

Customer lifetime value: the effect of relational benefits, brand experiences, quality, satisfaction, trust and commitment in the fast-food restaurants

Customer
lifetime value

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Abstract

Purpose – This study examines factors that affect customer lifetime value (CLV) in fast-food restaurants (FFRs) in Jordan. These factors are relational benefits, brand experiences, service quality (SQ), satisfaction, trust and commitment.

Design/methodology/approach – An online survey was collected from a sample of 503 respondents. The authors used SPSS to test the constructs' relationships and analyse the data. SmartPLS was used to test the hypotheses.

Findings – In contrast to previous studies, not all dimensions of brand experiences and relational benefits had a significant and positive influence on relationship marketing outcomes (satisfaction, trust and commitment). On the other hand, results demonstrated that SQ had a significant and positive influence on relationship marketing outcomes. Furthermore, research reveals that satisfaction, trust and commitment significantly and positively influenced CLV.

Practical implications – Those FFRs that seek to enhance CLV should build solid and sustainable bonds with their customers. This paper concludes by stating its implications, its limitations and the opportunities available for future research.

Originality/value – This study, which is unique in the Middle East, includes essential strategies for managing customer relationship that can be universally applied to improve customer benefits and maximise the performance of businesses.

Keywords Brand experiences, Service quality, Customer satisfaction, Relational benefits and trust, Customer commitment, Customer lifetime value

Paper type Research paper



1. Introduction

All over the world, people enjoy going out to eat with family or friends. This growing trend in many cultures throughout the 20th and 21st centuries has contributed to the growth of the restaurant industry (Salehzadeh *et al.*, 2017; Ong *et al.*, 2018). Significant transformations in the lifestyles of consumers, the growth of household income and the convenience of fast food have led to the fast food sector's rapid expansion across ethnic, national and geographic boundaries (Singh *et al.*, 2021). As the demand for fast-food grows, so does competition within the sector, as fast-food restaurants (FFRs) depend on customer retention (Singh *et al.*, 2021). This emphasises the significance of relationship marketing for FFRs if they aim to increase customer value (Dandis *et al.*, 2022b). Relationship marketing is an ideal strategy for hospitality and tourism companies, such as FFRs, that plan to create lasting symbiotic relationships with customers (Dagger *et al.*, 2011). Through this strategy, companies can improve customer-firm interaction by means of constructing solid relationships and transforming nonchalant customers into loyal ones (Dagger *et al.*, 2011).

Customer lifetime value (CLV) is a vital aspect in relationship marketing and a major factor in assessing the making of marketing decisions (AboElHamd *et al.*, 2021; Dahana *et al.*, 2019; Kumar and Reinartz, 2016; Qi *et al.*, 2012). CLV is recognised as being "the metric which guides the allocation of resources for ongoing marketing activities in a firm adopting a customer-centric approach" (Kumar, 2006, p. 608). To maximise return by using the CLV-based approach, businesses can design methods, such as optimal resource allocation, to determine the future products consumers will probably purchase (Kumar and Reinartz, 2016) and businesses can reallocate the excess resources to other ventures to revive dormant customers or gain new customers (Kumar *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, firms now realise that losing a customer is much more than just losing a single sale. Losing a customer signifies losing CLV (Kotler *et al.*, 2020).

Moreover, businesses nowadays have been struggling with various humanitarian crises including the coronavirus pandemic, so the importance of adapting in order to tend to their customers and stakeholders is understandably increasing. This agenda is specifically challenging in a wide range of industries, such as insurance, banking and hospitality, which primarily depend on physical interaction with customers. The recent reduction in nonessential activities, the necessity to practice physical distancing and the limits on social contact have been deemed essential in safeguarding the health of communities (Mousavi *et al.*, 2022; Apornak, 2019). Particularly in the service industry, there is a growing apprehension concerning how these types of business can continue to serve customers and satisfy their expectations.

Many recent studies (DeVita *et al.*, 2022; Mousavi *et al.*, 2022; Khalili-Damghani *et al.*, 2022) have focused on the implications of key performance indicators of HSE during the pandemic within the hospital management system and have introduced an effective resource allocation model using equitable allocation of shared cost and common revenue approaches. This contemporary research assists in the strategic decision-making process for companies during this unexpected crisis. However, maintaining and creating CLV has, on the other hand, an important impact on the course of sustainable growth in the company. Thus, the present research was carried out to examine the factors that affect CLV in the fast food restaurant industry in the Middle East, where much research is required.

In order to contribute to relationship marketing theory, the main goal of this paper is to ascertain and research the variables that affect CLV in FFRs in Jordan. Past studies have investigated the roots of CLV and mainly focused on the influence of satisfaction (Dandis *et al.*, 2022b) and customer commitment on customer relationship management (CRM) outcomes (Dagger *et al.*, 2011). Customer commitment and satisfaction are both linked to service quality (SQ) (Lee and Seong, 2020). Brand experiences are essential in accomplishing business sustainability (Ong *et al.*, 2018). According to previous studies, relational benefits are vital precursors of customer satisfaction and commitment (Gremier *et al.*, 2020). Few empirical

studies have been carried out within the hospitality industry context to investigate all of the above dimensions in one model. Hence, the following research topics are the focus of this study.

RQ1. What are the effects of relational benefits, SQ and brand experiences on customer satisfaction, trust and commitment?

RQ2. What are the impacts of customer satisfaction, commitment and trust on CLV?

Therefore, the present study aims to make a contribution to the existing literature by investigating the following.

