



Unraveling the dynamic and contingency mechanism between service experience and customer engagement with luxury hotel brands

Angelina Nhat Hanh Le^{a,*}, Nguyen Huu Khoi^{a,*}, Dong Phong Nguyen^b

^a School of Management, University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City, 59C Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

^b School of International Business and Marketing, University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City, 59C Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Service experience
Emotional attachment
Relational quality
Customer engagement
Value co-creation
Moderating effects

ABSTRACT

This study unravels the dynamic and contingency mechanism between service experience and customer engagement with luxury hotel brands by investigating a multi-step model linking these two variables, in which emotional attachment and relational quality constructs (i.e., brand satisfaction, brand trust, and brand commitment) act as a bridge, while customer involvement acts as a moderator. Based on a self-administered survey dataset of 249 international tourists who are customers of luxury hotel brands, partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) is used to test the hypotheses. The results indicate that all proposed hypotheses are supported. As such, this study discovers and clarifies the nature and dynamic mechanism underpinning the co-creation and reciprocation process of customer engagement with luxury hotels. In particular, the positive service experience is found to contribute to customer engagement via emotional attachment and relational marketing. Furthermore, the moderating role of customer involvement in the luxury hotel setting is confirmed.

1. Introduction

Customer service experience has been considered to be an essential foundation of firm competitiveness (Becker and Jaakkola, 2020; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). In the hotel industry context, in particular regarding luxury hotels (Ahn and Back, 2018; Choi and Kandampully, 2019), “memorable service experience cannot be sold ‘to’ customers, but must instead be co-created ‘with’ them” (Wu and Gao, 2019, p. 4247). As such, the role of service experience is particularly highlighted in the luxury hotel service domain (Yang and Lau, 2015; Zhan and He, 2012). For instance, the Ritz Carlton Hotel no longer presents themselves as simply a hotel but rather as an “experience and memory creator”. Other luxury hotels also function as venues in which customers pursue experiences rather than simply purchasing accommodation, food, and drinks (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Jani and Han, 2014). According to Kandampully et al. (2018), 89% of firms position service experience as central for firm competitiveness—indeed, by delivering distinctive customer experiences, luxury hotel brands such as Marriott, Hilton, and Starwood have become superior franchises and especially successful. In addition to the increasing focus on customer experience, luxury hotels try to transform customers into brand ambassadors who not only

consume the offerings, but also serve as storytellers of these offerings through different engagement behaviors (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Roy et al., 2018; Wu and Gao, 2019). Moreover, luxury hotel service providers have acknowledged customer brand engagement (CBE hereafter) as a golden driver for marketing and sales performance (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Kumar et al., 2019; Roy et al., 2018). Practical evidence reveals that luxury hotels which do not embrace strategies to engage customers have low return rates. Also, compared to engaged hotel guests, the annual average expenditure of their disengaged counterparts comes in 46% lower (Local Measure, 2016). Indeed, at present, service experience and CBE have both been highlighted as the top priorities of contemporary luxury hotel management (Ahn and Back, 2018; Cetin and Walls, 2015; Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Yang and Lau, 2015).

In line with the considerable surge in the attentions of practitioners, the past decade has observed a proliferation of scholarly discussions and academic works devoted to several perspectives and forms of customer experience and CBE in service and hospitality contexts (see Table 1); the luxury hotel sector is no exception (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Islam et al., 2019). The underlying mechanisms between service experience and CBE and its contingent conditions have also been conceptually

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: hanhln@ueh.edu.vn, lenhathanh@gmail.com (A.N.H. Le), khoinguyen60.n17@st.ueh.edu.vn, khoinh@ntu.edu.vn (N.H. Khoi), phongnd@ueh.edu.vn (D.P. Nguyen).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.103057>

Received 22 April 2020; Received in revised form 17 May 2021; Accepted 23 August 2021

Available online 10 September 2021

0278-4319/© 2021 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

incorporated in previous papers (Kumar et al., 2019; Pansari and Kumar, 2016). In luxury hotel contexts, intervening mechanisms connecting experiential perspectives with different forms/components of CBE such as satisfaction (Choi and Kandampully, 2019), trust (Roy et al., 2018), and emotional responses (Wu and Gao, 2019) have been examined. These studies imply that both relational quality and emotional states play an important role in linking co-creative luxury experiences and customer engagement. However, there remains a lack of studies that have integrated and comprehensively discussed such dynamic mechanisms in a luxury hotel context. According to Kumar et al. (2019), the

dynamic nature of the mechanisms is still questioned—co-creating value with customers that delivers positive service experience is desirable, but not a sufficient condition to obtain customer engagement and/or gain value from customers as a reciprocation process. In the luxury hotel context, drawing from the co-creation process of S-D logic (Hollebeek et al., 2019), positive and extraordinary experiences which make customers feel a strong emotional connection and perceive a positive relationship (i.e., relational quality) with a particular luxury hotel are expected to better foster their intention to reciprocate/contribute back to the hotel brand (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Itani et al., 2019;

Table 1

Literature on the link between experience and engagement: selected conceptual and empirical studies in service, hospitality and luxury hotel contexts.

Author (s)	Theoretical background	Perspective of experience	Mediator/Moderator	Engagement components
1. Conceptual papers				
Pansari and Kumar (2016)	Literature review	Customer experience (cognitive, affective, emotional, social and physical responses to the brand/firm, products and services)	Mediator: Satisfaction; Emotions Moderator: Natural of industry (service vs. manufacturing); Convenience; Type of firms; Level of involvement; Brand value	Customer engagement (purchase, referral, word-of-mouth, feedback)
Kumar et al. (2019)	Literature review	Service experience (customer interactions, communications, transactions regarding the service offerings over time)	Mediator: Satisfaction; Emotional attachment Moderator: Perceive variation in service experience; Convenience; Type of firms; Level of involvement; Brand value	Customer engagement (purchase, referral, word-of-mouth, feedback)
2. Empirical studies in the context of hospitality				
Manthiou et al. (2016)	Literature review	Brand experience (sensory, affective, behavioral, intellectual)	Mediator: Brand knowledge	Brand loyalty
Xie et al. (2017)	Social exchange theory	Brand experience (sensory, affective, Behavioral, intellectual)	Mediator: Brand relationship quality (i.e., self-connective attachment, satisfaction, behavioral commitment, trust and emotional intimacy)	Help other customers; Help firms
Choi et al. (2017)	Literature review	Brand experience (sensory, affective, behavioral, intellectual)	Mediator: Brand prestige; Brand trust; Customer satisfaction	Attitudinal and behavioral loyalty
Roy (2018)	Schema theory	Service experience (product experience, outcome focus, moment of truth, peace of mind)	Moderator: Service type; Customer type	Loyalty; WOM
Bravo et al. (2019)	Hierarchy of effects, signalling theory	Service experience (core service, employee service, service-scape)	Mediator: Emotions; Satisfaction (with individual hotel); Attitudes toward hotel chain	Intention to return; Scepticism of negative information; WOM
Alnawas and Hemsley-Brown (2019)	Literature review	Service experience (atmospheric, staff-customer interaction, customer-customer interaction, guest security, learning, surprise, escapism/immersion, fun/entertainment, lifestyle)	None	Brand loyalty
Itani et al. (2019)	Theory of engagement, relationship marketing literature	Perceived quality	Mediator: Relational quality (i.e., satisfaction, trust, commitment)	Customer engagement (purchases, referrals, social influence, knowledge sharing)
3. Empirical studies in the context of luxury hotels				
Yang and Lau (2015)	Literature review	Perceived hotel quality	Mediator: Perceived value; Satisfaction	Loyalty intention
Liu et al. (2017)	Customer-based brand equity	Brand loyalty; Brand awareness; Perceived quality; Brand image	Mediator: Brand attitudes Moderator: Brand performance	Purchase intention
Ahn and Back (2018)	Brand experience Theory	Brand experience (sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual experience)	Mediator: Cognitive processing; Affection; Activation	Behavioral intention
Wu and Yang (2018)	Value co-creation	Luxury customer value (utilitarian value, symbolic value, hedonic value, relational value, financial value)	None	Purchase intention
Roy et al. (2018)	Service-dominant logic	Service fairness	Mediator: Trust (cognitive and affective); Value-in-use	Customer engagement behavior (augmenting, co-developing, influencing and mobilizing)
Wu and Gao (2019)	Appraisal theory	Emotional sources/triggers (service management and offerings, physical environment, human interaction)	Mediator: Emotional responses (positive, negative, ambivalent, mixed, neutral)	Reinforce co-creation intention, active co-creation behavior, resourceful co-creation behavior
Rather and Hollebeek (2019)	Social identity theory, social exchange theory	Customer brand identification	Mediator: Customer satisfaction; Customer trust; Customer commitment	Customer loyalty
Choi and Kandampully (2019)	Stimulus – organism – response	Atmosphere (social, public design, room design, ambience)	Mediator: Satisfaction	Customer engagement (willingness to suggest, WOM)
Zhang et al. (2020)	Cognitive-affective-behaviour framework	Cultural motivation, cultural interest	Mediator: Existential authenticity; perceived value; Hotel image; Satisfaction	Hotel loyalty
This study	Co-creative and reciprocal process supported by S-D logic	Service experience (the cognitive and affective assessment of all co-creation activities during the process of formulating customers' own preferred services)	Mediator: Emotional attachment; Satisfaction; Trust; Commitment Moderator: Customer involvement	Customer engagement (purchase, referral, word-of-mouth, feedback)

Kitayama et al., 2000; Kumar et al., 2019). As such, we propose that emotional attachment (Vlachos et al., 2010) and relational quality (i.e., satisfaction, trust and commitment; Itani et al., 2019) are the bridges that link positive service experience and CBE in the luxury hotel context. Thus, the value exchange process of co-creation and reciprocation between luxury hotel brands and customers should be a multi-step process in which co-created positive service experiences amplify customers' emotional attachment and foster relational quality, and eventually lead to CBE. This proposition will be thoroughly discussed and investigated in the current research.

