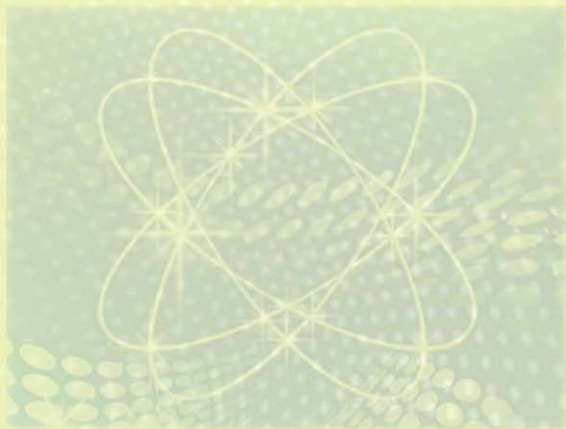


度假酒店体验的概念 构成因素及评价体系研究

The resort hotel experience conceptualization

measurement and relation to antecedents and consequences

杨韫 主编



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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that the book *The Resort Hotel Experience: Conceptualization, Measurement, and Relation to Antecedents and Consequences* is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it reproduces no material previously published or written, nor material that has been accepted for the award of any other books, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Yang Yun

ABSTRACT

Resort hotels have sprung up all over China in recent years, providing customers with pleasurable and memorable experiences. The concept of customer experience was first introduced into the consumer behaviour literature by Holbrook and Hirschman in 1982, and the notion was quickly taken up by numerous researchers. However, the way in which customer experience is formed and the ways in which products and services affect the formation of customer experience are unclear. This study developed and tested a structural equation model of customer experience in the resort hotel setting in an attempt to better understand the nature, antecedents, and consequences of customer experience.

The research model includes six exogenous variables (reception, room, food and beverage, recreation and entertainment, open public areas and customer involvement) and three endogenous variables (customer experience, satisfaction, and behavioural intention). Based on the work of Rust and Oliver (1994) and Holbrook (1994), the study developed two scales to measure resort hotel service performance and customer experience. Customer involvement was measured using Mittal's (1995) revised personal involvement inventory; customer satisfaction was measured using three items from Crosby and Stephens (1987); and behavioural intention was measured using the loyalty and willingness-to-pay scales developed by Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996). All of the scales used in this study were pretested and refined using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis.

An on-site survey was conducted in three resort hotels in the province of Yunnan, and 497 questionnaires were successfully completed. The collected data were first analyzed through structural equation modelling (SEM) with LISREL. The results suggested that the proposed model fit the observed data well, with acceptable

model fit indices. The results from confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicated that the scales had good reliability and validity. Customer experience was confirmed to be a significant mediator between service performance and customer satisfaction, and in addition to service performance, customer involvement was found to be an antecedent of customer experience, directly having a positive impact on behavioural intention. Taken together, the results suggest that service quality is important, but not as important as customer experience in a resort hotel which has a direct effect on customer satisfaction. Therefore, resort hotels should make every effort to create a special customer experience and promote it among customers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During the past years at the School of Hotel and Tourism of Hong Kong Polytechnic University, I have concentrated on only one thing—how to complete a better thesis. I was anxious about finding a good topic, but found consolation in the framework of my thesis. I devoted great effort to writing the confirmation proposal, and was nervous when waiting for the result of the assessment of my thesis proposal. I was busy in data collection. I racked my brains over the data analysis and completion of the thesis. In summary, almost all of my joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness over the past years has been related to my thesis. Looking back now on my studies, I realize that they are not only about obtaining a degree. Rather, the learning process has given me a richer and more significant life experience through which I have really matured, and in which, if not for the help of so many people, I could never have succeeded. I would like to thank those people who offered their help to me in my studies.

First, I would like to express deep gratitude to my chief supervisor, Dr. Andrew Chan. I am greatly honored to have studied under his excellent supervision. He patiently taught me how to conduct research, encouraged me not to give up when I had problems, and generously gave of his time to guide my research work. Without his patience, encouragement, and guidance, I believe I could not have completed this thesis on time. He is a real scholar and enjoys teaching and doing research with all his heart. He is willing without reserve to help any student solve research problems. From him, I learned what a real teacher is, and fully un-

derstand Han Yu^①'s famous words^② on "Mentor Lecturing" (*Shi Shuo*). "古之学者必有师。师者,所以传道受业解惑也。"

Special gratitude also goes to my co-supervisor, Professor Bob McKercher. He also is a good teacher and respected researcher. When I was an MSc student in 2003, I took two courses from him. His knowledgeable lectures and patient individual guidance impressed me, and aroused my interest in doing research. His comments and advice on this thesis have helped me to be more conscientious in carrying out research.

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Conducting research can feel like drifting about on a boundless sea. Of course, if it were not for the supervision of experts, one would not be able to navigate and would be lost in this sea. However, without the love and sincere support of relatives and friends, the journey would be boring and lonely. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to express my great thanks to my husband. He has always supported my study career without a word of complaint, and shared with me the joys and sadness of my study life. My thanks go also to my parents and older brother. With their enduring and selfless love, I could set my heart on pursuing my long and tortuous research studies and overcome difficulties time and again. I also want to thank my good colleagues at Kunming University—Ling Xing and Hong Liu, and my students at Kunming University—Zhiming Ruan, Yayun Song, and Lujuan Yang. Without their help, I could not have so efficiently finished the on-site data collection. Thanks are also extended to Patrick L'Esprit Decosta, Haiyang Kong, York Yan, Doris Lo, Jue Huang, and other research students at the school for their friendship.