- (1) Most research has mainly been carried out in the hospitality industries of developed countries (Cossio-Silva *et al.*, 2019; Jun *et al.*, 2017). Little research has specifically investigated the drivers of CLV, particularly in the fast-food industries of emerging markets (Dandis *et al.*, 2022a, b). Thus, no other research provides an integrated study involving all these drivers in one framework. For instance, the research using a multi-countries approach by Jiang *et al.* (2021) was conducted across nine countries from five continents of the world (except Antarctica and Africa), but still lacked a focus on the context of a country like Jordan. Thus, this paper develops a more comprehensive model of CLV to furnish policy makers, business owners and managers with pertinent recommendations intended to enhance relationship marketing strategies to entice and retain more customers.
- (2) For many businesses, the developing crisis led to unforeseen dramatic shifts in customer demand. As a result, many businesses in non-essential product or service sectors have been urgently seeking to reorient and respond to this change while at the same time maintaining efficient operations. Therefore, service organisations will need to adapt and practice flexibility amid the uncertainty experienced during the present public-health interventions and the resulting economic malaise. Our proposed integrated model can also be applied to other service-focused organisations in the industry. The results are also generalisable for exploring the effect of CLV and its components, such as the commitment, trust and satisfaction of customers with similar cultural backgrounds. In addition, this research answers the call for quantitative studies about effective management systems for service providers (DeVita *et al.*, 2022; Amiresmaeili *et al.*, 2022).
- (3) The recent pandemic has put businesses through rigorous strategic-resilience tests and, subsequently, the academic scholars have contributed their research under the agenda of social and economic development through strategic planning, decision making and efficient resource allocation (Mousavi *et al.*, 2022; Khalili-Damghani *et al.*, 2022). In other words, studies have focused on the organisational perspectives of creating resilience and values (Apornak, 2019) rather than the consumer perspectives of creating value and sustainable relationships for substantial business growth. This research focuses on the latter cause due to its vital role of increasing companies' competitive edge and fulfilling the customers' expectations for their business-model change or modification to persist over the long term.

2. Research model and hypotheses

In Figure 1, we present our research model.

2.1 Relationship benefits

Relational benefits is a concept that has emerged from the rationale that both customers and service providers gain from a relationship developed over a lengthy period of time (Kim and

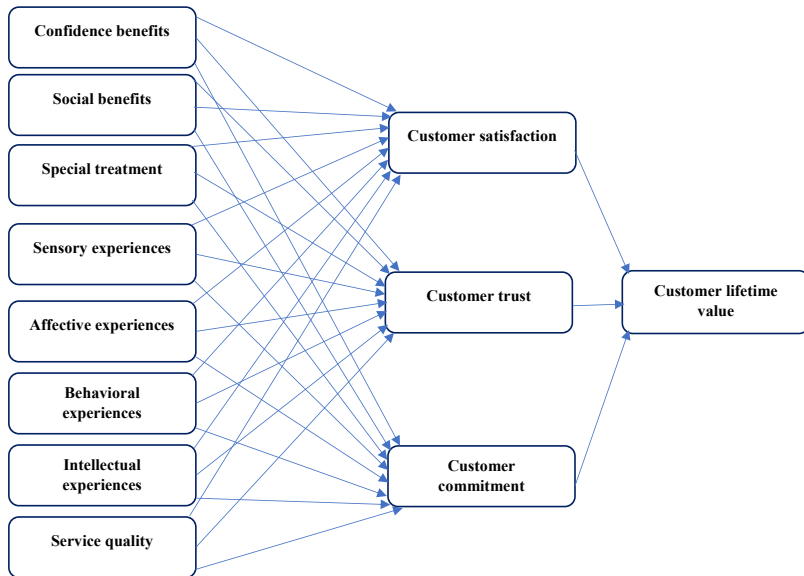


Figure 1.
Research model

Ok, 2009; Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002). Relationship benefits consist of special treatment, confidence and social benefits (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002). In this study, these three forms of relationship benefits influence customer satisfaction, trust and commitment.

2.1.1 Confidence benefits, customer satisfaction, commitment and trust. Scholars indicate that confidence benefits are positively related to a customer's satisfaction, commitment and trust about relationships with service provider staff. For example, Dandis *et al.* (2022c) concluded that confidence benefits positively and significantly influenced customer commitment and satisfaction. Fatikhaturrohmah *et al.* (2020) realised that confidence benefits significantly impacted trust and customer satisfaction. In the long run, the trust of customers is enhanced by confidence benefits (Chou and Chen, 2018). Prior research has also indicated the positive impact that confidence benefits have on customer satisfaction (Fatima *et al.*, 2016; Dagger and Brien, 2010) and on commitment (Chou and Chen, 2018; Fatima *et al.*, 2016; Wong *et al.*, 2019; Yang *et al.*, 2017). In addition, Dandis *et al.* (2022a) observed that confidence benefits positively impacted outcome relationship marketing in FFRs, such as the willingness to pay more and repurchase intentions. Moreover, Kim and Ok (2009) observed in the hospitality industry that affective commitment is impacted both directly and indirectly by confidence benefits.

H1. Confidence benefits are positively related to satisfaction.

H2. Confidence benefits are positively related to commitment.

H3. Confidence benefits are positively related to trust.

2.1.2 Social benefits, customer satisfaction, commitment and trust. Earlier literature has noted the significance of the social side of relationships that exist between service provider staff and customers (Goodwin and Gremler, 1996). When a service provider builds a relationship with a specific customer, social benefits can be obtained (Gwinner *et al.*, 1998). Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2002) found that social benefits, confidence benefits, customer commitment and customer satisfaction significantly impact relationship marketing outcomes among service providers.