Customer involvement that refers to the amount or level of perceived importance and attachment to an object (e.g., luxury hotel services) and/or perceived activation and motivation in response to that object (Rodríguez-Molina et al., 2015) is usually studied as a boundary condition in consumer behavior research (Harrigan et al., 2018; Rodríguez-Molina et al., 2015). As luxury hotel services are costly and expensive, hotel guest behaviors largely depend on their involvement level (Kotler et al., 2017). The role of customer involvement in explaining CBE is interesting since it may exert both direct (Hollebeek et al., 2019) and interactive (Kumar et al., 2019; Pansari and Kumar, 2016) effects with other cognitive and affective drivers of CBE, thus having the potential to provide further knowledge regarding the co-creation and reciprocation process of luxury hotel brand engagement. It is even more interesting since customer involvement may interact differently with emotional attachment and relational quality constructs to influence CBE in the luxury hotel context (Kumar et al., 2019). More specifically, we argue that a high level of involvement make customers more sensitive to emotional attachment (Harrigan et al., 2018; Kumar et al., 2019; Rodríguez-Molina et al., 2015), thus eventually intensifying CBE while convincing customers to put less importance on relational quality (Reinhard and Sporer, 2008; Rodríguez-Molina et al., 2015), therefore reducing CBE. Such interactions can transform simple main effects into conditional effects, then a deeper and broader understanding of value exchange between customers and luxury hotel brands can subsequently be acquired. To date, there remains a lack of studies examining such interactions in a luxury hotel context. Thus, this study further contributes by investigating how the dynamic formation of CBE is contingent on customer involvement.

As a summary, this study aims to bridge the identified research gaps by clarifying the value co-creation and reciprocation process of CBE and empirically testing the effect of service experience on customer engagement with luxury hotel brands via emotional attachment and relational marketing constructs. Also, the moderating role of customer involvement is scrutinized. The research findings will guide luxury hotel managers toward how to nurture customer contributions to their hotel brands and effectively harvest customer lifetime value.

2. Literature review, conceptual background, and theoretical framework

2.1. Literature review regarding the link between service experience and customer engagement

Service experience and customer engagement have received great attention from researchers in the general service, hospitality and luxury hotel literature (see Table 1). In the luxury hotel domain, customer experience has been studied in several forms, including perceived hotel quality (Yang and Lau, 2015), service fairness (Roy et al., 2018), and atmosphere (social, public design, room design, ambience; Choi and Kandampully, 2019), whereas different components of customer engagement such as customer loyalty (Rather and Hollebeek, 2019; Yang and Lau, 2015), behavioral intention (Ahn and Back, 2018; Wu and Yang, 2018), willingness to recommend, word of mouth (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Islam et al., 2019; Rather and Hollebeek, 2019), in addition to augmenting, co-developing, influencing and mobilizing engagement behaviors (Roy et al., 2018) have been articulated.

Nevertheless, according to Pansari and Kumar (2016), customer experience should be holistic in nature, involving customers' cognitive, affective, emotional, social, and physical responses. Based on S-D logic, customer experience should be co-created by a brand and its customers (Hollebeek et al., 2019). In addition, CBE should encompass all customer activities and is defined as the mechanics of a customer's value addition to a brand, either through direct (customer purchases) and/or indirect contributions (incentivized referrals, word-of-mouth, feedback/suggestions) (Pansari and Kumar, 2016). The lack of holistic views of both service experience and CBE as co-creative and reciprocal processes would assuredly inhibit luxury hotel managers deriving value from contemporary consumers; therefore, this study will address such research gaps.

The literature review in luxury hotel contexts also reveal several mediating mechanisms linking experiential perspectives and separate components of CBE, for example, satisfaction (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Yang and Lau, 2015), emotional responses (Ahn and Back, 2018; Wu and Gao, 2019), trust and value-in-use (Roy et al., 2018), and perceived value (Yang and Lau, 2015; Zhang et al., 2020). These studies suggest that both relational quality and emotional states have important roles in connecting co-creative experience and customer engagement. However, there remains a lack of comprehensive knowledge integrating these two mediating mechanisms in the luxury hotel context. Emotional attachment is defined as 'the emotion-laden bond between a person and a brand characterized by deep feelings of connection, affection, and passion' (Kumar et al., 2019, p. 148). The importance of emotional attachment in connecting customer experience and positive outcomes for brands has been demonstrated in the context of luxury consumption (Fleming et al., 2005; So et al., 2013; Yim et al., 2008), including hospitality services (Hyun and Kim, 2012). Thus, we expect that it also has a significant connecting/intervening role in the context of luxury hotels.

Key brand relational quality constructs are comprised of brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand commitment (Aurier and N'Goala, 2009; Itani et al., 2019). In luxury hotel context, brand satisfaction alludes to a conscious evaluation or cognitive judgment that the luxury hotel brand has performed relatively well or poorly (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Rather and Hollebeek, 2019). Brand trust refers to customer confidence in the quality and reliability of the services offered by a particular luxury hotel brand (Rather and Hollebeek, 2019; Roy et al., 2018), while brand commitment is the perception that an ongoing relationship with another is so important and is worth working on to ensure that it endures indefinitely (Rather and Hollebeek, 2019). As suggested by Aurier and N'Goala (2009) and empirically evidenced by Rather and Hollebeek (2019), luxury hotel brand satisfaction, trust and commitment are distinct constructs that might play different roles in maintaining the interactive relationship between customers and brands. In particular, positive service co-creation experiences can stimulate/engender brand satisfaction, then enhance brand trust and brand commitment, eventually acquiring valuable contributions/reciprocations (i.e., CBE) from luxury hotel guests. However, no studies exist that fully incorporate these three discrete relational quality constructs as well the associations among them on the link from customer experience to CBE in the luxury hotel context.

Previous studies in service context (e.g., Kumar et al., 2019) have suggested that customer contribution to firms is moderated by context-based variables, including customer involvement. Using luxury hotel services usually requires high-involvement decisions, as luxury hotel services are costly and expensive (Kotler et al., 2017). Thus, customer involvement has an important role in influencing the co-creation and reciprocation process of CBE with luxury hotels. Nevertheless, previous studies in this context have largely ignored the contingency role of customer involvement on the path from emotional attachment and relational quality to CBE. This study, therefore, fills that gap by discussing and testing how customer involvement intensifies the impact of emotional attachment while mitigating the influence of brand satisfaction and brand commitment on CBE. The investigation of the

moderating role of customer involvement will provide greater insight into how to keep customers engaged with luxury hotel brands in a profitable manner and harvest the lifetime value of these customers.

2.2. A co-creation and reciprocation process of CBE in a luxury hotel context

Due to the dominant power of customers in today's competitive market which is fueled by the explosion of digital technologies and extensive interactions between customers themselves (Itani et al., 2019), contemporary marketing management has shifted its focus from creating value for customers to co-creating value with customers, and subsequently gaining customer lifetime value through their engagement behaviours (Pansari and Kumar, 2016; So et al., 2020). This shift is consistent with the S-D logic perspective in forming customer engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2019). In the luxury hotel context, CBE is comprised of a range of value-added activities in which customers do not only directly contribute to hotel brand performance in the form of current and future purchases, but they can indirectly contribute to the business success of a hotel through supporting behaviours that go "beyond purchase", such as word-of-mouth, blogging, writing reviews, providing feedback to the hotel, and other similar activities (Wu and Gao, 2019). These activities reflect the value gaining/acquisition from customers, which is of primary importance to luxury hotel brands (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Kotler et al., 2017; Rather and Hollebeek, 2019; Roy et al., 2018).

Customer engagement with luxury hotel brands is not generated by itself, but is a result of the value co-creation and reciprocation process in which hotel guests who receive substantial benefits from the co-created memorable experiences are likely to feel indebted, and therefore tend to reciprocate in kind (c.f. Ahn and Back, 2018; Itani et al., 2019; Kumar et al., 2019). According to Wu and Gao (2019), extraordinary hotel experiences are not sold to customers, but rather must be co-created with them. Hotel guests are acting as 'co-creators' participating in the formation of their own preferred services (Tommasetti et al., 2017), while luxury hotel service providers can utilize customers' knowledge and personal preference to co-create unforgettable and unique moments (DeWitt et al., 2008). The current literature in the context of luxury hotels also suggests that co-created customer experiences can bring lot of positive outcomes such as emotional attachment and quality relationships (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Kumar et al., 2019; Wu and Gao, 2019; Zhang et al., 2020) which are beneficial to consumers. In addition, according to the principles of reciprocity, "when a party perceives that he/she has obtained benefits from another, he/she will feel indebted and will be obligated to reciprocate in kind" (Lee et al., 2019, p. 3). Thus, we can argue that in the context of luxury hotel settings, due to extraordinary services and benefits they receive, guests tend to proactively reciprocate their indebtedness to the hotel brand in forms of both direct and indirect contributions (i.e., CBE), rather than merely receiving the benefits. In addition, the process of formulating such contributions to firms is contingent on the situation at hand, such as customer involvement (Kumar et al., 2019; Pansari and Kumar, 2016).

In the current study, the co-creation and reciprocation process of CBE is proposed as a multi-step model progressing from co-generating positive service experiences to attaining emotional attachment and brand satisfaction, then nurturing brand trust and brand commitment, and eventually obtaining valuable contributions/reciprocations (i.e., CBE) from luxury hotel guests. Moreover, this co-creation and reciprocation process might be contingent on customer involvement.

2.3. From customer experience to emotional attachment and brand satisfaction

Customer service experience with a luxury hotel brand is defined as the cognitive and affective assessment of all co-creation activities during the process of formulating customers' own preferred services (adapted

from Klaus and Maklan, 2013; Tommasetti et al., 2017). Following Klaus and Maklan (2013), service experience is operationalized as a multi-dimensional construct that includes the four sub-components of product experience, outcome focus, moments-of-truth and peace-of-mind. While product experience refers to "the importance of customers' perception of having choices and the ability to compare offerings", outcome focus is "associated with reducing customers' transaction cost, such as seeking out and qualifying new providers" and "reflects the importance of goal-oriented experiences in consumer behavior". Meanwhile, moments-of-truth emphasize the importance of service recovery and flexibility in dealing with customers once complications arise, and peace-of-mind describes a customer's assessment of all the interactions with the service provider before, during and after purchase (Klaus and Maklan, 2013, pp. 16–17).

