

The impact of multi-stage customer experience on tourists' revisit intention in the hotel industry: The mediating role of satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

In the context of increasingly intense competition within the hotel industry, customer experience plays a critical role in shaping satisfaction and revisit intention. This study adopts a multi-stage perspective on customer experience, in which pre-purchase experience corresponds to brand experience, purchase-stage experience reflects service experience, and post-purchase experience is represented by consumption experience. Drawing on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework, the study examines the influence of customer experience on revisit intention through the mediating role of satisfaction. Survey data were collected from 276 tourists staying at mid-scale and upscale hotels in Gia Lai (Vietnam) and were analyzed using PLS-SEM. The results indicate that customer experience positively influences satisfaction, satisfaction positively affects revisit intention, and satisfaction also serves as a mediating mechanism that facilitates tourists' revisit intention. These findings provide empirical support for the SOR framework in explaining lodging behavior and offer managerial implications for enhancing guest experience and encouraging return visits.

Keywords: *Multi-stage customer experience, satisfaction, revisit intention, hotel industry, stimulus–organism–response (SOR) model.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive business environment, several scholars and industry practitioners have argued that differences in price, products, or services no longer constitute a sustainable competitive advantage for firms [1]. Instead, customer experience (CEX) has emerged as a central strategic focus that enables firms to differentiate themselves and build long-term competitive advantage [2], [3]. When customers have positive experiences with products and services, they not only tend to repurchase but also disseminate favorable evaluations to others [4]. A superior customer experience further

enhances satisfaction and revisit intention [5], while contributing to improved financial performance and long-term organizational sustainability [6]. This role becomes particularly salient in the hotel industry, where services are largely intangible and closely tied to customers' perceptions [7].

In recent years, customer experience in the hotel sector has become an increasingly prominent topic among both scholars and practitioners, given its critical role in sustaining customer loyalty, fostering revisit intention, and consequently enhancing hotel reputation and business performance [8]. Prior studies suggest

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that customer experience may influence revisit intention through three key mechanisms: direct effects, indirect effects, and moderating effects. Concerning direct effects, numerous studies have confirmed a positive relationship between customer experience and revisit intention. For example, Saribaş and Demir demonstrated that sensory experience positively affects tourists' revisit intentions in five-star hotels in Izmir, Turkey [9]. Similarly, Dhewi et al. found that customer experience positively influences revisit intention in heritage hotels [10], while Amoako et al. reported comparable findings in the hotel industry in Ghana [11].

With respect to indirect effects, several scholars have emphasized the mediating roles of satisfaction, trust, or emotions in the relationship between customer experience and revisit intention. Specifically, Hossain et al. tested a multidimensional model of domestic tourists' dining and lodging experiences and found that satisfaction and trust mediate the relationship between customer experience and revisit intention [12]. Similarly, Nazarian et al. reported that customer experience indirectly affects revisit intention through emotions, satisfaction, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), and loyalty [13]. Ugwuanyi et al. also confirmed that through satisfaction, customer experience contributes to enhancing tourists' revisit intention [14]. In Vietnam, Bùi Thị Quỳnh Trang's study on the impact of customer experience on loyalty in the hotel sector also highlights the significant mediating role of satisfaction [15].

In addition to direct and indirect pathways, other studies have examined moderating mechanisms within the customer experience–revisit intention relationship. For instance, Kim et al. clarified the moderating roles of gender and lodging experience in the links among sensory experience, satisfaction, and hotel revisit intention [16].

Although prior studies have provided important evidence regarding the influence of customer experience on revisit intention in

the hospitality sector, several research gaps remain insufficiently addressed. *First*, most existing studies have focused on customer experience at the post-purchase stage or within online environments, without adopting a comprehensive approach that incorporates all three experiential stages—pre-purchase, during purchase (or consumption), and post-purchase. The absence of multi-stage investigations limits the understanding of the overall impact of customer experience on revisit intention, particularly when considering the mediating role of satisfaction. *Second*, while numerous studies worldwide have examined customer experience in mid-scale and upscale hotel segments, they have predominantly focused on major tourism destinations or coastal areas in countries with well-developed tourism industries [9], [10], [11]. By contrast, in Vietnam, studies on customer experience within this hotel segment have primarily been conducted at a national level [17], leaving a lack of research on distinctive regions with diverse tourism development potential, such as the newly established Gia Lai Province. This province was created following the administrative restructuring implemented nationwide on July 1, 2025, under a government decision. The new Gia Lai Province comprises the former Bình Định and Gia Lai provinces, featuring a unique geographical structure that includes both coastal areas and characteristic highland regions. This territory holds substantial potential for the development of coastal tourism as well as eco-tourism, where mid-scale and upscale hotels play a central role in providing accommodation services.

