

THE EFFECT OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE DESIGN, RELATIONSHIP QUALITY, AND EMOTION CONNECTION ON LOYALTY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of customer experience design, emotion connection and relationship quality on customer loyalty. Hotel must manage the consumer experience well. When the consumer experience increase, it will give effect to increasing relationships quality and emotional connection. Increasing the quality of the relationship and emotional connection between the consumer and hotel is expected to increase customer loyalty. The sample in this study is 142 respondents. The analysis in this study uses a structural equation model, in which we use Amos version 20 to help data analysis. The result of this study : (1) there are positive and significant effects between customer experience design on relationship quality and between customer experience on emotional connection; (2) there are not any positive and significant effects between customer experience design, emotional connection, and relationship quality on customer loyalty.

Keywords: Customer experience design, Relationship quality, Emotion connection, and Loyalty

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk pengalaman pengaruh desain pengalaman pelanggan, hubungan emosi dan kualitas hubungan terhadap loyalitas pelanggan. Hotel harus mengelola pengalaman konsumen dengan baik. Ketika pengalaman peningkatan konsumen akan berpengaruh terhadap peningkatan kualitas hubungan dan hubungan emosional. Peningkatan kualitas hubungan dan hubungan emosional antara konsumen dan hotel diharapkan dapat meningkatkan loyalitas pelanggan. Sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah 142 responden. Analisis dalam penelitian ini menggunakan model persamaan struktural di mana kita menggunakan Amos versi 20 untuk membantu analisis data. Hasil penelitian ini: (1) terdapat pengaruh positif dan signifikan antara pengalaman pelanggan desain pada kualitas hubungan dan antara pengalaman pelanggan pada hubungan emosional; (2) tidak ada pengaruh positif dan signifikan antara pengalaman pelanggan desain, hubungan emosional, dan kualitas hubungan pada loyalitas customer.

Kata kunci: *Customer experience design*, Hubungan kualitas, *Emotion connection*, dan Loyalitas

JEL Classification: M31

1. Research Background

According to Lashley et al. (2008), the hospitality industry has been used as a word to describe the commercial provision of services, associated with the provision of food, drink and accommodation in restaurants, bars and hotels. The study of

hospitality is described as human behaviour, essentially involves the relationship between host and guest, as well as a blend of tangible and intangible factors (Ariffin and Maghzi 2012). Further more, Ariffin and Maghzi (2012) said that the hospitality is not just about greeting and assisting guests but the warmth and sincerity of speech and the nature of the totality of the help offered.

Hospitality industry is growing significantly in Solo. This is shown by the data of BPPIS (2013). In September 2013, in the city of Solo, there were 28 stars hotels and 77 non-star hotels, and the number of rooms reached 4,500 units. The amount is more than the ones in 2007, which was only 10-star and 70 non-star hotel with room number only 2,800 rooms. Moreover, Solo has become one of the MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition), encourages players in this industry to improve continuously in order to provide the best service.

In their research, Zhang et al. (2013) investigates the key success factor for Hotel Inn in China. One of the key success factors is the way to build a culture that called "harmonious relationship" or O'Connor (2005) called it as "a close kinship". It is the quality of the interactions between service providers and guests, in which guests will remember the best and for a long time. The more qualified the relationship between the consumer and vendor, it can lead to enhance customer loyalty (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2001; Beatson et al. 2008; Ibrahim and Najjar 2008; Jones et al. 2007; Mirpuri and Narwani 2012; Abdul-Rahman and Kamarulzaman 2012). However, there were also studies that examined the relationship quality which did not have a significant effect on customer loyalty (Alejandro et al. 2011; Rauyruen and Miller 2007).

O'Connor (2005) said that hospitality is not just talking about the vendor-customer behavioral, but the experience became the important part. Vendors have to design physical aspects, relationships, and other aspects that are believed able to enhance the consumer experience when using the services of the hotel. For Hotel Inn in China, Zhang et al. (2013) had identified the key success factors that must be considered to be done in designing hotels. Everything should be done to enhance special experience for the customer because experience is one of the factors that can enhance the positive emotions of consumers (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). Marketers must be able to provide a stimulus to consumers so that the consumers' positive emotions is increased which in turn it will lead to loyal customers (White 2006; Barsky and Nash 2002; Bloemer and de Ruyter 1999).

