency in their knowledge of technologies and the internet. In order to achieve a good number of respondents, the sample was selected from Saudi students only. Hence, it would be advantageous to conduct comparable studies in other geographical locations with a broader representation of internet experience and gender to verify if the same key factors influenced search intention, search information and evaluation and purchase intention.

In considering contextual generalisablility, it has to be acknowledged that the travel sector in emerging economies is perhaps atypical in terms of the level information that consumers encounter. Online travel firms, portals and facilitator sites that are international is scope offer a very comprehensive range of constantly updated information; whereas the scope of the information search process in an alternative sector might be more restricted. While the insights from this study are likely to be useful for other travel studies, for banking and for many retailing businesses in emerging economies, the range of search option may be much more limited when examining a sector such as public health services in emerging economies.

8.5 Directions for Future Research

Further research should be undertaken to extend the scope of the existing study. In considering key variables in the conceptual framework, this study observes trust as directly related to search intention. This is consistent with other research studies that have noted trust as having a direct influence on behavioural intention (Lloyd et al., 2010; Ponte, Carvajal-Trujillo and Escobar-Rodríguez, 2014) and which have included risk, privacy and security as antecedents. Nevertheless, investigating risk, privacy and security elements in detail and their complex association with trust was outside the range of this study. As we are now beginning to see a greater level of security being incorporated into online service websites, the perceived security risk of more experienced online users may

be lessening (Ray, Ow and Sung , 2011; Özgüven, 2011). However, some additional research could examine the nature of perceived privacy in greater detail as this is now becoming a more critical factor of influence on perceptions of online services, even on the part of experienced users (Tsai, et al., 2011; Riquelme & Román, 2014). Future research that investigated the perception of privacy in a cross-national study could be helpful in distinguishing variations across different emerging economies.

Furthermore, a hypothetical framework such as the framework presented here in relation to search intention and information search and evaluation may not have included all pertinent variables, or other attitudes. The scale for information search and evaluation, which has proved to be useful in this study, will, undoubtedly need validation and this may be achieved in further cross-sectional studies (perhaps in other sectors), that focus, in a similar way, on the relationship between information search and evaluation and purchase intention in other emerging market contexts. The convenience factor emerged as significant in this study; further exploratory and confirmatory research into the relationship between attitude and perceived convenience could be useful - where different forms of perceived convenience are more thoroughly identified in other online service contexts beyond travel. Such research could offer useful marketer insights.

Finally, in terms of the examination of key variables, some further examination of moderating variables could enhance the insights gained in this research. The existing study outcomes, in relation to the non-moderating impact of gender suggest a benefit in further study to tease out any the relationship between online technology adoption and gender across different emerging economies. Future studies should consider gender disparities; some indicators emerged in phase two of gender differences in search approach, but they did not emerge as significant from the behavioural model in phase three. Therefore further research that perhaps conceptualises these differences in greater detail with a view to then examining any association between those itemised differences and search behaviour could be valuable if, as is suggested in Section 8.1.2.3, there may be opportunities for women in Middle-Eastern economies that are now embracing internet technology to become more engaged decision-makers in online service contexts.

9.0 References

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10.0 Appendices

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Phase (1) Interview Transcript

Appendix B: Phase (1) Interview Coding

Appendix C: Phase (1) Interview Participant Characteristics

Appendix D: Phase (2) Interview Transcript

Appendix E: Phase (2) Observation Participant Characteristics

Appendix F: A critique Sample of the Measurement Scales for Perceived Convenience

Appendix G: Detailed Breakdown of 13 constructs

Appendix H: Phase (3) Questionnaire

Appendix I: Phase (3) Questionnaire Data set Codes and Meanings

Appendix J: Phase (3) Missing values analysis SPSS tables

Appendix K: Phase (3) Normality tests

Appendix L: Phase (3) Regression models SPSS outputs

Appendix M: Phase (3) PCA SPSS outputs

Appendix N: Phase (3) The Effect of Moderators

Appendix A: Phase (1) Interview Transcript

My name is Khald Alatawy , I am a doctoral research student at De Montfort University in the UK. I would like to take this opportunity first to offer my thanks and gratitude for finding the time for me in answering the questions in this interview. May I talk you through the ins and outs of this research topic. This study is about the technology adoption of online booking / purchase of travel services in Saudi Arabia. The study aims to examine the current experience within travel agencies and the barriers to online shopping in the Saudi Arabian market. Thank you for your participation, it is really well appreciated and I am sure it will make a valuable contribution to this study. May I point out that the interview is purely for scientific and academic endeavor and not for commercial purposes. The data is recorded for accuracy only. I hope that is acceptable for you. If you have any further questions or concerns about this please feel free to ask. This interview will take about 30 minutes.

Interviewer: How long you have been in this business?
R7: Al-Tayyar as a company has existed for almost 30 years, while I myself have been Executive Director here for one year.
Interviewer: Can you please tell me more about your business?
R7: Al-Tayyar is the leading company within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's travel and tourism industry, and it is the largest in terms of sales volume. Our vision is to move towards having a strong presence in e-trade and e-digitisation. We recently launched a travel search engine on our site.
Interviewer: What is the message that you want to communicate to your customers through your brand?
R7: Al-Tayyar as a brand has been known for a long time, but if we wanted to work in a new field we would re-launch the Al-Tayyar's identity and develop the logo. However, we are very aware of what Al-Tayyar means to our customers and the key values that we want to uphold. We strive to achieve customer satisfaction by providing all that is new in digital commerce.
Interviewer: What is your main market?
R7: Domestic and overseas tourism. We are principally interested in customers who live in Saudi Arabia.
Interviewer: From your experience what is the most popular destination chosen by customers in Riyadh?
R7: Europe, Dubai, East Asia and Turkey.
Interviewer: How do you regard the competition in Riyadh's tourism market?
R7: There is strong competition, but the tourism market here is in a state of chaos.
Interviewer: Why is it in a state of chaos?
R7: Because there is no administrative body regulating the market.
Interviewer: What about the General Commission for Tourism?
R7: The General Commission for Tourism has shortcomings in this area, in my opinion.
Interviewer: How do rate your competitors?

R7: We have two types of competitors: firstly, those who rely 100% on selling to individuals and we are not affected by this; secondly, there are those who rely on selling to individuals as well as to firms. That is the area we strongly need to work on.
Interviewer: In what way has your business changed during the last three years?
R7: There have been changes leading to the adoption of e-trade. Therefore, it is important to implement these changes. Furthermore, the Internet and search engines mean that employees can work more quickly and efficiently.
Interviewer: Could you tell me about the changes, if there have been any, in customers' travel expectations during the past couple of years?
R7: Customers have become much more aware of the details of their holiday packages. Therefore, the main advantage of adopting a website is that the customer can find the vacation that suits him without going to the agency employees with questions and inquiries.
Interviewer: How do you evaluate your company as a technology user?
R7: Generally, the travel and tourism sector makes good use of the technology available, but the degree of use will vary from one company to another. Regarding our company, we have not yet achieved our planned objectives and are still working towards them.
Interviewer: Could you tell me about the benefits that you expect to obtain from online activities?
R7: I do not expect to reap any immediate benefits. Internet usage in Saudi Arabia is 40%, but this is for digital commerce. However, I can foresee some benefits such as reduced costs, access to new segments of the population and potential customers such as women, who we could not have reached in the past.
Interviewer: It is easy for a travel agency to adopt online services in tourism sector. What do you think of this statement?
R7: It is neither necessary nor easy. It requires a lot of effort in terms of managing the process, follow-up, marketing, and the prevention of scams and fraud.
Interviewer: Some travel companies are not comfortable with adopting online services in their business. What is your opinion about this?
R7: I think it is true. For the same reasons as mentioned above.
Interviewer: For your own company would you prefer to rely on a traditional or an online service? Or both?
R7: Some countries, such as those in Scandinavia, rely on 90% e-services, and in Europe it is 50%. In many ways these countries are far ahead of us: therefore we can assume that we will continue using the traditional sales methods but with the additional development of e-services.
Interviewer: From your experience, what are your expectations of how online activities will develop in future?
R7: We proactively develop our website to ensure all new services are available on it. However, establishing a website is not enough by itself. We should also work on preparing the travel agencies themselves to adopt this kind of technology, and we could do this by educating and training the staff, as well as by developing the existing payment systems; for instance, we are working together with American Express to develop our e-payment system.
Interviewer: From your experience, what are the factors that delay the adoption of technology in travel agencies?

R7: I think the delay can be caused by a lack of qualified employees and difficulties installing e-payment methods. For example, we have tried to develop our e-payment system but we faced considerable government bureaucracy.
Interviewer: What percentage of your customers use online booking?
R7: Unfortunately, I cannot give you an accurate figure because in the last period we had technical problems with the site and payment problems such as scams and fraud […] Some transactions were eliminated by a system which prevents processes originating in countries which are famous for fraud.
Interviewer: Which age groups are more likely to use online activities?
R7: Young people.
Interviewer: Why is that?
R7: Because this segment of customers are willing to take risks and experiment, unlike the older age groups. There are many older people who still do not use credit cards and when they need money they go to the bank.
Interviewer: Can you tell me about the gender differentiations, if there are any?
R7: Our website has only been running for a short period, therefore this is difficult to gauge, however, I do expect there to be differences. I think women will be more likely to use this kind of service because it gives privacy and confidentiality, and that will appeal to women in our society.
Interviewer: Can you tell me about the impact of the customers' level of education on their use of online activities?
R7: When customers are well-educated and knowledgeable the probabilities of them using e-services are high, as long as they have a regular income and visa.
Interviewer: Can you tell me about the regional differences, if there are any, between customers in the KSA with regard to their use of online and offline activities?
R7: I think there are regional differences and these are connected with the cultural variations which arise from the presence of multinational companies in the KSA; this is evident in Riyadh , Jeddah and Dammam.

Interviewer: What about other regions?
R7: Other areas of the KSA are less accepting of digital commerce; the reason is that most of the communities in the small cities are semi-closed. Generally, it is well known that the areas which are more advanced and urbanised are also more likely to be open and accepting of change.
Interviewer: Do you get any feedback from customers with regard to online activities?
R7: Yes.
Interviewer: Can you tell me more about this feedback?
R7: The remarks were concerning the slow service because customers want everything quickly.
Interviewer: Do you think that many customers now have the skills to use online booking?
R7: Skills are not necessary.
Interviewer: How do you see the future for the tourism sector?
R7: I believe that the future is promising because the country is undergoing an economic boom and this is a positive indicator.
Interviewer: What does your company foresee for the next five years?
R7: As I mentioned early, we would like to be the first company in KSA to adopt digital commerce.

Interviewer: The future of the tourism industry relies on e-service technology. What stands out in your mind about that comment?
R7: I believe it is true, and we are working to be there with iPads, iPhones and so on.
Interviewer: Can you tell me about any plans you have to develop your online service?
R7: We are interested in digital commerce and we will be following our customers through whichever channel they choose.
Interviewer: Thank you Dr. Fahad for your participation; it is much appreciated.
R7: You are welcome.

Appendix B: Phase (1) Interview coding

Codes	Meaning	Examples	Commentaries
FE	Firm Experience	R3: I have been doing business since 1980	To compare the firm age with the technology level of use.
FE-FB	Firm Background	R7: Al-Tayyar is the leading company within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's travel and tourism industry, and it is the largest in terms of sales volume.	To find out the firm size. Firm life cycle Marketing target
FE-SB	Service Background	R3: We are doing travel packages, travel insurances, visa services and a lot of services.	To crafty Services kinds To discover the Preferred destination
FE-FTP	Firm types and positioning	R14: There is no clear mechanism for identifying our competitors	To find out who is the market leader. To find out how Saudi commission for tourism manage the market.
ECB	Experience of change in business	R12: We now have our own website and we provide a different type of reservation system over the web.	To investigate what types of changes they got.
ECB-PE	Past experience	R9: We launched the e-service through our website.	To link the past experience with the experience of change.
ECB-TAS	Technology adoption stage	R6: If not excellent, we are certainly very good.	To Find out actual system use
TA	Technology adoption	R1: we were concerned with the market needs and the atmosphere of the market itself which did not fully encourage the application of technology.	TAM model To Find out actual system use
TA-PU	Perceived usefulness	R8: We hope to gain access to the largest segment of customers.	
TA-PE	Perceived ease of use	R4: No, it is not easy; however, it is necessary	
TA-ATU	Attitude towards using online services	R13: No, because as I said before, customers are looking for the cheapest prices and they can find these on a number of travel websites.	
TA-BIU	Behavioural intention to use	R8: I believe that travel websites are the future.	