By surveying tourists who have previously stayed at mid-scale and upscale hotels located in the new Gia Lai Province and employing PLS-SEM to analyze the proposed model, this study offers several theoretical and practical contributions. (1) *From a theoretical perspective*, the study develops a research framework grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model to comprehensively assess the impact of customer experience

across three stages-pre-purchase, during purchase (or consumption), and post-purchase-on revisit intention through the mediating role of satisfaction. This approach contributes to extending theoretical understanding of multi-stage customer experience in the context of mid-scale and upscale hotels. (2) *From a practical perspective*, the findings will provide managerial implications for hotel managers in these segments to enhance customer experience and satisfaction, thereby improving business performance and strengthening the ability to retain tourists.

Beyond the introduction, this study is organized into four subsequent sections: Section 2 presents the theoretical framework and develops the research hypotheses; Section 3 describes the research methodology; Section 4 reports the analysis results; and Section 5 provides the conclusions along with managerial implications.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Theoretical framework

2.1.1. Stimuli-organism-response (SOR) theory

Based on the principles of environmental psychology, the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model proposed by Mehrabian and Russell is considered one of the most valuable theoretical frameworks for explaining consumer behavior [18]. This model has been widely employed by scholars to elucidate how environmental factors or experiences influence individuals' psychological states and behaviors, particularly in the context of tourism and hospitality [19], [20].

Building on this foundation, the present study applies the SOR model to examine the impact of multi-stage customer experience on revisit intention in the hotel industry through the mediating role of satisfaction. Specifically, customer experiences across three stages-pre-purchase, during consumption, and post-consumption-are treated as stimuli (S) that can elicit internal emotional and cognitive responses within customers (Organism – O), reflected in

their level of satisfaction [21]. Based on this, the response (R) is manifested through customers' revisit intention following their experience [22].

Within this framework, the stimuli (S) reflect the quality and consistency of customer experiences at each stage of service interaction. These stimuli influence internal emotional and cognitive states (O), with satisfaction regarded as the central response reflecting customers' overall perception following the interaction process [23]. According to the SOR model, the 'Organism' (O) represents customers' internal processing, including evaluations, emotions, and attitudes formed throughout the experience journey [24]. Finally, the response (R) constitutes the behavioral outcome arising from these internal states, manifested as the intention to continue choosing or revisiting the hotel, analogous to approach behaviors described by Sherman et al. within the SOR framework [25].

Consequently, the SOR model provides a suitable theoretical basis for explaining the relationship among multi-stage customer experience (S), satisfaction (O), and revisit intention (R) in the hotel industry. This approach clarifies the internal psychological mechanisms of customers while also elucidating the mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between customer experience and revisit behavior.

2.1.2. Customer experience

In academic research, customer experience is a multidimensional concept, approached from various perspectives depending on the context and research objectives. Each scholar offers a distinct definition, reflecting their theoretical standpoint. For instance, Schwager and Meyer define customer experience as the subjective, internal response of customers when they interact directly or indirectly with a firm [26]. Direct interactions occur during the purchase process, while indirect interactions may arise through advertising, word of mouth, or information in the media. Similarly, Johnston et al. emphasize that customer experience is formed throughout

the journey of interaction with a firm across multiple touchpoints [27]. From a tourism and hospitality perspective, Sørensen and Jensen, as well as Woyo, conceptualize customer experience as the encounter between customers and service providers that occurs across the entire consumption journey, encompassing pre-, during, and post-service stages [28], [29].

Meanwhile, Klaus extends this concept by conceptualizing customer experience as a multidimensional construct, encompassing customers' cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensory, and social responses to a product or service throughout the entire purchase journey [30]. This approach is considered particularly appropriate for the hospitality industry, which is characterized by service intangibility and high levels of interaction between customers and staff, physical space, and socio-emotional elements. Accordingly, this study adopts Klaus's perspective, viewing customer experience as a multidimensional construct manifested across three stages: pre-purchase experience (brand experience), during-purchase experience (stay experience), and post-purchase experience (post-stay experience) [30].

Klaus argues that brand experience reflects customers' perceptions and evaluations of a brand prior to purchasing the service [30]. This includes assessments of brand value, pricing, staff quality, corporate reputation, as well as influences from social groups, friends, and word-of-mouth information. The stay experience captures customers' direct perceptions during their use of hotel services. It encompasses facility quality, amenities, the physical environment, service quality, and supplementary elements such as dining, entertainment, technology, or cultural and local value. Finally, the post-stay experience encompasses post-consumption responses and emotions, reflected in customers' overall service evaluation, perceived social value, enjoyment, or pride associated with the brand. Analyzing these three stages clarifies how each dimension of customer experience influences satisfaction and revisit intention in the hotel industry. It also

highlights the multidimensional and interrelated nature of customer experience within the service context.

