THE STUDY OF RELATIONSHIPS OF GUEST EXPERIENCE TO RELATIONSHIP STRENGTHIN HOTEL INDUSTRY

[1]CHUN-HAO CHENG, [2]JUN-ZHI CHIU, [3]NATSUKO KASHIRAJIMA

[1,2,3]Graduate Institute of Hospitality Management, National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism,Taiwan
E-mail: [1]chunhao@mail.nkuht.edu.tw, [2]jun-zhi65@hotmail.com, [3]50411026@stu.nkuht.edu.tw

Abstract— In recent years, more hotels hope to strengthen the corporate identity of hotel guests through experiential marketing practices. This is because hotel guests currently are not only concerned about the value of the accommodation itself or service, thus they hope to make hotel guests to increase a set of values of the hotel by offering good experiences. Many scholars proposed the concept of hotel Guest experience, as opposed to the traditional marketing focus on the performance and benefits of commodity, providing value of senses, feelings, thinking, action and relationships. Using this concept to explain the invisible and the emphasis on the experience demands of service, for the hospitality industry, 'experience' is the key element of evaluation of the hotel. Due to staying hotel and providing services are proceeded at the same time, the Guest experience will lead to hotel guests' behavior, feeling and thinking and others when they stay at a hotel, which will also affect hotel guests' perception of the hotel service image. Currently Guest experience strategies are most widely used in hotel industry, the main purpose is to be able to enhance the strength of the relationship between hotel guests and hotels, because to increase the strength of the relationship will make the hotel's profit enhance in parallel. Therefore, in this study, we propose the relationships among Guest experience, Experience value, Guest satisfaction, Relationship bonds, and Relationship strength on hotel guests. Guest experience will have a positive effect on Relationship strength directly. Guest satisfaction, Experience value and Relationship bonds will have parametric effects between Guest experienceand Relationship strength. There will be a positive relationship among Guest experience, Experience value and Relationship strength; Guest experience, Guest satisfaction and Relationship strength; Guest experience, Relationship bonds and Relationship strength. Experience value also will positively affect Guest satisfaction, and Guest satisfaction has a positive impact on Relationship bonds.

Keywords— Guest experience, Guest satisfaction, Experience value, Relationship bonds, Relationship strength.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reference [1]recognized the 21th century as an experiential economic age; consumers currently have not concerned about the value of the commodity itself, but an impression experience which they expected to get in their consumption process. Reference [2] indicated the module of experiential marketing strategy in which contained sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational values, and he represented that the most important thing for hotels' strategies of experiential marketing was to create different kinds of style for hotel guests and make them get a wonderful experience; At the same time emphasizes the arrival of experiential marketing age because the traditional marketing mix analysis had been unable to meet the marketing strategies in the experiential economic age. Reference [2] also mentioned it was necessary to make valuable experiences for customers from the view point of their actual experiences. Therefore values made from experience were more valuable than a simple function and profit of accommodations[3]. Reference [4] represented that Experience Value (EV) came from GE, and good GE could bring to hotel guests positive EV. EV plays as an intervening variable between GE and RS, GE and GS[3], [5]. Therefore, GE has been a very important concept for hotels to change hotel guest behavior, and applying experiential marketing has also been a main marketing strategy for them, and aim of offering good GE is to strengthen up hotel guests' Relationship Strength (RS) toward hotels because RS makes a profit for hotels[3],[6]. RS is an important variable for hotel guest relationship but there are few studies research the relationship between GE and RS[7].

It is be positively correlated with GE and RS[8]. Reference [9] recognized that satisfaction was psychological and emotional condition after the experiences. Guest Satisfaction (GS) is one of the antecedents of RS [6], and it is positively correlated with hotel GE and GS.