TA-FO	Factors that obstruct	R9: Most companies are unaware of the importance of marketing their websites. Also, customer culture.	The reason why customer do not use e-service
CCU	Customer change & use of online search	R14: I cannot provide you with an accurate percentage. Maybe 20%.	Usage percentages
CCU-D	Demographic	R15: aged from 25 to 45.	To measure the impact of age , gender, income and education on e-service usage.
CCU-C	Culture impact	R8: Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam all have more open, culturally diverse populations and there are more internet users in these cities compared to other cities, such as Tabouk and Qassim.	The reason for regions differences
CCU-CEBS	Customer experience in Booking and Searching	R6: Most complaints are regarding the lack of direct assistance available when they use our website.	which area they worried about according to feedback
CCU-DE	Domain expertise	R14: Yes, many customers have these skills	Why they have skills but they did not use them
GFV	Growth and future vision	R1: I think the tourism sector will continue to thrive and develop quickly.	When e-service well be adopted in the future
GFV-FV	future vision	R14: It is true, and I think this will be the future	How important the adoption of technology in the future.
GFV-MS	Marketing strategy	R8: We are already working on the development of the site to re-design it.	To discover any new plan

Appendix C: Phase (1) Interview participant characteristics

Respondent	Position	Travel firm Age	Travel Agency name	Interview duration	Date
R1	Marketing director	20 years	Kassab, travel and tourism	35minutes	13/7/2011
R2	Branch manger	18 years	Amra' house , travel and tourism	31 Minutes	14/7/2011
R3	Marketing director	30 years	Travel and tourism	33minutes	17/7/2011
R4	Branch manger	25 years	Alhamad , travel and tourism	31minutes	18/7/2011
R5	Branch manger	3 years	The Saudi Commission for Tourism, Tabouk branch	35 minutes	19/07/2011
R6	Branch manger	15 years	Al-sarh Travel & Tourism	39 Minutes	27/7/2011
R7	executive manager	5 years	Al-Tayyar Travel Group	35 minutes	22/7/2011
R8	Marketing assistant	3 years	Amjad Travel & Tourism	40 minutes	27/7/2011
R9	Marketing director	29 years	Saudi international agency	23 minutes	29/7/2011
R10	Branch manger	20 years	Zahid Travel group	26 minutes	2/8/2011
R11	The chairman of The Saudi Commission for Tourism	14 years	The Saudi Commission for Tourism, central branch	31 minutes	07/08/2011
R12	Branch manger	8 years	Mosaid Travel & Tourism Services	25 minutes	10/8/2011
R13	Branch manger	46 years	Saudi Tourist & Travel Bureau Ltd	28 minutes	12/8/2011
R14	Customer relationship manger	20 years	Alamoudi holidays	29 minutes	13/8/2011
R15	Branch manger	6 years	City stars service Travel	31 minutes	14/8/2011
R16	Branch manger	27 years	Saudi international travel agency	29 minutes	16/08/2011
R17	Branch manger	7 years	The Saudi Commission for Tourism, Jeddah branch	25 Minutes	18/08/2011

Appendix D: phase (2) Interview Transcript

First of all I would like to introduce myself, my name is Khald Alatawy, I am a doctoral research student at De Montfort University in the UK. I would like to take this opportunity first to offer my thanks for finding the time for this interview. I would like to give you some background of this research topic. This is a study that is clarifying the range of online search behaviour, Saudi consumers engage in prior to purchase. In particular, today we are looking at how Saudi travellers browse web pages, what kinds of sources they will use, and how they will evaluate this information. I am really interested in learning about your experience of this and I am sure this will make a valuable contribution to this study. I would like to point out that the interview is purely for academic purposes and all responses are fully confidential. The data is recorded for accuracy only. I hope that is acceptable for you. If you have any further questions or concerns about this please feel free to ask. This session will take about 45 minutes.

Interviewer: My first question is, have you ever used traditional travel services to book your holiday before?
R8: No.
Interviewer: Why not?
R8: Because everything I do revolves around the internet, so it's just easier for me. Plus, I think that travel agencies will most likely disappear within the next 5 years!
Interviewer: Okay! Does the internet give you everything you need, or anything that the travel agency wouldn't?
R8: It cuts costs for me. The travel agent will charge me a fee, but the internet won't, so it cheaper for me to do it myself.
Interviewer: Okay. Do you remember the first time you booked your holiday online?
R8: Yes, it was to Austria.
Interviewer: Okay, could you tell me a bit about your experience?
R8: I was happy because I found a lot of information, and everyone was talking about Austria and how good it is. People were giving comprehensive views on which websites are the best ones to use. The benefit on the internet is you can find many opinions on one thing, but with travel agents, you can't.
Interviewer: Do you remember how long it took you to make your decision?
R8: Yes, 2 days.
Interviewer: How was it?
R8: Good, but it took me a while to decide because they were all expensive. After I checked online, for the first time, I went to the travel agent to check their prices, and they were much more expensive. Like 50% more expensive than the internet prices.
Interviewer: Oh right. So that's the reason you just use the internet?
R8: Yes, mostly.
Interviewer: Okay. Did all of this happen in Saudi or over here?
R8: Over here.
Interviewer: Okay. If you were in Saudi when you were doing all this, would you do the same? Would you use the internet?
R8: Yes, we would, but I would also go to the agents. They offer family packages.

Interviewer: Some people I have spoke to, think that all Saudi's living or studying abroad, may be using online travel services, others don't. what do you think?
R8: I think we learn a lot more over here, regarding the internet. We're more open over here and learn about certain websites that try and hack you. The government over here are very good. For example, my bank in Saudi took money from me, and when I realised, they didn't do anything. They didn't give me a refund or anything. But over here, I'm with HSBC, and there was a slight issue with my account, so they gave me a refund within 2 weeks, so it's very good.
Interviewer: Some people I have spoke to think that when they came over here, and they saw people using the internet for everything, they were encouraged to use it more. What do you think of this?
R8: Yes, it does. When I lived with a host family, I saw them using the internet for everything, and then for the first time, I started using the internet for online shopping.

Interviewer: And why do you think that is? The majority of Saudi's I've spoke to didn't use the internet in Saudi that much, but when they come here, suddenly they use it a lot more. What is your opinion on why this happens?
R8: Well, for me, it saves me time. It shows me many options and gives me choices to choose from. Also, I've learnt here to examine websites. I read reviews of websites a lot more and then look at the rating of that search engine or website. I have overall become more analytical.
Interviewer: Okay. Do you think you can do all of that in Saudi as well?
R8: No, because I've learnt how to use the internet properly over here. Over there, I think even in the last 5 years, the internet is not used much for online shopping or anything. It isn't as popular as it is over here, so I couldn't learn how to use it properly over there. Would you agree?
Interviewer: Yes. Do you know the percentage of people who are online shoppers in Saudi? It's 15%! This is from the latest report. If you compare that figure to the report in the UK, it's 75% of people are online shoppers. So yes, I agree.
Okay. Do you think that the Saudi culture would encourage using the internet for online travel services?
R8: No. Because Saudi's don't like to read. They just want someone to come and explain everything to them, and give them the contract, and that's it. They don't want to research or anything like that. Even if you send them an e-mail with all the information, they won't read it. You must come to them, explain it all, give them a contract to sign, and that's it. They want someone to do everything for them. This applies to both male and female Saudi's.
Interviewer: Could you tell me about the importance of getting advice from family/friends to make your decision regarding using the internet for travel purposes or using the traditional travel agents? Which way would your family encourage?
R8: My family use the internet always, but I use both the internet and travel agents because, like I said, I like to compare.
Interviewer: Okay, what about online communities such as travel websites? Social media? Forums?
R8: Yes, I trust them.
Interviewer: Do you think your family expect you to use the internet for travel purposes?
R8: Yes, because my family use the internet for everything.

Interviewer: Do you expect any of your family members who haven't travelled abroad to use the internet for travel purposes?
R8: Yes, because I have my own website online, and I find a lot of women online, so I would expect my family to use the internet as well, not just for travel purposes but for everything.
Interviewer: The reason they go online is because they want privacy. They don't want to move around, and communicate with men. Because in Saudi, some women wouldn't want to go to the travel agent and be in the same room as men, and sometimes they think it would be rude to ask a man a question, but that shouldn't be the case, but it is.
R8: Yes, I agree, because some of my family live in villages and they are not used to these things and they don't have big shopping centre's etc.
Interviewer: Okay. Do you remember the last holiday you booked? Was it online or the traditional way?
R8: Both. Online was for booking the flights, and to view different hotels (information about them), and the agent was for booking the hotel.
Interviewer: Did you have any problems?
R8: Yes, the flights. It was very difficult to find a good, competitive price. They were all very expensive so this was a problem.
Interviewer: Okay. Did you ask anyone when making your decision?
R8: Yes, my husband.

Interviewer: Okay, and do you have a joint decision with him? **R8**: Yes.
Interviewer: Okay, some people I've spoke to think that the wife does all the research and gets all the information, but then the husband chooses whatever HE likes and then pays for it. Like, one man I spoke to said that "whoever pays, they decide". What do you think?
R8: Yes, I agree!

Interviewer: Okay! But what about joint decisions?
R8: Yeah, I enjoy having joint decisions more.
Interviewer: Okay. If you were in Saudi now, would you book your holiday online or the traditional way?
R8: Both, because first I would go online and research everything, and then compare the prices on the internet to the prices of the travel agents, and then decide. The main factor for me is the price. It doesn't really matter to me about whether it's online or the traditional way. But the internet is always the first thing I use.
Interviewer: Can you describe your feeling when using the internet for travel purposes?
R8: Yeah, it feels nice and easy, but I don't like searching about the flights and tickets, but besides from that, it's nice.
Interviewer: Would you consider yourself an experienced user of online travel services?
R8: Not very experienced, just normal.
Interviewer: How would you rate yourself, on a scale of 1 to 10, in having the right skills? In terms of online travel services?
R8: 8. Because I use it a lot, but I can't say 10, because I don't travel all the time.
Interviewer: Okay, could you give me some examples of skills that you have regarding internet usage? Or skills anyone would need?

R8: Websites. You need to know which websites are well-known, so basically search skills.
Interviewer: What about language?
R8: I try and find an Arabic website because Arabic is my first language, and if I need help, I can ring them and ask them questions easily. Also, because we're both Arab, our needs are similar and they know exactly what I want. If I ring someone English, they may tell me about something that I don't like. We have things in common, which is important.
Interviewer: Okay. Some people think that knowing the English language will help you better than somebody who doesn't understand/speak English. Do you agree?
R8: Yes, because if you search English, you will find a lot of results, but if you search in Arabic, your results will be limited.
Interviewer: Okay, during your online task, you used Google. Why?
R8: Because I prefer it. It's easy, the quickest, and it gives you a lot of information.
Interviewer: Okay, what about photo search? Why do you pay so much attention to it?
R8: Because photo's give you a better idea of what the place looks like. Even if it's from the travel agent or the website, or it's not, pictures always give me a good idea of what the place looks like.
Interviewer: What do you think of people who say that not all pictures of hotels are real, some are fake?
R8: Well I don't book my hotel from anywhere (any website). It must be through my own agent, because I trust them because there 5 star. And even if it's referred from my travel agent, I still search that hotel on the internet and look for myself.
Interviewer: Okay, what about social media? Twitter?
R8: No, I don't use Twitter for travelling information.
Interviewer: So you don't think that is important then?
R8: I don't trust Twitter or Facebook or Social Networks, because you don't know anyone who's using that social network. With Google, if you search, you have pictures and information from websites, and it tells you the address and everything of the place.
Interviewer: Okay, what about your method and style of searching?
R8: First I use Google, and at the same time, ask my agent, and then compare the prices.
Interviewer: Okay, during your online search, you used only 2 key words. Did you think those 2 key words were enough to find what you wanted? The 2 key words were "Best places in Spain" and "Prices".
R8: No, they weren't enough, but it was just a quick search so I didn't do everything properly.
Interviewer: Okay. Do you use advanced search tools?
R8: Just Google really.

Interviewer: Okay, in your opinion, how important is it to use advanced search tools?
R8: I think it's very important, but I don't think there are many good travelling advanced tools. Travelling tools need to be developed. Also, I think we need travel websites to become more like online shopping websites. For example, online shopping websites, you can place an order and then they'll ring you, give you more information about your order, and that helps. So I would like to see something more like that on travelling websites.

Interviewer: Okay. Some people I've spoke to think that using advanced search tools may make things more complicated. Others don't. What do you think?
R8: No, I think it would make it easier. It saves time, and plus, it makes your search more trustworthy.
Interviewer: Okay, how do you feel about the search you have just done?
R8: Not happy, because I didn't have enough time. I need at least 1 week to do all my research and see all the information, and then I'll decide whether I want to go somewhere.
Interviewer: Okay. Do you ever get advice or recommendations from anyone?
R8: Yes, sometimes my friends, but mostly from Arabic forums.
Interviewer: Okay. Does their advice ever change your decision? Like, does their opinion ever influence you?
R8: Yes, I do change my mind sometimes, but only if I know them and I trust them, or if I know they have been to the same place I want to go.
Interviewer: Okay. Did you find what you were looking for when you did your online search task?
R8: No, I just found descriptions of the place I want to go.
Interviewer: Okay. How good was the information you found?
R8: Good, I have a general idea about Spain now, and the good places there.
Interviewer: Okay. When do you feel you have enough information to make your decision?
R8: After I've searched, and only if I feel confident about the information I have. For example, if my friend has been to Spain and she tells me, on average, how much I will spend every day and things like that, then I feel confident.
Interviewer: Okay, I'm going to give you some factors now and I want your opinion on them. How important is up-to-date information?
R8: I think it's very important, because things are always changing so I always want to look at recent information.

