



Antecedents and Consequences of Customer Brand Identification

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Abstract

This study expands the understanding of social exchange theory towards more perceiving of customer motives towards participation behaviour. However, experienced hotel and travel agency management gives their customers the idiosyncratic chance to involve themselves in making their own service. Such an opportunity creates a competitive advantage for their enterprise and maintains loyalty from their customers' side. The objectives of this study are to investigate the impact of product and technology-based service innovativeness on customer brand identification, assess the effect of experiential and promotional innovativeness on customer brand identification and explore the moderating role of customer brand identification in shaping customer participation behavior. By investigating 353 hotel and travel agency customers in travel agencies category A and five-star hotels in Egypt. The results proved that hotel and travel agency innovativeness significantly impacts customer brand identification which influences customer participation behavior. However, the study findings enriched the sector practitioners with recommendations and suggestions to strengthen brand identification customer loyalty and participation behavior dramatically. The study examines tourism sector innovation concepts by integrating theories on innovativeness management and brand identity. It seeks to enhance brand identity research and fill the gap in innovation acceptance literature.

Keywords: Product innovativeness, Technology Based Service Innovativeness, Experiential innovativeness, Brand Identification, Customer Participation Behaviour.

1. Introduction

Researchers in the hospitality and tourism industry have looked into value co-creation from the customer perspective (Arica et al., 2023). This includes customer citizenship and participation behaviors, which enable customers to participate in the process of creating value (Balikcioglu et al., 2022). Customers significantly influence the

formation of service experiences, in the tourism industry (AbdelAziz et al., 2023). The delivery of services can provide exceptional and unforgettable moments and have a significant impact on how customers perceive value (Acikgoz and Tasci 2022). Customer value co-creation is critical for differentiating a hotel/ travel agency since as it enhances customer perceptions of value, contentment,

and loyalty as well as employee performance and satisfaction (Wong et al., 2022; Prakash and Ambedkar, 2023). To acquire competitive advantages and maintain sustainable operations, the hospitality and tourism industry must actively foster value co-creation processes (Pham et al., 2022; Parris and Guzmán, 2023). Scholars have examined value co-creation from three key perspectives: the customer, the business, and the service environment (Chen, 2019). Innovativeness plays a critical role in this process by promoting consumer involvement and participation (Buhalis et al., 2023). While innovativeness has been studied from a variety of point of views (Balikcioglu et al., 2022), it is most commonly examined in relation to tourism services and customer adoption of new experiences (Gupta et al., 2022). Hotel and travel agency innovation serves as an external driver of co-creation behaviors, whereas consumer innovativeness represents an internal motivation that encourages customers to engage with new service concepts (Pham et al., 2022; Parris and Guzmán, 2023). Consumer innovativeness, characterized by the readiness to adopt new products and services, indicates a customer's propensity to engage with novel experiences in tourism and hospitality sector. (Chen, 2019; Arici et al., 2022; Hassan and Magdy, 2024).

Customers' willingness to embrace new goods, services, and technology is referred to as consumer innovativeness (Nangpiire et al., 2022; Nájera-Sánchez et al., 2022). Because it has a big impact on how customers interact with new goods, researchers find that consumer innovativeness is a crucial factor in determining the adoption of new products (Arica et al., 2023). Hotel and travel agency innovativeness in the tourism industry refers to companies that create and apply novel concepts, ideas, and procedures while launching exclusive services before rivals (Balikcioglu et al., 2022). Businesses use a multi-stage process called innovation to turn concepts into distinctive goods and services that set them apart in a crowded market (Tho, 2019; Lyu et al., 2023). Sustaining a solid competitive advantage in the modern tourism

sector requires constant innovation (Prakash and Ambedkar, 2023).

According to Innovation Diffusion Theory, individuals perceive and adopt innovation differently based on their personal tendencies and attitudes toward new products and services (Pham et al., 2022; Parris and Guzmán, 2023; Chen, 2019). Consumers that have a strong inclination towards innovation are more likely to accept recently created goods and services. When individuals believe an offering is new and valuable, they are more inclined to interact with it (Hassan et al., 2022; Wong et al., 2022; Prakash and Ambedkar, 2023; Magdy, 2023).

Additionally, consumers are more likely to investigate the service, engage in brand-related activities, and communicate with the provider when they believe an innovation to be better than current alternatives (Tho, 2019; Lyu et al., 2023). These clients thus exhibit greater levels of value co-creation engagement, actively participating in the innovation process and improving their overall customer service experience (AbdelAziz et al., 2023).