Reference [10] represented Relationship Bounds (RB) was relationship benefits to join customer and service provider. When hotels and room guests maintain a long term relationship, it will make a profit to both sides [6]. Hence, if hoteliers lost one guest, it also sacrifices the entire profit from the losing guest. Effects through an internal experiential marketing and external one are important key elements which effect on hotels' perpetual management. It is very important for hotels to maintain RS with hotel guests; therefore many scholars study about this topic[7], [8], [11]. However, at the present, few studies research the GE and RS in hotel industry.

Therefore the aim of this study is to examine entire relationships among hotel guests, RS, GS, EV and RB, from the standpoint of the GE.

II. LITERATURE REVIEWAND PROPOSITIONS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Guest Experience (GE)

A word of 'experience' was proposed early byPine& Gilmore[1], and the concept indicates that product serves different thing from product's price or function in the previous marketing. Afterwards, 'experience' is not only an emphasis of product functionality and price, but also consumer's entire feeling to what they received from the information about the products[2], and after this primary concept, he proposed the experience strategy module and definition of that five components; sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational values. Reference [12] also proposed similar perspective, indicating that experiences from consumption correlate with a stimulation of income, and generally there was an important emotional meaning. Reference [13] proposed that implementation of experiential marketing strategy enable to enhance marketing results effectively, hotelier should give weight on experience strategy and improve business results. Reference [14] used experiential marketing module and showed what impressive experiences hotel guests really wanted was, and that some of them did not pay attention to experience about hotel accommodation. Reference [1]noticed the basic concept of experiential marketing which indicated many hotels incorporated experience into traditional service and improved business results in this service emphasized industry. It alsorepresented that companies used service as stage and products as tools to create impressive experiences for customers, which involve them in it, and then, experience is made.This is true of hotels, too; hotels usedaccommondation as stage and service as tools to create impressive experiences for hotel guest.

2.2. Relationship Strength (RS)

The first concept of RS was proposed by Storbackaet al.[6], and the study described that customer RS was effective for extension of relationship longevity and enhanced company's profitability. And It also recognized that RS should be evaluated by three aspects, loyalty as repurchasing, word of mouth on communication behavior and complaining.

Reference [1]recognized a successful experience made customers feel distinctive character, which was very impressive and stay in thier hearts for a while. This is true of hotels, too; When hotel guests feel service or accommodation have distinctive character, it is unlikely to result in getting substitutes for them. Reference [15] revealed that less substitutability enhanced customer loyalty. Reference [16] represented that hotel guests evaluated staying experiences via some profit such as accommodations' effect and enjoying feelings, and it made positive or negative feelings. When hotel guest gets satisfied with particular service or feels the products have unique points, they tends to recommend their happy feelings to others and produces positive word of mouth. Reference [17] recognized when customers participate actively at service prosess, a feeling of belonging to the company was increased, and when service failure has occurred, customers cognized they also had responsibility for that failure, which results in lowering of complaint behavior. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***Proposition 1*: GE will positively and directly relate to RS.**

2.3. Guest Satisfaction (GS)

Customer Satisfactionwas defined as customer's price and rewards of purchasing products, and psychological condition if they got satisfactions or not[18]. This is true of hotels, too. GS is hotel guests'price and rewards of staying at a hotel, and psychological condition if they got satisfactions or not. Afterward, reference [9] indicated that GSwas a psychological and emotional condition after customers got experiences, which was a kind of attitude made by external elements affected some social elements or psychological conditions, or mutual atmosphere. Because satisfaction is a result getting after experience and evaluation, GS evaluates consistency betweenperformance and paying decision after testing the commodity. When there is an enormous consistency, hotel guests get satisfaction; in contrast, when there is not consistency, they feel dissatisfaction[19]. Getting GE is essential because experience is the psychological perception in the hearts of users, and substantially influences subsequent usage behaviors [20]. Reference [21] implied that GE was correlated with satisfaction.