Interviewer: Okay, what about comprehensive information?
R8: Yes, I like in-detail information.
Interviewer: Okay, do you prefer hot weather?
R8: No, not that hot!
Interviewer: Okay. Information reviewed and recommended by others?
R8: Yeah, it helps you make your final decision.
Interviewer: Okay. Men and women may differ in how they search and process information? Your opinion?
R8: I think women and men search for different things. Like, women may look for shopping places and places to take the children. If I use me and my husband as an example, he looks at everything in details, but I don't.
Interviewer: And why do you think that is?
R8: Well a couple of days ago, I was looking at a magazine that had something about Maldives on it, and I liked it, but my husband said that first I should check about the security in the country/hotel, and these kind of things I don't think about.
Interviewer: Okay. Some people think that the use of the internet for travel purposes may give Saudi women more freedom to make travel decisions. What do you think?

R8: Yes, I think it gives them freedom, and makes things easier for women, like general life. Because in Saudi, women can't really go to agents, but over here we can do everything. But in the last 4 years, I have been going to travel agents in Saudi and I have never had any problems. And about 60% of the people there were women, so I don't think it's a problem now. Only 50% of women in Saudi, I think, can't go out.
Interviewer: Okay, in your opinion, is the travel decision the mans, or the woman's, or both?
R8: I think it's both. Sometimes, me and my husband want to go to different places, so we just choose a package that includes both. Or whoever is more excited about the holiday chooses.
Interviewer: Okay, some studies mention that the internet may break down social restrictions, especially for Arab women. What do you think?
R8: Yes, I agree, because like you said, in our culture, men and women don't really interact, but now, especially because of social media like Twitter and Instagram, men and women interact more, even if its about travelling or shopping, everyone talks about it openly. It has given women more confidence now. But regarding travelling, I don't think any social restrictions have been broken down.
Interviewer: Okay, could you tell me any social restrictions in Saudi, for example? Because in Saudi, people confuse religion and culture/tradition.
R8: Well one example is how women, when they come from Saudi to over here, they always think they can't talk to men because of their tradition/culture. But once they come here, they talk to men who are British because they are not from their country, so they don't mind.

Interviewer: So we get Religion and tradition/culture mixed up?
R8: In all honesty, we pay more attention to tradition/culture. That is the number one thing, not religion.
Interviewer: What about women driving? Is this a religious matter or traditional matter?
R8: It's a traditional matter, because in our culture, we have grew up in a very conservative environment. We always try and separate men and women, but nowadays, we try and mix men and women, but it's a problem, but we still keep trying.
Interviewer: Okay. Do you think there is a difference between Saudi women who live in different regions?
R8: Well women in Jeddah, women are more open, because their origin is not from Saudi, and they mix with different cultures, and they are very open and free. But women in Riyadh, they are very conservative, but 9 or 10 years ago, they were also very open like women in Jeddah and Dahman. But overall, now I think women all over Saudi are very open.
Interviewer: What about women in the South and North?
R8: Women in the south are conservative. There are some rules they have which even I find hard to believe and I'm from Saudi!
Interviewer: Okay. Which part would you want to come from in Saudi if you had the choice?
R8: Riyadh, I wouldn't change!
Interviewer: Okay! As a Saudi women, would you prefer to find information online or the traditional way?
R8: Both. Travel agents are more trustworthy for me, and online, I trust official websites but not any other websites because I have had bad experiences with them.
Interviewer: Could you give us one example of these bad experiences?

R8: For example, I did online shopping one week ago, and also one month ago, and I brought a watch. The website did many things, like bags and watches. But after I looked at the "Contact Us" page, I realised something. If you ever see a page that just has an e-mail address and no other form of contact, don't trust it. If it doesn't have an address or phone number, don't trust it, just block it. What they did was, they sent me a different watch and it was a very poor quality watch, a fake. So I contacted my bank, told them the order number and I sent them a picture of the watch that I actually ordered and the photo of the watch they actually sent me. The other example was a Burberry T-Shirt. I ordered it online, and it was £200, and it's £350 in the official Burberry store/website, and the website didn't send me anything.
Interviewer: Wow! Me, personally, I always use Amazon or E-Bay.
R8: I don't mind them, I use them both as well. But I feel safe over here, in the UK, because I know things like this don't really happen.
Interviewer: Okay. Some think that the marital status will effect the choice and use of the internet for travel purposes. What do you think?
R8: No, I don't think so. If you mean as a whole, then I think single people may use the internet a lot more.
Interviewer: What about if your married? You have a job, but what if you don't have a job and you're married?
R8: They will, but not as much as people who are single.
Interviewer: What about age?
R8: I think people between 20 and 30 use the internet use the internet a lot, for everything! People between 10 and 20 just use it for fun.
Interviewer: What about people between 18 and 30, why do they use it a lot?
R8: Like for travelling, shopping, sometimes doing deals with companies and looking for jobs.
Interviewer: What about the level of education?
R8: No, not at all, because of my experience. Education sometimes may affect someone's attitude and thinking style, but most of the time no. Most of the time its personality. You may not go to school, but you still might have the personality that likes the internet and uses it a lot. Like my Grandfather, I like his personality even though he is a lot older, but he has life experience. It's a personality thing. Maybe, with education, if you're using the internet for your studies, that may help you in how to search about your topic and things, but for general use, I don't think the level of education matters.
Interviewer: Would you use the internet again for travel information?
R8: Yes, because I always use it and it's easy.

Interviewer: Okay, how ready are you to go onto the purchasing step?
R8: I'm not ready because I only have 2 weeks off for Easter, and I don't have time to do much searching and I don't have time to ask anyone before that, so if I do go, I will just go and not do much research. But if I plan to go in the summer holidays, I'll have time to research.
Interviewer: Okay, well that's it. thank you very much and I have really enjoyed your interview. Your free to say anything you like now or ask any questions if you want.
R8: I would just like to say that I want you to hopefully improve the online travel websites and our technology.
Interviewer: I will try, thank you very much.

Appendix E: phase (2) Observation participant characteristics

Respondent	Gender	Age group	Education	Income	No. Of years in the UK	*Internet Experience	*Travel knowledge
R1	Male	28-40	PhD	Between £60.000 and £100.000	More than 4 years	6	6
R2	Male	28-40	Master	Between £15.000 and £50.000	1 to 3 years	5	7
R3	Male	18-28	Bachelor	Less than £15.000	More than 4 years	5	5
R4	Female	28-40	Bachelor	Between £15.000 and £50.000	More than 4 years	5	3
R5	Female	18-28	Bachelor	Less than £15.000	1 to 3 years	3	5
R6	Female	28-40	Master	Between £15.000 and £50.000	1 to 3 years	6	3
R7	Male	28-40	PhD	Between £15.000 and £50.000	More than 4 years	5	5
R8	Female	28-40	PhD	Between £60.000 and £100.000	More than 4 years	5	5

*The respondents rated themselves at a scale from 1 to 7, measuring their experience with using the internet to search for information, where 1 refers to not very experienced user and 7 to very experience user.

*The respondents rated themselves at a scale from 1 to 7, measuring their travel knowledge with using the internet to search for information, where 1 refers to Poor knowledge and 7 to excellent knowledge.

Appendix F: A critique sample of the measurement scales for Perceived Convenience

F1. Proposed Perceived Convenience instruments

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the perceived convenience construct. This appendix is an example of how the researcher undertook criticise of previous studies which have addressed the perceived convenience construct. Step one (table F1) was a detailed reviewed of a range of past studies. It was found that the most perceived convenience item were based on three key studies (Shim, et al, 2001; Brown,1989; Berry et al , 2002) as shown in table F2

Table F1

Author	Aim & finding	Used items
Shim, S., Eastlick, M. A., Lotz, S. L., & Warrington, P. (2001). An online prepurchase intentions model: The role of intention to search: Best Overall Paper Award—The Sixth Triennial AMS/ACRA Retailing Conference, 2000☆ 11☆ Decision made by a panel of Journal of Retailing editorial board members. Journal of retailing, 77(3), 397-416.	This study aimed to find out whether intent to search online for product information is a major aspect for marketers to utilize in predicting consumers' Internet purchasing intentions, and also look at the roles of consumer attitude and other relevant variables in predicting both online searching and purchasing intentions. The results of this study demonstrated that intention to adopt the online search for information was not only the most strongest predictor of online purchase intention, but it is also mediated relations between purchasing intention and other predictors such as attitude toward online shopping, perceived behavioral control and previous Internet purchase experience it was also found that there is direct and indirect relationships between attitude toward Internet shopping , previous Internet purchase experience and Internet purchase intention.	Perceived convenience was measured by adopting six items. These are Overall Speed of Process, Ease of Finding What I Want, Time Savings, and Instant Ability to Get Items and Freedom from Hassles.
Torkzadeh, G., & Dhillon, G. (2002). Measuring factors that influence the success of Internet commerce. Information Systems Research, 13(2), 187-204.	This study attempted to look at the factors that influence online commerce success and influence online purchase as well the other measures the fundamental objectives that customers perceive to be significant in online commerce. It was found that Factors, such as internet product choice, online payment, Internet vendor trust, shopping travel, convenience and Internet shipping errors have an Influence the Success of Internet Commerce and its applications.	How Perceived convenience was measured through the following items; • It is important to make shopping easy. • It is important to minimize effort of shopping. • It is important to minimize queuing time. • It is important to minimize time to select a product. • It is important to minimize personal hassle. • It is important to minimize payment time. • It is important to minimize time pressure when shopping.
Berry, L. L., Seiders, K., & Grewal, D. (2002). Understanding service convenience. The Journal of Marketing, 1-17.	This study focus on service convenience that is conceptualized as customers' time and effort perceptions associated with buying or using a service. This study proposes different types of service convenience and considers how time and effort costs manipulate customers' convenience attitude. It was found that customers' evaluation of	In order to measured the Perceived convenience, this study is divided it into five dimensions, namely Decision convenience, Access convenience, Transaction convenience, Benefit convenience, and Postbenefit convenience. Each dimension has a number of items that can be assessed using a Likert

	waiting time influences their attitude and satisfaction with the service. Several waiting time studies report a strong relation- ship between consumers' evaluation of the wait and overall service satisfaction. This study also provided a conceptual model proposing a more comprehensive multi-dimensional measure of convenience within a services context; • Decision convenience is consumers need to decide how to obtain a particular service. • Access convenience involves consumers initiating service delivery, i.e. actions required to request services and to receive them. • Transaction convenience is consumers need to secure the service. • Benefit convenience involves consumers to experience of the services. • Post-benefit convenience is post service interactions with the provided.	format. **Decision convenience** is consumers' perceived time and effort expenditures to make service purchase or use decisions: • It took minimal time to get the information needed to choose a service provider. • Making up my mind about what I wanted to buy was easy. • It was easy to get the information I needed to decide which service provider to use. **Access convenience** is consumers' perceived time and effort expenditures to initiate service delivery: • It was easy to contact the service provider. • It did not take much time to reach the service provider. • I was able to get to the service provider's location quickly. **Transaction convenience** is consumers' perceived time and effort expenditures to effect a transaction: • I did not have to make much of an effort to pay for the service. • They made it easy for me to conclude my purchase. • I was able to complete my purchase quickly. **Benefit convenience** is consumers' perceived time and effort expenditures to experience the service's core benefits: • I was able to get the benefits of the service with minimal effort. • The service was easy to use. • The time required to receive the benefits of the service was appropriate **Post benefit convenience** is consumers' perceived time and effort expenditures to reinitiate contact with the service provider after the benefit stage of the service: • The service provider resolved my problem quickly. • It took little effort to arrange follow-up service. • The service provider made it easy for me to resolve my problem.
Jih, W. J. (2007). Effects of consumer-Perceived convenience on shopping Intention in mobile commerce: an Empirical study. International Journal of E-Business Research (IJEBR), 3(4), 33-48.	This study was conducted to examine the effect of convenience on customers' intention of shopping via their mobile communication devices. The result shows a significant relationship between the two variables, and a positive effect of convenience perception on shopping intention. The findings have practical implications for mobile commerce strategists by providing more understanding of the mobile commerce success factors from a consumer	In order to measure perceived convenience, this study adopted Brown (1989)'s proposed a five-dimension convenience model. These are time dimension, place dimension, acquisition dimension, use dimension and execution dimension.

