# An Empirical Study of Consumer-Brand Relationships in the Hospitality Industry

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| ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT |
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| | This study aims to determine consumer-brand relationships in the hospitality industry. The data gathered for the purpose of this research adds to our understanding of consumer-brand relationships as a novel generation marketing tool. This data was generated through a structured questionnaire; a total of 250 customers who used profiles of five (5) hotels were surveyed. These hotels were all ranked five stars and located in Tehran, Iran. The data was examined using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings revealed that the hospitality industry has positive intentions to adopt consumer-brand relationships in order to enhance relationship quality and achieve satisfaction and brand loyalty. The study expands upon existing research on the components of consumer-brand relationships. Furthermore, the partially supported mediation outcome of brand satisfaction is also addressed. Implications, limitations, and future research directions are also discussed. |

## 1. Introduction

The COVID-19 crisis has had a catastrophic effect on the hotel industry. For example, 150 Hilton hotels were closed in China following the pandemic (Han, 2020). Moreover, some experts have referred to the situation as a crisis in the tourism industry (Backer and Ritchie, 2017; Ritchie and Jiang, 2019). The tourism industry has become one of the most controversial topics in the scientific community following the COVID-19 pandemic (Zhao and Xu, 2020). Therefore, it is of great importance for scholars to examine variables influencing the financial performance of this industry. Brand loyalty is a critically important marketing indicator that affects financial performance.

In a study on the hospitality industry of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), T. Nuseir (2020) pointed out the effects of brands and their dimensions on customer purchase intention. Hollebeek et al. (2014) highlighted the importance of brand names for hotel consumers. Creating quality content in the digital marketing process provides marketing managers with great opportunities to establish greater relationships with consumers (Kim and Johnson, 2016). In the hospitality industry, marketing managers have changed the distribution and consumption of brand content by expanding branding activities and creating brand love. Accordingly, they have contributed to the creation of brand values in hotels (Omar et al,2021; Tsai and Men, 2013). Given the increasing attention to hotel services, the similarity of the services offered by different hotels, and their intense competition, marketing managers attempt to offer unique services. In this situation, marketing activities can strongly affect consumer decisions by developing brand-consumer relationships (Moisilio et al,2022; Simon and Tossan, 2018). In the meantime, it is essential to understand characteristics that stimulate positive emotions in consumers and dramatically affect their decisions (Yan et al., 2020). Hotel consumers would feel deeply satisfied if they gain high value from the services they receive (Ramírez et al., 2019; Yan et al., 2020).

In this regard, hotel managers have tried to expand their business by attracting more guests and focusing their efforts on communication and branding activities (e.g. offering more economic or social benefits). However, there have been some contradictions in this respect recently (Suguan and Yang, 2020). In this regard, Le (2021) note the importance of extending our knowledge of the gratifications derived by value creation in their consumer-brand relationships. Some studies (e.g., Cheung et al., 2021., Ghosh & Jhamb, 2021) have shed light on the importance and dynamics of consumer-brand relationships, whereas others (e.g., Liu et al. 2021) call for a need to further explore the socio-psychological process of consumer-brand relationships (Wang,2021).

Therefore, hotel marketing managers play a key role in developing brand-consumer relationships. In fact, these relationships are among the most important keys to success in today's competitive environment (Foroudi, 2020). Hotels must properly assess their relationships with their consumers in areas of value creation and brand characteristics in order to survive in this highly competitive environment (Yan et al., 2020; Yao et al., 2019; Khenfer and Cuny, 2020).

Marketing campaigns are other effective tools in marketing science. Marketers may design different campaigns based on various corporate goals (Khenfer and Cuny, 2020; Loureiro and Sarmento, 2019). Given the nature of the services provided by hotels, the creation of competitive advantages in the hospitality industry requires the establishment of strong brand-consumer relationships (Wang et al., 2018). Positive brand-consumer relationships can boost consumer (guest) trust, and thereby contribute to the institutionalization of intangible features of hotels in the consumer mind (Foroudi, 2020). In addition, brand equity helps hotels create distinctive competitive advantages while maintaining their market share (Khan et al., 2019; Kim and Johnson, 2016). The study prepares the background for future studies by providing a model for brand-consumer relationships and examining the effects of these relationships on brand loyalty, brand community characteristics, and brand value creation. In response to the research question, these findings of the current research provide a new type of information service and serve as a reference for managers in designing t consumer-brand relationships and developing marketing strategies for Hospitality Industry products and services.