Numerous researchers have examined the cognitive processes underlying customer brand identification (Arica et al., 2023). Brand identification refers to a customer's perceived affiliation—either formal or informal—with a brand (Chen, 2019). Rooted in Social Identity Theory, customer brand identification explains why individuals form strong connections with specific brands (Foroudi et al., 2022). Innovative consumers are more likely to gravitate toward brands that offer cutting-edge features, as these brands align with their self-concept and aspirations (Pham et al., 2022; Parris and Guzmán, 2023). The symbolic meaning and self-congruity associated with these brands enhance customer satisfaction and deepen their identification with the brand (Balikcioglu et al., 2022). Consequently, consumer innovativeness positively influences brand identification (Nangpiire et al., 2022; Nájera-Sánchez et al., 2022). Moreover, according to the Social Identity Theory (SIT), consumers identify with a brand when they believe that its image aligns with their own beliefs (Lintumäki and Koll, 2024). Innovative services and technologies in the tourism

industry enable patrons to identify with a brand that they consider to be special and modern. Strong brand identification drives participation behaviours including social media interaction and word-of-mouth promotion, as well as customer loyalty and engagement (Foroudi et al., 2022).

However, the Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) explains the differences in customers' desire to use novel tourism services (Magdy and Hassan, 2024). Consumers that exhibit high levels of innovation are more likely to embrace new products, which strengthens their brand loyalty. Customers' participation and engagement behaviors, which are important factors in value co-creation, improve as they come to identify with the innovative brand (Pham et al., 2022; Parris and Guzmán, 2023). Research use model, which examines the relationship between hotel and travel agency innovativeness, customer brand identification, and customer engagement behavior, is based on these theories taken together.

The effects of customer participation in services have received little attention (Li and Hsu, 2017) and how product innovativeness, technology-based service innovativeness, experiential innovativeness, and brand innovativeness collectively shape customer brand identification despite the fact that customer brand identification is essential for building brand loyalty and promoting customer participation behavior in the fiercely competitive tourism sector (Jeseo et al., 2024). Consumer brand identification and consumer participation behavior in tourism innovation have not been extensively studied. The lack of clarity in the research makes it unclear how innovation improves brand relationships and customer engagement. Therefore, the study aims to investigate the impact of product and technology-based service innovativeness on customer brand identification, assess the effect of experiential and promotional innovativeness on customer brand identification and explore the moderating role of customer brand identification in shaping customer participation behavior. However, this study contributes in expressing in a theoretical model the influence of hotel and travel agency

innovativeness upon customer brand identification (Tho, 2019; Lyu et al., 2023). In addition, scrutinizing the influence of customer brand identification on customer participation behaviors (Magdy and Hassan, 2024; Wong et al., 2022; Prakash and Ambedkar, 2023). Furthermore, meager the academic gab of researchers' investigation upon the influence of innovations acceptance degree and brand identification (Nangpiire et al., 2022; Nájera-Sánchez et al., 2022).

The study provides practical guidance for hotel and travel agency managers, supervisors and staff on effectively utilizing new products, technology, experiences, and branding to enhance brand loyalty and customer engagement. It offers actionable advice for developing improved branding and marketing strategies that foster stronger emotional connections with customers, ultimately leading to increased involvement, loyalty, enhanced customer experiences, and better business outcomes. Eventually, this research will strengthen the mutual knowledge concerning the relationship between hotel and travel agency innovation, brand identification and customer participation behavior. Such correlations could give hospitality practitioners a clear understanding of customer behaviors and how to positively deal with them.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Product innovativeness and customer brand identification

Product innovativeness positively influences brand identification in hotels and travel agencies, a social identity viewpoint can assist explain the interaction between a firm and its stakeholders. Brands promote social identity creation, which leads to enhanced attitudes and behavior towards the brand, hence satisfying self-verification requirements (Rather, 2017). Consumer and firm innovativeness have been found to positively affect customer brand identification (CBI) in the tourism industry (Yen, 2023). This relationship is further supported by research showing that green industry practices, which can be considered a

form of product innovation, are positively related to consumer brand identification (Dang-Van et al., 2023). The link between innovativeness and brand identification is also reinforced by findings that AI quality, particularly system timeliness, significantly affects customer-brand identification in hotels and travel agencies (Nguyen et al., 2021). Interestingly, while innovativeness positively influences brand identification, the relationship between brand identification and loyalty is not always direct. So et al. (2013) suggest that customer brand identification is an indirect predictor of hotels and travel agencies brand loyalty, mediated by factors relating to service experiences. This implies that while innovativeness can enhance brand identification, other factors also play a role in building brand loyalty. In conclusion, product innovativeness appears to have a positive influence on brand identification in the tourism industry. This relationship is supported by various studies examining different aspects of innovation, including green practices (Aly, 2023) and AI implementation. However, it's important to note that brand identification alone may not be sufficient to ensure brand loyalty, hotels and travel agencies should consider multiple factors in their branding strategies. According to Social identity theory, the brand identity is crucial factors in customer engagement, enhancing brand-customer relationships and offering insights for developing effective communication strategies (Jang and Kim, 2024). The diffusion of innovation theory shows adoption and identifies dissemination variables for new ideas, products, and practices in a social system, it works for understanding consumer approval of new items for the tourism community (Wang et al., 2024). Based on the previous discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1. Product innovativeness positively influences brand identification