	behavior point of view.	
Brown, L. G. (1989). The strategic and tactical implications of convenience in consumer product marketing. Journal of Consumer Marketing, 6, 13-19.	This study attempted to define the concept of convenience and its tactical implications in marketing. Also , it indentifies the dimensions that influence perceived convenience. This study Proposes a conceptual framework that can be used to examine the convenience of consumer products, involving five dimensions: time dimension, place dimension, acquisition dimension, use dimension, and execution dimension.	This study proposed five dimensions that the concept of convenience has. These are 1) time dimension 2) place dimension 3) acquisition dimension 4) use dimension 5) execution dimension. By applying these dimensions, perceived convenience is measured. **Time dimension:** Services and products might be provided at a time that is most convenient for the consumers. This dimension does not mean time saving, it means customers can buy products or services at a convenient time. **Place dimension:** Products and services might provide in a place that is more convenient form the customers' perspective, for instance a bank branch. **Acquisition dimension:** Make it easier for the customers financially to purchase their product, for instance, accepting credit cards, paying online (i.e. telephone call and over the internet). **Use dimension:** Products and services might be made more convenient for the customers to use. For instance, the use of a new technology. **Execution dimension:** The most obvious convenience is simply having someone else supply the product for customers (e.g. frozen food).
Izquierdo-Yusta, A., & Schultz, R. J. (2011). Understanding the effect of internet convenience on intention to purchase via the internet. Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness, 5(4), 32-50.	This study looked at Purchasing over the Internet which offers significant cost savings and time benefits to both service providers and consumers. Also it assesses a model of factors to be expected to affect intentions to Purchase over the Internet. It was found that the importance of Internet Convenience demonstrates it is necessary that consumers perceive the Internet will save them time and effort. Perceptions of convenience of using the Internet exert a direct influence on perceived usefulness from a consumer perspective, and should be applied specifically to the process of decision making. It was also found that study also imply that trust is a key variable that acts on Intentions to use the Internet.	**Convenience in decisions** (CONVD) 1. Shopping on line is a good idea 2. Shopping on line is enjoyable 3. Shopping on line is easy **Convenience in usefulness between channels** (CONVU) I believe that ……. 1. I save more time shopping on line than over traditional channels 2. It's faster shopping on line than over traditional channels 3. It's more comfortable to shopping on line than over traditional channels **Convenience in safety and trust (CONCS)** 1. They offer freely information regarding privacy policies and data security 2. The privacy policy and security is certified by an external authority **Convenience in pre-benefits (CONPRB)** 1. They are accessible 24hrs 7days/week 52weeks/year . 2. They show quickly and clearly any and all relevant information 3. The page is downloadable in a matter of seconds (3-7 seconds) 4. There are quick search options **Convenience in the benefits during the choice (CONDCB)** 1. I am able to review my booking before finalizing and paying . 2. The final price is shown (including VAT) 3. The reservation/ booking is confirmed by mail

		within 24 hours 4. Cancellation policy is clearly outlined and readily available **Convenience in pre-benefits (CONPRB)** 1. They are easy to navigate 2. It is easy to find what you are looking for quickly with minimum navigation 3. The website is visually appealing 4. Animated pop ups with advertising material don't interrupt the navigation process. **Convenience in the benefits during the choice (CONDCB);** 1. All costs are shown (airport taxes etc.) 2. Different means of payment are fully detailed. **Convenience in post-benefits (CONVPTB)** 1. Email Contact information is accessible 2. Contact phone numbers are outlined and readily accessible 3. The different type of rooms available are clearly shown 4. User feedback regarding customer satisfaction/ dissatisfaction regarding differences between information gained online and reality is shown 5. User feedback regarding customer satisfaction/ dissatisfaction regarding the presentation of services is shown.
Kuo-Chien Chang, Mu-Chen Chen, Chia-Lin Hsu, Nien-Te Kuo, (2010),"The effect of service convenience on post-purchasing behaviours", Industrial Management & Data Systems, Vol. 110 Iss: 9 pp. 1420 – 1443	This paper made an attempt to examine the relationships among service convenience, perceived service value, perceived service guarantee strength, loyalty and customer satisfaction. This study finding demonstrated that service convenience has a positive influence on customer satisfaction. Moreover, customer satisfaction is indirectly influenced by service convenience through perceived service value and the relationship between service convenience and customer satisfaction, which is stronger for customers who perceive high service guarantee strength than for customers who perceive low service guarantee strength.	The items (listed below) used to measure each variable were measured on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 7 – strongly agree. The aspect of service convenience was modified from (Berry et al, 2002) **Decision convenience** • The information I received from the restaurant made it easy for me to choose what to dine • Making up my mind about what I wanted to dine in the restaurant was easy • It was easy to get the information I needed to decide this restaurant to dine **Access convenience** • There are various transportation ways can be chosen to reach the restaurant • It did not take much time to reach the restaurant • I was able to get to the restaurant's location quickly **Transaction convenience** • The restaurant provides various ways for customers to make the payment • It was easy for me to complete the restaurant reservation • I was able to complete my purchase quickly **Benefit convenience** • The restaurant's menu is easy for me to order meals • The time required to deliver food and

		beverage is appropriate • The operating hours of the restaurant meet my dining requirements **Post-benefit convenience** • The restaurant quickly resolved any problem I had with the services or meals • The restaurant is able to resolve my problem I had with the services or meals • It was easy for me to obtain information regarding new menu or promotion activities from the restaurant.
Chang, C. C., Yan, C. F., & Tseng, J. S. (2012). Perceived convenience in an extended technology acceptance model: Mobile technology and English learning for college students. Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 28(5), 809-826.	The purpose of this study is to extend the TAM, proposed by Davis, with another external factor which is perceived convenience as it is regarded to be one of the features of mobile learning. This study finding demonstrated that perceived convenience, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are antecedent factors that affected acceptance of English mobile learning and also perceived convenience, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness had a considerably positive influence on attitude toward using English mobile learning. Furthermore, perceived usefulness and attitude toward using have a considerably positive influence on continuance of intention to use.	Perceived convenience was measured as follows; according to the definition of Perceived convenience which is a level of convenience toward time, place and execution that one feels when pursuing a task during the English mobile learning. This study uses the following items; • I can learn English at any time via the mobile learning. • I can learn English at any place via the mobile learning. • The mobile learning is convenient for me to engage in English learning.
Yoon, C. & Kim, S. (2007). Convenience and TAM in a ubiquitous computing environment: The case of wireless LAN. Electronic Commerce Research & Applications, 6(1), 102-112.	This study aimed to empirically propose and validate the extended technology acceptance model for ubiquitous computing technologies. It was used the concept that "convenience" which is deduced as a potentially influential factor leading to IT acceptance in a ubiquitous computing environment, In order to make the extended TAM. This study result showed that perceived convenience is a significant determinant of perceived usefulness, but does not have a direct impact on accepting ubiquitous computing technologies. This study also demonstrated that perceived convenience mediates the relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness in the ubiquitous computing context.	On the basis of Brown's work, this study defines the dimensions of perceived convenience. Although, Brown proposed five dimensions for the concept of convenience in the marketing area, this study has excluded the acquisition and use dimensions from our study. The reason is acquisition convenience is not necessarily relevant to using technology, and it is not easy to distinguish use of convenience from 'ease of use' that has been comprehensively used as a construct in this study. Consequently, this study defined three dimensions of perceived convenience: • Time dimension: The degree of perception held by someone that he/she can use wireless LAN to accomplish their job at a time that is more convenient for them. • Place dimension: The degree of perception held by someone that he/she can use wireless LAN to accomplish their job in a place that is more convenient for them. • Execution dimension: The degree of perception held by someone that he/she finds the wireless LAN convenient in the process of accomplishing his or her work. Perception of convenience: Likert scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree 1. Using the wireless LAN enables me to accomplish my job at a time that is

		convenient for me. 2. I will perform my job anyplace with the use of wireless LAN. 3. Using the wireless LAN gives me convenience in performing my work. Used 4. I find the wireless LAN convenient for my work.

Perceived Convenience proposed items

Most common perceived convenience instrument	studies used this instrument
Shim, et al (2001) Perceived convenience instruments (Overall Speed of Process, Ease of Finding What I Want, Time Savings, and Instant Ability to Get Items and Freedom from Hassles).	• y Monsuwé, T. P., Dellaert, B. G., & De Ruyter, K. (2004). What drives consumers to shop online? A literature review. International Journal of Service Industry Management, 15(1), 102-121. • Chang, M. K., Cheung, W., & Lai, V. S. (2005). Literature derived reference models for the adoption of online shopping. Information & Management, 42(4), 543-559. • Kim, E. Y., & Kim, Y. K. (2004). Predicting online purchase intentions for clothing products. European journal of Marketing, 38(7), 883-897.
Brown (1989)'s proposed a five-dimension convenience model. These are time dimension, place dimension, acquisition dimension, use dimension and execution dimension. The research will create a number of items under each dimension.	• Jih, W. J. (2007). Effects of consumer-Perceived convenience on shopping Intention in mobile commerce: an Empirical study. International Journal of E-Business Research (IJEBR), 3(4), 33-48. • Vu, Ngoc-Cam. "A Study of Factors Influencing Online Shopping in Vietnam." (2011). • Zhang, Jun Li Helen. "An Empirical analysis of online shopping adoption in China." (2011). • Yoon, C. & Kim, S. (2007). Convenience and TAM in a ubiquitous computing environment: The case of wireless LAN. Electronic Commerce Research & Applications, 6(1), 102-112. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2006.06.009
Berry et al (2002) Perceived convenience instruments (Decision convenience, Access convenience, Transaction convenience, Benefit convenience, and Post benefit convenience).	• Izquierdo-Yusta, A., & Schultz, R. J. (2011). Understanding the effect of internet convenience on intention to purchase via the internet. Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness, 5(4), 32-50. • Bianchi, C. C. (2009). Investigating Consumer Expectations of Convenience-Store Attributes in Emerging Markets: Evidence in Chile. Journal of International Consumer Marketing, 21(4), 309-320. • Chang, Y. W., Polonsky, M., & Junek, O. (2012, August). A preliminary examination of Berry, Seiders and Grewal's (2002) five dimensional measure of convenience in a service setting. In ANZMAC 2007: 3Rs, reputation responsibility relevance (pp. 2500-2508). University of Otago, School of Business, Dept. of Marketing.

These studies are well known (Brown , 1989; Berry et al , 2002; Shim, et al , 2001) , in terms of measuring perceived convenience as a significant factor that influence customers intention. Brown (1989) argued that the concept convenience has to be clarified; it should apply to a product/service characteristic, but also needs considering effort spent in using or purchasing. Berry et al (2002) noted a variety of convenience conceptualizations proposed by prior research either explicitly and implicitly, time savings; time flexibility; consumer waiting; effort savings; location; task allocation and ease of transaction.

While both studies were useful, this adopts a measurement tool suggested by Brown (1989). The reason for adopting the measurement tool are; a) that they have been widely used online contexts, and validated and tested across different cultures (Jih, 2007; Vu, Ngoc-Cam, 2011; Zhang, Jun Li Helen , 2011; Yoon and Kim, 2007; Skallerud, Korneliussen and Olsen, 2009). This study will include just four dimensions form Brown's work; time dimension, place dimension, acquisition dimension and execution dimension. Most pervious work suggested that time and effort are the main components of perceived convenience (Brown, 1989; Berry et al, 2002; Jih, W. J, 2007; Yoon and Kim, 2007). Place dimension is planned to be included, because it highlights and represents the online context which is a significant element of this study. Furthermore, acquisition dimension is planned to be included, because it represents the financial aspect of perceived convenience. The use dimension may cause some duplication with dimension perceived ease of use which is already planned to use as a construct in this study. Therefore, the use dimension is excluded from this study.

The proposed scale is modified form Brown (1989), so wordings of the items are appropriate to the study context, while also taking into account the study objectives.

Perceived Convenience proposed items

Construct		Measure	Reference
Perceived convenience	**Time dimension**	The use of the internet for travel services activities enables me to book my holiday (i.e. search & purchase), at a time that is convenient for me.	New measurement items based on the dimensions definitions
	Place dimension	I can book my holiday using travel service activities (i.e. search & purchase) anyplace with the use of the internet.	
	Acquisition dimension	The use of the internet for travel service activities (i.e. search & purchase), will make it easier for me financially to book my holiday (i.e. paying over the internet)	
	Execution dimension	Having holiday packages (i.e. hotel & flight) arranged and provided by online travel sites , would be convenient for me.	

This appendix illustrates how one sample was developed. A similar process was followed for the scales used in sections 3 to 9 of the questionnaire.

Appendix G: Detailed Breakdown of 13 constructs

Attitude Construct

Measurement items designed for attitude construct and its antecedents were adapted and modified from Ajzen, (1991), Wixom, and Todd, (2005) , and Taylor, and Todd, (1995). They have been widely validated (Armitage and Conner, 2001; Montano and Kasprzyk, 2008; Lu, Zhou and Wang, 2009; Rivis, Sheeran, and Armitage, 2009), and they have been found to be effective for predicting customer attitude leading to actual search/purchase (Ajzen, 1991; Taylor and Todd ,1995; Shim, et al , 2001; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009). These items have also been used in online contexts, including information search and purchase (Shim, et al , 2001; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009 ; Lin, 2010; Huang, et al, 2011; Crespo and Bosque, 2010). This study proposes the use of these items which have been validated and tested across different cultures (Ndubisi and Sinti, 2006; Lean, et al 2009; Aloud and Rathur, 2009; Lam and Hsu, 2004).

