
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT IN INCREASING AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT WITHIN HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Raouf Ahmad Rather*, Shakir Hussain Parray**

**ICSSR Doctoral Fellow and Research Scholar, The Business School, University of Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir, India. Email: r.raouf18@gmail.com*

***ICSSR Research Associate and Asst Professor, Kashmir University, Jammu & Kashmir, India. Email: Shakirparray@kashmiruniversity.ac.in*

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of customer engagement on affective commitment in hospitality sector. Customer engagement has recently emerged in both academics and practitioners as an outstanding customer relationship construct and as a predictor of affective commitment. However, empirical examination on customer engagement is relatively limited. As hospitality sectors have widely adopted customer engagement practices for managing customer relationships, further understanding of this notion is important. Descriptive statistics, correlation, regression analysis and a sample of two hundred thirty service customers were used in the hospitality sector. Samples consisted of customers from four star hotels, (sixty one percent) and five star hotels, (thirty nine percent) in Jammu and Kashmir, India. The findings suggest that customer engagement have significant and positive effects on affective commitment in the hospitality sector. The results can prove vital to practitioners in engaging customers while branding and marketing their products and services so as to strengthen a customer emotional and loyal base. Moreover, customer engagement acts as a useful tool in the relationship building strategies in hospitality sector. This research not only expands the academic research on customer engagement but also presents an outline for service firms particularly hospitality to improve and design their customer engagement activities. This research also offers number of vital avenues for future research.

Keywords: *Customer Engagement, Affective Commitment, Jammu and Kashmir, Hospitality Sector*

Introduction

Marketing Science Institute (MSI) positioned customer engagement (CE) in its list of the top research priorities in 2016-18 (MSI, 2016). CE is likely to be among the highest priorities for firms (Verhoef, Reinartz, and Krafft, 2010; Rather, 2018; Roy, Balaji, Soutar, Lassar, and Roy, 2018). Recently, scholars have been investigating CE in a marketing context. For instance, CE has been an advanced research perspective in service and marketing management in the coming years (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, and Ilic, 2011; Leckie, Nyadzayo, and Johnson, 2018; Rather, 2018, Rather and Sharma, 2017a; Roy et al., 2018). As service sectors are inspired to make engaged customers as co-creators of their goods and services and further enhance customers service experience (Ostrom et al., 2010), hospitality service sectors require to pursue practices steering customer engagement behaviors beyond transactions to sustain and nurture the customer base. The tourism and hospitality literature widely supports the potential benefits of customer engagement. For example, leveraging customer engagement behaviors may allow hospitality organizations to attract and retain more customers, convert browsers to buyers, and gain additional insight into their business (Wang and Fesenmaier 2004). Actions that engaged customers will perform are: they provide ideas and suggestions, they do some of the work, they collaborate, co-create, they buy, they advocate a brand or product to family, friends or colleagues and they bring feedback (Iqbal, 2011; Leckie et al., 2018; Rather, 2018). More recently, scholars found that engaged customers of a virtual brand community tend to display positive relationship quality barometers like increased satisfaction, trust, and commitment (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, and, Hollebeek, 2013). Moreover, Fullerton (2003) stated that affective commitment to be in a long-term relationship provides to feelings of affection and identification with the brand or the firm. The essence of affective commitment is that customers return to accumulate an emotional attachment to their partner in a consumption relationship. Once customers involves to love (or, in some cases, like) brands or service providers, they are showing conditions of emotional state of affective commitment (Fullerton, 2003). In today's highly competitive business environment, where keeping customers happy and maintaining a long-term brand relationship with them has been an important business strategy. Therefore, it is essential for any hospitality business to seek opportunities to achieve a competitive advantage by adopting various marketing practices and strategies. Clearly, engagement encompasses a key place in contributing to an understanding of service performance and customer outcomes.

