

Article

Social and Cultural Experiences with Loyalty towards Hotel Services: The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction

Olaleke Oluseye Ogunnaike ¹, Solomon Agada Agada ², Oghenechuko Salome Ighomereho ² and Taiye Tairat Borishade ^{1,*}

¹ Department of Business Management, Covenant University, Ota 112104, Nigeria; olaleke.ogunnaike@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

² Department of Business Administration and Marketing, Faculty of Management Sciences, Redeemer's University, Akoda 232101, Nigeria; agadas@run.edu.ng (S.A.A.); ighomerehoo@run.edu.ng (O.S.I.)

* Correspondence: taiye.borishade@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

Abstract: The increasing role of the customer experience, based on the feelings the customers acquire from the interaction with a firm's product and services, has been considered an effective influence on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customer satisfaction also plays a linking role in the performance–loyalty link. This study, therefore, investigated the effect of the social- and cultural-experience dimensions on loyalty towards hotel services, with customer satisfaction playing a mediating role. Based on a cross-sectional survey of 532 customers of three-star hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria, the analysis was carried out with partial least squares structural equation modelling. The results showed that social and cultural experience jointly account for about 38% of the variance in consumer loyalty, customer satisfaction has a moderate impact size on loyalty, and social and cultural experiences have a moderate and low effect size on customer loyalty, respectively. The study further established an indirect and significant effect to show that customer satisfaction partially mediates the association between cultural experience and loyalty and the association between social experience and loyalty. Consequently, since the hotel service environment provides the types of experiences that customers expect, sustainability strategies based on the aspects of the hotel service environment would provide memorable experiences for guests' satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, this study has both theoretical and practical implications for researchers and practitioners, by suggesting additional dimensions to the traditional customer-experience realms.

Keywords: customer experience; social experience; cultural experiences; customer satisfaction

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1. Introduction

Customer experience has increasingly been recommended as a strategy to measure business performance indices such as customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customer experience involves the feelings customers acquire from the various interactions with the organization and the aspects of the firm's performance. Pine and Gilmore (2011) [1] suggest that business organisations need to identify aspects of their business that can create memorable experiences for their customers, as this can help them achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty. Jain, Aagja, and Bagdare [2] suggest that delivering definite customer experiences by a business is an effective strategy for achieving key performance indices such as competitive improvement, customer fulfillment, distinction, loyalty, image, and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. The hotel-services sector provides a very good opportunity within the overall hospitality industry to generate customer experiences that can effectively influence customer satisfaction and loyalty. Sustainability aspects of the hotel-service environment, which comprises the atmospherics or servicescapes, have been identified as effective means by which hotels create memorable customer experiences for

their guests. Servicescapes includes a hotel's architectural dimensions such as style, layout, colours, lighting, and furnishings [3]. Based on these attributes, a hotel derives social and cultural experiences that enable diverse consumers to enjoy social relations as well as cultural artefacts that have a sustainable impact on society.

Hotels primarily offer accommodation for purposes such as lodging, resting, dining, seminars, conferences, meeting venues, and entertainment [4]. In Nigeria, the hotel-services sector has been recognized to make significant contribution to economic growth. In terms of growth, the [5] indicates that accommodation and food services developed by 1.66% yearly in the last quarter of 2021, and this growth exemplifies an upsurge of 2.45% points when compared to the growth in 2020, which was negative at −0.79%, while the overall contribution to the annual gross domestic product was 0.86%, indicating a gradual recovery due to the decrease in contribution caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is an increasing trend in the current marketing literature to assess customer relationships with the business organization from the viewpoint of experience. Customer experience is regarded as a multidimensional concept and reflects different experiences from different contexts [6,7]. Previous hotel-services research has investigated customer experience with varied dimensions, and the issue of conflation of terms with regards to customer experience has been indicated in the literature [8]. Consequently, specific experience with respect to hotel services such as social and cultural experiences have rarely been examined in connection with customer satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, customer experience has been suggested as a better predictor of customer fulfilment and loyalty. However, the direct and indirect relationship of these variables is also a gap that is missing in the literature, especially with respect to hotel services. This is probably because the relationship is not as specific and clear as imagined. Kirkby and Scott (2003) [9] argue that although loyal customers can be satisfied, satisfied customers may not necessarily become loyal. In other words, the transition from satisfaction based on the firm's performance strategies does not automatically create loyalty outcomes. Customer satisfaction has, therefore, been suggested as an effective element in the performance–loyalty link, thus mediating the connection between customer experience and loyalty. The focus is on three-star hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria. This category of hotels has been regarded as the standard hotels that cover a major part of the hotel-services sector of the economy, as they are more accessible and affordable [10]. The luxury classes of hotels, such as the four- and five-star hotels, are fewer in number and contribute less than three-star hotels to the gross domestic product (GDP), while budget hotels are expected to possess a limited capability to generate experiential effects. This study, therefore, investigates the extent to which customer satisfaction will play a mediating role in linking specific hotel services' experiences, such as social and cultural experience, with loyalty.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Customer Experience

Insight into the enormous studies on customer experience reveals that customer experience is recognized as a multidimensional concept [6,7]. From the perspective of the "Experience Economy", customer experience is delineated in four dimensions that include escapist, entertainment, education, and esthetic dimensions. Other authors, such as [11], identified customer-experience dimensions as composure, moment-of-truth, and merchandise experience in hotel operations. Schmitt (2010) [12] suggests five experiential modules that include feel, sense, think, relate, and act experience. Schmitt (2010) [12] argues that these modules represent the opinions, emotional states, and beliefs that customers have when they meet a firm's products and services as well as the recollection of such involvements, which may be evoked by packaging, promotion, in-store dealings, procedures, and offline or online activities. Amoah, Radder, and Eyk (2016) [13] indicate that experience quality consists of holistic and affective dimensions, especially in the context of the hospitality industry. These dimensions can better evaluate customer experience and

satisfaction than the concept of service quality, because the concept of customer experience goes beyond the notion of service quality [14].