Emotional attachment has been investigated under different terms such as consumer-firm emotional attachment (Vlachos et al., 2010), customer-firm affection (Yim et al., 2008), and brand love (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Its importance has been highlighted in the context of luxury consumption (Fleming et al., 2005; Hyun and Kim, 2012; So et al., 2013; Yim et al., 2008). Meanwhile, brand satisfaction reflects the cognitive evaluations that a luxury hotel brand has performed relatively well or poorly (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Rather and Hollebeek, 2019). Previous studies have suggested that customer experience drives customer-accumulated emotions such as brand love, consumer-firm emotional attachment, and customer-firm affection in both non-luxury (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Thomson et al., 2005; Vlachos et al., 2010) and luxury (Hyun and Kim, 2012; Kreuzer et al., 2020; So et al., 2013) consumption settings. Thus, it is expected that a positive and co-creative customer experience may facilitate the formation of emotional attachment between customers and brands in the luxury hotel context.

Furthermore, positive experience that involves favorable emotions and evaluations (Klaus and Maklan, 2013) increases customer perceptions of value, thus leading to a higher level of overall satisfaction (Oliver, 2014) with the luxury hotel brand (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Rather and Hollebeek, 2019). These contentions are in line with expectation-disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1980) which suggests that positive disconfirmation (i.e., premium customer experience with a luxury hotel brand) leads to positive emotions and satisfaction. While previous studies in the luxury hotel context have suggested the influence of customer experience on positive outcomes (Choi et al., 2017; Wu and Gao, 2019), empirical studies regarding how customer experience generates not only satisfaction but also emotional attachment, however, have been overlooked, leading to an incomplete understanding of how to leverage positively experienced customers to a state of being more ready to contribute to the luxury hotel brand. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses for testing in the context of luxury hotels:

H1. Positive service experiences have a positive effect on emotional attachment.

H2. Positive service experiences have a positive effect on brand satisfaction.

2.4. From emotional attachment and brand satisfaction to brand trust and commitment

In the context of luxury consumption, previous studies have suggested that emotional attachment with a brand is related to strong and intense emotions such as love-awakening and affectionate connection (Hyun and Kim, 2012; So et al., 2013; Yim et al., 2008) that promote customers' beliefs about the quality and reliability of the brand (Drennan et al., 2015). As such, we expect that the more intense the emotional attachment toward a luxury hotel brand, the more strongly customers trust that hotel. Moreover, regarding luxury consumption, emotional attachment fosters bonding feelings of closeness and connectedness (Kreuzer et al., 2020; So et al., 2013; Yim et al., 2008). The bonding feelings facilitate care and concern for the partner's welfare

and the belief that the other party feels likewise, and are thus expected to induce and consolidate trust (Xie et al., 2014) in the luxury hotel context. While some studies in luxury hotel contexts (e.g., Rather and Hollebeek, 2019; Roy et al., 2018) have suggested that good connections between customers and brands positively influence brand trust, none of them have empirically tested this matter. Therefore, this study contributes by proposing that:

H3. Emotional attachment has a positive effect on customer brand trust.

Satisfaction, trust and commitment—three important constructs of relational marketing—have strong relationships with each other (Aurier and N'Goala, 2009; Itani et al., 2019). The linkages between satisfaction, trust, and commitment have been well-established in previous studies; satisfaction has a positive influence on trust, which in turn has a positive impact on commitment (Aurier and N'Goala, 2009). The relationships between these constructs of relational marketing have also been validated in various contexts in the service domain (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002), including the luxury hospitality setting (Choi et al., 2017; Rather and Hollebeek, 2019). Thus, we propose and test the relationship between satisfaction, trust, and commitment in a luxury hotel brand context:

H4. Customer brand satisfaction has a positive effect on customer brand trust.

H5. Customer brand trust has a positive effect on customer brand commitment.

2.5. From emotional attachment, brand satisfaction and brand commitment to CBE

A consensus exists that customer emotional attachment will lead to their engagement with the firm (Hollebeek, 2011; Kitayama et al., 2000)—the service domain is no exception (Bowden, 2009; Kumar et al., 2019). In the context of luxury consumption, emotional attachment is expected to affect post-purchase behaviors, including purchase loyalty (i.e., customer lifetime value), incentivized referrals, influence (i.e., word-of-mouth) and knowledge (i.e., feedback), thus emotional attachment is vital in forming enduring relations (Hyun and Kim, 2012; So et al., 2013; Yim et al., 2008). In the luxury hotel context, the link between emotional attachment and CBE can be explained via the process of building relationship continuation (Gonzaga et al., 2001). At the initial stage of a customer-brand relationship, emotional attachment as a powerful motivator urges the customer to defy costs and risks and approach the brand more frequently (Yim et al., 2008). When the initial relationship has been established as interaction increases, it is expected that customers grow increasingly intimate and positive emotional ties as well as interdependence with, and dedication to, the brand (Saavedra and Van Dyne, 1999). As such, customers ignore alternatives and replacements, are willing to sacrifice for the brand, and over time demonstrate pro-relationship behaviors such as loyalty, re-patronization, retention, positive word-of-mouth, referral, feedback and customer share development (Fleming et al., 2005; Verhoef, 2003). We believe that this process of building relationship continuation (Gonzaga et al., 2001) is justified in the luxury hotel context since relational quality development is one of the key objectives of hospitality marketing management (Kotler et al., 2017). Thus, we propose that:

H6. Emotional attachment has a positive effect on CBE.

In luxury hotel settings, the notion that satisfaction results in positive outcomes is widely advocated by both academia and practitioners (Choi and Kandampully, 2019). The relationship between satisfaction and positive outcomes is established both at the individual (e.g., customer satisfaction with a service) and aggregate level (e.g., customer satisfaction with a brand) in the luxury hotel domain (Rather and Hollebeek, 2019; Yang and Lau, 2015). Since satisfaction is considered a key

predictor of long-term customer behavior (Oliver, 2014), we expect that brand satisfaction and a brand's positive outcomes should be positively related in the luxury hotel sector (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Rather and Hollebeek, 2019; Yang and Lau, 2015). In this context, previous studies have demonstrated that satisfaction has a link to brand loyalty such as repurchase intention and referral (Rather and Hollebeek, 2019; Yang and Lau, 2015), word-of-mouth and feedback (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Wu and Gao, 2019). Thus, it is suggested that customers' brand satisfaction leads to both the direct and indirect contributions (i.e., CBE) to brands in the luxury hotel context.

H7. Customer brand satisfaction has a positive effect on CBE.

Previous studies have provided support for the impact of customer commitment on several positive outcomes such as acquiescence and cooperation, enduring attitudes toward a brand and behavioral loyalty, the avoidance of considering alternative offerings from other brands, and positive word-of-mouth (Aurier and N'Goala, 2009; Tuškej et al., 2013). In the hospitality service setting, Kang et al. (2014) suggested that customers who are committed to a brand are more likely to conduct positive actions toward that brand, since they tend to maintain consistency between their actions and commitment. Empirically, Itani et al. (2019) suggested that brand commitment in the hospitality context generates a wide range of positive results, including purchase, referral, knowledge sharing and social influence (i.e., CBE). In the domain of luxury hotel settings, it seems that only Rather and Hollebeek (2019) have empirically validated the impact of customer commitment on customer loyalty, one important aspect of customer engagement. Thus, previous studies have implied a link between brand commitment and CBE in the luxury hotel context, so we propose that:

H8. Customer brand commitment has a positive effect on CBE.

2.6. The moderating effects of customer involvement on the formation process of CBE

CBE is the ultimate outcome of the co-creative and reciprocal process between luxury hotel brands and customers; therefore, understanding the key drivers as well as the boundary conditions that intensify CBE is utterly important for firms who aim to maximize value acquisition from customers. As previously justified, emotional attachment, brand satisfaction, and brand commitment are proposed to have direct and positive effects on CBE in the luxury hotel context, we further argue that such effects are contingent on customer involvement—a frequently-studied moderator in consumer behaviour research—because the decision-making process regarding luxury hotel services largely depends on such a personal tendency (Harrigan et al., 2018; Kotler et al., 2017; Rodríguez-Molina et al., 2015).

Following Rodríguez-Molina et al. (2015), this study defines customer involvement as a perception of importance, pleasure value, sign value, risk probability, and risk consequences toward luxury hotel services in general. Thus, it is related to the extent to which customers are motivated to seek and process information in order to optimize a decision-making process (Harrigan et al., 2018; Reinhard and Sporer, 2008) regarding the use of luxury hotel services. It is suggested that a service/product context can generate personal values that are relevant or irrelevant to customer needs and interests (Khoi et al., 2021, 2019; Klaus and Maklan, 2012). Previous studies have suggested that a high level of customer involvement is linked to greater cognitive efforts and information processing (Harrigan et al., 2018; Reinhard and Sporer, 2008). This means that the elaboration of object-related situations increases to a broader and deeper level of cognitive evaluation (Rodríguez-Molina et al., 2015). In other words, the thoughts and inferences of customers toward the provided luxury hotel service intensify when their involvement is higher. However, it is expected that while the number of cognitive reasons being considered increases, the importance of a particular cognitive reason/cue (e.g., brand satisfaction, brand

commitment) in this set may decrease. This is because: (1) individuals' cognitive resources used for evaluations and inferences are limited, and as such when the number of evaluations and inferences increases, the available resources available for each evaluation and inference decrease accordingly (Sanchez-Franco, 2009); and (2) when there are too many evaluations and inferences, information overload can occur within the minds of individuals, which in turn leads to the selection of easier ways to make decisions – for example, based on emotions (Rodríguez-Molina et al., 2015). Thus, in addition to the satisfaction and commitment they have with a brand, their involvement with the luxury hotel service makes them evaluate many other perspectives of this luxury service provision such as service interactivity or service quality (Sanchez-Franco, 2009). As a result, we expect that customer involvement with a luxury hotel service weakens the influences of brand satisfaction and brand commitment on CBE (c.f., Kumar et al., 2019; Pansari and Kumar, 2016). Thus, in the luxury hotel domain, we hypothesize that:

H9a. Customer involvement has a negative moderating effect on the influence of brand satisfaction on CBE.

