Hotel Guests' Experience, Satisfaction and Revisit Intentions: An Emerging Market Perspective

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the guests' experience dimensions and their effects on destination marketing bottom lines of satisfaction and revisit intention. This is borne of the overarching importance of customer experience (CX) which has been acknowledged by scholars and practitioners and understanding of the concept been sought from various sectoral perspectives. Admittedly, experience-based investigations in the hotel service sector have been scarce, particularly from a non-western context. The study utilised an intercept approach to collect data from 400 hotel guests in a city in Southern Nigeria. The research model and the formulated hypotheses were tested using partial least square structural equation model (PLS-SEM) with the aid of SmartPLS software. The study findings reveal that guest experience dimensions (utilitarian, hedonic and relational) have a positive and significant influence on guests' revisit intention and satisfaction with the exception of hedonic experience whose relationship with satisfaction was statistically insignificant. Overall, the research model explained 56.5 per cent of the variance in guest satisfaction and 68.7 per cent on guest revisit intention. This study adds an empirically supported strategic direction for proper guest experience management in hotels from a non-western context.

Keywords: Hotel-guest experience; customer experience; revisit intention; customer satisfaction; Nigeria

Introduction

Researches in the hotel service sector have noticed a paradigm shift from the traditional view of guests as rational decision makers to a more integrated view of being both experiential and rational (Le, Scott & Lohmann, 2018). Thus, creating and managing memorable, unique and excellent guest experiences have been consistently sought in the hotel service sector recently. This is reflected in the service process, service environment and relationships between service provider and customers, producing sensorial, hedonic, utilitarian and relational value for customers (Hwang & Seo, 2016; Schmitt, 1999). This has become more important in the sector as the hotel service sector is highly experiential in nature, hence, firms in the industry try to provide more unique and personal experiences that surpass customer expectations as a

means of achieving strategic competitive advantage (Cetin & Dincer, 2014). However, in the face of these attempts, Meyer and Schwager (2007) noted that the efforts of firms are yet to realise the desired intention as only 8 per cent of customers demonstrated having received superior experience out of 80 per cent of the surveyed companies that believed they are providing superior experiences. This implies a need to reassess the sector for a deeper insight into what constitutes a memorable experience for customers as this has also been a complex construct for researchers and practitioners to understand (Akesson, Edvardsson & Tronvoll, 2014).

Increasingly, the work of Pine and Gilmore (1999) '*The Experience Economy'* has drawn attention of researchers and practitioners towards the concept and popularised customer experience (hereafter referred to as CX) which implies that experience should be sold as a distinct offering from goods and services. Extant research describes experience as beginning from pre-purchase to post-purchase phase (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009) and it has been adjudged to create value for customers emotionally, rationally and socially (Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeven, Tsiros & Schlesinger, 2009). Schmitt (1999) posit that experience is unique and not easily commoditized leading to a form of differentiation and a source of competitive advantage for firms. This is most important in the hotel service sector which is known for high commoditization (Berezina, Bilgihan, Cobanogbu & Okumus, 2016) and as such embracing experiential marketing has proven a way out of the vicious circle. Similarly, research evidence has shown that competing on traditional elements such as price, product and quality has ceased to be sustainable business strategies and has pointed to CX as the next competitive battleground (Ivens & Shaw, 2005). Earlier research (Otto & Ritchie, 1996) argues that experience has a significant influence on the customer evaluation and perception of satisfaction, thus will improve the performance of hotels. The growth and survival of hotels have been found to be tied to the delivery of an enjoyable and unforgettable hotel-stay experience to guests (Banki, Ismail, Danladi & Dalil, 2016). Thus, in an ever-evolving industry such as hospitality, managers must stay abreast of current happenings in the industry to respond to competitive pressures and guests' sophisticated demands.

Understanding hotel guests experience seems important and relevant to the sector for several reasons. The growth of the sector in the past decade shows that it is a growing economic sector in Nigeria with an increase from 7,145 hotels in 2016 to over 12,000 in 2020 (hotels. ng, 2020); an indication that there is a growing competition in the industry, a need to outsmart each other to win customers and stay competitive. Globally, the hospitality industry has shown signs of tremendous improvements over the years, contributing immensely to the economy of nations; Caribbean, South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria (Esu, 2015; United Nations World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO], 2006). Similarly, CBN (2003, 2006) reports have shown that the industry in Nigeria has made significant contributions to the country's GDP, about US$9 million in 2004, US$12 million in 2006, thus the economic growth can be attributed to the growth of the hospitality industry (Sanmi, 2009). Specifically, the hotel service sub-sector has been found to contribute the highest in the sector in terms of turnover and contribution (World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC], 2015). The past decade has seen a shift by scholars in the hotel service sector towards experience as a distinct offering rather than goods and service (Astrom, 2017). This is in agreement with the position of Pine and Gilmore (1999) to offer customer experience as a means to get a share of their heart and mind (Schmitt, 1999). Thus, the need to assist hotel managers with an understanding of guests' experience creation and management in hotel service sector becomes imperative to enable appropriate strategy formulation and implementation (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantello, 2009; Ritchie, Tung & Rithcie, 2011).