The structure of the paper is as follows: first, the literature review and theoretical framework are presented. Next, the methodology (involving data collected from 250 guests (consumers) with convenience sampling) is described, and then the results of the analysis (SEM) are presented. Finally, a discussion of significant outcomes, implications, and concluding remarks are provided.

## 2. Literature Review

Our study makes a threefold contribution. First, by integrating brand-consumer relationships, brand loyalty, brand value creation, and brand community characteristics in a theoretical model, this research contributes to the brand-consumer relationships perception and tourism, literature. This research provides insight into the role of brand-consumer relationships and their effect on brand loyalty in the Hospitality Industry. Second, this research also offers an extended understating of the moderating roles of brand community characteristics and the mediating effect of Brand satisfaction on proposed relationships. These relationships involve mutual interactions between the brand and consumers, which are accompanied by some repetitive activities that lead to many benefits for both parties.

Finally, while brand-consumer relationships were examined in literature amongst several contexts (e.g. business management, marketing, tourism), very few studies have explored the key roles of these factors (i.e. Brand attitude, Brand relationship quality, and brand value creation) relating to hospitality issues during pandemics.

### 2.1 Brand-consumer relationships

Today, brand names play a major role in the daily lives of consumers. Recent studies on brand names have mainly focused on brand-consumer relationships (Chinomona, 2016). According to studies, consumers sometimes attribute human characteristics to a brand and form their relationships with the brand based on these characteristics (Aggarwal, 2004). After reviewing a body of studies that attribute human characteristics to brands, MacInnis and Folkes (2017) categorized these studies into three groups. They concluded that consumers humanize brands by perceiving them as like part of, or in a relationship with themselves (Alizadeh et al., 2020). while brand-consumer relationships were examined in literature amongst several contexts (e.g. business management, marketing, tourism), very few studies have explored the key roles of these factors (i.e. Brand attitude, Brand relationship quality, and brand value creation) relating to hospitality issues during pandemics.

### 2.2 Brand value creation

Researchers believe that brand value creation is an essential customer satisfaction tool in service-oriented organizations, and the hospitality industry is obviously no exception (Alilou and Saeidnia, 2017) because the interaction of value and value creation leads to immense customer satisfaction. While hotels will lose their customers, if they fail to create value for them, the establishment of a good relationship between consumers and brand values leads to brand loyalty and word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising (Zhou *et al.*, 2012). Many scholars have examined the issue of brand value creation. For example, Simon and Tossan (2018) studied the social interaction between consumers and brand value creation in social networks.

### 2.3 Brand community characteristics

The high effectiveness of a brand community as a marketing tool adds to the advantages of a partnership with a brand (Christian et al., 2014). Brand communities facilitate social interactions between users. In addition, these useful marketing tools provide companies with many benefits (Papagindil et al., 2017). Algashmir et al. (2013) argue that the identification of brand community characteristics leads to the recognition of brand identity. According to Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006), recognition of the identity of a brand community positively influences brand loyalty. They also concluded that identification of brand community characteristics often leads to value creation (Zhou et al., 2016).

### 2.4 Brand loyalty

The concept of brand loyalty has been extensively studied in the marketing literature (Dick and Basso, 1994; Ivanzchitzki *et al.*, 2006; Harris and Good, 2004; Oliver, 1999). Although many definitions have been offered for the concept of brand loyalty, Oliver (1999) has provided the best definition for this concept. According to him, loyalty reflects a persistent attitude in consumers and customers toward repurchasing a product or service in the future (Ismail, 2017). Different types of brand loyalty include cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty (Hay *et al.*, 2011Brand loyalty is a customer's final reaction to the services and products of a brand (Crystalis and Chrisoko, 2014).

### 3. Developing research hypotheses and conceptual research model

Brands have the potential to create a sense of trust and satisfaction; thus, these valuable tools (appropriate public relations, social networks, content marketing, advertising, etc.) should be used to create positive attitudes toward brands (Khan et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2017).