2.2 Technology based service innovativeness and customer brand identification

Technology-based service (TBS) innovativeness indeed positively influences brand identification in hotels and travel agencies, as evidenced by several studies in the provided context. Research shows that firm innovativeness, including technological innovations, positively affects customer brand identification (CBI) in the tourism industry (Yen, 2023). This relationship is further supported by findings that green hotel practices, which often involve technological innovations, are positively related to consumer brand identification (Dang-Van et al., 2023). The impact of innovativeness on brand identification is also observed in the restaurant and travel packages sector, where brand innovativeness influences customer loyalty through perceived quality (Kim et al., 2021). Interestingly, the degree of co-creation in technology-based services plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between customer innovativeness and adoption intention, as well as customer satisfaction (Kamboj and Gupta, 2018). This suggests that involving customers in the innovation process can enhance their identification with the brand. Furthermore, AI quality, particularly in terms of information currency and system flexibility, significantly affects customer flow and brand identification in hotels and travel agencies (Nguyen et al., 2021). In conclusion, technology-based service innovativeness positively influences brand identification in the hotel industry by enhancing customer experiences, facilitating co-creation, and improving service quality. Hotels can leverage this relationship to build stronger customer-brand connections and ultimately increase brand loyalty (So et al., 2013). However, it's important to note that the effectiveness of technological innovations may vary depending on the hotel segment and customer type (Victorino et al., 2005), highlighting the need for targeted innovation strategies. Social identity theory discusses how perceived membership affects behavior, especially in global competition, and how technology-based services can boost consumer value, brand identification, and loyalty (Wu and Lin, 2016).

Based on the previous discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2. Technology Based Service Innovativeness positively influences brand identification

2.3 Experiential innovativeness and customer brand identification

In the hospitality and tourism industry, experiential innovativeness plays a pivotal role in shaping customer perceptions and strengthening brand identification (Kim et al., 2019). Research suggests that innovative experiences create memorable brand interactions, fostering deeper customer-brand connections (Teng and Chen, 2021). Tourism innovations such as AI-powered front office operations, travel packages, AI chatbots, and robotic assistants enhance guest experiences by increasing efficiency, satisfaction, and engagement (Aly, 2024). Beyond brand identification, experiential innovativeness also influences brand attachment, forming a deeper emotional connection between customers and the brand (Teng and Chen, 2021). This indicates that innovative experiences not only help customers identify with a brand but also nurture long-term emotional bonds.

Moreover, in the hospitality and tourism sector, experiential innovations elevate symbolic value, positioning customers as members of an exclusive, forward-thinking community (Foroudi et al., 2022). This sense of self-congruity strengthens brand identification, as individuals naturally gravitate toward brands that align with their aspirational self-image (Balikcioglu et al., 2022). When guests perceive a hotel's and travel agency's innovations as distinctive and superior to competitors, their brand identification intensifies, leading to greater brand loyalty and advocacy (Arica et al., 2023). Additionally, customers who strongly associate with an innovative brand are more likely to engage in co-creation activities, such as sharing feedback, writing reviews, and participating in brand-driven initiatives (AbdelAziz et al., 2023). Empirical findings further support this perspective, showing that

experiential elements—particularly the "feel-think-act" framework—enhance service quality perceptions across both local and global hotel and travel agency brands (Yoon and Lee, 2017). By delivering unique and innovative experiences, hotels and travel agencies can differentiate themselves in a highly competitive market, fostering stronger customer-brand relationships and ultimately improving business performance (So et al., 2013; Tajeddini, 2009).

From an Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) perspective, experiential innovation is a multi-stage process that enables hotels and travel agencies to transform ideas into exclusive services, setting them apart from competitors (Ghali et al., 2024). This strategic focus on innovation is critical for success, as it accelerates customer adoption and strengthens brand affiliation. Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3. Experiential innovativeness positively influences brand identification

2.4 Brand innovativeness and customer brand identification

Brand innovativeness is a crucial factor influencing consumer brand identification (CBI) within the tourism sector (Rather, 2022). Per Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT), consumers are more inclined to adopt and interact with brands perceived as innovative (Kamboj and Sharma, 2023). This clarified how perceived brand innovativeness amplifies customer brand engagement (CBI) and customer value co-creation behaviors (CVCBs), resulting in heightened customer engagement and brand loyalty (Yen, 2023).