Scholars in the hospitality industry have reached a consensus that guests' experience during hotel stays affect their evaluation and post-consumption behaviours (Banki et al., 2016). Moreover, Kandampully, Zhang and Bilgihan (2015) argues that overused antecedents of revisit in hotel service need to be replaced given the dynamic nature of the market and the cut-throat competition in the industry, hence CX is identified as the silver bullet (Ivens & Shaw, 2005). Inasmuch as a great body of literature have been devoted to studies on hotel guests' behaviour, a significant part of these are dedicated to developed economies, despite the rise in hotel establishment in developing countries including Nigeria (Banki et al., 2016). The study by Adeola and Ezenwafor (2016) explores the challenges facing the Nigerian hospitality industry. These issues, which include inadequate and poorly-equipped training institutes for hospitality studies, complaint of unfavourable government policies and multiple taxation, ill-equipped hospitality regulatory body etc. seems to affect the delivery of hospitality service in Nigeria, hence, is likely to affect the guests' experience and its outcomes. Hence, differentiating the sector from what obtains in other climes. More so, guests' experience evaluation studies are scarce (Ritchie et al., 2011). Therefore, there is a need to fill this gap in knowledge to help managers in the sector understand the guest experience dimensions and reposition their operations appropriately for better result and global competitiveness. More so, the dimensions of CX abounds requiring context-specific studies (Izogo, Jayawardhena & Kalu, 2018; Rose, Clark & Hair, 2012) and the exploration of the relationship between customer experience and satisfaction continues to evolve (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), it becomes necessary to seek further understanding. In addition, knowing that experience is personalized and unique, it seems reasonable to study hotel guests from an emerging hotel industry given that attitude, background, values and beliefs differ across nations (Knutson, Beck, Kim & Cha, 2009).

In view of the above, this study contributes to the stream of research on experience in the hotel service sub-sector as it adds a comprehensive and empirically supported strategic direction for proper management of experience in hotels for improved customer lifetime value and seeks to create and manage superior experience from pre-purchase stage to post-purchase evaluation focusing on functional and emotional attributes as well as relational values (Berry, Carbone & Haeckel, 2002). Specifically, this study examines the validity of the utilitarian, hedonic and relational dimensions of guest experience and their relationship with satisfaction and guests' revisit intention. Further, we examined the level of influence guests' satisfaction has on guests' revisit intention. The rest of this paper is structured thus; a review of conceptual and empirical literature which gives rise to the study hypotheses is next, followed by a detailed description of the study methodology. Data analysis and discussion is followed by study implications and further research avenues.

Literature review and hypotheses formulation
Experiential marketing theory
The idea of experiential marketing was first introduced in the business space by the work of Pine and Gilmore (1999) titled *The Experience Economy*. They explained it thus, "when a person buys a service, he purchases a set of intangible activities carried out on his behalf. But when he buys an experience, he pays to spend time enjoying a series of memorable events that a company stages to engage him in a personal way" (Pine & Gilmore, 1998:2). This set the mood for a change from the traditional manner of seeing marketing offers to the inclusion of more experiential dimensions. It expands the marketing sphere by giving consumers an deeper, more inclusive view of the brand, product or service, hence, has the capacity to influence decision making (Williams, 2006).

The experiential marketing theory is one of the most contemporary marketing philosophies, however, has been overlooked especially in the hospitality and tourism sector (Williams, 2006). At the heart of experiential marketing, theory is the fact that value does not lie only o the physical objects (goods and services) and their functional benefits but also in the hedonic and experiential elements and the consumption process itself (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). Experiential marketing has been seen as a business philosophy influencing consumer behaviour especially in H & T sector (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Rather, 2018). This is attributed to the highly intangible nature of benefits sought in this sector, thus aligning with experience's nature as being intrinsically personal and existing in the customers' mind by engaging the customer rationally, emotionally, socially and spiritually (Schmitt, 1999). In the hotel service sector, guest experience management will be built around the functional benefits, the derivation of pleasure, mood improvement and the social interactions built within the hotel environment. The hotel environment, ambience and service provider attitude and appearance make guests' stay enjoyable, pleasing and pleasurable and influence guests' experience by enhancing the enjoyment of the guest.

Customer experience: An overview
The concept of CX was first mentioned by Toffler in 1970, pointing to a paradigm shift to experience and was conceived into the mainstream marketing literature in the mid-1980s when Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) presented customers as rational decision makers and offered an experiential approach as the original view of consumer behaviour. This led to a reconsideration of earlier neglected variables such as the role of emotions in understanding behaviour giving that consumers are feelers, thinkers as well as doers. Thus, the importance of the roles of consumers beyond purchase and product use was identified (Addis & Holbrook, 2001). However, the concept did not gain popularity in the business domain until in the 1990s when Pine and Gilmore (1999) popularised it in their book, *The Experience Economy,* presenting it as a new economic offering emerging after commodities, goods and services. Hence, other researchers and practitioners paid attention to customer experience as a new means of creating and capturing value from customers (Schmitt, 1999).

From an organisational perspective, Pine and Gilmore (1999:11) define experience as "a company intentionally using services as the stage and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event". Similarly, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982:132) posit that experience is an emotional state, reflected through "a steady flow of fantasies, feelings and fun". Schmitt (1999) describes experience as a phenomenon that occurs through encountering or undergoing things which gives rise to sensory, emotional, cognitive relational and behavioural values. Studies in psychology and communication have noted two main components used in measuring human experience; a cognitive and an affective component (Forgas, 2000). Experience has been largely described as a personal and subjective phenomenon given rise to challenges with respect to its description, definition and dimensionalities (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994).