Recent studies show that attitude toward a behavior is an immediate determinant of displaying that behavior (Veraa and Trujillo, 2017). Moreover, a positive attitude toward online shopping increases an individual's satisfaction level (Solem, 2016). The following hypothesis is proposed based on the above discussion:

**Hypothesis 1**: Brand attitude significantly affects brand satisfaction.

From the customers' perspective, the concept of brand relationship quality is relatively different from other common concepts in the branding literature such as brand trust, internal branding, brand attitude, brand credibility, and relationship marketing (Severi and Ling, 2013). Brand relationship quality refers to consumers' subjective, internal (*e.g.* feelings, emotions, and cognitions), and behavioral reactions to brand stimuli. These stimuli include several concepts such as design, packaging, brand identity, *etc*. Brand relationship quality can be either positive or negative, and more importantly, it can influence levels of consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). Given the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 2**: Brand relationship quality significantly affects brand satisfaction.

While extant research establishes a direct/positive effect of brand-consumer relationships /brand loyalty (Rather et al., 2018; Rather, 2021; Hollebeek & Rather., 2019; Hallaj et al., 2022), empirical insight into the association of proposed model concepts remains sparse, particularly in based tourism and hospitality context in crises/pandemic times. Relationship quality can be defined as a set of intangible brand values that reflect customers' expectations, predictions, and desires throughout the relationship. Brand relationship quality consists of factors of association, awareness, and value, and reflects a company's strategy to attract, retain, and increase value creation (Wang *et al.*, 2017). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**Hypothesis 3**: Brand relationship quality significantly affects brand value creation.

Vargo and Louch (2008) state that cooperation in production is different from cooperation in value creation, yet cooperation is an essential part of value creation. According to customer participation theory, a customer is satisfied with the development of value creation, if he/she is emotionally attached and completely satisfied with his/her relationship with the company (Pansari and Kumar, 2017). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**Hypothesis 4**: Brand satisfaction significantly affects brand value creation.

Oliver (1999) defines loyalty as a deep commitment to repurchase or support a product or service in the future, despite situational effects and competitors' marketing efforts. A loyal customer may willingly pay more to purchase a brand because of its unique values that do not exist in other brands (Aghazadeh *et al.*, 2015). The following hypothesis is proposed based on the above discussion:

**Hypothesis 5**: Brand value creation significantly affects brand loyalty.

Papu and Quister (2006) argue that past consumption experiences affect brand satisfaction through the moderating role of brand characteristics. On the other hand, according to some empirical studies, brand value creation is an outcome of brand satisfaction (Cooil *et al.*, 2007). In addition, Milberg and Sinn (2008) state that satisfaction occurs when a brand's performance is consistent with buyer's expectations. Accordingly, poor performance results in dissatisfaction (Patterson *et al.*, 1997). Therefore, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**Hypothesis 6**: Brand community characteristics moderate the effect of brand satisfaction on brand value creation.

Social users' motivations to use media positively affect participatory behaviors through desirable brand characteristics, and the outcome of participatory behaviors is brand loyalty (Kim and Kou,

2012). In addition, the use of social media for information communication, social exchange, and entertainment accelerates brand value creation. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> **Hypothesis 7**: Brand community characteristics moderate the effect of brand value creation on brand loyalty.

In recent years, consumers have been familiarized with the concept of brand value creation through good relationships (Alizadeh et al,2020). Therefore, they constantly look for better offers and if their expectations are not met, they will be tempted to break off relationships with the brands they are currently using (Filipe *et al.*, 2017). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> **Hypothesis 8**: Brand relationship quality affects brand value creation through brand satisfaction.

The development of attractive brands requires planned collection and analysis of the consumer information market (Alizadeh *et al.*, 2020). This process helps companies make changes in their brands to increase customer satisfaction and create new brand values. Accordingly, the ultimate result is attracting more customers/consumers in this 1competitive market (Zhu *et al.*, 2012; O'Donnell *et al.*, 2000). Therefore, the following hypothesis is suggested. The conceptual research model has been designed based on the research literature (Figure 1).