CE has emerged as a prominent construct in recent years and is increasingly gaining attention among practitioners and academics, mainly due

to its potential influences to customer behavior (Brodie et al., 2013; Gambetti and Graffigna, 2010; Rather and Sharma, 2016b; Vivek et al., 2014; Rather, 2018, Rather & Sharma, 2017a). Since limited research is conducted in customer engagement with respect to hospitality sector like (Bowden, 2009b; Rather and Sharma, 2016b; So et al., 2012; Rather, 2018, Rather and Sharma, 2017a; Roy et al., 2018), further understanding of this concept is important. Despite the growing interest in fostering customer engagement, empirical research is relatively scarce (Bolton 2011; Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, and Pihlstrom, 2012; Hollebeek, 2011a; Rather and Sharma, 2016b), and very little is known about the customer engagement in enhancing affective commitment. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the extent to which the customer engagement practices operate in the hospitality sector of Jammu and Kashmir (J & K). The hospitality sector of Jammu and Kashmir has emerged as one of the key drivers of growth and development and is one of the largest segments under the services sector of its economy (Rather and Sharma, 2017b; Sharma & Rather, 2015). Against this background, hospitality sector is regularly re-appraising their business practices and strategies in evaluating various strategic options to ensure profitability and survival within the extremely competitive business surroundings. Our literature search indicates that there was no study of customer engagement in the hospitality sector notably in J & K and particularly in India despite the fact that recent events indicate that the arena is very competitive. Therefore, this study is intended to address this research gap with the aim of to explore the influence of CE in enhancing affective commitment in hospitality sector.

Literature Review

Concept of Customer Engagement (CE) and Hypotheses Development

The Economist Intelligence Unit (2007, p. 2) defines engagement as ‘the creation of experiences that allow companies to build deeper, more meaningful and sustainable interactions between the company and its customers or external stakeholders. From marketing perspective, engagement also refers to the strength of the behavioral tie the customer has with the company that surpass purchases and repurchases of a product and service, ensuring from different motivations of the individual (van Doorn et al., 2010). This tie not only serves to retain present customers by developing the relationship with the company but also to attract new ones (Bowden, 2009b).

Customer engagement in the marketing literature has also been separated into two classifications, uni-dimensional conceptualizations which are predominantly focusing on only behavioral aspect of CE (Bijmolt et al., 2010;

van Doorn et al., 2010; Kumar, Aksoy, Donkers, Venkatesan, Wiesel, and Tillmanns, 2010), and multi-dimensional conceptualizations which comprise all the three dimensions including cognitive, emotional and behavioral (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011b; Mollen and Wilson 2010; Vivek et al., 2012; So, King, and Sparks, 2012). While several multidimensional conceptualizations of CE have been proposed (Brodie et al. 2013; Hollebeek 2011b, van Doorn et al. 2010, So et al., 2012), which provide a significant conceptual foundation for CE, this study adopts the conceptualization proposed by So et al. (2012), Sharma and Rather (2016) as it focuses specifically on hospitality services. Therefore, this research advances current understanding of beyond-purchase psychological and behavioral connections with customer engagement and the influences of these connections (enthusiasm, attention, absorption, interaction and identification) on the development of affective commitment.

Interaction refers to a customer's online and off-line participation with the brand or other customers outside of purchase. Some researchers promote customer engagement as manifesting in behaviors, such as customer interactions (Bijmolt et al., 2010; van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010), and others include customers participation with the firm or other customers in exchanging information (Wagner and Majchrzak, 2007). For these reasons, interaction constitutes an important dimension of customer engagement, representing the behavioral manifestation of a customer brand relationship with the brand beyond traditional consumptive behavior (So et al., 2012). Absorption is pleasant state which describes the customer as being fully concentrated, happy, and deeply engrossed while playing the role as a customer of the brand (Patterson, Yu, and de Ruyter 2006), and an absorbed customer interacting with the brand or other customers perceives time as passing quickly. Enthusiasm signifies a high level of energy while playing ones role, reflecting the feeling of enthusiasm (So et al., 2012). The literature suggests that the feeling of enthusiasm as a positive affectivity is a central indicator of a customer's engagement with a brand. Attention captures a customer's level of attention toward a brand. A customer who is engaged with a brand is attracted to information related to the brand. For instance, (So et al., 2012) a highly engaged customer of Marriott hotels is likely to focus a greater level of attention toward its brand information, such as news, advertising, or product information. Identification is an individual's perceived oneness with or belongingness to an organization (Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn, 1995; Rather, 2017, Rather and Sharma, 2016a). Identification can help to explain customer's relationships with brands. Strong customer-company relationships are depends on customer's identification with the companies that assist them satisfy one or more important self-definitional needs (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Rather, 2017, Rather and Sharma, 2016a). These five underlying

dimensions collectively reflect the psychological/emotional and behavioral aspects of CE.