- Customer Experience of Hotel-Service Environment and Sustainability

The hotel-service environment encompasses the elements that serve as an opportunity for management to create customer experiences. Pine and Gilmore (1998) [15] suggest that hotels should identify aspects of their services or memorabilia that can create memorable customer experiences. In view of this, evidence indicates that some hotels have made efforts in creating sustainable environments for their customers' green experiences, based on the hotel atmospherics or servicescapes. Servicescapes include architectural dimensions such as style, layout, colours, lighting, and furnishings [3]. Consequently, the servicescapes attributes of a hotel, such as the hotel lobby and other public spaces, have been suggested as very influential in driving hotel guests' patronage [16]. Yu, Li, and Jai (2017) [17] argue that hotels' sustainable green practices influence customer satisfaction, especially when guests' awareness is promoted in the hotel's environment. Similarly, Baker, Davis, and Weaver (2014) [18] argue that for guests who care about environmental sustainability, their high awareness of green practices can positively influence their loyalty or revisit intentions. Preziosi, Acampora, Lucchetti and Merli (2022) [19] find that eco-labelled hotels' green practices, with respect to food and staff elements, partially influenced guests' satisfaction and intention to revisit those hotels. However, they equally suggested the need for proper information to be provided as an integral part of service quality, when hotels deem it necessary to offer services with green attributes. Kim and Kim (2022) [20] establish the link between attributes of the hotel services' environment and the impact on customer satisfaction and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Servicescapes and other memorabilia identified as crucial to customer experience include location, service, food, and beverage.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The concept of experience has entailed a conflation in the definition of terms that delineate the meaning of customer experience, which has resulted in the diminishing of commercial interest in espousing experience marketing [8,21]. Moreover, there is the post-modern approach that suggests the need for businesses to realize the rapid departure of customers' preferences from the rational value of products, evolving rapidly towards products and services driven by emotions and sensitive experiences [22].

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) by [23] suggests the framework where social and cultural values predict consumption behaviour of product and services. The theory, therefore, explains the extent to which a combination of beliefs, idiosyncratic norms, and observed behavioural mechanisms influence the satisfaction and loyalty towards hotel services. The social and cultural beliefs and norms, as well as the consumers' perceived control of resources, constitute elements of experience that can significantly determine customer behaviour towards hotel services. Behavior is explained as the impulsive feature of attitude that deals with the probability or propensity of someone to take a certain action or relate in a certain way to a product or service [24].

Moreover, customer satisfaction, as espoused by the expectancy disconfirmation theory (EDT), suggests the performance–loyalty link. Based on the expectation-disconfirmation theory, Oliver (1997) [25] suggests satisfaction has a mediating influence between service quality and service loyalty. Disconfirmation of beliefs about a hotel service depends on the judgments or evaluations the customer makes, in terms of comparison between their expectations and the definite performance of the service. The EDT suggests the hypothesis that expectations would directly influence performance and indirectly influence post-purchase behaviours such as satisfaction and loyalty. However, positive or negative disconfirmation of beliefs is based on satisfaction, such that satisfaction would tend to mediate the relationship between social and cultural experiences and loyalty. Yuksel and

Yuksel (2001) [26] confirm that the EDT has developed the dominant structure engaged in the calculation of customer satisfaction within the tourism and hospitality sectors.

3. Hypotheses

3.1. Social Experience and Loyalty

From the holistic viewpoint, social experience can be conceptualized from the interactive and relational behaviours of the customers. Safrona (2014) [27] argues that social experience is the product of socialization arising from emotional relationships due to interaction with people. The customer social experience involves the feeling of community and relational value the customer gets from the patronage of the hotel services. In hotel services, social experience is related to guests who seek relational experiences to mingle with other people. This can occur, for example, when individuals visit the cafes to be seen by others and to interact with individuals, not only for the food [1,15].

Ugwuanyi, Ehimen, and Uduji, (2021) [28] investigated hotel guests' experience, in relation to customer satisfaction and revisit intentions with respect to four-star hotels in Asaba, Delta State, South-South Nigeria. According to [28], the findings of the study revealed that interpersonal experience had a progressive and noteworthy effect on customer satisfaction, but an undesirable connection was found between interpersonal experience and return intent, while the direct connection between customer satisfaction and return intent was discovered to be significant.

Social experience in hotel services has been identified as having gender inclinations. For instance, Sanchez, Vincente, Jose, and Moliner (2010) [29] found that relational experiences with the staff in hotel services have a greater predictive power for women's satisfaction and loyalty than for men's satisfaction. Similarly, Bauer (2001) [30] reveals that interaction with fellow passengers was the second-most-enjoyed activity onboard a cruise-touring service.

When the service is staged, a feeling of community is expected among the customers that participate in the service. The customers would want a type of experience that casts the service stage as a community that possesses or creates relational value. Arnould and Price (1993) [31] found that a feeling of "communita" with other tourists and guides was one component of an extraordinary river-rafting experience. Schmitt's (1999) [32] experiential-marketing modules classified social experience within the "Relate Experience" marketing schema. Relate Experience can, therefore, be regarded as the hotel's customer feelings of the ideal self and the perception of positive self-esteem by other individuals such as friends, family, spouse, and colleagues [32], when a customer patronizes a hotel. The social elements of experience go beyond the hotel service and do connect the customer to a broader social system, such as country or subculture.

Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1989) [33] note that consumers tend to grant "sacred status" to consumption objects that are value expressive, in order to celebrate their connection to society and particular individuals. Schmitt (1999) [32] argues that such a development creates a paradigm shift for firms to broaden the concept of a category, by "moving over" to examining the meaning of specific consumption in its broader sociocultural context or following the sociocultural consumption vector (SCCV) to create a better meaning or experience for the customer.