There are several research gaps that explain the differences between the effects of the consumer experience and customer loyalty. Several studies have described that the customer experience has a significant influence on customer loyalty (Brakus et al. 2009; Sahin et al. 2011; Sathish and Venkatesakumar 2011), but there are also some studies explain that there are not any significant effects between customer experience and customer loyalty (Shim 2012; Iglesias et al. 2011).

This paper wants to analyse the impact of customer experience design, relationship quality, and emotion connection on loyalty.

1.1. Literature Review and Hypothesis

1.1.1. Customer Experience Design, Emotion Connection, Relationship Quality

Pine II and Gilmore (1998) described the way the economics change. They explained that economics change from commodity, product and service to experience economics. Schmitt (1999) described about the shifting from "traditional marketing" to "experiential marketing". Traditional marketing more focuses on the feature and benefit that are provided by marketer to customer, while experiential marketing focuses on the sensory, affective, cognitive experience, and relation. Consumer

orientation begin to move away from the activity of purchasing goods and services to the way to get a memorable experience. Researchers believe that the experience is more important than just buying functional products (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Pine II and Gilmore 1998).

To create unique customer experience, we must design several context: physical, relational, and time context (Berry and Carbon 2007; Pullman and Gross 2003, 2004).

Physical context is described as an aspect of the tangible (visible) from design elements. Physical refers to the term mechanical clues that relating to sight, smell, sound, texture, etc. The physical aspect was made to touch the five senses of consumers. Marketers must understand the way to touch all five senses of consumers, where it could enhance the consumer experience. One way to touch the senses of consumers is by providing specific/ unique stimuli (Brakus et al. 2009; Schmitt 1999). Different sensory strategies and sense expressions can create brand awareness and establish a brand image that relates to the customer's identity, lifestyle, and personality (Hultén et al. 2009). Several strategies that can be done include : scents, romantic music, light bulbs, food testing, and many more strategies that can be developed.

Relational refers to the term humanistic clue, where design experience illustrates the relationship between individuals of one another at the time of purchase. Creating good relationships with customers is one way that consumers have experience with venue. For example, employee give friendly greeting, good handling customer complaint, etc. When consumers have experience in the context of relationships with venue, then the consumer will be satisfied with the venue.

Time has become one of the important factors in the design of the consumer experience. More and more people take the time to enjoy the experience provided by the venue, then the person is actually satisfied with the experience gained.

Huang (2001) explains about the application of theories of emotions in marketing. Some experts say that the theory of emotion in lowering of psychological theories and used in marketing (Oliver and Rust 1997; Oliver 1992, 1993 1994; Havlena 1986; Holbrook and Batra 1987; Westbrook and Oliver 1991). Table 1 describes about the characteristic of marketing emotion.

Emotional consumption has become one of the very interesting topic in the hospitality industry (Han and Jeong 2013). Bagozzi et al. (1999) said that emotion as mental state of readiness that arising from the cognitive appraisal of events or thoughts, has a phenomenological tone, accompanied by a psychic process, often expressed physically, and can result in specific actions to affirm or cope with emotions, depending on the nature and meaning to the emotions. Different people will produce different emotional reactions to events or similar events.

In purchasing activities, consumers use their rational choice but consumers are also driven by emotional because when they do consuming, the experience (experience) is shown with fantastic things, feelings and pleasure (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). Bagozzi et al. (1999) describe emotion, such as: a full set of signs or evidence, including evaluative appraisal, subjective feeling, gesture, facial expressions, physiological responses, action tendencies, and overt action. Every company must create unique experience to enhance an emotional connection with its customers. Emotional connection will enhance the brand in the minds of consumers and increase the commitment of the customer (Berry and Carbon 2007).