Construct	Measure	Author
Attitude	Q1. I think the use of the internet for information searching for travel products, would be good for me.	(Adopted and modified form Ajzen, 1991)
	Q2. I think the use of the internet for information searching for travel products, would be beneficial for me.	(Adopted and modified form Ajzen, 1991)
	Q3. I am pleased with using the internet for information searching for travel products.	(Adopted and modified form Taylor, and Todd, 1995)
	Q4. Overall, using the internet for information searching for travel products would be a pleasant experience.	Adopted and modified form Wixom, and Todd, 2005)

Construct	Measure	Author
Perceived usefulness	Q1. I find using the internet for information searching for travel products to be useful.	(adopted and modified from Davis, 1989)
	Q2. Using the internet improves my effectiveness in searching for travel products.	
	Q3. Using the internet for information searching for travel products allows me to get my work done quicker.	
	Q4. Using the internet to search for travel products can improve my ability to make good decisions.	

Construct	Measure	Author
Perceived ease of use	Q1. Learning to use the internet for information searching for travel products would be easy for me.	(adopted and modified from Davis, 1989)
	Q2. I find using the internet for information searching for travel products easy to use.	
	Q3. Using the internet for information searching for travel products requires little effort from me.	
	Q4. Using the internet for information searching for travel products is clear and understandable.	

Perceived behavioural control construct

Measurement items for Perceived behavioural control construct were adapted and modified from Ajzen, (1991), because they have been widely validated (Armitage and Conner, 2001; Montano and Kasprzyk, 2008; Lu, Zhou and Wang, 2009; Rivis, Sheeran, and Armitage, 2009) and have been found to be effective for predicting Perceived behavioural control with regard to online shopping leading to actual search/purchase (Taylor and Todd ,1995; Shim, et al , 2001; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009). These items have also been used in online contexts (Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009 ; Lin, 2010; Huang, et al, 2011; Crespo and Bosque, 2010) including successful application to the tourism sector (Quintal, Lee and Soutar, 2010; Tsai, 2010; Lee, 2009). This study proposes the use of these items with modified wording.

Construct	Measure	Author
Perceived behavioural control	Q1. I think that I am able to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	Adopted and modified form Ajzen, 1991)
	Q2. I think that using the internet for information searching for travel products would be entirely within my control.	
	Q3. I think that I have the knowledge to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	
	Q4. I feel comfortable using the internet for information searching for travel products on my own.	

Subjective Norms Construct

Measurement items for the Subjective Norm construct were adapted and modified from Ajzen, (1991), Venkatesh, and Davis, (2000), Taylor and Todd ,(1995) and a new item was created. These items have been widely validated (Armitage and Conner, 2001; Montano and Kasprzyk, 2008; Lu, Zhou and Wang, 2009; Rivis, Sheeran, and Armitage, 2009) and have been found to be effective for predicting subjective norms leading to actual search/purchase (Shim, et al , 2001; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009). They have also been used in the

online context (Shim, et al , 2001; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009 ; Lin, 2010; Huang, et al, 2011; Crespo and Bosque, 2010) with some successful application to the tourism sector (Quintal, Lee and Soutar, 2010; Tsai, 2010; Lee, 2009). These items will be used with modified wording.

Construct	Measure	Author
Subjective Norms	Q1. People who are important to me (e.g. family) would approve if I used the internet for information searching for travel products.	(adopted and modified from Ajzen, 1991)
	Q2. People who influence my behavior (e.g. friends) would think that I should use the internet for information searching for travel products.	(adopted and modified from Venkatesh, and Davis, 2000).
	Q3. People I know would expect me to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	(adopted and modified from Ajzen, 1991)
	Q4. The Saudi culture I came from would encourage me to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	New item
	Q5. Since coming to the UK, I feel encouraged to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	New item
	Q6. When I return to Saudi Arabia, I will encourage people I know to use the internet for information search for travel products.	New item

Trust Construct

Measurement items designed for the trust construct and its antecedents were adapted and modified from Gefen, (2000), Grazioli and Jarvenpaa ,(2000), Bart, Shankar, Sultan, and Urban,(2005), Yu-Hui Chen, Stuart Barnes, (2007) Lee, and Turban, (2001). They have been widely validated (Lee, 2009; Luo, Zhang, and Shim, 2010; Malhotra, Kim, and Agarwal, 2004; Pavlou, and Fygenson, 2006; Gefen, Pavlou, 2012) and have been found to be effective in the online contexts (, 2011; Lee, 2009; Chai, and Piew, 2010; Nicolaou, and McKnight, 2006; Chiu, et al. 2009; Luarn, and Lin, 2005). These items will be used with modified wording.

Construct	Measure	Author
Trust	Q1. Online travel sites want to be known as sites who keep commitments.	(Adopted and modified from Grazioli and Jarvenpaa , 2000)
	Q2. Online travel sites are trustworthy.	(Adopted and modified from Grazioli and Jarvenpaa , 2000)
	Q3. I find the information on online travel sites is realistic.	(Adopted and modified from Bart, Shankar, Sultan, and Urban,2005).
	Q4. Compared to other web sites, online travel sites are reliable.	(Adopted and modified from Yu-Hui Chen, Stuart Barnes, (2007)

Construct	Measure	Author
Security	Q1. Online travel sites present enough online security for users	(Adopted and modified from Yu-Hui Chen, Stuart Barnes, (2007)
	Q2. I am confident that the private information that I provide to online travel sites will be secure.	(Adopted and modified from Shin, 2010).
	Q3. I think online travel sites show concern for the security of transactions	(Adopted and modified from Flavián, Guinalíu, 2006)
	Q4. Overall, Online travel sites are a safe place to send out sensitive information.	(Adopted and modified from Cheng, Lam, , Yeung, 2006)

Construct	Measure	Author
Privacy	Q1. The personal information that I provide on online travel sites is well protected.	(Adopted and modified from Yu-Hui Chen, Stuart Barnes, 2007)
	Q2. I am concerned that online travel sites will use my personal information for other purposes without my authorization.	(Adopted and modified from Juan Carlos Roca, Juan José García, Juan José de la Vega ,2009)
	Q3. I think online travel sites show concern for the privacy of its users.	(Adopted and modified from Flavián, and Guinalíu, 2006)
	Q4. I think online travel sites only collect personal data that are necessary for the activity.	(Adopted and modified from Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalíu, 2007).

Construct	Measure	Author
Risk	Q1. I feel the risk associated with purchase from online travel sites is high.	(Adopted and modified from Cheng, Tsai, Cheng, and Chen, 2012).
	Q2. I think it is risky to consider the information from online travel sites as valid.	
	Q3. I believe that booking a holiday from online travel sites is risky because services delivered may fail to meet my expectations.	(Adopted and modified from Corbitt et al., 2003; Chang, and Chen, 2008).
	Q4. Booking a holiday from online travel sites would involve more financial risk (i.e. fraud, hard to refund) when compared with more traditional ways of booking.	(Adopted and modified from Kim, Ferrin, and Rao, 2008)

Perceived Convenience Construct

Measurement items for perceived convenience construct was adapted and modified from Brown (1989), as they have been widely used in online contexts, (Jih, 2007; Vu, Ngoc-Cam, 2011; Zhang, Jun Li Helen , 2011; Yoon and Kim, 2007; Skallerud, Korneliussen and Olsen, 2009). This study includes just four dimensions from Brown's work. These are the time dimension, place dimension, acquisition dimension and execution dimension. This study proposes the use of these items with modified wording.

Construct	Measure	Author
Perceived convenience	Q1. I can search for travel information at any time by using the internet.	New measurement items based on the dimensions definitions, Brown, 1989
	Q2. I can search for travel information at any place by using the internet.	
	Q3. Using the internet for information searching for travel products gives me convenience in booking my holiday.	
	Q4. Paying over the internet when booking my holiday will make it easier for me financially.	
	Q5. I find the holiday packages (e.g. flight & hotel) arranged by online travel sites are convenient for me.	

Search Intention Construct

Measurement items for search intention construct were adapted and modified from Ajzen, (1991), Shim, et al., (2001), Wixom, and Todd, (2005) Crespo, and Bosque, (2010). These have been widely validated (Armitage and Conner, 2001; Montano and Kasprzyk, 2008; Lu, Zhou and Wang, 2009; Rivis, Sheeran and Armitage, 2009) and have been found to be effective for predicting customer search intention with regard to online shopping leading to actual search/purchase (Shim, et al., 2001; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009). The items have also been used to measure online activities and contexts, including information search and purchase (Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009; Lin, 2010; Huang et al., 2011; Crespo and Bosque, 2010), including successful application to the tourism sector (Quintal, Lee and Soutar, 2010; Tsai, 2010; Lee, 2009). This study proposes the use of these items with modified wording.

Construct	Measure	Author
Search Intention	Q1. I intend to search online for information about travel products in the future.	Modified and adapted from Ajzen, 1991)
	Q2. If I want to book a holiday, I intend to use the internet to search for travel information.	(Modified and adapted from Lin, 2010)
	Q3. I expect my use of the internet for information search for travel products to continue in the future.	(Modified and adapted from Casaló, Flavián, and Guinalíu, 2011)

	Q4. I plan to increase my use of the internet for information search for travel products in the future.	(Modified and adapted from Wixom, and Todd, 2005)

Information Search and evaluation Construct

Measurement items for information Search and evaluation construct were adapted and modified from previous studies which are presented in the table below. Three new items also were included in this study. The items have been widely validated (Kuhlthau, Heinström, and Todd, 2008; Kuhlthau, 2005; Jayawardhena, 2004; Li, Pan, Zhang, and Smith, 2009) and have been found to be effective for predicting customer information Search and evaluation in online contexts, including information search and purchase (Caran, and Lima, 2011; Dinet, Chevalier, and Tricot, 2012; Hansen, Møller Jensen, and Stubbe Solgaard, 2004: Darley, Blankson, and Luethge, 2010), and some successful application to the tourism sector (Khare, and Khare, 2010; Jensen, 2012; Xiang, Wöber, and Fesenmaier, 2008). This study proposes the use of these items with modified wording.

Construct	Measure	Author
Information Search and Evaluation	Q1. The internet provides a rich amount of travel information that would help me to book my holiday.	(Modified and adapted from Pan, and Fesenmaier, 2006).
	Q2. Search for online information about travel products is an important step for anyone before booking.	(Modified and adapted from Rowley, 2000)
	Q3. The quality of online travel information provided is the most important criteria in the process of information evaluation.	(Modified and adapted from Pookulangara, , Hawley, and Xiao, 2011)
	Q4. I frequently browse for travel information online before booking my holiday.	(Modified and adapted from, Shim et al. 2001)
	Q5. My search for travel information includes investigation of search results, that I then consider before purchasing on the internet .	(Modified and adapted from Kuhlthau, 1999)
	Q6. I would evaluate the information in the search results before booking my holiday.	Brand-Gruwel, S., Wopereis, I., & Vermetten, Y. (2005).
	Q7. When searching, I would usually use multiple search approaches (e.g. search engine, forums, websites).	(Modified and adapted from Tina Du and Evans, 2011)
	Q8. My online past travel searching experience would not encourage me to spend time evaluating travel information.	(Modified and adapted from Ho, Lin and Chen, 2012)
	Q9. When evaluating the information I would consider an image search to gain more details (i.e. hotel, location, and destination).	New item
	Q10. When evaluating the information I would look for accurate and up-to-date travel information.	New item
	Q11. When evaluating the information I would consider the travel information reviewed and recommended by others before purchasing on the internet.	New item

Purchase Intention Construct

Measurement items for purchase intention construct were adapted and modified from Ajzen, (1991) Venkatesh, and Davis, (2000), and Shim, et al.,(2001), as they have been widely validated (Armitage and Conner, 2001; Montano and Kasprzyk, 2008; Lu, Zhou and Wang, 2009; Rivis, Sheeran, and Armitage, 2009), and have been found to be effective for predicting customer purchase intention with regard to actual purchase (Ajzen, 1991; Taylor and Todd ,1995; Shim, et al , 2001; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009). These items have also been used in online contexts, (Shim, et al , 2001; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lee, 2009 ; Lin, 2010; Huang, et al, 2011; Crespo and Bosque, 2010) including successful application to the tourism sector (Quintal, Lee and Soutar, 2010; Tsai, 2010; Lee, 2009). This study proposes the use of these items with modified wording.

Construct	Measure	Author
Purchase Intention	Q1. I intend to purchase online travel products in the future.	(Modified and adapted from Ajzen, 1991)
	Q2. Given that I have access to the internet, I predict that I would purchase online travel products.	(Modified and adapted from Venkatesh, and Davis, 2000),
	Q3. In the future, I intend to regularly purchase online travel products.	(Modified and adapted from Shim, et al., 2001).
	Q4. I expect my purchasing of online travel products to increase in the future.	