Belk et al. (1989) [33] argue that an advancement of this concept can provide social cohesion and integration for society as well as a meaningful life, stability, joy, and ecstasy through connection for the customer. Hailey (2010) [34] suggests that social experience can be enhanced in the hotel industry through the use of social-media tools. Social-media tools have been adjudged as effective tools that provide social-interaction context through online reviews, which can influence initial customer buying decisions and loyalty [35].

Specific studies on hotel guests' social experience are scarce, however, so this study proposed the hypotheses that:

Hypothesis H1. *Social experience significantly influences customer satisfaction towards hotel services in Lagos State, Nigeria.*

Hypothesis H2. *Social experience significantly influences customer loyalty towards hotel services in Lagos State, Nigeria.*

3.2. Cultural Experience and Loyalty

Culture has been generally defined along key concepts of consumer behaviour and has been suggested as a major influence on consumer behaviour towards product and services [36]. Parhizgar (2001) [37] defines culture “as patterned set of behaviors, knowledge, values, beliefs, experiences and traditions shared by a particular group of people”. In the context of national culture, Peterson and Smith (1997) [38] define national culture as “the set of values and beliefs shared by people within a nation”, thereby suggesting the tendency for a general culture. However, even though there is a national shared culture, the existence of a set of distinct and unique ethnic subcultures of individual groups, with its personal attribute of learned behaviors, language, rules for behavior, values, and customs, cannot be underestimated [39,40]. Loach, Kirsten; Rowley, Jennifer; and Griffiths, Jillian (2017) [41] indicate that cultural memorabilia and artefacts from a culture tends to play a sustainable role in modern society. Consequently, such items can provide cultural experience for customers, as they represent valuable relics that can be displayed for customers to remember past stories, skills, and knowledge of society that people can learn from [41,42].

Koc (2019) [43] suggests the creation of social relations based on the culture of people, and they argue that the presence of cultural elements among customers and employees can have significant impact on the efficient handling of service deliveries, customer satisfaction, and service quality in the hospitality industry. Moreover, evidence exists that intercultural sensitivity supported by the staff’s cultural diversity can be a significant source of capability for the hospitality and tourism business, especially with respect to care for international customers [44,45].

Hotel customers tend to have unique expectations from the services offered by hotels that will give them memorable cultural experiences [34]. Torres, Fu, and Lehto (2014) [46] suggest that guests are likely to express their personal experience as a reflection of their cultural backgrounds, and, as such, hoteliers should always strive to provide unique services to satisfy customers from all cultural backgrounds. De Mooij (2011) [47] argues that culture has an important influence on wants, drives, beliefs, and attitudes, which are all drivers of consumer behaviour. In view of this, most marketing strategies in the areas of advertising, branding, and retail strategies reflect the definite standards of the people [48]. A content analysis by [46], of the different perspectives of customers from across different cultures such as those of Europe, the United States, Canada, and South America towards hotel services, suggested that cross-cultural insights about customer experience of hotel service can assist in customer delight and loyalty.

In this study, therefore, cultural experience is expected to impact significantly on guest satisfaction and loyalty. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis H3. *Cultural experience significantly influences customer satisfaction towards hotel services in Lagos State, Nigeria.*

Hypothesis H4. *Cultural experience significantly influences customer loyalty towards hotel services in Lagos State, Nigeria.*

3.3. Customer Experience and Satisfaction and Loyalty

The presumed relationship between customer experience and customer satisfaction and loyalty in the marketing literature is imperative for the evaluation of the performance

of the hotel-services sector. Paul, Bendle, Pfeifer, and Reibstein (2010) [49] argue that understanding customer satisfaction will lead to improved product offerings and organizational performance. Caruana (2002) [50] argues that customer satisfaction and loyalty are an outcome of customer experience. Shankar (2003) [51] suggests that customer experience conveys customer satisfaction, which afterwards results in brand allegiance. Similarly, Ladipo, Agada, and Ighomereho (2020) [52] identify age, education, and occupation as significant moderators in establishing the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Borishade, Worlu, Ogunnaike, Aka, and Dirisu (2021) [53] examined the mechanistic and humanistic elements of customer experience among students and found that mechanistic elements such as comfortable and clean rooms tend to ensure students' retention by the institution, while the humanistic elements such as the respect and courtesy of the staff as well as friendly behaviour significantly influenced the willingness of the students to recommend the institution to prospective students in the future. Humanistic clues, which are likened to social experience factors such as friendliness of staff, tone of responsive behaviours, and care, were also identified by [54], to significantly influence loyalty towards hospital services in Lagos State. Customer satisfaction is ingrained with emotional and cognitive attributes about a service experience, such that customers who rate a service high on the satisfaction-performance metric are likely to become loyal or return and be willing to recommend or evangelise about the company's product or service [49].

This relationship also suggests the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between customer experience and loyalty. Khan, Garg, and Rahman (2015) [11] found that a positive relationship exists between customer satisfaction, loyalty, and experience towards hotel services. Amoah, Radder, and Eyk (2016) [13] argue that customer satisfaction is the outcome of improved service quality and memorable experiences that can lead to the attraction of new customers and the loyalty of existing ones, especially with regard to hotel services. We, therefore, hypothesize as follows:

Hypothesis H5: *Customer satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between social and cultural experiences and loyalty towards hotel services in Lagos State, Nigeria.*

4. Methodology

4.1. Data Collection

Descriptive research design using cross-sectional survey was adopted for the purpose of the study. Quantitative approach was employed to deductively test relevant theories based on the theoretical framework [55]. This involves collection of data using a self-administered structured questionnaire involving 47 three-star hotels in Lagos State (Supplementary Materials). Lagos State is regarded as the commercial hub of the Nigerian economy and hosts the largest number of hotels in Nigeria. Three-star hotels are the most populous mid-class hotels, which are city hotels that are also affordable and provide comfort with some medium elements of the luxury hotels such as ensuite rooms, television, room service, and well-trained staff.