2.1.3. Satisfaction

According to Kotler, satisfaction is understood as the feeling of pleasure or disappointment that arises from comparing the perceived performance of a good or service with the consumer's initial expectations [31]. Customer expectations typically stem from four main sources: personal needs, past experiences, word-of-mouth information, and external communication channels [32]. Based on this, Kotler distinguishes three levels of satisfaction: (1) dissatisfaction if the outcome falls short of expectations; (2) satisfaction if the outcome meets expectations; and (3) delight or exhilaration if the outcome exceeds expectations [31]. Parker and Mathews define satisfaction as the feeling that arises from evaluating the performance of a good or service in fulfilling certain needs [33]. Furthermore, Zeithaml et al. argue that customer satisfaction is a post-consumption evaluation of whether a service meets or exceeds customer expectations [34].

This study adopts Zeithaml et al.'s approach, viewing customer satisfaction as a post-consumption evaluation of whether the service meets or surpasses expectations, forming the theoretical basis for the mediating variable "satisfaction" [32]. The rationale for this choice is that it reflects the inherent nature of intangible services and the complex experiences characteristic of the hospitality industry. Moreover, this definition aligns with the research model examining the influence of multi-stage customer experience on revisit intention, wherein satisfaction is considered the accumulated outcome of experiences across all stages (pre-, during, and post-stay). Accordingly, satisfaction is not only a psychological response of customers but also a strategic mediating variable, reflecting the relationship between service experience and revisit intention in the hotel sector.

2.1.4. Revisit intention

Revisit intention is defined as the likelihood or probability that a customer will return to a service provider in the future [35]. According to Kim et al., tourists' intention or desire to revisit a hotel is based on their level of satisfaction [16]. In the context of fierce competition among hotels to attract and retain visitors, revisit intention is considered an important indicator of customer loyalty and business performance. Identifying and understanding the factors influencing revisit intention enables hotels to enhance the quality of customer experience and increase customer satisfaction. This also supports the development of sustainable relationships with customers, thereby contributing to the stable and long-term development of the local tourism industry.

2.2. Hypothesis development

2.2.1. Effects of customer experience on satisfaction

When customers have a positive experience, they perceive the value, quality, and ability of the service to meet their needs, which in turn leads to satisfaction. In other words, satisfaction results from the convergence between actual experience and customer expectations. Moreover, when a customer's experience meets or exceeds expectations, positive emotions are generated, resulting in higher satisfaction [36]. More recently, Hossain et al. indicated that positive experiences during a hotel stay lead to greater customer satisfaction [12]. Previous studies by Rose et al., Meng and Han, Chen and Chen, and Mason and Nassivera have reported similar findings [5], [37] - [39]. Based on the above rationale and evidence, the authors propose the following research hypothesis:

H1: Customer experience has a positive impact on satisfaction

2.2.2. Effects of satisfaction on revisit intention

Customer satisfaction is crucial across all sectors, particularly in service industries. It is an important factor influencing subsequent

consumer behaviors, such as revisit intention [16]. Oliver also noted that customer satisfaction affects attitudes and purchase intentions through the benefits perceived by customers [40].

Customer satisfaction represents a post-consumption evaluation of a product or service feature-or the product/service as a whole-reflecting the degree of fulfillment derived from consumption, which may be below or above expectations. When satisfaction is high, customers not only experience emotional fulfillment but also develop positive perceptions of service value and quality, thereby promoting future consumption behaviors, particularly revisit intention. Numerous studies have confirmed this relationship in the service sector. For instance, Chen and Chen found that higher tourist satisfaction increases the likelihood of revisiting in the future [37]; Mason and Nassivera reported that participant satisfaction is a key determinant driving intentions to attend future events [38]; similarly, Cong emphasized that satisfaction is a fundamental basis for repeat service usage in the hotel industry [41]. Based on the above rationale and evidence, the authors propose the following research hypothesis:

H2: Satisfaction has a positive impact on revisit intention

2.2.3. The mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between customer experience and revisit intention

In the context of the tourism and hospitality industry, satisfaction is regarded as an indicator reflecting a firm's level of success [42]. Given the multi-stage nature of tourism experiences, customer satisfaction typically represents a cumulative outcome of various factors, such as dining, accommodation, staff friendliness, destination culture, and convenience [43], [44]. Empirical evidence indicates that tourists who have positive experiences throughout their journey tend to form higher overall satisfaction, which in turn leads to revisit intention or destination recommendations to others [45], [46].

