

# **MARKETING**

**CONSUMER EXPERIENCE: EXAMINATION OF CONCEPTUAL  
PROPOSALS APPLIED IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY**

**EXPERIÊNCIA DE CONSUMO: EXAME DE PROPOSTAS  
CONCEITUAIS APLICADAS NA INDUSTRIA HOTELEIRA**

## **ABSTRACT**

As consolidated business differentiation strategies become commonplace, interest in consumer experiences grows, including for the hotel industry, whose growth depends on offering unique, memorable, and personalized experiences for the consumer. However, the literature recognizes the conceptual dispersion in the development of the theme, especially in the identification and treatment of its constituent elements. Regarding the academic call, conceptual definition proposals are raised, with the recommendation for its application and examination in real consumption situations, leading to the objective of this work: Understanding how hotel consumers perceive their experience from the dimensions proposed by the concepts suggested. The analysis of two conceptual proposals was promoted in a case study, where the reports about the latest hotel experiences of frequent business travelers, employees of a Brazilian organization, were collected in focus groups. The results showed how consumers notice the constitutive dimensions of the consumption experience, highlighting the interconnection between them and the complexity of the consumption journey. As a contribution of this paper, the examined concepts are strengthened, and the debate on their solidification as definitions for consumption experience is enhanced.

Keywords: Consumer experience, Hospitality, Consumer behavior

## **RESUMO**

À medida que estratégias consolidadas de diferenciação de negócios se tornam lugar comum, cresce o interesse em experiências de consumo, inclusive para a hotelaria, cujo crescimento depende da oferta de experiências únicas, memoráveis e personalizadas para o consumidor. No entanto, a literatura reconhece a dispersão conceitual no desenvolvimento do tema, principalmente na identificação e tratamento de seus elementos constitutivos. Respondendo a chamada acadêmica, são levantadas propostas de definição conceitual, com recomendação para a sua aplicação e exame em situações reais de consumo, conduzindo ao objetivo deste trabalho: Compreender como os consumidores de hotéis percebem a sua experiência a partir das dimensões propostas pelos conceitos sugeridos. A análise de duas propostas conceituais foi promovida em um estudo de caso, onde os relatos sobre as últimas experiências hoteleiras de viajantes frequentes a negócios, funcionários de uma organização brasileira, foram coletados em grupos focais. Os resultados mostraram como os consumidores percebem as dimensões constitutivas da experiência de consumo, destacando a conexão entre elas e a complexidade da jornada de consumo. Como contribuição deste trabalho, são fortalecidos os conceitos examinados, e é potencializado o debate sobre sua solidificação como definições para a experiência de consumo.

Palavras-chave: Experiência de consumo, Hotelaria, Comportamento do Consumidor

## INTRODUCTION

While services are moving towards commoditization and relationship marketing practices are becoming common strategies, the focus on experiences emerges as the next step, revealing themselves as distinct economic offers desired by consumers and increasingly offered by organizations (PALMER, 2010; PINE; GILMORE, 1998). The interest in consumer experiences arises at a time when consumers are starting to interact with organizations through increasingly complex journeys (KANDAMPULLY et al., 2018; LEMON; VERHOEF, 2016). Authors also defend the power of consumer experiences in generating good marketing results, such as satisfaction, loyalty and word-of-mouth communications (JAIN et al., 2017; KRANZBÜHLER, 2018).

More recently, authors recognized the theoretical advance but consider that there is a conceptual dispersion in consumption experience, not finding consensus on construct definitions (CARÙ; COVA, 2003; JAIN et al., 2017; KRANZBÜHLER et al., 2018; LEMON; VERHOEF, 2016; PINTO; LARA, 2011; SCUSSEL, 2019; SCUSSEL et al. 2021), having even been perceived as an umbrella construct, covering a variety of phenomena (KRANZBÜHLER et al., 2018). For Verhoef et al. (2009), the literature should understand the multiple factors that affect the consumption experience, whether controlled or not by organizations, adding that the conceptualization of the term should capture not only cognitive considerations and affective responses but also social and physical experience components.

Understanding the literature call to better understand and delimit the theme, conceptual proposals are suggested for the terms Customer Experience (BECKER; JAAKKOLA, 2020) or Consumption Experience (SCUSSEL et al., 2021). The first proposal directs the focus to the individuals' responses to stimuli in a complex consumption journey. In turn, the second proposal highlights the interaction process between individuals and organizations in the creation of an experiential value constituted by six consumption dimensions.

As a starting point, Becker and Jaakkola (2020) maintain that organizations do not create consumption experiences but can manipulate the stimuli received by individuals throughout the journey. In this sense, the authors demonstrate concern about how organizations can deal with experiences to achieve desired consumer responses. Future research is suggested related to the manipulation of stimuli controlled or not by organizations; the interaction between different stimuli along the journey; the role of contextual variables and institutional arrangements in shaping experiences; among others.

Scussel et al. (2021) understands consumption experience primarily as the interaction between consumer and organization, directly affected by the surrounding sociocultural context, on a journey over time. Individual responses to stimuli, for the authors, are part of the process as a whole and lead to experiential value, or the value understood and derived from an experience. Thus, organizations can strategically position themselves based on the relationship with the consumer and the empirical observation of six constitutive dimensions – Emotional, Cognitive, Contextual, Utilitarian, Pragmatic, and Material. This way, it is recommended to conduct exploratory research capable of investigating the proposed dimensions in a real environment.