- **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

A sample of 532 customers was selected based on purposive sampling of hotels in eleven randomly selected local government areas (LGAs) in Lagos State. The sample elements were adult male and female customers who patronize the hotels for various purposes. This includes those customers who come to the hotels for both relaxation and lodging. The questionnaire was distributed to customers physically on a convenience-sampling basis in the selected hotels, through the hotels staff such as the hotel managers and supervisors in the concierge sections of the hotels. The employed convenience-sampling method entailed the use of the researchers or research assistants to administer the questionnaire to guests who were willing and easily accessible in the selected hotels at the

reception hall, bar, and restaurant, while other guests were given a copy in their rooms by either the porters in the concierge section or the in-room waiters.

4.2. Measurement

The constructs of social experience, cultural experience, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty were measured on a five-point Likert scale. The items generated were contained in a self-administered structured questionnaire which was tested for validity and reliability. The measures of social and cultural experience consist of 10 items adapted from the experiential marketing scale by [56], based on [32] strategic-experience modules (SEM). Customer satisfaction comprised of 6 items adapted from [25,57,58] Customer loyalty comprised of 5 items adapted from the customer-loyalty scale generated by [59].

The appraisal of the evaluation scales for reliability and validity purposes as well as the test of the hypothesized associations, as signified in the conceptual model, were showed using SEM-PLS Version 3. With a sample size of 532 respondents, the cases were considered adequate for structural-equation-model analysis, in accordance with previous suggestions [60]. The measurement model was initially appraised with confirmatory-factor analysis (CFA) and the postulated associations tested with structural-equation model.

5. Results

5.1. Measurement-Model Assessment

The result of the measurement model was used to measure the latent or composite variables in this study [61]. The model comprises four components (social experience [SOCEX], cultural experience [CULEX], customer satisfaction [CUSSAT], and customer loyalty [CUSLOY]), with reflected measurement models. All of the objects employed in this investigation had acceptable outer loadings. Table 1 shows the composite reliability value for the constructs: 0.744 for CULEX, 0.761 for SOCEX, 0.739 for CUSSAT, and 0.764 for CUSLOY. This indicates that all four of the variables have a good degree of internal-consistency reliability (>0.70). Table 1 also demonstrated that the average variance extracted (AVE) value for all the constructs is above 0.5. Hence, the value of 0.618 for CULEX, 0.626 for SOCEX, 0.587 for CUSSAT and 0.666 for CUSLOY demonstrate an extraordinary level of convergent validity, with all values over 0.5.

Table 1. Measurement model for the constructs.

Construct(s)	Standardize Loadings	Alpha	CR (>0.70)	AVE (>0.50)
Cultural Experience				
CULEX1	0.706	0.726	0.744	0.618
CULEX2	0.789			
CULEX3	0.795			
Social Experience				
SOCEX1	0.730	0.720	0.761	0.626
SOCEX2	0.696			
SOCEX3	0.731			
SOCEX4	0.728			
SOCEX5	0.639			
Customer Satisfaction				
CUSSAT1	0.701	0.785	0.739	0.587
CUSSAT2	0.711			
CUSSAT4	0.639			
Customer Loyalty				
CUSLOY1	0.712	0.710	0.764	0.666
CUSLOY2	0.790			

CUSLOY3

0.807

Source: PLS-SEM statistical output for the study.

The [62] criterion was used to determine discriminant validity to indicate the distinctiveness of the constructs. Consequently, the square root of the AVE of the reflective constructs CUSLOY, CUSSAT, CULEX, and SOCEX is larger than the corresponding latent variables correlations, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Discriminant validity.

Construct	Customer Loyalty	Customer Satisfaction	Cultural Experience	Social Experience
Customer Loyalty	0.852	-		
Customer Satisfaction	0.821	0.818	-	
Cultural Experience	0.628	0.637	0.783	-
Social Experience	0.620	0.678	0.707	0.711

Source: PLS-SEM statistical outputs for the study.

5.2. Structural-Model Evaluation

In order to show the hypothesized relationships and dependencies based on path analysis, a structural model has been employed. The model shows that the constructs' measurements utilized in this investigation are valid and reliable. Consequently, in the following phase, PLS-SEM is used to evaluate the factor structure. However, before that, it is crucial to check the structural model's level of collinearity [63]. Collinearity was, therefore, assessed while examining the structural model. However, since SmartPLS does not produce VIF and tolerance values, collinearity was assessed using SPSS. Table 3, therefore, shows the assessment of multicollinearity among the variables. The table shows no evidence of multicollinearity, as the tolerance values are well over the 0.2 threshold and the VIF values are below the 5.0 threshold.

Table 3. Assessment of multicollinearity.

CUSLOY as Target Variable (DV)			CUSSAT as Target Variable (DV)		
Constructs	Tolerance (>0.2)	VIF (<5)	Constructs	Tolerance (>0.2)	VIF (<5)
Cultural Experience	0.362	2.9	Social Experience	0.539	1.826
Social Experience	0.528	2.4	Cultural Experience	0.539	1.826
Customer Satisfaction	0.472	1.7		-	

Source: PLS-SEM statistical outputs.

5.2.1. Path Coefficient and Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The statistical significance of the structural model link is revealed by the coefficients of the direct and indirect pathways (Table 4). The coefficient of determination (R^2) value is a commonly used metric for evaluating structural models. The cumulative impacts of all the independent factors on the dependent variables are represented by this coefficient. The total model's R^2 value is high (41.9%), although social and cultural experience jointly account for 38.1% of the variance in consumer loyalty (Table 5).

Table 4. Mediation analysis in PLS-SEM.

Effects	Path	Path Coefficient	Indirect Effect	Standard Deviation	Total Effect	VAF	t Values	p-Value	Decision
Direct without mediator	CE → CL	0.195		Not applicable			2.114	0.015	Supported
Indirect with mediator	CE → CL	0.188	Not applicable		0.2863	21.18%	2.299	0.012	Supported
	CE → CS	0.149	0.1983	0.086252					

	CS → CL	0.265						
Direct without mediator	SE → CL	0.314	Not applicable		2.785	0.007	Supported	
Indirect with mediator	SE → CL	0.300	Not applicable	0.4978	61.3%	5.289	0.003	Supported
	SE → CS	0.503						
	CS → CL	0.265	0.4847	0.091635				

Source: PLS-SEM statistical outputs.