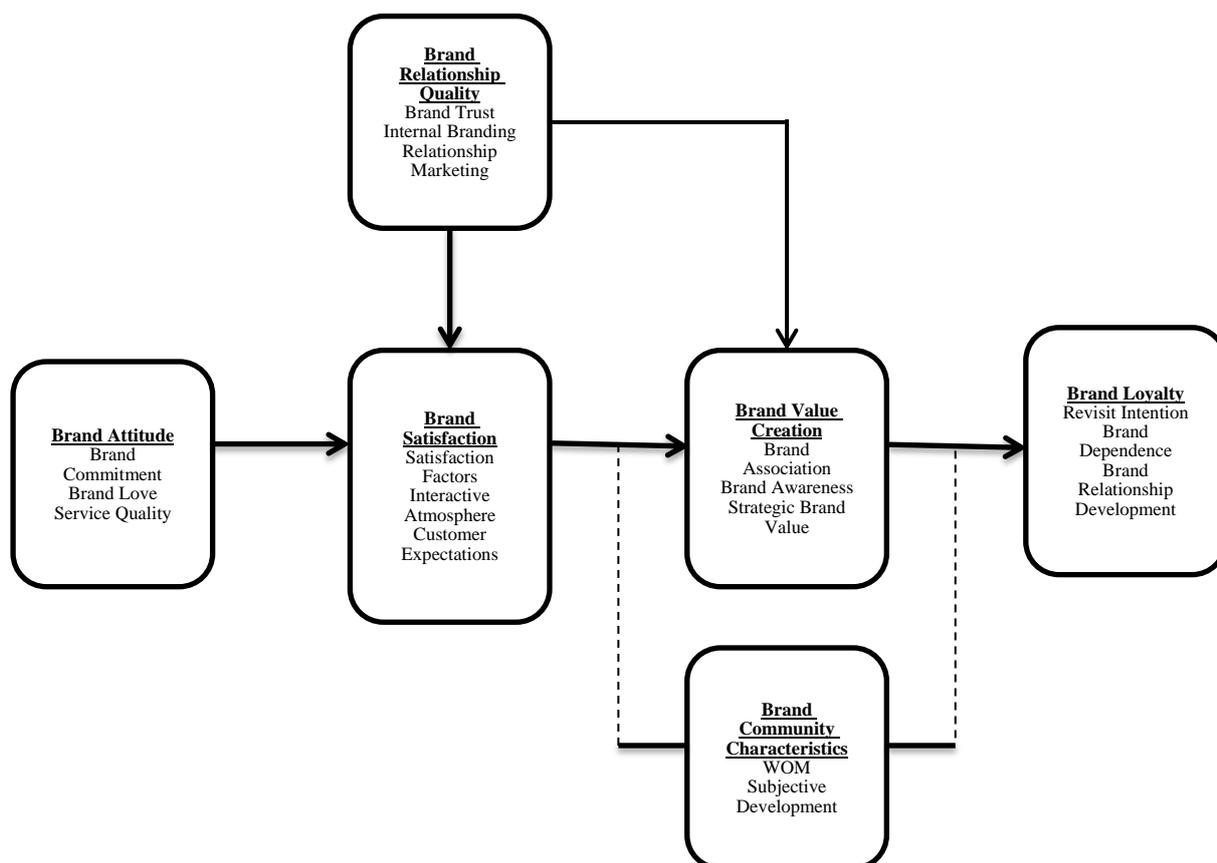**Figure 1.** Conceptual research model

## 4. Research method

For this research, the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is used to investigate the consumer-brand relationships. SEM is a technique that allows separate relationships for each of a set of dependent variables and provides a series of separate multiple regression equations estimated simultaneously (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014).

For the data analysis Smart Pls software has been used.The final questionnaire was confirmed regarding the content validity after resolving some ambiguities in questions using the opinions of hospitality industry experts and corrective comments left by some hotel managers.

The size of the study sample was determined as 250 using Jackson's (2003) method. The participants consisted of guests (consumers) who had stayed at least one night in 5-star hotels in Tehran. They were selected using online social networks and convenience sampling, and the data were collected using standard electronic questionnaires. The items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (score 1) to strongly agree (score 5). To this end, 30 questionnaires were first provided to the hotel guests in a pilot study. To increase the response rate, 300 questionnaires were distributed electronically among the participants, of which 250 questionnaires were completed.

**Table 1.** Descriptive characteristics of the participants

| Gender | | | Age | | | Educational qualifications | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Frequency** | **%** | **Year** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Degree** | **Frequency** | **%** |
| Male | 168 | 67.02 | 18-25 | 58 | 23.02 | Associate and lower degrees | 32 | 12.08 |
| Female | 82 | 32.08 | 26-30 | 102 | 40.08 | Bachelor's degree | 133 | 53.02 |
| Total | 250 | 100 | > 30 | 90 | 36.00 | Master's and higher degrees | 85 | 34.00 |
| | | | Total | 250 | 100 | Total | 250 | 100 |

## 5. Findings

The data were analyzed using the partial least squares (PLS) method. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) were used to assess the reliability of the questionnaire. The obtained Cronbach's alpha and CR values are all greater than 0.7; hence, the overall reliability of the research tool is acceptable (Table 1). Convergent and discriminant validity were used to assess the overall validity of the scale. As shown in Table 2, the convergent validity of all latent variables was greater than 0.5; therefore, the measurement model has a desirable convergent validity.