Table 1. Characteristic of Marketing Emotion

No.	Name (Years)	Variable	Finding
1	Edell and Burke (1987)	Edell and Burke's Ad Feeling Dimensions	They developed model to measure the way an advertisement makes consumer feel, rather than descriptors of ads. The key characteristics of this account are as follows. First, the three dimensions of upbeat, negative, and warm feelings, best capture consumers' emotional responses to ads. Second, feelings are results of exposure to advertising, not antecedent states such as moods. Third, positive and negative feelings are independent and can co-occur.
2	Aaker et al. (1988)	Aaker et al.'s Ad Feelong Cluster	They developed this full range a feeling model with the following characteristic. (1) it identifies 31 feeling clusters (16 positive and 15 negative), representing the range of specific feeling response to advertising. (2) it focuses on the less intense feelings rather than the stronger emotions. (3) using a cluster approach it assumes maximizing differences between emotional clusters.
3	Batra and Holbrook (1990)	Batra and Holbrook's Affective Responses to Ad Categories	First, 12 affective responses evoked by advertising messages are identified. Second, it covers moods, emotions, and drives, as affective responses to ads. Third, emotional responses can be organized into the dimensions of pleasure, arousal, and domination.
4	Richins (1997)	Richins' Consumption Emotion Set (CES)	The set of consumption has the following characteristic: (1) it measures 17 consumption emotion (7 positive, 8 negative, and 2 other), (2) it measures only emotion experienced directly from product consumption, (3) using multidimensional scaling approach it maximizes the differences between emotions.
5	Barsky and Nash (2002)	Hotel-Loyalty Emotion	They developed dimension of emotion in hotel industry. There are 12 dimension of emotion in hotel industry: comfortable, secure, relaxed, welcome, content, respected, prectical, Important, pampered, entertained, excited, elegan, sophisticated, inspired, extravagant, hip and cool.
6	Pullman and Gross (2003)	Pullman and Gross' Emotion dimension	They developed dimension of emotion is like Basic and VIP emotion. Both of emotion dimension had different effect on customer loyalty.
7	Kim and Perdue (2013)	Affective and sensory attribute	The data suggest that hotel managers can effectively differentiate their properties by incorporating affective (comfortable feeling and entertaining) and sensory attributes (overall atmosphere) in their product development and communication strategy.

Source: elaborate, 2014

Vieira (2009) believes that relationship quality is increasingly seen as a key factor of competitive advantage. Crosby et al. (1990) were among the first who defined the relationship quality as a higher-order construct composed of at least two

dimensions, trust in the salespersons and satisfaction with the salesperson. They stated that high relationship quality means that the customer is able to rely on the salesperson's integrity and has confidence in the salesperson's future performance because the level of past performance has been consistently satisfactory. Most researchers agree that the development of relationship quality relies on a customer's evaluation of individual transactions and the relationship as a whole (Barry and Doney 2011). Relationship quality can be seen as key components that reflect the overall nature of a relationship between two parties (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2002) and can be interpreted in terms of accumulated value (Moliner et al. 2007).

Crosby et al. (1990) said that satisfaction, trust, and commitment are presented as the core foundations of relationship quality. In the research quality of the relationship, the three main variables of satisfaction, trust, and commitment are treated as interconnected rather than independent (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2002).

Customer satisfaction is one of the important things in literature and marketing activities (Sathish and Venkatesakumar 2011; Siddiqi 2011). Trust and Commitment is represented as essential part for successful long-term relationship (Morgan and Hunt 1994; Moorman et al. 1993). Moorman et al. (1992) defined trust as a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence. Furthermore, Moorman et al. (1992) said that those definition divided into two approaches. First, considerable research in marketing views trust as a belief, confidence, or expectation about an exchange partner's trustworthiness that results from the partner's expertise, reliability, or intentionality. Second, trust has been viewed as a behavioral intention or behavior that reflects a reliance on a partner and involves vulnerability and uncertainty on the part of the trustor. Commitment represented as positive evaluation of relationship (Moorman et al. 1992).

Experience will enhance customers satisfaction (E. W. Anderson and Mittal, 2000) which may be larger than when customers take functional benefit. In the research conducted Sahin et al. (2011), customer experience have impact on satisfaction and trust. Fournier (1998) found that brand experience will enhance brand relationship.

On a basis of aforementioned finding, the present study will investigate and assess the following hypothesis.

H1 : Customer Experience Design have positive and significant effect to relationship quality.