The effect of green service innovation and sustainability initiatives is pivotal in strengthening this relationship, as articulated by Social Identity Theory, especially within the luxury hotel sector and global travel agents, where consumers are progressively prioritizing eco-friendly practices (Dang-Van et al., 2023). In addition to direct impacts, the association between brand innovativeness and CBI is affected by perceived relationship orientation (PBRO), which influences

customer perceptions of their connection to a brand (Rather et al., 2024). A robust PBRO cultivates brand recognition, therefore improving essential business metrics such as elevated share of wallet, expanded consideration set, and heightened revisit intention (Casidy et al., 2017; Elkhwesky et al., 2024). This corresponds with Customer Value Co-Creation Theory, which posits that engaged customers actively partake in brand-related activities, such as providing feedback and engaging in promotions (Sadighha et al., 2024). Furthermore, brand innovativeness and a green image affect multiple dimensions of brand experience—namely sensory, affective, cognitive, relational, and behavioral aspects—which partially mediate their influence on brand satisfaction (Nysveen et al., 2018). This indicates that innovative and sustainable branding tactics not only augment brand recognition but also increase the overall customer experience and foster long-term brand loyalty (Bing et al., 2024).

In conclusion, the integration of promotional innovativeness with sustainable practices and ethical branding substantially enhances customer brand identification. The relationship is additionally influenced by perceived quality, brand experience, and customer value co-creation behaviors (Agu et al., 2024). Hotel and travel agency managers could utilize these insights to cultivate creative and sustainable practices that meet customer expectations, so strengthening brand identity and improving business success (Dang-Van et al., 2023; Nysveen et al., 2018; Yen, 2023). Based on the previous discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4. Brand innovativeness positively influences brand identification

2.5 Customer brand identification and customer participation behavior

Customer Brand Identification (CBI) significantly influences customer participation behavior (CPB) within the tourism industry. Strong identification with a brand leads

individuals to internalize its values, resulting in increased engagement in activities that strengthen their connection to the brand. This theoretical perspective elucidates the correlation between customers with a robust Customer Brand Identification (CBI) and their propensity to engage in value co-creation behaviors (CVCBs), including feedback provision, online review writing, and brand advocacy (Yen, 2023). This is consistent with research indicating that perceived innovativeness enhances brand engagement, subsequently promoting participatory behaviors (Kim et al., 2017; Rather et al., 2019).

The relationship between CBI and customer participation is bidirectional. Research indicates that customer participation may enhance customer brand involvement (CBI), fostering a positive cycle of engagement (González-Mansilla et al., 2019). Furthermore, the consumer-perceived ethicality of a brand can enhance customer-based brand identification, thereby indirectly fostering customer participation through heightened brand loyalty (Fatma and Rahman, 2017). The positive impact of CBI on customer participation behavior in hotels and travel agencies is well-documented in various studies. This relationship underscores the significance of cultivating robust brand identification among hotel and travel agency customers to promote active engagement and value co-creation. Hotels and travel agencies can utilize this insight to formulate strategies that improve CBI, thereby increasing customer engagement and loyalty (Cha et al., 2015; So et al., 2013). Based on the previous discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H5. Customer brand identification positively influences customer participation behavior

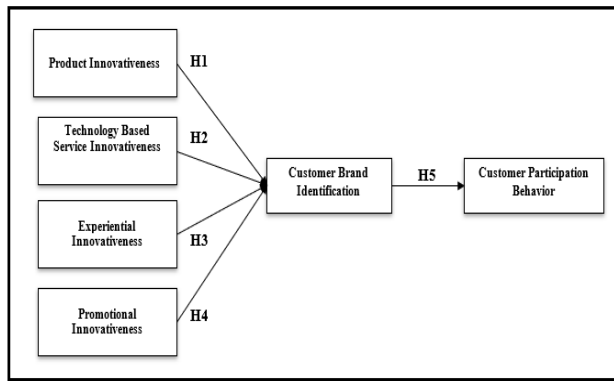


Figure 1. The Research Hypothetical Framework

3. Methods

3.1 Procedure and sample

The researchers adopted a positivist research philosophy. Quantitative data were collected using a web-based questionnaire directed at hotel and travel agency category. A customer from different hotels and travel agencies in Egypt. Using questionnaires for data collection is useful to reduce bias, achieve good response rates, acquire high-quality, usable data, obtain more honest and frank answers, and yield quantitative data (Bartram, 2019. Van-Gelder et al. (2010) confirmed that using a web-based survey is a very efficient and effective way for data collection because it expedites data processing and analysis and eliminates the need for cumbersome and expensive transfer and tracking of forms, data entry, and verification. Further, previous scholars used online methods for collecting data because of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions in Egypt and the need for social distancing (Salem et al., 2021). We randomly chose a portion of our target sample to get the survey link using modern web survey techniques, making sure each participant had an equal likelihood of being included (khan, 2024). Our approach follows the highest standards in research technique and reflects our dedication to accuracy (Saunders and Darabi, 2024). The current research asked a sample of 10 academic specialists in hotels and 7 in travel agencies management to address any issues with the questionnaire after it had been created. The validity of the measurement items and substance as well as the questionnaire's

clarity was requested by the authors from specialists. A few changes to the questionnaire's structure were made in response to their helpful recommendations. The survey's findings were supported by every specialist. Subsequently, a pilot study was issued to 35 hotel and 19 travel agency customers to check for the instrument's validity, assess the translated Arabic version of the questionnaire, minimize measurement error, and assure the content before gathering the final data. This procedure helps the authors make slight changes to the measurement items. A stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of 46 five-star hotels and 21 travel agencies category A from different destinations in Egypt, accounting for 30% of the total population of hotels and travel agencies (EHA, 2020). Then, a simple random sampling was used to select the participants.

