The Moderating Influence of Brand Image on the Relationship Between Customer Engagement and Customer Loyalty

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Abstract

The current study attempted to address the role of customer engagement (CE) in the relationship with other psychological constructs leading to supply a new higher - order model of CE that can explain the nature of CE upon the reviews of literature. Therefore, the discovery of the importance of CE was carried out in the Vietnamese restaurant service context. I found that service quality and perceived value were important causes leading to more engagement. Moreover, the influence of CE on perceived value was the strongest and the relationship between CE and service quality was the weakest. Also, the influence of CE on customer loyalty for the lower - income customers was higher than that for higher - income ones ; also, the income of the customers did not moderate the relationships between perceived value/service quality and CE. The relationship between CE and customer loyalty was weakened by the moderating influence of brand image. Thus, a crucial contribution of the current research is to give knowledge of CE by investigating the diverse nature of the relationships among order - high marketing structures and CE in a comprehensive integrated model.

Keywords : customer engagement, perceived value, moderating influence, service industry, restaurants

One of the major changes that come along with the enhancement of life quality is the steadily rising demand for eating out. This means that new food service companies will emerge continuously and there will be constant competition among them. In this reality, customers play an important role that determines the success of these restaurants. Therefore, it is normal that restaurant companies try to attract, satisfy, and continue to make new customers (Voon, 2012).

This reality is emerging in international business, and Vietnam, which is regarded as an attractive destination for travelers all over the world, is no exception. In particular, Vietnam declared tourism development as a core economic area through the 9th Communist Party convention. Currently, the food industry contributes greatly to the success of the tourism industry. In other words, nationally, the tourism industry, especially the cuisine service industry, has been cultivated and the constant influx of tourists has become a big driver of the growth of the Vietnam restaurant industry. However, with the growth of the food service industry, Vietnam restaurants are facing fierce competition that they have not experienced before. Thus, companies are calling customers to participate and engage in service design in order to obtain different perspectives.

In a dynamic business context, customer engagement (CE) is emerging in the current marketing literature with initial research indicating that it has an important structure that not only reflects consumers' interactive experience and the relationship within brand communities (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011), but also is conducive to a firm's financial value (Bijmolt, Leeflang, Block, Eisenbeiss, Hardie, Lemmens, & Saffert, 2010 ; Kumar, Aksoy,

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Donkers, Venkatesan, Wiesel, & Tillmanns 2010 ; Sharma, 2012). Moreover, CE authorizes product quality amelioration, sales promotion, decrease in costs and risk, rise in customer satisfaction, and increase of competitive advantage (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2013 ; Di Gangi & Wasko, 2009). Thus, most companies aim to initiate their engagement initiatives to provoke a potent customer - brand relationship (Voyles, 2007) and have spent a huge investment to tailor their product/brand to match customer preference and consequently initialize CE (Brodie et al., 2011 ; Hardyman, Daunt, & Kitchener, 2015 ; Storbacka, Brodie, Böhmann, Maglio, & Nenonen, 2016). Correspondingly, it is suggested that one of the important strategic imperatives referring to customer loyalty is CE (Bowden, 2009 ; Jahn & Kunz, 2014).

However, discovering the antecedents and consequences of CE in many research studies is quite nebulous as studies lack consensus. Furthermore, in addition to the issues of the ambiguous relationships among structures known to be associated with CE, there are needs to make sure the comprehensiveness of the focal structure (i.e., CE). In order to do so, it would be attempted to introduce new variables and/or modify the current framework (Brodie et al., 2013; Hapsari, Clemes, & Dean, 2017 ; So, King, & Sparks, 2014). To this respect, the inclusion of moderating factors into the model could also enhance the explanatory power of the model (Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted 2003). There are three factors that are suitable to explain the antecedent of CE, including service quality, involvement, and perceived value. Customer loyalty is also selected as a comprehensive structure for the consequence of CE. In addition, the changing relationship between CE and customer loyalty related to the brand image is proposed as a moderating variable.