Appendix H: phase (3) Questionnaire

Dear Madam/Sir,
My name is Khald Alatawy, a PhD researcher at De Montfort University in the UK. My research project aims to clarify the range of online search behaviour that Saudi consumers of travel services engage in prior to purchase and to investigate consumer attitudes towards online booking when selecting travel services. I would entirely appreciate your participation by completing a short survey.

This questionnaire has been carefully designed to enable you to complete the questionnaire in less than 15 minutes. I would like to point out that the questionnaire is purely for academic purposes and all responses are fully confidential. You can withdraw from this procedure at any time for any or no reason, but I would highly appreciate your valuable responses that will contribute significantly to my research, aiming to improve online travel services in Saudi Arabia.

Finally, I would like to offer my thanks for finding the time to compete this questionnaire. I value the time you take for this, and acknowledge your cooperation.
Yours Faithfully,
Khald Alatawy
PhD candidate
Leicester Business School
De Montfort University
Email: p08003658@myemail.dmu.ac.uk

Section 1 : Background questions

Please answer the following questions about yourself. (Please tick ☑ the appropriate box)

1. **Please indicate your age range?**

☐18 to 24 years

☐ 25 to 34 years

☐ 35 to 44 years

☐ Age 45 or older

2. **Please indicate your gender?**

☐Male

☐Female

3. **Please indicate your Monthly income?**

❑ Less than £1,200 ❑ £1,201 to £2,000 ❑ £2,001 to £3,000

❑ £ 3,001 to £ 4,000 ❑ £ 4,001 or more

4. **Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed?**

☐ Some high school ☐ College

☐ Bachelor's degree ☐ Master's degree

☐ Doctoral degree ☐ Other please specify.....

5. **Please indicate the Saudi region where you come from?**

❑ Eastern region ❑ North region

❑ Western region ❑ South region ❑ Central region

6. **Please indicate your marital status?**

☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced

☐ Widowed ☐ Other please specify.....

7. **How long have you been living in the UK?**

☐ Less than 1 year

☐ 1 to 3 years

☐ More than 3 years

8. Please indicate your experience of using the internet ?

❑ Less than 1 year ❑ From 1 to less than 3 years

❑ From 3 to less than 5 years ❑ From 5 to less than 7 years

❑ 7 years or more

9. Please indicate your experience of using the internet to search for online travel products?

❑ Less than 1 year ❑ From1 to less than 3 years

❑ From 3 years to less than 5 years ❑ From5 to less than 7 years

❑ 7 years or more

10. How many times have you bought a travel product online, within the last three years?

☐ Never ☐ 1-3 times

☐ 4 -6 times ☐ 7 times and above

11. Please respond to each of the following statements by circling one number in each scale.

[Scale from "1 = strongly disagree" to "7 = strongly agree]

- I like browsing on the internet.

Strongly disagree: __1__:___2__:___3__:___4__:___5__:___6___:___7___: Strongly agree

- Time spent on the internet is enjoyable for me.

Strongly disagree: __1__:___2__:___3__:___4__:___5__:___6___:___7___: Strongly agree

- Using the internet is a key part of my daily routine.

Strongly disagree: __1__:___2__:___3__:___4__:___5__:___6___:___7___: Strongly agree

- I think online buying is a new, fun way to shop.

Strongly disagree: __1__:___2__:___3__:___4__:___5__:___6___:___7___: Strongly agree

Section 2: Attitude
The following statements indicate your attitude to the use of the internet for information searching for travel products. You can circle any number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree):

	Strongly disagree			Neutral			Strongly agree
Q1. I think the use of the internet for information searching for travel products, would be good for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q2. I think the use of the internet for information searching for travel products, would be beneficial for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q3. I am pleased with using the internet for information searching for travel products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q4. Overall, using the internet for information searching for travel products would be a pleasant experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q5. I find using the internet for information searching for travel products to be useful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q6. Using the internet improves my effectiveness in searching for travel products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q7. Using the internet for information searching for travel products allows me to get my work done quicker.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q8. Using the internet to search for travel products can improve my ability to make good decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q9. Learning to use the internet for information searching for travel products would be easy for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q10. I find using the internet for information searching for travel products easy to use.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q11. Using the internet for information searching for travel products requires little effort from me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q12. Using the internet for information searching for travel products is clear and understandable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 3: Perceived Behavioural Control
The following statements relate to your knowledge and ability to use the internet for information searching for travel products. You can circle any number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree):

	Strongly disagree			Neutral			Strongly agree
Q1. I think that I am able to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q2. I think that using the internet for information searching for travel products would be entirely within my control.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q3. I think that I have the knowledge to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q4. I feel comfortable using the internet for information searching for travel products on my own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 4: Subjective Norms

The following statements relate to social influence that may be relevant (e.g. Family, peers and friends) when searching for travel information online. You can circle any number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree):

	Strongly disagree			Neutral			Strongly agree
Q1. People who are important to me (e.g. family) would approve if I used the internet for information searching for travel products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q2. People who influence my behavior (e.g. friends) would think that I should use the internet for information searching for travel products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q3. People I know would expect me to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q4. The Saudi culture I came from would encourage me to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q5. Since coming to the UK, I feel encouraged to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q6. When I return to Saudi Arabia, I will encourage people I know to use the internet for information search for travel products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 5: Perceived Trust

The following statements relate to your expectations of privacy, security and risk when using the internet for information searching for travel products. You can circle any number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree):

	Strongly disagree			Neutral			Strongly agree
Q1. Online travel sites want to be known as sites who keep commitments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q2. Online travel sites are trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q3. I find the information on online travel sites is realistic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q4. Compared to other web sites, online travel sites are reliable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q5 Online travel sites present enough online security for users	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q6. I am confident that the private information that I provide to online travel sites will be secure.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q7. I think online travel sites show concern for the security of transactions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q8. Overall, Online travel sites are a safe place to send out sensitive information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q9. The personal information that I provide on online travel sites is well protected.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q10. I am concerned that online travel sites will use my personal information for other purposes without my authorization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q11. I think online travel sites show concern for the privacy of its users.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q12. I think online travel sites only collect personal data that are necessary for the activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q13. I feel the risk associated with purchase from online travel sites is high.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q14. I think it is risky to consider the information from online travel sites as valid.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q15. I believe that booking a holiday from online travel sites is risky because services delivered may fail to meet my expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q16. Booking a holiday from online travel sites would involve more financial risk (i.e. fraud, hard to refund) when compared with more traditional ways of booking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 6: Perceived Convenience

The purpose of the following statements is to indicate how convenient it is for you to use the internet for information searching for travel products. You can circle any number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree):

	Strongly disagree			Neutral			Strongly agree
Q1. I can search for travel information at any time by using the internet.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q2. I can search for travel information at any place by using the internet.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q3. Using the internet for information searching for travel products gives me convenience in booking my holiday.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q4. Paying over the internet when booking my holiday will make it easier for me financially.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q5. I find the holiday packages (e.g. flight & hotel) arranged by online travel sites are convenient for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 7: Search Intention

The following statements relate to your intention to use the internet for information searching of travel products You can circle any number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree):

	Strongly disagree			Neutral			Strongly agree
Q1. I intend to search online for information about travel products in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q2. If I want to book a holiday, I intend to use the internet to search for travel information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q3. I expect my use of the internet for information search for travel products to continue in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q4. I plan to increase my use of the internet for information search for travel products in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 8: Information Search and Evaluation

Please read the following statements and indicate the extent to which these statements reflect how you search and evaluate travel information. You can circle any number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree):

	Strongly disagree			Neutral			Strongly agree
Q1. The internet provides a rich amount of travel information that would help me to book my holiday.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q2. Search for online information about travel products is an important step for anyone before booking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q3. The quality of online travel information provided is the most important criteria in the process of information evaluation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q4. I frequently browse for travel information online before booking my holiday.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q5. My search for travel information includes investigation of search results, that I then consider before purchasing on the internet .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q6. I would evaluate the information in the search results before booking my holiday.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q7. When searching, I would usually use multiple search approaches (e.g. search engine, forums, websites).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q8. My online past travel searching experience would not encourage me to spend time evaluating travel information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q9. When evaluating the information I would consider an image search to gain more details (i.e. hotel, location, and destination).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q10. When evaluating the information I would look for accurate and up-to-date travel information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q11. When evaluating the information I would consider the travel information reviewed and recommended by others before purchasing on the internet.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 9: Purchase Intention

The following statements relate to your intention to use the internet for purchasing of travel products. You can circle any number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree):

	Strongly disagree			Neutral			Strongly agree
Q1. I intend to purchase online travel products in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q2. Given that I have access to the internet, I predict that I would purchase online travel products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q3. In the future, I intend to regularly purchase online travel products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q4. I expect my purchasing of online travel products to increase in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you for your participation in this survey

Appendix I: phase (3) Questionnaire data set codes and meanings

Code	Meaning
ATT	Attitudes
PU	Perceived Usefulness
PEU	Perceived Ease of Use
PBC	Perceived Behavioural Control
SN	Subjective norms
TRU	Trust
SEC	Security
PRI	Privacy
RIS	Risk
PCN	Perceived Convenience
SI	Search Intention
IFSE	Information search evaluation
PI	Purchase intention

Appendix J: phase (3) Missing values analysis SPSS tables

I step

EM Means[a,b]

LIF1	LIF2	LIF3	LIF4	ATT1	ATT2	ATT3	ATT4	PU1	PU2	PU3	PU4	PEU1
5,5572	5,5780	5,7443	5,3990	5,3160	5,2453	5,3470	5,2482	5,4304	5,2805	5,2937	5,2278	5,3160

a. Little's MCAR test: Chi-Square = 4695,790, DF = 4127, Sig. = ,000

b. The EM algorithm failed to converge in 25 iterations.

II step

EM Means[a,b]

ATT1	ATT2	ATT3	ATT4	PU1	PU2	PU3	PU4	PEU1	PEU2	PEU3	PEU4	PBC1
5,3160	5,2453	5,3469	5,2471	5,4315	5,2800	5,2936	5,2274	5,3160	5,2604	5,4109	5,1864	5,2923

a. Little's MCAR test: Chi-Square = 3212,238, DF = 2736, Sig. = ,000

b. The EM algorithm failed to converge in 25 iterations.

III step

Warnings

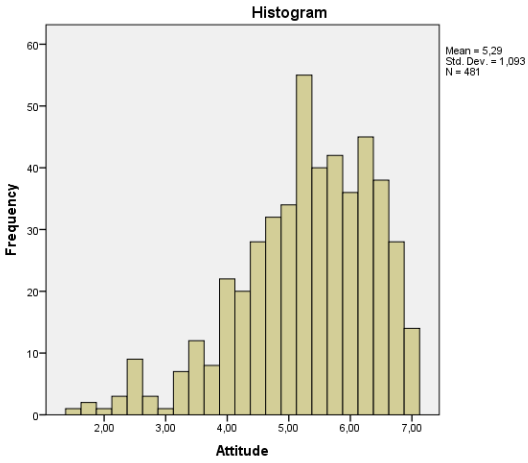
There are no missing values. EM estimates are not computed.

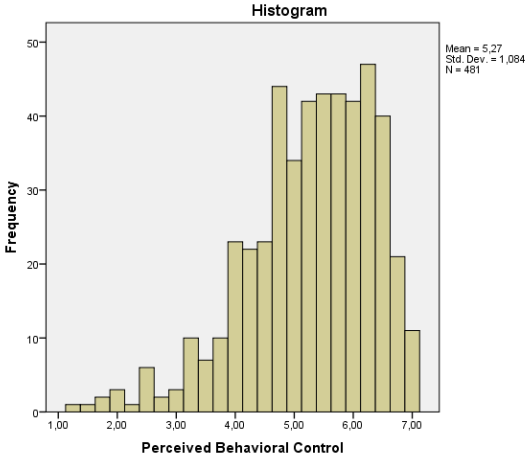
Appendix K: phase (3) Normality tests

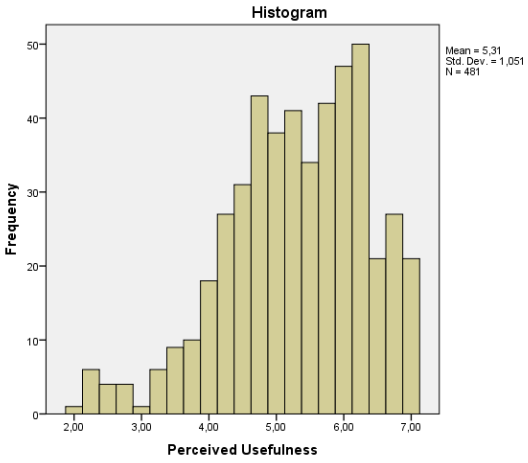
Tests of Normality

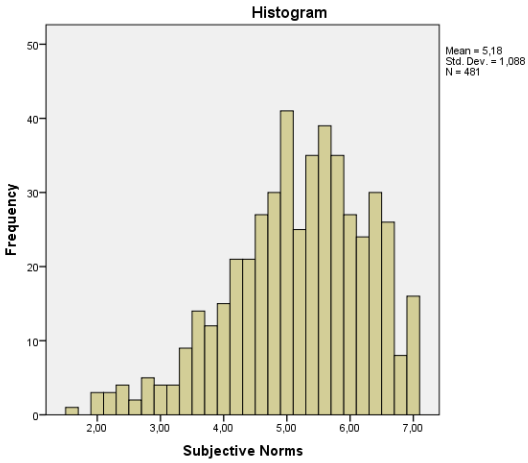
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Attitude	,105	481	,000	,951	481	,000
Perceived Usefulness	,096	481	,000	,963	481	,000
Perceived Ease of Use	,092	481	,000	,959	481	,000
Perceived Behavioral Control	,097	481	,000	,948	481	,000
Subjective Norms	,081	481	,000	,969	481	,000
Trust	,101	481	,000	,963	481	,000
Security	,102	481	,000	,946	481	,000
Privacy	,147	481	,000	,953	481	,000
Risk	,120	481	,000	,947	481	,000
Perceived Convenience	,106	481	,000	,930	481	,000
Search Intention	,136	481	,000	,929	481	,000
Information Search Evaluation	,071	481	,000	,976	481	,000
Purchase Intention	,115	481	,000	,939	481	,000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction


Histogram
Mean = 5,29
Std. Dev. = 1,093
N = 481
Frequency
Attitude


Histogram
Mean = 5,27
Std. Dev. = 1,084
N = 481
Frequency
Perceived Behavioral Control


Histogram
Mean = 5,31
Std. Dev. = 1,051
N = 481
Frequency
Perceived Usefulness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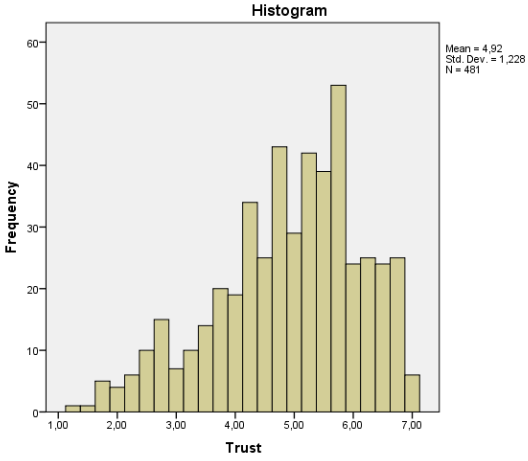
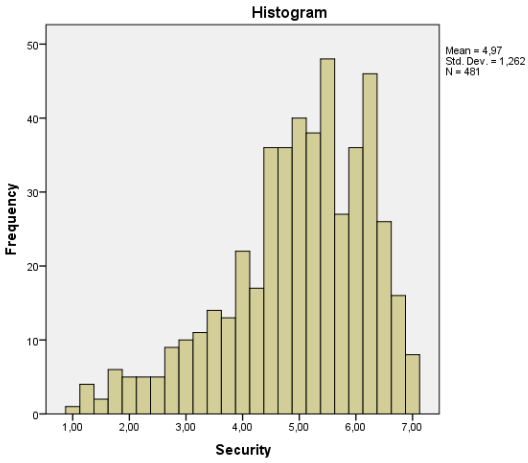
Std. Dev. = 1,088
N = 481
Frequency
Subjective Norms


Histogram
Mean = 4,92
Std. Dev. = 1,228
N = 481
Frequency
Trust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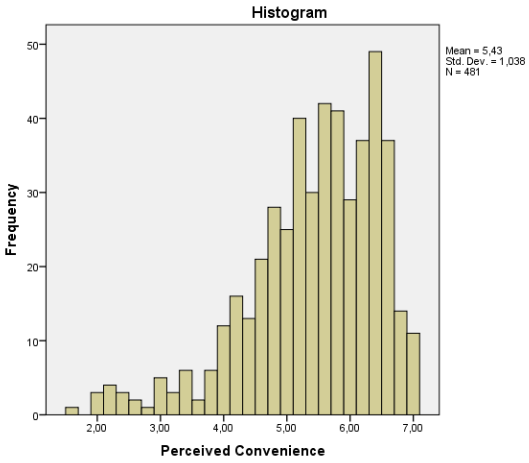
Mean = 4,97
Std. Dev. = 1,262
N = 481
Frequency
Security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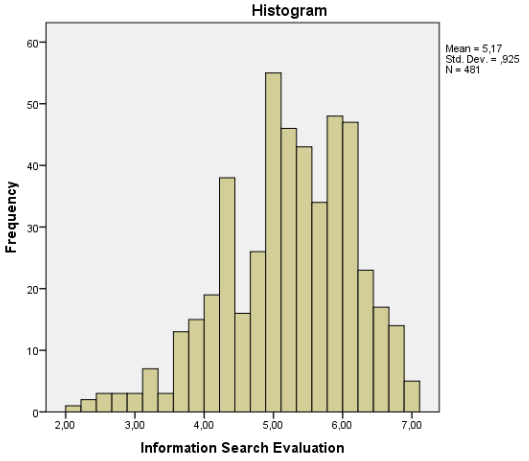
Mean = 5,43
Std. Dev. = 1,038
N = 481
Frequency
Perceived Convenience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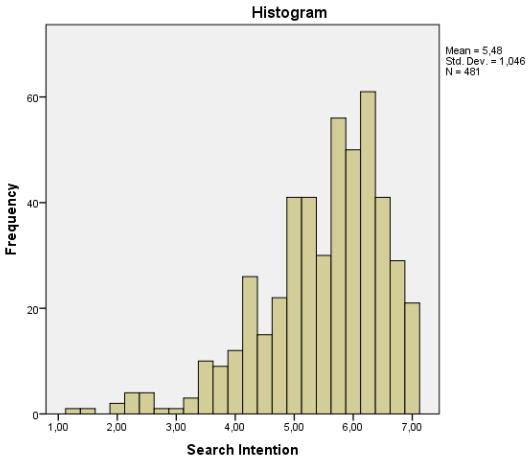
Mean = 5,17
Std. Dev. = ,925
N = 481
Frequency
Information Search Evaluation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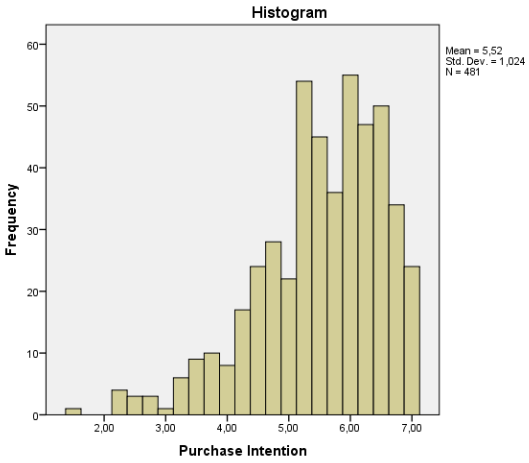
Std. Dev. = 1,046
N = 481
Frequency
Search Intention


Histogram
Mean = 5,52
Std. Dev. = 1,024
N = 481
Frequency
Purchase Intention
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
2,00
3,00
4,00
5,00
6,00
7,00

Appendix L: Regression models SPSS outputs

Appendix L.1: Hypothesis 1

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	**.865**[a]	**.748**	.743	**.52364**

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	.822	.153		5.390	.000	.523	1.122			
	PerceivedUsefulness	.841	.028	**.806**	29.843	.000	.786	.897	.806	.806	.806

Appendix L.2: Hypothesis 2

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,771[a]	,595	,594	,69643

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Ease of Use
b. Dependent Variable: Attitude

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1,282	,154		8,302	,000			
	Perceived Ease of Use	,757	,029	,771	26,531	,000	,771	,771	,771

Appendix L.3: Hypothesis 3

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	**.770**[a]	**.593**	.592	**.66842**

a. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1.603	.150		10.672	.000	1.308	1.898			
	Attitude	.734	.028	**.770**	26.397	.000	.679	.789	.770	.770	.770

a. Dependent Variable: SearchIntention

Appendix L.4: Hypothesis 4

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	**.682**[a]	**.465**	.464	**.76615**

a. Predictors: (Constant), SubjectiveNorms

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1.496	.199		7.515	.000	1.104	1.887			
	SubjectiveNorms	.783	.038	**.682**	20.362	.000	.707	.858	.682	.682	.682

Appendix L.5: Hypothesis 5

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	**.760**[a]	**.578**	.577	**.68161**

a. Predictors: (Constant), PerceivedBehaviouralControl

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1.651	.155		10.674	.000	1.347	1.955			
	PerceivedBehaviouralControl	.727	.029	**.760**	25.309	.000	.671	.783	.760	.760	.760

Appendix L.6: Hypothesis 6

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.811[a]	.658	.658	.61189

a. Predictors: (Constant), Convenience

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1.047	.149		7.028	.000	.754	1.340			
	Convenience	.817	.027	**.811**	30.315	.000	.764	.870	.811	.811	.811

Appendix L.7: Hypothesis 7

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.692[a]	.478	.477	.75680

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	2.589	.143		18.171	.000	2.309	2.869			
	Trust	.589	.028	**.692**	20.939	.000	.533	.644	.692	.692	.692

Appendix L.8: Hypothesis 8

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	,211[a]	,044	,042	1,20185	,044	22,218	1	479	,000	1,727

a. Predictors: (Constant), Risk
b. Dependent Variable: Trust

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	4,134	,175		23,591	,000			
	Risk	,172	,036	,211	4,714	,000	,211	,211	,211

Appendix L.9: Hypothesis 9

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.806[a]	.650	.649	.72830

a. Predictors: (Constant), Security

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1.084	.133		8.163	.000	.823	1.344			
	Security	.773	.026	**.806**	29.829	.000	.722	.824	.806	.806	.806

a. Dependent Variable: Trust

Appendix L.10: Hypothesis 10

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	,588[a]	,346	,345	,99405	,346	253,680	1	479	,000	1,770

a. Predictors: (Constant), Privacy
b. Dependent Variable: Trust

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1,450	,222		6,517	,000			
	Privacy	,716	,045	,588	15,927	,000	,588	,588	,588

a. Dependent Variable: Trust

Appendix L.11: Hypothesis 11

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	**.777[a]**	**.603**	.602	**.52408**

a. Predictors: (Constant), SearchIntention

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1.721	.128		13.471	.000	1.470	1.972			
	SearchIntention	.617	.023	**.777**	26.959	.000	.572	.662	.777	.777	.777

a. Dependent Variable: InformationEvaluation

Appendix L.12: Hypothesis 12

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	**.773**[a]	**.597**	.597	**.65651**

a. Predictors: (Constant), InformationEvaluation

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	.609	.188		3.231	.001	.238	.979			
	InformationEvaluation	.961	.036	**.773**	26.383	.000	.889	1.033	.773	.773	.773

a. Dependent Variable: PurchaseIntention

Appendix L.13: Multiple Regression SPSS outputs

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.851[a]	**.724**	.721	.55256	.724	243.850	5	464	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Convenience, Subjective Norms, Trust, Perceived Behavioural Control, Attitude
b. Dependent Variable: Search Intention

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	372.258	5	74.452	243.850	**.000**[b]
	Residual	141.667	464	.305		
	Total	513.925	469			

a. Dependent Variable: Search Intention
b. Predictors: (Constant), Convenience, Subjective Norms, Trust, Perceived Behavioural Control, Attitude

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	**Sig.**	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	**Beta**			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.628	.153		4.101	**.000**		
	Attitude	.200	.045	**.210**	4.450	**.000**	.268	3.732
	Perceived Behavioural Control	.150	.045	**.157**	3.363	**.001**	.273	3.657
	Subjective Norms	.073	.045	**.095**	2.396	**.009**	.382	2.615
	Trust	.090	.033	**.106**	2.746	**.006**	.406	2.465
	Convenience	.413	.046	**.410**	9.024	**.000**	.289	3.459

a. Dependent Variable: Search Intention

Appendix M: Phase (3) PCA SPSS outputs

a. Attitude

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.773
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	940.584
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.849	71.226	71.226	2.849	71.226	71.226
2	.549	13.717	84.943			
3	.351	8.764	93.707			
4	.252	6.293	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
ATT1. I think the use of internet for information searching for travel products, would be good for me.	.812
ATT2. I think the use of internet for information searching for travel products, would be beneficial for me.	.886
ATT3 I am pleased with using the internet for information searching for travel products.	.865
ATT4. Overall, using the internet for information searching for travel products would be a pleasant experience.	.810

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]
a. 1 components extracted.

b. Perceived usefulness

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.803
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	701.140
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.671	66.763	66.763	2.671	66.763	66.763
2	.511	12.779	79.542			
3	.443	11.066	90.609			
4	.376	9.391	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
PU1. I find using the internet for information searching for travel products to be useful.	.814
PU2. Using the internet improves my effectiveness in searching for travel products.	.823
PU3. Using the internet for information searching for travel products allows me to get my work done quicker.	.812
PU4. Using the internet to search for travel products can improve my ability to make good decisions.	.820

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]
a. 1 components extracted.