Table 3 presents the discriminant validity of the research constructs. The discriminant validity of the model is acceptable, because the square root of the AVE of each construct is greater than the correlation between that construct and other research constructs.

**Table 2.** Assessing the validity of research variables

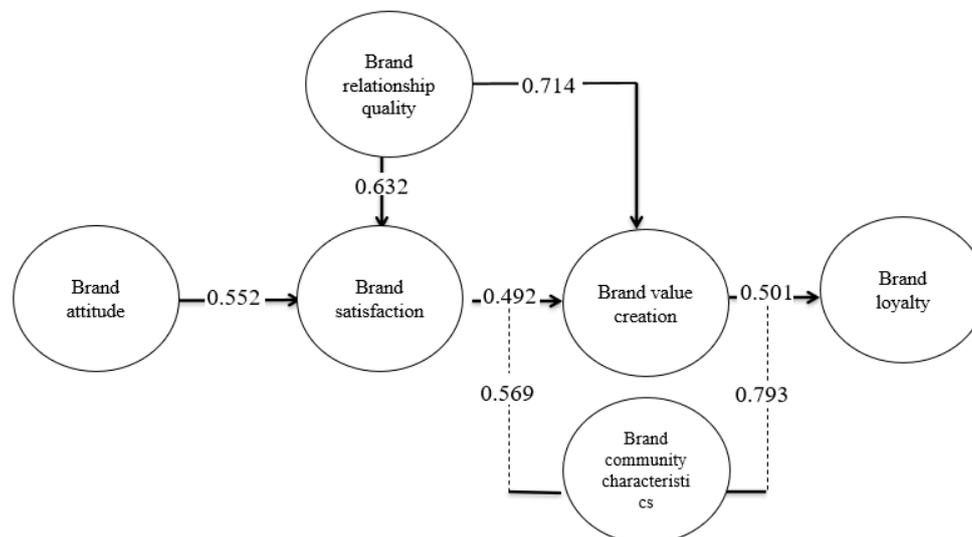| Variable | Factor loading | Standard Error | Standardised Factor Loading | SMC** | Cronbach's α | AVE* | CR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brand attitude | 0.702 | | | 0.650 | 0.830 | 0.622 | 0.777 |
| | 0.693 | 0.088 | | 0.494 | | | |
| | 0.777 | 0.09 | | 0.473 | | | |
| Brand satisfaction | 0.679 | | 0.846 | 0.621 | 0.812 | 0.614 | 0.805 |
| | 0.823 | 0.088 | 0.892 | 0.559 | | | |
| | 0.863 | 0.06 | 0.828 | 0.674 | | | |
| Brand relationship quality | 0.740 | | 0.614 | 0.714 | 0.844 | 0.615 | 0.863 |
| | 0.771 | 0.056 | 0.636 | 0.701 | | | |
| | 0.733 | 0.065 | 0.681 | 0.599 | | | |
| Brand community characteristics | 0.807 | | 0.741 | 0.690 | 0.863 | 0.639 | 0.741 |
| | 0.666 | 0.122 | 0.719 | 0.625 | | | |
| | 0.652 | 0.113 | 0.732 | 0.636 | | | |
| Brand value creation | 0.639 | | 0.634 | 0.639 | 0.820 | 0.599 | 0.812 |
| | 0.804 | 0.121 | 0.675 | 0.628 | | | |
| | 0.825 | 0.666 | 0.721 | 0.613 | | | |
| Brand loyalty | 0.869 | | 0.867 | 0.617 | 0.801 | 0.587 | 0.779 |
| | 0710 | 0.097 | 0.771 | 0.666 | | | |
| | 0.810 | 0.095 | 0.829 | 0.670 | | | |
| | 0.801 | 0.093 | 0.886 | 0.605 | | | |
| | 0.719 | 0.107 | 0.726 | 0.608 | | | |

*Note: C.R. - Composite Reliability, \*\*SMC = Square Multiple Correlations, \*AVE = Average Variance Extracted, AVE\* calculated as $\sum SMC / (\sum SMC + \sum standard\ measurement\ error)$*