Moreover, positive customer experiences enhance perceived value and satisfaction, thereby fostering the desire to repurchase services or products in the future. Thus, satisfaction is a key and mediating factor influencing tourists' revisit intention [16]. To date, several studies have identified satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between customer experience and revisit intention. For example, Hossain et al. demonstrated that domestic tourists' dining and lodging experiences affect revisit intention through the mediating roles of satisfaction and trust [12]. Similarly, Nazarian et al. found that customer experience indirectly influences revisit

intention via satisfaction in the hotel sector [13]. Other scholars, including Ugwuanyi et al. and Kim et al., also confirmed that satisfaction mediates the relationship between customer experience and revisit intention [4], [16]. Based on the above rationale and evidence, the authors propose the following research hypothesis:

H3: Satisfaction mediates the relationship between customer experience and revisit intention

Based on the identified research gaps, theoretical foundations, and proposed research hypotheses, the authors develop the following research model:

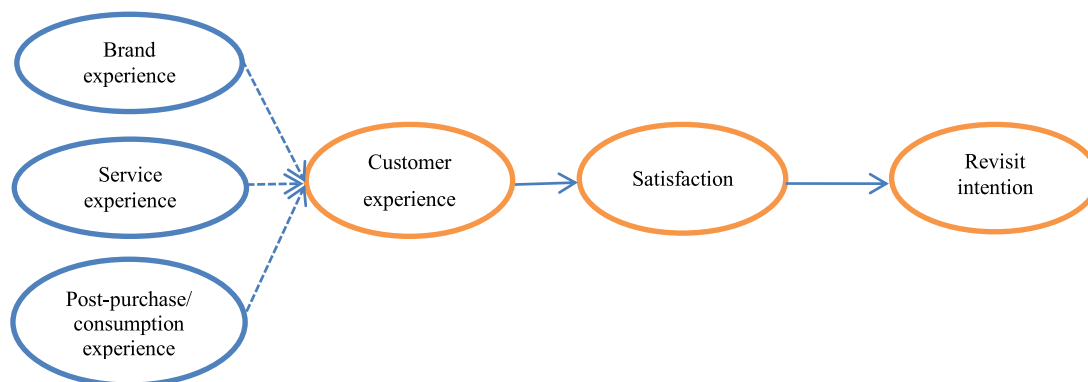


Figure 1. Proposed research model.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

The questionnaire was developed following a three-step procedure grounded in prior literature. In Step 1, the measurement scales for both first-order and second-order latent constructs were identified through an extensive review and synthesis of previous studies. All items were initially translated from English into Vietnamese by one expert and then back-translated by another. The original and translated versions were subsequently compared to ensure semantic equivalence and conceptual consistency. In Step 2, the authors conducted in-depth interviews with two academic experts who teach tourism-related courses at a university. These experts reviewed and evaluated the draft questionnaire to assess the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of each measurement item. Based on their feedback, the

authors refined the wording, structure, and format of the items to ensure clarity, conciseness, and alignment with the original constructs. In Step 3, a pilot study was conducted with a randomly selected sample of 60 respondents to evaluate the suitability and measurement performance of the items. The pilot data were assessed for normality and multicollinearity, and the results confirmed that the dataset was appropriate for subsequent analyses. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha with an acceptable threshold of 0.70 ($\alpha > 0.70$). Most constructs met this criterion, except for a few items that required minor revisions. Several small adjustments were made to improve clarity before finalizing the questionnaire.

The final questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section introduced the research objectives and provided statements ensuring

respondents that all information collected would remain confidential and be used solely for academic purposes. The second section measured tourists' perceptions of their experiences across the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages, along with their satisfaction and revisit intention, using 34 items across five first-order constructs. Customer experience (CEX) was operationalized as a reflective – formative second order construct. Items for Customer experience and its three components-pre-purchase, purchase-stage, and post-purchase experience-were adapted from Klaus [30]. Items measuring satisfaction and revisit intention were adopted from Kim et al [16]. All items in Section 2 were rated using a five-point Likert scale. The third section collected demographic information, including gender, age, educational level, marital status, and average monthly income.

3.2. Data collection and analysis

The authors conducted an online survey in Vietnam targeting tourists who had previously stayed at mid-scale and upscale hotels in Gia Lai Province. Data were collected via Google Forms using a random distribution method through social media platforms such as Facebook, email, Zalo, and other online channels between July and

August 2025. A total of 300 questionnaires were received; however, 24 responses were excluded due to missing information, inconsistencies, outliers, or unusable data. Ultimately, 276 valid responses were retained for subsequent analyses. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the valid respondents.