While Becker and Jaakkola (2020) questioned how organizations can measure and use the customer experience, raising suggestions for future research, Scussel et al. (2021) proposed a series of constitutive dimensions of the consumption experience,

which also need to be investigated. At the junction of both studies, there is the opportunity to answer questions from the first study with the tools raised by the second.

Consumer experience has received attention from studies including tourism and hospitality (BAO et al., 2021; SCUSSEL, 2019), as it represents the industry core (GOMEZ-SUAREZ; VELOSO, 2022), being especially important for its sustainable growth (BAO et al., 2021). Recognizing experiential value as a joint creation between consumers and organizations along the consumption journey, Roy et al. (2019) agrees with the importance of collaboration between the parties for the hospitality industry since the survival and growth of hotels largely depend on offering unique, memorable, and personalized experiences.

In their systematic literature review, Adhikari and Bhattacharya (2016) found studies on consumer experience in the tourism and hospitality industry to be quite limited. Kandampully et al. (2018) consider that there is little integration between consumer experience research and hotel management principles, pointing out the limitations of studies. Chia and Xiong (2022) recognize that the multiplicity of interpretations causes difficulties in the coherent identification of characteristics of memorable experiences in hotels. Taheri et al. (2021) consider that tourism authors have privileged the study of cognitive and affective dimensions with less attention to social dimensions.

From this opportunity arises the objective of the present work, which seeks to answer: How do hotel consumers perceive their experience from the consumption dimensions proposed by Scussel et al. (2021)? Seeking to reach this target, a case study was applied, analyzing the consumption experience in Brazilian hotels from the perspective of a frequent consumer group, composed of employees from the same organization. The group's choice was based on one of the profiles proposed by Cook (2020) for highly mobile travelers, called "frequent business traveler", which is characterized by a high frequency of professional trips, due to displacements motivated by visits to customers and other stakeholders. This ends up culminating in greater consumption of accommodation compared to most of the population.

As a result, it is expected to obtain a greater understanding of how the proposed dimensions are revealed in a consumption practical context. Thus, the examination of proposals raised by Becker and Jaakola (2020) and Scussel et al. (2021) might promote theoretical advances in consumer experience by strengthening its theoretical delimitation (CARÜ; COVA, 2003; JAIN et al., 2017; KRANZBÜHLER et al., 2018; LEMON; VERHOEF, 2016; PINTO; LARA, 2011; SCUSSEL, 2019; SCUSSEL et al. 2021).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

While commodities, goods, and services are products external to the individual, experiences are personal creations, existing in the individual's mind engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or spiritual level (PINE; GILMORE, 1998). Therefore, the value of an experience is not created by organization, but by the consumer, who buys inputs offered by organization to extract the desired value from their use (GRÖNROOS, 2008). It also emphasized the use of consumption for individuals to say something about themselves, affirm their position in society, and their relationships with other people (HOLT, 1995; PINTO; LARA, 2011), extrapolating the limits of a strict marketing relationship between individuals and organizations (CARÜ; COVA, 2003).

Consumption experience reveals itself, at first analysis, as an interactive process between the consumer and the value propositions of an organization

(SCUSSEL et al., 2021). For Holbrook (2002), the value extracted from consumption is based on the interaction between object and subject – organization and consumer, where the tangible and intangible characteristics of products and services do not reach their purpose without the involvement of someone who appreciates these elements. Each consumer uniquely accesses a value proposition offered, so that different consumers can experience the same proposition in different ways (CHANDLER; LUSCH, 2014).

In parallel, for Becker and Jaakkola (2020), customer experience refers to consumer responses to offer stimuli encountered along a consumption journey made up of multiple touchpoints (consumer-offer interaction moments) and cues (smallest stimulus unit felt by the consumer able to influence the customer experience). In addition to organizations, such elements can also be controlled by other organizations, consumers, and contexts (LEMON; VERHOEF, 2016).

Other authors understand the set of individual-organization interactions as a consumption process or journey, which transits between the pre-experience and post-consumption moments (CARÙ; COVA, 2003; JAIN et al., 2017; VERHOEF et al., 2009). Journeys follow a complex path, starting and ending at moments far from the commercial transaction itself, and must be observed holistically, integrating all the activities involved in the journey (JAIN et al., 2017).

For the individual, the consumption journey purpose is the purchase and use of market inputs to obtain some desired value. On the other hand, organizations participate in the journey to help individuals in their practices. In this way, value is not created by organizations, but by consumers in a value-creation process (GRÖNROOS, 2008; BECKER; JAAKKOLA, 2020). In this sense, organizations do not create value but offer their proposals, and the consumer needs to perceive it in the market (SCUSSEL et al, 2021). Depending on their value proposition, organizations can stipulate which responses they want to get from consumers (BECKER; JAAKKOLA, 2020).

When describing the types of touchpoints that exist in the consumer journey, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) include those in the social domain. For the authors, consumers are also influenced by other consumers, friends, and sources of information, among other actors, whether requested or not.