Customer Engagement and Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is psychological attachment of an associate exchange partner to the other and is relies on feelings of identification, loyalty, and affiliation (Verhoef, Franses, and Hoekstra, 2002). In addition, affective commitment produces a stickiness that moderates attitudinal and behavioral responses under service failure conditions (Mattila, 2004). The interactivity represent by customer engagement also facilitates the process of building enduring intimate relationships that engender trust and commitment between the customer and the seller or brand, making emotional bonds in relationship exchanges with them (Sashi, 2012). Higher the benefits that result from engagement with an organization's offerings or activities will likely to produce greater affective commitment toward the firm (Bendapudi and Berry, 1997). Other investigators also suggest that customer engagement results in favorable attitudes toward a product, company, or brand, such affective commitment and as trust (Vivek et al., 2012).

Hypothesis Development

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

- H1: There exists a positive relationship between CE and affective commitment.
- H2: CE dimensions namely absorption, enthusiasm, identification, attention and interaction positively influences affective commitment.

Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the influence of CE dimensions on affective commitment.
- To suggest the applicability of CE strategies in hospitality sector of J & K, India.

Research Methodology

Measurement Instrument and Questionnaire Design

The scale adopted for this study was based on the previous work of the author's viz., (So et al., 2012; Sharma & Rather, 2016; Fullerton, 2003). Proper

modifications were made in order to suitable the current research context and purpose. The questionnaire consists of two parts; part first consists of pre coded questions regarding the demographic information like age, gender, education and travel behavior of respondents like nature of visit, frequency of stay at hotel, duration of stay at a hotel etc. The second part consists of customer engagement scale followed of affective commitment scales respectively. Customer engagement was measured with the scale operationalized by the authors (So et al., 2012; Sharma and Rather, 2016). Customer engagement scale is having 25 statements containing five dimensions viz., enthusiasm (5 statements), attention (5 statements), absorption (6 statements), interaction (5 statements) and identification (4 statements). Affective commitment scale was taken from the work of (Fullerton, 2003) contains 4 statements. All the constructs were measured on 7-Point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree).

Sample and Data Collection

The questionnaire was pretested with 20 respondents randomly selected from 10 four and five star hotels to ensure that they understood the meaning and wording of the statements. This was helpful in achieving content validity. The geographical area for data collection was Jammu and Kashmir, India. This site has been chosen because there are five prominent cities situated in the areas namely Gulmargh, Srinagar, Phalgam, Jammu and Katra. Furthermore, all the four and five star hotels of Jammu and Kashmir, India are located in these five particular cities. The information was collected from those who had consumed services of various four and five star hotels located in Jammu and Kashmir, India. A self-administered survey has been conducted in four and five star hotels in Jammu and Kashmir, India.

Sample size is decided according to the number of items to be used to study customer engagement and affective commitment. Every item requires minimum 5 respondents and maximum 10 respondents (Hair et al., 2008). As the study's construct contained 29 items, so it was decided to take 290 as the sample size. The study used simple random sampling techniques to collect the data in four and five star hotels. Out of 290 questionnaires, 230 (79%) completely filled questionnaires were received. A list of four and five star hotels operating in Jammu & Kashmir was procured from the Tourism Departments of Jammu and Kashmir respectively. The hospitality sector was selected for this research because, this sector allows for a high level of interpersonal interaction with the service provider, and it also allows the examination of customers based on their experience with the service provider.

Results of the Study

Description of Demographic and Travel Behaviour of Respondents

The demographic information represents the majority of the customers were male (59%) followed by female (41%). In terms of age (15%) of respondents were between 20-30 years of age, (39%) were between 31-40 years of age, (29%) were between 41-50 years of age and (17%) were above 51 years of age. About the nature of visit, most of the respondents were visited for recreation and entertainment purposes (60%) followed by adventure (27%), religious (8%) and official purposes (4%). The overall results are presented in table 1.