c. Perceived ease of use

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.809
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	799.398
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.748	68.712	68.712	2.748	68.712	68.712
2	.526	13.162	81.875			
3	.418	10.448	92.323			
4	.307	7.677	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
PEU1. Learning to use the internet for information searching for travel products would be easy for me.	.809
PEU2. I find using the internet for information searching for travel products easy to use.	.852
PEU3 Using the internet for information searching for travel products requires little effort from me.	.779
PEU4. Using the internet for information searching for travel products is clear and understandable.	.873

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]
a. 1 components extracted.

d. Perceived behavioral control

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.806
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	827.033
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.789	69.734	69.734	2.789	69.734	69.734
2	.496	12.392	82.126			
3	.390	9.751	91.877			
4	.325	8.123	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
PBC1. I think that I am able to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	.843
PBC2. I think that using the internet for information searching for travel products would be entirely within my control.	.840
PBC3. I think that I have the knowledge to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	.818
PBC4. I feel comfortable using the internet for information searching for travel products on my own.	.839

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]
a. 1 components extracted.

e. Subjective norms

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.798
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1064.426
	df	10
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.094	61.872	61.872	3.094	61.872	61.872
2	.827	16.535	78.408			
3	.481	9.612	88.019			
4	.354	7.082	95.101			
5	.245	4.899	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
SN1. People who are important to me (e.g. family) would approve if I used the internet for information searching for travel products.	.837
SN2. People who influence my behavior (e.g. friends) would think that I should use the internet for information searching for travel products.	.864
SN3. People I know would expect me to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	.821
SN5 Since coming to the UK, I feel encouraged to use the internet for information searching for travel products.	.654
SN6. When I return to Saudi Arabia, I will encourage people I know to use the internet for information search for travel products.	.738

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]

a. 1 components extracted.

f. Trust

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.816
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1112.386
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.021	75.537	75.537	3.021	75.537	75.537
2	.442	11.045	86.582			
3	.296	7.399	93.980			
4	.241	6.020	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
TRU1. Online travel sites want to be known as sites who keep commitments.	.850
TRU2. Online travel sites are trustworthy.	.897
TRU3. I find the information on online travel sites is realistic.	.877
TRU4. Compared to other web sites, online travel sites are reliable.	.852

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]

a. 1 components extracted.

g. Security

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.806
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1141.882
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.061	76.513	76.513	3.061	76.513	76.513
2	.401	10.020	86.532			
3	.328	8.190	94.723			
4	.211	5.277	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
SEC1. Online travel sites present enough online security for users	.867
SEC2. I am confident that the private information that I provide to online travel sites will be secure.	.897
SEC3. I think online travel sites show concern for the security of transactions	.876
SEC4. Overall, Online travel sites are a safe place to send out sensitive information.	.859

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]
a. 1 components extracted.

h. Privacy

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.707
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	417.739
	df	3
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.112	70.398	70.398	2.112	70.398	70.398
2	.459	15.311	85.708			
3	.429	14.292	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
PRV1. The personal information that I provide on online travel sites is well protected.	.841
PRV3. I think online travel sites show concern for the privacy of its users.	.845
PRV4. I think online travel sites only collect personal data that are necessary for the activity.	.832

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]
a. 1 components extracted.

i. Risk

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.858
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1503.079
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.279	81.987	81.987	3.279	81.987	81.987
2	.310	7.740	89.727			
3	.231	5.777	95.504			
4	.180	4.496	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
RIS1. I feel the risk associated with purchase from online travel sites is high.	.874
RIS2. I think it is risky to consider the information from online travel sites as valid.	.927
RIS3. I believe that booking a holiday from online travel sites is risky because services delivered may fail to meet my expectations.	.908
RIS4. Booking a holiday from online travel sites would involve more financial risk (i.e. fraud, hard to refund) when compared with more traditional ways of booking.	.913

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]

a. 1 components extracted.

j. Perceived convenience

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.865
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1095.747
	df	10
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.301	66.016	66.016	3.301	66.016	66.016
2	.544	10.874	76.889			
3	.459	9.170	86.059			
4	.361	7.217	93.276			
5	.336	6.724	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
PCN1. I can search for travel information at any time by using the internet.	.766
PCN2. I can search for travel information at any place by using the internet.	.823
PCN3. Using the internet for information searching for travel products gives me convenience in booking my holiday.	.848
PCN4. Paying over the internet when booking my holiday will make it easier for me financially.	.825
PCN5. I find the holiday packages (e.g. flight & hotel) arranged by online travel sites are convenient for me.	.798

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]
a. 1 components extracted.

k. Search intention

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.819
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	907.223
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.864	71.603	71.603	2.864	71.603	71.603
2	.460	11.502	83.104			
3	.369	9.227	92.331			
4	.307	7.669	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
SI1. I intend to search online for information about travel products in the future.	.822
SI2. If I want to book a holiday, I intend to use the internet to search for travel information.	.850
SI3. I expect my use of the internet for information search for travel products to continue in the future.	.871
SI4. I plan to increase my use of the internet for information search for travel products in the future.	.842

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]

a. 1 components extracted.

l. Information search and evaluation

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.887
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1488.952
	df	28
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.168	52.102	52.102	4.168	52.102	52.102
2	.931	11.640	63.742			
3	.638	7.971	71.713			
4	.585	7.310	79.022			
5	.540	6.747	85.769			
6	.453	5.666	91.436			
7	.365	4.562	95.998			
8	.320	4.002	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
IFSE2. Search for online information about travel products is an important step for anyone before booking.	.728
IFSE3. The quality of online travel information provided is the most important criteria in the process of information evaluation.	.758
IFSE4. I frequently browse for travel information online before booking my holiday.	.739
IFSE5. My search for travel information includes investigation of search results, that I then consider before purchasing on the internet.	.786
IFSE6. I would evaluate the information in the search results before booking my holiday.	.599
IFSE9. When evaluating the information I would consider an image search to gain more details (i.e. hotel, location, and destination).	.627
IFSE10. When evaluating the information I would look for accurate and up-to-date travel information.	.745
IFSE11. When evaluating the information I would consider the travel information reviewed and recommended by others before purchasing on the internet.	.771

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]
a. 1 components extracted.

m. Purchase intention

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.826
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1031.938
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.985	74.629	74.629	2.985	74.629	74.629
2	.419	10.477	85.106			
3	.331	8.272	93.378			
4	.265	6.622	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component Matrix[a]

	Component
	1
PI1. I intend to purchase online travel products in the future.	.864
PI2. Given that I have access to the internet, I predict that I would purchase online travel products.	.851
PI3. In the future, I intend to regularly purchase online travel products.	.882
PI4. I expect my purchasing of online travel products to increase in the future.	.858

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]
a. 1 components extracted.

Appendix N: Phase (3) The Effect of Moderators

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Attitude = 2]	2.811	2.170	1.677	1	.195	-1.443	7.065
	[Attitude = 3]	5.216	2.151	5.879	1	.015	1.000	9.433
	[Attitude = 4]	7.968	2.163	13.564	1	.000	3.728	12.208
	[Attitude = 5]	10.829	2.193	24.389	1	.000	6.531	15.127
	[Attitude = 6]	13.428	2.222	36.536	1	.000	9.074	17.782
Location	Age	-.783	.182	18.611	1	.000	-1.139	-.427
	Income	-.016	.112	.021	1	.886	-.235	.203
	Education	.260	.136	3.666	1	.056	-.006	.526
	LengthOfStayUK	.481	.166	8.372	1	.004	.155	.807
	InternetExperience	.110	.138	.635	1	.426	-.161	.381
	TravelExperience	-.113	.121	.870	1	.351	-.351	.125
	BoughtTravelProduct	.353	.148	5.671	1	.017	.063	.644
	PerceivedUsfulness	1.990	.135	216.925	1	.000	1.725	2.255
	[Gender=1]	-.176	.205	.743	1	.389	-.577	.225
	[Gender=2]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[SearchIntention = 0]	2.686	2.344	1.313	1	.252	-1.909	7.281
	[SearchIntention = 1]	3.457	2.220	2.424	1	.119	-.894	7.808
	[SearchIntention = 2]	5.019	2.132	5.541	1	.019	.840	9.198
	[SearchIntention = 3]	6.219	2.118	8.622	1	.003	2.068	10.370
	[SearchIntention = 4]	8.723	2.125	16.854	1	.000	4.558	12.887
	[SearchIntention = 5]	11.026	2.150	26.295	1	.000	6.812	15.241
	[SearchIntention = 6]	13.944	2.192	40.477	1	.000	9.649	18.240
Location	Age	.005	.177	.001	1	.980	-.343	.352
	Income	.022	.111	.041	1	.840	-.194	.239
	Education	.028	.134	.044	1	.834	-.234	.290
	LengthOfStayUK	-.402	.165	5.943	1	.015	-.726	-.079
	InternetExperience	-.405	.136	8.831	1	.003	-.672	-.138
	TravelExperience	.360	.120	9.013	1	.003	.125	.595
	BoughtTravelProduct	-.174	.148	1.386	1	.239	-.463	.116
	Attitude	1.872	.131	204.042	1	.000	1.615	2.129
	[Gender=1]	.481	.204	5.578	1	.018	.082	.880
	[Gender=2]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[SearchIntention = 0]	-.728	2.211	.109	1	.742	-5.061	3.605
	[SearchIntention = 1]	-.020	2.118	.000	1	.992	-4.172	4.131
	[SearchIntention = 2]	1.332	2.041	.426	1	.514	-2.669	5.333
	[SearchIntention = 3]	2.365	2.023	1.367	1	.242	-1.600	6.330
	[SearchIntention = 4]	4.603	2.021	5.189	1	.023	.642	8.563
	[SearchIntention = 5]	6.521	2.034	10.282	1	.001	2.535	10.506
	[SearchIntention = 6]	8.922	2.052	18.901	1	.000	4.900	12.944
Location	Age	-.343	.170	4.075	1	.044	-.676	-.010
	Income	.038	.107	.130	1	.719	-.171	.248
	Education	.051	.129	.157	1	.692	-.202	.304
	LengthOfStayUK	-.359	.162	4.942	1	.026	-.676	-.043
	InternetExperience	-.278	.132	4.454	1	.035	-.537	-.020
	TravelExperience	.358	.116	9.464	1	.002	.130	.586
	BoughtTravelProduct	-.003	.142	.000	1	.986	-.282	.277
	SubjectiveNorms	1.413	.124	130.212	1	.000	1.170	1.655
	[Gender=1]	.540	.198	7.442	1	.006	.152	.929
	[Gender=2]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Trust = 1]	-1.168	2.198	.282	1	.595	-5.477	3.141
	[Trust = 2]	2.447	2.034	1.448	1	.229	-1.539	6.433
	[Trust = 3]	4.854	2.038	5.675	1	.017	.860	8.847
	[Trust = 4]	7.033	2.051	11.762	1	.001	3.014	11.052
	[Trust = 5]	9.133	2.067	19.513	1	.000	5.080	13.185
	[Trust = 6]	11.684	2.092	31.186	1	.000	7.583	15.784
Location	Age	-.176	.172	1.044	1	.307	-.514	.162
	Income	-.089	.108	.685	1	.408	-.301	.122
	Education	-.282	.132	4.576	1	.032	-.540	-.024
	LengthOfStayUK	-.103	.159	.418	1	.518	-.415	.209
	InternetExperience	-.038	.133	.080	1	.777	-.299	.224
	TravelExperience	.109	.116	.886	1	.347	-.118	.337
	BoughtTravelProduct	.314	.143	4.826	1	.028	.034	.593
	Security	1.704	.112	233.207	1	.000	1.485	1.922
	[Gender=1]	.124	.198	.396	1	.529	-.263	.512
	[Gender=2]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[SearchIntention = 0]	.335	2.278	.022	1	.883	-4.130	4.801
	[SearchIntention = 1]	1.050	2.155	.237	1	.626	-3.174	5.275
	[SearchIntention = 2]	2.421	2.064	1.376	1	.241	-1.624	6.466
	[SearchIntention = 3]	3.480	2.044	2.898	1	.089	-.526	7.487
	[SearchIntention = 4]	5.747	2.043	7.915	1	.005	1.743	9.751
	[SearchIntention = 5]	7.780	2.058	14.287	1	.000	3.746	11.814
	[SearchIntention = 6]	10.351	2.085	24.646	1	.000	6.264	14.437
Location	Age	-.365	.170	4.616	1	.032	-.698	-.032
	Income	-.046	.108	.185	1	.667	-.258	.165
	Education	.213	.131	2.633	1	.105	-.044	.470
	LengthOfStayUK	-.022	.159	.019	1	.889	-.334	.290
	InternetExperience	-.211	.133	2.506	1	.113	-.472	.050
	TravelExperience	.257	.117	4.864	1	.027	.029	.486
	BoughtTravelProduct	-.063	.144	.193	1	.660	-.345	.219
	Trust	1.240	.098	158.781	1	.000	1.047	1.432
	[Gender=1]	.398	.199	4.002	1	.045	.008	.788
	[Gender=2]	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.