The term experience has been characterised in different ways (Caru & Cova, 2003; Klaus & Maklan, 2012). On the basis of ontological and epistemological backgrounds, experience in the service sector has been characterised in three ways (Helkkula, 2011). First, it is process-based, implying that it consists of different phases that may be linked to experiential learning (Edvardsson, Enquist & Johnston, 2005). Secondly, experience has been seen as outcome-based, indicative of the fact that it is capable of linking a number of variables to various outcomes (Le Bel, 2005). Third, experience is phenomenological, relating it to value and consciousness (Meyer & Schwager, 2007).

The CX literature lacks consensus on the standardised dimensions, however, several scholars have put up logic in support of their proposed dimensions. Payne, Storbacka & Frow, (2008) proposed a three-dimensional approach to CX; cognition, emotions and behaviour. These components are essential to customer learning and knowledge acquisition, thus, the service providers can enhance experience by supporting customer cognition, emotions and behaviour. They, however, ignored the social context within which most services take place and the consequent influence on the CX. Similarly, Haeckel, Carbone and Berry (2003) discussed three experience clues as functional, mechanic and humanic with the functional linked to performance and reliability of service; mechanic relates with the physical service environment while the humanic refers to the service provider behaviour, performance and appearance. Other scholars conceptualised CX as being made up of the concept as cognitive and affective components (Rose et al., 2012; Babin et al., 1994). Schmitt (1999) further expanded the components to a five-dimensional framework including sensorial, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and relational components while Gentile, Spiller and Noci (2007) came up with the most expanded framework of CX made up of sensorial, emotional, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle and relational experiences.

Customer experience in hotel service

There is a growing global competition in the hotel service sector and this has become a challenge to marketers in the sector have to deal with. Part of the difficulty in winning the competitive war is the personal, unique nature of guests' experience (Gentile et al., 2007). While issues relating to hotel guests behaviour have been researched over the years, guests' experience and its management have received little attention (Ritchie et al., 2011). The earliest mention of experience in the hospitality industry was by Clawson and Knetsch (1963) while studying outdoor recreation. Over the years, researchers have made attempts to enhance understanding in this research stream with the emphasis being on creating memorable experiences. For instance, Okumus, Okumus and McKercher (2007) have applied the experience construct to achieve successful destination marketing using customer experience with the food as a measure to promote memorable experience. Oh, Fiore and Jeoung (2007) adapted the experience dimensions by Pine and Gilmore (1999) to demonstrate that memorable experience in hospitality sector is a result of the four realms of experience as Pine and Gilmore posited. Similarly, Kim, Ritchie and McCormick (2012) developed a scale for measuring memorable tourist experience (MTE) comprising of seven dimensions. In luxury hotel, Walls (2013) measured experience as culminating from physical environment and human interactions which gives rise to cognitive and emotive values. Also, Otto and Ritchie (1996) developed a four-dimension approach to guest experience measurement- hedonics, peace of mind, involvement and recognition, thereby demonstrating that the mental state felt by guests can be explained by these in hotel sector and as well are contributory to satisfaction.

Pizam and Ellis (1999) argued that the attributes of a service encounter in hospitality setting include the product, the behaviour and attitude of service providers as well as the servicescape-the environment. This suggests that satisfactory experience in hotel is a combined effort of these factors which appeal to provide utilitarian, hedonic value and relational values to customers which have the possibility of increasing customer satisfaction, word-of-mouth and revisit to the hotel. From operational point of view, hotel services including employee attitude and response to guests' requests contribute to the nature of experience remembered afterwards. In the new economy-*the experience economy,* capitalizing on providing unique, personalized and quality experience to customers, most especially hotel guests is the way to capture a share of their heart (Pine & Gilmore, 1999;

Schimtt, 1999). While several conceptualizations of customer experience exist, our conceptualization of the guest experience components has some elements similar to Gentile et al's (2007) six dimensions-sensorial, emotional, relational, lifestyle, cognitive and pragmatic. We have chosen the utilitarian/cognitive, hedonic/affective/emotional and relational experience dimensions. This approach is in consonance with the dimensions of measure used in some earlier studies in H & T sector (Oh et al., 2007; Otto & Ritchie, 1996). The utilitarian experience is a component of the guest experience that reflects the thought process and conscious mental state (Gentile et al., 2007). For the hotel guest, this is demonstrated in the form of cost-benefit, design, space and service performance (Kim et al., 2012; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Walls, Okumus & Youcheng, 2011). Hedonic experience is generated through moods, feelings and emotions. This is achieved when customers have fun and are entertained in the course of their stay. The service dominant (S-D) logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2008) explains that experience is individual, subjective and co-created, thus, relational experience is a component of customer experience that involves the guest, the service provider and other guests in the servicescape. This is reflected in service provider and other guests' attitude and disposition, which could be cooperative or competitive (Lumineau & Henderson, 2012). The hotel service environments offer guests an opportunity to interact especially outside their normal daily routine. This social relationship leaves an impression on the guest, which may be memorable or otherwise and constitutes what Schmitt (1999) and Gentile et al. (2007) conceptualized as relational experience.