Validity and Reliability

Validity can be measured with the help of the KMO value which is higher or equal to 0.50. They are valid (Hair et al. 2008). KMO value for all the constructs were 0.904; Barlett's test chi-square = 4.893E3, df = 465, p = .000. The results are presented in table 2. Internal reliabilities of expected factors was performed in the form of Cronbach's alpha coefficient and shown in Table 4. For the purpose of this study a cut off value adopted was 0.6 (Hair et al., 2008) lower limit of acceptability and the acceptable benchmark value of item-to-total correlation was set above 0.3 (Hair et al., 2008). Following the decision relating to the internal reliability and in line with Hair et al. (2008), the factors were respecified. The internal consistency of all the factors were computed and shown in Table 4. 2 out of the original 29 variables were deleted, one item from interaction and one item from affective commitment respectively due to low item-total correlations.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 contains the descriptive statistic of the dependent and independent variables. The mean values of the variables of absorption range from (4.56 to 5.83). This means that most of the statements have moderate loadings. The mean values of enthusiasm range from (5.42 to 6.13). This means that most of the statements have greater loadings. The mean values of the variables of attention range from (5.45 to 5.80), this means that most of the respondents have moderate loadings. The mean values of interaction range from (3.61 to 5.87), that give the idea that the most of the respondents was somewhat agree on its variables and the mean values of identification range from (3.83 to

5.38), which also indicated that the respondents was somewhat agree on its variables. With regard the mean values of affective commitment variables which range from (4.63 to 5.77) and have moderate loadings. The results are shown in table 3.

Correlation and Regression Analysis

The results reveal that there is a positive correlation between the customer engagement and affective commitment which supports the H1 as shown in table 5. The study also examined that customer engagement contributes significantly towards affective commitment ($\beta = 0.686$, $F = 202.832$, $p = .000 < .05$) which accepts H2. An R-squared of 0.471 indicates that the customer engagement explained 47.1% of affective commitment. This means absorption, identification, enthusiasm, interaction and attention collectively determine affective commitment. The overall results are presented in table 5 and 6.

Discussion and Implications of the Study

This research contributes to the hospitality literature by investigating the relationship between CE and affective commitment. Descriptive statistic, validity test, reliability test and finally correlation and regression analysis were applied to test the relationships. Descriptive statistics of absorption, enthusiasm, attention, and affective commitment shows that all the variables have moderate to high mean values. The mean values of interaction and identification of the respondents was somewhat agree on its variables. The findings demonstrate that there is a positive and significant correlation between the customer engagement and affective commitment. This study was to examine the influence of customer engagement on affective commitment ($R^2=47.1$) in hospitality sector. The findings of this study illustrate that hospitality sectors need to integrate these different engagement practices in order to win affective commitment or emotional connection of customers. CE proved to be an important determinant of affective commitment as both the constructs influences highly and significantly with each other. Hence, hospitality managers should also personalized services to meet customer needs, wants and desires where necessary. As, Mattila (2006) investigated that affective commitment is developed through the enhancement of emotional bonds with customers. The results shows a significant and positive relationship between customer engagement dimensions and affective commitment that support theoretical studies done by Vivek et al. (2012) and the empirical study done by (Vivek et al., 2014; Rather and Sharma, 2016b).

All of five dimensions of CE were found to be significant in influencing affective commitment. This result recommends that, when attempting to develop CE practices, hotel operators should focus on the enhancement of each of the five CE dimensions to enhance affective commitment, with equal emphasis on absorption, identification, enthusiasm, interaction and attention given their highest beta coefficients as stated in the regression model. The findings demonstrated that absorption, identification, enthusiasm, interaction and attention collectively determine affective commitment. Absorption was also found to have the greatest influence on affective commitment that reveal time flies while interacting, and/or customer's interactions with hotel (staff, guests etc), their immersion, and happiness can affect affective commitment. In addition, identification was found to have a second largest influence on affective commitment which implies personal compliments of customers, customer identity with the brand, success of the hotel from customer's point of view. Enthusiasm dimension was found to have the third greatest influence on affective commitment implying the passion, enthusiasm, excitement and love of customers about hotels can influence affective commitment. This is followed by interaction implying that, in general, customers like to get involved in hotel discussions, they enjoys interacting with like-minded others in the hotel and in general, they like to participate in activities of hotel can also effects affective commitment. Moreover, attention was also found as a significant determinant of affective commitment implying that customer's attention related to the hotel, their learning interests and their concentration about hotel also influences affective commitment. It is also significant to note that all the hypotheses were supported by the analysis. The results imply that customer engagement construct which is related to customer relationship marketing area is proven to be an essential construct to enhance affective commitment in the hospitality sector of Jammu and Kashmir.

