



THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

香港理工大學

Pao Yue-kong Library

包玉剛圖書館

Copyright Undertaking

This thesis is protected by copyright, with all rights reserved.

By reading and using the thesis, the reader understands and agrees to the following terms:

1. The reader will abide by the rules and legal ordinances governing copyright regarding the use of the thesis.
2. The reader will use the thesis for the purpose of research or private study only and not for distribution or further reproduction or any other purpose.
3. The reader agrees to indemnify and hold the University harmless from and against any loss, damage, cost, liability or expenses arising from copyright infringement or unauthorized usage.

IMPORTANT

If you have reasons to believe that any materials in this thesis are deemed not suitable to be distributed in this form, or a copyright owner having difficulty with the material being included in our database, please contact lbsys@polyu.edu.hk providing details. The Library will look into your claim and consider taking remedial action upon receipt of the written requests.

**NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN HOTELS AS
A MEDIUM OF EXPERIENCE CO-CREATION**

MOHAMMAD SHAHIDUL ISLAM

PhD

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

2020

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
School of Hotel and Tourism Management

**Nonverbal Communication in Hotels as a Medium of
Experience Co-Creation**

Mohammad Shahidul Islam

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

July 2019

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it reproduces no material previously published or written, nor includes materials that have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

Mohammad Shahidul Islam

Abstract

Different from verbal interaction, nonverbal communication comprises expressive emotions, subtle cues, or gestures, that customers and service providers (e.g., hotel employees) mutually detect and decode. Like verbal cues, these signs can induce a change in attitude, belief, or behavior and shape individuals' mutual experiences. On the basis of such co-creation potential of nonverbal communication, this study refers to service-dominant (S-D) logic to utilize its principles (i.e., co-creation process). The logic suggests that interactional value or value in exchange that occurs in guest–employee dyads triggers experiences. Thus, these values must (1) be nested within the broad organizational structure, such as operant resources (combination of knowledge and skills; e.g., employees' interaction expertise), philosophy, and culture; and (2) influence service delivery and customer perception of service quality.

Nonetheless, explorations of nonverbal communication, which is an effective tool of guest–employee engagement, have been academically overlooked and practically underemphasized in the hospitality industry. Such explorations shed light on high-quality interactions (i.e., the psychological value of relationships in guest–employee dyads) and economic leverage. Therefore, given the importance of high-quality interactions in hotels for the sake of memorable experiences for guests, the co-creation potential of nonverbal communication in the hospitality industry should be explored in addition to the widely known phenomenon of co-creation principles between consumers and firms (i.e., information technology, computer software, and website and online reservation within hotels). The current study focuses on the dyadic kinesic (i.e., body language) interactions between frontline employees and customers in the hotel lobby as a unit of analysis.

Kinesics is the most dominant and noticeable component of nonverbal communication. Particularly, this study seeks to (1) identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions; (2) identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in terms of co-creation of experience during face-to-face interactions; and (3) outline the process that underlies kinesics-based experience co-creation between guests and employees in hotels.

Given the exploratory nature of this study, a qualitative approach was adopted with the implementation of a constructivist stance as a research paradigm. This study underwent two phases. In Phase I, covert nonparticipant observation was performed in lobbies of eight full-service hotels in Hong Kong to develop and design stimulus video scenarios. Three videos of guest–employee encounters were produced in total, that is, (1) an employee greets a guest at the front door, (2) interaction with a lobby greeter, and (3) check-in. Hospitality and tourism graduate students were hired and trained to enact typical kinesics scenarios, which were video-recorded and later acted as video stimuli in Phase II. Four video elicitation focus group discussions (FGDs) of more than 11 hours were conducted with 12 hotel employees and 12 guests in Phase II. Each focus group consisted of three employees and three guest participants recruited based on purposeful sampling. Hotel employees had at least two years of frontline experience in a full-service hotel in Hong Kong, and guests stayed in a similar type of hotel in the previous six months across the world. Inductive six-step thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. All FGDs were video-recorded and transcribed verbatim into English.

Findings of this study provide a rich description of the phenomenon of experience co-creation in hotel guest–employee dyads by concerning its core dimensions of experience

together; that is, how the dimensions of kinesic experience that occurred between hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions, such as (1) reciprocity ((i) mutual recognition, (ii) exchanged insights, and (iii) expectation formation) and (2) engagement ((i) customized attention, (ii) building relationship, and (iii) sense of affinity) are unearthed concerning the co-creation process attributed in employees' imperative and guests' complacent expressiveness. In reciprocity, hotel guests and employees experienced interaction in a mutually beneficial manner to fulfill expected objectives and build kinesic experience. In engagement, guests and employees were motivated to build a relational foundation of loyalty to each other in moderating the means to foster mutual relationships. Findings of this study further depict their dyadic engagement process in terms of experience co-creation. Hotel employees and guests articulated imperative kinesics expressions (i.e., exhibiting willingness to help and understanding needs and requirements toward guests) and complacent kinesics expressions (i.e., exhibiting satisfaction, no complaints, and anxiety toward employees), respectively, by decoding (affective, affiliative, and cognitive) the motives. They seemed interested to co-create their experience while perceiving value in kinesic exchange (i.e., sense of safety, confirmation of pleasurable moments, less workload, and a deep relationship).

This study contributes to the empirical literature in the hospitality domain by enriching our understanding of nonverbal communication in hotels as a medium of experience co-creation. It also extends the discourse on operant resources management in the S-D logic in the pursuit of employees' interaction competencies to develop and succeed experience co-creation practices in hotels. In terms of practical implications, hotel managers may take insights from this study as reference points. Particularly, the styles of

recognizing guests, letting guests judge the value of interaction, fulfilling guests' kinesic expectation, adapting kinesic measures for guests' favorable feelings, and enhancing and fostering relationship with guests through kinesics exchange are the central elements of guests' memorable experience. Hotel managers may also understand the effects of kinesic cues by specifically understanding the method of employees' imperative or necessary kinesic expressions in pursuit of managing and promoting their hospitality experience co-creation explicitly and effectively.

Keywords: nonverbal communication, experience co-creation, consumer behavior in hospitality, video elicitation focus group.

Acknowledgments

The accomplishment of this thesis would not have been possible without the kindest mercy and grace of Allah and the cooperation of many people. The journey toward the achievement of this thesis has been exciting, full of passion, challenging, and highly rewarding, scholastically and professionally. My consistent commitment to and enthusiasm for this study has been a catalyst to prompt me to succeed every hurdle in my PhD journey. My chief supervisor, Dr Ksenia Kirillova, who believes in me and has never been uncertain about my ability to complete this thesis, has kept my passion to reach my goal. Primarily, Dr Kirillova has influenced my academic taste and changed my attitude on how to focus on an object in the core of practicing research. Her continuous supervision and intellectual support have cleared my vision toward the accomplishment of this thesis. Working under her mentorship has frequently made me feel self-reliant and given me the determination and skills that I need to progress my scholarly career in times to come. My most profound honor and gratefulness to her are immeasurable.

Furthermore, I am immensely honored to have a co-supervisor like Dr Honggen Xiao, who provided me with guidance during this journey and let me understand the reasons for my PhD in the world where we live and work. I am also thankful to all the faculty members of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM), specifically to my supervisory committee members, namely, Dr Catherine Cheung and Dr Basak Denizci Guillet, for the valuable comments and suggestions they provided me to develop and accomplish this thesis. I am also grateful to BoE Chair Dr Sau Yee Ada LO and external examiners, Dr Jill Mabel Poulston and Dr Siu-Ian So, for their invaluable comments and suggestions that helped me improve and finalize this dissertation.

I also wish to extend my gratitude to all my contemporary PhD colleagues at SHTM, mainly to Fuad Mehraliyev, Munhyang (Moon) Oh, Vasilis Papavasiliou, Taurus Sun, Antony Wong, Richard Hrankai, Irene Chan, and Zandivuta Kankhuni, who sincerely helped me in playing roles as hotel guests and employees on hotel lobby interaction scenarios during my video film production for data collection.

Finally, I give my heartfelt appreciation to my family members. My sincere gratitude goes to my wife Sadeka Sultana, my daughter Aafra Aahmed, my younger sister Tamanna Ferdous, my elder brothers Shafiul Murad, Shafiul Azam, and Shafiul Islam, who have always inspired and cheered me on this journey of PhD from the very beginning until present. Even from far away (Bangladesh), my family has kept me confident and filled me with prayers, love, affection, patience, and encouragement.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgments.....	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Tables.....	xiii
List of Figures.....	xiv
Glossary.....	xv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Rationale of the study.....	3
1.3 Research purpose and questions.....	8
1.4 Research objectives	10
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
2.1 Nonverbal communication in consumer experience	11
2.1.1 Conceptualization of experience	14
2.2 S-D logic	19
2.2.1 Value proposition as experience.....	21
2.3 Experience co-creation: Definition and effects.....	23
2.3.1 High-quality interaction for experience co-creation.....	32

2.3.2 Experience co-creation in hospitality	33
2.3.3 Importance of face-to-face interaction	37
2.3.4 Role of employees' nonverbal behavior	41
2.3.5 Nonverbal interaction and experience co-creation	47
2.4 Nonverbal communication: Definitions and effects.....	50
2.4.1 Types of nonverbal communication	52
2.4.2 Kinesics	53
2.5 Nonverbal communication theories	58
2.5.1 Emotional contagion theory.....	58
2.5.2 Affiliative conflict theory	63
2.5.3 Uncertainty reduction theory	66
2.6 Conceptual framework	72
2.6.1 Affective	74
2.6.2 Affiliative.....	75
2.6.3 Cognitive	75
2.7 Concluding remarks	77
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHOD	80
3.1 Research paradigm	80
3.1.1 Researcher as a constructivist.....	83
3.2 Research approach.....	85

3.3 Research strategy.....	86
3.4 Phase I: Covert nonparticipant observation	88
3.4.1 Observation as a research method	88
3.4.2 Nonparticipant observation.....	90
3.4.3 Covert stance	91
3.4.4 Observation site and access	93
3.4.5 Checklist development and deductive observation	94
3.4.6 Observation procedure and analysis	95
3.5 Phase II: Video elicitation focus groups	97
3.5.1 Video stimuli development.....	97
3.5.2 Procedures	98
3.5.2.1 Treatment profile of kinesic cues.....	98
3.5.2.2 Three scenarios	100
3.5.3 Video production procedures.....	104
3.5.3.1 Role player recruitment and training	104
3.5.3.2 Video shooting and editing	105
3.6 Data collection.....	106
3.6.1 Sampling strategy	109
3.6.2 Sampling criteria.....	109
3.6.3 Sample size.....	110

3.6.4 Participant recruitment	111
3.6.5 Instrument.....	111
3.6.5.1 Focus group procedure.....	111
3.6.5.2 Interview questions	115
3.6.5.3 Focus group moderation	117
3.6.5.4 Pilot study	118
3.7 Potential researcher bias.....	119
3.8 Data analysis	121
3.8.1 Inductive TA approach.....	121
3.8.2 Data analysis procedure.....	123
3.8.2.1 Familiarization with data	124
3.8.2.2 Generation of initial codes.....	124
3.8.2.3 Searching for themes.....	126
3.8.2.4 Reviewing themes.....	129
3.8.2.5 Defining and naming themes	131
3.8.2.6 Producing the report.....	132
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	133
4.1 Overview of findings.....	134
4.2 Kinesic experience in guest–employee dyads (Objective 1).....	135
4.2.1 Kinesics as reciprocity.....	136

4.2.1.1 Mutual recognition	137
4.2.1.2 Insight exchange	145
4.2.1.3 Expectation formation.....	152
4.2.2 Kinesics as engagement.....	159
4.2.2.1 Customized attention	159
4.2.2.2 Relationship building.....	167
4.2.2.3 Sense of affinity	173
4.3 Kinesic expressions in guest–employee engagement (Objective 2)	179
4.3.1 Imperative kinesic expressions.....	180
4.3.1.1 Employees’ hand gestures in guests’ engagement.....	182
4.3.1.2 Employees’ walking movements in guests’ engagement	186
4.3.1.3 Employees’ smiling with eyes in guests’ engagement	189
4.3.2 Complacent kinesic expressions.....	192
4.3.2.1 Guests’ shoulder posture in employees’ engagement.....	194
4.3.2.2 Guests’ walking movements in employees’ engagement	197
4.3.2.3 Guests’ facial cues in employees’ engagement	199
4.4 Potential problems and ethical issues in managing kinesics	203
4.4.1 Alleviation of problems and ethical issues	206
4.5 Kinesics-based experience co-creation (Objective 3).....	209
4.5.1 Overview of co-creation process	210

4.5.2	Initiation of co-creation process	213
4.5.3	Moments of co-creation.....	218
CHAPTER 5:	CONCLUSION	223
5.1	Thesis overview.....	223
5.2	Theoretical implications.....	228
5.3	Practical implications	233
5.3.1	Implications for frontline employees’ training in hotels	234
5.3.2	Implications for course syllabus design in hospitality training institutes.....	250
5.4	Limitations and suggestions for future research	255
5.4.1	Kinesic experience in cultural differences.....	255
5.4.2	Extension of S-D logic in hotels.....	257
5.4.3	Kinesics in different types of hotel in different hours	258
5.4.4	Verbal and nonverbal communication in experience co-creation	259
APPENDIX I.	KINESICS OBSERVATION CHECKLIST	260
APPENDIX II.	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDELINES.....	262
APPENDIX III.	INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM.....	266
REFERENCES.....		268

List of Tables

Table 2.1 Axioms and theorems of uncertain reduction theory	71
Table 3.1 Treatment profile of kinesic cues in three scenarios.....	99
Table 3.2 Content of Scenario 1	101
Table 3.3 Content of Scenario 2	102
Table 3.4 Content of Scenario 3	103
Table 3.5 Sociodemographic profiles of hotel guests and employees	114
Table 3.6 Profile of pilot FGD participants	119
Table 3.7 Phases of TA	123
Table 3.8 Example of processing initial themes	128

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 Emotional contagion theory	60
Figure 2.2 Affiliative conflict theory	65
Figure 2.3 Uncertainty reduction theory	69
Figure 2.4 Conceptual framework	73
Figure 3.1 Overall research methodology.....	86
Figure 3.2 Research plan.....	88
Figure 3.3 Initial thematic map.....	129
Figure 3.4 Developed thematic map	130
Figure 3.5 Final thematic map	131
Figure 4.1 Themes of kinesic experience in guest–employee dyads in hotels	136
Figure 4.2 Nonverbal communication in hotels as a medium of experience co-creation	212

Glossary

Affective, originated from emotional contagion theory, refers to nonverbal expressions that evoke emotions in receivers and are similar to the emotions displayed by senders (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993).

