



Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality (JAAUTH)

journal homepage: <http://jaauth.journals.ekb.eg/>



How Does the Experiential Value Effect on Customer Decision-Making in Tourism and Hospitality: the Mediating Role of Viral Marketing?

Mohamed Ahmed¹ and Maha Y.K. Abdou²

¹Hotel Management Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University, Fayoum, Egypt, Email: moa00@fayoum.edu.eg

²Tourism Studies Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University, Fayoum, Egypt, myk11@fayoum.edu.eg

ARTICLE INFO

Abstract

Keywords:

experiential value;
viral marketing;
customer decision-
making; hotels;
travel agencies;
Egypt.

(JAAUTH)
Vol.27 , No. 1 ,
(2024),
pp.277 -292.

The aim of the study is to identify the experiential value influences (EV) on customer decision-making (CDM): by examining the mediating role of viral marketing (VM) in hospitality and tourism. This study depend on a quantitative approach and primary data was collected by questionnaire. Data was gathered from customers of four- and five-star hotels as well as travel agencies in Sharm El Sheikh City using a convenience sample technique. Out of the 500 questionnaires distributed, only 375 were returned with a response rate of 75%. Partial least squares (PLS-SEM) structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized to test the study model. The finding presented that EV has a positive effect on CDM. Also, it reported that there is direct relationship between effect of experiential value and viral marketing. Thus, EV has a positive impact on VM. It explained that there is a positive influence that indicate the relationship between VM and CDM. Also, it showed that EV was indirectly influences on CDM through VM as a mediated. Consequently, the study hypotheses were approved, providing empirical evidence of the direct or indirect relationship between EV, VM and CDM. This research contributes to EV and VM knowledge through associating EV and VM to CDM. Also, examining their effects on customer decision making. This study has some obstacles that it faced, including the process of distributing the questionnaire to customers is not easy in order to avoid annoying them, and thus some errors appeared in data. The study recommends more research to compare the findings with those of other studies conducted in different contexts in order to recognize variations and improve the results' generalizability.

1. Introduction

Experience value (EV) has been a major factor in tourism and hospitality studies (Jahromi et al., 2015). The consumption of experiences is really driving some of the fastest-growing economic sectors in the world (Li & Lee, 2016). Customer experience is characterized as a series of encounters that elicit a response from a customer regarding a product, a business, or an aspect of its operations (Jahromi et al., 2015). As well, Astari and Pramudana, (2016) reported that EV is refers to the customer's impression of the product or service based on

their direct or indirect experiences with it. Customer preferences for the good or service and cognitive evaluation are equally valuable components of experiential value (Jahromi et al., 2015). EV is concerned with the value that customers get out of their use of a good or service (Wu et al., 2018). For someone working in the service sector, understanding the term of EV is essential to appreciating client value (Alsaïd & Amor, 2020). EV differs from product/service value because it is derived from customer experience and focuses on the customer's subjective beliefs and reactions, which vary based on the type of interaction (Setianingsih & Nursaidah, 2023). Moreover, experiential value has developed into a desirable resource and a modern marketing strategy, particularly in tourism and hospitality industry (Wu et al., 2018). Also, Setianingsih and Nursaidah (2023) asserted that the experience and value are viewed exclusively from the perspective of a certain consumer and are intrinsically unique, existing solely in the customer's imagination. As a result, experience is a very subjective term that is hard to quantify (Wu & Liang, 2009). For instance, a customer's stays in a hotel for multiple nights to experience the hotel (Ghanem, 2019). This experience setting is made up of several different elements (Jahromi et al., 2015).

A customer's experience encompasses their interactions with the surroundings as well as their perceptions of what they see and feel (Chen et al., 2020). According to Aprillio and Widodo, (2020) viral marketing (VM) is a concept of communication and delivery that depends on consumers distributing electronic messages with digital marketing content about products to additional prospective customers inside their social network. Additionally, it prompts these prospective buyers to send messages about the same item (Sarioğlu, 2023). Viral marketing spreads via the internet, where it replicates itself endlessly, much like a computer virus (Trivedi, 2017). Viral marketing distributes content from free electronic websites to a large audience by way of a database of registered internet users (Daif & Elsayed, 2019). Shatnawi et al. (2024) viral marketing can start with a variety of sources, including the business. Product information must originate from either direct customers or from those who are excellent at persuading others in a similar way, such as travel forums or other product-related parties (Susanti & Kurniawan, 2020). This will increase the effectiveness with which customers accept the provided product information (Aprillio & Widodo, 2020).