H9b. Customer involvement has a negative moderating effect on the influence of brand commitment on CBE.

As mentioned above, when customers are more involved in a luxury hotel service, they may exert more cognitive evaluations and inferences, which in turn lead to information overload or a shortage of required cognitive resources. In such a case, they will shift to a heuristic approach, such as using emotions or mood to make decisions (Reinhard and Sporer, 2008). Thus, we expect that when involvement with a luxury hotel service is higher, customers are more likely to depend on their emotions to decide whether or not they should engage with a hotel brand. In the current study, this means that customers become more sensitive to emotional attachment, which in turn leads to an increase in the influence of emotional attachment on CBE. This is consistent with arguments that customer involvement in a service context leads to heightened arousal and intensified experiences of emotions in general—specifically, positive emotions (Kumar et al., 2019). As such, we anticipate that customers with higher involvement put more importance on emotional attachment when considering becoming engaged with luxury hotel brands. Thus:

H9c. Customer involvement has a positive moderating effect on the influence of emotional attachment on CBE.

2.7. Control variables

Previous studies have suggested that number-of-use (the hotel brand), income and age can influence CBE (Itani et al., 2019; Pansari and Kumar, 2016). Thus, in order to take into account the potential effects of these variables on CBE, we include them as control variables in the proposed research model.

3. Methods

3.1. Measurement

The measurements of studied constructs were adopted from previous well-established studies. More specifically, CBE was operationalized as a reflective-reflective second-order construct which includes four first-order components (purchase, referral, word-of-mouth, and feedback). Sixteen items of this measurement of CBE were derived from Kumar and Pansari (2016). Customer service experience was operationalized as a reflective-formative second-order construct which itself involves four first-order components (peace-of-mind, moments-of-truth, outcome focus, and product experience). Nineteen items of this measurement of customer service experience were borrowed from Klaus and Maklan (2012). Regarding the measurement of emotional attachment, we adapted the measurement of Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), since it has

been adopted to measure customer–retailer emotional attachment (Vlachos et al., 2010). Only five items measuring emotional attachment were used because the other five items that have neutral feelings or low item-correlation loading during the pre-test of 30 international tourists were removed. We adapted five items measuring customer involvement in the study of Rodríguez-Molina et al. (2015) into the specific context of interest (i.e., luxury hotel services). As such, each item in this measurement served to ask customers about their perceived importance of luxury hotel services. Brand satisfaction, brand trust, and brand commitment were measured by four items for each which were derived from Klaus and Maklan (2013), Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), and Eisingerich and Rubera (2010), respectively. Finally, one item measuring the overall experience of using services ('The overall experience of their services is wonderful') was added for the redundancy test of the formative scale (Klaus and Maklan, 2012). A five-point Likert scale ranging from completely disagree to completely agree was applied for all items.

3.2. Subject and sample

The luxury hotel industry is an increasing crucial sector which has evidenced exponential growth and expansion in recent years (Islam et al., 2019; Rather and Hollebeek, 2019; Wu and Gao, 2019), not only in developed markets, but also in their emerging counterparts (Roy et al., 2018) such as Vietnam and Thailand (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2020). While it is suggested that every hotel should do their best to engage with customers, the process of customer engagement seems to be more important to luxury hotels than with lower-priced brands (Chathoth et al., 2014; Choi and Kandampully, 2019). Furthermore, a study by Gallup (Yu and Timmerman, 2014) indicates that customers of luxury hotels tend to be more engaged, and luxury hotels place greater emphasis on guests' experience and satisfaction (Choi and Kandampully, 2019), emotional attachment (Liu et al., 2017), relational quality (Rather and Hollebeek, 2019) and engagement (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Wu and Gao, 2019). Thus, this study serves to examine the proposed hypotheses drawing on the experience of customers with luxury hotels.

According to the UNWTO's 2018 Tourism Highlights Report, Vietnam is among the 10 fastest-growing tourist destinations in the world (Ha, 2018). With the number of tourists rising, international hotel operators are working up an appetite for the Vietnamese market. Coastal cities and islands in Vietnam such as Nha Trang, Da Nang and Phu Quoc have become more and more attractive to international luxury hotel brands (Anh, 2018).

Nha Trang is a coastal city possessing unique tourism advantages, including beautiful beaches, ideal coastal climate, ancient temples (e.g., Long Son Pagoda), and remnants of the ancient Champa Kingdom (i.e., Ponagar Tower), and more. As such, Nha Trang has become one of the top choices for foreign tourists travelling to Vietnam, and therefore has potential to turn into an economic hub and much-preferred destination for investors. In fact, many international luxury hotel chains including The Intercontinental Hotel Group, The Ascott Limited, and Marriott International, have invested and built up their luxury hotel brands in Nha Trang with hotels such as InterContinental, Citadines and Sheraton. Thus, Nha Trang City seems to be ideal for investigating customer engagement toward luxury hotel brands.

Based on discussions with sale and marketing managers of some luxury hotels in Nha Trang, we discovered that international tourists who come from Asia, America and Europe comprise the majority of their customers. This is consistent with the statistics that tourists from Asia, America and Europe accounted for 96.90% of international visitors to Vietnam in 2018 (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2019). Thus, we selected foreign tourists as our main respondents and focused on Asians, Americans, and Europeans. Since this research examines the value co-creation and reciprocation process between customers and brands, the selected luxury hotel brands should be popular. Thus, we

conducted a sample collection at the Sheraton, InterContinental, and Citadines hotels in Nha Trang during the summer of 2019. To conduct the data collection process, we firstly contacted the receptionists of those hotel brands, described the purpose of the study, and politely requested their support for arranging hotel guests to participate in the research. The questionnaires were pretested with 30 international tourists (10 tourists for each of the English, Chinese and Korean versions of the questionnaire). Based on the pilot testing results, we made some minor modifications to develop the final questionnaire. In the main survey, the hotel guests who agreed to join the study chose a convenient time to fill in the survey questionnaire. Although a self-administered survey was adopted, our data collectors were always available on-site to answer any queries the respondents may have regarding the questionnaire. To minimize response biases, we clearly indicated that the survey was completely voluntary and that all collected information would be coded to ensure anonymity. We further indicated that the study focused on their perceptions and evaluations, and that there were no right or wrong answers. In addition, following [Klaus and Maklan \(2013\)](#) to ensure that international guests could ably evaluate and clearly articulate their experience with the selected hotel brand, we aimed at surveying those who were quite familiar with the hotel brand (i.e., at least the second time staying at the hotel brand). Thus, two screening questions regarding originality (Where are you from?) and familiarity (Have you ever used the services of this hotel brand before?) were verbally posited to select suitable respondents. This careful arrangement and screening process resulted in 250 prospective respondents for data collection. However, one respondent was unexpectedly interrupted by an urgent call in the middle of the survey and could not continue the survey. Thus, the uncompleted questionnaire was eliminated, and 249 eligible ones were utilized for data analysis.

The obtained sample size of 249 was adequate for further analysis because, according to [Hair et al. \(2016\)](#), our proposed research model had the maximum number of independent variables in the measurement and structural models of ten (i.e., the number of arrows pointing to CBE), while a minimum of 129 observations was needed to achieve a statistical power of 80% for detecting R^2 values of at least 0.10 (with a 10% probability of error). Also, GPower 3.1 software was used to calculate the minimum sample size in which a two-tails t -test with $f^2 = 0.04$, 10% probability of error, and a total of 10 predictors were adopted. The calculation indicated that the minimum required observations were 216, lower than the number of 249 observations collected in our survey.

The characteristics of the sample are presented in [Table 2](#).

4. Data analysis and results

In this study, the partial least square structural equation model (PLS-SEM) method and SmartPLS 3.2.9 software were employed to analyze both the scale accuracy and the structural model because, according to a number of researchers (e.g., [Hair et al., 2019](#); [Rigdon et al., 2017](#); [Sarstedt et al., 2016](#)), PLS-SEM can effectively deal with predictive models and formative measurement scales. In the current study, we aim at developing and testing a multi-step model to predict CBE from service experience via emotional attachment and relational quality. In addition, the formatively measured construct (i.e., service experience) is part of the structural model. Moreover, our research model is complex with reflective-reflective and reflective-formative second-order constructs and moderators. Thus, our choice of PLS-SEM was justified.

4.1. Validation of measures: reliability and validity

Since our measurement model includes both reflective-reflective second-order constructs (i.e., CBE) and reflective-formative second-order constructs (i.e., service experience), we followed the guidance of [Sarstedt et al. \(2019\)](#) and used a disjointed two-stage approach to estimate the measurement and structural models. In Stage I, we used

Table 2
Characteristics of respondents.

Gender	Freq.	%	Education	Freq.	%
Male	112	45.0	Bachelor's Degree or below	149	59.8
Female	137	55.0	Master's Degree	79	31.7
Total	249	100.0	Doctor of Philosophy	21	8.4
Marital status	Freq.	%	Total	249	100.0
Single	65	26.1	Age	Freq.	%
Married	118	47.4	> = 15–29	62	24.9
Other	66	26.5	> = 30–44	112	45.0
Total	249	100.0	> = 45–59	58	23.3
Occupation	Freq.	%	> = 60	17	6.8
Student	58	23.3	Total	249	100.0
Company employee	82	32.9	Purpose of travelling	Freq.	%
Housewife/husband	7	2.8	Vacation/sightseeing	222	89.2
Teacher	23	9.2	Business/meeting	8	3.2
Businessman/woman	41	16.5	Visiting friends/relatives	16	6.4
Doctor	2	0.8	Other	3	1.2
Others	36	14.5	Total	249	100.0
Total	249	100.0	Number-of-use (including the current stay)	Freq.	%
Nationality	Freq.	%	2	93	37.3
Europe	51	20.5	3–4	73	29.3
America	59	23.7	5–6	47	18.9
Asia	139	55.8	7 and above	36	14.5
Total	249	100.0	Total	249	100.0

Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability (CR) for assessing reliability, average variance extracted (AVE) and factor loadings for evaluating convergence validity, and Fornell & Larcker's criterion and Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) values for checking discriminant validity. The results, as presented in [Table 3](#), indicated that Cronbach's Alpha and CR values were greater than 0.7, providing evidence that all reflective scales were reliable. Also, since most of the factor loadings were greater than 0.7 and AVE values were greater than 0.5, we concluded that the convergence validity of these reflective components/constructs was acceptable. The results in [Table 4](#) showed that the square root of AVE of each component/construct was greater than its bivariate correlations between this component/construct and other components/constructs. Thus, discriminant validity was attained. In addition, the HTMT values were less than 0.90 and the bootstrap confidence interval of these HTMT values did not include the value of 1, providing evidence that the discriminant validity between reflective components/constructs was confirmed.

