

ANALYZING THE CUSTOMER-PERCEIVED VALUE OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE HOTELS

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Abstract

Combining the Means-End Chain theory and using open-ended questionnaire, 50 individual hotel customers were interviewed by one-to-one in-depth laddering interviews. By the link structure of Means-End Chain (MEC), the customers were guided from low-level attributes and results to high-level values of consumer experience. Subsequently, a Hierarchical Value Map (HVM) was created to sum up the ultimate purpose of cultural and creative hotel guests according to the definitions of attribute, result, and value.

By using the results of content analysis, the HVM was drawn to show the relationships among concepts. The results revealed that in addition to the attribute of reasonable prices, tourists inclined towards experience with the environment and catering and itinerary services. Therefore, it was concluded that blissful value is the most important value perception for cultural and creative hotel customers. Marketing implications and future research directions were recommended at the end of this study.

Keywords: Cultural and Creative Hotel, MEC, HVM

Introduction

As tourism generates its output value on the basis of tourist visits and without building any factories, it has

always been considered as a “chimney-free” industry. In this industry, the greater the number of tourists and the longer they visit an attraction, the more shopping they engage in, and thereby

generates more profit. Promoting tourism can stimulate the growth of other related industries such as catering, aviation, transport, and travel services. Tourism can also encourage consumption, thereby boosting economies and job creation at the national level.

Moreover, the industry facilitates business activity and the understanding of natural resources to articulate a country's cultural awareness, economic competitiveness, and infrastructural progress, thereby helping to foster the overall development and cultural literacy of the nation. In 2015, Taiwanese people traveled approximately 178,520,000 times in Taiwan, which was a 14.25% increase compared with the previous year. The Tourism Bureau estimated that each Taiwanese person took 8.5 domestic trips in 2015, compared with 7.47 in 2014, and the output value of domestic tourism was NT\$ 360.1 billion in 2015, which was a 16.46% increase compared with the previous year (Tourism Bureau, 2016).

In the era that the expansion of human's knowledge and the evolution of technology grow rapidly, governments are striving to maximize the efficiency and value of limited resources at their disposal to develop effective industrial strategy models. Many countries focus on developing emerging industries with high economic value, particularly the cultural and creative industry. In addition to supporting their technology-related industries, countries utilize their cultural resources and creative prowess to build their emerging sectors. For example, the British government tapped the creativity and craftsmanship of its citizens, conventional forms of cultural art,

and various forms of intellectual capital to establish the creative industry, which boasted considerable economic value and increased employment opportunities; in fact, such an industry first appeared in the United Kingdom.

In June 2002, the Taiwanese government incorporated its initiative to develop the cultural and creative industry into its national development program and expanded the industry on an industrial basis through technological and cultural means. Therefore, Taiwan synergizes its intellectual and cultural capital to contribute creative and aesthetic value to product development and everyday life. This provided many domestic industries with the opportunities to transform themselves, unleash their potential, and further improve their business, fosters job creation and economic growth, and shift the nation's excessive focus away from manufacturing.

Consumers normally purchase commodities based on the functionality. They may also make purchases impulsively driven by the symbolic value of the brand, an identification with the symbol and packaging of the product, or personal taste. Consumers buy cultural and creative products because of accompanying intangible cultural value, which shapes their personal image in a manner that the consumers prefer. Such products represent a unique way of life, distinct social status, identity differentiation, or a personal idiosyncrasy. Hotels have recently proliferated across Taiwan. An online survey of popular Taiwanese hotels conducted by La Vie (2015) found that 32.7% of respondents preferred hotels with cultural and creative attributes and stated that such hotels provide excellent ser-

vices and exhibit creativity. Therefore, it can be stated that customers not only consider hotels' actual services but also place a growing emphasis on their thematic layouts, furnishings, lighting fixtures, dining environments, and the artistic aspects of their interior designs as well as whether their facilities combine creative, stylish, and cultural elements.