Consequently, several issues that affect the customer's decision-making to revisit or repurchase the service and the tourism and hotel product (Christianingrum et al., 2024). The term repurchase refers to the customer's desire to revisit and return to the place of visit and stay there for a longer period (Ahn et al., 2019). There are several factors that greatly affect repurchase and revisit such as satisfaction with the services provided and the value of the experience that the customer gets from the place of visit (Hashim et al., 2018). On the other hand, repurchase and return to visit the place are related to customer satisfaction after receiving the service and evaluating the results of the visit (Christianingrum et al., 2024). Therefore, revisiting is the behavioral and mental state that reflects the plans that the customer wants to achieve during a specific period of time (Tsai et al., 2024). Furthermore, in order to comprehend customer decision-making, the experiencing value becomes significant and pertinent. Several studies have been conducted in the tourism and hotel industry to better understand customer attitude by the examination of EV in a variety of industries. To fill the gap, the study aims to identify the experiential value influences (EV) on customer decision-making (CDM): mediating role of viral marketing (VM) in tourism and hospitality.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. The Experiential value (EV)

Currently, tourism and hospitality businesses should develop a special and remarkable value for their customer when putting ideas into practice in order to gain a competitive edge (Chen et al., 2020). An integrated experience is referred to as a "customer experience" when each interaction a customer has with goods, services, and other components results in either a pleasant or negative experience (Setianingsih & Nursaidah, 2023). According to Shah et al. (2018), customer experience also refers to the method, plan, and execution used by the business to manage the way that customers interact with its goods. A customer's experience is the outcome of continuous contact across a range of channels for both affective and functional purposes between businesses and their customers (Yeh et al., 2019).

According to Tsai et al. (2024), EV is the essential foundation for consumer preference that results from direct experiences with a good or service; that is, the general feelings, observations, and ideas that a customer has about a good or service after paying for it. EV is judged by how products and services are used and appreciated directly (Alsaid & Amor, 2020). There are different encounters can provide people with experiential value (Wu et al., 2018). In addition, experiential value evaluates consumer preference and cognitive value of the offered good or service (Setianingsih & Nursaidah, 2023). Also, the value that consumers obtain from using a product or service is covered under EV (Wu et al., 2018).

Experiential value may be influenced by the degree of communication between clients and provider of services (Tsai, 2015). EV is a representation of how customers view goods or services based on their usage (Alsaid & Amor, 2020). Experiences can take many various forms, and each one has worth. Value is a subjective concept that is formed by individual views or the exchange of experiences gained during a transaction (Shah et al., 2018). Also, Cetin et al. (2014) came to the conclusion that experiences turned into a significant different from the competitors as well as, experience value is a particularly important concept for individuals in the service industry when it comes to determining client value (Alsaid & Amor, 2020). Because it is based on customer experience and revolves around the customer emotions and reactions that based on the circumstances of the encounter, experiential value is therefore different from product/service value (Setianingsih & Nursaidah, 2023).

Additionally, Chen et al. (2020) proposed that offering an experience as a means of achieving an economic goal influences product prices. There are four key aspects of the consumer experience that are highly valuable: escapism, education, aesthetics, and entertainment (Alsaid & Amor, 2020). Shah et al. (2018) stated that there are eight constructs that make up experience value: quality, efficiency, respect, playfulness, aesthetics, ethics, and spirit. Yeh et al. (2019) investigated how consumer happiness, loyalty, experiential value, and experiential marketing relate to one another. It is evident from earlier study that there is a lack of consensus about replication and outcome in the diverse and fragmented research on experiential value components. Depending on the area of interest, many researchers have taken distinct tacks (Chen et al., 2020).

2.2. Viral marketing (VM)

The viral marketing paradigm opened up new avenues for effective contact with online consumers by creating a virtual environment. The concept of viral marketing relies on the widespread availability of electronic communication on a global scale (Sarioğlu, 2023). In the modern business environment, viral marketing has become a crucial tactic that many companies are using to stay ahead of the competition (Shatnawi et al., 2024). This is especially important because there is a growing trend of individuals of all ages spending more

and more time on the internet and social media (Aprillio & Widodo, 2020). Viral marketing leverages people's natural desire to share knowledge, jokes, and feelings. This leads to content that goes viral on digital platforms; studies of Reichstein and Bruschi, (2019) have shown that the main goal of viral marketing is to produce memorable content in addition to shareable content (Purwanto, 2023). Crafting words, movies, photos, or campaigns that resonate with viewers and encourage them to actively connect with the information and gladly share it is the central idea of this art (Sarpal & Ying, 2022). The dynamic marketing technique and idea known as "viral marketing" is based on the development of messages or material that is so interesting, compelling, or amusing that people willfully choose to share it with others (Sung, 2021). In viral marketing, the term "viral" aptly conveys the idea that content spreads quickly and widely from one person to another, much like a contagious virus (Sarpal & Ying, 2022). This idea is further explored by (Reichstein & Bruschi, 2019), which is facilitated by digital platforms like email and social media.

According to Shatnawi et al. (2024), viral marketing in this context is defined as the quick and widespread spread of a marketing message from one person to another, along with an amplification and growth process (Sawaftah et al., 2020). Additionally, viral marketing is primarily defined by the use of networks of individuals to advertise goods by taking advantage of circumstances in which self-replicating behavior is prevalent (Shatnawi et al., 2024). Furthermore, Sawaftah et al. (2020) reported that VM refers to the ability of an individual to communicate directly with others in order to distribute a message and help it expand exponentially. The term "viral marketing" is the new idea of word-of-mouth moving online (Reichstein & Bruschi, 2019). It is described as a kind of marketing that enables material to spread rapidly and with less effort through network-based platforms in the shortest amount of time (Sarpal & Ying, 2022). In addition, the content produces quantifiable added value, resulting in a high cost-benefit ratio (Sawaftah et al., 2020). The reason viral marketing is so popular on the internet is that it provides rapid communication at a significantly lower cost than conventional means of advertising such as billboards, television, or radio (Zhang & Huang, 2022). The development of the internet gave rise viral marketing, as digital transformation increased communication options (Purwanto, 2023). Viral marketing adoption is impacted by the nation's rate of internet penetration (Sawaftah et al., 2020).