**Table 3.** Average Variance Extracted and Correlation Matrix

| Variable | Brand attitude | Brand satisfaction | Brand relationship quality | Brand community characteristics | Brand value creation | Brand loyalty |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brand attitude | 0.815 | | | | | |
| Brand satisfaction | 0.460 | 0.813 | | | | |
| Brand relationship quality | 0.555 | 0.325 | 0.899 | | | |
| Brand community characteristics | 0.575 | 0.259 | 0.5 8 | 0.841 | | |
| Brand value creation | 0.511 | 0.4۵۹ | 0.563 | 0.697 | 0.866 | |
| Brand loyalty | 0.744 | 0.۵02 | 0.580 | 0.577 | 0.632 | 0.715 |

## 5.1 Testing research hypotheses

After confirming the validity and reliability of the measurement model, the structural research model is assessed. This model helps authors test the research hypotheses. Figure 2 shows the structural model designed based on the path coefficients obtained from SmartPLS 2.



**Figure 2.** Structural model with standardized coefficients

Hypothesis 1 assessed the effect of Brand attitude on brand satisfaction. Based on the results, the variable of brand attitude had significant positive effects on brand satisfaction (H1: $\gamma = 0.552$, t = 3.333). Accordingly, Johansson et al. (2006) found that committed customers with a sense of belonging to a particular brand are less likely to choose other brands. They are more likely to resist competitive offers and are even willing to accept short-term satisfaction. Therefore, desirable brand relationships are strongly associated with customer satisfaction

Hypothesis 2 assessed the effect of Brand relationship quality on brand satisfaction. Based on the results, the variable of Brand relationship quality had significant positive effects on brand satisfaction (H2: $\gamma = 0.632$, t = 3.060).

Previous research acknowledges the antecedent effect of brand attitude and brand relationship quality on brand satisfaction (Wang et al., 2017; Ramírez et al., 2019; Kim & Johnson, 2016). Therefore, this study's findings further provide existing knowledge by offering more insight into the extent to which the relationship quality satisfaction-based contributes.

Hypothesis 3 assessed the effect of brand relationship quality on brand value creation. Based on the results, the variable of Brand relationship quality had significant positive effects on brand value creation (H3: $\gamma = 0.714$, t = 2.850). This implies that only one unit increase in brand relationship quality and brand satisfaction scores results in 71.4% and 49.2% improvement in brand value creation,

respectively. Consistent with these findings, Aurier and N'Goala (2010) observed that consumers tend to be committed to a brand that continuously creates value for them and meets their expectations without causing any damage.

Hypothesis 4 assessed the effect of brand satisfaction on brand value creation. Based on the results, the variable of brand satisfaction had significant positive effects on brand value creation (H4: $\gamma = 0.492$, t = 6.211). Our findings reveal that the development of brand relationship quality, and brand satisfaction is conducive to fostering their ensuing brand value creation by undertaking more (extensive) brand-related activities (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Rather, 2018).

Hypothesis 5 assessed the effect of brand value creation on brand loyalty. Based on the results, the variable of brand value creation had significant positive effects on brand loyalty (H5: $\gamma = 0.501$, t = 6.129), indicating that only one unit increase in brand value creation results in a 50.1% increase in strategic brand value. Accordingly, in a study on online businesses, Sashi (2012) concluded that brand value creation can serve as a decisive factor in the development of strategic brand value. In line with the present results, Simon and Tossan (2018) showed that service providers can easily encourage brand loyalty by providing customers with satisfactory experiences and new values. These measures help customers precisely assess the risks of future business relationships. Islam and Rahman (2016) found that brand communities can create a link between brand value creation and loyalty by facilitating customer relationships and customer retention on social platforms. Moreover, some researchers such as Alizadeh et al(2020) and Nikunj et al. (2017) have found a direct relationship between brand equity and brand loyalty.

Hypothesis 6 assessed the moderating role of brand community characteristics in the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand value creation. Based on the results, brand community characteristics significantly moderated the effect of brand satisfaction on brand value creation (H6: $\gamma = 0.569$, t = 5.977). Kau and Loh (2006) concluded that brand community characteristics significantly influence consumer decisions. Correspondingly, our findings suggest a positive effect of brand community characteristics and brand satisfaction trust on the development of brand value creation for star hotels in the emerging market context. Furthermore, based on brand community characteristics, customers are keener to identify with those brands that help them maintain or enhance their satisfaction (Kim & Kou, 2013; Foroudi, 2020).