Guest experience and satisfaction

Satisfaction remains one of the many concepts in marketing that has defied a single definition despite the large interest in it as a subject both by practitioners and researchers. It is essential to business survival and growth (Anderson, Fornell & Mazvancheryl, 2004). The proliferation of service delivery, the technological growth and the commoditization of strategies have made it difficult to have monopolies and give customers more opportunities to explore. This indicates that customers will favour businesses that prioritise their satisfaction above others. Satisfaction can be defined as 'the consumer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations and the actual performance of the product as perceived after its consumption' (Tse & Wilton, 1988:204). Similarly, one of the notable authors of customer satisfaction studies (Oliver, 2010:8) defined it thus; "Satisfaction is the consumer's fulfilment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under-or over-fulfilment". This implies that satisfaction involves both a cognitive and affective dimension (Homborg et al., 2006). In this study, we define satisfaction as the result of guests' functional (cognitive) and hedonic (affective) evaluation and perception of the service delivery as well as the evaluation of attitude of hotel service providers and other guests towards them. Earlier studies have recognized that cognition predicts satisfaction to be a function of the expectation-performance continuum (Oliver, 1980) while the effect is experienced in the course of obtaining and consuming the product or service (Westbrok & Oliver, 1991). Chen and Chen (2010) in a study of tourists in Taiwan, found that the driving force of tourists' satisfaction is the quality of the experience given while at the attraction site.

Similarly, a significant relationship was found to exist between cruisers' experience and satisfaction in the tourism sector involving tourists en route Singapore to Hong Kong (Hosany & Witham, 2010). In the IT sector, satisfaction from the technology platform has been found to be derived from pleasure and enjoyment associated with the information system, thus satisfaction is increased with improved experience (Ugwuanyi et al., 2021;

Szymanski & Hise, 2007). CX scholars in the e-retail sector have also confirmed the significant influence of CX on the satisfaction of customers (Rose et al., 2012; Izogo et al., 2018). Also, the brand experience literature provides empirical support to the role of experience in satisfaction formation (Brakus et al., 2009; Nysveen, Pedersen & Skard, 2013). Most recently, Singh and Soderlund (2020) in a study of online grocery shoppers found empirical support for the influence of customer experience on satisfaction. Anecdotal evidence has shown that guests in contemporary age are self-indulgent, pleasure-seeking, easily swayed by service personnel and influenced by social pressures. Hence, consumption is used to make statements about self, create certain identities, a sense of belonging and a basis for relationship formation (Williams, 2006). Thus, providing experiential opportunities for actualisation of these complex desires will influence the guest' satisfaction levels. From the foregoing discussion, we hypothesize thus:

> *H1a: Utilitarian experience has a significant influence on hotel guests' satisfaction.*
> *H2a: Hedonic experience has a significant influence on hotel guests' satisfaction.*
> *H3a: Relational experience has a significant influence on hotel guests' satisfaction.*

Guest experience and revisit intention

The H & T sector is made up of two customer segments; first time customers and returning customers (Huang & Hsu, 2009). The decision to revisit a hotel is derived […] built on the experience and satisfaction of the earlier visit. Abubakar, Ilkan, Ai-Tai and Eluwole (2017) argues that first time guests visit on the basis of information gathered or other customers' suggestions, thus having expectations of the service and the service provider. This expectation has been referred to as the intention to visit while revisit intention is the willingness to visit a hotel again (Abubakar et al., 2017). Achieving revisit is the desire of every destination marketer because it costs less to retain guests than create a new one (Um, Chon & Ro, 2006). Researchers in online shopping context has found experience as leading to series of marketing outcomes ranging from satisfaction, WOM, eWOM and repurchase intention (Biligihan, Kandampully & Zhang, 2016; Rose et al., 2012). In H & T sector, Kim et al. (2012) examined the influence of memorable tourist experience (MTE) components on behaviour intention. Their results reveal that MTE components affect intention to revisit. Bill Xu and Chan (2010) posit that the quality of experience is an antecedent of hotel brand loyalty. Similarly, Hosany and Witham (2010) found experience to be positively related with cruiser's intention to recommend. Inasmuch as most studies agree that experience influences revisit intention, the behavioural patterns differ (Zhang, Wu & Buhalis, 2017). They (Zhang et al) also found that MTE measured as cognitive and affective experience have a strong influence on international tourists' revisit intention. From the foregoing, we hypothesise thus:

> *H1b: Utilitarian experience has a significant influence on hotel guests' revisit intention.*
> *H2b: Hedonic experience has a significant influence on hotel guests' revisit intention.*
> *H3b: Relational experience has a significant influence on hotel guests' revisitintention.*

Satisfaction and revisit intention

The willingness of customers to revisit a hotel is based on the attitude formed as a result of their previous experience. Given that satisfaction is a post consumption evaluation (Oliver, 1980), it is expected that if this evaluation process is positive, positive behavioural intentions will occur. Several scholars support the satisfaction-repurchase intention path (Anderson &

Sullivan, 1993; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Rose et al., 2012). In hospitality setting, Kivela, Inbakaran and Reece (1999) while studying CX in dining environment found that dining satisfaction does affect behavioural intentions. Similarly, Anderson and Sullivan (1993) suggest that increased level of customer satisfaction decreased switching intention and invariably increasing repurchase intention. From the information technology literature, Kim, Kim and Kim (2009) also investigated the relationship between hotel guests' satisfaction with smartphone apps and reuse intention to the hotel apps with a multi-ethnic sample and found this path positive and significant. Also, Chen and Lin (2015) posit that the customers' satisfaction level in the course of using information systems (IS) will affect their willingness to continue using the IS. Similarly, Chen, Yen and Hwang (2012) while examining the factors of continuance intention of Web 2.0 users in Taiwan suggests in their study that post-consumption satisfaction evaluation is a key determinant of continuance intention. The above studies all show evidence of a positive and significant relationship between satisfaction and repurchase, reuse and revisit intention. Thus, satisfied guests are most likely to reject competitive offers and revisit a hotel. Hence the last hypothesis:

H4: Hotel Guests' satisfaction has a positive and significant relationship with their revisit intention.