Effective viral marketing has the power to alter consumer behavior toward a brand or organization and have a hugely positive viral impact (Sung, 2021). A good VM strategy must be inventive, able to attract helpfulness from the general public in order to create buzz, raise sales, expand market share, and establish a positive reputation (Shatnawi et al., 2024). Since viral marketing relies on customers' interpretations of marketing messages and sharing of messaging is the means of disseminating information or engaging audiences, it can be unpredictable (Purwanto, 2023). Thus, in order to boost the rate at which online material is shared, viral messages need to be well-structured and distinctive (Zhang & Huang, 2022).

2.3. Customer decision-making (CDM)

Since customers can simply switch to other hotels or tourist destinations, maintaining a high customer retention rate is crucial in an environment where intense competition is impacting tourism and hospitality revenue (Setianingsih & Nursaidah, 2023). In this instance, management's capacity to influence consumer behavior through marketing also gives a business a competitive edge and chances to set itself apart from rivals (Chen et al., 2020). Decisions are defined as the process of making purchases, which involves choosing what to buy and what not to buy based on past actions (Aprillio & Widodo, 2020). Customers make their decisions on how they perceive a good or service, and they use their senses to interpret marketing communications (Setianingsih & Nursaidah, 2023). According to Kotler and

Armstrong (2018), CDM used to describe how the clients identify their needs, purchase, use goods which satisfy those requirements. In consumer behavior and marketing, the term "customer purchase intention" show the person's inclination and propensity to buy good in the near or foreseeable times (Shatnawi et al., 2024). It basically represents a person's purpose or plan to buy something, and it's a crucial first step on the way to the real buying process (Liu & Wang, 2019). Also, Reichstein and Bruschi, (2019) revealed that a customer's purchase intention is a measure of their willingness to acquire a certain brand, emphasizing the brand's importance in the decision-making process and its susceptibility to effects from advertising and brand reputation. Purchase intention, which conveys a person's inclination and intention to engage in a particular behavior, is a strong predictor of actual purchasing behavior (Mukaromah et al., 2022; Bayzurrah et al., 2024).

Moreover, Reichstein and Bruschi, (2019) have proposed that CDM represents probability of customer to obtain a product, through how much they weigh their options and how much they are impacted by marketing and promotion (Liu & Wang, 2019). Essentially, purchase intention offers insightful information about consumers' decision-making processes and level of transaction readiness (Aprillio & Widodo, 2020). The behavior or acts that lead up to, affect, and come after decisions about purchasing goods that meet consumer demands are referred to as the consumer decision-making process (Hu & Zhu, 2022). Customers define business communications from marketers using their senses, and their decisions are dependent on how they see a product or service (Chen et al., 2020). The CDM describes exactly how customers identify requirements, find and use items that address those needs, and make decisions based on those needs (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

2.4. Developing a conceptual framework and hypotheses

The following is a conceptual framework model that has been produced to be used in the context of a literature review (see Figure 1).

Experiential value (EV) and customer decision-making (CDM)

Understanding customer behavior makes experiential value relevant and significant. EV has been examined via empirical study in a variety of business industries to better understand consumer behavior (Setianingsih & Nursaidah, 2023). Alsaïd and Amor (2020) discovered a strong and positive correlation between EV and CDM. Yeh et al. (2019) reported that repurchase intention significantly impacted by EV. Experience values and customer satisfaction have been positively correlated, when the perceived value of the service exceeds the expectations of the customer, they are happy; when the perceived value falls short of their expectations, they are not (Alsaïd & Amor, 2020). For that, this hypothesis was suggested;

H1: Experiential value affects customer decision-making.

Experiential value (EV) and viral marketing (VM)

Value is created through interactions between goods and customers, according to Holbrook (Tsai et al., 2024). Value is a relative phrase that describes how two or more objects are ranked or evaluated in order to be compared (Ahn et al., 2019). Value possesses the attributes of preference, encompassing consumers' favored assessments of products (Setianingsih & Nursaidah, 2023). However, since people have different views that affect how they evaluate and interpret a situation after it has occurred, value also includes personal factors (Chen et al., 2020). EV also yields value, not from the brand or product one selects or owns, but rather from the act of using it (Ahn et al., 2019). Due to increased local and worldwide rivalry brought about by newly developed technologies that are easily accessible to anybody with internet access and may be used as marketing tools, modern marketing has had to change (Alghizzawi, 2019). In light of this, the VM paradigm produced new chances for efficient

contact with online consumers as well as a virtual environment (Urdea & Constantin, 2021). Gaining and keeping the loyalty of customers is essential to boosting revenue and profit (Sarioğlu, 2023). Creating and keeping consumers who will turn down better offers from other brands or businesses and persuade them to keep buying the same goods or services is a fundamental aspect of loyalty (Liu & Wang, 2019). The concept of VM relies on the widespread availability of electronic communication on a global scale (Sarioğlu, 2023). For that, this hypothesis was suggested;

H2: Experiential value affects viral marketing.

