

A Review and Future Directions of Brand Experience Research in Tourism

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Abstract

This paper presents a review of brand experience studies in tourism using a systematic literature review while utilizing a total of 44 articles that were published in 30 journals. Four databases were used to search for the articles including Taylor and Francis, Google Scholar, Emerald, and Science Direct. The objectives of this review were to discuss the extant state of brand experience literature in the tourism industry, summarize the antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes of brand experience and identify the gaps in the current studies and suggest the areas of future research. The results indicate that the quantitative research approach, convenience sampling technique, cross-sectional survey strategy, and structural equation modeling have dominated brand experience research. Various theories used, contexts, methodologies, antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes of brand experience are also discussed in the paper. It is concluded that brand experience influences the majority of customer-related and brand-related constructs. Thus, it is recommended that tourist agencies, destination practitioners, and other tourism stakeholders should invest in generating pleasurable experiences at every touch point of their service to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

Keywords: *Brand experience, tourism, content analysis, systematic literature review*

INTRODUCTION

Brand experience construct is conceptualized as "sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments" (Brakus et al., 2009). The authors also developed a four-dimension scale namely sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual dimension. However, Nysveen, et al. (2013) added the relational

experience dimension as the fifth dimension of brand experience as it is important, especially in services. To further develop and enable the brand experience framework to suit different contexts and industries, previous scholars introduced other constructs like retail brand experience (Rodrigues & Brandão, 2021), destination brand experience (Kumar & Kaushik, 2018), hotel brand experience (Khan & Rahman, 2017) and online brand experience (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013).

Since its inception, the field of brand experience has witnessed dramatic development and has attracted the attention of scholars and practitioners (Khan & Rahman, 2015). Consequently, branding literature has stressed the need to build better and unique consumer experiences to create stronger brands. More emphasis on this school of thought has been given by brand management scholars and practitioners who believe that experiences emanating from contacts with brands have a significant influence on consumer behavior (Brakuset al., 2009; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999). Gilmore and Pine (1998) underscored that business firms should concentrate on selling experiences generated from brands rather than products or services per se. This is because consumers are no longer concerned with simply purchasing products and services; they look to satisfy their emotional needs through pleasurable experiences from buying goods and services (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999). More precisely, consumers are after products, marketing communications, and campaigns that dazzle their senses and touch their minds (Schmitt, 1999). This is particularly true for service brands (like tourism), where experience is considered as important as the service itself (Gilmore, 2003; Morrison & Crane, 2007).

Brand experiences have been described as an important driver in tourism brand building due to their link with nurturing the psychological well-being and personal development of tourists (García et al., 2018). According to Wang et al. (2020), "the importance of implementing marketing strategies based on the experiential economy is no exception in tourism and leisure in that experience is a major factor in differentiating tourism and leisure services to form positive images and memories from their visit". Rather (2018) also pointed out that generating excellent customer experiences in the contemporary hospitality industry is the core source of differentiation strategy which accounts for competitive advantage as it creates valuable customer relationships. Even though

brand experience can be used to differentiate oneself from competitors in the tourism sector, there are still limited studies of brand experience. Andreini et al. (2019) pointed out that “to date, there is still only one definition, a single operationalization of the brand experience construct, and a single theoretical perspective through which it is approached”. The direction in which brand experience research is now headed is also unclear (Khan& Rahman, 2015). Moreover, the branding factor in consumer experience has not been earnestly studied on its own merits (Zha et al., 2020).

Generally, the area of brand experience is still growing, this calls for a review to ensure that brand experience studies will move in the right direction. Reviews of previous studies offer a roadmap for future study undertakings (Zha et al., 2020). There is therefore a need to have frequent and honest reassessments to have a clear idea of one's position in the domain (Cooper, 2010). The review of brand experience literature by Khan and Rahman (2015) found that a comprehensive study giving a deeper understanding of the brand experience concept is missing. A review of brand experience studies by Andreini et al. (2019) discovered with considerable concern that, since the first conceptual models suggested by Schmitt (1999) and Brakus et al. (2009), no studies had made a critical assessment or theoretical evaluation of the essence of the brand experience construct. There was therefore a need to conduct this review to fill this gap. The current review differs from that of Khan and Rahman (2015) and Andreini et al. (2021) in at least two regards: (1) they were general and did not focus only on studies done in the tourism industry like this study (2) their reviews did not use the Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methodology review protocol which was applied by the current study.

Hence, the overall objective of this paper was to build upon previous empirical studies on brand experience and offer guidelines for future research. Specifically, the current paper aimed at (1) discussing the extant state of brand experience literature in the tourism industry, (2) Summarize the antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes of brand experience in the field of tourism (3) To identify the gaps in the current studies and suggest the areas of future research in tourism. To attain these objectives, the paper addresses the following questions:

- (a) What is the current state of brand experience literature in terms of theory utilized, journal distribution, country of research, and methodologies?
- (b) What are the antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes of brand experience in the tourism industry?
- (c) What are the important areas of research that should be addressed by future researchers in the field of brand experience?

The next section of the paper is structured as follows: First, the paper presents the methodology applied, followed by the findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and lastly presents the agenda for future research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This review applied the theoretical, Context, Characteristics, and Methodology (TCCM) framework (Shimul, 2022) to offer a holistic analysis of the theoretical perspectives (T), contexts (C), characteristics (C), and methodology (M) of brand experience literature. This method also has been extensively used in recent reviews (Chen et al. 2021, Mandler et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2022; Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019).

The data used were obtained from different four online databases namely Science Direct, Taylor and Francis, Emerald, and google scholar as previous studies (Vlahovic-Mlakar, 2022). Science Direct is amongst the most cherished and comprehensive online databases for tourism research journals because of its high degree of search functionality and coverage over the stated timeframe (Chen et al., 2021). Google Scholar was used as it returns the most comprehensive results over other databases (Chen et al., 2021). Taylor & Francis is considered one of the reputable publishers that publishes comprehensive articles (Levinson & Amar, 1999) whereas the Emerald database was used to increase the variability of published brand experience articles in the current review. Content analysis was utilized in this study to classify the reviewed articles. According to Holsti (1969), content analysis is a "technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages".