H2 : Customer Experience Design have positive and significant effect to emotion connection

1.1.2. Customer Loyalty

Companies should focus on maintaining the existing customer base by minimizing the number of lost customers. The one thing to take into consideration is the cost, because the cost of finding new customers is more expensive than retaining existing customers (Griffin 2005). Blackwell et al. (2006) give a simple definition of the customer loyalty where consumers prefer to buy a brand compared to buying brand competitors. A company is said to be successful in managing customer loyalty, if the company is able to make consumers only buy those products. Oliver (1999) defined Brand loyalty as a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product / service consistently in the future, thereby causing the repetitive same brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite the situation of Influences and marketing Efforts to having potential which cause switching behaviors.

The driving factor of consumer loyalty in this study is customer experience design, relationship quality, and emotion connection.

Experience always gives personal touch to the customer (Pullman and Gross, 2004; Schmitt, 1999a, 1999b). To be able to touch the side of the consumer personal, then marketers must provide stimuli in order to create the consumer experience (Brakus et al. 2009). Customer experience will enhance customer loyalty (Brakus et al. 2009; Sahin et al. 2011; Sathish and Venkatesakumar 2011).

The relationship quality approach holds that customer loyalty is largely determined by the limited number of constructs reflecting the “degree of appropriateness of a relationship from the customer point of view” (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2002). Other research also said that relationship quality has positive effect on customer loyalty (Jones et al. 2007; Mirpuri and Narwani 2012; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2001). Relationship quality often divided into satisfaction, trust, and commitment. Customer satisfaction has been regarded as a fundamental determinant in maintaining long-term customer relationship behaviors (Oliver 1980; Anderson and Sullivan 1993). Several researchers described that customer satisfaction had effect on repurchase intention (Boonlertvanich 2009; He et al. 2008; Yang 2009) or loyalty (Christodoulides and Michaelidou 2011; Isstianto et al. 2011; Siddiqi 2011; Skard et al. 2011; Yu and Dean 2001; Zafar et al. 2012).

Consumer emotions must be managed properly. For good moods, positive emotion best predict loyalty (White 2006). Bloemer and de Ruyter (1999) also believe that positive emotion will drive customer on loyalty. In his research, Barsky and Nash (2002) divide emotion into several market segments. Focus of his research is that different market segments will produce different types of emotions. Pullman and Gross (2003) did not divide the type of emotion into several segments, but the emotions are divided into two types, namely basic and VIP emotions. Several researchers at above conclude that emotions connection has a significant effect on customer loyalty (Pullman and Gross 2003, 2004; White 2006; Bloemer and de Ruyter 1999; Barsky and Nash 2002)

On a basis of aforementioned finding, the present study will investigate and asses the following hypothesis.

H3 : Customer Experience Design has positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.

H4 : Relationship Quality has positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.

H5 : Emotion connection has positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.