Hypothesis 7 assessed the moderating role of brand community characteristics in the relationship between brand value creation and brand loyalty. According to the results, brand community characteristics significantly moderated the effect of brand value creation on brand loyalty (H7: $\gamma = 0.793$, t = 6.007). Consistent with the findings, Shafei and Mohammad (2015) concluded that loyalty is a unidimensional construct, which is defined by revisit intention, willingness to recommend, and positive WOM advertising. In addition, Ismail (2017) observed that value creation has been widely studied as a predictor of brand loyalty. According to Loureiro and Sarmento (2019), consumers are only influenced by other users on social networks when they receive messages from a valuable source, which is not necessarily an expert, friend, or relative. Researchers such as Nikunj et al. (2017) and Marist et al. (2014) argue that eWOM advertising, which is a desirable brand feature, has a great impact on people's loyalty if the source of information is reliable.

Hypothesis 8 assessed the mediating role of brand satisfaction in the relationship between brand relationship quality and brand value creation. Strategic brand value was found to strengthen the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand loyalty. In line with these findings, Zhu et al. (2012) concluded that brand loyalty is among the major achievements of online brand communities. In addition, McAlexander et al. (2002) stated that brand value creation can prepare the ground for the development of brand loyalty. Satisfied customers better understand the strategic value of a brand, and therefore, they are more loyal to the brand. According to Rizan et al. (2014), satisfaction is key to customer loyalty. In studies on the hospitality industry, So et al. (2013) and Mattila (2006) found that creating a positive mental image in customer's mind increases his/her satisfaction with the services received, and thereby improves his/her brand loyalty.

Table 4 presents the path coefficients and t-values along with the hypothesis testing results.

<div align="center"><strong>Table 4.</strong> Hypothesis testing results</div>

| Hypothesis | Path coefficient (β) | Critical value (t) | Result |
|---|---|---|---|
| Brand attitude -> Brand satisfaction | 0.552 | 3.333 | Confirmed |
| Brand relationship quality -> Brand satisfaction | 0.632 | 3.060 | Confirmed |
| Brand relationship quality -> Brand value creation | 0.714 | 2.850 | Confirmed |
| Brand satisfaction -> Brand value creation | 0.492 | 6.211 | Confirmed |
| Brand value creation -> Brand loyalty | 0.501 | 6.169 | Confirmed |
| Brand satisfaction * Brand community characteristics -> Brand value creation | 0.569 | 5.977 | Confirmed |
| Brand value creation * Brand community characteristics -> Brand loyalty | 0.793 | 6.007 | Confirmed |
| Brand relationship quality -> Brand satisfaction -> Brand value creation | 0.574 | 3.335 | Confirmed |

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

The presented conceptual model in this study examined brand-consumer relationships in the hospitality industry based on digital marketing. The findings reveal that hotel consumers (guests) can contribute to industry development through positive word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising. Additionally, these findings assist marketing managers in organizing effective campaigns to establish improved relations with consumers in the online sphere. Consequently, hospitality brands should allocate financial resources to further cultivate brand-consumer relationships on digital platforms. Furthermore, the results highlight the significance of brand-consumer relationships as a strategic tool within the hospitality industry and an appropriate approach for integrating marketing policies into brand-oriented strategies on digital platforms.

With respect to the significant impact of brand attitude on brand satisfaction, the following suggestions are provided:

Given the pivotal role of commitment as a constituent of brand attitude (path coefficient = 0.850), hotel managers are advised to refrain from making false promises that could diminish consumer commitment. Such promises significantly reduce both current and future satisfaction levels, ultimately compromising long-term interests.

To enhance levels of brand satisfaction, hotel websites should promptly provide customers with a clear understanding of hotel benefits and special services.

Furthermore, suggestions are put forth regarding the significant influence of brand relationship quality on brand satisfaction:

Given the substantial role of relationship marketing as a crucial element of brand relationship quality (path coefficient = 0.882), the results suggest that hotel managers should enhance relationship marketing by designing specialized programs to address customer inquiries and receive valuable suggestions and comments on social networks. These seemingly straightforward measures can establish a favorable image of the hotel brand in customers' minds.