This study used a three-stage approach by Denyer and Tranfield (2009) and Moher et al. (2009) for mapping and selecting articles for final review. The first stage included data mapping in which selected keywords

were used to search articles. The keywords used included "Brand experience", "Brand experience" and "tourism", "Destination brand experience", "Destination brand experience" and "tourism", "Online brand experience", "Online brand experience" and "tourism" and "Customer experience", "Customer experience" and "tourism". These keywords were searched across article titles, abstracts, and keywords to search for the most relevant studies. The articles in English and published from 2009 to 2022 were included. The second stage was refining the search findings where the initial search from the database resulted in 680 articles. Among the articles, 330 were either duplicates, not in English, proceedings, book chapters, or books and hence were excluded from the review. Screening of the articles resulted in the exclusion of 204 articles because full articles were not available, and brand experience or tourism was not the main topic of the article. For eligibility, 102 articles were excluded because they were not relevant to the topic i.e. they did not include both brand experience and tourism as the main topic of study. The third stage included the assessment of the articles and finalizing the review list. Using the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 44 articles remained for review. The author read the articles across the title, abstract, keywords, background information, theoretical approach, contexts, characteristics, results, and contributions of the articles. MS Excel worksheet was used for coding the captured information from the reviewed articles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Current state of brand experience research in the tourism industry literature

A total of 44 articles included in this study were published in thirty (30) journals. Figure 1 indicates that the majority of articles were published in the journal of Sustainability (5), International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management (4) and Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing (4). The Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management received three (3) articles while Current Issues in Tourism and Journal of Destination Marketing and Management each recorded two articles. Each of the 24 remaining journals received one article as presented in Figure 1. These findings imply that brand experience scholars prefer to publish their papers in the Journal of Sustainability, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management and Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing. This may be because these journals publish quality

rate of spending to individuals through tourism. The findings also indicate that each of the three countries namely Nigeria, South Korea, and Spain had two studies (2) while the remaining fourteen (14) countries had only one study implying that these countries are minor contributors to brand experience studies.

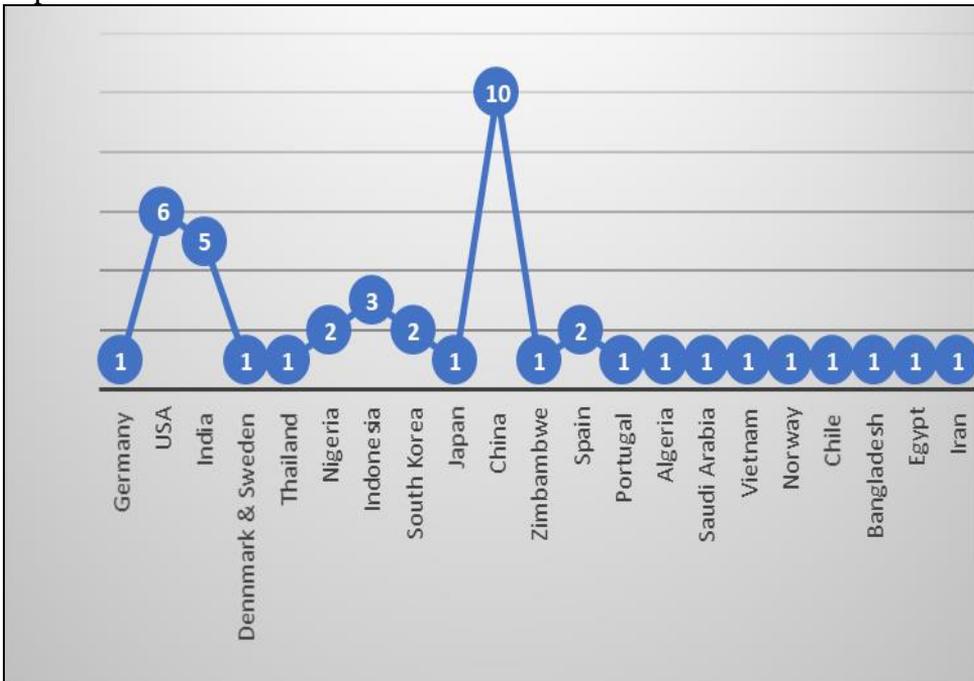


Figure 2: Distribution of brand experience research in tourism industry by country

Distribution of brand experience research by year of publication

There has been an increase in studies about experiences encountered by consumers from brands. The current review indicates that there was only one article that was published in 2014 regarding experiences encountered by tourists. However, there was a gradual increase in the number of articles published in the year 2017 and 2019 where five and six articles were published respectively (Figure 3). The following year (2020) experienced a twice increase of articles published equating to 12 articles that were published regarding this area. However, after this year, there were gradual decrease of number of papers published where 10, 3, and 4 papers were published in 2021, 2022 and 2023 respectively. These findings suggest that experiences encountered by tourists are gaining more attention from researchers. Similarly, the literature reveal that, it has

become important to be conscious of the manner destination brands are experienced by tourists (Berrozpe et al., 2019; Kumar & Kaushik, 2017; Rather et al., 2020).



Figure 3: Annual scientific publications from 2014 – 2023

Theories used by brand experience studies in the tourism industry

The theory is defined as a set of assertions that are scientifically connected and that can be tested empirically (Hunt, 2002). Stam (2007) regards theory as the systematic organization of knowledge that can be utilized for solving problems. The theory is used to conceptualize and elucidate a set of systematic explanations of phenomena and complex behaviors (Thomas, 2017). Hence it was important to identify the theories used by different scholars in an attempt to understand the behaviour of tourists as they become exposed to various destination experiences. Figure 4 indicates various theories which were used by scholars in the reviewed articles. It reveals that social identity is among the theories used by various authors in an attempt to understand the behavior of tourists from destination brands. Social identity theory postulates that individuals group themselves into numerous social classes to help their definition of their own-self (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Individuals' identification with a brand community and the positive experiences derived from belonging to

a particular brand community can affect their relations with the brand, the product, the firm, and other individuals.