Conceptual model
The conceptual framework in figure 1 was proposed based on the review of literature and in line with the aim of this study- to examine the relevant guests experience dimensions as it applies to an emerging hotel market and also seek to understand the relationship guest experience bears with satisfaction and revisit intention. Our model theorizes that guests revisit intention is an outcome of satisfaction […] which is influenced by utilitarian, hedonic and relational experience dimensions.
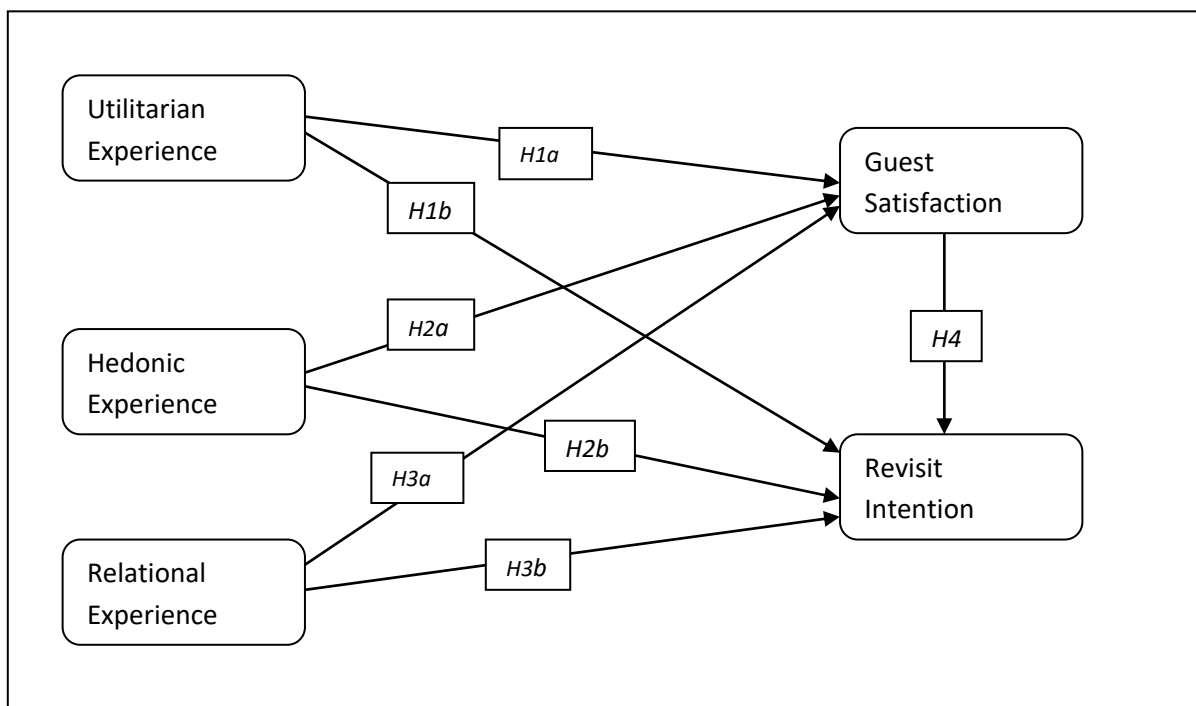

Figure 1: Conceptual model

Methods and measures

To collect data from respondents (hotel guests) an intercept approach was adopted to conduct the survey. A total of 400 hotel guests in six 4-star rated hotels in Asaba, Delta State, South-south Nigeria were approached and the questionnaire administered to them. Of the 338 returned copies of the questionnaire (representing 85% return rate), 32 copies were eliminated as there were serious omissions of responses to some scale items. Only 306 copies were found correctly filled and used for this study. The questionnaire items were measured on a 5-point scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1) with a middle point (3) to show indecision. The items used in measuring the constructs were adapted from earlier studies to achieve content validity (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The scale for utilitarian experience is based on Izogo et al. (2018), hedonic experience was measured on a five-item scale as proposed by Overby and Lee (2006). Similarly, Hsu and Tsou's (2011) scale was adapted to measure relational experience. The measure for satisfaction was from Fornell et al. (1996) while guests' revisit intention was measured with a combined scale adapted from Cronin et al. (2000) and Khalifa and Liu (2007). The respondents' demographics are as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Profile

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent %
Gender	Male	156	51
	Female	150	49
Age	< 20yrs	18	5.9
	20-35yrs	171	55.9
	36-50yrs	96	31.4
	> 50yrs	21	6.9
Income	< ₦50,000	90	29.4
	₦50,000-₦100,000	105	34.3
	₦100,001-₦150,000	57	18.6
	₦150,000 +	54	17.6
Marital status	Single	123	40.2
	Married	165	53.9
	Divorced	9	2.9
	Widowed	9	2.9
	Total	*306*	*100*

Note: $1=₦360

Results and discussion

Data analysis

Data was subjected to a series of test to determine its appropriateness. This was done by using the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach in SmartPLS software version M2.0. First, we examined construct and content validity as well as reliability indices of the test instrument. Afterwards, the structural model which invariably tests the study hypotheses was tested. Selection of the PLS-SEM over Co-variance based-SEM (CB-SEM) is on its appropriateness for use in testing predictive models and in addition, its suitability for small and medium-sized samples (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins & Kuppelweiser,

2014). Since this paper is concerned with making prediction rather than co-variation, PLS-SEM was considered a better model estimate.