There are some studies on the hotel industry that focused intensively on the topics of decision-making process when selecting a hotel and the effect of customer values on consumer behaviors (Kim, Park, 2017; Choi, et al, 2015; Chen and Tung, 2014). However, few studies have analyzed the perceived value when customers check-in at the hotel they have chosen (Morosan and DeFranco, 2016; Ting et al., 2011). Although the hotel and hospitality market becomes increasingly competitive while customer demand for quality accommodation and unique lodging environments continues to increase, the customer-perceived value of hotel services or the hotel itself still has not been discussed thoroughly.

Therefore, this study addressed the literature gap to explicate the value of hotels selected by customers. Studies on user value have mostly adopted means-end chain (MEC) approaches to explore topics such as the value of participating in recreation and physical exercise (Lin et al., 2017; Uijl den et al., 201) and the value of buying behavior (Kim et al., 2016). MEC is a methodology for examining customer behavior and value that is typically used in the development of advertising strategies, market segmentation, and brand management to investigate the

meanings that consumers attribute to products, services, or their consumption behaviors (Matook, 2013), as well as the relationships between these meanings and their perceived value (Gutman, 1982; Olson and Reynolds, 2001). This study adopted the MEC to investigate consumers' perceived value of cultural and creative hotels in Taiwan and their purpose of consumption. The findings were expected to encourage the integration of cultural and creative elements into hotel environments.

In summary, this study (a) conducted a literature review to explore the manner in which consumers select cultural and creative hotels, the consequences of their selection, and the perceived value of their selected hotels; (b) used the MEC to construct an attribute–consequence–value chain applicable to cultural and creative hotel consumers; and (c) created a perceptual map illustrating crucial factors in consumers' decisions to select cultural and creative hotels. This perceptual map may be of referential value to hotel managers.

Literature Review

Cultural and creative hotels
In 1997, the Creative Industries Task Force was established in the United Kingdom to promote the development of the domestic creative industry, compiling its first “creative industry” report in the following year. In 2002, the Singaporean government announced the plan of building a global cultural and design center and a global media center. In recent years, South Korea has seen its digital content, electronic sports, and audiovisual industries to thrive. These three countries

have transformed their existing cultural and artistic heritage. Taiwan has also followed the pursuit, sparing no effort in constantly promoting its cultural and creative industry. The industry is officially defined as an industry that “emerges from creative or cultural accumulation, creates and applies intellectual property, and possesses the potential to create wealth and job opportunities and enhance the overall quality of life of the general public,” which is stated by the definitions of cultural and creative industries in other countries while incorporating Taiwan’s industrial characteristics. The principles of the industry include 1. High number of employed population or participants 2. High economic value or associated benefit 3. High growth potential 4. Strong in originality or creativity 5.

High Additional Value

The cultural and creative industry encompasses a range of professional fields; one of them is architecture and design, which includes building design and interior design. Building design involves tailoring a building according to certain environmental, functional, and visual specifications. Professions related to building design include architectural design and interior design. With increasing globalization and the ever-growing popularity of backpacking, it has become a trend that hotel business with construction experience acquire land to customize their hotels in a themed and stylish manner, leading to a growing number of boutique hotels. Moreover, public art spaces have been increasingly established, contributing to the demand for interior design. Cultural and creative spaces have become a vital driver of the cul-

tural and creative industry (Su, 2011). In Taiwan, buildings of cultural or historical significance are scattered nationwide and are gradually slipping from public memory as time passes. However, they can be revitalized with artistic elements; Taiwan has recently seen the renovation of old department stores, reconstruction of aged and abandoned houses into culturally meaningful parks and spaces, and construction of culturally stylish hotels imbued with local character. With the government’s growing emphasis on maintaining culture and the demonstration of local characteristics, many buildings in Taiwan have been rebuilt into local cultural sites or cultural and creative hotels. In recent years, stylish cultural and creative hotels have become one of the top choices of customers and many unique hotels have proliferated, each targeting a specific consumer market.