This study has theoretically conceptualized and empirically investigated the customer engagement in building affective commitment in the hospitality sector. The results offers customer relationship management knowledge by expanding the current understanding of customer engagement and affective commitment, which suggests that affective commitment, is developed through enhancement of CE dimensions. Research suggests that customer's attitudes, tastes, and preference toward the services offerings are changing. Customers prefer offerings in which active participation, interaction, and possibly co-creation occurs (Styven, 2010). However, given that the conceptual and practical research work investigated in this study was grounded within the relationship marketing literature, it is expected that the results are broadly applicable to a relatively wide range of service sectors. The practical implication to hospitality managers is that, they must place

a lot more emphasis on the building and maintenance the valued based relationships through emotional attachments apart from customer evaluations and customer experiences. Further, hotels must allocate resources effectively to foster customer engagement, build positive customer identity, generate customer absorption, enhance customer interaction and participation, develop customer enthusiasm and induce customer attention derived from engagement enabled strategies to enhance affective commitment with their customers. In developing the integrative research work of CE and affective commitment, this investigation provides vital insight in the process of building successful customer relationships which remains a fundamental objective for the hospitality sector. Therefore, the results of this study generates insights for building the customer relationships encompassing customer engagement practices reflected by absorption, enthusiasm, attention, interaction and identification and their influence on affective commitment in hospitality sector.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The results of this study need to be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, since simple random sampling was used in this study, results cannot be generalized. For example the findings should be interpreted with caution when applied to different industries or different category of hotels. This study was conducted on four and five star hotel guests only. Future studies might investigate hotels from different categories. Restaurants, airlines and attractions might also be areas of future study.

Despite its limitations, this investigation suggests several areas for future research. In testing the role of customer engagement in developing affective commitment, the study has addressed calls for more research on customer engagement to further the understanding of this emerging construct (Bolton 2011; MSI 2016). Ramaswamy's (2009) notion of "engagement platforms" provides a useful avenue to explore managerial applications of the consumer engagement concept. Literature suggests that customer engagement may affect aspects such as customer loyalty, customer equity, long-term reputation of the firm, brand recognition, and financial outcomes (Sharma and Rather, 2016; Rather and Sharma, 2016b; van Doorn et al. 2010). At last, future studies should also examine the moderating role of variables such as gender, income, education, and age, frequency/stay at hotels in building customer engagement, affective commitment (Rather, 2018; Rather and Sharma, 2016b).

Table 1: Demographics and Travel Behaviour of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
Male	135	59	Matriculation	8	4
Female	95	41	Graduation	73	32
Age			Post-graduation	136	59
20-30	34	15	Others	13	5
31-40	91	39	Nationality of customers		
41-50	67	29	Indian	131	57
Above 51	38	17	USA	33	14
Income (annual) INR lakhs			UK	15	6.5
Below	22	9	Russia	13	5.7
5 lakh – 10	52	23	Dubai	8	3.5
10 lakh – 15	39	17	Bangladesh	8	3.5
Above 15	117	51	Sri Lanka	6	2.8
			Saudi Arab	4	1.8
			Canada	3	1.3
			France	3	1.3
			Denmark	3	1.3
			Indonesia	3	1.3
Travel Behaviour of Customers					
	Nature of visit		Star category		
Recreation & Entertainment	140	60	Five star		
Adventure	61	27		140	61
Religious	18	8		90	39
Official visit	9	4			
Others	2	1			

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.904
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4.893E3
	df	465
	Sig.	.000

Table 3: Customer Engagement (Descriptive Statistics)