Literature Review

(1) Customer Engagement : In point of fact, the term engagement has been explored since a few decades. It appears to have been addressed in several disciplines, but with no concurred definition. While studies of engagement are addressed in various contexts, the concept of CE is the foundation of all the engagement concepts (Brodie et al., 2011 ; Van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Pirner, & Verhoef, 2010). CE is viewed as a psychological state (Zainol, Omar, Osman, & Habidin, 2016), or a combination of behavioral and psychological constructs (So et al., 2014), or a process (Yang, Lin, Carlson, & Ross, 2016), or motivational psychology (Brodie et al., 2011 ; Wallace, Buil, & De Chernatony, 2014). CE has been considered to be a new construct in understanding and interpreting customer behavior (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010). Overall, the CE concept has extended study prospects and potentials and recognized the importance of participating in online and offline contexts. Moreover, the benefits of CE have been accepted and there are numerous values consumers may stem from their engagement with a firm. To sum up, according to Harmeling, Moffett, Arnold, and Carlson (2017), it may be preferable when defining CE behaviorally rather than psychologically ; it does not exclude the appropriateness of psychological structures (eg, cognitive and affective commitment, involvement, satisfaction), and instead enables these structures to oscillate independently, with one of a kind antecedent and result, and identify with either a key antecedent or a consequence of CE (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Thus, defining the CE concept and encouraging further research about its structure and interaction is significant.

CE is defined, in this study, as the interest of the customer voluntarily toward a specific brand by combining of "active mental state" of cognition and vigor and emotional experience aspects to drive behavioral intention.

The exploration of reviewed literature of CE (Brodie et al., 2011 ; Marbach, Lages, & Nunan, 2016 ; Zainol et al., 2016) exposes a rather interesting issue that there is an inconsistency regarding its dimensionality (Cheung, Lee, & Jin, 2011). The majority conceptualizations of CE of authors concentrated on multidimensional perspectives (Hollebeek, 2011) ; incorporated behavior, emotional, and cognitive aspects (Vivek, 2009) ; combined absorption, dedication, and vigor dimensions (Dwivedi, 2015) ; or consisted of dedication, enthusiasm, and absorption (Cheung et al., 2011 ; Greve, 2014). In opposition to the multidimensional view of many

researchers, the uni - dimensional perspective concentrates on the behavioral domain of CE (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Expressing different aspects of CE determined the various levels of engagement in the specific context of the studies leading to different results (Banyte & Dovaliene, 2014).

(2) Related Structures : The relationship between the two constructs (service quality and CE) has been explored in service marketing. Several researchers have demonstrated that service quality has a considerable effect on CE with different effect levels, which directly influence the success of firms, especially in the service context such as the restaurant industry (Shekarchizadeh, Rasli, & Hon - Tat, 2011) and influenced business operations (Krishnamoorthy, Karthikeyan, & Prakash 2016 ; Sharma & Verma, 2015). Phadke (2011) defined the quality of service as the key determinant of overall satisfaction, overall service quality, and behavioral intentions. The effects of service quality on customers (satisfaction, engagement, or loyalty) have been explored by some studies. For example, Puriwat and Tripopsakul (2014) concentrated on the investigation of the effect of service quality on CE in service industries in Thailand. The results revealed that all service quality dimensions significantly influenced CE. In addition, Wang, Yu, and Zhang (2014) also revealed the connection between service quality and CE, and CE was also found to have a role as a mediator factor between continuance usage and service quality.

At the same time, Hapsari et al. (2017) also indicated that CE is influenced by perceived service quality and customer satisfaction ; Claussen, Kretschmer, and Mayrhofer (2013) proposed that the quality of mobile applications on Facebook will impact CE. When customers are willing to purchase higher quality products, it also results in a behavioral intention such as CE (Kuo, Wu, & Deng, 2009 ; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). Reitz (2012) performed a survey of Facebook users to analyze a conceptual model in the online CE context. The results illustrated a positive relationship between customers' perception of information quality and CE. Therefore, the first hypothesis is proposed :

✦ **H$_1$:** There is a positive relation between CE and service quality.

One of the most conceptually related concepts to CE is involvement (Kuo, 2013 ; Simon & Manohar, 2017), which is based on their similarities in encouraging the individual toward a particular object (e.g., a brand) (Hollebeek, 2011). Consumer involvement is viewed as a "motivational state" structure, which is used to gain an understanding about consumer attitudes and measure the meaning of a product or a brand for the consumers (Guthrie & Kim, 2009). On the other hand, Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan (2012) stated that the involvement level of an individual will be positively linked with the intensity level of engagement. Involvement likely creates a sense of ongoing psychological responsibility to a specific brand in respect to the feelings and thoughts of the customers and their subsequent behaviors (Bowden, 2009). Lastly, regarding some research studies, authors have suggested that when customers increase the cognition of their involvement, the engagement will consequently rise, and involvement has also been proposed as antecedents of CE (Brodie et al., 2011 ; Islam & Rahman, 2016 ; Parihar, Dawra, & Sahay 2019 ; Vivek, 2009). Therefore, the next hypothesis is proposed :

✦ **H$_2$:** Customer involvement will have a positive effect on CE.