Affiliative, as explained in affiliative conflict theory (Argyle & Dean, 1965), refers to an affiliation between two interactants while they become proactive and collaborative to balance their intimacy during exchange of nonverbal cues.

Cognitive, with reference to uncertainty reduction theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975), refers to the underlying effect of nonverbal cue display norm between interactants to increase or decrease uncertainty.

Experience, which shapes from the verbal and nonverbal customer–employee face-to-face interactions, is the synopsis of emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational values (i.e., value in exchange).

Experience co-creation, in the context of face-to-face nonverbal interaction, refers to the joint creation of value in a dyadic (i.e., customer–employee) engagement process that occurs during exchange of nonverbal cues (Burgoon et al., 1989; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a).

Face-to-face high-quality interaction is a dyadic contact that evokes emotion and meaning between individuals and helps them co-create experience elements (Page & Elfer, 2013; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a).

Nonverbal communication comprises expressive emotions, visual displays, and wordless interactions that occur through cues between people (Argyle, 1990).

Kinesics is a type of nonverbal communication, also known as body language, and concerns movements of any part of the body or the body as a whole (i.e., facial expressions, eye contact, and smile; Birdwhistell, 1952).

Paralanguage is a type of nonverbal communication that consists of cues or messages transmitted between individuals vocally (i.e., intonation, pitch, and speed of voice; Sundaram & Webster, 2000).

Physical appearance is a type of nonverbal communication that represents particular information regarding an individual's attitude and social assessment (i.e., uniform and hairstyle; Yuksel, 2008).

Proxemics is a type of nonverbal communication that corresponds to the spatial relationship expressed in distance behavior (i.e., distance maintenance and amount of space during face-to-face interaction; Jung & Yoon, 2011).

Service-dominant logic is a metatheoretical framework that discusses value creation through exchange among/between configurations of actors (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Hospitality employees must be competent in verbal and nonverbal interactions (Gabbott & Hogg, 2001, 2000; Jung & Yoon, 2011; Lim, Lee, & Foo, 2016; Lin & Lin, 2017; Moore, Hickson, & Stacks, 2010; Sundaram & Webster, 2000). Scholars believe that developing and managing customer experiences through the quality of service employees' interactions are critical components in the success of a service business (Islam & Kirillova, 2020; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Warren, Becken, & Coghlan, 2017). They also consider the ability of employees to interact with customers as vital in the success of professional growth and customer experience management. Thus, successful businesses, including those in hospitality, exert considerable efforts into training their employees on the proper execution of quality interaction with customers (Chung-Herrera, Enz, & Lankau, 2003; Jauhari, 2006; Wong & Lee, 2017).

The verbal component of a service encounter has gained most attention from researchers, whereas the nonverbal component in customer–employee interaction is often overlooked (Lim et al., 2016; Lin & Lin, 2017). Different from verbal interactions, nonverbal communication comprises subtle cues or gestures (e.g., facial expressions, nodding, and eye gaze) that, from a theoretical perspective, customers and employees detect and derive meaning from; subsequently, nonverbal communication induce a certain change or adjustment in attitude, belief, or behavior and thus shape customers and employees' mutual experiences (Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1989; Griffin, 2009; Hatfield et al., 1993; Moore et al., 2010). On the basis of such a theoretical perspective of

detecting and inducing meaning during exchange of mutual cues, nonverbal interaction in customer–employee dyads is transformed into a dimension of their experience co-creation (Hatfield et al., 1993; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a)

In contemporary service sectors, such as those in hospitality, the importance of customer–employee dyadic interaction in experience co-creation has been elevated by service-dominant (S-D) logic (Lusch & Vargo, 2014; Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Zhang, Guo, & Liu, 2017). This perspective demonstrates that the interactional values or values in exchange occurring in customer–employee dyads trigger experiences. Consequently, scholars have suggested that service organizations must emotionally engage customers in the service process, which is the primary element of high-quality interactions (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2018; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). Other scholars have argued that customer–employee psychological participation and cognitive actions initiate the so-called high-quality interactions (Kolb, 1984; Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Yi & Gong, 2013).

The literature on nonverbal communication (i.e., kinesics) contends that nonverbal cues, such as kinesics (i.e., facial expression and gestural approaches), have psychological and cognitive engagement strengths (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993; Schoenewolf, 1990). Such assertion is further supported by emotional contagion theory (ECT; Hatfield et al., 1993), affiliative conflict theory (ACT; Argyle & Dean, 1965), and uncertainty reduction theory (URT; Berger & Calabrese, 1975) by respectively adapting affective, affiliative, and cognitive effects to individuals' engagement during face-to-face interaction. The exchange in these unique characteristics (i.e., psychological and cognitive strength to engage two individuals) of nonverbal cues in guest–employee dyads can contribute to their experience co-creation (Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1989; Schoenewolf, 1990). Thus,

such exchange can be of practical advantage in developing service quality, customer relationship, and consumer experience management and can theoretically enrich the existing literature in these areas. For example, a service organization can identify productive operant resources (i.e., organizational competency—knowledge and skills) to succeed in competitive market advantage by designing effective management of the customer–employee face-to-face interaction style (Jamal & Adelowore, 2008; Warren et al., 2017).

1.2 Rationale of the study

The research direction on human interactions, specifically face-to-face interactions, is suggested as an important requirement for the adoption of the co-creation paradigm in the hotel industry (Chathoth et al., 2016). Studies on experience co-creation in hospitality and tourism and particularly on high-quality customer interaction are still emerging. Despite several critical studies that explain the types, dimensions, and stages of consumer experiences in hospitality and tourism, further research is still needed (Scott et al., 2009). Particularly, the understanding of an experience, which may occur in face-to-face interactions in customer–employee dyads, is limited in the domain of hospitality research (Kandampully, Zhang, & Jaakkola, 2018). No empirical study exists in hospitality literature that systematically investigates experience triggered from face-to-face interactions in such dyads. Scholars continue to demand advanced knowledge on the characteristics and diverse means of offering consumer experiences at academic and decision-making levels (Chang, 2018; Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

Within the hospitality literature, Fan, Hsu, and Lin (2020) noted that studies on co-creation practice have received considerable attention on conceptual and empirical

research, which mostly focuses on information technology and computer software within hotels. For example, Shaw et al. (2011) were pioneers in examining experience co-creation in hotels; however, their research emphasized co-creation and innovation in hotel information technology. In their conceptual paper, Bharwani and Jauhari (2013) presented the importance of hospitality professionals' communication intelligence in co-creating memorable customer experiences. The exploratory study of Neuhofer, Buhalis, and Ladkin (2013) suggested high technology as a critical factor in the co-creation and facilitation of high-touch experiences. The authors demonstrated that advanced technology enables hotels to assemble information about their guests, which helps in co-creating personalized experiences for the guests during their stay.

The relational and engagement attributes in customer–employee dyads in experience co-creation are still limited. Thus, despite the empirical evidence in the studies on experience co-creation in hospitality and tourism, knowledge gaps remain, such as in ascertaining issues that can improve resources for utilizing face-to-face interaction as an experience trigger.

Therefore, given the potential influence of nonverbal interaction on guest–employee experience co-creation, its nature and framework must be explored. Nevertheless, studies on nonverbal communication in different disciplines, such as psychology (e.g., Briton and Hall (1995)), health (e.g., Caris-Verhallen, Kerkstra, and Bensing (1999)), sports (e.g., Mellick, Fleming, Bull, and Laugharne (2005)), and law (e.g., Burnett and Badzinski (2005)), have invaluable contributed to the existing literature of nonverbal communication in different perspectives. These prior studies were mostly conducted to understand the effect of nonverbal communication on the corresponding

discipline-related concerns. For example, the needs and elements of the relationships between lovers (Miller, Mongeau, & Sleight, 1986), nurse–patient (Henry et al., 2012), referee–player (Furley & Schweizer, 2016), cancer-stricken child–mother (Dunn et al., 2010), and jurors–judges (Halverson et al., 1997) have not been similarly considered in general because their aims of interaction are based on different concerns. For instance, the patient seeks treatment, the cancer-stricken child wants to be accompanied by his/her mother, the player searches for judgment, and justice concerns are presented in the court. Although the insights and implications of these studies are important from the human interaction perspective, they do not sufficiently suit the need of the hospitality setting. Hence, nonverbal communication in hotel settings must be further explored because the relationship concerns expected from mutual interaction, such as in customer–employee dyads, are significant for actors (customers and employees) because of the unique nature of the hospitality business.

In the hospitality industry, employees are also called internal customers. Employee retention and satisfaction are also behaviorally influenced for business growth and effective operant resource management (Donavan, Brown, & Mowen, 2004). The same insight is not practically warranted in the court or sport settings because of their dissimilar focal relationships. Furthermore, the emphasis of nonverbal interaction differs in accordance with the actors involved. For example, the premise of police–criminal nonverbal interaction is noticeably dissimilar to the interaction between a guest and an employee. The end goal of the former is to assess suspicion and allegation, whereas the latter involves delivering service quality and assure customer loyalty.

However, thus far, nonverbal communication has not been studied from the receiver perspective, such as examining how referees perceive the nonverbal cues of players. Nonverbal communication from the perspective of hospitality employees remains unexplored empirically, which provides a novel avenue for the current study. How the integration of nonverbal communication into the guest–employee relationship in hospitality management can enhance their mutual experience and potentially lead to a new type of consumer experience under the co-creation framework is likewise not evident in the existing nonverbal communication literature. Most existing studies on hospitality and service management have recognized the influence of nonverbal communication in service encounters and analyzed its effect on customers for service evaluation (Gabbott & Hogg, 2000; Islam & Kirillova, 2020), service quality (Sweeney, Soutar, & Mazzarol, 2012; Jung & Yoon, 2011), and service recovery (Yuksel, 2008). In these domains, knowledge gaps still remain in terms of the exploration of emotional, relational, and behavioral elements of nonverbal cues (e.g., smile, eye contact, facial expressions, hand gestures, and walking movements) in face-to-face interaction in guest–employee dyads.

Nonverbal communication has yet to be examined as an addition to customer–employee dyads to enhance the mutual experience (co-creation). In addition, employee job satisfaction is only as important as customer service satisfaction for business growth, positive word of mouth, and service recovery (Bayraktar, Araci, Karacay, & Calisir, 2017). Empirical studies on employees’ favorable/comfortable and unfavorable/uncomfortable feelings and experiences from exchange of nonverbal cues (e.g., smile, eye contact, facial expressions, hand gestures, and walking movements) in customer interactions may highlight new directions for developing communication proficiency and knowledge in

enhancing consumer interaction experience and maximizing employee retention, employees' wellbeing, job satisfaction, and workplace productivity. Therefore, the study of nonverbal communication in the co-creation framework is necessary in contemporary S-D philosophy, where the search for experiences is now the core focus.

The literature has further demonstrated that hospitality is essentially a relationship based on guests and employees. Such a relationship starts from the frontline employees who can create a distinctive characteristic of hospitality from which several other dimensions emerge, such as experience, service quality, and customer relationship. From such dimensions, customers may grow into part-time employees of the organizations and actively collaborate with service employees (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). This transformation of the customer helps ensure long-term relationships and business success (Bendapudi & Leone, 2003). Previous studies have also confirmed that high-quality interaction and relationships or rapport can be increased through appropriate displays of nonverbal cues during face-to-face interaction, can improve customer engagement (Gabbott & Hogg, 2001, 2000; Lim et al., 2016; Sundaram & Webster, 2000) and participation in the service process, and gradually eliminate the boundary between service providers and customers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a).