VARIABLES	M	SD	t	P (two tailed)
Absorption*				
When I am interacting with this hotel, I forget everything else around me	4.56	1.20	57.32	0.000
Time flies when I am interacting with the hotel	5.00	1.12	67.32	0.000
When I am interacting with hotel, I get carried away	4.97	1.07	69.82	0.000
When interacting with the hotel, it is difficult to detach myself	4.58	1.19	58.18	0.000
In my interaction with this hotel, I am immersed	5.40	0.84	97.01	0.000
When interacting with the hotel intensely, I feel happy	5.83	0.64	137.72	0.000
Enthusiasm*				
I am passionate about this hotel	5.42	1.00	82.03	0.000
I am enthusiastic about this hotel	5.68	0.93	92.56	0.000
I feel excited about this hotel	5.97	0.68	132.02	0.000
I love this hotel	6.13	0.62	149.39	0.000
I am heavily into this hotel	5.63	0.67	126.70	0.000
Attention*				
I pay a lot of attention to anything about this hotel	5.80	0.83	105.91	0.000
I like to learn more about this hotel	5.70	0.88	97.42	0.000
Anything related to this hotel grabs my attention	5.80	0.82	107.27	0.000
I concentrate a lot on this hotel	5.45	0.75	110.17	0.000

I like learning more about this hotel	5.73	0.86	101.07	0.000
Interaction*				
In general, I like to get involved in hotel discussions	4.90	1.35	54.85	0.000
I am someone who enjoys interacting with like-minded others in the hotel	5.86	0.87	102.10	0.000
I am someone who likes actively participating in hotel discussions	3.61	1.08	50.41	0.000
In general, I thoroughly enjoy exchanging ideas with other people in the hotel	5.87	0.81	108.86	0.000
I often participate in activities of this hotel	4.99	1.26	59.87	0.000
Identification				
When someone criticizes this hotel, it feels like a personal insult	3.83	1.16	49.89	0.000
When I talk about this hotel, I usually say “we” rather than “they”	4.22	1.15	55.59	0.000
This hotel successes are my successes	4.57	1.10	62.85	0.000
When someone praises this hotel, it feels like a personal compliment	5.38	0.70	115.57	0.000
Affective commitment*				
I feel a strong sense of identification with this hotel	5.77	0.74	117.93	0.000
I am emotionally attached to this hotel	5.07	1.01	75.52	0.000
I feel like part of a family as a customer of this hotel	5.58	0.88	95.51	0.000
This hotel has a great deal of personal meaning for me	4.63	1.13	61.81	0.000

Table 4: Internal Consistency and Final Revised structure

Variables	Item-total-correlation	α - value	Decision
Absorption		0.903	Retained
When I am interacting with this hotel, I forget everything else around me	0.756		
Time flies when I am interacting with the hotel	0.837		
When I am interacting with hotel, I get carried away	0.791		

Variables	Item-total-correlation	α - value	Decision
When interacting with the hotel, it is difficult to detach myself	0.804		
In my interaction with this hotel, I am immersed	0.677		
When interacting with the hotel intensely, I feel happy	0.615		
Enthusiasm		0.872	Retained
I am passionate about this hotel	0.740		
I am enthusiastic about this hotel	0.797		
I feel excited about this hotel	0.703		
I love this hotel	0.674		
I am heavily into this hotel	0.663		
Attention		0.861	Retained
I pay a lot of attention to anything about this hotel	0.680		
I like to learn more about this hotel	0.699		
Anything related to this hotel grabs my attention	0.717		
I concentrate a lot on this hotel	0.582		
I like learning more about this hotel	0.718		
Interaction		0.842	Retained
In general, I like to get involved in hotel discussions	0.749		
I am someone who enjoys interacting with like-minded others in the hotel	0.636		
In general, I thoroughly enjoy exchanging ideas with other people in the hotel	0.677		
I often participate in activities of this hotel	0.745		
Identification		0.822	Retained
When someone criticizes this hotel, it feels like a personal insult	0.725		
When I talk about this hotel, I usually say “we” rather than “they”	0.674		
This hotel successes are my successes	0.630		
When someone praises this hotel, it feels like a personal compliment	0.619		
Affective commitment		0.785	Retained

Variables	Item-total-correlation	α - value	Decision
I feel a strong sense of identification with this hotel	0.636		
I am emotionally attached to this hotel	0.645		
I feel like part of a family as a customer of this hotel	0.623		

Note: Two items were deleted due to the low item-total correlations.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis

	Customer Engagement	Affective Commitment
Customer Engagement	1	0.686**
Affective Commitment	0.686**	1

Note : **Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed).