① Han Yu 韩愈 (768—824) was a great educationist in the Tang Dynasty, whose educational ideology, especially that related to mentor lecturing, has had a far-reaching influence on Chinese education.

② "古之学者必有师。师者,所以传道受业解惑也。" That is, every scholar must have a teacher. A teacher's responsibilities are to preach, teach, and answer.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the School of Hotel and Tourism of Hong Kong Polytechnic University for the opportunity and financial support to pursue my studies. I am also grateful to the Yunnan Tourism Bureau, Kunming Tourism Bureau, Dianchi Garden Resort Hotel, Yijing Garden Resort Hotel, and Spring Soul Garden Resort Hotel. With their support, the main survey was conducted without any difficulties.

PREFACE

This book “The Resort Hotel Experience: Conceptualization, Measurement, and Relation to Antecedents and Consequences”, is built on Yang Yun’s research at the School of Hotel & Tourism Management, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, which she took charge of. As her research supervisor, I am glad to provide the preface for this book in order to congratulate her and warmly recommend it to readers as well.

This book presents a review of the literature, the research design and the findings of a survey undertaken at Yunnan’s resort hotels. Some managerial and academic recommendations are also provided. One of the strengths of this study is that it is the first of its kind to focus on customer experience in resort hotels. Results will provide essential information to operators seeking to improve their services and provide better experience to customers.

Today, many hospitality and tourism organizations have moved away from a cognitive orientation to an experiential orientation. Competition is also shifting away from how organizations deliver their services to how well they convert their services into memorable experiences. Despite the fact that we can conceptually distinguish between service performance and service experience, much of the research in the tourism literature has not made a clear distinction between the two.

This study makes a distinction between service performance and service experience. Hotel services are separated into discrete components to determine their relative impact on customer experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions. The results indicate that service performance and service experience are distinct concepts; service performance is the antecedent while service experience is the consequence. Another factor examined in this study for its effects on service

experience is customer involvement. The results provide support for such a relationship. Customers with greater involvement are more likely to enjoy their hotel stay. While service performance is clearly of concern to hotels, it is customer's experience that matters most. Resort operators should pay attention not only to improving the quality of their services, but also to improving customer experience. Customer involvement could also be promoted which further enhances customer experience and satisfaction.

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*Lead Hospitality
and Tourism*

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Introduction

Today, consumption is more of an experience than a necessity. Surrounded by a rich variety of products and services, consumers want products that can express their lifestyles and identity. It has been said that post-modern consumers pursue the aesthetic and symbolic values of a product rather than its substance(Corrigan , 1997 ; Williams, 2000). In other words, contemporary consumption is not merely the act of buying and using products or services. It is the seeking of experience through consumption.

“Experience” has become a buzz word in marketing. Phrases such as “the shopping experience,” “the hotel experience,” and “the restaurant experience” are seen everywhere. Companies have realized that creating special experiences through products and services can attract more customers. Pine and Gilmore (1999) believe that profits are generated through the creation of experience and the staging of products and services for customers. Today’s economy has evolved from pure product to product with service and then from product with service to the creation of a special experience.

The customer experience concept was introduced into the marketing literature by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and was quickly taken up by numerous researchers(e. g. , Jensen, 1999 ; Pine & Gilmore, 1999 ; Schmitt, 1999 ; Wolf, 1999 ; Gobe & Zyman, 2001 ; Davenport & Beck, 2002 ; Chan, 2003 ; LaSalle & Britton, 2003). Recent research has shown that the customer experience is linked to service performance and customer satisfaction(e. g. , Otto & Ritchie, 1996 ; Wakefield & Barnes, 1996 ; Barlow & Maul et al. , 2000). Yet, the way in which the customer

experience is formed and the way in which products and services affect the formation of the customer experience are unclear. There is an urgent need to understand more fully the experiential aspects of consumption.

Resort hotels came of age with the advent of rail travel. Thanks especially to further improvements in air transportation and automobiles after World War II, large numbers of travellers could arrive quickly and safely in exotic, though remote, destinations, and increasing numbers of resort hotels then sprang up in beautiful natural locations (Walker, 2006). Resort hotels provide ample opportunities for guests to relax in picturesque surroundings. Their emergence represents a trend in which, in addition to the need for the supply of physical life products and services, the hotel also becomes a medium through which the consumer expression of dynamic and multiple selves can be sustained and communicated, thus enabling customers to act out their own desired social roles and make and maintain social relationships (Morrison, Rimmington & Willams, 1999; Beardsworth & Keil, 1997). Simply put, a successful resort hotel should now deliver its products and services in a way that creates and exchanges pleasurable and memorable experiences, because guests are looking for a total experience rather than just a room to sleep in (Walker, 2006).

Compared with business hotel customers, resort hotel customers expect special and additional experiences during their stay. For example, when a customer lodges in a resort hotel that is located in a beautiful, natural tourism destination, he or she wants to obtain total relaxation and forget the trivial matters of life or do something new and exciting and make new friends. Therefore, it is not enough for a resort hotel to merely supply good service. If customers are only interested in accommodation, then they can stay at any downtown hotel, rather than in a resort hotel. What differentiates resort hotels? And what attracts consumers to resort hotels? In essence, it is the experience that a guest gains during the stay. Therefore, in this study, the customer experience is introduced in the resort hotel setting. It is proposed that the customer experience in a resort hotel is firstly driven by the hotel service performance, and that total satisfaction and loyalty after consumption are the results of a favourable and memorable experience.