Theories support that nonverbal behavior between employees and customers profoundly affects their interactive situations (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1992; Pugh, 2001; Verbeke, 1997). This effect can be a creative, emotional, and behavioral process that quickly makes both parties relational and engaged to co-create favorable cognition (i.e., high-quality interaction), which, in turn, is suitable for experience co-creation. High-quality interaction and relationship or rapport also regards customers as a critical integrated

resource, which facilitates an exchange process known as experience co-creation (Prebensen et al., 2014; Kasnakoglu, 2016). To date, research in this theoretical direction remains limited (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009; Chathoth et al., 2016).

The current study follows the above line of research by utilizing the co-creation potentials of nonverbal communication in guest–employee dyads. Although “interaction” in hospitality generally refers to face-to-face dyadic interaction between guests and employees, a direction in exploring different potential means of enriching the quality of interaction can enable hotel organizations to initiate various co-creation schemes (Chathoth et al., 2013). Interaction is also acknowledged in S-D logic as an effective element of operant resources under human capital management (e.g., employees’ communication skills, practical know-how, and knowledge or human resources that manage operand resources). Therefore, managing and monitoring the quality of customer interaction in the light of co-creation paradigm (i.e., experience co-creation) may contribute to consumer experience dimensions (i.e., customer engagement and co-creation process) and leverage their competitive survival in the hospitality business (Chathoth et al., 2016; Rihova, Buhalis, Moital, & Gouthro, 2014).

1.3 Research purpose and questions

Under the backdrop of the above research rationale, the overall purpose of this study is to explore the role of nonverbal communication in hotels as a medium of experience co-creation. The extant literature has shown that nonverbal communication consists of four groups, namely, (1) kinesics (body language), (2) proxemics (distance maintenance), (3) physical appearance (clothing and grooming), and (4) paralanguage (vocal behavior; Druckman, Rozelle, & Baxter, 1982; Gabbott & Hogg, 2001, 2000; Jung

& Yoon, 2011; Moore et al., 2010; Sundaram & Webster, 2000). Particularly, this work focuses on the kinesics expected from frontline employees and customers because it is the most dominant and noticeable component of nonverbal communication (Gamble & Gamble, 2013) and serves “as important vehicles for nonverbal communication” (Sundaram & Webster, 2000, p. 381) in interactions and service encounters. Thus, this study aims to establish a compact theoretical framework and shed light on the role of kinesics (i.e., body orientation, shoulder movement, hand gesture, facial expressions, walking movements, eye contact, and smile) in experience co-creation, which, as a pioneering research attempt, is expected to direct future research on the remaining groups of nonverbal communication (i.e., proxemics, physical appearance, and paralanguage).

Specifically, this study focuses on the dyadic kinesic interaction between frontline employees and customers in the hotel lobby as the unit of analysis. The lobby area of a hotel (considered to be the area of first impressions and a reflection of the hotel) is conventionally represented by service people (also called frontline employees). Their behavioral and communicational aspects are as crucial as operant resources in experience co-creation (Kasnakoglu, 2016; Lusch et al., 2007). Thus, the study is intended to address two research questions:

- (1). How is kinesics mutually experienced by hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions?
- (2). What kinesic cues engage hotel guests and employees in terms of co-creation of experience during face-to-face interactions?

1.4 Research objectives

In line with the emergent research questions, in particular, this research objectively seeks to:

1. Identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions;
2. Identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in terms of co-creation of experience during face-to-face interactions; and
3. Outline the process that underlies kinesics-based experience co-creation between guests and employees in hotels.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Nonverbal communication in consumer experience

Experiences are acknowledged as a key component in the life of the present-day consumer (Volo, 2009). Research suggests that consumers are becoming increasingly self-indulgent in their pursuit of an identity through sensations, emotional pleasures, and memorable recollections from the very outset of experiential consumption events (Scott, Laws, & Boksberger, 2009). Experience, over the past several decades, has also become a central phenomenon in the hospitality industry. Since the experiential dimension of consumer behavior was conceptualized, hoteliers and hospitality researchers have increasingly recognized the need for an in-depth understanding of the effective means of offering experiences to customers so they can use the knowledge for strategic decision making (Edvardsson, Enquist, & Johnston, 2005; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Jaakkola, Helkkula, & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2015). Scholars claim that experience that effectively arises from the quality of interactions between a service provider and a customer can be exploited as experience co-creation in S-D logic (Lusch & Vargo, 2014; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2018).

Hence, in recent times, human interaction elements have emerged as an important dimension that impacts customer experiences in the hospitality and tourism sectors (Walls et al., 2011). Scholars believe that the interaction competencies of service employees are key indicators of service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty, competitive advantage, and organizational performance (Kusluvan et al., 2010). Researchers in the co-creation domain add that the successful interaction between a company (employee) and a consumer

is also significant in experience co-creation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a) and S-D logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), with the premise that the engagement between customers and employee/service providers in an interactive situation results in their beneficial collaboration and generates value perception (Frow, Payne, & Storbacka, 2011; Im & Qu, 2017; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

In the hospitality and other service domains, high quality interaction is considered an essential component of experience co-creation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; Shaw, Bailey, & Williams, 2011). According to S-D logic, experience co-creation can occur at any point in a service interaction and have major effects on value construction and service experiences. Vargo and Lusch (2004) assert that co-creation primarily depends on company resources, namely, operand (natural resources) and operant resources (e.g., employees' communication skills, practical know-how, and knowledge or resources that control operand resources). The existing literature has further established that employees' communication expertise is a key operant resource and is crucial for successful value co-creation (Jaakkola & Hakanen, 2013; Karpen, Bove, & Lukas, 2011; Kasnakoglu, 2016; Lusch, Vargo, & O'Brien, 2007; Madhavaram & Hunt, 2008). Previous research has also verified that operant resources are the determinant of successful intellectual capital assets, such as customer relations, knowledge and skill, innovation, experiences and competencies of individual employees, and specific business policies and procedures (Kamukama, Ahiauzu, & Ntayi, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2008a).

Extant research does not explicitly establish the significant components of employees' communication skillset under operant resources. Currently, a serious need exists for meeting the instruments (i.e., means to create value in exchange) of experience

co-creation. In some studies (e.g., Blue and Harun (2003) and Kurihara and Okamoto (2010)), English as a verbal communication skill is generally emphasized in customer-service-oriented businesses, including those in hospitality; by contrast, the focus on the nonverbal aspects of communication is deemed to be inefficient (Gabbott & Hogg, 2001, 2000; Jung & Yoon, 2011). Without appropriate and effective nonverbal behavior competencies, the verbal communication skill of service people cannot sufficiently retain the quality of interaction. Scholars and practitioners have believed that verbal interactions require the support of nonverbal cues, and the appropriate displays of such cues during interactions are highly critical to the quality of interpersonal or face-to-face dyadic interactions (Lin & Lin, 2011; Yuksel, 2008).

As a whole, existing service management and hospitality literature on service employees' communication competencies still shows a lack of comprehensive understanding of nonverbal communication as a skillset alongside verbal ones. The few empirical studies available (e.g., Elizur (1987), Gabbott and Hogg (2000), Jung and Yoon (2011), Kehoe (1975), and Yuksel (2008)) have typically focused on the cues, frequencies, effects, and factors of dyadic interactions. Although valuable, such studies have not provided a comprehensive strategy for developing practical nonverbal communication skillsets. The experiential characteristics of nonverbal cues and their innate influence on the quality of dyadic interactions (e.g., engagement in guest–employee dyads) have been insufficiently addressed. Holistic and systematic approaches for the promotion of guest–employee engagement as a nonverbal behavioral outcome emotionally and relationally, rather than merely on a functional level, remain lacking (Boone & Buck, 2003; Hollebeek, Srivastava, & Chen, 2019). Potential resources and empirical knowledge (e.g., experiential

characteristics of nonverbal cues) on engagement in guest–employee dyads should be included in the analysis of guest–employee motivation, satisfaction, and willingness to suggest improvements to hotels (Harmeling et al., 2017).

Accordingly, operant resources should be evaluated and strengthened to utilize the advantages of nonverbal cues in intellectual capital assets, thereby ensuring experience co-creation. Understanding how nonverbal communication can facilitate enhanced consumer experiences is of particular relevance. Therefore, the conceptual discourse on nonverbal communication as an integral part of service employees' operant performance must be included in the key components of face-to-face interaction-based experience and co-creation.

2.1.1 Conceptualization of experience

As argued above, the current study intends to advance a means of offering experience that can be determined from face-to-face nonverbal interactions/ exchange of nonverbal cues between customers and employees. Although experience has been the emphasis in various disciplines, an all-inclusive face-to-face experience theory in dyads (i.e., between guests and employees) remains lacking thus far. In this line of justification of understanding such experience in detail, the analysis of experience may start with the question: What does experience mean in various scientific disciplines? Furthermore, this section integrates the extant literature and offers an analysis of the meanings of experience in various scientific fields in addition to the defense of conceptualizing the guest–employee experience for this study.

The concept of experience, which first started in the 1960s, has been extensively addressed by scholars and has several embedded meanings (Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

Depending on the context and respective scientific field, a broad spectrum of meanings of experience has advanced and changed over time (Gentile, Spiller, & Noci, 2007). Generally, experience corresponds to specific knowledge, skill, or practice consequential from direct observation of or involvement in actions or a specific activity (Lin, Zhang, Gursoy, & Fu, 2019). However, different and connected notes and connotations exist regarding the meaning of experience in philosophy, anthropology, psychology, marketing, and hospitality and tourism. The primary angles in philosophy conform with the general concept of experience, that is, experience is considered a subjective trial that influences the gathering of experiences and results in knowledge (Kim & Chen, 2019). Therefore, experience can shape while an individual consciously decodes an occurrence or event into knowledge (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). From an anthropological perspective, experience is essentially how individuals consciously live their ethnic culture (Geertz, 1986), whereas social anthropological perspectives emphasize the interactive and collaborative extents of experiences (O'dell, 2007). In this vein, Carù and Cova (2003) concluded that experience must be distinguished from an occurrence or event that happens to culture (i.e., society) because an experience is something that takes place within an individual.

The stance of general psychology also offers knowledge about experiences (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Similar to that in sociology, experience in the view of psychology is considered a subjective, cognitive action that happens to individuals (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Knobloch, Robertson, & Aitken, 2017). Thus, experience can be represented as a subjective and cognitive view of an individual (Larsen, 2007), in which one's emotions, feelings, and sensations are stimulated (Ismail, 2010).

On the basis of the comparable foundation of experience as mentioned previously, the interactional activities (i.e., online reservation and events) of guests (customers) and firms in marketing and tourism are considered in creating an experience (Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011). However, experience as a function in marketing, hospitality, and tourism have subtle differences. From a marketing perspective, Pine and Gilmore asserted, “An experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event” (1998, p. 98). Furthermore, in the marketing context, experience comprises personal emotions instigated by the consumption of products and services (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Fun, excitement, authenticity, engagement, nostalgia, meaning, hedonism, and identity are viewed as experiences in the business and marketing setting (Snel, 2011).

However, in the hospitality and tourism industry, the characteristics of experience are observed to shape the symbolic meaning involved in the deep engagement with activities (Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk, & Preciado, 2013). Likewise, Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung (2007, p. 120) stressed that “everything tourists go through” is an experience provided with a memory (Kim et al., 2012) and is related to behavior or perception and cognition or emotion (Oh et al., 2007). Therefore, Rickly and McCabe (2016) suggested that destination managers and other tourism service providers must design multiple services from which tourists may develop positive emotional engagement during different stages of experiential consumption. Oh et al. (2007) considered the aesthetics of tourism as a factor in creating memorable experiences. Service companies or experience providers can facilitate customer activities based on emotional wellbeing, thereby allowing customers to co-create experiences and be active service exchange participants. Favorable and enduring emotions

create enjoyable and memorable experiences. Specific emotions can be used to engage customers through communication (Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Prebensen & Foss, 2011; Rickly & McCabe, 2016; Volo, 2009). For example, interactional emotions can be used during the “moment of truth” through verbal and nonverbal communication (Echeverri & Skålén, 2011; Schmitt, 1999).

In evaluating scientific origins, the term experience from a transdisciplinary standpoint consolidates that sharing features or attributes can be drawn out to constitute the definitional underpinning for the present work. An empirical research in the hospitality literature that systematically investigates experience triggered from face-to-face interaction between two individuals (i.e., guests and employees) is needed. The literature has shown that an experience or experience dimension consists of many individual aspects that come together within the individual; thus, no two individuals will conceive the same experience because experience dimensions are interpreted and constructed individually (Shaw & Ivens, 2002; Walls et al., 2011). In the service context, experience dimension in social surroundings, such as the interaction in customer–employee dyads, is important because an experience is characterized as a spontaneity of thoughts and feelings that occur during moments of consciousness in the respective interaction (Arnould & Price, 1993; Carlson, 1997; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In this stream of argument, an experience is an actor’s subjective response to or interpretation of any direct or indirect contact with the elements of service consumption, such as service employees, manner of offering services, and quality interaction mediated by thoughts and cognition (Helkkula, Kelleher, & Pihlström, 2012).