The theory of social identity has been used by Kumar and Kaushik (2017) to determine the role of destination brand experience in assessing the holistic and unified view of tourism destinations. In their study, the authors found that different dimensions of destination brand experience have a diverse influence on destination brand identification that consequently affects both tourists' trust and loyalty toward tourism destinations. Rather et al. (2020) also used the social identity theory amongst other theories (Self-congruity theory, and attachment theory) to develop and test a theoretical model of destination branding that assimilates the concepts of destination brand experience, identification, value congruence, attachment, and tourist's behavioral intentions. It was found that brand experience, value congruence, and destination credibility cause divergent effects on destination brand identification, which subsequently affects tourists' destination attachment, advocacy, and brand loyalty toward tourism destinations.

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework was also applied to study the experiences of tourists toward destination brands in the reviewed articles. This framework was first introduced in environmental psychology by Mehrabian and Russel in 1974 and later became popular in the field of marketing. The S-O-R framework elucidates how the stimulus (S) as a precursor influences individuals' internal organisms (O) and behavioral responses (R) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The S-O-R framework comprises three dimensions namely stimulus, organism, and response (Mody et al., 2017). Stimulus encompasses marketing mix and external environmental inputs which influences an individual's internal state. The organism is a superseding process between stimulus and response which comprises perceptual, physiological, feeling, and thinking activities. On the other hand, Response refers to an approach or avoidance behaviour for the ultimate decision of consumers. Using the S-O-R framework, Phan & Ting-Yueh (2022) proposed a mediation model to augment existent knowledge by emphasizing the effect of brand innovativeness towards brand loyalty through individual dimensions of online brand experience in the online booking setting. The findings of their study reveal that sensory, affective, and behavioral experiences are the leading factors in building loyalty to brands respectively. The authors

also report that online brand experience fully mediates the relationship between brand innovativeness and brand loyalty. Haobin et al. (2021) also utilized the S-O-R framework to develop and test a conceptual model that assessed the effect of servicescape on brand experience through mindfulness. It was found that hotel servicescape exerts influence on brand experience through customers' mindfulness. Kwon and Boger (2020) also applied the S-O-R framework amongst other frameworks (customer inspiration) to determine the potential predictors of customers' pro-environmental intention using green hotel customers. Their study found that brand experience and customer inspiration have a significant effect on pro-environmental intention. It was also found that customer inspiration plays a significant mediating role between green hotel brand experience and pro-environmental intention.

The reviewed articles reveal that the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) have been also applied in studying brand experience in tourism. The TRA postulates that the behavior of individuals (in this case tourists) can be predicted from behavioral intentions, attitudes, and subjective social norm influences (Becker & Gibson, 1998). The immediate antecedent to predicting behavior is the behavioral intention whereas the attitudes and subjective social norms exert influence on behavioral intention creation. The TPB is the extension of TRA. It integrates a third precursor of intentions namely perceived behavioral control and therefore, behavioral intention becomes a function of three direct predictors including attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Conner & Armitage, 1998). The TRA and TPB assume that individuals form behavioral decisions while considering the existing information. Thus, behavioral intentions enable scholars to study the actual behavior of tourists who have experienced destination brands. Using TRA and TPB, Singh & Mejraj (2019) examined the effect of destination brand experience on the behavioral intention of tourists. The authors reveal that brand experience has a positive influence on tourists' satisfaction and that tourists' satisfaction positively influences their revisit intention. It was also found that brand experience exerts a positive influence on tourists' intention to revisit.

The theory of Embodied cognition was also used in the reviewed articles. This theory is based on the assumption that the body functions like a component of the mind rather than a passive perceiver and actor serving

the mind. The embodied cognition theory indicates a strong association between psychological states and physical experiences (Krishna, 2012). This theory regards the experience of tourists as a complex process in which external sensory stimuli are transformed into internal perceptions (Agapito et al., 2013), signifying that bodily sensations could lead to emotive responses (Lv et al., 2020). Another theory was the bottom-up spillover theory; this theory posits that people's overall happiness is established by various domains, like family, work, health, leisure, and travel (Erdogan et al., 2012). Using both the embodied cognition theory and bottom-up spillover theory, Lv and Wu (2021) examined the influence of extraordinary positive sensory experiences on building destination brand love. The results reveal that creating extraordinary positive sensory experiences has a positive impact on establishing destination brand love.

On the other hand, sensory impression theory was applied in one article. This theory stresses that individuals perceive the world via the senses, and the long-standing memories of physical experiences have a direct effect on an individual's attitudes and behaviors (Agapito et al., 2014). The theory of sensory impression was utilized by Elvekrok & Gulbrandsøy (2021) to determine the relationship between the degree of sensory inspiration and positive memory in staged experiences. The results indicate that there was a strong association between the sensory dimension and positive memory and that cognitive and affective dimensions partially mediate the relationship. Other theories applied by the reviewed literature include trust formation theory and social exchange theory (Torres-Moraga & Barra, 2023), self-expansion (Guo & Hsu, 2023), flow theory (Fu et al., 2020) and interactionist-based theory (Shang et al., 2020).

Together with various theories used by scholars, the majority of the articles (24) used Brakus et al. (2009) conceptualization. However, the authors of these articles relied on the theoretical viewpoint of brand experience resulting from the work of Brakus et al. (2009) without offering any criticism or additional theoretical explanation of the concept (Andreini et al., 2019). Scholars have failed to further develop the definition and operationalization of the brand experience construct. This is a gap that needs to be filled by future research.

To sum, the finding revealed that four (4) articles used the theory of social identity and four (4) used the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework. This suggests that the two theories are mostly used by authors when they want to study brand experience particularly in tourism. Other studies used more than one theory including that of Singh and Mejrjaj (2019) which applied the TRA and TPB, Rather et al. (2020) which utilized the Self-congruity theory, Social Identity Theory, Attachment theory as well as that of Phan and Ting-Yueh (2022) that applied the S-O-R framework and Signaling theory. This may be due to the fact that these theories are suited to explain the experiences encountered by tourists from different destinations. On the one hand, the majority of the studies (54.5%) used the Brakus et al. (2009) conceptualization and measurement scale. These findings suggest that the conceptualization of brand experience by Brakus et al. (2009) is still considered the best approach when somebody wants to study the experiences of tourists towards various destination brands. However, it is still questionable whether this conceptualization can suit every type of tourism such as cultural tourism, eco-tourism, beach tourism, medical tourism, adventure tourism, gastronomic tourism, and wildlife tourism to mention a few. There is a need therefore to test it for various types of tourism. Future research is also needed to further develop the definition and operationalization of brand experience construct.