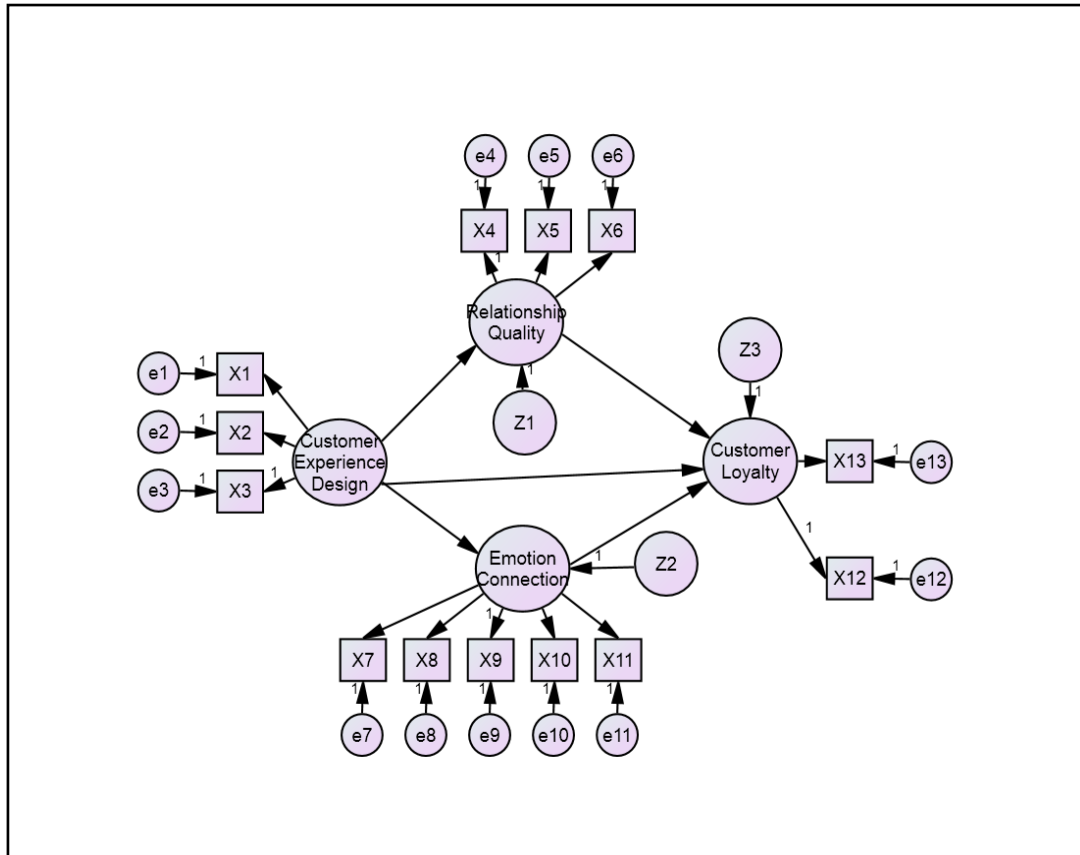
2. Research Methods

2.1. Data Collection

The data come from a survey of the customers of the hotel in Solo, Middle Java, Indonesia. Questionnaires are delivered to approximately 250 respondents but only 142 returned worthy for further analysis. The response rate of this study is 58,6%. Sampling technique in this study is purposive sampling, where the sample is required to take the terms. The requirements include: (1) respondents have stayed at least 2 times in the same hotel; and (2) this research examines consumers of 3 star, 4 star, and 5 star hotels.

2.2. Measurement

Table 2 describes the measurement of this reseach. This study used structural equation modeling (SEM) and Amos 21 in processing the data. The use of SEM is useful because it allows researchers to simultaneously test the measurement model and path model of the relationship between the variables tested. It is also beneficial because it allows the measurement error in both the explanatory variables and the overall model.



Source: Primer Data, 2014

Figure 1. Empirical Research Model

Table 2. Measurement

VARIABLE	ITEMS	Measurement Scale	SOURCE
Customer Experience Design	physical experience relational experience time experience	10 scale (1 for strongly disagree and 10 for strongly agree)	Pullman and Gross (2003); Berry and Carbon (2007)
Relationship Quality	satisfaction trust commitment	10 scale (1 for strongly disagree and 10 for strongly agree)	Chang and Ku (2009); De Cannie`re et al. (2010); Hennig-Thurau et al. (2002)
Emotion Connection	comfort entertained hip and cool sophisticated privilege	10 scale (1 for strongly disagree and 10 for strongly agree)	Pullman and Gross (2003); Barsky and Nash (2002)
Customer Loyalty	Repurchase word of mouth	10 scale (1 for strongly disagree and 10 for strongly agree)	Oliver (1999)

3. Result and Discussion

There are 4 respondents characteristics: Gender, Occupation, Hotel's Name, and Customer Place. Mostly respondents are male (62%). Most of them work as civil servants and private employee. They stayed at several hotels in Solo, such as Agas International (8%), Baron Indah (2%), Indah Palace (2%), Sahid Kusuma Raya (8%), Best Western (15%), Novotel (17%), Solo Paragon (8%), The Sunan (14%), and Lor Inn (10%). Most respondents come from Jakarta.

When we see tabel 3, we can conclude that the data of this study has been reliable and valid. Reliability in this study, can be known from *cronbach alpha* (α) and construct reliability (CR). Cut off of *cronbach alpha* must be more than 0.6 and cut off of CR must be more than 0.7. Reliability in this study is more than cut off as well as the validity in this study. AVE is the measurement of validity. Cutt off of AVE is more than 0.5. AVE of this study is more than cut off.