Relationship marketing theory considers perceived value as the main element of long-term relationships that its integration with CE will create the discrepancy between success and failure of a company (Hollebeek, 2013). It is defined that perceived value is a "consumer's overall evaluation of the utility of a service/product based on cognitions of what is given and what is taken" (Zeithaml, 1988, p.14), thus reflecting a specific rate /trade-off between perceived quality and price (Kaltcheva, Winsor, Patino, & Shapiro, 2013). More importantly, it has been revealed across studies that perceived value is also one of the antecedent factors of CE, which means that

perceived value has the intention to drive CE (Brodie et al., 2011). Moreover, while Hollebeek and Chen (2014) suggested that perceived value influences engagement toward a brand, Hapsari et al. (2017) demonstrated that CE is influenced by customer perceived value. By the point that customers receive good value from service, they may be stimulated to level up their engagement to the service provider, either to gain more value in future trading or for psychological reasons (Brodie et al., 2013). Furthermore, companies that create positive experiences for their engaged customers are likely to improve their perceived value (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Therefore, the next hypothesis is proposed :

✦ **H₃ :** Perceived value will have a positive impact on CE.

The relationship between CE and customer loyalty to a company would be revealed through this examination, however, it could be noticed that researchers have demonstrated the same using various methods. While inspecting the relations between CE and customer loyalty, Grissemann and Stokburger - Sauer (2012) and Banyte and Dovaliene (2014) detected that customer loyalty depended on CE. Under any circumstances, logically, when customers become loyal, they always seek the greater benefit from remaining in a long - term relationship, and they suggested that loyalty is positively related to CE in value creation. CE can result in successful marketing findings, including loyalty, spreading word-of-mouth, the weight of wallet, and cross-selling (Vivek et al., 2012). According to Sprott, Czellar, and Spangenberg (2009), CE with a brand impacts customer findings such as brand perceptions and attitudes, which lead to having a significant impact on brand loyalty. Finally, an individual who engages in a particular product is more likely to improve more favorable attitudes toward a specific brand or company, resulting in entity loyalty (So, King, Sparks, & Wang, 2016 ; Vivek et al., 2012). Referring to it, I form the following hypothesis :

✦ **H₄ :** CE will have a positive impact on customer loyalty.

A brand with high levels of reputation or high brand image-level leads to a stronger commitment to the company (Walsh, Mitchell, Jackson, & Beatty, 2009), which plays a crucial role in determining customer loyalty. Moreover, the relationship between CE and brand image displays the direction and level of reputation where the brand is placed in a consumer's mind (Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci, 2010). According to

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework
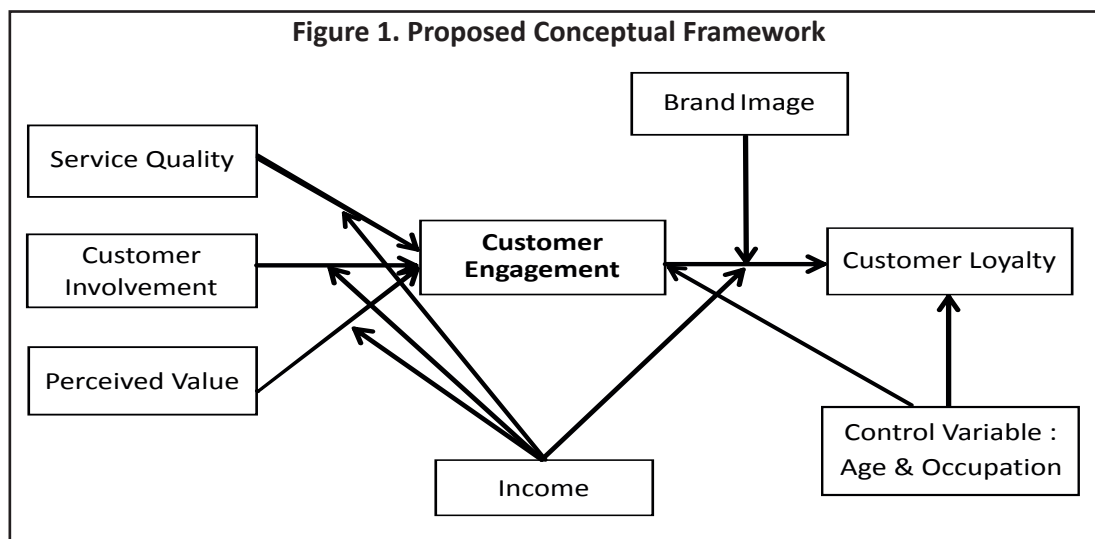
Keller (2013), brand image as the brand association situated in memory of consumers reflects their perceptions. Also, it positively influences CE (Jana & Chandra, 2016). Additionally, Rahi (2016) revealed that the image of a brand moderated the relationship between perceived value and loyalty of the customer, and it also moderated the relation between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Chung, Yu, Choi, & Shin, 2015). Logically, I presume that :