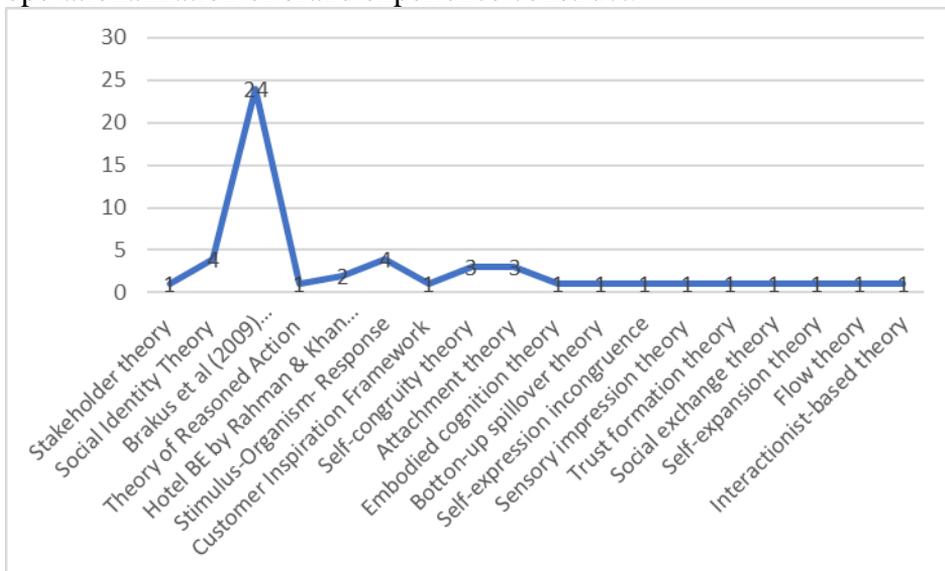


Figure 4: Theories used by reviewed articles

Context perspective

Contexts refer to the subsection of physical and conceptual positions of interest to a certain entity (Pascoe 1998). The TCCM method considers contexts as the environments which form the research setting (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019). This study grouped the contexts of the reviewed articles into four main groups namely Offline context, general online context, Amazon Mechanical Turk, and Sojump. The offline context referred to studies that collected data face-to-face while the general online context referred to studies that gathered data through normal online means such as emails, websites, etc. On the other hand, Sojump, referred to studies that collected data through Sojump which is a professional online survey platform (Lv & Wu, 2021). The Amazon Mechanical Turk context referred to studies that collected data via the Amazon Mechanical Turk which is the crowdsourcing website that permits employees to do jobs for monetary rewards (Yang & Wang, 2015). It was discovered that the majority of reviewed articles (32) used offline context, followed by those that used general online context (11), Amazon Mechanical Turk (2), and Sojump (1). The total number reported contexts is more than 44 because two of the studies used both offline and online. These findings imply that the majority of scholars are in favor of face-to-face interactions while gathering information regarding experiences encountered by tourists. In other words, face-to-face interactions are the major source of information for brand experience studies, particularly in Tourism.

Characteristics perspectives

The next sections synthesize the constructs and their relations to brand experience. Specifically, it presents the antecedents, consequences, mediators, and moderators of brand experience in the tourism industry.

Antecedents of brand experience

Scholars have determined the antecedents of brand experience in the tourism industry. Using the Self-expression incongruence theory. Tarigan et al. (2021) discovered that tourist self-expression, destination attraction, and destination image are determinants of brand experience. Haobin et al. (2021) also concluded that mindfulness is a predictor of brand experience. In other words, if an individual is aware of what is happening in the surroundings, that awareness has a positive influence on the experiences encountered by tourists. Ahn and Back (2018) on the other hand, posit

that brand reputation is also among the determinants of brand experience particularly in the field of tourism.

The quality of the brand has been also reported to exert an influence on experiences encountered by tourists towards various destination brands (Seehanam et al., 2018). Other scholars such as Kim et al. (2022), also examined the influence of destination brand and brand awareness on destination brand experience and found that both the destination brand and brand awareness are the predictors of destination branding. A study by Guo and Hsu (2023) in China utilized the self-congruity theory among others to determine the relationship between brand experience, self-congruity, brand attachment, self-expansion and brand identification and found that self-congruity is an antecedent of brand experience. Interestingly, Rezaei et al. (2017) in Iran, studied the influence of customer perceived relationship marketing, quality of service and brand experience on tourists' satisfaction and actual expenditure behavior. Their results, revealed that brand experience is influenced by customer perceived relationship marketing. Moreover, Chiang and Chen (2023) in China examined the link between tourism destination brand identity, brand experience and intention to recommend. The findings of this study shows that destination brand identity is an antecedent of brand experience. In other words, tourism destination brand identity is important in creating overall brand experience of tourists. Generally, these findings indicate that brand experience is influenced by other brand-related and customer-related factors. This further connote that there is a need for tourism actors to identify and invest in factors that build positive experiences for successful industry. Moreover, although these studies have unveiled several antecedents of brand experience, still the list is not exhaustive and hence there is an avenue for testing more customer and brand-related constructs to broaden the understanding of the antecedents of this construct including green image, tourist attitude, self-image congruity, and marketing communications.

Mediators of brand experience in the tourism industry

This review also identified the mediators of brand experience in the tourism industry. It was found that the majority of reviewed articles discovered that satisfaction plays a big role in mediating the relationship between brand experience and other constructs (Barnes, et al., 2014; Chukwunwem & Ndubueze, 2018; Hussein, 2017; Wang et al., 2020;

Odor & Okeke, 2020; Martins et al., 2021). Destination brand identification also has been found to mediate the relationships between brand experience and other constructs such as brand loyalty and destination trust (Han et al., 2019; Kumara & Kaushik, 2017). Destination brand identification can play either a partial mediator role or a full mediator role (Kumara & Kaushik (2017). Meaningful and involvement are also mediators of brand experience in the tourism industry (Legendre et al., 2019). A study by Elvekrok and Gulbrandsøy (2021) reveals that affective and cognition dimensions mediate the relationship between sensory and memory dimensions in staged experiences.