Further expanding this perspective beyond organization-consumer interactions, researchers from consumer culture theory (CCT) focus on the sociocultural context of the consumer and his contribution to value creation (ARNOULD; THOMPSON, 2005; VARGO; LUSCH, 2011). Cultural aspects such as material and symbolic resources, social resources, consumption ideologies, and lived culture contribute to value co-creation and experience evaluation, including being mediated by industry interactions (AKAKA et al., 2015). For Pinto and Lara (2011), culture and consumption are strongly linked, as consumption is shaped in every way by cultural considerations.

In this way, sociocultural influences involved in organization-individual interactions are added to the understanding of the customer (BECKER; JAAKKOLA, 2020) and consumption experience (SCUSSEL et al., 2021), placing the consumer in a specific influential time-space point (SCUSSEL et al., 2021), where contingencies more directly related to the individual, the experience situation and the sociocultural environment will be observed (BECKER & JAAKKOLA, 2020; JAIN et al, 2017).

In this way, external stimuli felt by a consumer are building elements of their experience. Their sensory perception is influenced by situational characteristics, specific to the event, in addition to sociocultural and personal properties of the

individual (JAIN et al., 2017; PALMER, 2010). Furthermore, consumers use symbolic meanings contained in industry resources to manifest their individual personalities and collective identity (ARNOULD; THOMPSON, 2005; HOLT, 1995).

In their seminal 1982 article, Holbrook and Hirschman highlighted the role of consumer emotions, where fantasies and thoughts are part of the experience when stimulated by consumed products and services. There is the incorporation of the individual's emotional and social involvement, such as their dreams, imagination, experimentation, and sharing with friends. In this way, the process is also built beyond rational economic transactions, including experiences where there is no purchase, but interactions with organizations in other situations, such as the exchange of gifts or public services consumption (CARÙ; COVA, 2003).

Consumer experience is both a formative construct through the learning in interaction with environment elements, and a reflective construct through the expression of consumer responses. It is the interaction with the environment result, leading to the consumer's cognitive and emotional processing, resulting in multiple possibilities of responses (JAIN et al., 2017).

Consumer experience is a holistic construct composed of the consumer's cognitive, affective, emotional, social, and physical responses, involving the totality of the experience and consumption journey, considering elements controlled or not by the organization (VERHOEF et al., 2009). Each experience is the individual's unique and subjective mental processing reflection and can be considered good or bad, leading to positive or negative responses and behaviors related to satisfaction, perceived quality, purchase intention, among others (JAIN et al., 2017).

Becker and Jaakkola (2020) define customer experience as non-deliberate and spontaneous responses and reactions to stimuli. This vision is complemented with the premise that the customer experience is related to stimuli positioned in a consumption journey influenced by personal, situational, and sociocultural contingencies, resulting in consumer responses about the experience.

The authors observe in the literature the concern to classify the experiences result, following the premise that good experiences should be memorable for the individual. It is proposed that this result derives from the intensity level of consumer responses to experiences, with a continuum between weak and strong responses, resulting in ordinary to extraordinary customer experiences. Therefore, organizations cannot create the experience, but they can manage a variety of stimuli that influence them.

Scussel et al. (2021), in turn, define consumption experience as an interactive process between the consumer and the value propositions of an organization, within a given sociocultural structure, capable of generating emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses in the consumer, whose final product is experiential value, benefiting both consumers and organizations.

The consumption experience result, for these authors, resides in the experiential value, which is revealed to be a construct formed by all the existing elements throughout the relationship between consumer and organization. More specifically, six properties of the consumption experience (material, utilitarian, contextual, pragmatic, emotional, and cognitive – described in Table 1) are proposed as its building dimensions, which can be used as a starting point for the decomposition and analysis of the resulting experiential value.

When passing through the proposed consumption dimensions, the experiential value is an individual personal creation in his/her consumption process, being developed both by his/her competence and resources and by the value proposition

offered by the organization. Through the relationship with individuals along the journey, organizations can collect learnings about the consumer and influence the process to increase the experiential value, in a two-way interaction, where both parties influence the service and are benefited (GRÖNROOS, 2008; SCUSSEL et al, 2021).

## METHOD

Focus groups were selected as data collection technique due to its characteristic of allowing the researcher to observe how facts are articulated, censored, or modified through group interaction. Focus groups provide a greater variety of communication, making it suitable for exploratory research, where a greater understanding of a given topic is sought (MCLAFFERTY, 2004; RYAN et al, 2013; WILKINSON, 1998). Nevertheless, the option for this qualitative method is in line with Palmer's suggestion (2010) in studies aimed at understanding consumer experiences.

It is important to emphasize that this research consists of a case study since it is an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon in depth and its real context (YIN, 2015). In this way, two focus groups were conducted with self-selected participants from the same business consulting organization, selected for convenience and because it is an organizational practice that employees frequently make face-to-face visits to clients in country different regions, often using hotels as accommodation during these trips. Such characteristics place these professionals mainly in the "frequent business travelers" profile (COOK, 2020), according to their high geographic mobility and professional focus on travel. The organization provides workspaces with adequate structure in Brazilian cities where it has an office, opening the option for individuals to use the space whenever they wish.

An open invitation was sent to the organization's employees, encouraging voluntary participation, containing a description of the requirements for participation: working in organization senior positions for at least 12 months and having stayed in hotels in Brazilian territory during the period.