Reference [16] found out that customers evaluated consumption experiences via some profit such as products' effect and enjoying feelings, and it made positive or negative feelings. Afterwards, reference [1] indicated consumption was a process, the memories of experience was unforgettable forever. And experience puts entertainment, education, detachment from reality and sensuousness into living space, and does not only make customers entertain, but also put them there. According to literature about GE and GS, we can find that GE has a positive influence on GS[21]. Therefore, this study proposes when hotel offers good GE, hotel guests will get GS. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***Proposition 2*: GE will positively relate to GS.**

Reference [3] stated that when a company hoped to maintain a long and profitable relationship with customers, it is very important to construct RS between company and customer. This is true of hotels, too; when loyalty is high, probability that hotel guest spreads positive word of mouth gets higher, hotel receives lower complaints. Reference

[22] also mentioned that satisfied customers tended to spread positive word of mouth. Reference [6]recognized that satisfaction affected to RS. Therefore, this study proposes when hotel guest get satisfaction, hotel will get RS.Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***Proposition 3*: GS will positively relate to RS.**

2.4. Experience Value (EV)

Reference [12] recognized that EV came from consumption values. Early studies about consumption cognized that consumption came from a choice of rational nature, and it had a relationship with person's clear motivation and demand. However more studies found that consumption related with some different elements such as hobby, pleasure, sense, art and feeling. Also recognized that customers' value was a kind of experience, it was not on purchased products, brands that they choice or ownership of products, but completely from the experiences. EV is able to provide intrinsic and extrinsic values to customers[12], [16]. Reference [23]represented EV as an experience creation of customer after consumption, and the connection between experience and customer's consumption value could fill the lack of experiential marketing theory. And also stated that experience and customer's decision making had some of consumption values, and in this experience economic age, products, brands and services all began at experiences, from which customers made a decision finally. Reference [24] cognizes that EV was consumer's a cognition and preference for products or service. and it was also a remuneration of perception after mutual evaluation of rational minds and emotions. The difference between experiential markrting and traditional marketing is an importance on unforgettable experiences that company serves for consumers. Therefore good experience can enhance EV. Above mentioned are true of hotels, too.

Reference [2] proposed that applying of experiential markrting stimulated customer's sensory and thinking. It is necessary to make valuable experiences for customers from the viewpoint of their actual experiences. Therefor,reference [4] represented that EV came from GE, and good experience could bring to hotel guests positive EV. Reference [23]also proposed that elements of good experiential marketing effects on customer's different experiences, this means it correlates with GE and EV. Reference [24], [25] reviewed the experiential markrting modules ofSchmitt [2]and the experiential value modules ofMathwick et al. [26], and found there was a positive relation between them. Some scholars attest GE positively effected on EV[23],[24],[27]. Therefore, this study proposes when hotel offers good GE, hotel guests will getGV. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***Proposition 4*: GE will positively relate to EV.**

Reference [28],[29] cognized that service quality, GS would effect on perceived values, and it had an effect on loyalty. Reference [30]also mentioned that EV made trust for experiential product; a good experience will make customers have a positive intention of behavior. Reference [24] found EV influenced GS and intention of repurchasing. Reference [31]recognized the previous way of experience put much value on function value but the point of needed experiences was to create a valuable experience in this experience economic age.Reference [32]found that there was a positive relationship between experience variables, such as experience quality, experience emotion and EV, and loyalty. Reference [33] also stated that EV had four aspects; hotel guest investment price, service meliority, sense of beauty and hobby; except value of beauty sense, they were positive relationships to loyalty. Therefore, this study proposeswhen hotel guests getEV, RS will strengthen.Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***Proposition 5*: EV will positively relate to RS.**

Numerous scholars have studied the relationship between perceived value and satisfaction [15]. Reference [34] examined six service industries and found a significant correlation among perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. Reference [24] found that brand image. EV and GS had definite relationship. Reference [35] also found there was a positive effect between EV and GS. Therefore, this study proposes when hotel guests get EV, they will feelsatisfaction.Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***Proposition 6*: EV will positively relate to GS.**

2.5. Relationship Bonds (RB)

Reference [36] defined RB as continuous strategy between service provider and customer, which makes relationship with customer stronger. Reference [37] recognized RB was the degree of correspondence between company and customer. Afterwards reference [10] proposed RB was relationship benefits between customer and service provider. These are true of hotels, too.

