Evaluated the Relationship between Sensory Marketing with Customer Satisfaction in Hotel Services

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ABSTRACT − In the business world which is facing with increasing competition among the firms, customers get more aware about the products and services every day. In this regard, it can be stated that today the businesses cannot be sustainable without satisfied customers. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction in the hospitality services. Today, little research has been conducted in Iran to examine the relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction. However, outside of Iran, numerous studies have examined the relationship between experiential marketing and other variables. In order to collect the inventory information, 300 customers of the five-star Samin hotel in the city of Khoie were selected based on random sampling and then the hypotheses were tested through structural equation modeling. This study is applied based on purpose and a descriptive survey based on data collection method. The results of the study indicated that there was a relationship between experiential marketing, hedonistic value and perceived usefulness, perceived service quality with customer satisfaction.
KEYWORDS: Experiential marketing, perceived usefulness, value, hedonistic value, customer satisfaction

Introduction

The experiential marketing is a form of marketing which encourages the individual consumers to win unique experiences and improve the recognition of product or service (Huang 2004). Smith (1999) stated that experiential marketing focuses on consumer experience and considers the consumers as phenomena that feel, act and interact. Today, due to increasing competition between businesses and increasing the awareness and knowledge of customers which makes them to prefer the high quality and high standard product and service and are willing to purchase goods and services quality. In this competitive condition, the businesses and firms will not survive unless they can create their own loyal customers. It can be said that customer satisfaction have great importance to an enterprise because it provides many benefits to an enterprise. Therefore, an enterprise should increase the quality of their goods and services and by attracting and going beyond the customers' expectations; it can create a prolonged and long-term relationship that will be profitable for both sides. Customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are not new concepts. Best Hotels of customer consider customer satisfaction as the most important competitive weapon to achieve their profit. Customer satisfaction is met when the service provided by the hotel meets or exceeds customer expectations. So, in order to survive, the hotels should create convenient standard services on the wishes and desires of their customers (Min, Chung, 2002). Today, many researches out of Iran and at international level have examined the relationship between sensory and experiential marketing on customer satisfaction and functional value and other variables. Some surveys have also been conducted inside Iran but there is no sufficient attention to this aspect of marketing or experiential marketing. The aim of this study was to spread knowledge about the relationship between experiential marketing on customer satisfaction in the hotel services. Experiential marketing provides an important concept to test this relationship because in today's competitive world by changing in marketing and the using experiential marketing and the creation of a deep and emotional and tangible experience allow the consumers to decide be better and easier. Experiential marketing in the future will be the world's premier marketing tool. According to the above mentioned cases, does the experiential marketing affect the customer satisfaction in the hotel services?

Literature research
Experiential Marketing

Experiential marketing: Experiential marketing is a specific marketing tool. It is an idea and a mindset. Experiential marketing is a strategy to strengthen the brand (Robertson & Wilson, 2008). Smith (1999) stated that experiential marketing focuses on consumer experience and considers consumers as phenomena that feel, act and communicate.

Hedonistic value and usefulness

Value can be defined in different ways, for example, in economic terms they refer to the personal values and preferences and tastes. Values have been defined as the stable belief that is a particular behavior or social and even individual behaviors and attitudes and

behaviors toward the opposite (Rokeach, 1973). Researchers are always looking for better and more complete understanding of consumer values. There has been an extensive literature in the field and defined the perceived value as "what the consumer does not get for what they paid" or it is the overall assessment of consumer perceptions of the usefulness of a product or service offered on the basis of what is received (Bakero et al., 1994; Zitemal, 1988).

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is defined as the customer feeling or attitude toward a product or service after applying it. Customer satisfaction is the result of marketing activity which serves as the main link between the various stages of consumer buying behavior. For example, if customers are satisfied by special services, their purchase is likely to be repeated. Satisfied clients may also speak to others about their experiences and as a result, advertising by word of mouth (oral-verbal) are positive effects (Jamal & Naser 2002). Kiuming (2006) showed that consumer satisfaction is directly related to consumer loyalty. The definition of customer satisfaction which is accepted by many experts is: customer satisfaction is a result of the comparison before purchasing from the expected performance with actual achieved performance perception and the cost paid ((Berrli & Martin 2004). Studies show that satisfaction is defined as a response to an evaluation process, especially as a result of the evaluation of the value derived from the consumer shopping experience. The results of studies on the value of the purchase and consent have created a support for the creation to be happy about the relationship between hedonistic purchase value and utilitarianism purchase value (Carpenter, 2007).