The Act for the Development of Tourism (Tourism Bureau, 2001) defines a hotel as “a profit-taking public facility that operates international tourist hotels or regular tourist hotels to provide tourists with lodging, catering, and other related services.” Gee proposed that Resort hotels mainly serve the needs of customers on vacation and customers who take vacations while attending conferences (Gee, 1996). Customers of such hotels tend to participate in diverse activities to seek an entirely fresh experience during their stay. The value that consumers derive from the cultural value can be divided into in the following groups (Throsby, 2001): aesthetic (the coherence and beauty of a commodity), spiritual (a unique cultural inspiration), social (enhanced social identification),

historical (understanding one's relationship with history), symbolic (the significance of a commodity), and authentic (the originality and true value of a commodity). Moreover, culture and tourism form a symbiotic relationship (Jansen, 2006). Tourism legitimizes the political support for culture and its role in the society and economy as well as encouraging cultural preservation and innovation.

On the other hand, culture provides abundant resources for the development of tourism products; culture serves as a rich source of heritage and folklore that tourism can tap to further unleash its own potential, thereby engaging tourists in culturally enriching experiences. On the basis of the above mentioned arguments, a cultural and creative hotel that incorporated cultural elements can be defined as "a profit-making organization offering accommodation and related services with cultural and recreational value." Means-End Chain (MEC)

Gutman (1982) first proposed the MEC theory, which was premised on the viewpoint of Rokeach (1973). The theory assumes that value plays an important role in consumer behaviour and customers categorize products according to their personal value to simplify the selection process. Therefore, value can be described as a consumer's desired ultimate form of existence. Personal value indicates a person's desired way of life and intrinsic goals; its influence on individual's behavior can be examined through the MEC, which illustrates how a consumer—to derive the satisfaction from a product or service—considers the attributes or functions of that product and the conse-

quences of using it before purchasing. The MEC analyzes customers' comprehension of product attributes and consequences (means) to derive certain value (ends) by capturing abstract meanings from various products (Goldenberg et al., 2000).

An attribute is a tangible or intangible feature of a product, thing, or activity (Pitts et al., 1991). Symbolic attributes include quality and service attitude, whereas physical ones, which are measurable, involve packaging, weight, and price. Symbolic and physical attributes represent the psychological and physical characteristics of a product, respectively, as perceived by consumers. A consequence is a psychological or physical benefit that consumers expect to obtain from a product or service. In other words, a consequence of a purchase is a physical or psychological result of using a product or service. If that consequence is desired by the consumer, it is perceived to be a benefit; if it is loathed by the consumer, it is perceived to be a risk. Levitt (1960) divided consequences into functional and social-psychological consequences that arise from consumption; functional refers to physical reactions, whereas social-psychological refers to perceptions. Value is the physical or physical state that a consumer expects to achieve with a purchase; it is defined in MEC theory as a desired ultimate form of existence (Gutman, 1982; Peter and Olson, 1996). Rokeach (1973) referred to value as a commitment to a given behavior or state, suggesting that this commitment predisposes a person or society to act in a certain way. Holbrook (1994) suggested that value is a preferred consumption experience that

involves emotions and preferences that represents consumers' preferred overall consumption experience. Therefore, consumption largely follows on from satisfaction by pursuing not only the functionality but also other specific value of a product or service.

Olson and Reynolds (1983) proposed an MEC with six levels of attributes, consequences, and values, ordered from less to more abstract: (a) concrete attributes (the appearance and functionality of a product); (b) abstract attributes (the sum of indirect tangible messages); (c) functional consequences (the direct consequences derived from the purchase of a product); (d) psychological consequences (the psychological or social consequences produced by a purchased product); (e) instrumental value (the means of achieving terminal value); and (f) terminal value (the perceived or conceived ultimate goal of a purchased product). Concrete and abstract attributes are organized into the attributes level; functional and psychological consequences into the consequences level; and instrumental and terminal values into the values level.

The MEC examines the relationship between consumer behavior and value. This study used an attribute–consequence–value chain to analyze the value of tourists' stays at cultural and creative hotels; conducted ladder interviews to acquire the tourists' perceived attributes, consequences, and value of the hotels as well as content analysis to create value ladders for the tourists; and constructed a perceptual map to explicate the linkages among factors in the tourists' decisions to select the hotels.