In addition, [Chou and Chen \(2018\)](#) observed that social benefits impacted commitment, trust and gratitude in diverse service provider settings. Moreover, [Fatikhaturrohmah et al. \(2020\)](#) realised that customer satisfaction and trust are impacted significantly by social benefits. [Kim and Ok \(2009\)](#) also ascertained that social benefits directly impacted affective commitment in the hospitality and tourism industry.

H4. Social benefits are positively related to satisfaction.

H5. Social benefits are positively related to commitment.

H6. Social benefits are positively related to trust.

2.1.3 Special treatment benefits, customer satisfaction, commitment and trust. [Kim and Ok \(2009\)](#) found that special treatment benefits, which inspire sensations of comfort and importance among customers, are related to customisation and economic benefits for customers. These benefits are characterised by speedier service, price breaks or additional individualised services ([Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002](#)). [Dagger and Brien \(2010\)](#) found that special treatment benefits had a positive impact on perceptions of commitment, satisfaction and trust. [Chou and Chen \(2018\)](#) agreed that these gains had a positive impact on commitment. [Dandis et al. \(2022c\)](#) also observed that special treatment benefits had a significant positive impact on customer commitment and satisfaction. Moreover, [Fatikhaturrohmah et al. \(2020\)](#) indicated that these benefits had a significant influence on the trust and satisfaction of customers. [Kim and Ok \(2009\)](#) also reported that benefits of this nature had a direct and indirect impact on affective commitment in the hospitality industry.

H7. Special treatment benefits are positively related to satisfaction.

H8. Special treatment benefits are positively related to commitment.

H9. Special treatment benefits are positively linked to trust.

2.2 Brand experience

[Brakus et al. \(2009\)](#) defined brand experience to be a multi-dimensional construct consisting of affective, behavioural, cognitive and sensory dimensions. Brand experiences are activated by exposure to brand-related stimuli and relies on the customer's long-term memory. Therefore, the following section aims to investigate the relationships that exist between each dimension of brand experience and the outcomes of CRM.

2.2.1 Affective experience, customer satisfaction, commitment and trust. Affective experience (feel) alludes to the experience of the consumer that arises from an emotional encounter with the brand (i.e. animation) ([Ong et al., 2018](#)). [Sina and Kim \(2019\)](#) observe that emotional brand experiences perform an essential part in raising the affective commitment of clients. [Han et al. \(2009\)](#) are of the view that affective experience is the principal factor in explaining the post-purchase decision-making process and behaviour of customers in the hospitality industry (cited by [Han et al., 2020](#)). [Wang et al. \(2020\)](#) found brand experience generally and affective experience had a positive influence on satisfaction. [Jung and Soo \(2012\)](#) also found that brand commitment and trust were positively impacted by an affective brand experience. Among the brand experience dimensions, affective experience had a positive impact on brand trust ([Jung and Soo, 2012](#)), and in other research, it had the highest along with the intellectual dimension ([Yu and Yuan, 2019](#)).

H10. Affective experience is positively related to satisfaction.

H11. Affective experience is positively related to commitment.

H12. Affective experience is positively related to trust.

2.2.2 Intellectual experience, customer satisfaction, commitment and trust. Intellectual (cognitive) experience alludes to the experience of the consumer that arises from an intellectual encounter with the brand (i.e. inquisitiveness) (Ong *et al.*, 2018). Cognition is a key factor in achieving a desired brand experience through associations, memories and interpretations that can endow products with allegorical importance, expressive features and personality (Al Mandil, 2016). Wang *et al.* (2020) indicated that intellectual experience had a positive direct and indirect impact on satisfaction. In addition, a differentiated brand experience will uplift commitment to a brand and decrease the probability that consumers will change to a different brand (Seddon and Sant, 2007; Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). The intellectual experience was found to have a higher impact on brand trust than behavioural or sensory experience (Yu and Yuan, 2019). Similarly, Dandis *et al.* (2022a) ascertained that intellectual experiences had a positive impact on outcome relationships in FFRs. Consequently, customers who are cognitively stimulated during their dining experience are more likely to be satisfied, consider such experiences worth visiting again and trust this FFR brand.

H13. Intellectual experience is positively related to satisfaction.

H14. Intellectual experience is positively related to commitment.

H15. Intellectual experience is positively related to trust.

2.2.3 Sensory experience, customer satisfaction, commitment and trust. Sensory experience alludes to the experience of a consumer that arises from a sensory encounter with the brand (i.e. using the five senses) (Ong *et al.*, 2018). Sensory marketing permits the visualisation of intangible services and this aids in promoting brand experiences (Lee *et al.*, 2018). Han *et al.* (2020) revealed that affective and sensory experiences among the four first-order dimensions were the biggest influences on the brand experience of Starbucks' customers. Barnes *et al.* (2014) also suggest that of the four dimensions of brand experience, it is the sensory dimension that performs the essential role in determining the potential customers' outcome variables, such as their intentions to recommend and to visit again; and their general level of satisfaction (cited by Han *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, the satisfaction of customers in a restaurant is impacted by the smells, tastes, music, visual aesthetics and comfort (Han and Ryu, 2009; Jin *et al.*, 2012, cited by Ong *et al.*, 2018). Carrizo Moreira *et al.* (2017) found that brand experiences can be leveraged to raise the perceptions of quality and trust.

H16. Sensory experience is positively related to satisfaction.

H17. Sensory experience is positively related to commitment.

H18. Sensory experience is positively related to trust.