In Stage II, latent scores obtained from Stage I were used as indicators for the studied constructs of the research model. As such, CBE and service experience became reflective and formative constructs, respectively; each of them was measured by four indicators that represented their corresponding lower-order components. In this stage, the accuracy analysis for CBE applied the same criteria as for those reflective scales in Stage I. The assessment values, as presented in [Table 3](#) and [Table 4](#), demonstrated a satisfactory level of reliability and validity (both convergent and discriminant) for CBE.

Regarding the formative construct of service experience, we firstly assessed convergence validity by conducting redundancy analysis of the formative measurement of service experience on a single-item measure of the overall service experience. The results in [Table 5](#) indicate that the path coefficient of 0.85 was located within a 95% percentile confidence interval of [0.73; 0.92]. Next, the VIF values of four indicators (peace-of-mind, moments-of-truth, outcome focus, and product experience) measuring service experience ranged from 1.01 to 1.40, indicating that there was no collinearity among the indicators. Finally, the four indicators exerted significant effects on service experience. Thus, we concluded that the formative scale of service experience was valid.

Table 3

Accuracy analysis of reflective components/constructs.

	Research constructs/ component	No. of scale items		Construct reliability and validity			
		Original	Final	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE	Item loadings
Stage I: first-order reflective components (<i>bold italicized</i>) and constructs (bold) were analyzed.	1. <i>Peace of mind (POM)</i>	6	5	0.95	0.96	0.82	0.95/0.86/0.90/ 0.83/0.97
	2. <i>Moment of truth (MOT)</i>	5	5	0.93	0.94	0.77	0.89/0.88/0.86/ 0.87/0.88
	3. <i>Outcome focus (OF)</i>	4	4	0.88	0.91	0.72	0.84/0.87/0.84/ 0.86
	4. <i>Product experience (PE)</i>	4	4	0.94	0.96	0.85	0.94/0.90/0.91/ 0.94
	5. Emotional attachment	5	5	0.92	0.94	0.76	0.84/0.88/0.85/ 0.88/0.89
	6. Brand satisfaction	4	4	0.92	0.94	0.80	0.91/0.89/0.91/ 0.88
	7. Brand trust	4	4	0.93	0.95	0.82	0.93/0.88/0.89/ 0.92
	8. Brand commitment	4	4	0.84	0.89	0.68	0.90/0.88/0.84/ 0.64
	9. Customer involvement	5	5	0.93	0.95	0.79	0.94/0.92/0.86/ 0.81/0.92
	10. <i>Purchase (PUR)</i>	4	4	0.89	0.93	0.76	0.92/0.89/0.83/ 0.83
	11. <i>Referral (REF)</i>	4	4	0.85	0.90	0.68	0.80/0.81/0.80/ 0.89
	12. <i>Word-of-mouth (WOM)</i>	4	4	0.77	0.86	0.60	0.82/0.81/0.60/ 0.85
	13. <i>Feedback (FB)</i>	4	4	0.69	0.81	0.51	0.61/0.72/0.73/ 0.81
Stage II: Second-order reflective construct is shown here while second-order formative construct is presented in Table 5	14. CBE	4	4	0.86	0.91	0.71	0.88/0.87/0.81/ 0.81

Note: CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted. Service experience (SE) is a reflective – formative second order construct that includes: POM, MOT, OF, and PE; CBE is a reflective–reflective second order construct that includes: PUR, REF, WOM, and FB.

Table 4

Discriminant validity assessment using Fornell & Larcker's criterion and Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) values.

Constructs/Components	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. <i>Peace of mind</i>	0.90	0.02	0.08	-0.02	0.32	0.29	0.33	0.24	0.29	0.38	0.29	0.28	0.24	0.33
2. <i>Moment of truth</i>	0.06	0.88	0.46	0.40	0.33	0.25	0.17	0.23	0.28	0.36	0.30	0.27	0.26	0.36
3. <i>Outcome focus</i>	0.08	0.51	0.85	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.19	0.22	0.27	0.36	0.31	0.35	0.28	0.37
4. <i>Product experience</i>	0.04	0.43	0.35	0.92	0.28	0.18	0.13	0.18	0.23	0.24	0.24	0.21	0.21	0.27
5. Emotional attachment	0.31	0.36	0.34	0.30	0.87	0.72	0.66	0.68	0.79	0.73	0.66	0.57	0.55	0.74
6. Brand satisfaction	0.28	0.27	0.33	0.19	0.77	0.90	0.73	0.65	0.58	0.74	0.62	0.58	0.70	0.78
7. Brand trust	0.32	0.18	0.19	0.13	0.71	0.79	0.90	0.64	0.54	0.62	0.46	0.45	0.52	0.61
8. Brand commitment	0.23	0.26	0.24	0.20	0.76	0.73	0.72	0.83	0.56	0.65	0.59	0.52	0.52	0.68
9. Customer involvement	0.28	0.30	0.28	0.24	0.85	0.62	0.58	0.62	0.89	0.57	0.62	0.47	0.48	0.63
10. <i>Purchase</i>	0.36	0.39	0.39	0.26	0.80	0.81	0.67	0.73	0.62	0.87	0.70	0.61	0.64	n.a
11. <i>Referral</i>	0.29	0.33	0.34	0.27	0.73	0.69	0.51	0.68	0.68	0.80	0.83	0.67	0.59	n.a
12. <i>Word-of-mouth</i>	0.30	0.32	0.40	0.25	0.68	0.67	0.51	0.63	0.55	0.73	0.81	0.78	0.50	n.a
13. <i>Feedback</i>	0.25	0.30	0.31	0.23	0.62	0.83	0.62	0.62	0.54	0.75	0.71	0.63	0.72	n.a
14. CBE	0.35	0.39	0.42	0.29	0.82	0.87	0.71	0.78	0.70	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	0.84

Notes: The Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratios and bivariate correlations are below and above the diagonal, respectively. The square root of AVE is on the diagonal; n. a. is not available/relevant; Data in the last row and column were retrieved in Stage II while the remaining data were retrieved in Stage I.

Interaction terms were also created lately in Stage II by applying a two-stage calculation method. Thus, direct effects were estimated in a direct-only structural model that did not include terms of interaction while the moderating effects were estimated in a full structural model that incorporated those interaction terms.

4.2. Hypothesis testing

Research model quality: The quality of the research model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2) and Stone-Geisser (Q^2). More specifically, R^2 for endogenous variables ranged from 0.18 to 0.76, indicating adequate explanatory power. The Q^2 values were all greater than 0, providing further evidence supporting the predictive relevance of the exogenous latent variables.

Hypothesis testing results: The VIF values of predictive variables were lower than 5.0, ranging from 1.0 to 4.02 (Fig. 1), indicating that multicollinearity was less likely to be a serious problem in the current study (Hair et al., 2016). The results in Fig. 1 depicted that all direct hypotheses (H1 to H8) were supported. In particular, service experience had significant effects on emotional attachment and brand satisfaction. Furthermore, emotional attachment and brand satisfaction had positive impacts on brand trust, which in turn positively influenced brand commitment. Both emotional attachment and brand satisfaction had positive effects on CBE. Finally, brand commitment positively affected CBE. Regarding moderating effects (H9a, b, c), all three hypotheses were supported as expected. While involvement weakened the impacts of brand satisfaction and brand commitment on CBE, it strengthened the effect of emotional attachment on CBE. The control variables of

Table 5

Accuracy analysis of formative construct of service experience.

1. Redundancy analysis				
Formative construct	Single-item measurement	VIF	Coefficient	Bootstrap
Service experience	Overall service experience	1.00	0.85	[0.73; 0.92]
2. Significance and relevance of formative measurement				
Formative construct	Indicators	VIF	Weight	Bootstrap
Service experience	Peace of mind	1.01	0.70	[0.58; 0.81]
	Moment of truth	1.40	0.25	[0.10; 0.36]
	Outcome focus	1.31	0.40	[0.31; 0.49]
	Product experience	1.23	0.25	[0.18; 0.32]