The data for this study were gathered over a period of five months, from the third of May to the end of October. The selected duration allows for adequate enrolment of participants and attainment of the target sampling size, during the month of October 2022, the final data were collected. First, drawing on the Egyptian Hotel Association (2022) and the Egyptian travel agent's association (2022), researchers obtained the email addresses of all the human resources managers in the Egyptian hotels and travel agents category A. Second, the researchers emailed the managers and asked them to distribute the questionnaire as an attached URL hyperlink, to their enterprises, indicating the aim of the research. Last, two follow-up emails were sent to the directors until the survey closed to increase their response rate. The authors employed a non-probability convenience sampling to gather the required data (Saunders and Darabi, 2024), especially since the population is very large (Etikan et al., 2016; Salem et al., 2021) and the difficulty of the Egyptian context (Saunders and Darabi, 2024). Previous scholars used convenience sampling to collect data in tourism and hospitality research (Elkhwesky et al., 2024). With a high level of participation, non-probability sampling could

provide robust data and good quality results (khan, 2024).

3.2. Measures

Hotel and travel agency innovativeness was measured via eighteen items from Kim et al. (2018) to measure product innovativeness, technology-based service innovativeness, experiential innovativeness, and promotional innovativeness. Further, brand identification was measured using five items from Shin et al. (2020). Moreover, customer participation behavior was measured using five items from McCroskey et al. (2006). However, responses to the items rated on five-point scales range from (1 strongly disagree) to (5 strongly agree).

4. Results

4.1. Sample Characteristics

After data screening was completed, a complete description of the respondents' profiles was reported to convey the context in which this research was explored. The age of most of the respondents (84%) was in the category ranging from 18 to 45 years old. Otherwise, respondents whose age is more than 45 years represented only 16%.; this may have an influence on the results. Also, the higher percentage (62.9%) of respondents had bachelor's degrees. Furthermore, the highest percentage of respondents (33.4%) were students or recently graduated. Moreover, according to respondents' marital status, the highest percentage of them were married (53.3%). In sum, the overall characteristics of the sample are young, married/recently graduated, highly educated, and from different nationalities.

4.2 Confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement model

According to Liu et al. (2020), the confirmatory factor analysis is a tool, which is used to assess the psychometric characteristics of the specified items in each dimension in the research. With regard to Jung and Yoon (2020), the confirmatory factor analysis is a type of statistical and arithmetical analysis that enables researchers to evaluate the validity of

the measured items. Thus, in order to assess the validity of the measured items, the researcher first demonstrated a confirmatory factor analysis on the following dimensions: PD (Product Innovativeness), TBS (Technology Based Service), EIN (Experiential Innovativeness), PMI (Promotional Innovativeness), CBI (Customer Brand Identification), CPB (Customer Participation Behavior), CCB (Customer Citizenship Behavior) and CSI (Customer Switching Intention). The results demonstrated that model fit of data well. Also, Cronbach's alpha demonstrated internal consistency (≥ 0.90). The validity of the measured items was divided into convergent validity and discriminant validity for verification as shown in figure (2).