Product Attributes

To elucidate what leads to a purchase, the MEC was used to link the attributes, consumption consequences, and purchasing value of products. A content analysis was performed to organize the interview data into linguistic stems for a subsequent hierarchical analysis. This study analyzed attributes that may contribute to a hotel's business, which are brand awareness, style and design, room size, location, service quality, catering quality, landscape, price, number of rooms, convenience of transport, facilities (e.g., swimming pools and hydrotherapy tubs), house-keeping, personal itinerary planning, privacy, and digital services. Keeney (1999) summarized the factors involved in customers' selection of tourist hotels into six categories according to customer value:

- (a) price (e.g., of traffic, accommodation, catering, tour services, and use of facilities);
- (b) quality (e.g., of bedding, showers, communication devices, and dining facilities);
- (c) location (e.g., modes of transportation available, the amount of time required to reach the hotel, and whether any attractions exist nearby to visit);
- (d) convenience (e.g., whether any accessible information about the hotel exists, whether the hotel allows online room reservation, and whether park or making payments are convenient);
- (e) facility (e.g., availability of gyms, saunas, swimming pools, or conference rooms);
- (f) safety (e.g., availability of fire facilities and hygiene facilities and security services);
- (g) catering (e.g., availability of catering services); and

(h) service (e.g., service attitude and efficiency, pickup service, and package tour planning).

Value Theory

Value is not only a desirable ultimate form of existence and a commitment but also a crucial factor in the selection process (Gutman, 1982). Academic focus on customer value has shifted from the value associated with transaction cost reduction to the comparable value between price and quality to perceived utility value to the perceived value of experience exchange. Therefore, Gale (1994) suggested that customer value involves rational and experiential perspectives. The rational perspective refers to a customer's orientation to problem solving, focus on the product, and the utility and effectiveness of the product purchased, whereas the experiential perspective concerns the impression and feelings that a customer has about their purchase (Butz & Goodstein, 1996). Value can be seen as the sum of money that a buyer is willing to pay for the product or service provided—i.e., the overall opinion of the consumer about the utility of the product or service (Zeithaml, 1988).

Common instruments for measuring personal value include the 36-item Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) designed by Rokeach (1973). The instrument comprises the dimensions of means and ends; the means comprise 18 instrumental values, which refer to modes of behavior, whereas the ends comprise 18 terminal values, which refer to end-states of existence (See Table x). In this study, participants were asked to rank the terminal

values followed by the instrumental ones by their order of importance as guiding principles in their lives.

Kahle (1986) incorporated other values into the RVS and proposed the List of Values (LOV), which has been implemented in numerous value-related works. The LOV is a value-measurement instrument developed by the Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, on the basis of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954) as well as Feather's (1975) and Rokeach's (1973) value theories (Kahle et al., 1986). Arguing that Rokeach's value theory contained an excessive number of values, Kahle (1986) used only nine values in the theory, and these nine included self-fulfillment, sense of belonging, excitement, sense of accomplishment, self-respect, being respected, security, fun and enjoyment, and warm relation with others. Schwartz (1992) indicated that value arises from three types of need (physical, social and group life, and wellbeing) and proposed 10 values including power, achievement, and enjoyment.

In summary, studies have attempted to develop a simplified value-measurement instruments on the motivations of personal behavior and simplify the value-measurement instruments to assess customer value. This study used value theories to examine the value of tourist hotels as perceived by consumers and analyzed these customer-perceived values qualitatively. MEC is a set of research method that evaluates consumer behavior and values; since consumers endow meanings to different products, services, or purchasing behaviors in their minds, these

meanings are linked to their personal psychological values. Therefore, this study uses value-measurement instrument as foundation and MEC as research method, to discuss the consumer behavior and personal values of cultural and creative hotel customers.

Methods

Participants And Sampling Procedure

Consumers who had stayed at cultural and creative hotels for at least two days in the previous year were recruited and Informed consent for using the information was obtained. Snowballing sampling method was performed in which the participants were asked to recommend friends or relatives to participate in the study who had also stayed at cultural and creative hotels. Data were collected from February 17 to April 20, 2016, through face-to-face interviews. The interviews were conducted in locations where they could be audio recorded intelligibly for transcribing and audio recording began only with participants' agreement. Each participant was interviewed for averagely 25–30 minutes.