Table 5. f^2 and q^2 effect sizes; R^2 and Q^2 values.

Constructs	Customer Loyalty			Customer Satisfaction		
	B	f^2	q^2	B	f^2	q^2
Social experience	0.314	0.02	−0.004	0.503	0.041	0.015
Cultural experience	0.195	0.013	−0.005	0.149	0.171	0.06
Customer satisfaction	0.265	1.19	0.4521	-	-	-
R^2 and Q^2 Values						
Endogenous LVs	R^2 Value			Q^2 Value		
Customer Loyalty	0.419			0.487		
Customer Satisfaction	0.361			0.216		

Source: PLS-SEM statistical outputs.

5.2.2. Predictive Relevance (Q^2), f^2 Effect Size, and q^2 Effect Size

The findings in Table 5 show that the model is highly predictive, since the predictive relevance value is greater than zero (Chin, 1999) [64]. Customer satisfaction has a moderate impact size on the customer-loyalty R^2 value, but social and cultural experiences have a moderate- and low-effect size on the customer-loyalty R^2 value, respectively (Table 5). The impact size of customer satisfaction's predictive relevance to the dependent or target variable is considerable, but the effect sizes of social and cultural experience on customer loyalty and satisfaction are medium and low, respectively (Table 5).

5.3. Mediating Effect Analysis

The route model was first calculated via bootstrapping, without a mediator's interaction. Both straight approaches are statistically significant. As a result, including customer satisfaction as a mediator is important. The authors further established an indirect and significant effect to show that CUSSAT mediates the association between CULEX and CUSLOY as well as the association between SOCEX and CUSLOY. To determine the T-value of the indirect effects, standard deviation was computed. The indirect path (CULEX → CUSSAT → CUSLOY) has a p -value of 0.0012 and a t value of $0.3183/0.08625 = 3.690$. It is possible to deduce that CUSSAT mediates the relationship between CULEX and CUSLOY. The T-value (SOCEX → CUSSAT → CUSLOY) of the indirect path is $0.16353/0.0836 = 1.2333$, at a 5% significance level (Table 5).

Finally, it is critical to determine the effectiveness of mediation. As indicated by Hair et al. (2014), the strength of mediation is calculated using variance accounted for (VAF). Table 5 shows that customer satisfaction accounts for 26% of the influence of cultural experience on customer loyalty. We may assume that customer satisfaction is a partial mediator because the value of VAF is more than 20%. Table 5 further reveals that customer satisfaction accounts for 61% of the influence of social experience on customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction partially mediates the link between social experience and customer loyalty, since the value of VAF ranges from 20% to 80%. Besides the measurement models and structural models, the path coefficients R^2 and Q^2 and the effect sizes f^2 and q^2 were analysed and presented in Figures 1–5, respectively.

The first model, the proposed theoretical model (Figure 1), indicates the direct and indirect relationships between social and cultural experiences and loyalty. However, Figures 2 and 3 shows the direct path coefficient and T value statistics of the influence of social and cultural experience on loyalty. On the other hand, Figures 4 and 5 shows the models depicting the partial mediating role of customer satisfaction between social and cultural experiences and loyalty. This approach is consistent with previous studies, suggesting a test of the hypothesis through mediation analysis [65,66].

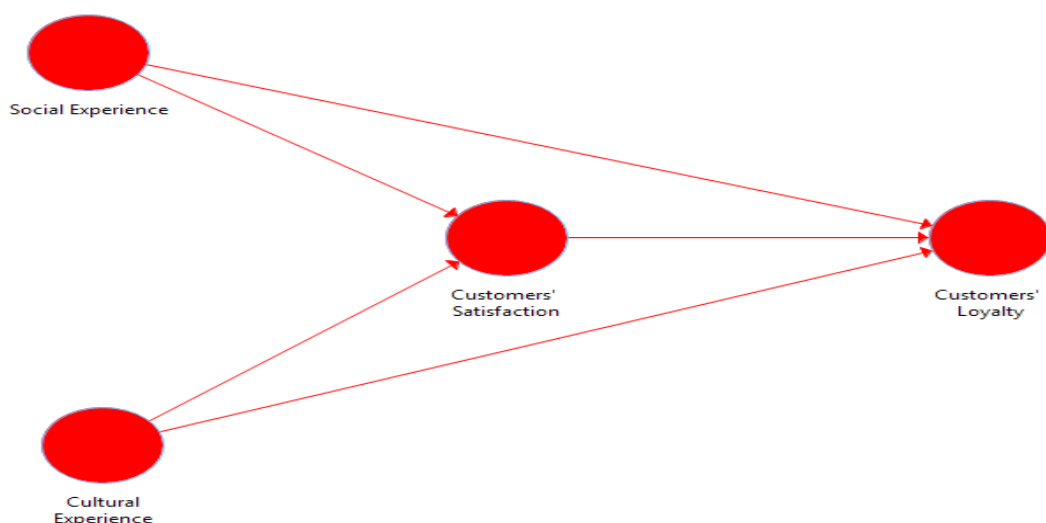


Figure 1. The hypothesized model showing the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between social and cultural experiences and loyalty.