From the above arguments of experience, experiences have been acknowledged as a critical element in the life of modern-day consumers. Experience unfolds as consumers' subjectivity with intrinsic drives, attitudes, value system, and personalities. Thus, at their affective states of moods, consumers feel a particular occurrence that is cognitively transformed into an experience (Morgan, 2010). For example, experiential consumption activities (e.g., dining in a free Wi-Fi zone and reserving hotels with gift vouchers) imbue consumers' own experience with the pursuit of self-identity via feelings and emotional pleasures (Tasci & Milman, 2019). As such, consumption activities are not directed as the end of an economic cycle but a means to create consumer experience and affect their life through experience. Conventionally, consumer experiences are assumed as everyday activities that occur when services and products are consumed in everyday life (Holbrook & Hirschman, 2015). However, the early literature in the field of hospitality and tourism (Ellis, Freeman, Jamal, & Jiang, 2019) has underlined the need for distinctions while experiences transpire in the specific context of hospitality and tourism. Previously, experiences that can occur in face-to-face interaction, such as in the context of consumer–employee interaction (i.e., different from interaction between information technology and consumers) are missing the importance as given by those of transformative nature of consumer experiences (Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai, 2017), dining (Jeong & Jang, 2018), and information technology experiences (Neuhofner, Buhalis, & Ladkin, 2015). This need, specifically in the context of hospitality, can be driven by the distinctive nature of experiences in verbal and nonverbal interactions and typified by sensible consumer–employee behavior and symbolic, cognitive, and hedonistic dimensions (Chen, Suntikul, & King, 2019).

As a result, this work proposes the following general conceptualization of experience based on the study needs. Given the importance of contributing to the co-creation potentials of nonverbal communication in the hospitality industry (Chathoth et al., 2016), this study aims to explore employee and customer experiences of nonverbal interaction under the S-D logic framework (i.e., value that is created mutually by consumers and employees during face-to-face exchange of nonverbal cues). In this study, experiences are focused on verbal and nonverbal customer–employee face-to-face interactions—the synopsis of emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational values with which customers and employees co-create memorable events (i.e., value in exchange)—while they become engaged in dealings or interactive sequences during service initiation, consultation, and reception. These experiences are re-thinkable, interpretable, co-creatable, or shareable through the sensations, memories, or inner views of customers and employees and are intuitively designed.

2.2 S-D logic

This study is interested in advancing experience co-creation in guest–employee dyads by adopting nonverbal cues as operant resources (i.e., generally human—knowledge, skills, culture, and intangible objects) highlighted in the S-D logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The basic idea of S-D logic, a metatheoretical framework, is that individuals exert their competencies (i.e., operant resources) to benefit others and reciprocally benefit from others’ exerted competencies (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). Specifically, S-D logic advocates and evokes wellbeing and sustainability by catalyzing interactive engagement between actors in interdependent and reciprocally beneficial collaboration (Vargo, Lusch, Akaka, & He, 2016). Thus, S-D logic develops novel perspectives that emphasize

relationships, intangible resources, and the value creation between actors (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Primarily, value creation occurs in an engagement process in which resources are exchanged between actors (i.e., value creation from exchange of nonverbal cues in this study) and is consequently conceptualized as value co-creation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004c; Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Vargo, Maglio, & Akaka, 2009).

These novel perspectives of S-D logic appear different from those of traditional goods-dominant (G-D) logic. S-D logic is a transition (i.e., paradigm shift) from a G-D logic. G-D logic highlights the exchange of operand resources (i.e., typically physical—raw materials and tangible objects), whereas S-D logic highlights the action of operant resources (i.e., generally human—knowledge, skills, and intangible objects). This paradigm shift is inevitable in achieving a sustainable competitive market or business advantage. Increasingly, consumers start to recognize that operant resources (i.e., knowledge, skills, and intangible objects) are more important than operand resources (i.e., raw materials and tangible objects; Blomberg & Darrah, 2015) because the resources cannot generate effects. Resources can generate effects only through services or competencies that are provided by resources (Prahalad & Hamel, 1997). Different from operand resources, operant resources are often intangible, dynamic, and problematic to replicate. The core competencies of a company [e.g., employees' knowledge and communication skills (i.e., verbal and nonverbal communication skills)] are indispensable component of distinction that are challenging to transfer and thus remain a basis of a sustainable competitive market or business advantage (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Therefore, an organization's (i.e., hotels) competency or ability to integrate and exert its operant resources regulates whether it can reinforce its competitive market or business advantage.

However, S-D logic emphasizes the process of value co-creation by managing operant resources; accordingly, it has further advanced toward a dynamic systems orientation in which value co-creation is synchronized through norms, symbols, and other heuristics—resource integration and value exchange processes in the interactive situation (i.e., between firm/service providers and consumers). S-D logic scholars have advanced arguments that value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary, where knowledge and skills (i.e., operant resources) are the fundamental source of strategic benefit (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b, 2008c, 2016). Vargo and Lusch (2016, 2017) argued that the term “beneficiary” of value reflects the generic nature of actors. In joint service exchange, all concerned actors (i.e., guests and employees) are providers and beneficiaries. Moreover, value propositions in an exchange are perceived and integrated differently by each actor, and value is uniquely experienced and determined. Hollebeck, Srivastava, and Chen (2019) indicated that value must be perceived in terms of the holistic combination of resources that intends to lead to it. Value perception is thus always unique to an individual actor and can only be determined by that actor. For example, in a study, guests’ and employees’ value perception can be individually determined from their mutual exchange of nonverbal cues (Argyle & Dean, 1965; Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993)

2.2.1 Value proposition as experience

Vargo and Lusch (2008b, p. 7) noted that “Value is idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual, and meaning laden.” Scholars have further articulated that value creation is phenomenological and experiential in nature. Thus, experiences are the extracts of value (Ballantyne, Williams, & Aitken, 2011; Bourgeon-Renault et al., 2006; Ramaswamy,

2011; Ramaswamy & Gouillart, 2010; Vargo & Lusch, 2016). Holbrook (2006) claimed that value resides only in a consumption experience, not in an object, a product, or possession. Values are determined by interactive relativistic preferred experiences (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Holbrook, 2006). Majdoub (2014) analyzed “interactive” to indicate that no value exists without an interaction between two actors, (i.e., value in exchange) and “relativistic” to denote that value is comparative, situational, and personal. Above all, the process of value can be typified as functional value (i.e., performance and skills), experiential value (i.e., emotional and social), symbolic/expressive value (i.e., self-expression, self-identity/worth, emotional, relational, and subjective/social meaning), and cost value (i.e., economic, personal investment, and risk; Smith & Colgate, 2007).

Therefore, in the premises of this study, the consideration of value (i.e., functional, experiential, and symbolic/expressive) can be concerned with the context to which individuals (i.e., guests and employees) phenomenologically attach or associate psychological meaning to service consumption. For example, in the study context, nonverbal expressions/performance of individuals that indicate hospitality can prompt individuals’ self-concept (i.e., politeness) and self-worth (i.e., trust). Thus, such expressions may help regulate the interaction quality, appropriate experience, feelings, and emotions between individuals, which, in turn, make them feel engaged with one another affectively, affiliatively, and cognitively (Argyle & Dean, 1965; Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993; Holbrook, 1994; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; Vargo & Lusch, 2016). By considering the dynamic nature and multidimensions of value, Vargo and Lusch (2008b, 2008c) concluded that value creation depends on how consumers interpret the consumption of objects through their experience. Thus, instead of

mentioning *value co-creation*, the current study suggests *experience co-creation* from nonverbal interactions in guest–employee dyads.

2.3 Experience co-creation: Definition and effects

In Sections 2.1.1 and 2.2.1, although the conceptualization of experience and value proposition in the study setting have been discussed, understanding their co-creation that is suitable to the objectives of the present study is also necessary. First, co-creation is experience-centric (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; Vargo & Lusch, 2016) and is centered on collaboration with customers (Lusch et al., 2007). Second, co-creation entails joint (i.e., customer–employee) engagement in different points of the dyadic or direct interactions aimed at delivering consumption experiences. Third, co-creation specifically occurs when consumers interact with companies/service providers and play an active role in value perception, thereby shaping the co-creators’ experiences (Grönroos, 2011; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004c). Therefore, jointly creating something between people as a matter of value can be called *experience co-creation* (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; Vargo & Lusch, 2016) Specifically, co-creation is “the joint creation of value by the company and the customer; allowing the customer to co-construct the service experience to suit her context” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a, p. 8).

However, a substantial body of work (i.e., S-D logic) has reported that co-creation is conceptually embedded in two forms, namely, co-production and value co-creation (Kristensson, Matthing, & Johansson, 2008; Lusch & Vargo, 2006). Co-creation may occur in the shared action, co-design, or shared production between a company or service provider and a consumer (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). This condition implies that through mutual collaboration, the two parties engage in developing new products, services, or

service potentials. Some studies on co-creation have been conducted in a shared or co-production framework but focused on tourism innovation (Nambisan & Baron, 2009) and technology-based service innovation (Lee, 2012) on virtual platforms. Value co-creation is more significant than co-production when applied as a coherent and constructive means for providing customers with meaningful and memorable experiences (Prebensen, Woo, & Uysal, 2014). Each customer can also easily perceive value during the consumption experience. Value co-creation can accelerate the degree and quality of customer engagement and the interaction with a service provider during or across multiple stages of consumption (Andrades & Dimanche, 2014; Prebensen et al., 2014). Furthermore, the determinants of customer experiences commonly depend on their level of engagement and high-quality interaction with service providers (Chan, Yim, & Lam, 2010). The present study conceptualizes co-creation as centered on experience collaboration and predominantly dependent on dyadic face-to-face customer–employee interaction and the mutual engagement of customer–employee dyads in creating high-quality interaction (as discussed in the following section). In turn, this interaction is responsible for producing experience elements between customers and employees.

The existing literature supports that high-quality interaction between service providers or employees and customers is an indispensable part of hospitality and tourism business growth. This people- and service-oriented sector mostly evolves through increased frequencies of interactions, including face-to-face interaction between customers and service people (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013; Im & Qu, 2017). Scholars have indicated that the concept of co-creation can be applied successfully in hospitality and tourism research (Andrades & Dimanche, 2014; Prebensen et al., 2014). Surveys by academic

scholars have revealed that the concept of co-creation is extremely effective in face-to-face collaborations or dialogues and in interactions between service providers and consumers (Im & Qu, 2017). Furthermore, according to S-D logic (the common premise of value co-creation), the face-to-face interaction competencies of service providers are highlighted in operant resource management, such as employees' communication skills and knowledge (Lusch & Vargo, 2014; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). S-D logic argues that the proper and professional management and development of operant resources can play a vital role in effective co-creation practice. The literature on face-to-face interaction competencies is limited, including those on nonverbal cues, which are key players in creating effective interactive environments between service providers and customers (Barsade, 2002; Gabbott & Hogg, 2001, 2000; Hashim et al., 2008; Jung & Yoon, 2011; Lundqvist, 2008; Pugh, 2001; Sundaram & Webster, 2000; Verbeke, 1997). Thus, such sources do not provide a comprehensive understanding of industry needs, co-creation practitioners' usage, or managerial implications.

As such, experience co-creation based on face-to-face interaction has drawn research attention toward frontline employees. A conceptual paper by Bharwani and Jauhari (2013) proposed the importance of frontline employees' communication competencies in the hospitality sector for experience co-creation but placed limited emphasis on the essentials of frontline employees' nonverbal communication competencies. The authors further argued that the hospitality intelligence of frontline employees contributes to improved guest experience and is a key enabler for a satisfying guest–employee interaction. According to Lim et al. (2016), without expertise in nonverbal cue display, frontline staff tend to cause service failure, which can cause unfavorable word

of mouth. They asserted that the proper display of nonverbal cues between customers and frontline service employees rewards organizations because of successful service delivery. They found that the similarity in nonverbal cues between customers and employees enhances customer satisfaction and promotes positive word of mouth. Their findings also suggested that the initial interaction in customer–employee dyads is a key customer touch point that must be carefully managed. For example, in a joint display of cues, an employee’s tone of voice remains warm in response to a customer’s warm tone of voice. However, the moderating components of a long-term customer–employee relationship, such as the feelings or experience of those nonverbal cues, remain unexplored in the aforementioned studies. Knowledge on cue experiences can contribute to designing co-creation practices and developing proficiency in providing memorable experiences for customers.