Viral marketing(VM) and customer decision-making(CDM)

Viral marketing has the power to significantly affect customer decision-making. Its efficacy is impacted by a number of variables, such as the substance of viral messages, how people interact with them, how well they are received, and whether or not there is any potentially offending content (Shatnawi et al., 2024). Zhang and Huang, (2022) points out that interacting with VM messages is essential to producing favorable outcomes. Conversely, passively receiving messages can negatively impact brand equity and purchase intention if no active interaction occurs (Sung, 2020). However, It is possible to mitigate the negative effects of message reception on client purchase intentions and even turn them into positive ones by introducing brand equity as a mediator in the encounter (Purwanto, 2023).

The characteristics of VM and how it affects consumer behavior and purchase decisions have been determined by marketing research (Sarpal & Ying, 2022). VM lowers the price of quickly reaching a large audience with promotions and advertisements (Shatnawi et al., 2024). Businesses should prioritize online consumer satisfaction and relationships when they are accessible on social media platforms (Reichstein & Bruschi, 2019). Customers can communicate with one another and share their experiences on social media sites, which encourages social interaction and purchases (Aprillio & Widodo,2020). When satisfied customers spread the word to friends and family, changing their purchase habits, VM is a reduce cost and powerful of marketing strategy (Susanti & Kurniawan, 2020). VM strategies are superior to traditional marketing strategies (Sung, 2020). It has been demonstrated that VM activities significantly affect CDM and buy intention (Sarioğlu, 2023). For that, this hypothesis was suggested;

H3: Viral marketing affects customer decision-making.

Mediating role of viral marketing(VM)

According to Shatnawi et al. (2024), There's an indirect effect of VM on CDM. Experiential value's influence on customer decisions is ultimately determined by the mediating of viral marketing, which serve as middlemen in the interaction between experiential value and customer decision-making (Tsai et al.,2024). VM is thought to have a favorable influence on customers' intentions, also, it is crucial to developing robust EV because of the subsequent effects it has on CDM (Sarioğlu, 2023). For that, this hypothesis was suggested;

H4: Experiential value affects customer decision-making mediated by viral marketing.

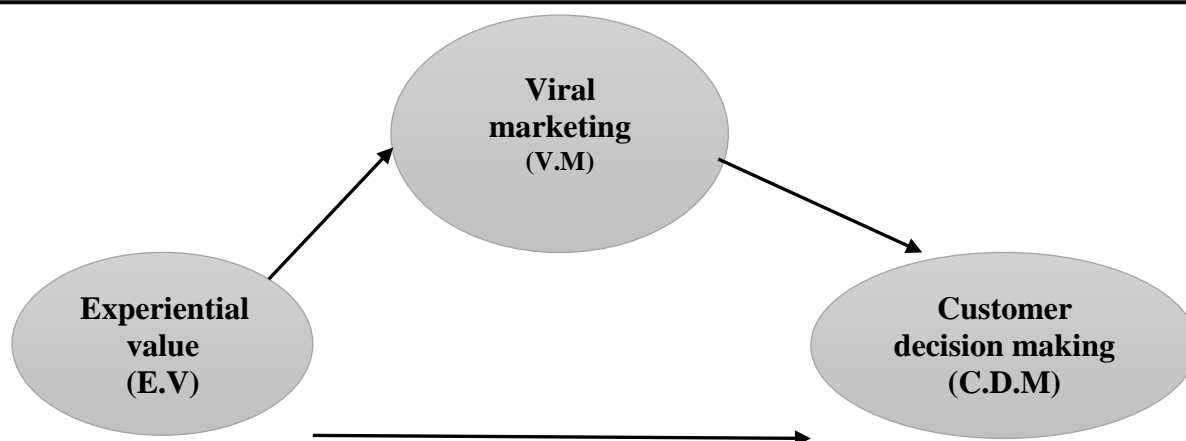


Figure 1: The research conceptual framework model

3. Research method

According to the study variables, a quantitative approach was applied to evaluate the research hypotheses and to identify the influence of experiential value (EV) on customer decision-making (CDM) of four and five-star hotels and travel agencies in Sharm El Sheikh City. The study population was comprised of (52) four-star hotels, (14) five-star hotels (EHA, 2023) and 37 travel agencies (category A) (ETAA, 2023) in Sharm El Sheikh, located in the Eastern North of Egypt. The city is considered one of the most popular resort destinations in the world. Sharm El Sheikh City was chosen for the research as a case study because it is regarded as a popular international travel destination that attracts large numbers of visitors from different countries. A questionnaire designed and conducted by the researchers was used to gather the primary data. The present study employed a convenience sample technique to collect data from customers of four and five-star hotels and travel agencies in Sharm El Sheikh. Of the 500 surveys that were sent out, only 375 were completed with a response rate of 75%.