Table 6: Regression Analysis

Dependent variable	Independent variable	R2	Adjusted R ²	F	Beta	P-Value
AC	ATT	0.210	0.206	60.452	0.458	0.000*
AC	ENU	0.283	0.280	90.131	0.532	0.000*
AC	ABS	0.335	0.332	114.869	0.579	0.000*
AC	INT	0.263	0.260	81.370	0.513	0.000*
Dependent variable	Independent variable	R2	Adjusted R ²	F	Beta	P-Value
AC	IDN	0.324	0.321	109.269	0.569	0.000*
AC	CE	0.471	0.468	202.832	0.686	0.000*

Note. CE = customer engagement; AC = affective commitment, ABS= Absorption, ENU= Enthusiasm, ATT= Attention, INT= Interaction, IDN= Identification. R²= R square, (*p < .05).

References

- Bendapudi, N., & Berry, L. L. (1997). Customers motivations for maintaining relationships with service providers. *Journal of retailing*, 73(1), 15-37.
- Bhattacharya, C. B., Rao, H., & Glynn, M. A. (1995). Understanding the bond of identification: An investigation of its correlates among art museum members. *The Journal of Marketing*, 59(4), 46-57.

- Bhattacharya, C. B., & Sen, S. (2003). Consumer company identification: A framework for understanding consumers relationships with companies. *Journal of Marketing*, 67(2), 76-88.
- Bijmolt, T. H., Leeflang, P. S., Block, F., Eisenbeiss, M., Hardie, B. G., Lemmens, A., & Saffert, P. (2010). Analytics for customer engagement. *Journal of Service Research*, 13(3), 341-356.
- Bolton, R. N. (2011). Comment: Customer engagement. *Journal of Service Research*, 14(3), 272-74.
- Bowden, J. L. (2009b). The process of customer engagement: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 17(1), 63-74.
- Brodie, R. J., Hollebeek, L. D., Juric, B., & Ilic, A. (2011). Customer engagement: Conceptual domain, fundamental propositions, and implications for research. *Journal of Service Research*, 14(3), 252-271.
- Brodie, R. J., Ilic, A., Juric, B., & Hollebeek, L. D. (2013). Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: An exploratory analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(1), 105-114.
- Economist Intelligence Unit. (2007). Beyond loyalty: Meeting the challenge of customer engagement. (Part II), 20. Retrieved from http://www.eiu.com/site_info.asp?info_name=eiu_Adobe_Beyond_loyalty.
- Fullerton, G. (2003). When does commitment lead to loyalty? *Journal of Service Research*, 5(4), 333-344.
- Gambetti, R. C., Graffigna, G., (2010). The concept of engagement: A systematic analysis of the ongoing marketing debate. *International Journal of Marketing Research*, 52(6), 801-826.
- Gummerus, J., Liljander, V., Weman, E., & Pihlstrom, M. (2012). Customer engagement in a Facebook brand community. *Management Research Review*, 35(9), 857-877.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L. (2008). *Multivariate data analysis* (Vol. 6). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

- Higgins, E. T., & Scholer, A. A. (2009). Engaging the consumer: the science and art of the value creation process. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 19*(2), 100-114.
- Hollebeek, L. D. (2009, November). Demystifying customer engagement: Toward the development of a conceptual model. In *Actas Congreso ANZMAC*.
- Hollebeek, L. D. (2011a). Demystifying customer brand engagement: Exploring the loyalty nexus. *Journal of Marketing Management, 27*(7-8), 785-807.
- Hollebeek, L. D. (2011b). Exploring customer brand engagement: definition and themes. *Journal of Strategic Marketing, 19*(7), 555-573.
- Iqbal, M. (2011). An inquiry into “customer engagement” – making the abstract concrete.,
- Kumar, V., Aksoy, L., Donkers, B., Venkatesan, R., Wiesel, T., & Tillmanns, S. (2010). Undervalued or overvalued customers: capturing total customer engagement value. *Journal of Service Research, 13*(3), 297-310.
- Leckie, C., Nyadzayo, M. W., & Johnson, L. W. (2018). Promoting brand engagement behaviors and loyalty through perceived service value and innovativeness. *Journal of Services Marketing*. (In press).
- Marketing Science Institute. (2016). *Research Priorities, Marketing Science Institute*. Boston, MA.
- Mattila, A. (2004). The impact of service failures on customer loyalty: The moderating role of affective commitment. *International Journal of Service Industry Management, 15*(2), 134-149.
- Mattila, A. (2006). The impact of affective commitment and hotel type in influencing guests share of wallet. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing, 15*, 55-68.
- Mollen, A., & Wilson, H. (2010). Engagement, telepresence and interactivity in online consumer experience: Reconciling scholastic and managerial perspectives. *Journal of Business Research, 919-925*.