Table 3. Reliability and Validity

Constructs and Measurement Items	Standardized loadings	α	CR	AVE
Customer Experience Design		0.859	0.862	0.677
• Physical Context (X1)	0.733			
• Relational Context (X2)	0.889			
• Time Context (X3)	0.839			
Relationship Quality		0.869	0.869	0.690
• Satisfaction (X4)	0.826			
• Trust (X5)	0.835			
• Commitment (X6)	0.831			
Emotional Connection		0.933	0.934	0.741
• Comfort (X7)	0.903			
• entertained (X8)	0.830			
• Hip and Cool (X9)	0.898			
• sophisticated (X10)	0.805			
• privilege (X11)	0.863			
Customer Loyalty		0.872	0.872	0.773
• Stayback	0.862			
• Word of Mouth	0.896			

Reflective, 10 points Likert answer scale, (1) strongly disagree — (10) Strongly Agree. Please comment on the characteristics of the industry you are active in Disagree” and “Strongly Agree

Source: Primer Data, 2014

Model measurement uses AMOS 21.0 software and applies the maximum likelihood (ML) procedure. The statistical outcomes demonstrates the model which fits the data well ($\chi^2=110,704$; GFI=0.898; AGFI= 0.845; NFI=0.941; and RMSEA=0.077).

In Tabel 4 and Figure 2, we can conclude that just two hypothesis that are supported (H1 and H2), whereas H3, H4, and H5 are rejected.

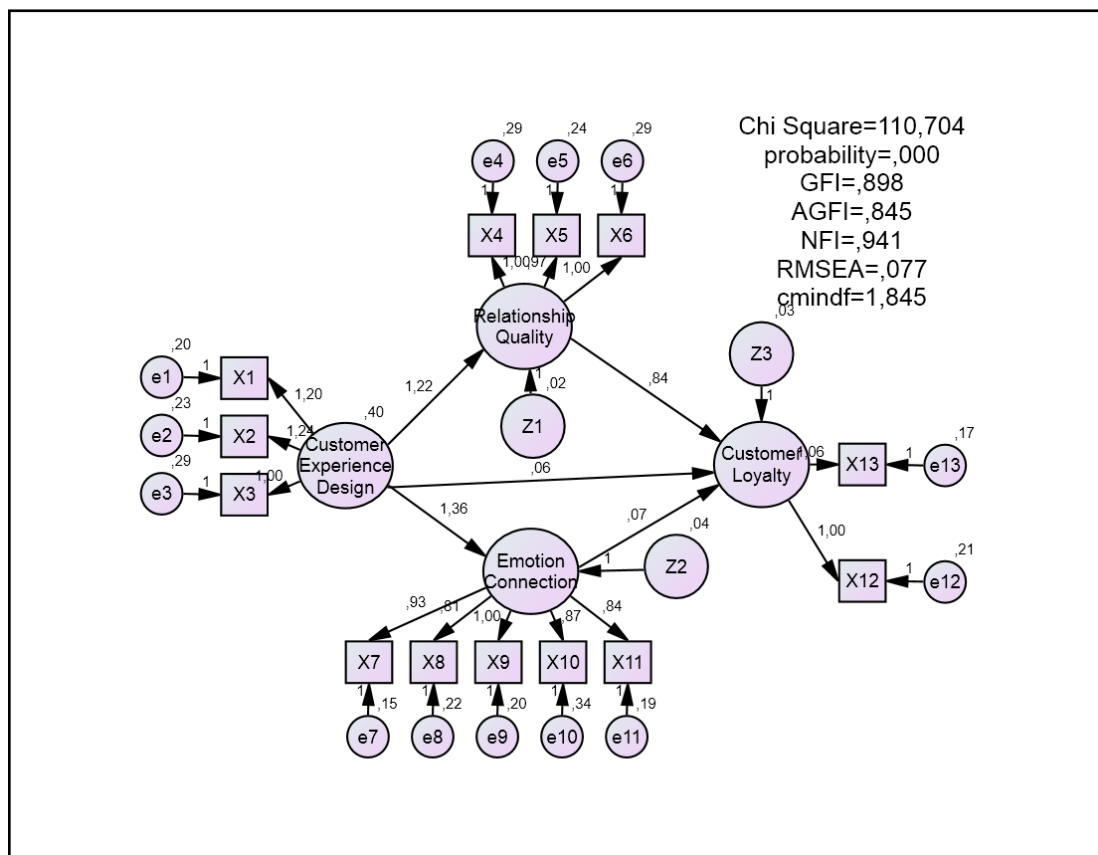
Various strategies are developed in order to consumers to have a memorable experience. Company must create design that will enhance customer experience. There are three things that must be considered. Pullman and Gross (2003) call them as the physical, relational, and time context. First, Physical design aspect tends to awaken the senses of consumers. For example, create a unique building, lighting, scent, and many other things that could be developed. Relational design tends to provide an experience