Measurement model: Factor analysis, validity and reliability of scale items

The latent constructs were factor-analysed; the result showed that all the items loaded above the 0.5 minimum benchmark as suggested by Hair et al. (2014) and ranged from 0.645-0.888, at a significant level of $p<0.05$ (See table 2). Similarly, the reliability of the instrument was confirmed through two means, Cronbach α and composite reliability statistics. As shown in table 2, the Cronbach α scores as well the composite reliability scores passed the Hair et al. (2014) test of 0.7 minimum score. This indicates the research instrument is reliable and internally consistent.

Table 2: Items' Factor Loadings, *t*-statistics, and reliability

Latent Construct	Indicators	Factor Loading	*t*-value	Cronbach alpha (α)	Composite reliability
Utilitarian Experience	UEx1	0.761	12.310***	0.803	0.864
	UEx2	0.738	12.873***		
	UEx3	0.645	7.701***		
	UEx4	0.775	12.308***		
	UEx5	0.818	18.865***		
Hedonic Experience	HEx1	0.674	8.798***	0.818	0.873
	HEx2	0.744	13.068***		
	HEx3	0.743	9.949***		
	HEx4	0.803	17.567***		
	HEx5	0.833	19.385***		
Relational Experience	REx1	0.805	16.798***	0.780	0.858
	REx2	0.755	12.295***		
	REx3	0.748	11.592***		
	REx4	0.794	13.700***		
Customer Satisfaction	SAT1	0.841	19.785***	0.809	0.887
	SAT2	0.888	25.841***		
	SAT3	0.822	11.794***		
Revisit Intention	RI1	0.753	8.371***	0.813	0.877
	RI2	0.788	12.734***		
	RI3	0.866	24.537***		
	RI4	0.794	12.394***		

UEx=Utilitarian experience; HEx= Hedonic experience; REx= Relational experience; SAT= Customer satisfaction; RI= Revisit intention
Note: Significant levels are denoted as ***$p < 0.05$

Similarly, construct validity was examined by assessing both convergent and discriminant validity. In line with Fornell and Larcker (1981), convergent validity is achieved when the average variance extracted (AVEs) of each construct is 0.5 and above while loading significantly on the *t*-values. As shown in table 3, the latent constructs have AVEs ranging from 0.562 to 0.724 and the indicators loaded with significant *t-value* at $p<0.05$ level. Also, the rule for discrimination implies that each construct must share variance with its assigned indicator more than any other construct while the square root of the AVEs must be above corresponding pairs in the correlation matrix (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 3 shows that the square roots of the AVEs (0.750 to 0.851) were far above their corresponding pairs in the correlation matrix. Therefore, convergent and discriminant validity were established, thus, provides a solid basis for structural model test and hypothesised relationships.

Table 3:Construct Correlations, Convergent (AVE) and Discriminant Validity

	AVE	HEx	RI	REx	SAT	UEx
HEx	0.580	*0.762*				
RI	0.642	0.629	*0.801*			
REx	0.602	0.701	0.445	*0.776*		
SAT	0.724	0.628	0.746	0.583	*0.851*	
UEx	0.562	0.650	0.760	0.519	0.699	*0.750*

Note: Square roots AVE are in bold italic print in the diagonal; all correlations are significant at *p*<0.05

Structural model and hypotheses test

The proposed model and research hypotheses were tested using PLS-SEM technique in SmartPLS 2.0 software. The path coefficients were tested using the bootstrapping re-sampling technique with 5,000 sub-samples as Hair et al. (2014) suggested. Except for the relationship between hedonic experience and satisfaction, the structural outputs support the proposed hypotheses. As shown in table 4 and figure 2, a positive linear effect was found to exist between utilitarian experience and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.481$, $t = 4.859$, $p <0.05$). Also, the relationship between utilitarian experience and guest's revisit intention was found to be positive and significant ($\beta = 0.416$, $t = 4.373$, $p <0.05$). Conversely, the relationship between hedonic experience and customer satisfaction was not statistically significant even though the coefficient was moderate ($\beta = 0.160$, $t = 1.338$, $p <0.05$) while a positive linear effect was found between hedonic experience and revisit intention ($\beta = 0.209$, $t = 2.429$, $p <0.05$). Similarly, relational experience had a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.221$, $t = 2.155$, $p <0.05$), however, a negative relationship was found between relational experience and revisit intention ($\beta = -0.160$, $t = 2.257$, $p <0.05$). Further, the direct relationship between customer satisfaction and re-visit intention was found to be positive and significant ($\beta = 0.417$, $t = 4.274$, $p <0.05$).

Table 4: Estimated results of the structural model and hypotheses test outputs

Hypothesized relationships		Path coefficient	Standard error	*t*-value	Result
Direct effects					
H₁ₐ	UEx→SAT	0.481	0.099	4.859***	Supported
H₁ᵦ	UEx→RI	0.416	0.095	4.373***	Supported

H_{2a}	HEx→SAT	0.160	0.120	1.338^a	Not Supported
H_{2b}	HEx→RI	0.209	0.086	2.429***	Supported
H_{3a}	REx →SAT	0.221	0.103	2.155***	Supported
H_{3b}	REx→RI	-0.160	0.071	2.257***	Supported
H_4	SAT→RI	0.417	0.098	4.274***	Supported

Notes: Significant level is denoted as ***$p < 0.05$; $^a p$ not significant

UEx=Utilitarian experience; HEx= Hedonic experience; REx= Relational experience; SAT= Customer satisfaction; RI= Re-visit intention