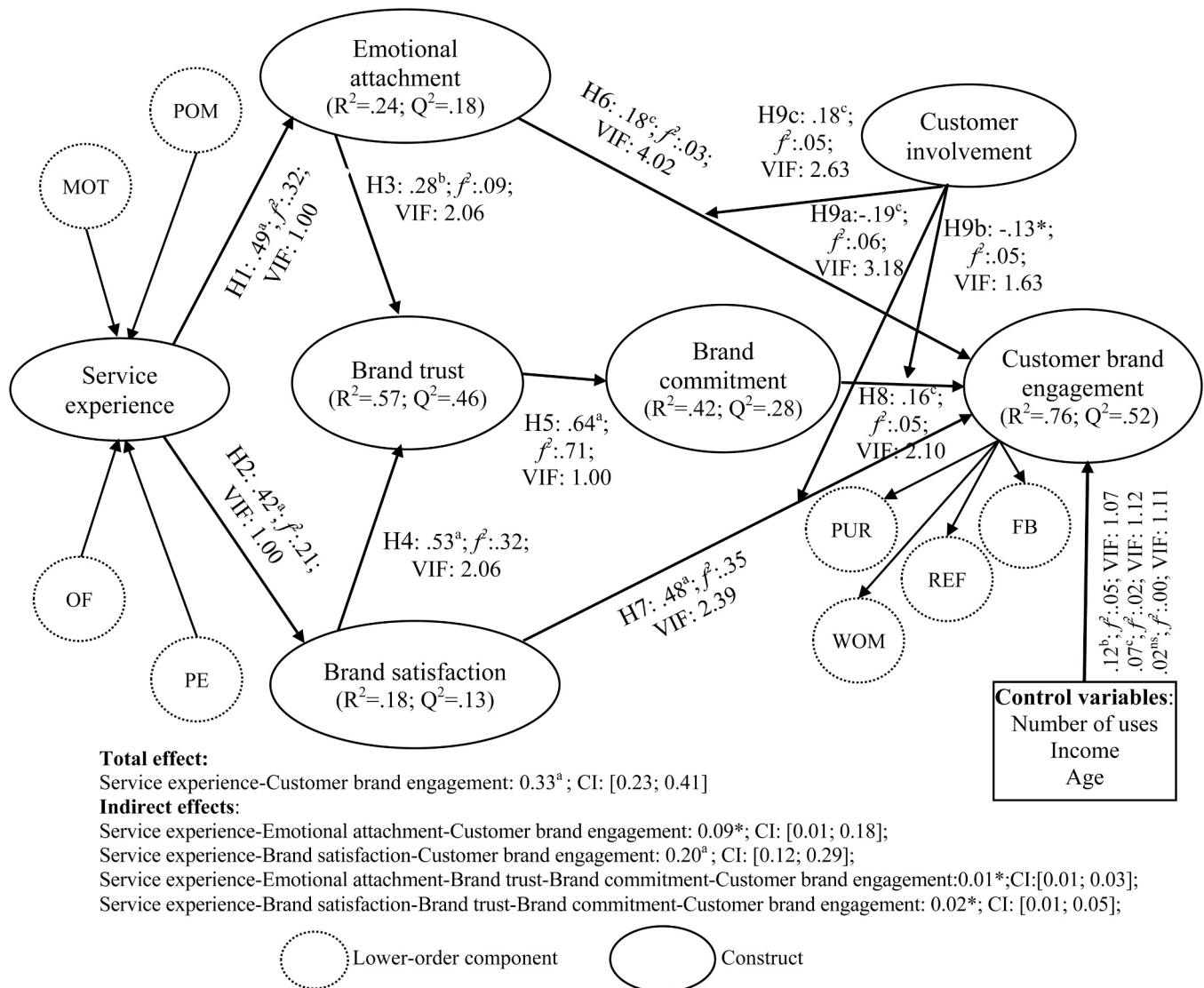
number-of-use and income had significant effects on CBE, while age did not.

To ensure the efficacy of the testing results, a bootstrap procedure with 5000 sub-samples was adopted. The bootstrap results showed that the estimated confident intervals did not include the zero value, demonstrating that the hypotheses were firmly supported.

5. Discussion and future research

5.1. Discussion

Based on S-D logic and the literature review shown in Table 1, luxury hotel brand managers should consider service provision as a co-creative, reciprocal process in which luxury hotels bring premium experiences to their guests in exchange for customer lifetime value (Hollebeek et al., 2019; Kumar et al., 2019; Pansari and Kumar, 2016). However, how this process should occur is not fully understood, due to the lack of a holistic view of luxury hotel experience and CBE, the undermined utilization of relational constructs and emotional attachment, and the deficiency in



Notes: POM: peace of mind; MOT: moment of truth; OF: outcome focus; PE: product experience; PUR: purchase; REF: referral; WOM: word-of-mouth; FB: feedback; Bootstrap confidence interval is in the brackets; CI: Confident Interval; ^a $p < 0.001$; ^b $p < 0.01$; ^c $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$; ^{ns} not significant

Fig. 1. Proposed research model and results.

considering contingent factors (e.g., customer involvement) that are important in luxury hotel contexts. This has led to a dearth of research aiming to discover the exact nature of the causal relationships among luxury hotel service experience, emotional attachment, relational quality constructs (i.e., brand satisfaction, brand trust, and brand commitment) and CBE. In the current study, we apply a holistic view of service experience (Klaus and Maklan, 2013) and CBE (Kumar and Pansari, 2016; Kumar et al., 2019), as well as a co-creative and reciprocal theoretical perspective, to develop and investigate a multi-step research model of how luxury hotel service experience is connected to CBE from both dynamic and contingent aspects. The testing results demonstrate that all proposed hypotheses are supported. Thus, this study undoubtedly provides scholars with specific knowledge regarding the process of how to harvest customer lifetime value (Kumar et al., 2019) by delineating a clear path to win the hearts and minds of luxury hotel customers. This path is comprised of the three stages of the value co-creation and reciprocation process. In the first stage, the positive hotel experience generates emotional attachment and brand satisfaction. In the second stage, emotional attachment with a luxury hotel brand and brand satisfaction together generate brand trust, in turn building and consolidating brand commitment to that luxury hotel brand. In the final stage, emotional attachment, brand satisfaction, and commitment exert positive influences on luxury hotel CBE. Thus, the current study sheds light on, and provides managers with, practical insights on how to make customers more engaged with a luxury hotel brand.

More specifically, luxury hotel brand managers, as demonstrated, should firstly devote their resources to providing customers with premium experiences since it is a key component of starting the engagement process. For the luxury hotel sector, as customers spend more money, they expect a superior experience. They are not only expecting better tangible accommodations but also that intangible experience to be unforgettable. It means that service is taken to the next level and is focused on how to make customers feel. To win more repeat customers, luxury hoteliers must generate a tailored and personalized experience (Yu and Timmerman, 2014). A full and superior experience in a luxury hotel context requires four components: product experience, outcome focus, moments-of-truth, and peace-of-mind (Klaus and Maklan, 2012, 2013). To provide these specific experiences for luxury hotel customers, practical differentiation strategies from the perspective of people, physical environments, and processes, as suggested by Kotler et al. (2017), can be applied. Since product experience emphasizes the importance of customers' perception of having choices and the ability to compare offerings (Klaus and Maklan, 2013), luxury hotel brand managers should consider making their service information highly available and accessible for customers. With this in mind, luxury hotel brand managers can differentiate their luxury brand experience by having more competent and reliable customer-contact personnel, with one of them in charge of fixed potential and current customers (i.e., the people aspect of differentiation strategies). This responds to the wish of having 'one designated contact' to work with during the process of acquiring and consuming the hotel service, an important factor contributing to the evaluation of service quality perceptions. Furthermore, outcome focus reflects the importance of goal-oriented experiences in consumer behavior (Klaus and Maklan, 2012, 2013). In this sense, designing and continuously improving the hotel service provision process (i.e., the process aspect of differentiation strategies) may save customers time, money and effort devoted to service acquisition and consumption, thus increasing value perceptions and satisfaction with the service. Next, because moments-of-truth is related to service recovery and flexibility in dealing with customers, improving this component requires luxury hotel brand managers to give their frontline service employees responsibility and incentives to recognize and care for customers' needs and empower those employees with authority to do their best to recover service experience. Finally, peace-of-mind is associated with emotional benefits elicited from the perceived expertise of the service provider as well as

guidance throughout the process (Klaus and Maklan, 2012, 2013). As such, the physical environment, people, and service provision process may play an important role. From this perspective, brand managers can develop a comprehensive service provision process while training existing employees better or hiring new employees with more skills to better serve and satisfy customers with expertise and enthusiasm. It should be noted that the physical environment and facilities also contribute to the perception of brand service expertise. Thus, luxury hotel brand managers may identify customers' expectations and design the physical environment and equip facilities accordingly. As suggested by Yu and Timmerman (2014), luxury hotel guests require a superior experience. Thus, personalized, and tailored experiences based on differentiation strategies are utterly essential and should be more and more carefully designed.

The practical implications of emotional attachment and brand relational management have been discussed in some settings (Vlachos et al., 2010; Yim et al., 2008), yet its pragmatic implication in a luxury hotel CBE context is still nascent. As suggested by the present findings, the development of emotional attachment and brand relational quality is important. Thus, luxury hotel brand managers, while developing brand satisfaction and brand commitment (the cognitive aspects of a relational quality), also devote their efforts to building customer emotional attachment with the brand, such as love, intimacy, passion, and immersion. This is consistent with the arguments that for luxury hotel customers, price is not the top factor, but rather responsive employees and their ability to solve problems (i.e., satisfaction with the hotel) and personal connection (e.g., emotional attachment and bonding) have in fact become more important in retaining customers (Yu and Timmerman, 2014). To increase emotional attachment and relational quality, luxury hotel brand managers should create positive disconfirmation in customer experience over time, which in turn generates perceived values and evokes positive emotions, and then contributes to emotional attachment and overall brand satisfaction. These two variables lead to brand trust and brand commitment and finally, to foster CBE. In other words, luxury hotel brand managers should bear in mind that the key to emotional attachment and brand satisfaction is to exceed their customers' service-quality expectations: 'Promise only what you can deliver and deliver more than you promise!' (Kotler et al., 2017, p. 62).

The intricate moderating effect of customer involvement on the engagement process implies that luxury hotel brand managers can use this variable as a segmentation criterion and devote tactical efforts to carefully serving the hotel customer segment with high involvement. As luxury hotel service is largely intangible and perceived quality depends largely on frontline employees, we suggest that for this segment, luxury hotel brand managers should decrease customer cognitive evaluation of the brand service by more strongly adapting practical differentiation strategies from the perspective of people, the physical environment, and processes. Such diverse strategies provide more tangible evidence of high hotel service quality when compared with industry standards and competitors. Thus, this tangible evidence helps customers with high involvement evaluate luxury hotel services more easily (i.e., decrease thoughts and evaluations). This way, luxury hotel brand managers can increase the influence of existing cognitive evaluations (e.g., satisfaction and commitment) while fostering positive emotions (e.g., emotional attachment) amongst these customers (Kotler et al., 2017). Therefore, hotel brand managers can use promotional materials (e.g., images, videos, brochures, employees' appearance/manners (e.g., uniforms, expertise and attitude) and the hotel brand's physical environment (e.g., facilities and equipment) to render their hotel service quality more tangible (Kotler et al., 2017) and increase the possibility of businesses successfully engaging with customers.