Data Collection and Analysis

All interview data were sorted systematically and transcribed. Content analysis was performed to code the transcripts. To construct a needs-based hierarchical value map (HVM), an implication matrix was established on the basis of the number of linkages accumulated.

Content analysis involves building linguistic stems and coding data. In this study, transcripts were reviewed to

test the coherence of each interview response and the validity of the data. Key descriptions were extracted from the transcripts in accordance with the product attributes, consumption consequences, and consumption values that influenced the selection of cultural and creative hotels. Similar key descriptions were categorized under appropriate linguistic stems and organized according to their respective features. To ensure the transcript descriptions were categorized as accurately as possible, the two researchers from this study and two experts conversant in MEC conducted the categorization and coding. Coding consequences among the four experts were subsequently compared, and the concepts that led to disagreement over their categorization were all discussed to reach consensus and prepare a category list of factors in the selection of cultural and creative hotels (Table 1). The concepts were named by keywords according to their characteristics and content, and subsequently numbered and coded. Reliability and validity tests were conducted to organize all factors into “attribute,” “consequence,” and “value” levels.

A reliability test was conducted for inter judge reliability, in which all raters independently coded the same data according to the same coding procedure. Similar coding consequences between raters showed higher agreement; those that were not similar had lower agreement. Consequences from two coders were compared and showed a mean inter-rater agreement level of 0.85. Subsequently, the reliability of the study was estimated using the reliability equation, which is expressed as follows:

Table 1. The identification of attributes, consequences, and value

Attributes (A)	Consequences (C)	Values (V)
A1 Price (e.g. promotion, discount, giveaway, free sample)	C1 Bargain(e.g. affordable, worth more than the price paid)	V1 Blissful value(e.g. happy life, blissfully happy, romantically happy, fulfilled life)
A2 Service quality(e.g. clean, hygienic, high Internet speed, diverse)	C2 Clean and comfortable(e.g. sanitary environment, clean rooms, immaculate inside)	V2 Aesthetic value(e.g. cleverly designed, ingenious interior design, culturally distinctive totems, beautiful, visually appealing)
A3 Convenience(e.g. convenient, simple, time-saving)	C3 Easy and convenient(e.g. convenient room booking, online booking, parking lot, easy to locate the hotel)	V3 Economic value(e.g. real bargain, money-saving satisfied)
A4 Experience with the environment(e.g. beautiful, unique, sense of design, creative, culture, emotion)	C4 Promoting cultural and creative awareness(e.g. creative designs everywhere, clever)	V4 Recreational value(e.g. full of fun, delightful life, immersing in leisure time)
A5 Security(e.g. safe, reassuring, friendly)	C5 Stress relieving(e.g. relaxing, restful, free from worries)	
A6 Catering and itinerary(e.g. abundant, delicious, good service, smile, varied itinerary)	C6 Satisfying desire for travel and foods (e.g. well-planned itinerary, clear introduction, local foods, gaining a deep understanding of local culture, sumptuous meals)	

2 (the number of coders) \times 0.85 (mean interrater agreement level) \div [1 + (2 - 1) \times 0.85]. Therefore, the reliability of this study was 0.92, which exceeded the 0.85 threshold recommended by Kassirjian (1977) and indicated high reliability.

An implication matrix is a systematic matrix depicting linkages among attributes, consequences, and values. On the basis of the linkages clearly shown by the implication matrix, an HVM was created to illustrate

a hierarchy of values for each participant. To assess the importance of various linkages and make it easier for the value hierarchy to converge (to improve the intelligibility of relevant information), less crucial linkages were eliminated using a cutoff value of 5% (Gengler & Reynolds, 1995); linkages with a number of direct links exceeding the value were confirmed. Considering that 45 participants were recruited, low cutoff values might have led to weak or complicated linkages, whereas high cutoff values might have resulted in the omission of comprehen-

sive or valuable information. Therefore, the cutoff value was set as 3; linkages with more than three direct links were displayed in the HVM.