To test the proposed hypotheses, this study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4. As highlighted by several scholars (e.g., Hair et al.; Sarstedt et al.), PLS-SEM is well suited for predictive models and for handling formative measurement constructs [47], [48]. In this study, we develop and test a multistage predictive model in which revisit intention is influenced by customer experience through the mediating role of satisfaction. In addition, the formatively measured construct-customer experience-is incorporated into the structural model. The measurement model was assessed to evaluate the reliability and validity of all constructs, while the structural model was used to test the research hypotheses. IBM SPSS Statistics 20 was also utilized to analyze demographic characteristics, conduct descriptive statistics, and examine common method bias (CMB).

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents.

	Freq	%	Variable	Freq	%
Gender			Marital status		
Male	91	33.0	Single	96	34.7
Female	185	67.0	Married	178	64.5
Total	276	100.0	Other	2	0.8
Age group			Total	276	100.0
18 - 30	50	18.1	Monthly Income (million VND)		
31 - 40	179	64.9	7 - 15	17	6.2
41 - 50	35	12.7	16 - 25	176	63.7
51 - 60	10	3.6	26 - 40	71	25.7
> 60	2	0.7	41 - 50	3	1.1
Total	276	100.0	> 50	9	3.3

	Freq	%	Variable	Freq	%
Educational level			Total	276	100.0
College, High school or below	24	8.7			
Bachelor's degree	183	66.3			
Master's degree or above	69	25.0			
Total	276	100.0			

Source: Authors

3.3. Common method bias

This study assessed common method bias (CMB) using Harman’s single-factor test. According to Podsakoff et al., CMB may be present if all measurement items load onto a single factor or if one factor accounts for more than 50% of the total variance [49]. The results show that the first factor explains only 48.929% of the total variance, indicating that common method variance is unlikely to be a concern in this dataset [49].

4. RESULTS

4.1. Measurement models assessment

To ensure the reliability and validity of the measurement constructs, this study followed a two-stage procedure for evaluating the measurement model [50]. Stage 1 assessed the reflective first-order constructs, including brand experience, service experience, post-purchase/consumption experience, satisfaction, and revisit intention. Stage 2 focused on the formative second-order construct-customer experience-formed by the three reflective first-order constructs examined in Stage 1.

Stage 1: Evaluation of the reflective measurement model

In this stage, the reflective first-order constructs were evaluated using the reliability and validity criteria recommended by Hair et al [50]. Internal consistency reliability was first assessed using Cronbach’s alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). All Cronbach’s alpha and CR values exceeded the threshold of 0.70, indicating acceptable reliability and consistency among the measurement items. Convergent validity

was then examined through factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Most factor loadings were above 0.70, and all AVE values exceeded 0.50, confirming that the items adequately converged on the constructs they were intended to measure.

Discriminant validity was assessed using both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The Fornell–Larcker results showed that most square roots of AVE were greater than the inter-construct correlations. Although several construct pairs (e.g., BEX-PEX, BEX-SEX, PEX-SEX, and SAT-SEX) exhibited correlations approaching or slightly exceeding the square root of AVE, such occurrences are not uncommon in behavioral models involving conceptually related constructs and do not necessarily imply serious violations of discriminant validity. Importantly, all HTMT values were below the recommended threshold of 0.90 [51], indicating adequate discriminant validity. Furthermore, the 95% bootstrap confidence intervals for all HTMT values did not include 1, thereby providing stronger evidence that the reflective constructs are conceptually distinct.

Taken together, these findings confirm that all five reflective first-order constructs meet the required standards for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Additionally, the three first-order constructs-brand experience, service experience, and post-purchase/consumption experience-show satisfactory measurement properties, allowing their latent variable scores to be used in the subsequent analysis of the formative second-order construct in Stage 2.

Table 2. Accuracy analysis of reflective components/constructs.

Research constructs/ components	No. of scale items		Construct reliability and validity			
	Original	Final	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE	Item loadings
1. Brand experience (BEX)	7	7	0.861	0.893	0.545	0.755/0.756/0.692/0.684/ 0.754/0.747/0.773
2. Service experience (SEX)	11	11	0.926	0.937	0.576	0.702/0.756/0.752/0.722/ 0.811/0.795/0.782/0.758/ 0.782/0.791/0.686
3. Post-purchase/ consumption experience (PEX)	7	7	0.886	0.911	0.593	0.770/0.705/0.775/0.785/ 0.770/0.793/0.788
4. Satisfaction (SAT)	5	5	0.889	0.918	0.692	0.847/0.821/0.790/0.871/ 0.829
5. Revisit Intention (REI)	4	4	0.860	0.905	0.704	0.808/0.875/0.863/0.807
Note: 1. First-order reflective components (bold italicized) and constructs (bold) were analyzed 2. CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted. Customer experience (CEX) is a reflective – formative second order construct that includes: BEX, SEX, and PEX						
Source: Authors						

Table 3. Discriminant validity assessment using Fornell & Larcker's criterion and Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) values.