The variance in satisfaction (56.5%) was accounted for by the guest experience dimensions-utilitarian, hedonic and relational experiences. In all, the model explained a variance of 68.7% in guests' revisit intention to hotels, which occurred as a result of combined effort of guest experience dimensions and satisfaction, thus, the predictive power of our model can be said to be high.
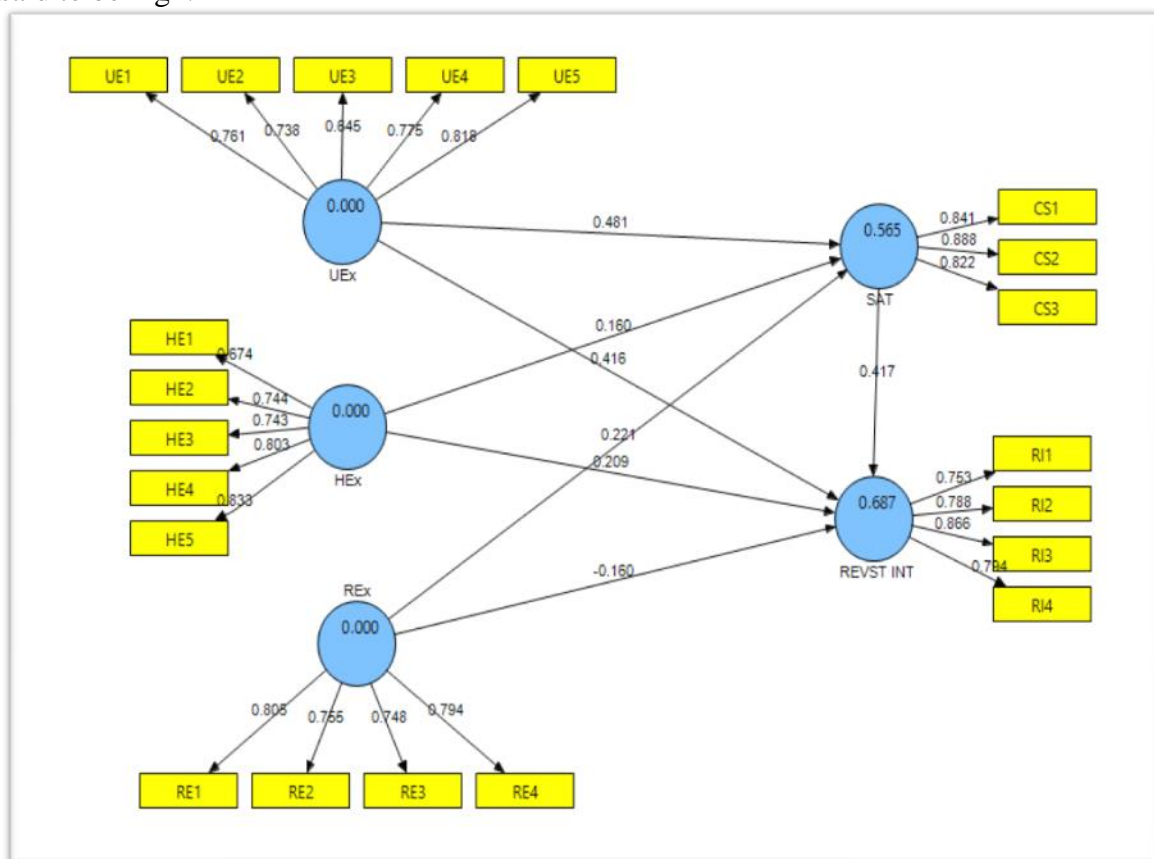

Figure 2: PLS-SEM Output

Discussions and implications

We have examined the guest experience dimensions and their influence on marketing bottom lines of satisfaction and revisit intention in this paper. Our result provides deeper insight and widens understanding in the experience domain from an emerging hotel service market, which hitherto had limited empirical findings on this relationship. In total, the findings support that guest experience (utilitarian and relational) has a significant influence on satisfaction while guest experience (utilitarian and hedonic) influences revisit intention. In addition, the revisit intention was shown to be a consequence of satisfaction from previous