✦ **H₅ :** Brand image will moderate the relationship between CE and customer loyalty.

Hence, on the platform of the above discussion, the integrated conceptual framework was formed and is shown in the Figure 1.

Methodology

(1) Sample : In order to validate the research model and hypotheses stemming from the above discussion, questions about each research concept were prepared, and data were collected through a questionnaire. The data for this study were collected from Vietnamese domestic customers who visited Vungtau, Vietnam. Vungtau is a region where many foreign tourists gather. A total of 628 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, of which 538 copies were collected. A total of 517 copies of the questionnaire were used for statistical analysis as 18 copies were incompletely filled questionnaires. This study was conducted in 2018.

(2) Measures : As shown in Table 1, the questionnaire items used to measure the constructs of this study were derived from revising the items used in previous research studies. The items for each category were framed in English and then translated into Vietnamese for surveying. The instrument was reviewed by five Vietnamese experts to ensure that the Vietnamese wording and content of items was appropriate.

(3) Research Model : A structural equation modeling approach was used to determine the research model in the test. AMOS 20 was employed to calculate the parameters and evaluate the fit of the model as shown in the Figure 1. Regarding Likert - scaled items, there are two different options including a path analysis with a latent variable - the

Table 1. The Composition and Source of the Measurement Tool

Research Variable	Number of Questions	Measuring Factors	Source
PV	6	A substitute restaurant presence ; Attractive service delivery	Yang, Yu, Zo, & Choi (2016) ; So et al. (2014) ; Dwivedi (2015)
BI	7	A good impression ; a distinct personality	Blasco - Arcas, Hernandez -Ortega, & Jimenez - Martinez (2016)
SQ	10	Excellent facilities ; Superior services	Puriwat & Tripopsakul (2014)
IV	9	A strong interest ; a psychological responsibility	Zaichkowsky (1985)
CE	14	Positive perception ; a pleasant feeling ; Spent a lot of energy	Vivek (2009); Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann (2005)
CL	10	Like other places ; Positive comments ; Repurchase intention	Brodie, Whittome, & Brush (2009)

Note. Perceived Value: PV ; Brand Image : BI ; Service Quality: SQ ; Involvement : IV; Customer Loyalty: CL

common factor of the item-scores sets or a simple path analysis of the item - sums (McDonald & Ho, 2002) which I could choose to apply for an examination. As for this study, the latter approach was employed to examine the proposed conceptual model.

Analysis and Results

(1) Evaluation and Refinement of Measurement Scales : The descriptive analysis provides the respondents' demographic characteristics. Potential participants could withdraw from the study at any time. The common reason cited to quit from the survey was a requirement to leave the restaurant. Incomplete responses of fewer than 20% in one observation were listwise cut out or excluded from the analysis considering the process conducted by Enders and Bandalos (2001). Thus, 517 observations were considered tolerable for this research.

While most of the respondents were men who accounted for 58.6% of the sample size, women accounted for 41.4% of the respondents. Among the respondents, 26.9% were under 30 years of age, the ages of 30 and 40 years accounted for 54.5% of the respondents, and the remaining 18.7% of the respondents were above 40 years of age. Most of the interviewees were of the opinion that they will choose a high-end restaurant to savor meals (76.2%). About 68.5% of the respondents had a medium income level from 3 million to 8 million VND per month, while respondents in the high income category accounted for 23.8% of the total respondents. Only 7.7% of the respondents had a low income of less than 3 million VND.