Results and Discussion

Demographics

The demographic data of the study population as follows. Most participants were female (56.8%, $n = 25$), aged 36–50 years (63.6%, $n = 28$), unmarried (52.3%, $n = 23$), earned a monthly disposable income of between NT\$ 20,000 and NT\$ 30,000, held a bachelor's or associate degree (75%, $n = 33$), and worked in the service industry (38.6%, $n = 17$). Relatively fewer participants worked in the military, government, and education (22.7%, $n = 10$) sectors and reported a monthly disposable income of between NT\$ 30,000 and NT\$ 40,000.

Frequency Analysis Of Each Attribute, Consequence, And Value

Analysis of the interview tran-

scripts yielded six attributes, six consequences, and four values (Table 2). At the attribute level, “price (A1)” was mentioned most frequently (34 times), followed by “service quality (A2),” “experience with the environment (A4),” “convenience (A3),” and “security (A5).” These attributes were crucial to the participants’ selection of cultural and creative hotels and to the consequences of their consumption. At the consequence level, “bargain (C1)” was mentioned mostly frequently (43 times), followed by “satisfying desire for travel and foods (C6),” “promoting cultural and creative awareness (C4),” “easy and convenient (C3),” “clean and comfortable (C2),” and “stress relieving (C5).” Therefore, participants attached the highest importance to whether the hotels were a bargain and satisfied their desire for travel and foods; these were the most critical consequences of generating consumption values. At the value level, “recreational value (V4)” was mentioned most frequently (36 times), followed by “blissful value (V1),” “aesthetic value (V2),” and “economic value (V3).”

Table 2. Frequency of each attribute, consequence, and value

Attributes (A)	Freq.	Consequences (C)	Freq.	Values (V)	Freq.
A1 Price	34	C1 Bargain	43	V1 Blissful value	24
A2 Service quality	22	C2 Clean and comfortable	18	V2 Aesthetic value	18
A3 Convenience	14	C3 Easy and convenient	19	V3 Economic value	14
A4 Experience with the environment	20	C4 Promoting cultural and creative awareness	20	V4 Recreational value	36
A5 Security	9	C5 Stress relieving	16		
A6 Catering and itinerary	31	C6 Satisfying desire for travel and foods	24		

HVM

Interview data collected from all of the 45 participants were used to construct an implication matrix (Table 3). An HVM (Figure 1.) was subsequently created on the basis of the linkages described by the matrix.

In the HVM, numbers shown on the side of the lines of linkages denoted the total number of mentions made of the linkages; the higher the numbers, the thicker the lines and the more stable and crucial the linkages. Among the attribute (A), consequence (C), and value (V) levels, several A–C–V pathways were identified: (a) “price (A1)” and “service quality (A2)” achieved “economic value (V3)” via “clean and comfortable (C2)” and “simple and convenient (C3)”; (b) “experience with the environment (A4)” and “catering and itinerary (A6)” achieved “aesthetic value (V2)” via “promoting cultural and creative awareness (C4)”; (c) “service quality (A2),” “security (A5),” and “catering and itinerary (A6)” achieved “recreational value (V4)” via “stress relieving (C5)” or “satisfying desire for travel and foods (C6)”; and (d) “security (A5)” and “catering and itinerary (A6)” achieved “blissful value (V1)” via “stress relieving (C5)” or “satisfying desire for travel and foods (C6).”

Some A–C–V pathways were also observed in the map: (a) “price (A1)” and “catering and itinerary (A6)” were linked with “clean and comfortable (C2)” via “bargain (C1)” to achieve “economic value (V3),” and (b) “service quality (A2)” was linked with “satisfying desire for travel and foods (C6)” via “stress relieving (C5)”

to achieve “blissful value (V1).

An analysis of the HVM revealed the following pathways leading respectively to the four values pursued by the participants.