2.2.4 Behavioural experience, customer satisfaction, commitment and trust. Behavioural experience alludes to the experience a consumer has with a brand (Ong *et al.*, 2018). According to Brakus *et al.* (2009), brand experience possesses a behavioural influence because, indirectly and directly via brand personality, brand experience impacts consumer loyalty and satisfaction. Behavioural experience was reported to create memorable moments that lead to higher satisfaction in the entertainment industry (Wang *et al.*, 2020). In the hospitality industry, diners undergo a behavioural experience, such as engaging in part of the food preparation; or taking phone pictures of the ambience or the presentation of dishes (Ong *et al.*, 2018). The behavioural dimension also had a positive impact on brand trust and brand commitment (Jung and Sool, 2012). Similarly, Dandis *et al.* (2022a) found that behavioural experiences had a positive impact on outcome relationships in FFRs. According to Yu and

Yuan (2019), behavioural experience may impact trust through attachment, which in turn positively impacts brand trust.

H19. Behavioural experience is positively related to satisfaction.

H20. Behavioural experience is positively related to commitment.

H21. Behavioural experience is positively related to trust.

2.3 Service quality, customer satisfaction, commitment and trust

According to (Kalargyrou *et al.*, 2018), various studies indicate that SQ is a vital antecedent of satisfaction and is often regarded to be a predictor of repeat patronage, giving rise to new clients and brand loyalty. In the hospitality industry, visible aspects, such as the architecture, decor, equipment and staff appearance, supply clients with vital cues for assessing the quality of services and for making purchase decisions (Kalargyrou *et al.*, 2018; Zeithaml *et al.*, 2018; Wirtz and Lovelock, 2016). Ali *et al.* (2021) found that most of the SQ dimensions had a positive association with customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry. In addition, Lee and Seong (2020) and Famiyeh *et al.* (2018) revealed that most of the enterprise SQ dimensions can have an impact on satisfaction and commitment and that these two variables in turn have a positive influence on performance (Lee and Seong, 2020). Dandis and Wright (2021) also found that SQ dimensions impact significantly upon behavioural loyalty. Joudh and Dandis (2018) reported that well developed SQ should raise levels of customer satisfaction and this will increase loyalty. In addition, Chenet *et al.* (2010) recognised that SQ has a significant positive impact on trust.

H22. SQ is positively related to satisfaction.

H23. SQ is positively related to commitment.

H24. SQ is positively related to trust.

2.4 Satisfaction, commitment, trust and customer lifetime value

In the context of buyer-seller and service relationships, commitment, trust and satisfaction are the most typically singled-out dimensions of relationship quality (Lam and Wong, 2020; Brown *et al.*, 2019). According to Radojevic *et al.* (2015), customer satisfaction is a commercial philosophy that emphasises the significance of building up customer value, forecasts and deals with customer expectations, and denotes the expertise and responsibility to satisfy customer wants and needs. Customer satisfaction bestows various benefits on companies, i.e. enhancing business reputation, markedly lowering the costs of marketing and producing client loyalty (Curtis *et al.*, 2011). The significant impact of satisfaction in influencing customers' intention to remain with the organisation also implies the importance of maintaining their existing customers in generating higher lifetime value (Keramati *et al.*, 2018). Amirreza *et al.* (2013) found support for customer satisfaction being an essential factor that contributes to success and competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. Dandis *et al.* (2021) reported that customer satisfaction can be considered a mediating variable between SQ and self-reported loyalty intentions. Consequently, we can conclude that in the hospitality industry, which is highly competitive and offers fairly uniform services, marketing managers have to be more accomplished in gratifying customers than their counterparts (Radojevic *et al.*, 2015).

According to Morgan and Hunt (1994), trust and commitment are “key” because they motivate marketers to endeavour to preserve and build social capital by collaborating with stakeholders and to choose long-term rewards by remaining loyal to current partners rather than opting for attractive short-term benefits. An individual who is willing to rely

upon and be exposed to another party in the face of uncertainty or risks is said to have a trusting relationship (McKnight *et al.*, 2002 cited in Robin and Dandis, 2021). Moreover, trust and commitment directly contribute to participative behaviours that in turn lead to success in relationship marketing (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Overall, to generate positive behaviours such as satisfaction, loyalty or continuous purchase intention, organisations depend on a level of commitment and trust from their clients (Kumar and Pansari, 2016). Dandis *et al.* (2022c) found that commitment and satisfaction had a significant effect on CLV.

H25. Satisfaction is positively related to CLV.

H26. Commitment is positively related to CLV.

H27. Trust is positively related to CLV.

3. Methodology

In order to test the hypotheses, the authors collected an online survey that employed Google Forms and that was distributed by e-mail and social media sites, such as Messenger and WhatsApp. The authors translated the questionnaire into Arabic language. Then, a pilot study was carried out that tested the questionnaire on 27 representative respondents. Following the pilot study, minor changes were implemented, and the data was collected between June 2021 and October 2021. The authors targeted the top 10 fast food chains (McDonald, KFC, Starbucks, Popeyes, Subway, Burger King, Pizza Hut, Hardee's, Domino's Pizza and Papa John's Pizza) in Jordan. Jordanian society is conservative and religious in nature (Mukattash *et al.*, 2021).