visits. As the R^2 values show, the guest experience dimensions measured in the study has a high influence on satisfaction with the hotel and its services (56.5%). This result supports earlier studies by Hosany and Witham (2010) who found that tourists experience has a significant influence on their satisfaction. In the same vein, the study by Ugwuanyi et al. (2021) supports our findings by presenting satisfaction as a consequence of both cognitive and affective experiential values delivered in the course of SSTs usage. In addition, other studies in the IT sector have found similar results to our as satisfaction from the technology platforms has been found to be a function of the fun and enjoyment derived in the course of using the system, hence, satisfaction is increased with improved hedonic experience (Szymanski & Hise, 2007). Literature support from the e-retail sector also corroborate our study findings as Singh and Soderlund (2020), Izogo et al. (2018) and Rose et al. (2012) found CX to be a predictor of satisfaction in online shopping. Similar results are found in the brand experience literature (Brakus et al., 2009; Nysveen et al., 2013) Thus, the key predictor of guest satisfaction can be adjudged to be the quality of experience felt in the course of staying at the hotel (Chen & Chen, 2010). This is most relevant as guests in contemporary age are self-indulging, pleasure-seeking, value social interactions and easily moved by social pressures and so their consumption forms a significant part of self-identity and basis of relationships (Williams, 2006). Similarly, revisit intention was predicted to a great extent (68.7%) by the combined effort of experience and satisfaction, this complements other scholarly predictions that memorable experience will engender behavioural intentions such as revisit, eWOM and intention to recommend the hotel (Hosany & Witham, 2010; Rose et al., 2012). This outcome also depicts that experience has a direct influence on guest intention to revisit […] this is the aim of most destination marketers as it cost more to gain new customers than to keep existing ones (Abubakar et al., 2017; Um et al., 2006). More so, studies in H & T sector have argued and found empirical support for the influence of experience on revisit intention (Kim et al., 2012; Bill Xu & Chan, 2010, Zhang et al., 2017). In addition, satisfaction was confirmed as an antecedent to guest revisit intention to hotels with a path coefficient of 41.7%. Our findings lay credence to the earlier researchers who have sought this relationship in other contexts, suggesting that guests' intention to revisit or repurchase a product or service is dependent on the level of satisfaction received at the last visit (Kim et al., 2009; Chen & Lin, 2015). This also implies that once a competitor provides a higher satisfaction; the likelihood of switching is higher (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). Overall, our finding have serious implications for customer experience management in hotels; that hotel guests who receive good value for money, have fun while in the hotel and enjoy the company of other guests and service personnel will have higher satisfaction levels and will revisit the hotel in most cases.

Implications for practice
This study provides some practical implication for managers of hotels especially from an emerging hotel service sector such as ours. This is aimed at assisting managers in hotel firms to properly align their strategies with current customer expectations as the study findings reveal. Evidently, the utilitarian component of guest experience has the highest influence on guest satisfaction and revisit intention. This shows that guests are rational beings as classical economists argue (Gentile et al., 2007), paying greater attention to value for money and state of the servicescape. Thus, attention of hotel service providers should be directed at ensuring that the state of the physical facilities are as promised and in tandem with the price charged for them. While efforts should be put into creating utilitarian value for the guests, the presence of fun, entertainment and absorbing activities should not be compromised as the hedonic experience dimension also has a role to play in achieving satisfaction and influencing

revisit intention. Invariably, the guests expect that the hotel environment should provide an escapist approach from their daily routine without adding boredom of any kind; the hotel environment should provide opportunities for relaxation and stress-relieving moments while serving the basic requirements of accommodation in a serene and lovely environment. Similarly, the hotel stay period should enhance the guests' social relationship and perception of self within a social class. This can be achieved by providing specialised services to meet different social class needs. Some guests have shown that the presence of other guests who fall into a different social class makes the environment uncomfortable and insecure for them as they find no ground of association and relationship. Opportunities for joint consumption of services should be created to enhance the guests' relational experience such as lounge, swimming pool etc.

In a bid to achieve guest satisfaction, management must consistently monitor all guest-hotel touch points so as to ensure that superior experience is served (Ugwuanyi et al., 2021). This way, guests will obtain value in the form of utilitarian, hedonic and relational experiences and react positively towards the hotel in the form of revisit, recommendation and/or WOM/eWOM. Since revisit has been adjudged the ultimate aim of destination marketers (Abubakar et al., 2017) hotel managers should strategically engender revisit by offering cumulative repeat patronage discounts and some complementary services such as laundry while staying in the hotel.

Conclusion

Hotel services like tangible goods are receiving the heat of increasing commoditization globally. Practitioners as well as researchers have recognized the role of memorable guest experience in achieving unique, differentiated customer service which has the capacity to influence satisfaction levels and relational outcomes. This study adds to the growing body of literature in the H & T sector, particularly from an emerging hotel service market; enhancing our understanding of the significant factors required in creating memorable experience for guests. It represents the latest attempt to examine the experience concept from a non-western context. As earlier studies posit, managing guest experience in a competitive market such as ours is important to achieve positive behavioural intentions (Kim et al., 2012). Thus, providing superior hotel-guest experience has the ability to lead to business prosperity. As our findings reveal, the utilitarian, hedonic and relational dimensions of guest experience combine to influence satisfaction and revisit intention. This is in line with the proposition of Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) that customers are thinkers, feelers as well as doers. It reaffirms the position of the experiential marketing orientation suggesting that when utilitarian, hedonic and relational values are provided, guests are immersed in their consumption and this escapist approach leads to satisfaction (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In addition, as Abubukar et al. (2017) suggests and supported by our analysis, satisfaction from prior visit will engender revisit intention.

Inasmuch as this study makes significant contribution to the literature on CX and hotel-guest behaviours, it should be interpreted with caution and may not serve generalised need. First, the study was conducted in a single city in Nigeria among guests of hotels in a single hotel rating category (4-star hotels), hence it does not capture the interest of other guests which may differ significantly. More so, the fact that our result showed a high variance explained on the dependent variables does not leave out other factors as having contributory power to guest satisfaction and revisit intention, thus, other studies should include factors considered relevant in the hotel service sector which may impact on guest experience. Furthermore, we examined intention which may not give rise to actual revisit given the dynamic nature of human minds; we suggest that subsequent scholars should take

the study a step further in this direction by reporting the extent to which these intentions lead to eventual revisits. In addition, this study took a quantitative approach, in view of the dynamics of the experience construct and the high involvement in hotel service, a qualitative approach would reveal deeper insights. Finally, since the hotel environment provides myriad of activities and services which are at the guests' disposal to use, we consider the role of co-creation of value important for future researchers in the hotel setting as the guest needs to take a step in order to have an all-round experience.

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