Pathway To Recreational Value

Analysis of the linkages in the HVM suggested that recreational value was the core value for consumers of cultural and creative hotels, and the pathway to this value constituted direct or indirect consequences as “stress relieving (C5)” and “satisfying desire for travel and foods (C6),” which arose from “service quality (A2),” “security (A5),” and “catering and itinerary (A6).” Therefore, when selecting cultural and creative hotels, customers would consider the service quality, security, and catering and itinerary whereas being able to relieve stress and satisfy their desire for travel and foods were the consequences they expected to derive from their consumption at the hotels.

Pathway To Blissful Value

The pathway to blissful value consisted of the consequences of “stress relieving (C5)” and “satisfying desire for travel and foods (C6),” which arose from “service quality (A2),” “security (A5),” and “catering and itinerary (A6).” Accordingly, recreational activities that consumers engage in when staying at cultural and creative hotels are normally enjoyable, allowing them to unwind, satisfy their desire for travel, lead a fulfilled, happy, relaxing life, and improve their wellbeing and quality of life. This finding indicated that by staying at a hotel when traveling

affords opportunities to relax, engage in leisure, and savor local foods, which enhances the consumers' happiness.

Pathway To Aesthetic Value

Tourists staying at a cultural and creative hotel may also have an aesthetic experience during their stay. Staying at hotels that boast cleverly designed environments, provide tour planning and guide services, and even introduce local dishes, allows tourists to broaden their horizons and adds an aesthetic dimension to their travel. Therefore, the ingenious and culture-specific environmental design of cultural and creative hotels is what appeals to their customers, and by introducing tourist attractions or providing local cuisines, the hotels can improve their customers' aesthetic experience of travel. These strengths can distinguish cultural and creative hotels from their conventional counterparts.

Pathway To Economic Value

Analysis of individual linkages indicated that "price (A1)" and "bargain (C1)" had the most linkages. Their formation was the consequence of "clean and comfortable (C2)," which led to "economic value (V3)." Moreover, "clean and comfortable (C2)" linked closely not only with "bargain (C1)" but also "service quality (A2)," which was described by related concepts ("clean," "hygienic," and "diverse") extracted from the interview transcripts to generate economic value.

Economic value was also observed in some interview responses in which "convenient room booking" and "easy to locate the hotel" were men-

tioned and consequently led to "easy and convenient (C3)." However, many participants stated that although price was a primary factor in their selection, they preferred casual immersion with family members in spiritually rich experiences gained from a glimpse into a cultural or creative activity at a local level to the economic value from the affordable prices they paid for their accommodation.

On the basis of these findings, the linkages among attributes, consequences, and values regarding the selection of cultural and creative hotels suggested that providing distinctive accommodation services can meet varying consumer needs. Because decisions to buy products or services are typically based on motivations to derive one or more value from the product or service in question, the combination of these values affects the purchase decision. Staying at a cultural and creative hotel can provide a consumer with recreational, blissful, aesthetic, and economic values—all of which indicate the consumer's travel motivations and goals. Compared with other studies, this study found that even when consumers derived the same final values from their hotel selection, the MEC suggested that the consequences and attributes linked by values differed from each other. Underlying these linkages were the accommodation experiences associated with the unique attributes of cultural and creative hotels. Furthermore, MEC theory states that various hierarchical linkages represent various consumption experiences, and even if these experiences yield the same values, they

Table 3. Respondents' A-C implication matrix

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	V1	V2	V3	V4	Total
A1	25	2	6		1						34
A2	2	10	1		5	4					22
A3	2		12								14
A4	1	1		16	2						20
A5	1				8						9
A6	12	2		4		13					31
C1		3				2			5		10
C2								2	4	1	7
C3									3		3
C4						1	1	16	2		20
C5						4	10			13	27
C6							13			22	35
Total	43	18	19	20	16	24	24	18	14	36	