When the interviewee chose an FFR, the rest of the questionnaire considered only that FFR. After four months, the authors received 503 completed questionnaires. The items in the survey instrument were measured utilising five-point Likert scales in order to improve the response rate and response quality (Buttle, 1996). Furthermore, numerous studies have used the five-point Likert scale (e.g. Al-Abdallah *et al.*, 2022; Dandis and Al Haj Eid, 2022; Joudeh *et al.*, 2021; Dandis *et al.*, 2022c; Al-Gasawneh *et al.*, 2022; Hammouri *et al.*, 2022; Dandis, 2016). Details of the items measured can be found in Table 2. This study used SPSS to test the constructs' relationships and analyse the data. SmartPLS was used to test the hypotheses.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 1 exhibits the descriptive statistics related to our the sample. Of 503 respondents in this survey, 195 (38.8%) were males and 308 (61.2%) were females. The vast majority of the respondents (70.4%) had an undergraduate level of education, whereas a minority (14.9%) had a postgraduate degree. Of 503 respondents in this survey, 18 (3.6%) were younger than 18 years old, 291 (57.9%) were between 18 and 25 years old, 117 (23.3%) were between 26 and 35 years old, 62 (12.3%) were between 36 and 45 years old, 8 (1.6%) were between 46 and 55 years old, and 7 (1.3%) were over 55 years old. This indicates that the major of respondents mainly come from two age groups (i.e. the 18–25 and 26–35 age groups). Table 1 indicates that dominant category for monthly income ranged between 250 and 500 (36.6% of the sample) Jordanian Dinars, followed by less than 250 JD (31.8%) (500 JD = 705 USD). This indicates that the respondents might be sensitive to any variations in the perceived SQ and that this might influence their satisfaction and commitment over the long term. The majority of the respondents (69.6%) have been visiting the same FFR between one to three times a month and

Factor	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	195	38.8
	Female	308	61.2
	<i>Total</i>	<i>503</i>	<i>100</i>
Education	High school or less	50	9.9
	College	24	4.8
	Undergraduate	354	70.4
	Postgraduate	75	14.9
	<i>Total</i>	<i>503</i>	<i>100</i>
Age	Less than 18	18	3.6
	18–25	291	57.9
	26–35	117	23.3
	36–45	62	12.3
	46–55	8	1.6
	More than 55	7	1.3
	<i>Total</i>	<i>503</i>	<i>100</i>
Income (Month)	Less than 250	160	31.8
	250–500	184	36.6
	501–750	49	9.7
	751–1,000	42	8.3
	1,001–1,250	20	4.0
	1,251–1,500	16	3.2
	1,501–2,000	14	2.8
	More than 2,000	18	3.6
	<i>Total</i>	<i>503</i>	<i>100</i>
	How frequently do you visit this FFR in a month?	1–3 times	350
4–6 times		112	22.3
7–9 times		18	3.5
10 or more times		23	4.6
<i>Total</i>		<i>503</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 1.
Sample characteristics

(22.3%) between four and six times. This indicates they are in an ideal position to judge and evaluate the FFRs and other related aspects.

4.2 Measurement model

We conducted tests of normality to check for skewness and kurtosis. According to [Chen \(2012\)](#), an abnormal distribution is indicated by an absolute value of skewness higher than 3.0 or of kurtosis higher than 8.0. [Table 2](#) reveals that the skewness and kurtosis values were within acceptable levels, indicating multivariate normality.

4.3 Factor analysis

As can be seen in [Table 3](#), the range for all items of the factor loadings was 0.784–0.962, which indicates that the variable is heavily influenced by the factor ([Malhotra et al., 2017](#)). Only one item had a loading lower than 0.40 in this construct. Therefore, this item was determined to be a weak item in this factor. Item 2 had the lowest loading (0.224). The range of the KMO statistic value was between 0.670 and 0.947. This suggested that the factor analysis was appropriate ([Malhotra et al., 2017](#)). [Table 3](#) presents the results of the factor analysis and the reliability tests.

4.4 Hypothesis testing

We employed structural equation modelling by means of SmartPLS to examine the path coefficients and the hypothesised relationships in the proposed model (see [Table 4](#)).