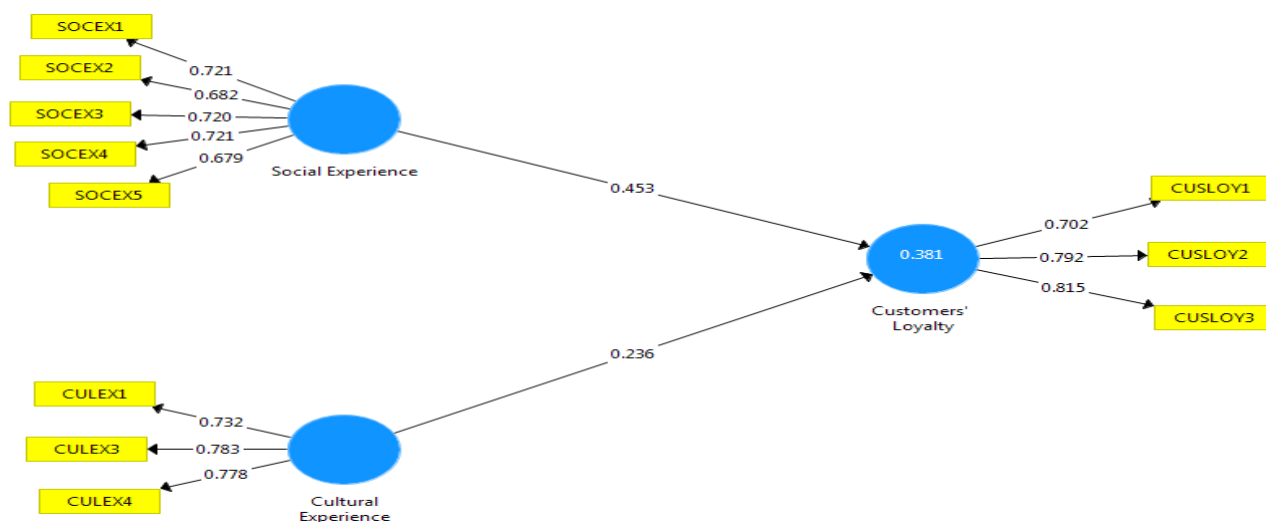


Figure 2. Direct path coefficient.

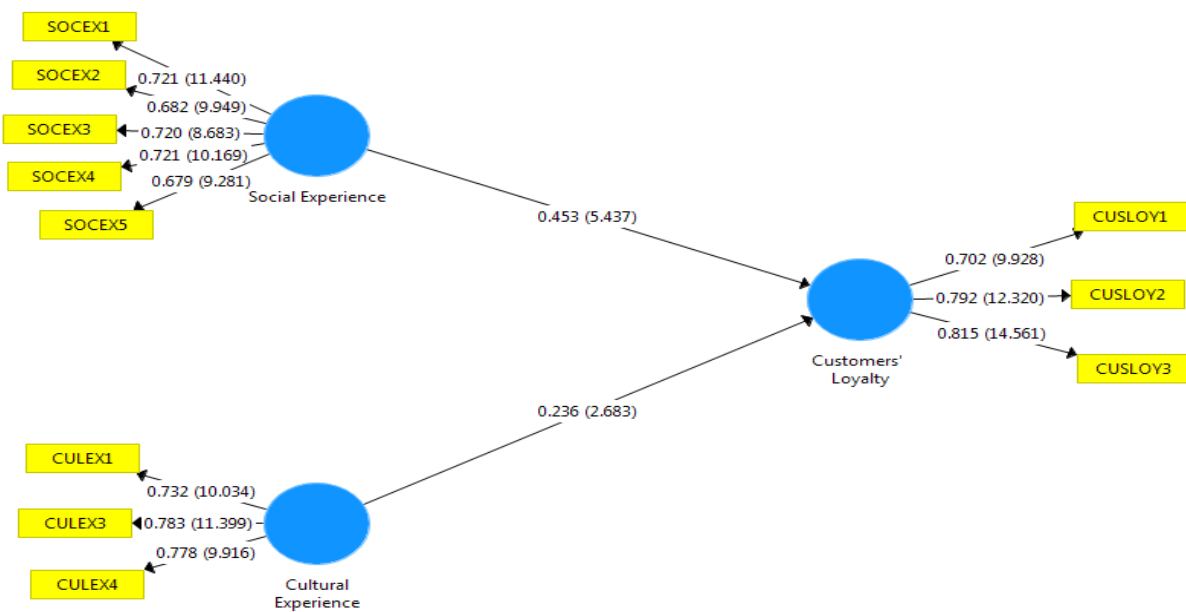


Figure 3. Direct path co-efficient and T value statistics.