There were four sections in the questionnaire: demographic profiles of the respondents, experiential value (8 items), viral marketing (7 items), and customer decision-making (9 items). Table 2 shows the amended questionnaire items from the literature review. The research model is tested using SmartPLS3. Each study concept was adapted from one that has already been proven to be valid and reliable in literature reviews. A Likert scale with five points, one for strongly disagree and five for strongly agree, was used to assess the components' level. An analysis was conducted on the research's validity, reliability, and descriptive analysis.

Table 1: The research variables' measurements

Variables	Items	Authors
Experiential value	8 items	(Alsaid & Ben Amor, 2020; Chen et al., 2020; Tsai et al., 2024)
Viral marketing	7 items	(Daif & Elsayed, 2019; Sarpal & Ying, 2022; Sarioğlu, 2023)
Customer decision-making	9 items	(Ahn et al., 2019; Setianingsih & Nursaidah, 2023; Tsai et al., 2024)

4. Statistical results

4.1. Descriptive analysis

Table (2) showed the results that most of the participants were male (52.8%) and (47.2%) of the participants were female. The most of the participants were aged 21 to less than 35 years old (26.7%) followed by 45 less than 55 years old (22.9%) and 35 less than 45 years old (21%). In term of information sources, most of the participants had learned about hotels and travel agencies from family and friends (54.7%) followed by website sources (24%).

Table 2: Participant's profiles (n=375)

Characteristics	Category	Statistics	%
Gender	Male	198	52.8
	Female	177	47.2
Age	Less than 20 years	70	18.7
	21 to less than 35	100	26.7
	35 less than 45	79	21
	45 less than 55	86	22.9
	55 and more	40	10.7
Information sources	Family & friends	205	54.7
	Journal & newspaper	45	12
	Website	90	24
	Others	35	9.3

4.2. Internal consistency reliability

The internal consistency qualifying measure that is more frequently employed is Cronbach's alpha. It offers a reliability estimate based on how well the observed indicator variables intercorrelations (Hair Jr et al., 2021). The ideal Cronbach's alpha value should be more 0.60. The limits of Cronbach's alpha in the population suggest that CR, a different kind of internal consistency reliability measure is a more appropriate option (Hair Jr et al. 2021). The results in table (3) showed that the Cronbach's alpha and CR for the constructs of the study were ranges from (0. 689 to 0.767) and (0.658 to 0.780) respectively. The finding presented that Cronbach's alpha is more than 0.60, it refers that the research variables are suitably reliable.

4.3. Convergent validity

It also, showed that the construct loading was ranging from 0.687 to 0.861, so the CFA ($p < 0.001$) was above 0.60, this matched with Gefen & Straub (2005) mentioned that loading of factor should be above 0.60. As a result, table (3) showed the data that validate the convergent validity of the current study model. The results confirmed that the value of AVE was greater than 0.5, suggesting the suitability model's measurement of the study (Henseler et al., 2016). The results showed a sufficient and appropriate level of convergent validity because the AVE value's square root was significantly higher than the internal constructs' correlation (see Table 3 and Figure 2).

Table 3: Reliability of internal consistency and assessment of convergent validity

Constructs	Indicators	Factor loadings	AVE	CV	Cronbach α	CR
Experiential value (E.V)	E.V-(1)	0.689	0.591	> 0.5	0.689	0.658
	E.V-(2)	0.720				
	E.V-(3)	0.763				
	E.V-(4)	0.751				
	E.V-(5)	0.687				
	E.V-(6)	0.695				
	E.V-(7)	0.721				
	E.V-(8)	0.735				
Viral marketing (V.M)	V.M-(1)	0.723	0.616	> 0.5	0.753	0.725
	V.M-(2)	0.753				
	V.M-(3)	0.821				
	V.M-(4)	0.741				
	V.M-(5)	0.861				
	V.M-(6)	0.758				
	V.M-(7)	0.829				
Customer decision-making (C.D.M)	C.D.M-(1)	0.752	0.630	> 0.5	0.767	0.780
	C.D.M-(2)	0.817				
	C.D.M-(3)	0.748				
	C.D.M-(4)	0.825				
	C.D.M-(5)	0.832				
	C.D.M-(6)	0.785				
	C.D.M-(7)	0.839				
	C.D.M-(8)	0.789				
	C.D.M-(9)	0.755				

Note¹: AVE= average variance extracted, CV= critical value CR= composite reliability. Note²: EV, experiential value; VM, viral marketing; CDM, customer decision-making.

4.4. Validity of discrimination

This research used the cross-loadings of the indicators to evaluate the discriminant validity (Hair Jr et al., 2021). When cross-loadings exceed the external loadings of the indicators, discriminating validity is compromised. The cross-loading results evaluation-based discriminant validity assessment was shown in Table (4). Since each indication of the latent variables loads more to its respective construct than the others, this result makes it evident that discriminant validity has been demonstrated.