No.	Statement	Skewness	Kurtosis
<i>Confidence benefits (Kim et al., 2011; Dagger and O'Brien, 2010)</i>			
1	I am more confident that the services at this FFR will be carried out appropriately	-0.894	0.688
2	When I acquire the service at this FFR, I feel less anxious	-0.102	-1.124
3	When I visit this FFR, I am aware of the service level	-1.031	1.028
4	I receive the finest level of service from the FFR	-0.672	0.034
<i>Social benefits (Ryu and Lee, 2017; Kim et al., 2011)</i>			
5	At the FFR, I am recognisable by a specific employee(s)	-0.041	-1.192
6	I am acquainted with the employee(s) that provide service at the FFR	-0.290	-0.935
7	I have a great relationship with the FFR staff	-0.028	-1.176
<i>Special treatment benefits (Ryu and Lee, 2017; Kim et al., 2011)</i>			
8	I receive unique offers or discounts that the majority of customers do not	0.262	-1.139
9	I receive lower prices than other customers	0.403	-1.106
10	For me, the FFR provides services that they don't often provide for other customers	0.321	-1.154
<i>Sensory experience (Ong et al., 2018; Kumar et al., 2018)</i>			
11	This FFR brand has some interesting sensory qualities	-0.486	-0.537
12	My visual senses or even other senses are strongly positively impacted by this FFR brand	-0.412	-0.642
13	I'm pleased with how this FFR looks	-0.802	0.341
<i>Affective experience (Ong et al., 2018; Kumar et al., 2018)</i>			
14	This FFR brand elicits pleasant emotions	-0.436	-0.541
15	I feel quite good about this FFR brand	-0.422	-0.575
16	This FFR boosts my mood	-0.714	-0.064
<i>Behavioural experience (Ong et al., 2018; Kumar et al., 2018)</i>			
17	This FFR brand wants to make me aware of things I can do, like take pictures of food presentations	-0.566	-0.540
18	My lifestyle is reflected in this FFR brand	-0.069	-1.003
19	I feel energised now that I've eaten at this FFR	-0.573	-0.400
<i>Intellectual experience (Ong et al., 2018; Kumar et al., 2018)</i>			
20	When I come across the FFR brand, I participate in a lot of optimistic thinking	-0.381	-0.598
21	This restaurant brand piques my curiosity	-0.318	-0.710
22	This FFR motivates me to think clearly	-0.236	-0.972
<i>SQ (Gallarza-Granizo et al., 2020)</i>			
23	The staff provides adequate attention to customers	-0.782	0.154
24	My needs are well considered by the staff	-0.811	0.357
25	The staff are knowledgeable	-1.012	0.919
26	The staff are honest and trustworthy	-0.997	1.098
27	This FFR's wait time is appropriate	-0.958	0.686
<i>Satisfaction (Han and Ryu, 2009)</i>			
28	Overall, I am satisfied with this FFR	-1.006	1.024
29	I have really enjoyed myself at this FFR	-1.013	0.845
30	Overall feeling I get from this FFR puts me in a good mood	-0.879	0.597
<i>Trust (Jin et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2011)</i>			
31	The cuisine at this FFR has dependable ingredients and is of high quality	-0.853	0.401
32	I have confidence in this FFR	-0.808	0.520
33	I think this FFR has high integrity	-0.656	-0.066
<i>Commitment (Morgan and Hunt, 1994)</i>			
34	I am completely devoted to this FFR	-0.512	-0.430
35	Definitely, I want to keep the relationship ongoing	-0.636	-0.161
36	I believe that this FFR merits some of my relationship-building efforts	-0.373	-0.623
<i>CLV (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Ong et al., 2018; Gallarza-Granizo et al., 2020)</i>			
37	Within the next few years, I wish to purchase additional goods from this FFR	-0.763	0.111
38	I would continue to choose this FFR even if some close friends suggested another one	-0.506	-0.732
39	Whenever I purchase the goods they offer, this FFR is my top pick	-0.607	-0.410
40	I am dedicated to the FFR brand	-0.465	-0.545
41	In comparison to other brands, I would be prepared to pay more for the FFR brand	-0.320	-0.976
42	Even if the costs went up a little, I would keep eating at this FFR brand	-0.411	-0.777
43	I endorse this FFR to others in a favourable manner	-0.669	-0.108
44	I suggest this FFR to anyone who wants my advice	-0.679	0.012
45	I recommend my friends and family have dinner at this FFR	-0.691	-0.075

Table 2.
Skewness and kurtosis
value of variables

Customer
lifetime value

Variable	No. of item	Factor loadings	Eigenvalue	% of variance explained	KMO	Cronbach's alpha
Confidence benefits	1	0.854	2.272	56.808	0.720	0.831
	2	0.224				
	3	0.851				
	4	0.886				
Social benefits	5	0.932	2.519	83.953	0.747	0.904
	6	0.904				
	7	0.912				
Special treatment	8	0.956	2.763	92.085	0.778	0.957
	9	0.962				
	10	0.960				
Sensory	11	0.915	2.289	76.301	0.670	0.844
	12	0.915				
	13	0.784				
Affective	14	0.921	2.425	80.839	0.700	0.881
	15	0.933				
	16	0.840				
Behavioural	17	0.897	2.341	78.029	0.734	0.858
	18	0.859				
	19	0.876				
Intellectual	20	0.883	2.409	80.315	0.741	0.877
	21	0.901				
	22	0.904				
SQ	23	0.869	3.761	75.213	0.863	0.917
	24	0.865				
	25	0.907				
	26	0.891				
	27	0.800				
	28	0.905				
Satisfaction	29	0.944	2.540	84.665	0.734	0.909
	30	0.911				
	31	0.926				
Trust	32	0.934	2.540	84.657	0.747	0.909
	33	0.900				
	34	0.922				
Commitment	35	0.919	2.486	82.851	0.743	0.894
	36	0.889				
	37	0.855				
CLV	38	0.831	6.830	75.892	0.947	0.959
	39	0.894				
	40	0.901				
	41	0.841				
	42	0.857				
	43	0.888				
	44	0.889				
	45	0.881				

Table 3.
Factor analysis and
reliability test

Hypothesis	Beta	Sig. value	Results
Confidence benefits → satisfaction	0.122	0.000	Supported
Social benefits → satisfaction	0.079	0.068	Not supported
Special treatment → satisfaction	-0.215	0.000	Supported
Sensory → satisfaction	-0.058	0.309	Not supported
Affective → satisfaction	0.186	0.007	Supported
Behavioural → c satisfaction	0.033	0.613	Not supported
Intellectual → satisfaction	0.09	0.108	Not supported
SQ → satisfaction	0.657	0.000	Supported
Confidence benefits → trust	0.225	0.000	Supported
Social benefits → trust	0.021	0.659	Not supported
Special treatment → trust	-0.084	0.058	Not supported
Sensory → trust	0.021	0.722	Not supported
Affective → trust	0.055	0.431	Not Supported
Behavioural → trust	0.024	0.723	Not Supported
Intellectual → trust	0.196	0.004	Supported
SQ → trust	0.497	0.000	Supported
Confidence benefits → commitment	0.058	0.180	Not supported
Social benefits → commitment	0.14	0.013	Supported
Special treatment → commitment	-0.039	0.412	Not supported
Sensory → commitment	-0.113	0.073	Not supported
Affective → commitment	0.192	0.016	Supported
Behavioural → commitment	0.12	0.08	Not supported
Intellectual → commitment	0.33	0.000	Supported
SQ → customer commitment	0.293	0.000	Supported
Satisfaction → CLV	0.098	0.047	Supported
Trust → CLV	0.139	0.022	Supported
Commitment → CLV	0.718	0.000	Supported

Table 4.
Summary of the results
of hypotheses testing

5. Conclusion and discussion

The principal aim of this study is to investigate the principal drivers of CLV in FFRs in Jordan, namely relational benefits, SQ, brand experiences, satisfaction, commitment and trust.