Generally, as members of a hospitality-centered business, hoteliers are advised to pay attention to designing co-creation to provide customers with memorable experiences (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009; Prebensen et al., 2014). The perception of high-quality customer interaction and engagement in the different stages of service consumption can offer favorable and notable customer experiences (Grissmann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). A meaningful customer interaction can also revive business growth. Some scholars have argued that customer interaction design and the examination of the interaction performance between a company and a consumer should be the focus of continuous research efforts to enable service organizations to arrange and offer novel and refreshing customer experiences (Morgan, Lugosi, & Ritchie, 2010; Neuhofer et al., 2014; Peters & Pikkemaat, 2006). If co-creation is not initiated, then the scope of

meaningful customer experiences will be restricted, consequently decreasing the number of customers and positive word of mouth.

Binkhorst and Den Dekker (2009); Cabiddu, Lui, and Piccoli (2013); and Chathoth et al. (2016) reported that in the field of hospitality and tourism, academic scholars have been increasingly seeking ways to identify the scope of practicing co-creation. The present study aims to observe the role of nonverbal communication in hotels in experience co-creation. Interaction has been identified as an effective tool for experience co-creation (Cabiddu et al., 2013; Campos et al., 2016; Chathoth et al., 2014; Grisseemann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012; Prebensen & Foss, 2011). Nevertheless, the extant literature does not provide adequately consistent cues, such as what cues can contribute to experience co-creation. Appropriate methods of nonverbal cues in a customer–employee dyad may offer a critical foundation for high-quality face-to-face interaction. Such methods can theoretically be an asset and a useful role player to ensure experience co-creation while widely recognizing their contributions to service quality, customer relationship, and satisfaction (Gabbott & Hogg, 2001, 2000; Jung & Yoon, 2011).

Similarly, the insights of the service management literature verify that the nonverbal communication efficacy of employees and customers and nonverbal communication as an organizations' operant resource (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) may play an important role in experience co-creation. Previous studies on nonverbal cues or communication (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Gabbott & Hogg, 2001, 2000; Jung & Yoon, 2011; Lim et al., 2016; Sundaram & Webster, 2000) and related theories (Hatfield et al., 1992; Pugh, 2001; Verbeke, 1997) have confirmed the influential role of nonverbal communication in dyadic face-to-face customer–employee interaction in service quality

and customer relationship or rapport management. These studies have reiterated that nonverbal communication plays a cognitive role in customer consumption experience (Sundaram & Webster, 2000), service appraisal (Pugh, 2001; Verbeke, 1997), and customer–employee rapport (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Lim et al., 2016). They have emphasized nonverbal communication as service-experience friendly; however, the theoretical emphasis of nonverbal communication in dyads (customer–employee) has not been critically examined. Consequently, evidence on the nonverbal cues’ narratives, such as their inductive meanings, is rare. Without such critical examination, customer relationship management and service quality may also encounter challenges, including customer–employee frustration and, ultimately, service failure.

In the hospitality and tourism context, managing, arranging, and developing customer interactions and engagement (including face-to-face interaction and dialogues at different stages of service transactions and consumption) are emphasized in the maintenance of experience co-creation (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009; Shaw et al., 2011). Mathis et al. (2016) discussed the importance of customer interaction and engagement in contributing to experience co-creation. They acknowledged that effective and successful interaction and engagement with customers can result in memorable experience co-creation. They also demonstrated that interactive engagement exerts a moderating effect in strengthening the effect of satisfaction with experience co-creation, thereby increasing loyalty to the service provider. Moreover, the authors suggested that practitioners should facilitate an environment for a great customer–employee social interaction, thereby enabling the two parties (i.e., customer and employee) to create a unique, personalized, value-added experience.

Within the hotel context, scholars have insisted on utilizing co-creation principles from the initial step of guest arrival (Chathoth et al., 2013; Kristensson et al., 2008). Co-creation practices in the hotel industry in New Zealand can be a recent instance to support such argument. Managers guide their employees in engaging hotel guests right away upon their arrival to enable them to participate in a hotel experience. Employees accomplish this by improvising a suitable time for guests to interact. They make conversation to prevent the guests from feeling like strangers in the hotel, ask guests about their holiday, and try to ascertain essential information not only in terms of check-in and check-out details but even about breakfast, dinner, and lunch preferences. They believe that interaction is everyone's important task, and its high quality can make or break a memorable guest experience (Harkison, 2018).

Researchers have further argued that within hospitality and tourism, service encounters must be highlighted as “experience” encounters by integrating guests into the service experience that will involve them. Experience encounters help co-create added experiential worth for guests and increase the co-creation of knowledge about guests (Sørensen & Jensen, 2015). The experiment by Sørensen and Jensen (2015) in a retro design boutique hotel in Copenhagen introduced some co-creation practices, such as a new way of engaging guests in the allocation of their own rooms. Another example of their co-creation practice includes applying the personal knowledge and experiences of employees as resources in the encounters. For example, a special service that frontline employees provide guests involves providing information about enjoyable places for dining, sightseeing, or shopping. Employees believe that learning more about the guests helps them understand specific guest demands, experiential wishes, and possibilities. In Moscow, most

international hotels practice co-creation by engaging guests in multisensory dining experiences combining food taste, sound, and visuals to stimulate and entertain all the guests' senses. For instance, the five-star hotel Swissotel practices co-creation with clients by organizing dinners on the roof, whereas the Fabrika hostel co-creates its design with clients by providing free accommodation in exchange for painting (Oyner & Korelina, 2016).

The important evaluation of co-creation is evident in the literature that shows that co-creation practices are diverse and encourage innovative attempts to enrich co-creation culture. Further revision and examination of interaction techniques can produce new knowledge for practitioners and the industry (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009; Shaw et al., 2011).

Scholars in marketing and hospitality have discussed the driving forces of experience co-creation from different perspectives (Cabiddu et al., 2013; Füller & Bilgram, 2017; Grisseemann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). Cabiddu et al. (2013) revealed that customers can quickly co-create consumption experiences, whereas companies or service providers allow customers access the evaluation of service offers swiftly and easily. Their study established that a quick service process, service access, or service element is effective for experience co-creation. Their results theoretically support the assertion that nonverbal cues, in the form of meaning, intention, and attitude of displayers, quickly engage individuals in face-to-face dyadic interaction and thus help them provide the cognitive space to co-create experiences.

Grisseemann and Stokburger-Sauer (2012) identified company support, such as active communication provision for customers and democratized new service offerings, as

a key factor in engaging customers in developing services. They established that customer–employee communication satisfaction has a positive effect on the degree of experience co-creation. The present study has an exploratory scope to delve into experience co-creation between customer–employee dyads from the premise of face-to-face communication, which will add to the existing literature. In product and brand management research, Füller and Bilgram (2017) demonstrated that consumers’ personal features, such as novelty seeking and dissatisfaction, enhance their experience of the aspects of the customer–employee relationship. In the restaurant context, Im and Qu (2017) proposed that customers can be brought into the scheme of knowledge, efficacy, and motivation practices designed or facilitated by an organization. They found that customers with a high level of knowledge, self-efficacy, and motivation are highly likely to participate in experience co-creation. Moreover, their study identified customers as resource integrators during experience co-creation.

The above literature establishes that customer interaction at different stages of the service plays a key role in experience co-creation. Every customer is unique. Hence, by arranging convenient and matching resources, service organizations can provide or design a credible and trustworthy environment and promote an effective experience co-creation culture (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). Bitner (1990) stated that the experience co-creation environment entails tangible and intangible elements, such as physical surroundings and interacting employees. The current study focuses on the latter, that is, on customer–employee interactions as the experience environment (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; Lusch & Vargo, 2004). In this study, the role of nonverbal cues and their affective

affiliative and cognitive characteristics can be important parts of the co-creation paradigm, thereby making theoretical contributions.

2.3.1 High-quality interaction for experience co-creation

In the above literature, experience co-creation is intertwined with the consideration of “high-quality interaction,” where “high-quality” denotes “effective” or “superior.” It further indicates that scholars (e.g., Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a)) recommend high-quality interaction performance in experience co-creation by engaging with consumers emotionally. However, evidence regarding the methods of emotional engagement has not been adequately proven in the literature. Other academics have argued that the psychological participation of consumers in interactions is more important than their physical participation in value perception (Prebensen & Xie, 2017), and they have summarized co-creation practices as the inclusion of physical and psychological importance. Participation from the physical perspective includes body movements (Campos et al., 2016). By contrast, customers’ cognitive actions (e.g., learning, collecting, sharing, and tracing information and knowledge) result in subjective participation (Kolb, 1984; Yi & Gong, 2013).

Thus far, the co-creation literature or domain has failed to provide any explicit or established definition of high-quality interaction. Therefore, a definition of “high-quality face-to-face interaction” must be conceptualized because, theoretically, the current study argues that nonverbal communication can help achieve high quality face-to-face interactions, which are effective for experience co-creation. This study takes observations from existing studies on indications for measuring high-quality interactions in co-creation practices, such as interaction with emotional engagement (Prahalad & Ramaswamy,

2004a), cognitive actions, and subjective participation (Kolb, 1984; Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Yi & Gong, 2013), all of which may facilitate the conceptualization of a suitable definition of high-quality interaction.

Furthermore, the extant literature in communication (Mercer & Wegerif, 1999), psychology (Liu, Chua, & Stahl, 2010), healthcare (Mercer, 2008), and education (Degotardi, 2010) has confirmed that the nature of face-to-face dyadic high-quality interaction should be considered alongside the promotion of human wellbeing and cognitive benefits. Consequently, an inter-thinking or co-construction is formed consisting of understanding and shared experiences that are considered responsive, comfortable, and interpretable (Degotardi, 2010; Liu, Chua, & Stahl, 2010; Mercer, 2008; Mercer & Wegerif, 1999; Page & Elfer, 2013; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Other scholars have argued that high-quality interactions should be able to transform attitudes and should be relational between interactants (Burgoon et al., 1989; Griffin, 2009). The features of high-quality interaction mentioned above are quite evident in the theoretical propositions that characterize nonverbal communication as affective, affiliative, and cognitive. On the basis of the above academic findings, the current study offers the following conceptualization of high-quality face-to-face interaction in the context of its research setting. Specifically, high-quality face-to-face interaction is a dyadic contact point that (1) evokes emotion and meaning that are co-sharable and inter-thinkable between individuals, (2) motivates them to elicit a relational response, and 3) helps them co-create experience elements.

2.3.2 Experience co-creation in hospitality

Customer engagement or participation through initiating co-creation culture is a concern of hospitality management (Chathoth et al., 2016). To find as many choices of co-

creation practices as possible for business sustainability (Chathoth et al., 2014), customer engagement in interactive situations is desirable because “consumers will undoubtedly seek different interactions; the value creation process must accommodate various experiences of co-creation. Context and consumer involvement contribute to the meaning of a given experience to the individual and to the uniqueness of the value co-created (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004c, p. 16). In the same vein, co-creation practitioners in hospitality have claimed that with the advent of S-D logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), the co-creation paradigm should have been promoted years ago. The hospitality industry should necessarily adopt co-creation practices for their future survival and growth (Chathoth et al., 2016, 2014, 2013), given that customers increasingly search for unique, meaningful, and memorable experiences (Morgan et al., 2010; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Walls et al., 2011).

Furthermore, in service-centric business phenomena, customer behaviors constantly change, and customer expectations become diverse. The service business sector, such as hospitality and leisure businesses, also focuses more than ever before on delivering individually customized services and tourism experiences to their guests (Erdly & Kesterson-Townes, 2003) to satisfy distinctive personal tastes with highly functional quality offerings of service (Chang, 2018). What customers can expect from hotel organizations from arrival to departure and engagement with other touristic ancillaries has been of concern, motivating hotel organizations to create new policy strategies to offer unique and memorable experiences; such development also indicates that a co-creation strategy can be used as a leverage (Chathoth et al., 2013; Vargo, Maglio, & Akaka, 2008). Thus, while designing customer experiences, hospitality organizations must posit the

customers' perspective as the central feature for the effective delivery of hospitality services (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013).

The current study observes the need for experience co-creation in the hospitality industry, which is also valuably endorsed by the literature. In an empirical study, Buonincontri, Morvillo, Okumus, and Niekerk (2017) asserted that experience co-creation positively affects guest satisfaction, expenditure, and happiness. Another investigation in Japan revealed that perceived benefits and subjective norms have significant roles in motivating guests to participate in co-creation (Lee, Lee, & Tussyadiah, 2017). Xu, Marshall, Edvardsson, and Tronvoll (2014) demonstrated the principles of co-creation in an innovative attempt in the hotel setting. They explored the concept of co-recovery by emphasizing the collaboration of service staff and customers in service recovery. They found that when a service employee engages in a co-recovery situation, customers have higher justice, satisfaction, and inclination toward future repurchase.

In hospitality interactions, the effects of nonverbal cues on the service recovery evaluations of customers have been significantly observed in the literature. Yuksel (2008) found that an open body posture accompanied by appropriate eye contact stimulates positive emotions and affects service recovery.

Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez, and Pascual-Fernández (2018) attempted to determine whether utilizing the valuable knowledge and competencies of customers will allow hotels to strengthen their competitiveness by accelerating their innovation process beyond the peripheries of the organization. They examined the effect of new service co-creation with customers in the hotel industry on new service performance. They found that co-creation practices (i.e., expansion of innovation process) have direct effects on the latest

service market outcomes (i.e., sales, market share, and profits) and the acceleration of original service development, which concurrently supports the quality of a new service. Furthermore, they identified lack of customer interest in devoting time to new service development engagement or to the appropriate knowledge and experience as a critical barrier toward new service co-creation in hotels. They concluded that managerial effort enhances the effect of co-creation in new service development schemes and thus engages customers in the co-creation process. Interaction enhanced by nonverbal cues, a concept yet to be explored, may contribute to engaging customers in co-creation. Theoretically, a doorperson's simple interested hand gesture with an affiliative, transmissible, and cognitive facial expression (indicating respect, friendliness, trust, and loyalty) can adequately develop interpersonal relationship and increase perceived service quality, resulting in memorable experiences.

The literature further demonstrates that on the basis of a broadened perspective of service businesses, nonverbal communication-enhanced interaction can play a vital role in customer engagement in the hotel service context. Favorable nonverbal cue displays by service people, such as kinesics and physical appearance, promote customer willingness to reconsider service consumption in restaurants (Islam & Kirillova, 2017). Customer–employee engagement in the service process has diverse benefits, including word of mouth, service quality, and rapport. Scholars have verified that nonverbal enhanced engagement in interactive situations can create and improve customer–employee rapport, which can accelerate the co-creation process in service businesses, such as those in hospitality.

The hospitality and tourism literature on co-creation and high-quality customer interaction and engagement remains inchoate (Chathoth et al., 2016). Chathoth et al. (2016)

suggested accelerating the means of engaging customers in instigating co-creation programs in the hotel service context. They proposed that hotel organizations should focus on managing high-quality customer engagement in light of S-D logic principles. Their notion is viewed in sdlogic.net in connection with the assertion of Vargo and Lusch (2004) that “the fundamental basis of exchange” shifts from “market to consumers” to “market with consumers.” Chathoth et al. (2016) insisted that “*Ex-ante, in-situ, and ex-post* considerations for creating experiential value need to be used as part of a checklist of... managing customer experiences using the service-dominant logic as part of the firm’s orientation toward its market. This would give it the required thrust to create superior engagement” (p. 222).

In sum, co-creation in the hospitality context is essentially an engagement-oriented interaction between a customer and an employee to co-create value, and this value is the nucleus of their mutual experience. Scholars have suggested that if co-creation comes into its full potential in practice, an organization may achieve a competitive advantage. Encouraging the use of additional co-creation in service businesses, including hospitality enterprises, can have a positive effect on customers’ co-creation of memorable experiences (Buonincontri et al., 2017; Harkison, 2018).

2.3.3 Importance of face-to-face interaction

The advancement in technology has revolutionized many business sectors, including those in hospitality. Consequently, a current trend in hotels involves the replacement of face-to-face interaction with technology, such as during check-in/out and through the usage of mobile apps, websites, or phone calls by guests. The application of face-to-face interaction accounts for multifaceted or critical contributions to business

success, such as face-to-face customer–employee emotional engagement, psychological participation for long-term relationship and rapport, mutual value perception from interpersonal interactions, or memorable and meaningful experience co-creation in customer–employee dyads in real-life environments.

How can experience be formed from interactions or service encounters? Such formation is centered on personal judgment or perception (Oliver, 2006). Nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions and bodily communication (e.g., gestures and posture), can significantly influence the interactive value creation of cue displayers. The characteristics of nonverbal communication can likewise shift interaction toward developing customer relationships (Ivanova-Gongne, 2015).

Grönroos (2011) defined interaction as a “mutual or reciprocal action where two or more parties have an effect upon one another” (p. 244). Here, the effect can be considered the value co-creation between interactants. Echeverri and Skålén (2011) argued that value is the function of the attitudes, affection, satisfaction, or behavior-based judgments that underlie a consumption experience and can never be limited to monetary evaluation. Ivanova-Gongne (2015) established interaction as the interplay between people through the expressions of attitude, voice, and bodily communication or kinesics. She further elaborated that such interaction entails short-term bilateral exchange that eventually leads to long-term rapport. The survey of Hau, Anh, and Thuy (2017) confirmed that “individuated, relational, and empowered interactions expressed by a service frontliner play a critical role in activating customer participation, leading to a higher level of perceived value” (p. 253). Choi and Kim (2013) showed a positive relationship between high-quality interaction and customer satisfaction in the hospital setting. They found that

interaction quality and peer-to-peer quality perceptions significantly influence customer satisfaction, which concurrently largely influences customer loyalty. Through confirmatory factor analysis, Chahal (2010) found that a caring attitude, friendliness, helpfulness, and responsiveness from physicians, nurses, and support staff significantly influence patient–physician interactions to co-create value, leading to customer satisfaction, repatronization, and recommendation. In marketing, repeated interactions between a customer and an organization are suggested to emotionally engage customers. Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie (2014) and Phang, Zhang, and Sutanto (2013) proposed that the significance of favorable and meaningful customer interaction is a matter of engaging customers in the service process of an organization. They further argued that repeated interactions can strengthen the emotional and psychological sphere of customers in brand recognition. Through in-depth interviews with respondents from different firms (e.g., marketing consulting, cosmetics, logistics, hospitality, and retail), Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan (2012) found interaction to be a fundamental component of customer engagement. They also reported that customer engagement through interaction involves feelings about experiences with the organization and generates positive word of mouth.

Marketing literature also demonstrates that value co-creation based on interaction can occur from successful service encounters (Meuter et al., 2000; Surprenant & Solomon, 1987). Researchers in this field have argued that customer evaluation of service encounters is essential for customer satisfaction. Oliver (2006) conceptually postulated this as the co-creation implication in the context of service encounter evaluation by service providers and customers. Oliver (2006) conceived the power of *symbiosis* in reference to mutual satisfaction and *bidirectionality*, which are both responsible for assessing the fulfillment of

individual needs. Approaches to interaction or service encounters, such as symbiosis (mutuality or mutualism) and bidirectionality (bilateral or mutually interactive roles), are reflected in nonverbal communication theories (discussed in Section 2.5). This theory requires interaction to be effective and meaningful for experience co-creation through the favorable nonverbal cues displayed by customers and service employees.

The above discussion implies that co-creation exists in customer interactions and experiences (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; Vargo & Lusch, 2016). Since the introduction of the co-creation paradigm in the marketing domain (Grönroos, 1982; Shostack, 1977), value in the service setting has been recognized as co-created from the interactions between employees/service providers and customers. Grönroos (1982) and Gummesson (1987) later referred to the interaction between employees and customers as interactive marketing. They observed that along with the traditional marketing mix (i.e., place, price, product, and promotion), interaction can also be associated with marketing tools. Views on the value creation process are diverse, but the perspectives are centrally identical. The present study examines the keywords of co-creation, namely, “interaction” and “experience,” between employees/service providers and customers, which are addressed as value creation based on interaction (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004c; Ramírez, 1999; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Value is also attached to products (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). This notion suggests that service providers/employees co-create services and products in support of customers. This belief highlights the fact that value, although objectively estimated in monetary appreciation, can be subjectively estimated by customer and provider perceptions. This estimation is understood as value

formation based on the interaction in the concept of “interactive relativistic preference experience” (Holbrook, 2006, p. 212).

Interaction enhanced by the display of nonverbal cues has also been meaningfully discussed in the literature. Ruben, Blanch-Hartigan, and Hall (2017) used a visual research method and found that nonverbal communication can also serve as a pain reliever. They observed that interactions involving physicians making eye contact, nodding, smiling, gesturing, and using a warm tone of voice can ease patients’ pain. Lin and Lin (2017) used an observational methodology and survey in the retail industry and proved that nonverbal enhanced interaction positively influences customers’ word of mouth. Gabbott and Hogg (2000) empirically revealed that the nonverbal behavior of service providers dramatically affects customers’ evaluations of service encounters. Therefore, previous research has demonstrated that nonverbal cues play an important role in successful dyadic interaction.

Therefore, experience co-creation from interactions or service encounters (Grönroos, 2011; Roser, DeFillippi, & Samson, 2013; Meuter et al., 2000) should be equally important for customer and service employee relationship management. Co-creation depends on joint (customer–employee) activity. For the success of business enterprises, the importance of employee satisfaction and experience, which are academically underresearched and practically underemphasized (in contrast to the customer’s perspective), should be examined as a research interest in human capital development. The current study can contribute to ensuring customer service sustainability in the competitive periphery of service businesses, such as hotels.

2.3.4 Role of employees’ nonverbal behavior

The existing literature shows that experience co-creation is a component of

successful service encounters (Sørensen & Jensen, 2015), and customers' evaluations of service encounters are essential for customer satisfaction (Bendapudi & Leone, 2003; Meuter, Ostrom, Roundtree, & Bitner, 2000; Söderlund, 2017). Oliver (2006) considered the notion of experience co-creation as the implication of co-creation in the service providers' and customers' evaluations of service encounters.

However, the role of service employees' nonverbal behavior concerning the outcomes of service encounters in service management remains overlooked (Choi & Kandampully, 2019; Echeverri & Skålén, 2011). This oversight probably occurs because of the focus on overall issues, such as the antecedents of service quality, the relationship between service quality and business profitability, and service recovery efforts (Sundaram & Webster, 2000; Webster & Sundaram, 1998). The stream of nonverbal communication literature (Gabbott & Hogg, 2001, 2000; Islam & Kirillova, 2020; Jung & Yoon, 2011; Lim et al., 2016; Lin & Lin, 2017) asserts that in a particular period, such as the moment of truth, face-to-face dyadic interactions (commonly referred to as "service encounters" in the hospitality industry) and nonverbal cues (e.g., facial expressions and gestural attributes) accomplish the following: (1) build an emotional episode where customers and employees encounter each other at the establishment, mutually make judgments, and perceive and co-create each other's attitudes; and (2) provide the opportunity, particularly for customers, to experience either the "building" or "breaking" of their expectations, which, in turn, contributes to their level of satisfaction (Blois, 1992; Carlzon & Peters, 1989; Kang & Hyun, 2012; Lin & Lin, 2017; Sparks & Callan, 1992).

Conversely, the perception of service employees' nonverbal behavior can be different based on customers' religious belief and gender (Hannigan, 1990). For example,

in a recent empirical study of Islam and Kirillova (2020), they revealed that upon encountering hotel employees with their nonverbal communication attributes [e.g., appropriate behaviors of distance (i.e., proxemics), professional clothing, combed hair (i.e., physical appearance), and proper tone (i.e., paralanguage)], Christian customers perceived less favorably than Muslim customers. Furthermore, their study showed that Muslim women had a better opinion regarding a pleasant and friendly attitude, attentive listening, and polite smile (i.e., kinesics) of hotel employees than Buddhist women did. Therefore, the awareness and analysis of customers' (from different religious backgrounds and genders) perceptions of hotel employees' nonverbal behaviors are critical in enhancing guest service experience and subsequent post-experience evaluations, such as word of mouth.

The importance of the moment of truth during service encounters in experience co-creation has not been highlighted in the S-D logic discussion. However, specifically in the hospitality sector, the notion is observed as an effective component that contributes to the customers' overall service experience, perception of service quality, and willingness to continue the relationship with establishments (Carlzon & Peters, 1989; Sparks & Callan, 1992). From the experience co-creation perspective, investigating the effective role of nonverbal behavior in triggering experience may develop the dimension of service encounters.

Employees are expected to display favorable nonverbal cues (i.e., welcoming gesture, nodding with a smile, and quick bodily response) toward customers at the right time and in the right sequence. Scholars believe that the absence of or failure to display favorable nonverbal cues by employees during the moment of truth may generate

difficulties (i.e., dissatisfaction and frustration) in establishing a further reciprocal long-term relationship in personal and organizational levels (Gabriel, Acosta, & Grandey, 2015; Lin & Lin, 2017). The importance of the appropriate display of nonverbal cues during the moment of truth may catalyze experience co-creation, and this important notion must be fully propagated in S-D logic. By contrast, individual interactions (i.e., service encounters) should be emphasized as a fundamental source of experience co-creation (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2018; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a) and should not be stricken by customers' negative word of mouth, irritation, frustration, and dissatisfaction (Díaz, Gómez, Martín-Consuegra, & Molina, 2017; Sparks & Callan, 1992).

The literature of nonverbal communication and co-creation indicates the importance of appropriate display of employees' nonverbal cues to influence guests' emotional engagement and experience co-creation (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). However, the literature in the stream of emotional labor, which is the management of feelings to create visible facial and bodily displays desired by an organization (Hochschild, 1983), suggests that employees' vulnerability to emotional burnout (e.g., exhaustion of nonverbal expressions—eye contact, smile, and facial expressions) may initiate guests' disengagement or emotional detachment in the process of experience co-creation (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Lusch & Vargo, 2014; Wu, 2017).