Table 4: Validity of discrimination through cross-loading

	EV	VM	CDM
E.V-(1)	0.689	0.510	0.055
E.V-(2)	0.720	0.563	0.033
E.V-(3)	0.763	0.610	0.061
E.V-(4)	0.751	0.486	0.040
E.V-(5)	0.687	0.422	0.065
E.V-(6)	0.695	0.375	0.072
E.V-(7)	0.721	0.510	0.047
E.V-(8)	0.689	0.613	0.025
V.M-(1)	0.421	0.723	0.031
V.M-(2)	0.532	0.753	0.018
V.M-(3)	0.621	0.821	0.093
V.M-(4)	0.570	0.741	0.017

V.M-(5)	0.156	0.861	0.0.63
V.M-(6)	0.265	0.758	0.160
V.M-(7)	0.325	0.829	0.0.49
C.D.M-(1)	0.053	0.047	0.752
C.D.M-(2)	0.040	0.046	0.817
C.D.M-(3)	0.038	0.063	0.748
C.D.M-(4)	0.029	0.076	0.825
C.D.M-(5)	0.072	0.083	0.832
C.D.M-(6)	0.086	0.090	0.785
C.D.M-(7)	0.090	0.079	0.839
C.D.M-(8)	0.069	0.066	0.789
C.D.M-(9)	0.156	0.134	0.755

Note: EV, experiential value; VM, viral marketing; CDM, customer decision-making.

4.5. The structural model of the research

The current research try to identify the influence of EV on CDM: mediating role of VM in tourism and hospitality. Path significance and coefficients of determination (R2) were employed in the data analysis. Also, CI for determining the relationship that mediates is measured using the multiplying path coefficients. According to Ahmed et al. (2023), if zero is excluded from the variable's confidence value, the mediating variable's indirect effect is considerably different from zero. Through the mediating variable (VM), PLS-SEM analysis revealed the significant association between the independent variables (EV) and the dependent variable (CDM); the significant relationship indicates the presence of the mediation variable. The study results showed that EV has a positive effect on CDM, the results seen in Table (5) which showed that ($\beta=0.436$, $t=11.310$, $p < 0.01$, CI: 0.152-0.285), the path coefficient between EV and CDM was a significant. Therefore, H1 in this research was accepted as an alternative hypothesis and the null hypothesis (no relationship/ no effect) was rejected in this study. Also, Table (5) revealed that the effects of experiential value viral marketing the path coefficients was positive ($\beta=0.568$, $t=23.381$, $p < 0.01$, CI: 0.136-0.189), this mean the relationship between them was significant. Thus, H2 in this research was accepted alternative hypothesis and rejected null hypothesis. The finding of the effect of viral marketing on customer decision-making, the results in Table (5) explained that ($\beta=0.620$, $t=14.630$, $p < 0.01$, CI: 0.173-0.276) with significant value. Therefore, the study accepted H3, which mean that alternative hypothesis was accepted and rejected null hypothesis. Consequently, the results showed that experiential value is indirectly influences on customer decision-making through VM as a mediated ($\beta=0.356$, $t=9.720$, $p < 0.01$, CI: 0.145-0.231), so H4 was confirmed “experiential value affects customer decision-making mediated by viral marketing”(see Table 5 and Figure 3).

Table 5: Testing the research hypotheses

Hypotheses	Standardize d estimates	SE	t-value	P-value	CI	Decision
H1: EV ---> CDM	0.436	0.050	11.310	0.000	0.152-0.285	Approved
H2: EV ---> VM	0.568	0.089	23.381	0.001	0.136-0.189	Approved
H3: VM ---> CDM	0.620	0.076	14.630	0.002	0.173-0.276	Approved
H4: EV ---> VM ---> CDM	0.356	0.086	9.720	0.000	0.145-0.231	Approved