The first focus group consisted of four individuals between 23 and 40 years old, two females and two males. They have been working at the organization for one to four years. Two people declared living in Brasília, two in Ribeirão Preto. The second group consisted of six individuals between 24 and 28 years old, five females and one male. They have been working at the organization for one to three years. Three people declared living in Brasília, two in São Paulo and one in Rio de Janeiro. All participants declared themselves to be single and without children. And all have declared college degree, including one person with postgraduate degree in each group.

The focus groups were held via videoconference recorded on July 4th and 14th, 2022, lasting 50 minutes each. Participants were read and shown the Free and Informed Consent Form at the opening of the meetings, being asked to accept it from all those present, who had the opportunity to express themselves and/or withdraw from participation.

On both occasions, three broad questions were applied, defined a priori, with the intention of provoking reports of their experiences associated with the Scussel et al. (2021) consumption experience dimensions: a) What is the purpose of your travels? b) How do you like to enjoy your travels? c) What are the factors considered most important throughout your hotel consumption experience? Favoring the group discussion and the achievement of the research objective, unplanned questions were created during the debate, considering the main discussions found in the literature, to

better understand the participants' perception of certain aspects of their consumer experience.

Having successfully carried out the group sessions, categorical content analysis was performed as instructed by Bardin (2009). The analysis was carried out based on the thematic-categorical model with characteristics defined a priori, using the categorization stage, classifying each recording unit in one of the six consumption experience dimensions (cognitive, contextual, emotional, material, pragmatic, and utilitarian) and allowing the application of the frequency of recording units by category (dimension). Thus, the participants' speeches were transcribed, so that each speech representing the consumption experience dimensions was used as an empirical example of these theoretical categories.

## FINDINGS

At first, the analysis focused on describing how consumers perceive the hotel consumption experience based on the set of six constitutive dimensions. Each dimension was individually investigated, with initial exposure to the emotional dimension (SCUSSEL et al., 2021).

Reading the reports allows relating the positive emotional participants' perception to their pleasure associated with traveling, favoring the experience as a whole; the satisfaction feeling obtained with hotel services, such as good service provided and consumption of good meals; and the encountering of extrinsic factors to the hotel, such as contact with local culture and new people, as demonstrated by the anonymized registration units: *"The trips I took were all [motivated by] leisure, enjoying the benefit, . . . the place, . . . and having a different balance [while I worked]"* (Michele), *"I was amazed [by the delivery of ironed clothes]. And it was on a weekend! So, it was very positive"* (Roberto), *"It's such an amazing breakfast that makes you want to return just for the breakfast, and the rest doesn't matter"* (Luna), *"Facilitates interaction with other travelers, to meet and make friends"* (Lydia).

In opposition to positive reports, there is a weak association of the dimension with negative experiences reports, with four reports identified. In these cases, their motivations are linked to poor service by hotel staff, in which the interviewees spontaneously made a detailed presentation of the situation. Furthermore, there was a case in which the participant experienced a negative experience with the structure and hotel staff, which in a short time sought to resolve the situation. *"It was a bad day, but later they noticed the need and fixed the situation"* (Bernardo).

Positive emotional value experiences were highlighted in the dimension, especially for sensory aspects awakened on trips, such as enjoying breakfast at the hotel or participating in new activities. There is also the social appeal described by participants, motivated by meeting new people or enjoying time with friends.

The contextual dimension is associated with sociocultural structures immersed in consumption, capable of influencing consumer behavior and perceptions (SCUSSEL et al., 2021).

For example, the work context experienced by the participants is demonstrated in several reports *"On a business trip, . . . I think it is more important staying in a more standardized hotel chain"* (Bernardo), *"When we travel to the customer, I think we are focused on the customer"* (Laura). There is also mention of the context centered on the hotel's particularities and its region *"I always looked for cities that were known for parties, busier places"* (Letícia); the one centered on the individual's particularity *"The*



*gym use depends on my phase*” (Daniel); in situational particularities *“During the pandemic, I felt the need to change the environment a little”* (Luna).

Positive experiences originate predominantly anchored in social issues in the hotel's region, considering public safety aspects and local culture. *“The location was very important in terms of being in a safe place”* (Laura). In addition, one of the positive reports is based on the professional context, through the appreciation of the individual cognitive capacity *“I think that even because of our profile, as good consultants, we do research, see which has the best reviews and everything else”* (Daniel).

Negative evaluations originated, in most cases, from the devaluation of the hotel's region. In turn, the neutral experiences evaluations mostly consist of explanatory reports about the context of their trips, without any value judgment or indication of returning to hotels, considering work trips where there is not necessarily a demand to return to that region *“The time I traveled for work, it was much more because of the client's needs”* (Laura). Also noteworthy is the role of third parties (especially clients to be visited) in deciding which hotel to choose for professional trips, making the consumer vulnerable to circumstances not decided by him/herself, in addition to a possible managerial challenge for the hotel manager to know and retain the individual responsible for the purchase *“When you work with the client, he is offering the entire structure”* (Diana).

The utilitarian dimension, specifically, concerns the consumer's consumption needs and objectives, in interaction with value propositions from organizations (SCUSSEL et al., 2021).