On the grounds that nonverbal communication is contagious (Verbeke, 1997), the adverse effect of employees' exhaustion of nonverbal expressions can extend to guests' emotional engagement and satisfaction (Landrum, Knight, & Flynn, 2012; Pugh 2001; Teoh, Wang, & Kwek, 2019). Given the lack of understanding on how to sustain nonverbal expressions in the workplace, employees may feel fatigued in their emotional

expressiveness, display a detached body language (e.g., disengagement or emotional detachment) toward customers, and finally undergo a low sense of efficacy at the workplace (Teoh, Wang, & Kwek, 2019). Thus, employees' burnout syndromes may regulate customers to feel angry, hostile, and detached toward the employees, which, in turn, can be related to low service perceptions, negative word of mouth, and may destroy co-creation potential (Lin & Lin, 2017; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Contrary to this, as an adverse emotional reaction, burnout creates a frustrating work atmosphere for employees. It can also be a key reason for emotional depletion, which promotes employees' absenteeism and turnover and reduces job performance (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). As a result, scholars have emphasized the importance of caring for employees' exhaustion of nonverbal expressions in an organization to promote customer relationship and engagement (Tepeci & Pala, 2016).

Leiter, Harvie, and Frizzell (1998) revealed that patients under the care of nurses who reported more exhaustion of nonverbal expressions and expressed an intention to leave had a lower amount of satisfaction and engagement with the care they encountered. Garman, Corrigan, and Morris (2002) explored team burnout among treatment employees at a psychosocial rehabilitation facility and established that higher emotional exhaustion was predictive of lower customer satisfaction. Therefore, the knowledge of displaying and sustaining nonverbal expressions systematically in a customer service-oriented business environment may relieve employees from emotional exhaustion. Petitta and Jiang (2020) indicated that a work environment free from emotional exhaustion contributes to reducing employees' turnover rate and service failure, which ultimately influences the mutual

wellbeing, engagement, and interaction experience in customer–employee dyads (Landrum, Knight, & Flynn, 2012; Wu, 2017).

Employees' deep acting, which is an attempt to display genuine nonverbal cues/expressions (Grandey, 2000), can expand the premises of guest engagement and can be useful for accomplishing experience co-creation. However, the premises of employees' surface acting (e.g., merely pretending to display instructed expressions; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1989) may increase their stress as a matter of displaying instructed expressions, which in turn, may create the destruction of co-creation potential (Cheung, Tang, & Tang, 2011). Surface acting, which is the display of discrepant expressions from felt emotions, is related to emotional exhaustion due to the internal pressure and the physiological effort of overturning genuine feelings (Tepeci & Pala, 2016). As a result, without understanding the consequence of frequent surface acting as opposed to deep acting may bring exhausted attitude to employees, in which the potential of guest–employee engagement and experience co-creation may not be shaped (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). By contrast, deep acting resolves the primary emotional dissimilarity resulting in an emotional state with the resemblance in felt and exhibited expressions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Wu, 2017) and may help shape the process of co-creation. Thus, the statement of service employees' vulnerability or liability, in terms of an increased risk of burnout, and competency to display genuine nonverbal expressions in guest–employee engagement and experience co-creation may contribute to the enhancement of operant resources in view of the S-D logic in hotels.

2.3.5 Nonverbal interaction and experience co-creation

Extensive research on the significant effect of nonverbal communication in customer–employee interactions (Gabbott & Hogg, 2001, 2000; Jung & Yoon, 2011; Sundaram & Webster, 2000) indicates the application of nonverbal communication as a contributory tool in experience co-creation on two major premises. The first premise is the visual and symbolic importance of experience co-creation in cognition, which is related to the psychological participation of customers in the co-creation process (Prebensen & Xie, 2017). Prebensen and Xie (2017) suggested that psychological co-creation is significant in enhancing customer experience. They found that psychological participation increases the probability of experiencing enhanced quality value in co-creation practice. They concluded that customers simply do not feel satisfied unless they participate psychologically in creating a certain type of value, such as economic, novelty, emotional, social, and knowledge value.

The second premise involves the essential service provider communication or interaction competencies or expertise, which is related to the operant resources for successful co-creation (Lusch & Vargo, 2014; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Lusch and Vargo (2014) and Vargo and Lusch (2004) verified that value co-creation is interactional, and the value co-created is idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual, and meaning-laden. Interactional value is initiated by operant resources. For example, the knowledge and operational performance of service providers (co-creator) can produce effects (Constantin & Lusch, 1994), such as communication or interaction skills and management skills.

In the co-creation literature, the importance of customers' psychological participation and operant resources has drawn considerable attention from scholars. According to Galvagno and Dalli (2014, p. 644), co-creation is “the joint, collaborative,

concurrent, peer-like process of producing value, both materially and symbolically,” which conceptualizes nonverbal behavior as an important construct in the co-creation process. In addition, research on nonverbal communication highlights the importance of symbolic value perception in interactive participation. The uniqueness of communication is intersected by symbolic value perception, which is effectively delivered in nonverbal forms, thereby allowing people to think and interpret their perceptions based on nonverbal cues or symbols (e.g., smiles, gestures, and posture) during face-to-face interactions (Hecht & Ambady, 1999). The performance of interaction is likewise meaningful and successful, provided that the interactants are positively involved on the basis of positive expressive cues (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Hatfield et al., 1992; Pugh, 2001; Verbeke, 1997).

On the basis of the insights and observations from the co-creation literature, the main aspects of experience or value co-creation are as follows: 1) value perception in an interactive situation (Vargo & Lusch, 2006); 2) cognitive participation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Keller & Bless, 2008; Prebensen & Xie, 2017); 3) hedonic, social, and personal benefits (Nambisan & Baron 2009); 4) emotional engagement (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a); and 5) emotional intelligence (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013). These aspects can be theoretically affected by the employees’ appropriate application of nonverbal behavior during customer interaction and engagement. Lusch et al. (2007) and Normann (2001) claimed that with the advent of new technologies, employees (operant resource) should find novel ways to be embedded in operand resources to sustain themselves. Lusch et al. (2007) also argued that “employees as operant resources become the primal source of innovation, organizational knowledge, and value” (p. 15).

The nonverbal knowledge and competencies of employees are essential in providing customers' consumption experiences (Gabbott & Hogg, 2001; Sundaram & Webster, 2000). Favorable or welcoming nonverbal cues (e.g., straight or sharp eye contact and a slight smile) from employees can stimulate customers' interest in further services or prepare them to respond positively to the next or upcoming service offer (Lim et al., 2016). Such guests or customers are aptly referred to in co-creation theory as active or engaging participants. Moreover, co-creation theorists (e.g., Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004c)) have confirmed that co-creation implies the consumers' active participation in the creation of their own experiences. From a holistic perspective, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000) argued that in the emergence of a new logic for value creation, customers' characterization as and transformation from a passive to an active audience has particular importance in value co-creation. Value is pushed in personalized experiences, such that "early experimenters are moving away from the old industry model that sees value as created from goods and services to a new model where value is created by experiences" (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004c, p. 172). Nonverbal cue experiences may exist for people as memories. Services in hospitality are comparatively expensive; thus, behavior involving positive nonverbal cues in different stages of service consumption allows guests to replace uncertain service perceptions with positive service expectations and perceive the environment as friendly and memorable.

The co-creation literature does not capture cognitive importance in customer–employee interaction. Nonverbal communication theories (e.g., Hatfield et al. (1993)) confirm the psychological attributes in bilateral interaction, which is affective and suitable for the perception of interactional value in terms of experience co-creation. As a persuasive

communication method, nonverbal communication involves a symbolic process in which interactants attempt to influence people into moderating their behavior or attitude by decoding or transmitting a message in a given environment (Blumer, 1962; Perloff, 2010). As such, communicational attributes can enrich an organization's operant resources.

2.4 Nonverbal communication: Definitions and effects

Nonverbal communication "is communication that transcends the written or spoken word. This encompasses a number of aspects of body language including facial expression, eye contact, posture, gesture and inter-personal distance. To these can be added a number of factors associated with speech itself, for example stress, loudness and intonation" (Gabbott & Hogg, 2000, p. 6). The behavior that occurs and indicates the cognitive orientation between people in interaction can also be called nonverbal behavior (Mandal, 2014). In an interactive situation, nonverbal behaviors include performance cues through body movements, artifactual cues through clothes, and grooming; contextual cues through time and space; and meditational cues through body signs as means of expression (Harrison, 1973). In the meta-analysis of Hall, Coats, and LeBeau (2005), nonverbal communication is observed as the content of "the face, head, eyes, hands, body, and voice; interpersonal distance and angle of orientation; and ability to express emotions through nonverbal cues" (p. 898).

This medium of communication is a widely acknowledged communication system and is importantly reviewed as an indispensable part of verbal communication (Koch, 1971; Nickson, Warhurst, & Dutton, 2005). Nonverbal communication can be simply defined as messages sent or received that are free from written and spoken words (Greene, Adelman, Friedmann, & Charon, 1994). It is a communication technique that can occur

through breathing, emotion, and feeling between players and what they intend to exchange (Ehrenwald, 1996).

Among human beings, nonverbal communication is present across all social and business settings. Nonverbal cue displays are deemed to be the power behind successful interaction (Ellyson & Dovidio, 1985). Nonverbal communication has also drawn important attention in different fields (e.g., psychology, anthropology, and marketing), in which interaction is a dominant factor for interpersonal wellbeing and value co-creation. The academic study of nonverbal communication began in 1872 with Charles Darwin. His seminal book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, emphasizes the facial expressions and bodily actions of humans and animals (Hess & Thibault, 2009). Darwin and Ekman (1998) defined nonverbal communication as "...expression in itself, or the language of emotions, as it has sometimes been called, is certainly of importance for the welfare of mankind... we may conclude that the philosophy of our subject... deserves still further attention, especially from any able physiologist" (p. 387). Nonverbal communication has gradually gained its own foundation of discussion in the psychology and psychotherapy literature, where it is often referred to as body language (Argyle, 1990; Delmonte, 1991; Ottenheimer, 2012).

Intended to be between people, message transmission occurs through nonverbal cues. Hall (1959) pointed out that communication is not as simple as it is assumed to be, and instead requires a complex process to transpire in human interaction with the goal of making it meaningful. Nonverbal cues help communication become meaningful and successful (Hargie & Dickson, 2004) because without the transmission of meaning, communication cannot fulfill what communicators intend to offer or deliver (Knapp &

Hall, 2007). Moreover, the complementary relationship between verbal and nonverbal communication is important; however, nonverbal communication is more influential than verbal communication (Ekman & Friesen, 1972). Birdwhistell (1952) revealed that 65% of human communication is nonverbal (his theory is called kinesics, which is related to body movements and facial expressions), whereas the remaining 35% is verbal. Mehrabian (1971) reported the percentage of human communication to be 55% physical movements, 38% vocal behavior, and 7% verbal. Furthermore, Argyle (1990) confirmed that human attitudes, obedience, or superiority can be exposed 4.3 times higher through nonverbal communication than through verbal communication.

Verbal communication is less effective if nonverbal communication does not act in accordance with conscious and unconscious states of mind. Nonverbal communication is an involuntary input during message exchange, whether occurring in person or electronically (Knapp, Hall, & Horgan, 2013; Perry, 2002). The emotional input, attitudinal cues, and ways of thinking of individuals are displayed through nonverbal communication (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, 2016).

2.4.1 Types of nonverbal communication

Conceptually, nonverbal communication is categorized into four essential groups, namely, kinesics, physical appearance, paralanguage, and proxemics (Jung & Yoon, 2011). Kinesics entails a person's facial expressions and body movements (Mehrabian & Williams, 1969). Physical appearance represents specific information regarding a person's attitude and social assessment (Sundaram & Webster, 2000). Paralanguage consists of cues or messages transmitted vocally. Proxemics corresponds to the spatial relationship expressed in distance behavior (Yuksel, 2008).

In organizational settings, including those in hospitality, face-to-face interactions are common, in which nonverbal communication is constant. Given the quick pace of communication between interactants, nonverbal cues are displayed intentionally and unintentionally (Gabbott & Hogg, 2000). Other aspects of nonverbal communication include emotional attributes, such as happiness, joy, and worry (Antonakis, Fenley, & Liechti, 2011). Studies in several disciplines, such as banking (e.g., Elizur (1987)), sociology (e.g., Palmer and Simmons (1995)), marketing (e.g., Sundaram and Webster (2000)), hospitality (e.g., Jung and Yoon (2011)), clinical psychology (e.g., Argyle, Salter, Nicholson, Williams, and Burgess (1970)) and law (e.g., Burnett and Badzinski (2005)), have revealed the effectiveness of nonverbal cue displays in interactions. Among other nonverbal components (i.e., physical appearance, paralanguage, and proxemics), kinesics has been given particular importance in such studies because it covers the most effective nonverbal cues in human interactions (e.g., body posture, eye contact, and smiling). Sundaram and Webster (2000) claimed, “In particular, body orientation (e.g., relaxed, open posture), eye contact, nodding, hand shaking, and smiling are all powerful nonverbal signals in interpersonal interactions” (p. 381). Kinesics is adopted in the present work to explore its role in experience co-creation.