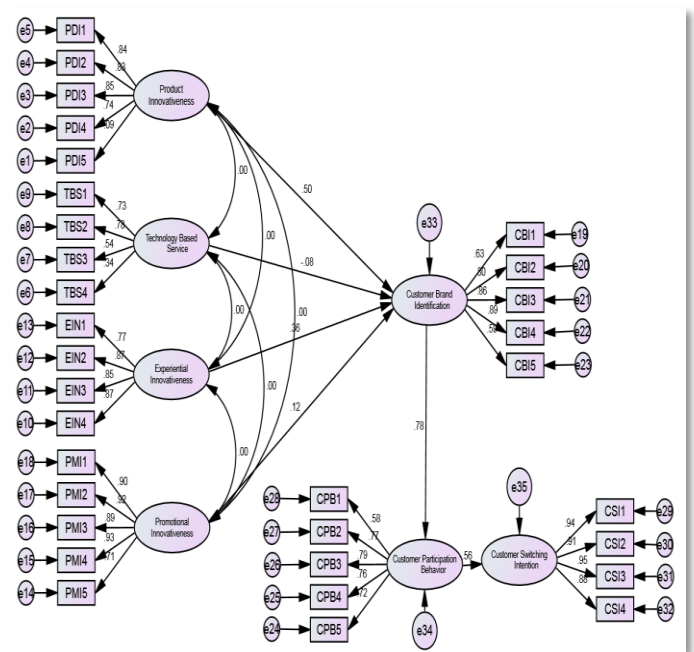


Figure 2: The Measurement Model

In addition, the evaluation standards for convergent validity (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) were standardized factor loading ≥ 0.6 ($p < 0.001$), average variance extracted ≥ 0.5 and composite construct reliability ≥ 0.7 . All the potential factors used in this study were found to satisfy this standard (Bratt and Fagerström, 2020). In sum, table (1) summarizes the qualities of the measurement model. All survey items had high factor loadings, ranging

from 0.811 to 0.977, and were significantly associated with their specified constructs ($p < .001$). The composite reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.935 to 0.987, which exceed the recommended thresholds of 0.60, thus indicating internal consistency (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.633 to 0.987, which exceed the recommended value of 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), and thus confirm convergent validity. Last, the AVE values for each construct were greater than the squared correlation between constructs and thus indicate discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 1: Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Dimensions	Loadings	Cronbach α	CR	AVE
<i>Product Innovativeness</i>				
PD11	0.84	0.811	0.977	0.822
PD12	0.83			
PD13	0.85			
PD14	0.74			
PD15	0.89			
<i>Technology Based Service</i>				
TPS1	0.73	0.823	0.957	0.774
TPS2	0.78			
TPS3	0.54			
TPS4	0.34			
<i>Experiential Innovativeness</i>				
EIN1	0.77	0.977	0.979	0.987
EIN2	0.87			
EIN3	0.85			
EIN4	0.87			
<i>Promotional Innovativeness</i>				
PMI1	0.90	0.898	0.987	0.697
PMI2	0.92			
PMI3	0.89			
PMI4	0.93			
PMI5	0.71			
<i>Brand Identification</i>				
CB11	0.63	0.899	0.935	0.633
CB12	0.80			
CB13	0.86			
CB14	0.89			
CB15	0.59			
<i>Participation Behavior</i>				
CPB1	0.58	0.954	0.967	0.646
CPB2	0.77			
CPB3	0.79			
CPB4	0.76			
CPB5	0.72			

All factor loadings are significant at ($p < 0.001$). (CR=composite reliability; AVE=average variance extract

4.3 Measurement model

For verification, the validity of the measured items is divided into convergent validity and discriminant validity. However, the results demonstrated that the eight-factor model fit the data well, root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) is lower than 0.08 and Tucker– Lewis index (TLI), incremental fit index (IFI) and comparative fit index (CFI) are higher than 0.90 (Hu and Bentler, 1999), as shown in Table 2. In addition, the Cronbach’s alpha demonstrated the internal consistency (>

0.7) (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Actually, the evaluation standards for convergent validity (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) were standardized factor loading ≥ 0.6 ($p < 0.001$), average variance extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.5 and composite construct reliability ≥ 0.7 , as shown in Table 2. Moreover, all the potential factors used in this research were found to satisfy this standard (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Therefore, the measurement model is considered suitable for proceeding with hypothesis testing using SPSS-AMOS software.

Table 2: Model fit summary of research constructs

Modification Indices	CMIN/DF	GFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Product Innovativeness	2.6	.932	.933	.974	.958	0.02
Technology Based Service	2.7	.921	.924	.995	.977	0.05
Experiential Innovativeness	3.8	.966	.966	.933	.973	0.04
Promotional Innovativeness	3.8	.983	.957	.948	.977	0.07
Brand Identification	2.5	.932	.951	.922	.968	0.05
Participation Behavior	2.5	.990	.954	.978	.991	0.06

Notes: CMIN/DF = chi square/ degrees of freedom; (GFI) = goodness of fit index; (NFI) = normed fit index; (TLI) = Tucker and Lewis index; (CFI) = comparative fit index; root mean square error of approximation = (RMSEA)