that relationships are built by the hotel is able to provide a feel of its own experience to consumers. While the design is more time focusing on consumers' desire for more time in the hotel venue. These designs that will be used to enhance relationship quality, customer loyalty and emotion connection.

Tabel 4. Hypothesis Testing

				Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Hypothesis test
H2:	Emotion_Connection	<---	Customer_Experience_Design	1.358	0.12	11.295	***	Supported
H1:	Relationship_Quality	<---	Customer_Experience_Design	1.22	0.117	10.423	***	Supported
H3:	Customer_Loyalty	<---	Relationship_Quality	0.836	0.807	1.036	0.3	Not Supported
H4:	Customer_Loyalty	<---	Emotion_Connection	0.072	0.374	0.192	0.848	Not Supported
H5:	Customer_Loyalty	<---	Customer_Experience_Design	0.062	1.306	0.047	0.962	Not Supported

Source: Primer Data, 2014



Source: Primer Data, 2014

Figure 2. Full Structural Analysis

The results of hypothesis testing in this study discovered there is impact between customer experience design on relationship quality (H1 accepted). The results of this study together with some previous researchers (Anderson and Mittal 2000; Sahin et al. 2011). The impact of customer experience design can be seen from the increasing satisfaction, trust and commitment to customers. Third, it is exactly what the build quality relationships between the customers.

In this study, customer experience design have a positive and significant effect on emotion connection. The hotel management is creating a design that is able to deliver a unique customer experience. The hotel management is inherently believe that

emotion and personal experience (Pullman and Gross 2004). Memorable guest experience will enhance emotion, like comfort, happy, satisfy, entertained, relaxed, and amused (Pullman and Gross 2004; Barsky and Nash 2002).

There are 3 hypotheses that are rejected, such as: relationship quality on customer loyalty (H3), emotion connection on customer loyalty (H4), and customer experience design on loyalty (H5). Different premises previous research that states there is a positive and significant effect between relationship quality on customer loyalty (Christodoulides and Michaelidou 2011; Isstianto et al. 2011; Siddiqi 2011; Skard et al. 2011; Yu and Dean 2001; Zafar et al. 2012), emotion connection on customer loyalty (Pullman and Gross 2003, 2004), and customer experience design on loyalty (Pullman and Gross 2003, 2004; White 2006; Bloemer and de Ruyter 1999; Barsky and Nash 2002).

Relationship quality, emotional connection, and customer experience design does not have a significant effect on consumer loyalty may be due to, (1) the type of customer loyalty. It may need to consider other indicators such as loyalty premium price or follow the community (member of the hotel). (2) The characteristic of respondents. As many as 62% of respondents are male. Hotels should consider the way to manage hotel. Consider gender as a way to create an memorable experience, build quality relationships, and create emotional. (3) the purpose of the consumer in choosing a hotel. It should also be researched on the consumer purpose when staying in hotels in Solo, whether for vacation, work, seminars, or other activities. When the researchers understand what the main purpose of the consumer in choosing a hotel, it can be determined the appropriate indicator in each variable.

4. Conclusion

Companies should consider the way they build their customers experience, ability to enhance the emotional experience, satisfaction, trust, commitment, and customer loyalty. The current study found the absence of the influence of design on the customer experience, customer loyalty, relationship quality on customer loyalty, and emotion connection on customer loyalty. The results of the study differ from previous research.

For future research, it is advisable to divide the intent and purpose of consumers to stay at the hotel, whether the goal is to family, work, or other. There is a possibility that it could be demonstrated any antecedent significant impact on customer loyalty.

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