Constructs/components	1	2	3	4	5
1. Brand experience (BEX)	0.738	0.776	0.754	0.731	0.700
2. Service experience (SEX)	0.861	0.759	0.792	0.806	0.695
3. Post-purchase/ consumption experience (PEX)	0.855	0.870	0.770	0.748	0.743
4. Satisfaction (SAT)	0.826	0.885	0.830	0.832	0.753
5. Revisit Intention (REI)	0.806	0.776	0.850	0.847	0.839
Notes: The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios and bivariate correlations are below and above the diagonal, respectively. The square root of AVE is on the diagonal.					
Source: Authors					

Stage 2: Evaluation of the formative second-order measurement model

In this stage, customer experience was modeled as a formative second-order construct composed of three reflective first-order constructs: brand experience, service experience, and post-purchase/consumption experience. Following the guidelines of Hair et al. and Sarstedt et

al., the assessment of the formative construct focused on two key aspects: examining potential collinearity issues and evaluating the contribution of each formative component to the higher-order construct [50], [52].

First, collinearity among the three formative components was examined. The results show that the Variance Inflation Factor

(VIF) values for BEX and PEX were all below 3.3, while the VIF value for SEX was 3.339-well below the critical threshold of 5. These findings indicate the absence of severe multicollinearity and confirm that each first-order construct contributes unique information to the second-order construct.

Next, the influence and statistical significance of each formative component were assessed through the outer weights. The results indicate that all three first-order constructs-brand experience, service experience, and post-purchase/consumption experience-significantly

contribute to customer experience ($p < 0.05$), with all weights being positive. This suggests that each dimension plays an important role in shaping the overall customer experience.

In addition, an examination of the outer loadings shows that all components exhibit loading values greater than 0.50, providing additional evidence for the validity of the formative model. Overall, the results of Stage 2 demonstrate that the customer experience construct meets the criteria for reliability and validity and is therefore appropriate for inclusion in the structural model analysis.

Table 4. Accuracy analysis of formative construct of service experience.

Formative construct	Indicators	VIF	Outer Weight	Outer loadings
Customer Experience (CEX)	Brand experience (BEX)	2.876	0.220	0.875
	Service experience (SEX)	3.339	0.590	0.969
	Post-purchase/ consumption experience (PEX)	3.100	0.264	0.897
Source: Authors				

4.2. Structural model assessment

4.2.1. Research model quality

The quality of the research model was assessed using two key indicators: the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the Stone-Geisser Q^2 value. The analysis results show that the R^2 values of the endogenous constructs range from 0.568 to 0.692, indicating a medium to high level of explanatory power in accordance with the guidelines of Hair et al [51]. Specifically, satisfaction achieved an R^2 of 0.692, while revisit intention recorded an R^2 of 0.568, suggesting that the independent constructs-particularly customer experience-explain a substantial

proportion of the variance in the dependent constructs. Furthermore, all Q^2 values exceed 0.554, demonstrating strong predictive relevance and confirming that the exogenous variables provide meaningful predictive accuracy for the endogenous constructs.

Collinearity among the predictor constructs was subsequently examined using the variance inflation factor (VIF). The results reveal that all VIF values equal 1, remaining well below the threshold of 5.0, thereby indicating the absence of any serious multicollinearity issues [51]. This ensures that the relationships among the latent constructs can be interpreted with confidence.

Table 5. Evaluation of the quality of the structural model.

Paths	R2	Q2	VIF
Customer Experience → Satisfaction	0.692	0.685	1.000
Satisfaction → Revisit Intention	0.568	0.554	1.000
Source: Authors			

4.2.2. Hypothesis testing results

The hypothesis testing results indicate that all structural relationships in the model are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. Specifically, customer experience exerts a positive and substantial effect on Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.832$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that customers' overall experience throughout the service journey plays a critical role in enhancing

their satisfaction. In addition, satisfaction significantly influences revisit intention ($\beta = 0.754$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that higher levels of satisfaction strongly promote customers' intention to return in the future. These findings reinforce the argument that investing in a holistic customer experience not only enhances satisfaction but also contributes to sustaining long-term customer relationships within the hospitality sector.

Table 6. Results of hypothesis testing in the proposed research model.