The empirical evidence indicates that confidence and special treatment benefits each have a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction. Also, the empirical evidence indicates that confidence benefits impact customer trust, and social benefits impact customer commitment. These results support other empirical studies (Dandis *et al.*, 2022c; Fatikhaturrohman *et al.*, 2020; Fatima and Mascio, 2020; Wong *et al.*, 2019; Chou and Chen, 2018; Yang *et al.*, 2017; Dagger and Brien, 2010; Kim and Ok, 2009) that find significant connections between relationship marketing outcomes and the above variables.

In contrast to the above results, we find an insignificant relationship between social benefits and satisfaction; between social benefits and trust; between special treatment benefits and trust; between special treatment benefits and commitment; and between confidence benefits and commitment. These findings are consistent with Yang *et al.* (2017), who find that special treatment benefits and commitment have an insignificant relationship. A possible explanation for this could be that customers in loyalty programs are more focused on saving income. Therefore, customer commitment built on value saving in loyalty programs is not sustainable over the long term. Consequently, if customers perceive that a competitor provides superior value, they are quickly enticed into defecting (Ong *et al.*, 2018). Gremler *et al.* (2020) support the above assumption and argue for the prudent implementation of special treatment benefits to encourage commitment from customers. In fact, Dagger and Brien (2010) counsel that the most experienced consumers might continue to demand superior

benefits. Thus, if a competitor reduces prices, special treatment benefits no longer remain attractive (Ong *et al.*, 2018).

Concerning brand experiences, this study relies on four dimensions: affective, intellectual, behavioural and sensory. The results of this research find affective and intellectual experiences have a significant impact on commitment and satisfaction; and intellectual experiences exert a significant effect on trust. These results support other empirical studies (Wang *et al.*, 2020; Han *et al.*, 2020; Yu and Yuan, 2019; Sina and Kim, 2019; Ong *et al.*, 2018; Carrizo Moreira *et al.*, 2017; Barnes *et al.*, 2014; Jung and Soo, 2012; Brakus *et al.*, 2009) that find a significant relationship between these variables and relationship marketing outcomes. This indicates that affective and intellectual experiences are vital for developing marketing strategies in FFRs and other service industries (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). However, we find an insignificant relationship between sensory and behavioural experiences, and customer satisfaction; and between sensory, affective and behavioural experiences and customer trust. However, sensory and behavioural experiences could be essential in developing a positive image of FFRs, but were not significantly associated with relationship marketing outcomes in the multivariate analysis. A possible explanation is that their customers might perceive the quality experiences of FFRs in Jordan as homogenous. As a result, sensory and behavioural experiences did not contribute to outcome relationship marketing. However, we can conclude that the effect of brand experiences on relationship marketing outcomes will vary between industries and cultures. These are unexpected results that require further additional studies.

The findings of this study also reveal that SQ has a positive and significant impact on outcome relationship marketing (customer satisfaction, trust and commitment). These results confirm those from other empirical studies (Ali *et al.*, 2021; Lee and Seong, 2020; Famiyeh *et al.*, 2018; Chenet *et al.*, 2010), which uncover a significant connection between SQ and outcome relationship marketing. Therefore, highly capable and skilful staff are vital for the efficiency and effectiveness of FFRs. FFRs have an obligation to guarantee that their staff are well prepared to answer the questions of customers and to provide clear explanations concerning the service of the FFR.

Lastly, the empirical evidence revealed that trust, commitment and customer satisfaction exerted a significant and positive influence on CLV and that customer commitment was the strongest predictor. These results are compatible with other empirical studies (Dandis *et al.*, 2022b; Amirreza *et al.*, 2013; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). This indicates that those customers with a higher level of commitment to, satisfaction with and trust of FFRs, also have a greater likelihood of raising their CLV to FFRs. Therefore, FFRs are obliged to re-assess their present business practices if they aim to maintain their competitiveness in the modern global market.

6. Theoretical implications

This paper includes various notable contributions that encompass various perspectives. First, the model developed through this research builds on to customer relationship marketing theory by determining the variables that represent CRM practice in practical organisational tasks. They provide advantages to customers and improve performance in FFRs. Distinctive constructs not found in previous research are included in this study. In addition, various constructs and variables are simultaneously introduced: relational benefits, brand experiences, SQ, commitment, customer satisfaction and trust, and CLV. Previous studies have also discussed the significance of these dimensions (see the above references). Second, this framework is significant because it provides fast food managers with the vision to enhance their preparedness and capabilities. After all, it provides them with a thorough understanding of the needs of their customers by means of the constructs utilised for CRM, which will lead to the enhancement of CLV. Therefore, the model is developed in a unique

manner by measuring its impact on CLV, in place of merely measuring its impact on customer satisfaction, which is a less reliable construct (Dandis and Wright, 2020). Also, the hospitality and service marketing literature has not covered the Middle East as a region or Jordan as a country, so this study seeks to fill that gap. The authors have endeavoured to accentuate a neglected area of research that should make significant contributions to the field of marketing.