In order to validate the reliability of the measurement variables in this study, items that inhibit the single dimensionality of each research concept were excluded through Cronbach's alpha and item-to-total correlation of each measurement variable. Thus, 54 items were clarified by calculation of item-to-total correlations employing the suggested cutoff of 0.5. To improve the coefficient alphas and item-to-total correlations, seven items across the six factors were eliminated. The coefficient alphas ranged from 0.900 to 0.950 for the six domains.

(2) Measurement Model Assessment : CFA aims to be evaluating the factorial structure of the complete scale and testing the reliability & validity of the corresponding measurement model by means of the convergent and discriminant validity in order to make sure unidimensionality of the multiple - item structures (Bollen, 1988).

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted for each research concept using refined items through internal consistency analysis. Residual difference analysis was performed for additional scale refinement. Specifically, for items with residuals greater than ± 2.58, the deletion was removed to impair the single dimensionality of each study concept (eg, Kline, 1998). The results are as follows : one item of perceived value, one item of brand image, one item of service quality, one item of involvement, one item of CE, and two items of customer loyalty were removed for the model fit.

Table 2. CFA Results of the Measurement Model

Constructs	Number of Items		Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	Parameter Estimate	*t*-value
	Before Analysis	After Analysis					
PV	5	4	.900	.894	.681	.594-.887	15.11-27.63
BI	6	5	.908	.903	.651	.738-.849	19.85-23.79
SQ	8	7	.926	.920	.591	.712-.888	19.71-23.69
IV	9	8	.933	.942	.699	.735-.895	19.65-23.85
CE	13	12	.949	.947	.597	.558-.833	13.86-23.53
CL	6	4	.811	.924	.754	.765-.994	26.84-55.48

Note. $\chi^2/df = 2.769$, GFI = 0.840, TLI = 0.913, CFI = 0.919, IFI = 0.919, RMR = 0.050, RMSEA = 0.059

Table 3. Correlation (Standard Error) Between Latent Variables and Confidence Interval Results

Construct	Mean	St. Deviation	CE	SQ	IV	BI	CL	PV
CE	5.202	.945	0.733					
SQ	5.002	.953	.103 (.044) [.097; .271]	0.769				
IV	4.887	.832	.129 (.049) [.03; .228]	.078 (.044) [-.01; .165]	0.836			
BI	4.756	.915	.499 (.057) [.388; .614]	.231 (.046) [.14; .322]	.184 (.044) [.097; .271]	0.808		
CL	5.078	1.119	.481 (.068) [.346; 616]	.236 (.056) [.125; .347]	.082 (.053) [-.024; .187]	.487 (.061) [.366; .609]	0.868	
PV	5.105	.918	.370(.157) [.058; 171]	.127(.062) [.003; .250]	.093(.039) [.015; .170]	.184(.065) [.055; .319]	.125(.045) [.035; .215]	.825

As shown in Table 2, the results display that items of each construct are loaded with a high loading value (0.50 or more). In addition, each constitutional concept shows a satisfactory level of AVE exceeding the general level of 0.50, indicating that each concept is a reliable measurement tool. In addition, to prove the validity of each constitutional concept, it is necessary to examine whether the constituent factors have a unique difference with each other, and also how the concepts have a correlation with external variables. As shown in Table 3, the fit index of the measurement model is : $\chi^2/df = 2.769$, GFI = 0.840, TLI = 0.913, CFI = 0.919, IFI = 0.919, RMR = 0.050, RMSEA = 0.059, respectively.

According to Jöreskog (1971), the correlation between concepts and the related confidence intervals are calculated, and if the confidence interval encompasses 1.0, the two concepts do not show significant differences (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The Table 3 shows that the correlation between each concept, standard error, and confidence interval are not more than 1.0, and the AVE of each variable is larger than the squared correlation between the variables.