Paths (hypotheses)	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P-values	Results
<i>Directs effects</i>						
Customer Experience → Satisfaction	0.832	0.832	0.027	30.909	0.000	H1: Support
Satisfaction → Revisit Intention	0.754	0.752	0.038	19.650	0.000	H2: Support
<i>Indirect effects</i>						
Customer Experience → Satisfaction → Revisit Intention	0.627	0.626	0.046	13.653	0.000	H3: Support

Source: Authors

In addition to the direct effects, the study also examines the mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between customer experience and revisit intention. The bootstrap procedure with 5,000 resamples reveals that the indirect effect is highly significant ($\beta = 0.627$, $p < 0.001$). This finding confirms the presence of a meaningful mediation mechanism, clarifying how multi-stage customer experience shapes customers' revisit behavior. In other words, positive experiences across different stages of the service journey enhance customer satisfaction, which in turn increases their intention to return.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the structural model exhibits satisfactory levels of model fit, explanatory power, and predictive relevance. All statistical evidence supports the proposed hypotheses and underscores the central role of customer experience-conceptualized as a

formative second-order construct comprising brand experience, service experience, and post-purchase/consumption experience-in influencing revisit intention through satisfaction. These findings provide empirical support for the importance of managing multi-stage customer experience in the hospitality industry and suggest that firms should consistently optimize pre-consumption, during-consumption, and post-consumption experiences to enhance customers' likelihood of returning.

4.3. Research findings discussion

The empirical results indicate that all hypotheses proposed in the research model are supported, thereby confirming the pivotal role of customer experience in shaping satisfaction and revisit intention within mid- and upscale hotels in an emerging market such as Vietnam. Conceptualized as a reflective-formative second-

order construct, customer experience in this study comprises three core components: brand experience (pre-purchase stage), service experience (purchase stage), and post-purchase/consumption experience. The significant contribution of all three dimensions underscores the multidimensional and integrative nature of customer experience, highlighting the need for a comprehensive rather than a fragmented assessment of customer experience.

First, the findings demonstrate that customer experience exerts a positive effect on satisfaction (H1). This result aligns with prior studies [5], [39], which argue that favorable experiences enhance customers' perceptions of value, quality, and service responsiveness, thereby strengthening positive emotions and overall satisfaction. This suggests that firms should improve customer experience holistically across all touchpoints—from brand interaction to service delivery and post-consumption support—to effectively enhance satisfaction.

Second, the results confirm that satisfaction positively influences revisit intention (H2), consistent with consumer behavior theory and previous empirical evidence [37], [38]. When customers are satisfied, they not only evaluate the service more favorably but also become more willing to return or recommend it to others. Satisfaction thus remains a central driver in theoretical models of loyalty and repeat patronage.

Finally, the study reveals that satisfaction mediates the relationship between customer experience and revisit intention (H3). This indicates that customer experience affects revisit intention not solely through a direct pathway but predominantly via satisfaction. This finding is consistent with prior research [12], [13], [16], suggesting that more positive experiences lead to higher satisfaction, which in turn motivates customers to revisit. This implies that hotels seeking to strengthen revisit intention should prioritize enhancing customer experience to

elevate satisfaction, rather than relying primarily on promotional programs or retention strategies.

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of adopting a customer-experience-centric approach. Hotels should continuously refine brand, service, and post-purchase experiences to create superior value throughout the entire customer journey. From an academic perspective, the study reinforces the validity of conceptualizing customer experience as a reflective-formative second-order construct and clarifies its underlying mechanism in shaping satisfaction and revisit intention.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Theoretical implications

This study contributes to the theoretical foundation of customer behavior and service marketing by extending and validating the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework in the hotel context of Vietnam. The findings demonstrate that multi-stage customer experience-comprising pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase experiences-significantly influences satisfaction, which subsequently mediates its effect on revisit intention. This result reinforces the argument that diverse touchpoints throughout the service journey serve as critical stimuli shaping customers' internal psychological states (Organism).

Moreover, the study confirms the central role of satisfaction as an internal response (Organism) in transmitting the effects of experience on behavioral intentions. This clarification deepens the understanding of how customers process, evaluate, and transform their service experiences into behavioral responses. Identifying satisfaction as a key mediating variable enriches existing empirical evidence and advances theoretical understanding of the mechanisms through which multi-stage experiences operate in high-quality service environments.

Additionally, by conceptualizing customer experience as a second-order construct that captures its multidimensional and temporally continuous nature, the study enhances the measurement of customer experience beyond traditional approaches that focus on single moments or isolated touchpoints. This represents an important theoretical contribution, reflecting the dynamic and multi-stage characteristics of customer experience in the contemporary hospitality industry.