4.4 Testing hypotheses and discussion

The researcher used a structural equation modelling approach by using AMOS. The results of hypothesis testing are outlined in Table 3. All the hypotheses were supported which shows a strong relationship among the constructs proposed by the virtue of this study. As shown in Table 3, regarding the first hypothesis, product innovativeness positively influences hotel and travel agency brand identification as proposed through H1 is supported ($\beta = 0.38$, $\text{sig} < 0.001$); technology-based service positively influences hotel and travel agency brand identification as proposed through H2 is supported ($\beta = 0.45$, $\text{sig} < 0.001$), Experiential innovativeness influences positively on hotel and travel agency brand identification as proposed through H3 is supported ($\beta = 0.72$, $\text{sig} < 0.001$) and promotional innovativeness influences positively on hotel and travel agency brand identification as proposed through H4 is supported ($\beta = 0.74$, $\text{sig} < 0.001$). The results confirmed that innovative hotels and travel

agencies give customers enduring brand experiences, which strengthen brand loyalty (Carida, 2022). Also, Chen (2022) pointed out that hotels and travel agencies must be innovative in their menus, packages, operations, and marketing. According to several studies, innovation enhances the brand experience and green image (Chen, 2022). In addition, such inventiveness enhances the financial success of hospitality and tourism businesses. According to recent studies, hotel innovation influences patrons' opinions of the quality of the food and services positively, encouraging patron loyalty. According to several studies, innovation enhances the brand experience and green image (Chen, 2022; Magdy and Hassan, 2025). Co-creation of consumer value is encouraged through creative business practices, and this fosters customer loyalty and satisfaction (Chen, 2022).

Table 3: Structural equation model

Hypotheses	Structural Relationship	R ²	β	Results
H1	Product Innovativeness → Brand Identification	.64	.38***	Supported
H2	Technology Based Service → Brand Identification	.38	.45***	Supported
H3	Experiential Innovativeness → Brand Identification	.44	.72***	Supported
H4	Promotional Innovativeness → Brand Identification	.94	.74***	Supported
H5	Brand Identification → Participation Behavior	.57	.58***	Supported

***p < .001

Regarding the fifth hypothesis, hotel and travel agency brand identification positively influences customer participation behavior as proposed through H5 is supported ($\beta = 0.58$, $\text{sig} < 0.001$). Hence, the results confirmed that hotel brand identification had the stronger positive influence on customer participation behavior. The results are consistent with Jabeen et al., (2022) investigated that hotel and travel agency brand identification has a favorable impact on perceived value, service level, and brand trust, which in turn promotes brand loyalty. Furthermore, Foroudi et al., (2022) suggests that trust is one of the essential predecessors of a recognized relationship because doing so will boost their sense of identity and self-worth. Also, the idea of brand trust is theoretically related to brand identification because customers are more likely to identify trustworthy brands or organizations, the study. Moreover, brand

identification among hotel and travel agency customers boosts brand trust, which is a significant predictor of customer participation behavior (Gupta et al., 2022). In the interim, stronger brand, recognition among hotel and travel agency customers can result in increased customer participation behavior (He and Zhang, 2022). Customers are more inclined to praise and remain loyal to a business if they identify with that brand's community (Gu et al. 2023).

5. Discussion and implications

Although scholars have examined the association between hotels and travel agencies innovativeness and customer brand identification (Chen, 2019; Acikgoz and Tasci, 2022), this study introduces the antecedents and the consequences of the brand identification. A total of 5 hypotheses were proposed in this study. On the basis of the empirical findings, study hypotheses are totally supported. The findings of this study revealed that hotel and travel agency innovativeness which includes product innovativeness, technology-based service innovativeness; experiential innovativeness and promotional innovativeness promotes customer brand identification. The results also reveal that customer brand identification positively affects customer participation behavior. In addition, the results indicate that product innovativeness, technology-based service innovativeness, experiential innovativeness and promotional innovativeness promote customer brand identification. This result is consistent with Sarmah et al., (2017) declared that customer innovativeness is a crucial innate characteristic that influences customers' motivation to engage in innovative events organized by hospitality and tourism business owners. Also, customers with a high level of innovativeness are more vitality enterprises. In addition, the results support those of Vermehren et al. (2022), demonstrating that intrinsic innovativeness promotes customer co-creation. This study adds to the literature by introducing customer innovativeness as an antecedent in

the holistic theoretical model of customer participation behavior.

According to innovation diffusion theory (Rogers, 2010), customer innovativeness is a crucial trigger of customer participation behavior. Furthermore, hotel and travel agency innovativeness facilitates knowledge exchange and collaboration between service providers and customers (Elkhwesky et al., 2023; Hassan et al., 2024). Also, hotels and travel agencies engage in product, technological service, experience, and marketing innovation to promote customer interaction and enhance customer brand identification and customer participation behavior. These results are consistent with those of Kim et al. (2019). According to service-dominant logic (Li et al., 2022), customers act as co-creators in the service delivery processes of innovative hospitality and tourism enterprises. In addition, the results expand on the literature (e.g., Kim et al., 2011) by demonstrating that hotel innovativeness exerts a stronger influence on customer brand identification than customer switching intention.