On the one hand, momentary happiness and retrospective happiness are the mediators of brand experience. This was observed by Lv and Wu (2021) in their study about the influence of extraordinary positive sensory experiences on destination brand love. Jimenez-Barreto et al. (2020) also discovered that perceived online destination brand credibility mediates the link between online destination brand experience and behavioral intention towards the destination. Customer inspiration has been also found to mediate the relationship between brand experience and pro-environmental intention (Kwon & Boger, 2020).

The reviewed literature further indicates that memory mediates the relationship between brand experience (in particular the intellectual dimension) and the behavioral intentions to revisit the theme park (Wang et al., 2020). Brand trust (Narimane & Lahcen, 2021), destination brand authenticity (Khan & Fatma, 2021), involvement and meaningfulness (Legendre et al., 2019), and customer mindfulness (Haobin et al., 2021) are also mediators of brand experience. Other identified mediators include heritage destination loyalty (Rahman et al., 2021), self-expansion (Guo & Hsu, 2023), flow experience and self-congruity (Fu et al., 2020), place attachment (Shang et al., 2020), brand attachment (Kang et al., 2017), brand relationship quality (Tang et al., 2023) and trustworthiness (Torres-Moraga & Barra (2023). The presence of various mediators of brand experience connote that brand experience influences brand-related and customer-related variables either directly or through other variables. This calls for other studies to research on more mediator variables such as consumer's emotions like joy and anxiety, social accomplishments, brand competence, and brand aspirations.

Moderators of brand experience in the tourism industry

This systematic review discovered that only a few of the articles (6) considered moderator variables and the remaining (38) did not include moderator variables. Ahn and Back (2019), examined the influence of cruise brand experience on perceived functional and wellness values and found that cruise brand experience influences perceived values. It was also revealed that service expertise played a big role in moderating the relationship between cruise experience and perceived values.

Chan & Tung (2019) also determined the influence of robotic service on guest appraisals of hotel brand experience and determined the moderating effects of hotel segment on guest appraisals of brand experiences. The findings reveal that the robotic service exerted greater levels of sensory and intellectual experiences and generated low levels of experiences due to the affective dimension. The findings of this study further indicate that the robotic service attracted greater levels of affective experiences for midscale and budget hotels, and did not exert influence on luxury hotels. Generally, the service from the robot may not essentially generate brand experience as influenced by the moderating role of the hotel segment.

On the one hand, Haobin et al. (2021) determined the link between mindfulness and brand experience in the presence of hotel customers' length of stay as the moderator variable. The findings show that hotel customers' length of stay negatively moderated the relationship between mindfulness and brand experience. Khan and Fatma (2021) also determined the link between online destination brand experience and destination brand authenticity while culture was applied as the moderator variable. The results indicate that culture plays a big moderating role in the link between online destination brand experience and destination brand authenticity.

Furthermore, Jimenez-Barreto et al. (2020) also assessed the moderating effect of tourists' past experience with the destination on the link between the online destination brand experience and users' behavioral intentions toward the destination. The findings reveal that tourists who had not yet visited the destination offered a higher path in the link between online destination brand experience and behavioral intentions compared to tourists who had previously stayed at that particular destination. It was also confirmed that tourists who had previously stayed at the destination

revealed a higher path in the link between perceived online destination brand credibility. Nevertheless, Srivastava et al. (2022) studied the moderating effect of trust and brand loyalty in the link between brand experience and destination advocacy in India. The findings of this study indicated that trust and brand loyalty played a big role in moderating the link between the studied variables.

To sum up, the current review reveals that the majority of studies do not bother about the variables that may affect the direction or strength of the relationship between brand experience and other constructs. The reviewed articles have concentrated more on the antecedents and consequences of brand experience. This is the gap that needs to be filled by future research as the inclusion of moderator variables provides a chance of going beyond studying just a simple link between the two variables and for a fuller picture of real-world brand relationships. Moderators offer insights into the link that we could not otherwise attain without being included in the model.

Outcomes of brand experience in the tourism industry

The reviewed articles reveal that scholars have studied this topic in either customer-related effects or brand-related effects. The findings reveal that customer-related effects have been assessed in terms of customer satisfaction, intention to revisit, intention to recommend, behavioral intention, functional and wellness value, intention to continue, and intention to repurchase. Others include pro-environmental intention, word of mouth, product attribute, customer involvement, social customer perceived value, functional and financial perceived values, meaningfulness, and a positive memory. On the other hand, brand-related effects have been studied in terms of brand equity, brand personality, destination brand identification, brand trust, brand loyalty, perceived online destination brand credibility, brand image, destination brand advocacy, brand trust, destination brand authenticity, and brand love.

It was found that the majority of articles reviewed (9) have studied the effect of brand experience on brand loyalty followed by those that studied the effect of brand experience on customer satisfaction (7). For example, Phan and Ting-Yueh (2022) assessed the effect of brand innovativeness on brand loyalty via distinct dimensions of online brand experience in the online booking setting. The authors found that sensory, behavioral, and

affective experiences are the most determinant of loyalty towards brands. Liu and Hu (2021) also determined the impact of various hotel brand experiences on brand loyalty and revealed that hotel boarders' perceived brand experience influences brand loyalty. A study by Narimane and Lahcen (2021) examined the influence of brand experience on brand loyalty in traveling agencies and confirmed that brand experience had a significant influence on the formation of brand loyalty. Scholars like Liu et al. (2020) also evaluated the effect of brand experience on brand loyalty in upscale hotels for mainland Chinese tourists. Their findings reveal that brand experience has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty. Han et al. (2019) on the other hand found that brand experience influences brand loyalty through brand identification. Similarly, Seehanam et al. (2018) examined the effect of brand experience on brand loyalty and revealed that brand experience builds the loyalty of customers towards the brands. In addition, Kumar and Kaushik (2017) did a study regarding the role played by destination brand experience in evaluating the holistic and unified opinion of tourism destinations. The findings suggest that different dimensions of destination brand experience have a diverse effect on destination brand identification that consequently influences loyalty towards tourism destinations. However, the intellectual dimension did not reveal any effect on destination brand identification.