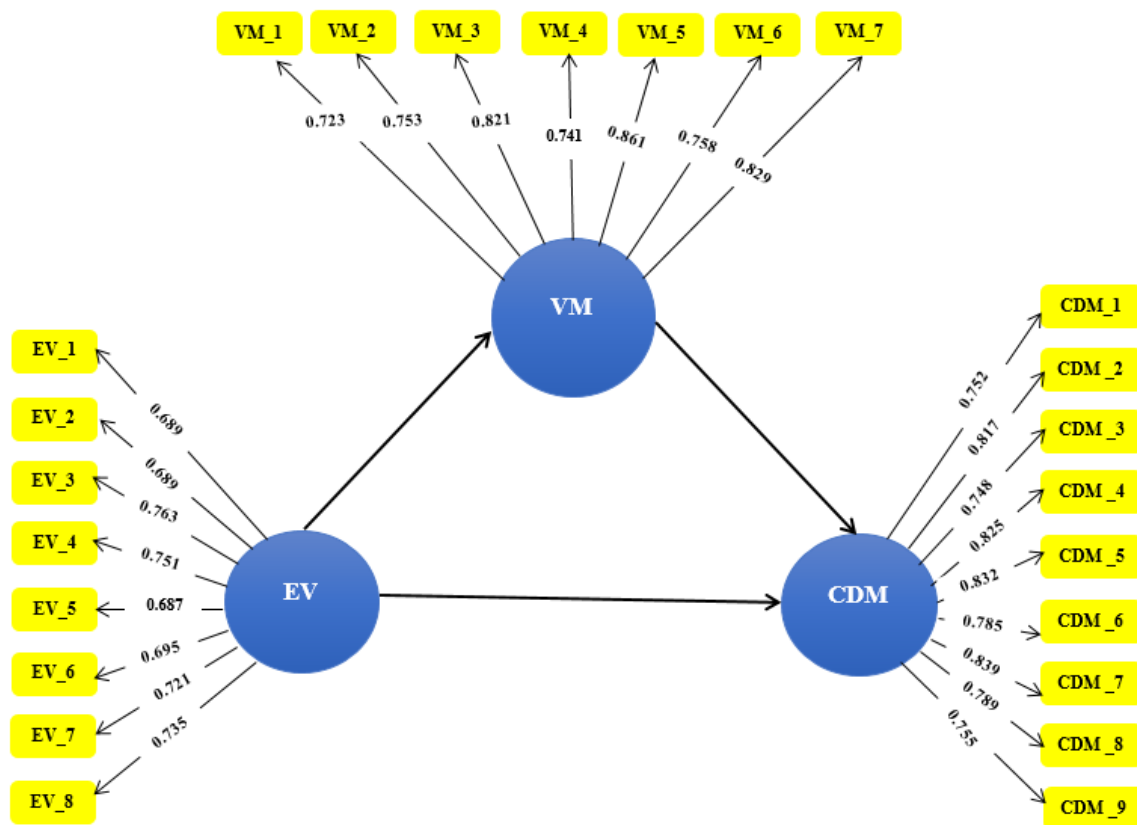


Figure 2. The results of standardized factor loadings

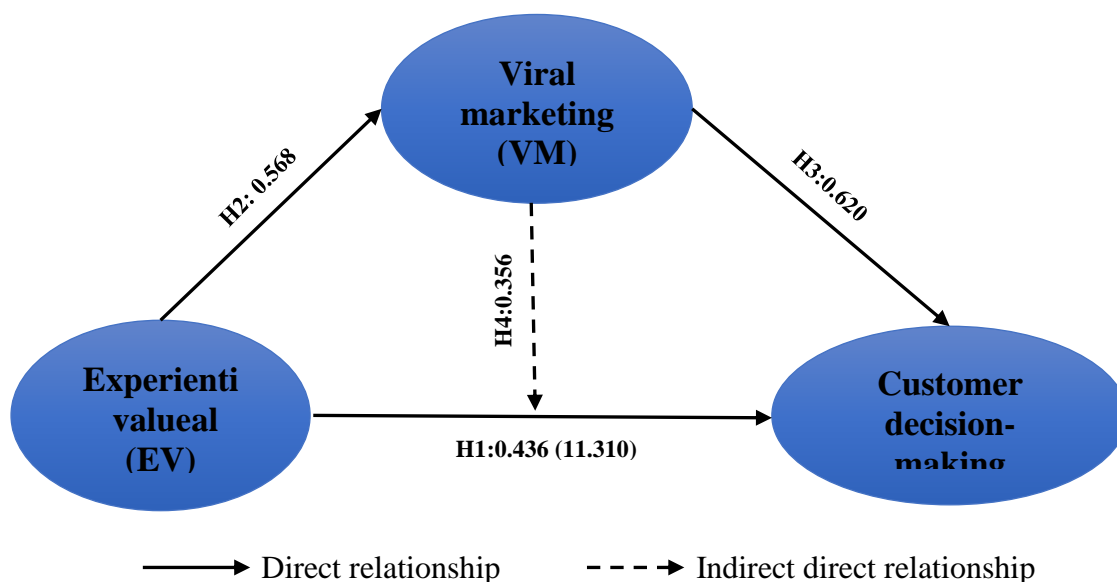


Figure 3: Relationships between research variables

5. Discussion

This research contributes to experiential value and viral marketing knowledge through associating EV and VM to customer decision making, also, examining their effects on the customer decision making. This study is different from previous studies, the mediating role of

VM on the link between EV and CDM was taken into consideration in this investigation. This study created a conceptual model and four hypotheses to explain the relationships between the study variables drawing on relational theory. All study hypotheses were approved, providing empirical data of the direct or indirect association between experiential value, viral marketing and customer decision making.

The results showed that EV has a positive impact on CDM. This finding is matched with the study of Alsaïd and Amor (2020) which discovered a strong and positive correlation between EV and CDM. As well, Yeh et al. (2019) reported that repurchase intention significantly impacted by EV. Also, the results reported that there is direct relationship between effect of experiential value and viral marketing. Thus, EV has a positive effect on VM. This confirms findings from a research by (Urdea & Constantin,2021) which highlighted there is association between EV and VM. In addition, the results explained that there is a positive influence that indicate a relationship between VM and CDM, which is consistent with the literature review (Sung, 2020) that showed VM strategies are superior to traditional marketing strategies. VM initiatives shown that a significant impact on CDM and purchase objective (Sarıoğlu, 2023).