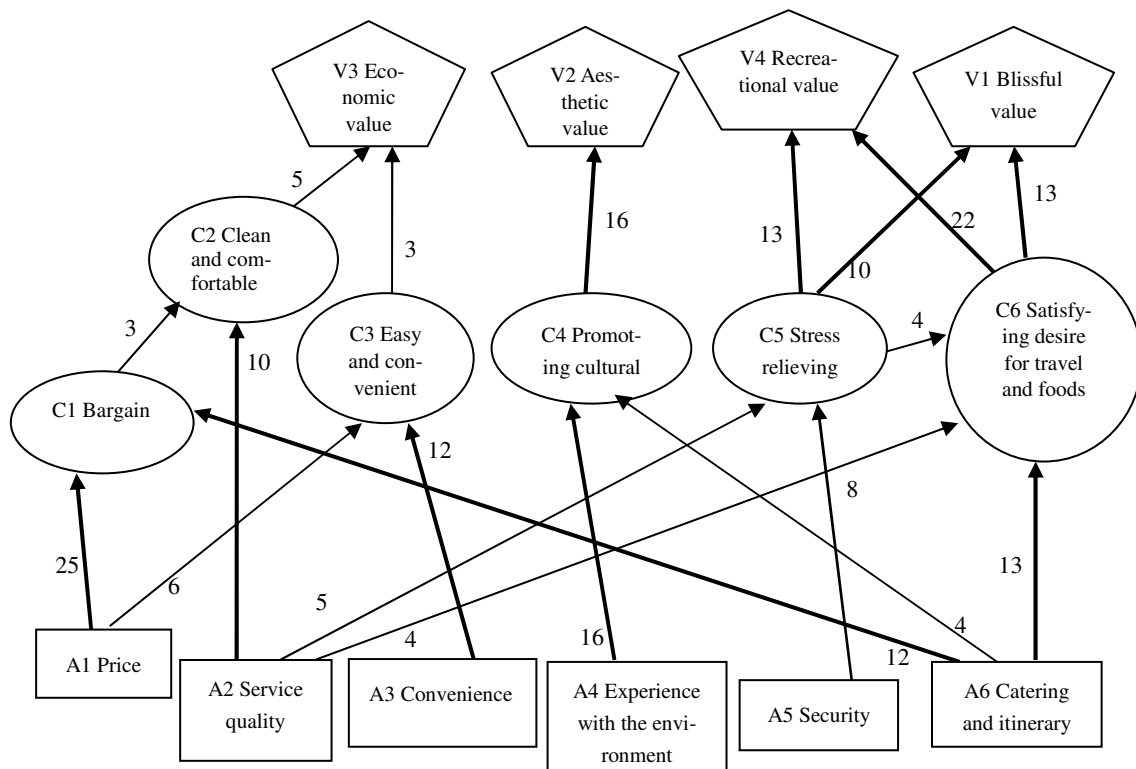


Figure 1. HVM of cultural and creative hotel customers

involve fulfilling various consumer needs. Hence, as travel experiences vary from hotel to hotel, so do consumer needs.

Conclusions

In this study, a hierarchical value analysis of cultural and creative hotels was performed on the basis of MEC theory to elucidate the attributes, consequences, and values of the hotels from consumer perspectives. The consequences indicated that consumers pursued multiple values from their stays at cultural and creative hotels. They focused on six attributes (price, service quality, easy and convenient, experience with the environment, security, catering and itinerary) during selection, which generated four values (blissful, recreational, aesthetic, and economic) via six consumption consequences.

To stand out in a market characterized by diverse tourist accommodation products, hotels can develop their own characteristics to generate various consequences and values, cater for varying consumer needs, and provide their consumers with blissful, recrea-

tional, aesthetic, and economic values.

An analysis of linkages from the findings yielded the following conclusion. The customer value chain of cultural and creative hotel consumers is characterized by the attributes of the hotels leading to blissful, recreational, aesthetic, and economic values via consumption consequences. The consumers attached the most importance to blissful value, followed by recreational, aesthetic, and economic values.

This indicated that consumers focus on gaining blissful and recreational values by unwinding and satisfying their desire for travel and delicacies at the hotels. Therefore, cultural and creative hotels should not only refine their service coverage but also offer a secure accommodation environment, local dishes, and itinerary planning services. Hotels can gain aesthetic value by immersing their consumers in a cleverly designed environment and by planning itineraries for them, which allows the consumers to broaden their horizons in order to achieve customer values.

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