7. Managerial implications

Concerning customer value benefits, relationship benefits consist of special treatment, social and confidence benefits. Therefore, in order to improve confidence benefits, the personnel of the FFRs should be capable of fulfilling obligations and keeping their promises. They also should be trustworthy and precise when they are processing the customers' orders. Overall, employees should not promise something they are incapable of delivering. In addition, if something goes wrong or staff are not going to deliver the order on time, employees should inform their clients as soon as possible to avoid confrontation. It is difficult for other firms to replicate social benefits, especially in the short term, so these are appropriate differentiation strategies. Small local firms, such as hair salons or dry cleaners, can memorise the names of customers or build personal friendships. However, this can be more complicated for larger companies, such as fast-food chains. One tactic that these larger organisations can implement to produce a more personalised interaction with clients is investing in customer database technology (Gwinner *et al.*, 1998). These companies can also encourage staff to thank customers for their patronage personally. Loyal customers should be rewarded with the offer of special treatment benefits, such as price reductions; improved services; and deals tailored to meet their needs.

The second principal implication for practitioners is concerned with denoting the individual influences of brand experience dimensions on outcome relationship marketing, in place of concentrating on brand experience as a whole. To improve the sensory experience for FFRs, marketers should especially concentrate on accentuating sensory experiences and joy in the marketing of FFRs by captivating customers with smells, tastes, sounds, sights and touch (Barnes *et al.*, 2014). Sensory aspects such as decoration, furnishings, cleanliness and equipment are recommended so that restaurant brand managers can bring into being a multi-sensory dining experience (Zeithaml *et al.* (2018). Also, intellectual or cognitive experience is related to the activation of the thinking process when the customer is interacting with the brand and the degree to which problem-solving and curiosity is stimulated (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). To improve the intellectual experience, food preparation, which can include secret recipes, food presentation and interactions with staff can enhance the dining experience provided by the restaurant brand. This can be achieved by delivering mouth-watering flavours derived from innovative and secret recipes that stimulate the curiosity of customers (Ong *et al.*, 2018). To improve the affective experience, restaurant marketers should create an affective experience strategy to enhance satisfaction and commitment. In practice, this can be accomplished by stimulating positive emotions at every touch-point during the entire dining experience from the entrance to the exit (Ong *et al.*, 2018). When devising brand experiences, marketing managers should attend to the emotions encapsulated in the dining experience and during all the touchpoints of this experience. To improve behavioural brand experience, it is important to be unique and differentiate the brand of FFRs from competitors and fulfil promises made by branded restaurants that promote certain lifestyles and cultures, associating customers with these ways of living that help clients to feel that they belong to a specific social group (Al Mandil, 2016).

In addition, this paper's findings indicate that executives in FFRs should focus their efforts on systematically enhancing SQ through improvement in all of their specific

operations. By creating and delivering first-rate services, FFRs can satisfy the shifting wants of clients. Moreover, FFRs executives need to coach their staff to listen attentively to customers, to pay careful attention to details and to understand their concerns. This implies staff alertness in being attentive to a wide variety of customer signals that include body language and behaviours that communicate sentiments, thoughts and intentions. Moreover, during the present pandemic and the growing competition driven by globalisation, FFRs ought to adopt a holistic, sustainable and comprehensive approach to develop their entrepreneurship system (Abou-Moghli and Dandis, 2021) so they can retain customers and increase their lifetime value.

Last but not least, the model proposed in this study can also benefit other areas within the hospitality industry. As one of the core attributes to evaluate the worth of customers to organisations (Méndez-Suárez and Crespo-Tejero, 2021), this study provides an overarching model that can apply to hotel or airline industries. In their research, Hyun and Perdue (2017) suggested the importance of evaluating the concept of lifetime for both hotel and restaurant businesses and provided insights for both types of business. This implies that future research can also extend our study on FFRs to investigate the generation of CLV in the hotel industry. With the expectation that hotel and airline industries will provide excellent SQ to enhance customer experience (Manosuthi *et al.*, 2021), future studies can replicate our model to evaluate how these industries can effectively generate CLV by the integration of relational benefits, brand experiences, SQ and customer experience within one research model.

8. Limitations and future research

The present study has some limitations that future research should address. To begin, this study is based on one hospitality industry, the FFRs. Consequently, it would be advantageous to analyse the model with different hospitality industries and service providers, such as the luxury restaurant sector, hotels and tourist destinations, or also other industries. Second, because a cross-sectional methodology only provides data for one moment in time, a longitudinal study should be employed to examine the causal relationships between independent variables and CLV. Third, this study also used a non-random sample (convenience sample) in order to collect data. It is recommended for future research to use a random sampling approach to generalise results to the FFR industry.

Fourth, the model in this research was restricted to the constructs we tested and their relationship with CLV. On the other hand, the framework we propose in this study opens up potential research avenues to investigate how SQ, brand experiences and relational benefits can impact CLV and customer satisfaction in other business types and nations. This will expand the generalisability of the findings. With CLV already being investigated in other geographical contexts, such as Japan and China (Dahana *et al.*, 2019; Wu *et al.*, 2018), future research can replicate and test the model in different cross-cultural settings to further investigate what influences CLV. Furthermore, the application of this model can stretch beyond the FFR and hospitality context. Considering the work by Gupta and Ramachandran (2021), to an extent, addressing how brand experiences and aspects of relational benefits affect CLV, future research in retail settings can also adopt our model. In order to further the understanding of the different cultural characteristics that can impact CLV, we recommend replication and testing in diverse cross-cultural locations. Future research can adopt the same independent variables to investigate how SQ, relational benefits and brand experiences impact other variables, such as brand equity and electronic word of mouth. Another potential area of research could be exploring how social cues and norms influence change in the behaviour of restaurant customers (Wallace-Williams *et al.*, 2022).

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