- Ostrom, A. L., Bitner, M. J., Brown, S.W., Burkhard, K. A., Goul, M., Smith-Daniels, V., & Rabinovich, E. (2010). Moving forward and making a difference: research priorities for the science of service. *Journal of Service Research*, 13(1), 4-36.
- Patterson, P., Yu, T., & De Ruyter, K. (2006, December). Understanding customer engagement in services. In *Advancing theory, maintaining relevance, proceedings of ANZMAC 2006 conference, Brisbane* (pp. 4-6).
- Ramaswamy V. (2009). Leading the transformation to co-creation of value. *Strategy & Leadership*, 37(2), 32-37.
- Rather, R. A. (2017). Investigating the impact of customer brand identification on hospitality brand loyalty: A social identity perspective. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 1-27.
- Rather, R. A. (2018). Consequences of consumer engagement in service marketing: An empirical exploration. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 1-20.
- Rather, R. A., & Sharma, J. (2016a). Brand loyalty with hospitality brands: the role of customer brand identification, brand satisfaction and brand commitment. *Pacific Business Review International*, 1(3), 76-86.
- Rather, R. A., & Sharma, J. (2016b). Customer engagement in strengthening customer loyalty in hospitality sector. *South Asian Journal of Tourism and Heritage*, 9(2), 62-81.
- Rather, R. A., & Sharma, J. (2017a). Customer engagement for evaluating customer relationships in hotel industry. *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation*, 8(1), 1-13.
- Rather, R. A., & Sharma, J. (2017b). The effects of customer satisfaction and commitment on customer loyalty: Evidence from the hotel industry. *Journal of Hospitality Application & Research*, 12(2), 41-60.
- Roy, S. K., Balaji, M. S., Soutar, G., Lassar, W. M., & Roy, R. (2018). Customer engagement behavior in individualistic and collectivistic markets. *Journal of Business Research*, (In press).
- Sashi, C. M. (2012). Customer engagement, buyer-seller relationships, and social media. *Management Decision*, 50(2), 253-272.

- So, K. K. F., King, C., & Sparks, B. (2012). Customer engagement with tourism brands: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 38(3), 304-329.
- Sharma, J., & Rather, R. A. (2015). Understanding the customer experience: an exploratory study of “A” category hotels. *International Journal on Customer Relations*, 3(2), 21-31.
- Sharma, J., & Rather, R. A. (2016). The role of customer engagement in ensuring sustainable development in hospitality sector. *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Systems*, 9(1), 33-43.
- Styven, M. E. (2010). The need to touch: exploring the link between music involvement and tangibility preference. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(9/10), 1088-1094.
- Van Doorn, J., Lemon, K. N., Mittal, V., Nass, S., Pirner, P., Doreen, P., & Verhoef, P. C. (2010). Customer engagement behavior: Theoretical foundations and research directions. *Journal of Service Research*, 13(3), 253-266.
- Verhoef, P. C., Franses, P. H., & Hoekstra, J. C. (2002). The effect of relational constructs on customer referrals and number of services purchased from a multiservice provider: Does age of relationship matter. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 30(3), 202-216.
- Verhoef, P. C., Reinartz, W. J., & Krafft, M. (2010). Customer engagement as a new perspective in customer management. *Journal of Service Research*, 13(3), 247-252.
- Vivek, S. D., Beatty, S. E., & Morgan, R. M. (2012). Customer engagement: Exploring customer relationships beyond purchase. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 20(2), 127-145.
- Vivek, S. D., Beatty, S. E., Dalela, V., & Morgan, R. M. (2014). A generalized multidimensional scale for measuring customer engagement. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 22(4), 401-420.
- Wagner, C., & Majchrzak, A. (2007). Enabling customer-centricity using wikis and the wiki way. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 23(3), 17-43.
- Wang, Y., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2004). Towards understanding members general participation in and active contribution to an online travel community. *Tourism Management*, 25(6), 709-22.