Nevertheless, Barnes et al. (2014) determined the influence of brand experience on satisfaction in a destination setting and showed the positive impact of sensory and affective experiences on destination satisfaction. However, intellectual and behavioral experiences did not show any impact on customer satisfaction. Singh and Mejraj (2019) also examined the influence of destination brand experience on the impact of destination brand experience on the behavioral intention of tourists. The authors found that destination brand experience influences tourists' satisfaction. Similarly, Wang et al. (2020) studied the effect of brand experience on satisfaction in the theme parking context and found that visitors' theme park experiences significantly exert an influence on the satisfaction of visitors. Martins et al. (2021) also determined the effect of destination brand experience on visitors' satisfaction. The findings indicate a positive impact of brand experience on visitors' satisfaction. Sensory experience exerted more influence compared to other experiences and the intellectual experiences did not exert influence on the satisfaction. In the same vein, Elvekrok and Gulbrandsøy (2021) evaluated the influence of individual

brand experience dimensions and found that sensory, cognitive, and affective experiences influence visitors' satisfaction towards destination brand.

Although destination brand experience influences brand loyalty and satisfaction, a review of the literature indicates that various dimensions of destination brand experience have a varied effect on these constructs. Studies confirmed that sensory experiences are more influential in generating satisfaction and brand loyalty in tourist settings whereas other experiences such as affective, behavioral, and intellectual experiences are weaker (Barnes et al., 2014; Kumar & Kaushik, 2017; Martins et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020). It is more difficult to attain behavioral and intellectual experiences in the tourism setting (Barnes et al., 2014). Relationships such as those of intellectual experiences are more predominant in generating product experiences than in tourism destinations. These results establish that studies regarding the influence of brand experience ought to account for individual influences of brand experience dimensions. On the one hand, findings suggest that tourist agencies, destination marketers, tour guides, and other tourism stakeholders should invest more in generating experiences that touch tourists' senses than other experiences.

Interestingly, other outcomes of brand experience have been reported as summarized in Table 1. This list of brand experience outcomes suggests that experiences encountered from destination brands can influence many brand-related variables. However, future studies are welcomed to unveil more outcomes of brand experience to enrich the brand management literature.

Table 1: The Outcomes of brand experience in the tourism industry

Outcome	Study
Brand loyalty	Phan and Ting-Yueh (2022), Liu and Hu (2021), Narimane and Lahcen (2021), Liu et al. (2020), Han et al. (2019), Seehanam et al. (2018), Kumar & Kaushik (2017), Rahman et al. (2021), Srivastava et al. (2022).
Customer satisfaction	Barnes et al. (2014), Singh and Mejrjaj (2019), Wang et al. (2020), Martins et al. (2021), Elvekrok and Gulbrandsøy (2021), Elvekrok and Gulbrandsøy (2021), Rezaei et al. (2017)
Intention to revisit and recommend	Barnes et al. (2014), Chiang and Chen (2023), Kumar and Kaushik (2020), Mohamed et al. (2020)
Brand equity and brand personality	Kim et al. (2022)
Destination brand identification	Kumara and Kaushik (2017), Rather et al. (2020)
Behavior intention	Ahn and Back (2018) Jimenez-Barreto et al. (2020), Praswati et al. (2021), Singh and Mejrjaj (2019)
Word-of-mouth	Chukwunwem & Ndubueze, 2018; Gomez-Suárez & Veloso, 2020; Khan & Fatma, 2021
Functional perceived value and wellness perceived value	Ahn and Back (2019), Wiedmann et al. (2017)
Brand identification	Guo and Hsu (2023), Han et al. (2019)
Memory	Elvekrok and Gulbrandsøy (2021), Wang et al. (2020)
Repurchase intention	Odor and Okeke (2020)
Pro-environmental intention	Kwon and Boger (2020)
Perceived online destination brand credibility	Jimenez-Barreto et al. (2020)
Brand image	Liu et al. (2020), Liu and Hu (2021)
Destination advocacy	Kumar and Kaushik (2020), Srivastava et al. (2022)
Brand trust	Narimane and Lahcen (2021), <u>Kang et al. (2017)</u> , Srivastava et al. (2022)
Affective commitment and destination brand authenticity	Khan and Fatma (2021)
Product attribute	Liu and Hu (2021)
Brand love	Lv and Wu (2021)
Sports event image	Girish and Lee (2019)
Involvement and meaningfulness	Legendre et al. (2019)
Multisensory marketing, social customer perceived value and financial customer value	Wiedmann, et al. (2017)
Brand attachment	Gomez-Suárez and Veloso (2020), Guo and Hsu (2023), <u>Kang et al. (2017)</u> , Shang et al. (2020)
Actual spending behavior	Rezaei et al. (2017)
Flow experience, self-congruity and brand commitment	Fu et al. (2020)
Existential authenticity	Shang et al. (2020)
Brand knowledge	<u>Kang et al. (2017)</u>
Tourism citizenship behavior	Tang et al. (2023)
Trustworthiness and trust	Torres-Moraga and Barra (2023)

Methodology perspective

This systematic review also assessed the methodology used by the reviewed literature including the sampling techniques, the approaches and strategies, and the analytical methods used. The findings reveal that various sampling techniques have been applied by brand experience studies in the field of tourism. It was found that the majority of studies (20) used convenience sampling and fifteen (15) articles did not state the sampling techniques used. This becomes difficult for readers to know which sampling techniques were used in these studies. However, eight (8) of them used random sampling whereas judgmental sampling was utilized by one (1) article. Other techniques included Amazon Mechanical Turk which was applied by two (2) articles and Sojump which was used by one (1) article. The former is the feasible and generalizable sampling technique when a general population sample is required (Gerlich et al., 2018) and the latter is the professional online platform for data collection. These findings suggest that convenience sampling plays a big role in selecting respondents for brand experience studies. This may be because the convenience sampling technique is less expensive, faster, and easy to do compared to other forms of sampling. Despite its advantages, studies conducted by convenience sampling cannot be generalized. The findings can only be applied to the study sample and the relationships and influences found from this type of sampling cannot be generalized to a target population (Acharya et al., 2013; Stratton, 2021). This is because convenience sampling is subject to various forms of bias and is prone to statistical assessment of sampling error or statistical validity (Acharya et al., 2013; Stratton, 2021). Generally speaking, both convenience sampling, judgmental sampling, Amazon Mechanical Turk, and Sojump are non-probability sampling. This calls for the use of probability sampling techniques that yield generalizable findings such as random sampling which seems to be infrequently used by scholars in tourism.