The results of this research reveal that customer brand identification positively affects customer participation behavior. Customers consider hotels 'and travel agents' products and services to have functional and symbolic value; this enhances self-concept, increases brand congruity, and strengthens customers' identification with brands. Therefore, hotel and travel agency innovativeness encourages customers' identification with brands. In addition, the results support the viewpoint of Sreejesh et al. (2015) and Gómez-Rico et al. (2022) that hotel innovativeness is an extrinsic or pull motivation that affects customer attitudes. This finding also supports the elaboration likelihood model of Petty and Cacioppo (1986) and suggests that in the hospitality and tourism industry, customer brand identification is a driver of customer participation behavior. In addition, Chan et al. (2010) investigated how customer participation affects customer perceived values, and how the perceived values affect customer satisfaction and loyalty, the benefits that are sought by the hotels and travel

agencies that use such technologies. Customer participation behavior is a critical component of the value co-creation process in the context of self-service technologies. Customer participation (CP) has been a growing focus of interest in service research (Chan et al., 2010; Nardi et al., 2020). Customers' participation levels throughout the service process affect their relationship development with employees and their subsequent behaviors, so we focus on joint production between customers and service employees (Bendapudi and Leone, 2013). Consequently, the study reveals that there was no influence for customer participation behavior with regard to customer switching intention.

5.1 Theoretical implications

This study investigated the relationships between hotel and travel agency innovativeness, customer brand identification, customer participation behavior while examining the moderating role of customer citizenship behavior in five-star hotels and travel agencies category A in Egypt. The findings support the role of hotel and travel agency innovativeness in strengthening customer-brand connections. Specifically, the results confirm that H1 and H2 product innovativeness and technology-based service innovativeness positively influences brand identification were supported. In addition, H3 and H4 experiential innovativeness and brand innovativeness positively influences brand identification were supported. Likewise, H5, customer brand identification positively influences customer participation behavior was supported.

The findings indicate that hotel and travel agency innovativeness, encompassing product, technology-based service, experiential, and brand innovativeness, is essential in influencing customer brand identification. Customers perceiving a hotel and travel agency as innovative are more inclined to identify with the brand and engage in behaviors that facilitate value co-creation.

Additionally, customer citizenship behaviour (CCB) influences the relationship between customer participation behaviour (CPB) and

customer switching intention. This indicates that customers with high engagement levels are less prone to brand switching when they demonstrate strong citizenship behaviours, including assisting other customers or promoting the brand.

5.2 practical implication

This study's findings offer significant insights for hotel and travel agency managers aiming to improve customer engagement and reinforce brand loyalty while reducing customer churn. To attain these objectives, hotel and travel agency management must proactively mitigate client switching intents by doing regular evaluations through organized surveys and feedback mechanisms to pinpoint primary dissatisfaction factors. Implementing personalized retention techniques, like loyalty programs, exclusive offers, and customized service experiences, can strengthen emotional brand attachment and decrease the likelihood of switching. Moreover, cultivating a robust brand community by promoting consumer interaction via interactive experiences, exclusive events, and digital platforms can enhance customer involvement and reinforce their affiliation with the brand. Managers should utilize co-creation opportunities, such as guest feedback panels and experiential innovations, to engage customers more actively in the brand experience. Moreover, consumer citizenship behavior (CCB) can serve as a competitive advantage by fostering and incentivizing beneficial actions, such as aiding fellow patrons and advocating for the brand, through organized programs like referral bonuses and ambassador efforts. The Frontline personnel must be trained to identify and promote acts of citizenship behavior, hence enhancing a collaborative service environment. Furthermore, data-driven customer relationship management (CRM) solutions, such as predictive analytics, can facilitate the monitoring of consumer behavior trends and identify early indicators of switching intentions. Customizing client interactions utilizing historical behavioral data can enhance retention and satisfaction. To achieve sustained performance, hotel and

travel agency management must implement training programs that enhance workers' guest engagement competencies and service recovery techniques, allowing them to rapidly address client issues and mitigate displeasure. Implementing a systematic method for periodically assessing client switching intentions will enable managers to monitor fluctuations and execute prompt interventions. Ultimately, although this study predominantly examines customer switching intentions from the customer's viewpoint, subsequent research should investigate the employee's influence on switching behavior. Comprehending the influence of staff member interactions and service quality perceptions on switching decisions may yield a more holistic approach to retention efforts and customer engagement.

5.3 Limitations and future research directions

This study acknowledged several limitations; it included a cross-sectional research design, which was used to gather data at one point in time within the period of study. Therefore, this may not be able to capture developmental issues and/or causal connections between variables of interest. A longitudinal study would be useful. In addition, the population surveyed is limited to the hotel customers from 5-star hotels and travel agents category A. Eventually, the study was limited to the category of 5-star hotels that attributed to chains in Egypt. Other categories of hotels and travel agencies were excluded from this study. Actually, in this study the researcher studied the moderating effect of customer citizenship behavior. Thus, other research could be conducted with different moderators, like, customer loyalty and organizational support as these different moderators could express different results plus indicating the vital role of each one of them. Furthermore, other studies could be conducted with moderators like, organizational reassurance, customer personality, and relationship age.

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