5.2. Managerial implications

From a managerial perspective, the findings offer several important implications for hotel practitioners seeking to design and enhance customer experience. *First*, all three stages of the experience-pre-consumption, consumption, and post-consumption-play essential roles; therefore, hotels should adopt an integrated customer experience management strategy rather than focusing solely on core service quality. Optimizing brand-related touchpoints across communication channels, ensuring consistency in service delivery during the stay, and maintaining positive interactions after departure collectively contribute to higher overall satisfaction.

Second, since satisfaction is demonstrated to be a key determinant of revisit intention, hotels should invest more intensively in managing perceived quality and emotional experience. Elements such as personalized services, staff competence, service responsiveness, and flexibility in addressing customer needs can meaningfully enhance positive emotional reactions, thereby improving satisfaction.

Finally, the results highlight that post-consumption experience-often overlooked in practice-plays a substantial role in sustaining customer relationships. Hotels should therefore develop comprehensive post-stay engagement programs, including thank-you messages, feedback surveys, personalized promotions,

and loyalty ecosystems. Such initiatives not only create lasting positive impressions but also strengthen customers' intentions to return in the future.

5.3. Research limitations

Despite its valuable contributions, this study is not without limitations. *First*, the research was conducted within the hotel context in Vietnam; therefore, the generalizability of the findings to other countries or service sectors may be constrained. *Second*, the data were collected using a cross-sectional design, while customer experience and satisfaction may vary over time. This temporal limitation may reduce the study's ability to capture deeper causal relationships. *Third*, the measurement of customer experience relied on customers' subjective perceptions, which may be influenced by cognitive biases or social desirability bias. Additionally, the research model focuses solely on the mediating role of satisfaction and does not account for other potential mediators or competing mechanisms-such as emotions, trust, or brand attachment-that have been shown to influence revisit intentions in prior studies.

5.4. Future research guideline

Building on the aforementioned limitations, several directions for future research are proposed. *First*, subsequent studies may broaden the empirical context by examining various service settings-such as tourism services, resorts, restaurants, or online service platforms-to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Expanding data collection to include different cultural contexts would also help determine the cross-cultural robustness of the SOR framework. *Second*, future research should consider adopting longitudinal designs to capture temporal changes in customer experience and satisfaction, thereby offering deeper insights into the dynamics of customer behavioral responses. Moreover, incorporating additional mediating or moderating variables-

such as positive or negative emotions, trust, customer participation, or service-supporting technologies—could extend the current model and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological mechanisms that shape the customer journey. *Finally*, in-depth qualitative approaches, such as semi-structured interviews or experience diaries, may be employed to explore emotional and cognitive dimensions that are not fully captured through quantitative measures. Such avenues would help strengthen empirical evidence and enrich our understanding of multi-stage customer experience in modern service environments.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that this research has no conflicts of interest.

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Ảnh hưởng của trải nghiệm khách hàng đa giai đoạn đến ý định quay trở lại của khách du lịch trong ngành dịch vụ khách sạn: Vai trò trung gian của sự hài lòng

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TÓM TẮT

Trong bối cảnh cạnh tranh ngày càng gia tăng trong ngành khách sạn, trải nghiệm khách hàng đóng vai trò then chốt trong việc định hình sự hài lòng và ý định quay trở lại. Nghiên cứu này tiếp cận trải nghiệm khách hàng theo mô hình đa giai đoạn, trong đó trải nghiệm trước khi mua tương ứng với trải nghiệm thương hiệu, trải nghiệm trong khi mua phản ánh trải nghiệm dịch vụ, và trải nghiệm sau khi mua được thể hiện qua trải nghiệm sau tiêu dùng. Dựa trên mô hình Kích thích – Sinh thể – Phản ứng (SOR), nghiên cứu kiểm định tác động của trải nghiệm khách hàng đến ý định quay trở lại thông qua sự hài lòng. Dữ liệu khảo sát được thu thập từ 276 khách du lịch lưu trú tại các khách sạn trung và cao cấp ở Gia Lai (Việt Nam) và được phân tích bằng PLS-SEM. Kết quả cho thấy trải nghiệm khách hàng ảnh hưởng tích cực đến sự hài lòng, sự hài lòng có ảnh hưởng tích cực đến ý định quay trở lại và sự hài lòng cũng đóng vai trò trung gian trong việc thúc đẩy ý định quay trở lại. Những phát hiện này cung cấp bằng chứng thực nghiệm củng cố mô hình SOR và gợi ý hàm ý quản trị nhằm nâng cao trải nghiệm lưu trú.

Từ khóa: *Trải nghiệm khách hàng đa giai đoạn, sự hài lòng, ý định quay trở lại, khách sạn, mô hình kích thích – sinh thể – phản ứng (SOR).*

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