For this dimension, the observation of positive comments shows a strong association of the hotel's usefulness in favoring the carrying out of work activities on its premises, both on trips to visit customers and on personal trips in which the employee remains working professionally. Material aspects such as Internet access, suitable spaces for work, and services aimed at guest convenience are valued by the participants, according to the reports *“You will stay inside the hotel room or at least in a place that has a space for you to work, and that catches Wi-Fi”* (Laura), *“I started to value laundry services, things like that”* (Roberto), *“It always surprises positively when it has a place to leave suitcases when you arrive before check-in, or when you need to leave a little later”* (Bernardo).

Negative experiences originated from disappointment with the same items raised in positive experiences – offering useful materials and services, necessary for the guest –, as reported *“Lack of socket, or sockets located in odd places in the room”* (Lydia), *“So 2, 3 times I wanted to eat at the hotel restaurant, in the common area, and I couldn't”* (Luna), *“We were talking about the project in the restaurant space. . . [and they asked us to leave] and it was really bad”* (Bernardo). In some reports, participants describe the utilitarian dimension as an important factor in their process of choosing a hotel *“We arrive, and we immediately have to find an iron”* (Roberto). Reports reveal the need for adequate social environments to support the personal preparation of the consultant for face-to-face meetings, such as laundry services, locker room, and amenities, among others. Facilities designed for simplifying the guests stay are also appreciated, looking away from extraordinary experiences, but recognizing the everyday life value for the consumer. *“In a hotel, you can't just open the fridge and get some yogurt. These are things you have at home, simple and light meals. I don't always want a whole meal”* (Lydia).

The cognitive dimension represents an important element to be considered by hotel managers. It is related to the consumer's mental activity, including their memories

and learning in an internal process of organizational stimuli response, during the prior planning of their trip and hotel choice criteria (SCUSSEL et al., 2021).

With descriptions of motivators in choosing a hotel, most reports point to the choice based on the support of friends' recommendations, and focused research at desirable points in the establishment *"When someone recommends it, it already enters the ranking as a favorite, with a great chance to deal"* (Bernardo), *"[I research] if there is Internet, if there is interesting food on the menu. . . I would probably go depending on the price too"* (Laura). On the other hand, according to the reports, it is observed that the hotel's choice is inserted in a higher planning context, considering the trip, not just the accommodation. In this sense, the participants show low cognitive interest in choosing the hotel, giving greater importance to the decision of aspects such as the destination and itinerary of their trip, in addition to the low attachment to hotel brands *"And then [later, finally] I see the accommodation options around"* (Lydia), *"I want to choose the best place possible, so I don't just go for the hotel chain, no"* (Daniel).

Positive descriptions revealed the potential of hotel consumption to generate positive memories, stimulating for the participant *"If I went back to that city, I would stay in that same place, . . . several of my friends have already stayed"* (Letícia). The surveys and selection criteria used by the participants during the purchase decision process also revealed the influence of product reviews published online *"Usually I look at the reviews if there are any bad comments about the Wi-Fi, then I practically eliminate that option"* (Luna).

The material dimension, more specifically, involves every artifact involved in the interaction between consumers and organizations' value proposition (SCUSSEL et al., 2021). For the participants, the material dimension focuses on the experience or search for tangible facilities in the hotel service. Items such as the gym, meals, and cleanliness are sought after by consumers, even though they are not necessarily associated with the purpose (utility) of the trip.

Mostly positive experiences of participants with material aspects are identified *"I see more if they have or don't have [breakfast], even if it is simpler"* (Roberto). In one situation, a participant reports having benefited from a material item on his trip, contributing to the experiential value, without it having been commercialized by the hotel *"But mainly because I had access to a car. [With it] we could get to know the whole island."* (Daniel).

The negative experience was based on the cleanliness of the hotel *"I've already made some complaints related to the cleaning part, but nothing too critical"* (Lydia). For the value-neutral experience, there is the consideration of a low level of dimension importance by the participant *"I usually don't value hotel accommodations very much, because I usually stay away a lot"* (Bernardo).

It can be inferred that participants who spend more time inside the hotel tend to value tangible aspects of the room, which is more used for rest and work, as well as the cleanliness of the environment and bathing suits. It is important to highlight that, although the participants did not show great attention to the material aspect of hotels, they seem to value such efforts when found.

The analysis of the pragmatic dimension refers especially to consumer actions in the context of consumption, reflecting their search for products and their interaction with the industry (SCUSSEL et al., 2021).

Reports of the pragmatic dimension reflect situations experienced and movements performed by the consumer in the context of purchasing the service. Positively evaluated experiences were characterized by the convenience that the consumer obtained when purchasing without the need to check out competing offers.

Such practicality was provided by the trust deposited in recommendations received, or by the behavior of hotel loyalty after previous experiences *"When it is a recommendation, I may ignore everyone else and go straight to close in that place"* (Roberto), *"If I went back to the client, I would probably stay at the same hotel, because it is the most comfortable"* (Laura).

Establishing another perspective, negatively evaluated experiences were characterized by the customer's astonishment when finding unexpected information at the time of payment, with an unpleasant buying experience. Both situations were reported by the same participant about different travel experiences *"[At the time of] checkout, there was the breakfast price, and I didn't know"*, and *"On the website, the value was much lower than what they told me personally"* (Luna).