(3) Structural Model Analysis : Structural equation modeling (SEM) is employed for testing the proposed framework. The results show that the TLI, CFI, and IFI scores (0.918, 0.924, and 0.925, respectively) achieve the requirement, suggesting a good fit. The values of RMSEA and GFI are 0.061 and 0.853, respectively, indicating close to a good fit. The relative chi - square/df (2.945) is within the suggested range. These fit indices are sufficient and maintain that the structural model reveals an appropriate data after considering the sample size and could possibly be applied to explain the hypotheses in this study, which means that all fit indices are set in between the corresponding recommended assessment and the research model offers a good model fit. A structural equation model analysis is also conducted to test this research's hypotheses. The results are presented in the Table 4.

When the satisfactory model fit is obtained, the form of a null hypothesis H_0 will be used to test the hypothesis

Table 4. Path Analysis Results

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate	C.R.	p	Result
H_1	SQ -> CE	0.066	1.875	*	Supported
H_2	IV -> CE	-0.021	-0.607	0.54	Not Supported
H_3	PV -> CE	0.442	9.410	***	Supported
H_4	CE -> CL	0.981	8.557	***	Supported

where no relationship remained or is estimated to be zero. The results illustrate that all hypothetical imperatives except the pairs from service quality, perceived value to CE are positively significant. Service quality and perceived value are significantly related to CE ($\beta = 0.066$, $p < 0.1$ and $\beta = 0.442$, $p < 0.01$, respectively). Hence, hypotheses H_1 and H_3 are supported. As expected, CE is also significantly related to customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.981$, $p < 0.01$), and hence, hypothesis H_2 is supported. Finally, in contrast to the proposed hypothesis, the results indicate that the hypothesis H_2 ($\beta = -0.607$, $p = 0.54$) is detected to be not insignificant, which means customer involvement did not influence CE. This demonstrates that all the hypotheses (without H_2) are supported. The findings also reveal that there are strong direct influences from perceived value and service quality to CE, which leads to customer loyalty.

Moderating Effects

Moderation is an indirect influence that can be employed for testing concepts that interpret the relation between two structures. According to Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2013), a moderating effect takes place when the relation between two latent variables is influenced by another variable and this variable moderates the bond. Brand image, in this study, is used as a moderator. The results show that the interaction between brand image and CE is significant ($p < 0.05$) to interpret the variance in customer loyalty. The results reveal that different levels of brand image could considerably moderate the relationship between CE in the consumption process, and the ultimate behavior intention return to buy and mouth marketing, and the coefficient B of -0.547 reveals that the direction is negative, recognizing a weakening effect.

The evaluation of customers' income level as a moderator is implemented by comparing the lower-paid customer group "income group 1- lower-paid" which composed of customers who received salary less than 8 million VND with the higher-paid customer group "income group 2- higher-paid" which composed of customers who received salary more than 8 million VND.

To find out the variation between the groups and to identify the considerable different pair, it is necessary to test the critical ratio for groups' pairwise comparisons that are displayed in the regression weight. The results are illustrated in the Table 5.

There are two hypotheses being affected by income due to the fact that the Z - score's absolute values are higher than the critical value of 1.65 (Bollen, 1988). For the relationship between customer involvement and CE where lower-paid customers yield higher coefficients ($\beta = 0.022$) than the higher - paid customers ($\beta = -0.101$), the difference is significant (Z - score $= -1.786 > \pm1.65$, $p<0.1$), which reveals that the lower - paid customers' involvement factor accounts for more influence than the higher-paid customer on the level of CE. In addition, for the relationship between CE and customer loyalty where lower-paid customers yield higher coefficients ($\beta = 0.980$) than the higher-paid customers ($\beta = 0.152$), the difference is significant (Z - score $= 1.698 > \pm1.65$, $p < 0.1$), which demonstrates that the higher-paid customers' engagement accounts for less influence than the

Table 5. Income Hypothesis Comparison

Causal Path	Coefficients		Critical Ratios for Differences Between Parameters	Result
	Group 1	*Group 2*		
SQ -> CE	0.103	0.041	-0.709	No difference
IV -> CE	0.022	-0.101	-1.786*	Difference
PV-> CE	0.408	0.465	0.532	No difference
CE -> CL	0.980	0.152	1.698*	Difference

Note. * $p < 0.1$

lower-paid customers on the level of customer loyalty. There is no significant difference elicited for the rest of the relations between the two customer groups : lower - paid and higher - paid customers.