Mediating Effects

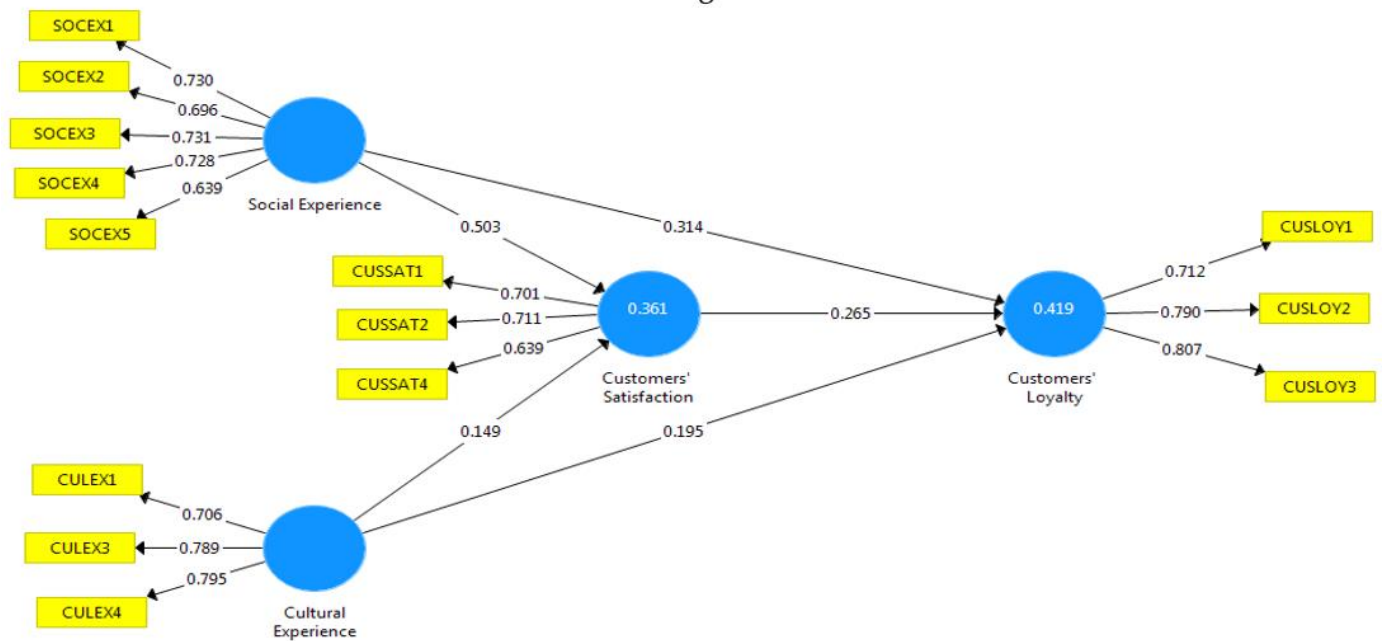


Figure 4. Path coefficient and mediating effect.

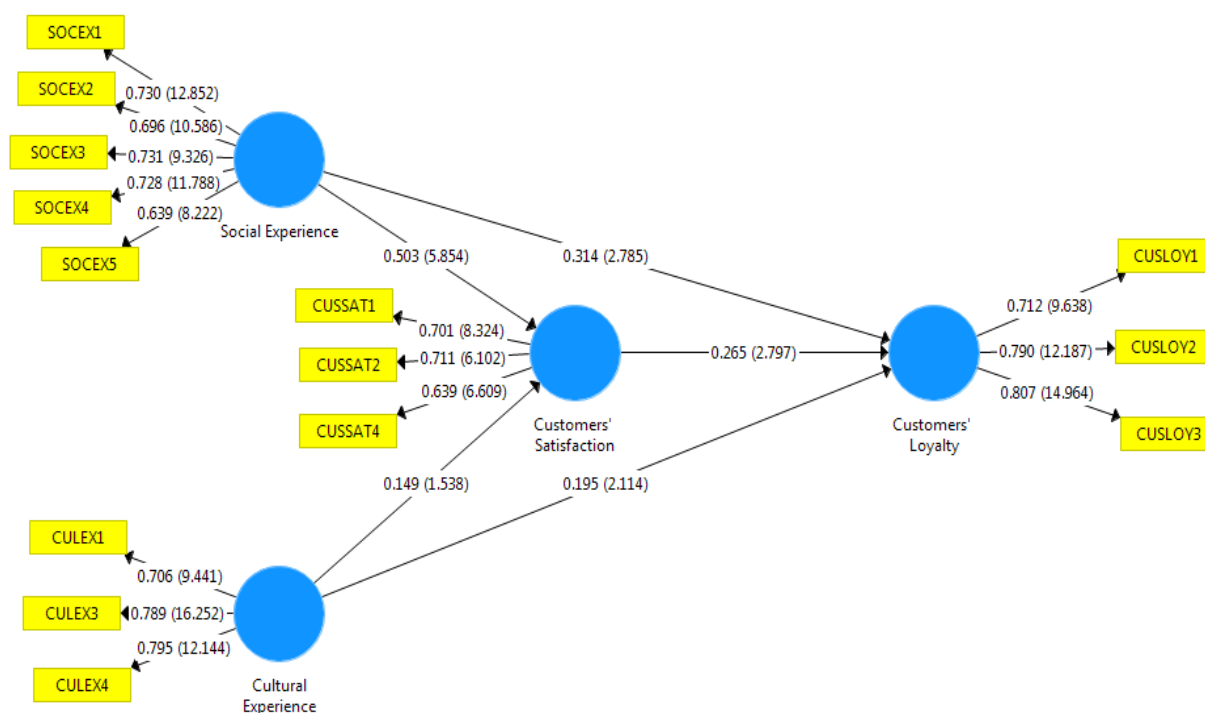


Figure 5. Mediating effect and T value statistics.

To complement the measurement and structural models, the predictive relevance Q^2 and the effect sizes f^2 and q^2 are demonstrated in Tables 4–6, respectively.

Table 6. Mediating effects and direct effects.

Mediating Effect					
Path	B	Std Error	t Statistics	p-Values	Decision
CS → CL	0.265	0.051	2.785	0.000	Supported
CE → CL	0.195	0.062	2.114	0.037	Supported
CE → CS	0.149	0.133	1.538	0.066	
SE → CL	0.314	0.069	2.785	0.002	Supported
SE → CS	0.503	0.027	5.854	0.001	Supported
Direct Effects					
Path	B	Std Error	t-Values	p-Values	Decision
CE → CL	0.195	0.117	2.114	0.036	Supported
SQ → CL	0.314	0.105	2.782	0.008	Supported

Source: PLS-SEM statistical outputs.

6. Discussion and Implications

6.1. Findings

The drive of this study is to determine the effect of social and cultural experiences as distinct types of experiences that customers takeaway when they patronize hotel services. Moreover, the research seeks to establish the mediating effect of customer satisfaction in the performance–loyalty link, by scrutinizing the direct and indirect effects of customer experiences. Overall, this study confirms the ability of customer experience to significantly influence satisfaction and loyalty towards hotel services, which is consistent with previous studies [11]. Consequently, social and cultural experiences jointly influence satisfaction and loyalty, as indicated by the result of the R^2 values, of about 42% and 38%, respectively.