Interestingly, quantitative and qualitative approaches have been used in the reviewed articles. The results reveal that the majority of studies have applied the quantitative research approach (40) and four have applied the qualitative research approach (Elvekrok & Gulbrandsøy, 2021; Jimenez-Barreto et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Singh & Mejraj, 2019). This suggests that the quantitative approach is the dominant research approach in brand experience studies particularly in the tourism industry.

On the other hand, the cross-sectional research strategy has dominated this field leaving the longitudinal strategy under use. It has been shown that only one (1) study by Lv and Wu (2021) in China dared to apply the longitudinal research strategy and the remaining forty (43) articles used the cross-sectional strategy. While the short-term influences and relationships of brand experience on various brand-related factors are well-established in the literature, the long-term influences and relationships are under-researched. Therefore, future research should consider integrating long-term influences and relationships of brand experience to gauge what is happening in the tourism industry.

Nevertheless, the measurement scale by Brakus et al. (2009) has been applied by the majority of studies. A total of thirty-six (36) studies used the scale (with four dimensions) although some of them used the scale plus additional other dimensions. For example, Jimenez-Barreto (2020) in Spain applied this scale and added a social aspect dimension whereas Liu et al. (2020) and Liu and Hu (2021) in China added ambience experience and recognition experience. Phan and Ting-Yueh (2022), on the other hand, added a relational dimension making a total of five dimensions. However, Mutsikiwa et al. (2020) did not apply the scale by Brakus et al. (2009) instead they used the Hotel brand experience scale by Rahman and Khan (2017) which comprises five dimensions namely hotel location, hotel ambience, staff competence, hotel website and social media experience and guest to the guest experience. The use of additional dimensions by different authors depending on the context applied suggests that the measurement scale by Brakus et al. (2009) does not suit all contexts and the nature of study objects. This calls for the development of other scales that may suit well to specific contexts and the nature of respondents. As has been revealed by some studies, intellectual and behavioral experiences do not suit well in tourism destination studies (Barnes et al., 2014).

In the case of analytical methods, a large part of the literature has used structural equation modeling (SEM). Specifically, thirteen (13) articles used SEM-Smart PLS, thirteen (13) articles used SEM without specifying the type of SEM used, whereas those utilized SEM-AMOS were eleven (11) articles. The majority of the articles which used SEM have also used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and exploratory factor analysis to aid in establishing the validity and reliability of the research constructs. It

was also found that the articles that used multiple regression analysis were six (6) and one (1) article utilized analysis of variance (ANOVA) together with multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA).

The findings of this review confirm that except for a few articles, 84 percent of the published articles applied SEM. This might be because the majority of these studies have used the quantitative approach which requires the use of analytical techniques that establish causal relationships. Quantitative methods are good at alleviating individual bias and offer cherished insights into the ordering of reality and materialized discourses (Savela, 2018). They also allow replicating the study over time because of the standardized methods (Taherdoost, 2022). However, they are not able to give an in-depth understanding and in-detail information about the studied objects due to the inherently reductive nature of classification (Savela, 2018; Taherdoost, 2022). They are also limited in the provision of concealed reasons in persons' feelings, acts and individual's behavior at large. Thus, a mixed research method may be a good approach to gathering information related to tourists' experiences.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study aimed at determining the current state of brand experience literature in terms of theory utilized, journal distribution, country of research, and methodologies. It also determined the antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes of brand experience in the tourism industry as well as identifying areas that should be addressed by future researchers in the field of brand experience. The current review has unveiled that one article was published in 2014 about brand experience in tourism in the searched databases and there was a gradual increase in the year 2017 and 2019 where five (5) and six (6) articles were published respectively. However, in the following year (2020) there was a twice increase of articles published equating to 12 articles. Thus, this study concludes that there is an increase in number of articles published regarding brand experience in the tourism industry.

On the other hand, this study revealed that different theories have been used in studying brand experience. However, the majority of the reviewed literature prefer to use social identity theory and Stimulus-Organism-Response framework while studying experiences encountered by tourists

from different destinations. From these findings, it is concluded that the social identity theory and Stimulus-Organism-Response framework are mostly used by brand experience researchers. This review also discloses that 54.5% of the reviewed articles applied the conceptualization and measurement scale of brand experience by Brakus et al. (2009). Hence, it is concluded that the conceptualization by Brakus et al. (2009) is the dominant viewpoint in brand experience research.

Country wise, this review divulges that majority of brand experience studies in the tourism industry have been done in the China (10) followed by USA (6), India (5) and Indonesia (3), South Korea (2) and Spain (2) whereas the remaining countries received one article each. Hence this study concludes that China is the major contributor of brand experience studies specifically in the tourism industry followed by USA, India and Indonesia. The review also shows that a large number of studies have favored the offline contexts, quantitative approach, and cross-sectional strategy. Thus, this review concludes that the majority of studies in brand experience particularly in tourism are mainly conducted offline, quantitatively in nature, and use a cross-sectional strategy.

It is also concluded from the findings that structural equation modeling is the leading analytical technique in brand experience research. For the case of sampling techniques, convenience sampling is mostly favored sampling technique over any other technique. The review also suggests that brand experience in tourism is influenced by many factors but it is also mediated and moderated by other customer-related and brand-related constructs. Brand experience also can influence many variables. Thus, this review recommends that, for tourist agencies and other tourism stakeholders to differentiate themselves from their competitors, they should invest more in building positive experiences from encounters with their customers. The study also recommends for further research to be conducted in this area particularly in tourism to have more insights about the relationships between brand experience and other related constructs.

Nevertheless, based on synthetization of the above-mentioned literature review, this review offers directions for future research by employing the theory perspective, context, characteristics, and methodology perspectives. Theoretically, the review reveals that various theories have been used to study brand experience in tourism. However, there is an

opportunity for future research to employ other theories such as social behavior theory, social exchange theory, and value co-creation theory. Future researchers are also welcome to work on brand experience conceptualization and operationalization (Andreini et al., 2019). Contextually, a large body of literature has concentrated on the offline context while leaving the online context unexplored. Hence, future studies coalescing offline and online studies are needed to elucidate how the two influence each other. More studies are also welcomed to examine how various online and offline touch points impacts each step of the consumer journey (Lemon & Veheof, 2016).