In this study model, the customers' age and occupation are observed as control variables. Age and occupation of customers do not have a considerable impact on CE ; both display non-significant paths. Likewise, the results reveal that occupation has no impact on customer loyalty. Alternatively, the path between age and customer loyalty structure is found to be significant with $\beta = 0.138$, $p < 0.01$.

Discussion

This research emphasizes the diverse nature of the service relationship process in which implied CE's relational antecedents (i.e. perceived, involvement) may act as independent factors to interactive experiences between an object and engaged customer. To do this, the existing study executes empirical testing and evaluation of interrelationships between CE with other-high marketing constructs, which were suggested in researches of Van Doorn et al. (2010) and Brodie et al. (2011). Furthermore, understanding what marketing structures including perceived value, service quality, and involvement could move a customer to engage with a specific company or brand and what value they could perceive in this forceful competitive environment can support managers estimating their CE. This study also indicates that the strength of relationships among these constructs is not only moderated by brand image, but depends on the research context.

The direct influences of perceived value and service quality on CE are comparable. The findings also reveal that the influence of perceived value on CE is the highest, and in turn, it impacts on customer loyalty. In contrast to previous studies (e.g. Hapsari et al., 2017), CE did not significantly predict the loyalty of customers in the airline industrial context. This may be attributed to the fact that in the catering service context, emotion and cognition to experience must be characteristic of engagement dimensions, which are better manifested by the measure of customers' loyalty levels.

Managerial Implications

In this research, I suggest a new research model in order to construct the nomological network regarding CE by considering the vital characteristics of CE and looking at, at the same time, the relationship of CE with different related research concepts. This supported me to capture a deeper understanding of the essential role of CE in the catering service industry.

In the restaurant service sector, although the service provided is of relative similarity, the perceived value of each customer is different. This may be due to different consumption experiences and different emotions of the customer. Different emotions between customers about the services that lead to the feeling about the level of benefits are also different. Hence, higher CE leads to higher perceived value for the brand. This means that for firms, it is necessary to enhance customer perceived value.

The assessment of the customer's income level, as a moderating variable, shows the different effects of income levels on the relationship between CE and the related structures. The results indicate that in food services, customer emotion is a crucial factor in evaluating the relationship between quality of service and CE. One of the reasons for this is that in recent years, the problem of Dirty Dozen in Vietnam is becoming a big disaster, such as seafood marinated with chemical fertilizers. This is a rather serious problem for exclusive management and also a cause of huge fear among people. Indeed, this is one of the important reasons for this research in which service quality is an important antecedent driving CE. Moreover, the literature review has shown that emotion is an important aspect of CE. Thus, after customers enjoy the services at restaurants, they often evaluate the results of their feelings. These emotions can be positive or negative depending on each customer's expectations. Positive

emotions are often expressed in the form of feelings of success, affiliations, happiness, and pride (Oliver, 2010). This means service quality is a crucial factor to maintain current customers and attract new ones.

This study not only assesses the direct effect of the higher-order structures, but also recognizes brand image as a moderating variable. Although, the moderating effect of brand image has been examined in some research studies as mentioned in the literature review, but it has not been investigated in the context of restaurant service in Vietnam. As the findings reveal, CE in the process of serving food at restaurants is negatively moderated by brand image. Meanwhile, according to Keller (2013), brand image is the cognition of a product that reflects the memory of the customer for a specific product. Therefore, people with a memory of a brand image feel less menaced by ambiguous and uncertain situations. As the findings show, the role of CE toward customer loyalty varies under various levels of remembered brand image. High brand image will weaken the relationship between CE and customer loyalty.

Limitations of the Study and the Way Forward

In addition to its contribution to marketing literature, the study has several limitations.

Firstly, the study was conducted only by investigating in the Vungtau region and for restaurant service as a research context without any comparison. Thus, the future studies may extend this study by comparing services and service areas to understand the nature of CE.

Secondly, this research only concentrates on the moderating role of brand image and judging the role of only demographic characteristic (income). However, considering the social role theory by Eagly, Wood, and Diekman (2000), males and females react distinctly to a particular situation. Therefore, further research might examine the moderator influences of gender and other demographic characteristics on the relationship between CE and related structures.

Finally, in this research, it is approved that CE is multidimensional in conceptualization, but an actual effect on each sub-concept is not tested in the actual analysis process. Albeit it was intended for further analysis, and future research studies should examine the structure and power of the sub-dimensions of CE.

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