Social experience was assessed based on the feeling of the relational value customers acquire from interaction during their patronage of hotel services. This study finds a noteworthy and favourable connection between social experience and customer satisfaction and loyalty, which is consistent with previous studies [30,29]. Social experience expressed as interaction with fellow passengers can significantly influence satisfaction, as [30] established: it was the second-most-enjoyed activity onboard a cruise-touring service. Moreover, Sanchez, Vincente, Jose, and Carolina (2010) [29] found that the perception of relational value with hotel staff had a greater predictive power for women's satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, Arnould and Price (1993) [31] discovered that a sensation of "community" was a single element of an astonishing river-rafting involvement by customers, due to the social interaction with fellow tourists and tour guides. In a more recent study, the social attributes of staff defined as humanistic cues, such as friendly behaviour, tone of responsiveness, and care, were identified as significant predictors of loyalty among students in higher institution [53]

We examined the relationship between cultural experience and satisfaction and loyalty, in order to identify guests' cultural leanings in relation to the services offered by the hotels. Consistent with previous studies, this study found that effective cross-cultural insights by the hotels significantly assist in achieving customer delight and loyalty [46]. The ability of hotels to seek better insights into understanding the cultural backgrounds of guests and other memorabilia has been argued as a crucial basis for increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty [1]. Similarly, the findings from this study support [43] argument that the presence of cultural elements among customers and employees can have significant consequences for the efficient administration of service experience, customer satisfaction, and service quality in hospitality services. Moreover, the findings from this study are in tandem with the need for intercultural sensitivity and the cultural diversity of staff, which is suggested as a foremost power of the hospitality and tourism business, especially when providing for international customers [44,45].

The objective to determine the mediating effect of customer satisfaction in relation to social and cultural experiences with loyalty intends to scrutinize the direct and indirect relationship of the customer experiences operationalized in this study with loyalty. The results, with respect to the variation accounted for (VAF) values, indicate that customer satisfaction intervenes with the connection between the two exogenous variables (social and cultural experiences) and the endogenous variable (customer satisfaction). Moreover, from the results in Table 5, customer satisfaction accounts for 26% of the effect of cultural experience on loyalty and 61% of the influence of social experience on loyalty. Overall, customer satisfaction only succeeded in accounting for a partial mediator and failed to account as a full mediator in its mediating role of the relationship between social and cultural experiences and loyalty. This outcome is stable with the discoveries of [34], that a positive relationship exists between customer satisfaction, loyalty, and experience towards hotel services, and those of [13], that customer satisfaction is the outcome of improved service quality and memorable experiences, which can lead to the attraction of new customers and loyalty with regard to hotel services.

6.2. Implications and Discussion

The findings from this study have theoretical, practical, and policy implications. From the theoretical perspective, the study shows the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between social and cultural experiences and loyalty. This has theoretical implication for the expectancy disconfirmation theory (EDT), by confirming the performance–loyalty link. In espousing the EDT, Oliver (1997) [25] suggests customer satisfaction has a mediating influence between service quality and service loyalty. Furthermore, the findings have implications for the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). Our findings prove that experiences of the social and cultural elements, norms, and beliefs about a service can influence customer satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, our study conceptualized, uniquely to hotel services, social and cultural experiences relative to customer

satisfaction and loyalty. The outcomes of these two variables modify the extant models of customer experience and makes additions to the popular 4Es model of customer experience by [15]. From the practical perspective, this study was able to provide insights into the nature of the experiences that customers take away from hotel services, and this will go a long way to assist managers and marketers of three-star hotels and, by extension, the hospitality industry with effective ways of achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty. Social experience elements such as interaction with fellow customers and hotel staff as well as cultural artefacts and local foods can be very good memorable attributes that can influence customer satisfaction and loyalty towards hotel services. Furthermore, the importance of customer satisfaction has been attested to by the impact of its mediating role in ensuring customer patronage of hotel services. Our study shows that social and cultural experience elements are vital attributes of hotel services that can have a sustainable impact on consumers in society. This has policy implications for governments' strategic plans for the hospitality and tourism industry, in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDP-#9), which relate to the development of industry, innovation, and infrastructure. Since social and cultural experiences are derived from the hotels' service environment, this study has been able to establish the impact of the sustainability strategies of hotels, such as green practices, to generate the needed customer experience. This is consistent with previous studies on the impact of the sustainability attributes of hotels on customer experiences, which lead to customer satisfaction and loyalty [19,20].

6.3. Limitations and Suggestion for Future Studies

Certain limitations are to be kept in mind, with respect to this study, as is common with any empirical study. Two customer experience variables were employed in relation with customer satisfaction and loyalty; it is recommended that upcoming research may survey other experiences that can influence customer satisfaction and loyalty towards hotel services. The type of customer experiences investigated relate only to three-star hotels. These are mid-class hotels with basic comfort properties. It is suggested that other classes of hotels, such as four–five-star hotels, may exhibit a more peculiar type of social and cultural experiences. Further study may also be conducted using a qualitative-search approach, which may give a more in-depth and empathic understanding of customer experience towards hotel services.

7. Conclusions

The drive of this research is to examine the effect of social and cultural experiences as distinct types of experiences that customers take away when they patronize hotel services. There are several dimensions of customer experience; this study focused on social and cultural experiences and the relationship with customer satisfaction and loyalty towards hotel services. Our findings attest to the theoretical and practical implications of the customer experience dimensions, in terms of the influence of social and cultural experiences on satisfaction and loyalty towards hotel services. Our study shows that both social and cultural experiences influence loyalty towards hotel services, however, social experience seems to have a moderate impact on loyalty compared to the impact of cultural experience, which is low. Our findings also indicate that customer satisfaction partially mediates the link between social experience and customer loyalty.

Furthermore, the performance–loyalty link, based on the mediation of customer satisfaction, was also confirmed. Based on the findings, social and cultural experiences can be considered as salient factors in achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty by hotels. The findings from this study, therefore, suggest integration of social and cultural elements among customers and interaction with employees, in order to achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty. Nevertheless, the findings suggest the basis to conclude that the ability of customer satisfaction to adequately provide the link between customer experiences and loyalty should not be underestimated by hotel managers.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at: <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/su14148789/s1>, File S1: Research Questionnaire.

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