Given the essential role of internal branding as an element of brand relationship quality (path coefficient = 0.858), hotel managers are recommended to implement comprehensive advertising programs, offer non-monetary incentives, and provide customers with sufficient information to increase customer awareness. This can build a positive brand association in customers' minds, thereby enhancing their perception of the quality of hotel services. All of these interactions will ultimately lead to stronger brand loyalty and higher levels of brand value creation.

Considering the significant effect of brand satisfaction on brand value creation, the following suggestions are offered:

Given the significant role of satisfaction factors as major components of brand satisfaction (path coefficient = 0.877), hotel managers should contemplate elevating consumer satisfaction levels by devising a two-way communication system to maintain contact with customers, receive their feedback, and address their evolving needs in this highly competitive environment. Additionally, the provision of quality online services along with reliable and timely training and support can heighten brand satisfaction levels.

Regarding the considerable impact of brand value creation on brand loyalty, the following suggestions are provided:

Given the pivotal role of brand association as a major component of brand value creation (path coefficient = 0.892), hotel managers must identify popular and renowned figures such as national sports heroes and actors who currently endorse their brand. They should then introduce these figures to the public through social media. This enhances the quality of brand-consumer relationships, fosters a sense of belonging and reliance on the brand, and augments brand trust levels. In this context, the selection of characters and figures that align with the desired brand image can foster positive brand associations.

Associating positive attributes with the services offered by a brand through virtual advertisements can amplify customer attraction, reinforce brand loyalty, and intensify the intention to revisit, which is indeed the ultimate objective of all hotels and accommodation establishments.

The following suggestions are provided regarding the moderating role of brand community characteristics in the connection between brand satisfaction and brand value creation:

Hotel managers and marketers are advised to explore novel digital marketing methods (e.g., WOM marketing, creation of marketing forums, channels, and discussion groups on social networks) and encourage users to share their experiences with the brand on social platforms. This approach can significantly enhance customer satisfaction. Furthermore, they can positively influence their customers and augment their brand value by focusing on their brand image and establishing a robust brand presence through social media.

Given the moderating role of brand community characteristics in the connection between brand value creation and brand loyalty:

Hotel managers must consistently study the lifestyles of both current and potential guests to comprehend their specific needs and interests. This enables them to provide tailored services that extend the average length of stay. Moreover, they should manage the flow of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) advertising on popular websites and channels.

Considering the mediating role of brand value creation in the connection between brand relationship quality and brand loyalty: brand value creation can assist hotel managers in achieving a major goal—developing long-term relationships with guests. Therefore, managers are advised to adopt appropriate policies to elevate the perceived service quality and brand value. Managers must also avoid undermining consumer trust by making false promises, as such promises significantly diminish both current and future loyalty levels, ultimately jeopardizing long-term interests.

Regarding the mediating role of brand value creation in the connection between brand satisfaction and brand loyalty, hotel managers should share guidelines on how to optimize the use of hotel services through digital platforms like social media. They should also share their successful or unsuccessful experiences with personalized services with consumers. Additionally, they can foster brand trust by promoting activities that enhance brand value creation.

**Research limitations and suggestions for future studies**

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## 6. Appendix A

***Brand attitude,*** *(Spears., 2004)*
I like this hotel better than any other hotel
 I would consume this hotel more than any other hotel
 I would be inclined to buy dairy
This is my preferred hotel overal

***Brand satisfaction***  *(Oliver., 1980)*
I am satisfied with my decision to customize the service from this hotel
I am happy that I customized the service from this hotel .
I am disappointed with this brand

***Brand relationship quality*** *(Munyaradzi et al., 2015))*
I'm proud to tell others that this is a great hotel to be part of
For me this is the best of all possible hotel to be part of
I regret I chose to work for this hotel over others I was considering.

***Brand community characteristics*** *(Pedro et al., 2018)*
I feel very positive when I use hotel.
I feel good when I use hotel.
I'm proud to use hotel .

***Brand value creation****(Kunja., 2021)*
nteraction  with  the  hotel  has  provided  me  with appropriate information about brand choices
Interaction with hotel has provided me with an efficient way to manage time while choosing brand
Interaction with the hotel has enabled me to undertake appropriate transactions securely
Interaction  with  the  hotel has  enabled  me  to generate value for an adequate price

***Brand loyalty*** *(Zeithaml et al., 1996)*
1. I would say positive things about this hotel  to other people.
2. I would recommend this hotel  to someone who seeks my advice.
3. I would encourage friends and relatives to do business with this hotel  .
4. I would do more reference with this hotel  in the next few years.

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