Finally, as CBE is important to luxury hoteliers with fully engaged customers being more likely to contribute to the hotel (Choi and Kandampully, 2019; Islam et al., 2019; Roy et al., 2018), luxury hotel brand managers should adopt a more holistic view of CBE as presented in the current study to set the goals of their CBE strategies. This is because the

view of engagement that includes customer purchases, referrals, word-of-mouth and feedbacks (Kumar et al., 2019; Pansari and Kumar, 2016) brings practical benefits that help luxury hotel brands create competitive advantages to survive, develop, raise and harvest customer lifetime value. Furthermore, from the marketing management perspective, the measurement of CBE components is helpful for the development of a metric performance index and is thus easily applied in brand management practices.

5.2. Research limitations and future research

While this study makes significant contributions to the literature as demonstrated above, we also suggest some future directions to further comprehend the process of CBE. Firstly, this study adopts the conceptualization of customer service experience as a second-order construct. While this approach provides a general understanding of how positive experience contributes to brand satisfaction and emotional attachment, future studies should further investigate these relationships by examining how each component of service experience contributes to brand satisfaction and emotional attachment. Secondly, future studies should also further investigate how emotional attachment and relational quality constructs specifically influence each component of CBE. It is expected that conducting these further examinations not only brings a deeper and broader understanding of the path from premium service provision to customer contributions but also supports brand managers in allocating limited resources to better develop CBE strategies. Next, this study treats emotional attachment as a uni-dimensional construct. The conceptualization of this construct as a multi-dimensional construct should further consolidate the step to leverage the positive experiences of consumers to attain customer contributions to a brand. Moreover, previous findings have suggested that the effect of customer experience on CBE via emotional attachment and relational quality may differ among hotel types (e.g., luxury vs. non-luxury) (Kumar et al., 2019). Since the current study focuses on predicting CBE in luxury hotel contexts, we therefore recommend that future studies should conduct investigations in non-luxury hotel contexts to further confirm the research findings. Furthermore, our proposed conceptual framework is a multi-step model which is temporal in nature. Thus, we recommend future studies apply a longitudinal approach to better delineate the process from service experience to CBE via emotional attachment and relational quality. We also propose that customer experience regarding luxury hotel brands may depend on the duration of the customer-hotel relationship (Kandampully et al., 2018; Rather and Hollebeek, 2019). Therefore, future studies should investigate the difference between groups of customers who possess either a short- or long-duration relationship with the luxury hotel. Finally, this study adopts the convenience sampling method that may hinder the generalization of the findings. We therefore suggest future studies adopt more representative sampling methods such as quota sampling or stratified sampling.

Service experience

Peace of mind (POM): Regarding this luxury hotel brand,

I am confident in this brand's expertise; they know what they are doing.
The whole process was so easy; they took care of everything.
It is not just about the now; they will look after me for a long time.
I am already a customer; they know me and take good care of me, so why I should go somewhere else.
I have dealt with them before, so getting good service was really easy.
I choose them because they give independent advice.

Moments-of-truth (MOT): Regarding this luxury hotel brand,

It is important that this brand is flexible in dealing with me and looking out for my needs.
It is important that they keep me up to date and inform me about new options.
I want to deal with a safe brand, because using the good service costs a lot of money.
It is important that the people I am dealing with are good people; they listen, are polite and make me feel comfortable.

(continued on next column)

(continued)

The way they deal(t) with me when things go (went) wrong will decide if I stay with them.

Outcome focus (OF): Regarding this luxury hotel brand,

Yes, there are other brands, but I would rather stay with mine; it makes the process much easier.
It was more important to get the service I desired than to shop around for a better rate.
I stay with this brand because I am not confident about using an alternative provider.
It is important that their advisors have experience with the service, too; they know what I am going through.

Product experience (PE): Regarding this luxury hotel brand,

I want to choose between different options to make certain I get the best offer.
It is important to me to receive different offers from this brand.
Unless I can compare different options, I will not know which one is the best for me.
It is great if I can deal with one designated contact through the entire process of using my service.

Emotional attachment (EA): Regarding this luxury hotel brand,

This is a wonderful hotel brand.
This hotel brand is totally awesome.
I love this hotel brand.
This hotel brand is a pure delight.
I'm very attached to this hotel brand.

Brand satisfaction (SAT): Regarding this luxury hotel brand,

I think it is good to come to this brand for the offerings I am looking for.
Overall, I am satisfied with this brand and the service they provide.
I think I am satisfied that this brand produces the best results that can be achieved for me.
The extent to which this brand has produced the best possible outcome for me is satisfying.

Brand trust (TRU): Regarding this luxury hotel brand,

I trust this hotel brand.
I rely on this hotel brand.
This is an honest hotel brand.
This hotel brand is safe.

Brand commitment (COMM): Regarding this luxury hotel brand,

I am loyal to this brand by devoting my effort to maintaining my connection with them.
Even if this brand were more difficult to buy, I believe I would still keep buying them.
I believe I am willing "to go the extra mile" to remain a customer of this brand.
I believe that I will not buy from this brand in the future.^R

Customer involvement (INV)

I do pay attention to luxury hotel service standards.
I do notice luxury hotel service standards.
I do concentrate on luxury hotel service standards.
I am involved in luxury hotel service standards.
I do put my thoughts into luxury hotel service standards.

Customer brand engagement (CBE)

Purchase (PUR): Regarding this luxury hotel brand,

I will continue buying the services of this brand in the near future.
My purchases with this brand make me content.
I do not get my money's worth when I use this brand.^R
Using the services of this brand makes me happy.

Referral (REF): Regarding this luxury hotel brand,

I will promote the brand if there are the monetary referral benefits provided by the brand.
In addition to the value derived from the service, the monetary referral incentives also encourage me to refer this brand to my friends and relatives.
I will enjoy referring this brand to my friends and relatives if there are monetary referral incentives.
Given that I use this brand, I will refer my friends and relatives to this brand if there are monetary referral incentives.

Word-of-mouth (WOM): Regarding this luxury hotel brand,

I do not actively discuss this brand on any media.^R
I love talking about my experience with this brand.
I discuss the benefits that I get from this brand with others.
I am a part of this brand and mention it in my conversations.

Feedback (FB): Regarding this luxury hotel brand,

I provide feedback about my experiences with this brand to the firm.
I provide suggestions for improving the performance of this brand.
I provide suggestions/feedback about the new products/services of this brand.
I provide feedback/suggestions for developing new products/services for this brand.

Note: ^R reversed item.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

Acknowledgment

This research is funded by the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Appendix

Measurement items.