Service quality

Service quality can be described from three aspects of physical, situation and behavior. In other words, the quality of service refers to what is provided, a situation in which services are provided, and how it is provided. According Chandar et al (2002) five basic elements of service quality which are important from the customer's perspective include: 1) the main product or service; 2) human element of service; 3) non-human element of service; 4) sensible factors; 5) corporate social responsibility. Service quality in terms of customer perception depends on the intensity and difference between customer expectations of quality and perception of quality. Thus, comparing the expectations of our customers and the perceived quality of service in an organization can represent desirability or undesirability of the organization's standard service (Parasuraman et al., 1998). In a study by (Mehdi Haghighi Kafash and Hamid Bagheri, 2012) it was concluded that there was a direct relationship between customer loyalty and perceived service quality. According to the literature review mentioned above, the conceptual model is presented as follows (Fig.1); The proposed model of the research is developed by Ming Qiu (2006) based on which experiential marketing has a positive impact on the perceived value of the consumer and his satisfaction and directly affects consumer loyalty.
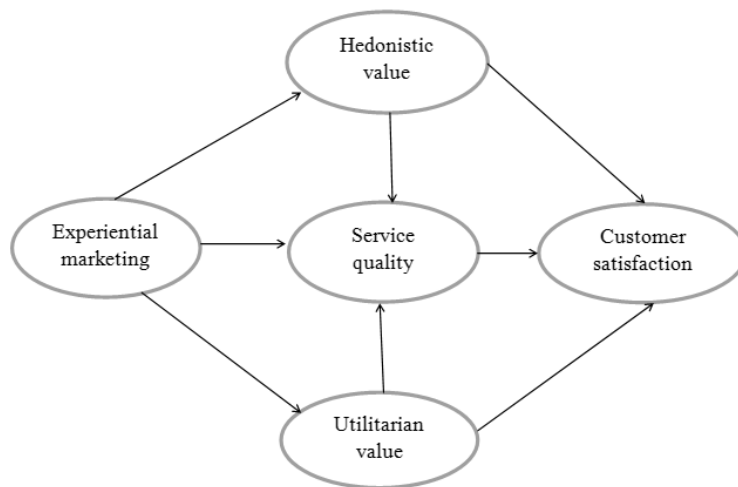

Fig.1: Conceptual Model of the Research

Hypotheses

H1: consumer perceptions of experiential marketing directly affect his hedonistic value.
H2: consumer perceptions of experiential marketing directly affect his utilitarian value.
H3: consumer perceptions of experiential marketing directly affect service quality.
H4: consumer hedonistic value directly affects customer satisfaction.
H5: consumer perceived value directly affects customer satisfaction
H6: service quality directly affects the customer satisfaction.

Research Method
This research is a descriptive survey in terms of methodology and based on correlation method, it is a causal-comparative study. This research is a quantitative research, the required data of which were certain collected by completing a questionnaire. Given that the present study aims to investigate the problem and the issue that is to examine the relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction in the hospitality services and Samin five-star hotel, therefore, it is an applied research conducted in order to identify and create effective and successful processes in Samin hotel. Reliability of the research was approved by the specialists and supervisors and in order to test the reliability of the questionnaire, it was distributed among 30 participants. According to the obtained results, the Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each of the indicators of the study, which is due to the fact that all of them were larger than 6.0, the reliability was acceptable and reflects the intrinsic correlation between variables to evaluate the concepts in question. Thus, it can be said that the questionnaire of the present research has proper reliability. In this study, the random sampling method was used. Due to the unlimited size of the population, the following formula is used to obtain the minimum required samples for research.

$$n = \frac{\left(Z\alpha_{/2}\right)^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{\varepsilon^2}$$

If the ratio of success in the society (p) of 50%, the error level (α) equal to 0.05 and accuracy of 5% are taken into account, the minimum sample size is determined as 384 participants.

$$n = \frac{(z_{\alpha/2})^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{\varepsilon^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5)}{0.05^2} = 384$$

Data collection and Analysis: In this study, descriptive statistics were used for descriptive statistical analysis, and inferential statistics were used to measure the relationship of the proposed hypothesis as follows.

Describing data: Describing data is simply used to provide some descriptive data of the respondents.

Data Analysis: The data that is collected through questionnaires is analyzed in the form of statistical tables and indexes of frequency and distribution. After describing the characteristics of the samples, classifying, coding and abstraction were performed and the statistics of sample were used and the statistical software of Amos was used for statistical analysis and examining the structural equation modeling.