Reference [38] mentioned that participation of customer was a big help service provider and customers understood each other, thus it bringed confidence and trust. Reference [39]cognized that there was an opportunity to get a customization service and a special customer facing because customers participated in a process of service quality and creating value. It also stated that they were easier to make frendships with providers of a service. Reference [8] found that RB and GE had positive relationship. Therefore, this study proposes when hotel offers good GE, RB will increase.Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***Proposition 7*: GE will positively relate to RB.**

Reference [40] found there was a positive relationship between GS and RB, and RB also affected on customer repurchasing and word of mouth in RS. This is true of hotels, too; when the relationship between hotel guest and hotel is better, less complain behavior will occur after service failure. Reference [7],[8] found that RB had positive relationship with RS. Therefore, this study proposes when hotel gets RB, RS will strengthen.Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

***Proposition 8*: RB will positively relate to RS.**

Reference [6] recognized that satisfaction did not only affect to RS directly, but also indirectly through positive effect of RB. And many scholarios found there was a positive relationship between GS and RB[7],[8], [40]. Therefore, this study proposes when hotel guests feel satisfaction, RB will increase.Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

***Proposition 9*: GS will positively relate to RB.**

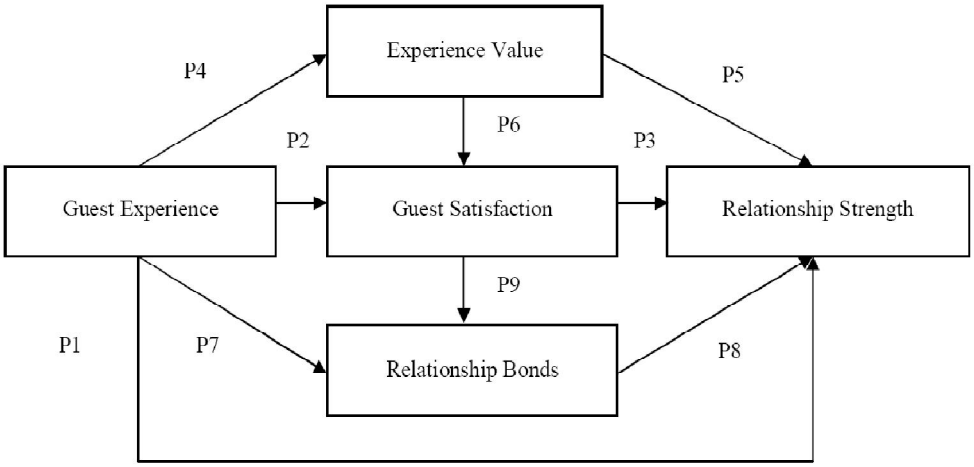


Fig.1.Research frame work for GE, GS, EV, RB and RS

2.5. Research Framework

Research framework ofthis studyis illustrated in Fig. 1. GE will have a positive effect on RS directly. GS, EV and RB will have parametric effects between GE and RS. There will be a positive relationship among GE, EV and RS; GE, GS and RS; GE, RB and RS. EV also will positively affect GS, and GS has a positive impact on RB.

CONCLUSIONS

The issue of GE has gained more attention in recent year. A hotel should focus not only on accommodation and service, but also on the experience. In the future, this study will further develop a framework of GE, GS, RS, EV and RB, and hope to mature the relationship of those constructs and be more completely. In conclusion, if the hoteliers can implement GE well, it will not only take responsibility to stakeholders, but also gains competitive advantage. This issue is important to hotel industry as it is a service orientation business and every hotel can serve its special experiences. Thus, this can keep a sustainable development to hotel, a competitive advantage to hotels.

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