References

- Ahn, J., Back, K.-J., 2018. Antecedents and consequences of customer brand engagement in integrated resorts. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 75, 144–152.
- Alnawas, I., Hemsley-Brown, J., 2019. Examining the key dimensions of customer experience quality in the hotel industry. *J. Hosp. Mark. Manag.* 28 (7), 833–861.
- Anh, N. 2018. Global hotel giants flock to Vietnamese tourism. Retrieved from <https://www.vir.com.vn/global-hotel-giants-flock-to-vietnamese-tourism-62515.html>. (Accessed 13 August 2020).
- Aurier, P., N'Goala, G., 2009. The differing and mediating roles of trust and relationship commitment in service relationship maintenance and development. *J. Acad. Mark. Sci.* 38 (3), 303–325.
- Becker, L., Jaakkola, E., 2020. Customer experience: fundamental premises and implications for research. *J. Acad. Mark. Sci.* 48 (4), 630–648.
- Bowden, J., 2009. Customer engagement: a framework for assessing customer-brand relationships: The case of the restaurant industry. *J. Hosp. Mark. Manag.* 18 (6), 574–596.
- Bravo, R., Martinez, E., Pina, J.M., 2019. Effects of service experience on customer responses to a hotel chain. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 31 (1), 389–405.
- Carroll, B.A., Ahuvia, A.C., 2006. Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love. *Mark. Lett.* 17 (2), 79–89.
- Cetin, G., Walls, A., 2015. Understanding the customer experiences from the perspective of guests and hotel managers: empirical findings from luxury hotels in Istanbul, Turkey. *J. Hosp. Mark. Manag.* 25 (4), 395–424.
- Chathoth, P.K., Ungson, G.R., Altinay, L., Chan, E.S.W., Harrington, R., Okumus, F., 2014. Barriers affecting organisational adoption of higher order customer engagement in tourism service interactions. *Tour. Manag.* 42, 181–193.
- Chaudhuri, A., Holbrook, M.B., 2001. The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: the role of brand loyalty. *J. Mark.* 65 (2), 81–93.
- Choi, H., Kandampully, J., 2019. The effect of atmosphere on customer engagement in upscale hotels: an application of S-O-R paradigm. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 77, 40–50.
- Choi, Y.G., Ok, C.M., Hyun, S.S., 2017. Relationships between brand experiences, personality traits, prestige, relationship quality, and loyalty. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 29 (4), 1185–1202.
- DeWitt, T., Nguyen, D.T., Marshall, R., 2008. Exploring customer loyalty following service recovery. *J. Serv. Res.* 10 (3), 269–281.
- Drennan, J., Bianchi, C., Cacho-Elizondo, S., Louriero, S., Guibert, N., Proud, W., 2015. Examining the role of wine brand love on brand loyalty: a multi-country comparison. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 49, 47–55.
- Eisingerich, A.B., Rubera, G., 2010. Drivers of brand commitment: a cross-national investigation. *Int. Mark. Rev.* 18 (2), 64–79.
- Fleming, J.H., Coffman, C., Harter, J.K., 2005. Manage your human sigma. *Harv. Bus. Rev.* 83 (7), 106–114.
- Gonzaga, G.C., Keltner, D., Londahl, E.A., Smith, M.D., 2001. Love and the commitment problem in romantic relations and friendship. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* 81 (2), 247–262.
- Ha, S. 2018. International hotel operators flock to Viet Nam's bustling tourism scene. Retrieved from <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/466302/international-hotel-operators-flock-to-viet-nams-bustling-tourism-scene.html>. (Accessed 13 August 2020).
- Hair, J.F., Hult, G.T.M., Ringle, C., Sarstedt, M., 2016. A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Hair, J.F., Risher, J.J., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C.M., 2019. When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *Eur. Bus. Rev.* 31 (1), 2–24.
- Harrigan, P., Evers, U., Miles, M.P., Daly, T., 2018. Customer engagement and the relationship between involvement, engagement, self-brand connection and brand usage intent. *J. Bus. Res.* 88, 388–396.
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K.P., Gremler, D.D., 2002. Understanding relationship marketing outcomes. *J. Serv. Res.* 4 (3), 230–247.
- Hollebeck, L.D., 2011. Demystifying customer brand engagement: exploring the loyalty nexus. *J. Mark. Manag.* 27 (7–8), 785–807.
- Hollebeck, L.D., Srivastava, R.K., Chen, T., 2019. S-D logic-informed customer engagement: integrative framework, revised fundamental propositions, and application to CRM. *J. Acad. Mark. Sci.* 47 (1), 161–185.
- Hyun, S.S., Kim, I., 2012. Identifying optimal rapport-building behaviors in inducing patrons' emotional attachment in luxury restaurants. *J. Hosp. Tour. Res.* 38 (2), 162–198.
- Islam, J.U., Hollebeck, L.D., Rahman, Z., Khan, I., Rasool, A., 2019. Customer engagement in the service context: An empirical investigation of the construct, its antecedents and consequences. *J. Retail. Consum. Serv.* 50, 277–285.
- Itani, O.S., Kassar, A.-N., Loureiro, S.M.C., 2019. Value get, value give: the relationships among perceived value, relationship quality, customer engagement, and value consciousness. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 80, 78–90.
- Jani, D., Han, H., 2014. Personality, satisfaction, image, ambience, and loyalty: testing their relationships in the hotel industry. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 37 (February), 11–20.
- Kandampully, J., Zhang, T., Jaakkola, E., 2018. Customer experience management in hospitality. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 30 (1), 21–56.
- Kang, J., Tang, L., Fiore, A.M., 2014. Enhancing consumer-brand relationships on restaurant Facebook fan pages: Maximizing consumer benefits and increasing active participation. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 36, 145–155.
- Khoi, N.H., Le, A.N.H., Tran, M.D., 2021. Tourist inspiration and its consequences: The moderating role of neuroticism. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2452>.
- Khoi, N.H., Phong, N.D., Le, A.N.-H., 2019. Customer inspiration in a tourism context: an investigation of driving and moderating factors. *Curr. Issues Tour.* 23 (21), 2699–2715.
- Kitayama, S., Markus, H.R., Kurokawa, M., 2000. Culture, emotion, and well-being: good feelings in Japan and the United States. *Cogn. Emot.* 14 (1), 93–124.
- Klaus, P., Maklan, S., 2012. EXQ: a multiple-item scale for assessing service experience. *J. Serv. Manag.* 23 (1), 5–33.
- Klaus, P., Maklan, S., 2013. Towards a better measure of customer experience. *Int. J. Market Res.* 55 (2), 227–246.
- Kotler, P., Bowen, J.T., Makens, J., Baloglu, S., 2017. Marketing for hospitality and tourism. Pearson Education Limited, Essex, England.
- Kreuzer, M., Cado, V., Raies, K., 2020. Moments of care: How interpersonal interactions contribute to luxury experiences of healthcare consumers. *J. Bus. Res.* 116, 482–490.
- Kumar, V., Pansari, A., 2016. Competitive advantage through engagement. *J. Mark. Res.* 53 (4), 497–514.
- Kumar, V., Rajan, B., Gupta, S., Pozza, I.D., 2019. Customer engagement in service. *J. Acad. Mark. Sci.* 47 (1), 138–160.
- Lee, Z.W.-Y., Chan, T.K.H., Chong, A.Y.-L., Thadani, D.R., 2019. Customer engagement through omnichannel retailing: the effects of channel integration quality. *Ind. Mark. Manag.* 77, 90–101.
- Lemon, K.N., Verhoef, P.C., 2016. Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey. *J. Mark.* 80 (6), 69–96.
- Liu, M.T., Wong, I.A., Tseng, T.-H., Chang, A.W.-Y., Phau, I., 2017. Applying consumer-based brand equity in luxury hotel branding. *J. Bus. Res.* 81, 192–202.
- Local Measure. 2016. Hotel guests engaged during stay 40% more likely to come back. Retrieved from https://www.hotel-online.com/press_releases/release/hotel-guests-engaged-during-stay-40-more-likely-to-come-back/#When:10:02:09Z. (Accessed 13 August 2020).
- Manthiou, A., Kang, J., Sumarjan, N., Tang, L.R., 2016. The incorporation of consumer experience into the branding process: An investigation of name-brand hotels. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* 18 (2), 105–115.
- Oliver, R.L., 1980. A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions. *J. Mark. Res.* 17, 460–469.
- Oliver, R.L., 2014. Satisfaction: A Behavioral Perspective on the Consumer. Routledge, New York.
- Pansari, A., Kumar, V., 2016. Customer engagement: the construct, antecedents, and consequences. *J. Acad. Mark. Sci.* 45 (3), 294–311.
- Rather, R.A., Hollebeck, L.D., 2019. Exploring and validating social identification and social exchange-based drivers of hospitality customer loyalty. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 31 (3), 1432–1451.
- Reinhard, M.-A., Sporer, S.L., 2008. Verbal and nonverbal behaviour as a basis for credibility attribution: the impact of task involvement and cognitive capacity. *J. Exp. Soc. Psychol.* 44 (3), 477–488.
- Rigdon, E.E., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C.M., 2017. On comparing results from CB-SEM and PLS-SEM: Five perspectives and five recommendations. *Mark. ZFP* 39 (3), 4–16.
- Rodríguez-Molina, M.A., Frías-Jamilena, D.M., Castañeda-García, J.A., 2015. The contribution of website design to the generation of tourist destination image: The moderating effect of involvement. *Tour. Manag.* 47, 303–317.
- Roy, S., 2018. Effects of customer experience across service types, customer types and time. *J. Serv. Mark.* 32 (4), 400–413.
- Roy, S.K., Balaji, M.S., Soutar, G., Lassar, W.M., Roy, R., 2018. Customer engagement behavior in individualistic and collectivistic markets. *J. Bus. Res.* 86, 281–290.
- Saavedra, R., Dyne, L., Van, 1999. Social exchange and emotional investment in work groups. *Motiv. Emot.* 23 (2), 105–123.
- Sanchez-Franco, M.J., 2009. The moderating effects of involvement on the relationships between satisfaction, trust and commitment in e-banking. *J. Interact. Mark.* 23 (3), 247–258.
- Sarstedt, M., Hair, J.F., Cheah, J.-H., Becker, J.-M., Ringle, C.M., 2019. How to specify, estimate, and validate higher-order constructs in PLS-SEM. *Australas. Mark. J.* 27 (3), 197–211.
- Sarstedt, M., Hair, J.F., Ringle, C.M., Thiele, K.O., Gudergan, S.P., 2016. Estimation issues with PLS and CBSEM: where the bias lies! *J. Bus. Res.* 69 (10), 3998–4010.
- So, K.K.F., Li, X., Kim, H., 2020. A decade of customer engagement research in hospitality and tourism: a systematic review and research agenda. *J. Hosp. Tour. Res.* 44 (2), 178–200.
- So, J.T., Phau, I., Parsons, A.G., Yap, S.F., 2013. Corporate branding, emotional attachment and brand loyalty: the case of luxury fashion branding. *J. Fash. Mark. Manag.* 17 (4), 403–423.
- Thomson, M., MacInnis, D.J., Park, C.W., 2005. The ties that bind: Measuring the strength of consumers' emotional attachments to brands. *J. Consum. Psychol.* 15 (1), 77–91.
- Tommasetti, A., Troisi, O., Vesci, M., 2017. Measuring customer value co-creation behavior. *J. Serv. Theory Pract.* 27 (5), 930–950.

- Tuškej, U., Golob, U., Podnar, K., 2013. The role of consumer–brand identification in building brand relationships. *J. Bus. Res.* 66 (1), 53–59.
- Verhoef, P.C., 2003. Understanding the effect of customer relationship management efforts on customer retention and customer share development. *J. Mark.* 67 (4), 30–45.
- Vietnam National Administration of Tourism. 2019. International visitors to Viet Nam in December and 12 months of 2018. Retrieved from <http://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/english/index.php/items/12453>. (Accessed 07 December 2019).
- Vietnam National Administration of Tourism. 2020. Vietnam listed among world's top 10 luxury destinations. Retrieved from <http://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/english/index.php/items/14793>. (Accessed 13 August 2020).
- Vlachos, P.A., Theotokis, A., Pramataris, K., Vrechopoulos, A., 2010. Consumer–retailer emotional attachment. *Eur. J. Mark.* 44 (9/10), 1478–1499.
- Wu, S.-H., Gao, Y., 2019. Understanding emotional customer experience and co-creation behaviours in luxury hotels. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 31 (11), 4247–4275.
- Wu, B., Yang, W., 2018. What do Chinese consumers want? A value framework for luxury hotels in China. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 30 (4), 2037–2055.
- Xie, L.-S., Peng, J.-M., Huan, T.-C., 2014. Crafting and testing a central precept in service-dominant logic: Hotel employees' brand-citizenship behavior and customers' brand trust. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 42, 1–8.
- Xie, L., Poon, P., Zhang, W., 2017. Brand experience and customer citizenship behavior: the role of brand relationship quality. *J. Consum. Mark.* 34 (3), 268–280.
- Yang, F.X., Lau, V.M.C., 2015. “LuXurY” hotel loyalty – a comparison of Chinese Gen X and Y tourists to Macau. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 27 (7), 1685–1706.
- Yim, C.K., Tse, D.K., Chan, K.W., 2008. Strengthening customer loyalty through intimacy and passion: Roles of customer–firm affection and customer–staff relationships in services. *J. Mark. Res.* 45 (6), 741–756.
- Yu, D., Timmerman, J. 2014. From economy to luxury, what matters most to hotel guests. Retrieved from <https://news.gallup.com/businessjournal/175568/economyluxury-mattershotelguests.aspx>. (Accessed 13 August 2020).
- Zhang, Y., Xiong, Y., Lee, T.J., 2020. A culture-oriented model of consumers' hedonic experiences in luxury hotels. *J. Hosp. Tour.* 45, 399–409.
- Zhan, L., He, Y., 2012. Understanding luxury consumption in China: consumer perceptions of best-known brands. *J. Bus. Res.* 65 (10), 1452–1460.