Identifying and discerning the aspects considered by the participants in each dimension proves to be useful for the hotel manager, who becomes capable of more assertively directing strategies aimed at customer loyalty. However, the dimensions represent complementary constitutive units of experiential value, being closely related to each other in the final consumer perception. In this sense, one participant's attention to the set of all six dimensions in a single speech stands out:

I think the cool thing about teleworking is getting to know new places, so when we think about [returning to a] hotel, it would be much more [for my] client's demand. For example, if I went back to the client, I would probably stay at the same hotel because it's the most comfortable. It's the location, it's closer, it's safer... Other people stayed there, and then when another project front also had to go to the client, we recommended the same hotel because we liked it there. There was meal offer at the hotel. Breakfast was not included, but if you paid for it, it was good. So, there was a meal at this place. If you arrived very tired, there was also [meal] for you. (Laura)

There is an emphasis on emotional aspects due to the participant's personal preference to discover new places; contextual aspects when relating the trip to your work demand; pragmatic aspects when demonstrating your purchase movement directly to that establishment without considering too many options; utilitarian aspects, when relating the hotel's adherence to your travel objectives; cognitive aspects, by emphasizing the exchange of indications between co-workers; and material aspects, considering the provision of meals as positive, even if paid separately.

## DISCUSSION

The discussion carried out in this paper involving consumption experience stands out as a contribution guided by the operationalization of the concept based on its constitutive dimensions, as Palmer (2010) suggested. The results allow the scientific community to reflect on the empirical understanding of the concept based on the six constitutive dimensions, thus strengthening the concepts of customer and consumption experience (BECKER; JAAKKOLA, 2020; SCUSSEL et al., 2021) and supporting the theoretical advancement of the theme.

First, the results demonstrate that there is the possibility of investigating the consumption experience and analyzing the experiential value from the dimensions proposed by Scussel et al. (2021). The investigation made it possible to observe the way consumers report their experiences, stimuli received and their responses, and their interaction with the entire context. All six proposed dimensions were identified in

the reports, and their set was enough to encompass all aspects experienced, albeit indiscriminately by the participants. In general, the consumer visualizes the experiential value without necessarily distinguishing the dimensions from each other. The notion that consumption experience should be a holistic concept is reinforced, representing the sum of all feelings, perceptions, and attitudes throughout an interactive process (JAIN et al., 2017; VERHOEF et al., 2009).

Another relevant point is to understand how the consumer perceives the stimuli controlled and not controlled by the hotels, and the interconnection of these stimuli in the experience construction, aspects questioned by Becker and Jaakkola (2020), as well as by Lemon and Verhoef (2016). For the participants, the entire hotel consumption journey is part of a broader travel itinerary, where other organizations participate in the experience. Despite not being controlled by the hotel, offers such as car rental and tourist attractions in the region influence the consumer's perception of the hotel, demonstrating how an organization's value proposition invites the participation of other stakeholders in the elaboration of a more intense proposal (CHANDLER; LUSCH, 2014), as well as the presence of other individuals influences the final result (KANDAMPULLY et al., 2018; VERHOEF et al., 2009). More specifically in the direct consumer/organization relationship, the journey's high complexity is perceived, where relevant touchpoints for the composition of the experiential value were associated with each of the dimensions.

The entire contextual dimension provided answers about the motivations involved in the experience. The reports do not necessarily refer to touchpoints on the journey, with attributions of value judgments about the hotel's performance. They are more strongly associated with descriptions of how personal, situational, and sociocultural contingencies represent important drivers for consumer decision-making and perceptions (BECKER; JAAKKOLA, 2020; JAIN et al., 2017). It also draws attention to the role of the profession of those consumers as a particular motivator of their behavior, highlighting the influence of institutions and institutional arrangements for the consumer (BECKER; JAAKKOLA, 2020).

Up to this point, the research findings support the adopted conceptual proposals, whether they are: customer experience as spontaneous consumer responses to stimuli (BECKER; JAAKKOLA, 2020), and consumption experience as the interactive process between individual and value propositions of organizations, wrapped in a sociocultural context, eliciting consumer responses and behaviors (SCUSSEL et al., 2021).

However, a point that is still undefined resides in the measurement and classification of the results of experiments. Understanding that organizations may wish to offer positive experiences, both extraordinary and ordinary, Becker and Jaakkola (2020) propose that the experiences development (or experiential value) can be located on a continuum between ordinary and extraordinary experiences. The results of this research demonstrated, however, that some dimensions reveal the consumer's criticality regarding the experience with the hotel (positive/negative). In contrast, others do not result in a value judgment, but "neutral" attributes that build the experience. In this sense, it is believed that a greater operationalization of the analysis by dimensions can lead to different classification axes, not necessarily extraordinary-ordinary, or positive-negative. The holistic view that must be adopted when investigating experiences is highlighted, analyzing all the constructive and influencing aspects which may not fit into a certain pre-conceived measurement scale (LEMON; VERHOEF, 2016; JAIN et al., 2017).