Consequently, the results showed that EV is indirectly influences on CDM through VM as a mediated. This finding is consistent with Shatnawi et al. (2024), there's an in direct effect of VM on CDM. Experiential value's influence on customer decisions is ultimately determined by the mediating of viral marketing, which serve as middlemen in the interaction between experiential value and customer decision-making (Tsai et al., 2024).

6. Conclusion, limitation and further research

This study presented some recommendation for hospitality and tourism business. Theoretically, it provided a some of empirical evidence related to the relationship between EV and CDM. In addition to including the role of VM as a mediating to clarify the association between EV and CDM within hotels and travel agencies. The results also added values to the review of literature on EV and its impact on customer decision, as the results confirmed that there are many issues that affect the customer's decision, whether to revisit or repurchase the tourism and hotel service and product. In addition, repurchase and return to visit the place are related to customer satisfaction after receiving the service and evaluating the results of the visit. In addition, this research provides some recommendations to managers of tourism and hotel establishments, which are represented in the need to recognize the importance of experiential value for tourists, as it plays a major role in choosing the tourism product. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the correct and accurate data about the services that delivered to the customer, which affects their expectations.

This study has some obstacles that it faced, including the process of distributing the questionnaire to customers is not easy in order to avoid annoying them, and thus some errors appeared in the data. In addition, this study was limited to customers of four- and five-star hotels and travel agencies in Sharm El Sheikh City. Another limitation that this study faced was that it relied on a quantitative approach. To build a more complete picture of the phenomenon and concepts being studied, other methodologies must be applied and qualitative insights must be combined. The study proposes that in order to improve the generalizability of the results and provide an accurate interpretation of the findings, more research should be done to compare the study's findings with those of other studies conducted in various circumstances.

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كيف تؤثر قيمة التجربة في إتخاذ القرار لدى العملاء في السياحة والضيافة: الدور الوسيط للتسويق الفيروسي؟

محمد عمر أحمد^١ مها يحيى كامل عبده^٢

^١ قسم إدارة الفنادق، كلية السياحة والفنادق، جامعة الفيوم.

^٢ قسم الدراسات السياحية، كلية السياحة والفنادق، جامعة الفيوم.

المخلص	معلومات المقالة
<p>تهدف الدراسة إلى التعرف على تأثير قيمة التجربة على إتخاذ القرار لدى العملاء من خلال فحص الدور الوسيط للتسويق الفيروسي في السياحة والضيافة. اعتمدت هذه الدراسة على المنهج الكمي التحليلي لتحقيق أهدافها. حيث تم جمع البيانات الأولية عن طريق توزيع استمارات الاستبيان. تم استخدام اسلوب العينة المناسبة (A convenience sample) من عملاء الفنادق الأربع والخمس نجوم ووكالات السفر في مدينة شرم الشيخ. وتم توزيع ٥٠٠ استمارة استبيان وبلغ عدد الاستمارات الصالحة ٣٧٥ استمارة بمعدل استجابة ٧٥%. تم استخدام نمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية-PLS (SEM) لاختبار نموذج الدراسة. وفيما يتعلق بنتائج الدراسة، وأظهرت النتائج وجود تأثير معنوي للمتغيرات المستقلة على المتغيرات التابعة من خلال المتغيرات الوسيطة.</p>	<p>الكلمات المفتاحية</p> <p>قيمة التجربة؛ التسويق الفيروسي؛ اتخاذ القرار لدى العملاء؛ الفنادق؛ وكلاء السفر، مصر.</p>
<p>أشارت نتائج الدراسة أن قيمة التجربة (EV) لها تأثير إيجابي على عملية إتخاذ القرار لدى العملاء (CDM). كما أفادت النتائج بوجود علاقة مباشرة بين تأثير قيمة التجربة والتسويق الفيروسي. كما أظهرت النتائج أن هناك تأثيراً إيجابياً يشير إلى العلاقة بين قيمة التجربة وعملية إتخاذ القرار لدى العملاء. كما تبين أن قيمة التجربة تؤثر بشكل غير مباشر على عملية إتخاذ القرار لدى العملاء من خلال الدور الوسيط للتسويق الفيروسي. وبناء على ذلك تم قبول فرضيات الدراسة، مما يوفر دليلاً تجريبياً على العلاقة المباشرة أو غير المباشرة بين متغيرات الدراسة (CDM-VM-EV). وتساهم هذه الدراسة في التعرف على تأثير قيمة التجربة (EV) على إتخاذ القرار لدى العملاء (CDM) من خلال الدور الوسيط للتسويق الفيروسي (VM) في السياحة والضيافة. توجد بعض القيود التي واجهت هذه الدراسة منها أن عملية توزيع الاستبيان على العملاء ليست سهلة لتجنب إزعاجهم، وبالتالي ظهرت بعض الأخطاء في البيانات. وتقتصر الدراسة إجراء المزيد من الدراسات والأبحاث لمقارنة نتائج هذه الدراسة بدراسات أخرى في سياقات مختلفة لتحديد الاختلافات وتعزيز قابلية تعميم النتائج.</p>	<p>(JAAUTH) المجلد ٢٧، العدد ١، (٢٠٢٤)، ص ٢٧٧-٢٩٢.</p>