Descriptive statistics relayed to demographic features of the participants
Gender: from a total of 384 participants, 283 (7/73%) were males and 95 (24.7 percent) were female. In addition, 6 participants (6.1%) did not answer the question. A history of using hotels: from among a total of 384 participants, 304 (2/79 percent) had a history of using hotels and 73 (0.19 percent) have used the hotel for the first time. Also 7 participants (8.1%) did not answer the question.

Age: from among a total of 384 participants, the most frequent age range was 35-26 years, with 173 of participants or 1.45 percent and the lowest frequency in the age range of 25 years which included 35 participants or 1/9 percent.

Level of Education: from among a total of 384 participants, 33 of them or 6/8 percent had high school diploma or an associate's degree, 37 of the participants or 6.9 percent had an associate's degree, 230 of the participants or 9.59 percent had bachelor's degree and 80 or 8.20 percent had a master's or Ph.D. degree. In addition, 4 participants equivalent to 1.1% did not answer the question.

Stay: from among a total of 384 participants, in terms of the length of stay, the maximum frequency was for 1 to 2 days with 155 participants or 4/40 % and the lowest frequency was for 1 day period equivalent to 25 participants or 5/6 percent.

Testing Model fitness
RMSE and RMR are bad criteria for model fitness that should be less than 0.08 and less than 0.07, respectively. In addition, CFI is also a goodness criterion for the model and it is better to be more than 0.09 and totally it should more approximate to 1. It is observed that according to the three indicators, the proposed structural model has good fitness (Table 1).

Table 1. Testing Model fitness

Index	Calculated value
RMR	0/037
CFI	0/900
RMSEA	0/082
AGFI	0/902
GFI	0/909

Results of Testing the Research Hypotheses

The Relations between variables based on assumptions show that according to the results (Table 2):

• Experiential marketing independent variable respectively has a direct, positive and significant relationship with the heuristic value, utility value and quality variables with coefficients of 0.612, 0.634 and 0.647 with the error level of 0.05 (critical ratio of greater than 1.96).

• The mediator variable of consumer satisfaction by coefficients of 0.244, 0.163 and 0.345 had direct, significant and positive relationship with the variables of heuristic value, utility value and quality at 0.05 error level.

Table 2. The relationships between variables based on research hypotheses

Relationships between variables	Correlation coefficient	Critical ratio	results
The impact of experiential marketing perception on heuristic value	0/612	15/125	H_1 approved
The impact of experiential marketing perceptions on utilitarian value	0/634	16/024	H_1 approved
The impact of experiential marketing perceptions on service quality	0/647	16/621	H_1 approved
Heuristic value impact on consumer satisfaction	0/224	4/751	H_1 approved
The impact of utilitarian value on customer satisfaction	0/163	3/424	H_1 approved
Impact of service quality on customer satisfaction	0/345	7/237	H_1 approved

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between experiential marketing, perceived heuristic value, , perceived usefulness value, perceived service quality, consumer satisfaction and the development of the model presented by Qiu Ming (2006) in Samin five-star hotel. The independent variable of experimental marketing had a direct, positive and significant relationship with the variables of heuristic value, utilitarian value and service quality (critical ratio is greater than 1.96). The dependent variable of customer satisfaction had a direct, positive and significant relationship with the variables of heuristic value, utilitarian value and service quality.

Research limitations

• The absence of database related to the loyal customers of the hotels which could help a lot in terms of research time.

• Lack of adequate access to targeted customers because of the large number of customers from Turkey.

• Lack of cooperation by some customers in completing the questionnaire.

Functional and Management Recommendations

• The results of this study showed that consumer perceptions of experiential marketing on consumer perceived value that is both pleasant and beneficial impact value thus providing unique experiences to important customers. In this regard, hoteliers can room with proper alignment, proper lighting, proper staining in the rooms, use of appropriate accessories, soft music in the lobby and corridors of the hotel using appropriate sensory experience to offer our clients as well as the exterior facade of the hotel to attract customers.

• Since the heuristic value has a significant impact on the level of customer satisfaction, hence creating a relaxed atmosphere where customers feel pleasure and comfort, can help the customer perceive the heuristic value.

• Given that service quality has a positive impact on consumer satisfaction thus for increasing the satisfaction, some customized services can be provided according to customer specific services. In addition, the hotel staff communication with the customers should be so that it creates the impression that the best quality of service is received and there was no discrimination between customers.

Suggestions for future research

The study population included al the customers of Samin five-star hotels. One of the statistical populations which are considered to examine the relationship between experiential marketing on consumer satisfaction including other hotels, restaurants, coffee shops in other cities. Similar studies can be conducted among foreign customers to compare the difference between the results obtained from Samin hotel.

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