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Given the exploratory nature of this study, once the results found here are more indicative than conclusive, it is expected that future investigations will continue to consolidate the conceptual proposals raised by Becker and Jaakkola (2020) and Scussel et al. (2021), previously requested by authors (CARÙ; COVA, 2003; JAIN et al., 2017; KRANZBÜHLER et al., 2018; LEMON; VERHOEF, 2016; PINTO; LARA, 2011; SCUSSEL, 2019), based on the expansion of empirical observations in real environments of the consumer experience dimensions in different consumers groups and other places, to obtain a better understanding of this important concept.

It is highlighted as a research limitation the access to participants to carry out focus groups, given the limited availability of employees in the studied organization. This represents an opportunity for further studies to use focus groups with participants from different traveler profiles, thus aiming to identify different profiles of hotel consumers and their preferences during their consumption journey.

In the current stage of theoretical maturation of the conceptual proposals used, it is still up to the researcher to analyze reports and their decomposition and classification into dimensions to obtain useful results for hotel managers and marketing professionals. Further studies will have the potential to mature the concept operationalization, already observing its potential for extracting rich knowledge about the formation of experiential value by the consumer, favoring the experiences co-creation, beneficial for both consumers and organizations (GRONROOS, 2008; SCUSSEL et al., 2021).

## CONCLUSION

Hoping to promote theoretical advancement and consumer experience concepts consolidation in the face of conceptual confusion already observed in the literature (CARÙ; COVA, 2003; JAIN et al., 2017; KRANZBÜHLER et al., LEMON; VERHOEF, 2016; 2018; PINTO; LARA, 2011; SCUSSEL, 2019), these authors raised proposals for the customer (BECKER; JAAKKOLA, 2020) and consumption experience (SCUSSEL et al., 2021). Taking advantage of the recommendation to empirically explore the two proposals and the interest of the hotel segment in the subject (ADHIKARI; BHATTACHARYA, 2016; BAO et al., 2021; CHIA & XIONG, 2022; KANDAMPULLY et al., 2018; ROY et al., 2019; SCUSSEL, 2019; TAHERI et al., 2021), we found the opportunity to answer questions raised throughout the first proposal with the tools proposed by the second, applied to a certain consumer market.

The investigation through the consumption dimensions suggested by Scussel et al. (2021), in a qualitative approach (BECKER; JAAKKOLA, 2021; PALMER, 2010), demonstrated important elements of the consumption journey in the hotel segment that is associated with each dimension. In this way, it was revealed how they are seen by consumers, emphasizing the interconnection between them and observing the complexity of elements in the consumption journey (LEMON; VERHOEF, 2016). In short, it was possible to observe the relationship between the emotional dimension with the desire to enjoy the destination, the contextual the trip purpose, the utilitarian with the adherence of the hotel to the trip purpose, the cognitive with the consumer's social relations, the material with the hotel services offered and the pragmatic with the purchase method.

When reporting relevant memories of their trips, the fusion perception between dimensions by consumers in the experiential value formation was evidenced, a fact observed in the way in which participants brought properties of different dimensions in the report of specific situations. Therefore, the holistic characteristic of consumer experiences is reinforced, and the consumer protagonist role along the journey in creating their experience (JAIN et al., 2017; KANDAMPULLY et al., 2018; VERHOEF et al., 2009).

## REFERENCES

ADHIKARI, A.; BHATTACHARYA, S. Appraisal of literature on customer experience in tourism sector: review and framework. *Current Issues in Tourism*, v. 19, n. 4, p. 296–321, 12 out. 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2015.1082538>

AKAKA, M. A.; VARGO, S. L.; SCHAU, H. J. The context of experience. *Journal of Service Management*, v. 26, n. 2, p. 206–223, 20 abr. 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOSM-10-2014-0270>

ARNOULD, ERIC J.; THOMPSON, CRAIG J. Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, v. 31, n. 4, p. 868–882, mar. 2005. <https://doi.org/10.1086/426626>

BAO, Y. et al. Examining the Airbnb accommodation experience in Hangzhou through the lens of the Experience Economy Model. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, p. 135676672110247, 18 jun. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13567667211024707>

BARDIN, L. *Análise de conteúdo*. Lisboa. Edições 70, 2009

BECKER, L.; JAAKKOLA, E. Customer experience: Fundamental Premises and Implications for Research. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, v. 48, n. 4, p. 630–648, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00718-x>

CARÙ, A.; COVA, B. Revisiting Consumption Experience. *Marketing Theory*, v. 3, n. 2, p. 267–286, jun. 2003. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14705931030032004>

CHANDLER, J. D.; LUSCH, R. F. Service Systems. *Journal of Service Research*, v. 18, n. 1, p. 6–22, 8 jun. 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670514537709>

CHIA, K. W.; XIONG, J. Once upon a time in quarantine: Exploring the memorable quarantine hotel experiences of Chinese student returnees during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, p. 146735842210852, 21 abr. 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14673584221085209>

GOMEZ-SUAREZ, M.; VELOSO, M. Enhancing social media engagement by the hospitality industry: The power of customer experience dimensions. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, p. 135676672211351, 1 nov. 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13567667221135195>

COOK, D. The freedom trap: digital nomads and the use of disciplining practices to manage work/leisure boundaries. *Information Technology & Tourism*, v. 22, 12 mar. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-020-00172-4>

GRÖNROOS, C. Service logic revisited: who creates value? And who co-creates? *European Business Review*, v. 20, n. 4, p. 298–314, 27 jun. 2008. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09555340810886585>