In the case of characteristics perspectives, several antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes of brand experience have been identified. However, there is an opportunity for future research to explore more antecedents (such as technology interaction, green image, tourist attitude, self-image congruity, marketing communications, and physical characteristics of the location such as physical evidence and or servicescape), mediators (such as consumer's emotion such as joy and anxiety, tourists' need fulfillment, social accomplishments, brand competence, and brand aspirations), moderators (like brand loyalty, brand image, brand identification, brand authenticity, cultural orientations of tourists and ethnocentrism) and outcomes such as brand engagement, brand attachment, brand knowledge, willingness to pay and brand strength to mention a few.

Methodologically, quantitative methods have dominated the reviewed studies in the tourism industry. Hence, future research should give more emphasis on the importance of qualitative data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews in order to get more insight into the brand experience construct in tourism. The majority of researchers are also in favour of a cross-sectional research strategy over longitudinal and hence the short-term influences and relationships of brand experience on various brand-related factors are well-established in the literature whereas the long-term influences are limited. Thus, future researches are welcomed to examine the long-term influences and relationships of brand experience to gather more information about experiences from destination brands.

The review also indicates that the majority of the studies have concentrated on the use of non-probability sampling techniques in

particular convenience sampling. However, this technique is subject to various forms of bias and is prone to a statistical assessment of sampling error or statistical validity (Acharya et al., 2013; Stratton, 2021). This warrants future research to employ the probability sampling techniques which yield generalizable findings. Nevertheless, the review discovered that the measurement scale by Brakus et al. (2009) has been widely used by researchers. However, this scale does not suit all contexts, cultures, and the nature of research participants. The scale is more useful when testing experiences exerted on products. Consequently, researchers have pointed out that the experience dimensions such as intellectual and behavioral do not fit well in tourism destination studies (Barnes et al., 2014). Hence, future research may engage in the development of other scales that may suit well to specific contexts and the nature of respondents. Moreover, this review also exposes that, the reviewed literature has not considered the negative brand experiences which are likely to be encountered by tourists in different destinations. Hence future research are welcome to include this aspect. The concept of brand experience has witnessed an increased interest by scholars in recent years. However, there are few reviews on this area. This calls upon other reviews in the future which may consider shorter periods such as five to eight years etc.

Interestingly, this review has theoretical and practical implications. In the case of theoretical implication, the current review highlights the understanding of the relationship between destination brand experience and other customer-related and brand-related variables. More specifically, it unveils the antecedents, mediators, moderators and outcomes of brand experience in the tourism industry and hence extends the theoretical foundation of the relationships between brand experience and other variables. The findings reveal that destination brand experience influences various customer-related and brand-related variables. Based on the findings of this review, Figure 5 summarizes the proposed antecedents, mediators, moderators and outcomes of tourism brand experience for future research. Practically, the review offers information that can be utilized by tourism marketers. The findings reveal that destination brand experience influences various customer-related and brand-related variables. Thus, tourism marketers can utilize various experiential factors such as sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual experiences to build loyalty of customers, customer satisfaction, trust, attachment to the

brands, promote intention to revisit and recommend the brands. These experiential factors can also be applied to foster word-of-mouth recommendations, repurchase intention, brand commitment from customers, build the brand image and increase the actual purchase behavior of customers.

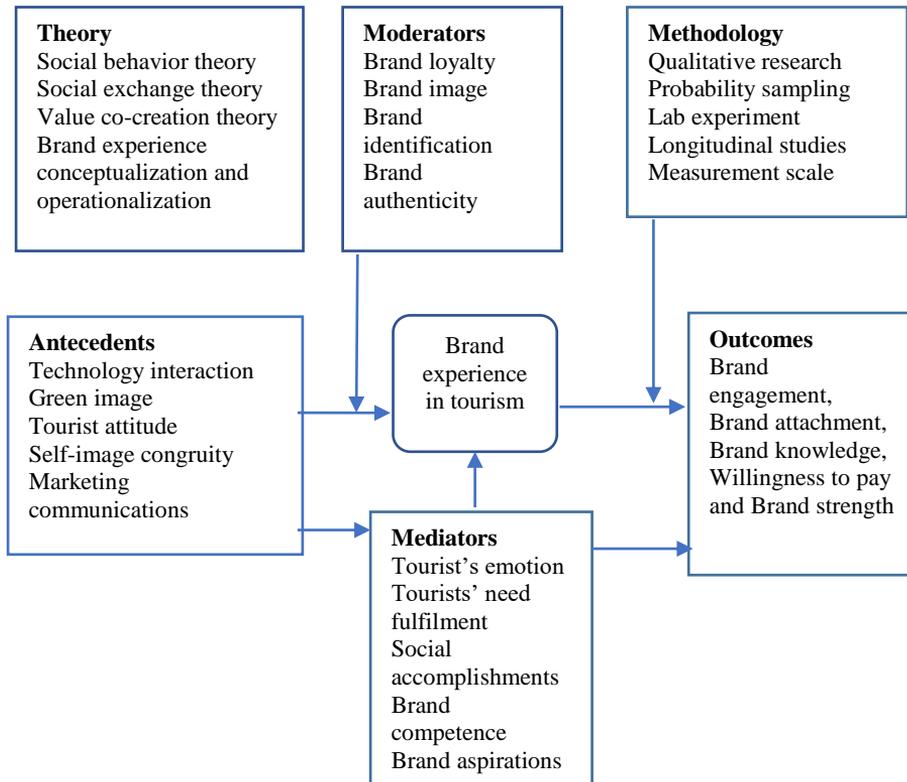


Figure 5: Proposed future research framework
 Source: Author’s research

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although this study has come up with novelty findings, it has some limitations. For example, this study was limited to articles published in English and that found in the Taylor and Francis, Emerald, ScienceDirect and google scholar databases. Another limitation is the small sample size of the reviewed articles due to strict criteria used in selecting the articles

published in the databases utilized for a review. This strictness was applied to keep the objectives manageable (Pham et al., 2022).

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