HOLBROOK, M. (ED.). *Consumer Value*. [s.l.] Routledge, 2002. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203010679>

HOLBROOK, M. B.; HIRSCHMAN, E. C. The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun. *Journal of Consumer Research*, v. 9, n. 2, p. 132–140, set. 1982. <https://doi.org/10.1086/208906>

HOLT, D. B. How Consumers Consume: A Typology of Consumption Practices. *Journal of Consumer Research*, v. 22, n. 1, p. 1–16, jun. 1995. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209431>

JAIN, R.; AAGJA, J.; BAGDARE, S. Customer experience – a review and research agenda. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, v. 27, n. 3, p. 642–662, 8 maio 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSTP-03-2015-0064>

KANDAMPULLY, J.; ZHANG, T.; JAAKKOLA, E. Customer experience management in hospitality. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, v. 30, n. 1, p. 21–56, 8 jan. 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-10-2015-0549>

KRANZBÜHLER, A.-M. et al. The Multilevel Nature of Customer Experience Research: An Integrative Review and Research Agenda. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, v. 20, n. 2, p. 433–456, 21 mar. 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12140>

LEMON, K. N.; VERHOEF, P. C. Understanding Customer Experience Throughout the Customer Journey. *Journal of Marketing*, v. 80, n. 6, p. 69–96, nov. 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0420>

MCLAFFERTY, I. Focus group interviews as a data collecting strategy. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, v. 48, n. 2, p. 187–194, out. 2004. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03186.x>

PALMER, A. Customer experience management: a critical review of an emerging idea. *Journal of Services Marketing*, v. 24, n. 3, p. 196–208, 25 maio 2010. <https://doi.org/10.1108/08876041011040604>

PINE, J.; GILMORE, J. Welcome to the Experience Economy. Disponível em: <<https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy>>.

PINTO, M. DE R.; LARA, J. E. As experiências de consumo na perspectiva da teoria da cultura do consumo: identificando possíveis interlocuções e propondo uma

agenda de pesquisa. Cadernos EBAPE.BR, v. 9, n. 1, p. 37–56, mar. 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1679-39512011000100004>

ROY, S. K. et al. The Antecedents and Consequences of Value Co-Creation Behaviors in a Hotel Setting: A Two-Country Study. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, v. 61, n. 3, p. 353–368, 4 dez. 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1938965519890572>

RYAN, K. E. et al. Focus Group Evidence. *American Journal of Evaluation*, v. 35, n. 3, p. 328–345, 3 dez. 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214013508300>

SCUSSEL, F. B. C. Is Consumer Experience the Next Best Thing? Reflections from a systematic review and research agenda proposition. *CBR - Consumer Behavior Review*, v. 3, n. 2, p. 57, 25 nov. 2019. <https://doi.org/10.51359/2526-7884.2019.241195>

SCUSSEL, F. B. C.; FOGAÇA, N.; DEMO, G. Experiência de consumo: proposta de um conceito unificador. *Revista Brasileira de Marketing*, v. 20, n. 1, 9 mar. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.5585/remark.v20i1.16103>

VARGO, S. L.; LUSCH, R. F. It's all B2B...and beyond: Toward a systems perspective of the market. *Industrial Marketing Management*, v. 40, n. 2, p. 181–187, fev. 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2010.06.026>

VERHOEF, P. C. et al. Customer Experience Creation: Determinants, Dynamics and Management Strategies. *Journal of Retailing*, v. 85, n. 1, p. 31–41, mar. 2009. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2008.11.001>

TAHERI, B.; PRAYAG, G.; MUSKAT, B. Introduction to the special issue: Consumer experience management and customer journeys in tourism, hospitality and events. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, v. 40, p. 100877, out. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100877>

WILKINSON, S. Focus groups in feminist research. *Women's Studies International Forum*, v. 21, n. 1, p. 111–125, jan. 1998. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395\(97\)00080-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395(97)00080-0)

YIN, R. K. *Estudo de Caso - 5.Ed.* [s.l.] Bookman Editora, 2015.

## TABLE



Table 1  
**Consumption experience constitutive dimensions**

Dimension	Constitutive elements
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception, judgment, and learning gained from experience and interaction with industry actors.</li> <li>• Decision on attitudes and behaviors before perceptions.</li> </ul>
Contextual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal, situational, and sociocultural variables influencing the experience.</li> <li>• Interactions with other actors, structures, and institutions capable of influencing the experience.</li> </ul>
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional goals related to consumption.</li> <li>• Emotional responses raised in consumption, generating individual attitudes and behaviors.</li> </ul>
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer objects, or elements participating in the service consumed, considering their physical properties - color, size, textures, aromas, sounds, flavor, etc.</li> </ul>
Pragmatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer actions in interactions with industry actors and resources.</li> <li>• Search movements, purchase, and use of products carried out by the consumer.</li> </ul>
Utilitarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer demands and consumption purposes.</li> <li>• Usefulness, convenience, and appropriateness perceptions of products.</li> </ul>

Adapted from "Consumption experience: proposal for a unifying concept", by Scussel, F. B. C., Fogaça, N., & Demo, G., 2021, *Brazilian Journal of Marketing*, 20.