2.4.2 Kinesics

The contribution of kinesics, which Birdwhistell (1952, 1970) termed “bodily communication” or simply “body language,” is important in customer–employee interactions in the hospitality setting (Jung & Yoon, 2011). It constitutes the most sophisticated and noticeable cues in nonverbal behavior (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). In addition, kinesics can be emotionally charged and can facilitate the exchange of emotions

(Yuksel, 2008). Its cues, such as facial expressions (e.g., eye contact, smiling, and nodding) and body movements (e.g., handshaking, gestures, and body orientation), complement social and perceptual messages or experiences between people during an interaction.

Given the importance of kinesics in interactions as evident in the literature (e.g., Yuksel (2008) and Jung and Yoon (2011)), the current study specifically sets out to explore the contribution of kinesics in experience co-creation. The role of kinesic cues, such as eye contact, smiling, and other cues from bodily actions, in interactive situations in different disciplines, including those in service management and marketing, is reviewed below.

Eye contact and smiling have received considerable attention in previous studies. Elizur (1987) utilized an observation method and demonstrated that customers in a bank setting are impressed by pleasant and friendly eye contact and smiles. In a family restaurant, Jung and Yoon (2011) found through structural equation modeling that eye contact and smiling have positive effects on guests' emotion and thus on guest satisfaction. For influencing perception and interpersonal relationships, the literature shows that eye contact is particularly important in the service sector. People repeatedly look each other in the eye during social, official, and service interactions, although only for short periods of time. In an experimental study, people were assumed to mostly look each other in the eye mutually when they listen to one another, making glances every 3–10 seconds. Glances lasting longer than this provoke uncertainty and anxiety. With decreased eye contact, people disconnect from communication (Argyle & Dean, 1965).

Beyond the above descriptions, eye contact is reported as the most influential form of reciprocity in the entire sphere of human relationships (Simmel, 1921; Vannini, Waskul, & Gottschalk, 2013). Previous research in the banking sector (e.g., Elizur (1987)) has

revealed that making frequent eye contact with customers affects customer satisfaction because it is linked with increased trustworthiness and friendliness. Decoding eye contact in service presentations and customer reception is always beneficial (Sommers, Greeno, & Boag, 1989). Eye contact between service employees and customers obligates both parties to connect themselves to the occurring service sequences (Argyle & Dean, 1965). Furthermore, some scholars have ascribed eye contact with a smile. For example, a study in clinical psychology (i.e., an experiment on college students) revealed that eye contact and smiling are two nonverbal cues that arouse warmth in communicators (Argyle et al., 1970). In the health sector, research has shown that patients become cheerful when physicians and nurses make eye contact and smile (Bayes, 1972). In the case of child patients, when physicians and nurses do not make eye contact with a smile, children are reluctant to become close to them. In the hospitality industry, greetings are mandatory, along with all other social skills. Without eye contact and smile, greetings and social skills may be less effective with customers (Hemsley & Doob, 1978).

In view of smile, the extant literature has considered it as an effective kinesic courtesy in dyadic interactions (Mackey, 1976). For example, in an exploration of different nonverbal cues, smiling people were found to be proactive in reciprocal relationships (Hall & Matsumoto, 2004). Gladstone and Parker (2002) showed that smiling people are perceived more positively than those who are not smiling. Smiles may make memories between communicators, such as smile is helpful as intimating affinity to be friendly in a social milieu (Van, 1972). Similarly, in genetic psychology, a smile seems to indicate a willingness to engage the counterpart in the social interaction and gives a signal of nonhostility. Whenever this particular signal is displayed, interactants tend to reciprocate

and imply a signal of conviviality (e.g., an interactant smiles at the counterpart's smile; Mackey, 1976). In the research of children's nonverbal behavior, Buck (1975) conceptualized smile as indicating relative dominance or submission; for example, submissive individuals smile more, whereas dominant individuals smile less. In marketing management, service with a smile affects customers' attitudes and behaviors. A service person's smile directly affects the cognitive appraisals of customers' behaviors (e.g., perceived service quality or fulfilled expectations; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). In the perspective of organizational behavior, Grandey et al. (2005) suggested that authentic smiles (i.e., Duchenne smile—engages the muscles around the mouth and eyes) lead to the positive internal attributions of service people, whereas inauthentic smiles deteriorate such attributions.

In addition to eye contact and smiling, kinesic cues, such as nodding, open/closed body posture, finger/hand pointing, or gesturing, also play important roles in the favorable perception of customers toward service quality (Islam & Kirillova, 2017). The salient characteristics of nonverbal communication are those of cues that are played together consciously or unconsciously. For example, facial expressions and nodding are displayed together in service inquiries to indicate “yes” or “no.” The literature on kinesics in different domains, including the healthcare sector, has revealed that kinesics can transmit emotions among people during interactions. In their study on the dyadic interactions between a mother and her cancer-stricken child, Dunn et al. (2010) demonstrated that hand holding transmits the emotion of hope, whereas frowning expresses the emotion of sadness. In their study on the kinesics of caregivers in Slovenian nursing homes, Zaletel et al. (2012) found nodding to be interpreted as approval, friendliness, and concern, whereas looking around

signals concern for the elderly patients' security in hospitals. They also uncovered interpretations of "hand gestures/trunk movements, caregivers by far most frequently communicated by moving the upper part of the body forward, followed by touching the hands, opening gestures, circular gestures, caressing, touching the shoulder, and patting the partner" (p. 99) as "positive attitude, implying kindness, sympathy, and acceptance of the discourse partner" (p. 99).

As the frontline employees' specialty in the service setting, kinesics has received significant attention in the literature. The kinesics of such staff affects customer service and care. Kinesic behavior effectively expresses one's emotions, which can help relieve customers' unease and concern (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremler, 2006). Customers tend to instinctively assess the service people's attitudes and their surroundings through their facial expressions and a quick observation of their overall behavior (Wilis & Todorov, 2006).

In addition, the kinesic cues of frontline staff, such as their eye contact, posture, and handshaking, are significant measuring signs for positive or negative judgment, upon which the subsequent relationship is framed (Menguc et al., 2017; Pounders, Barry, & Close, 2015). Frontline employees' kinesics behavior is critical because on the basis of their service contexts, they are the first to meet customers, and their interactions with them are brief. Hence, building service quality during the first impression is a challenge (Lim et al., 2016; Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990).

Generally, expressive emotions or emotional expressions are mainly symbolized in kinesic cues (e.g., facial expressions and body orientation). The kinesic skills of service employees constitute a prerequisite in service encounters. Bodily actions (kinesics) are

vital for engaging in successful mutual (customer–employee) interaction (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). The extant literature is still insufficient to contribute in developing effective bilateral face-to-face interaction. Thus far, nonverbal communication evolves with the same focus on its importance in interaction, which is invaluable but hinders new and unexplored insights, such as identifying the messages of engagement interest from cue exchange in interactions. In a sense, the experience dimensions of nonverbal communication remain unexplored. The present study may bring effective managerial implication through the investigation of essential kinesic cues that can moderate customer experience. In the hotel context, appropriate methods of facial expressions and body movements of frontline employees, which are yet to be empirically identified, may serve customers as preservice technique toward providing a customer service experience. For example, customers' favorable attitude judgement from employees' favorable facial expressions may work as a preservice apparatus toward perceiving service quality.

2.5 Nonverbal communication theories

Several theories help in understanding the role of nonverbal communication in effective interactions, including 1) Emotional contagion theory (ECT), 2) Affiliative conflict theory (ACT), and 3) Uncertainty reduction theory (URT). The subsequent sections review these theories in detail.

2.5.1 Emotional contagion theory

Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson (1994) proposed the ECT. Their postulation is based on the premise that nonverbal expression can evoke emotions in others, which are similar to the emotions displayed by the senders (Darwin & Ekman, 1998). They later

added further arguments to this emotional process. In their seminal paper (Hatfield et al., 1993), before discovering a deeper proposition on primitive emotional contagion (Hatfield et al., 1992), they described emotion as “emotional packages [comprising] many components—including conscious awareness; facial, vocal, and postural expression; neurophysiological and autonomic nervous system (ANS) activity; and instrumental behaviors (Fischer, Shaver, & Carnochan, 1992). Because the brain integrates the emotional information it receives, each of the emotional components acts on and is acted upon by the others” (Hatfield et al., 1993, p. 96). Figure 2.1 presents the emotional contagion process. In this figure, the arrows represent the contagion process between nonverbal cues’ sender and receiver (i.e., two individuals) that the phenomenon of having sender’ emotions/related nonverbal behavior triggers similar emotions/nonverbal behaviors (responses) in the receiver. In Figure 2.1, two interactants, such as nonverbal cues’ receiver and sender evoke similar expressiveness (i.e., similar cues display) to each other through neurophysiological and ANS activities. ANS explains that neurophysiological contagion promotes emotional synchrony between the sender and the receiver through the conscious or unconscious induction of similar states of emotional and behavioral attitudes; such states include automatic mimicry and synchronization of receiver’ expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of sender.

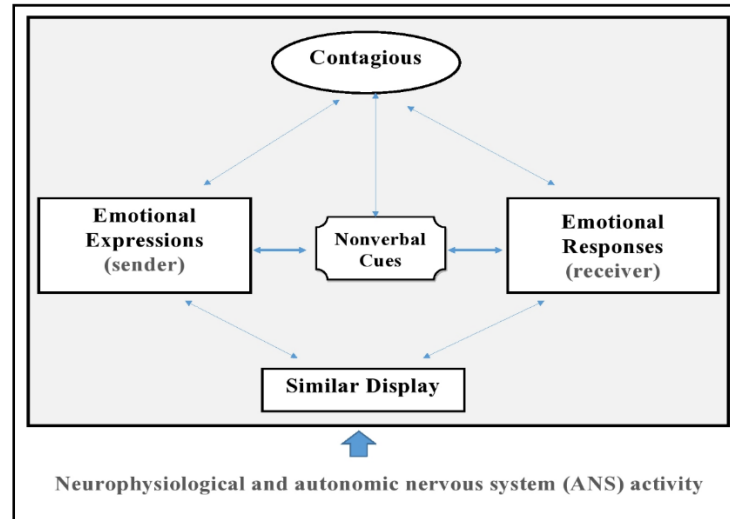


Figure 2.1 Emotional contagion theory

Source: Adapted from Darwin and Ekman (1998), Hatfield et al. (1994), Fischer et al. (1992), and Schoenewolf (1990)

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2006) examined the effects of employee emotions on customers’ assessments of service encounters according to ECT. Through a survey, they found that the authenticity of employees’ emotional expressions directly affects customers’ emotional states. They concluded that employees’ emotions influence customers’ outcomes that are of interest to marketers. Hatfield et al. (1992) proposed emotional contagion as “the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronize expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another person's and, consequently, to converge emotionally” (p. 153–154). Schoenewolf (1990) simply addressed this as the flow of emotions from one person to another, such that the emotion of the sender is similarly conveyed by the receiver.

Pugh (2001) and Verbeke (1997) advanced ECT in the context of service interaction. They proposed that emotional contagion creates bubbles of emotions from service staff to customers. They also stated that ECT is useful to understand

communicational aspects, namely, interpersonal communication. In service encounters, face-to-face customer–employee interaction significantly informs emotional contagion. More precisely, ECT is predominantly valuable in the case of the emotional responses of customers toward the display of nonverbal attributes by service employees. Pugh (2001) conducted a study in the banking sector on servicing with a smile. He found that customers' positive emotions are related to employees' positive emotional displays, leading customers to positively evaluate service quality. Verbeke (1997) confirmed that salespersons' ability to infect others with their emotions constitutes a resource. Appropriate emotional display from salespersons is also a sensitive issue because it can either be a resource for improved performance or a liability in terms of an increased risk of burnout. The studies of Pugh (2001) and Verbeke (1997) depended on the emotional contagion hypothesis proposed by Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson (1994) in a sales context, that is, how facial cues affect mutual emotion transmission during interactions and the outcome of such interactions between service staff and customers. On the basis of this hypothesis, Pugh (2001) and Verbeke (1997) concluded that nonverbal communication is emotionally contagious.

Dimberg, Thunberg, and Elmehed (2000) used a backward-masking technique and found that positive and negative emotional responses are deduced subconsciously according to facial expressions during face-to-face interactions. Hess and Blairy (2001) examined emotional contagion in response to facial expressions of emotions similar to those encountered in everyday life and mimicry, such as happiness, anger, disgust, and sadness. They investigated whether mimicry leads to emotional contagion and thus transmits emotion. In the mimicry situation, all expressions were found to be contagious, whereas in everyday life, sadness and happiness were revealed as contagious. Facial

mimicry reactions when participants were exposed to pictures of angry or happy faces showed significant imitative reactions (as represented by electromyographic activity) that were demonstrated quickly and occurred naturally and automatically (Sonnby-Borgström, Jönsson, & Svensson, 2003). By using video-based stimuli, Du, Fan, and Feng (2011) found that high levels of employees' negative and positive emotional displays increase and decrease customers' negative emotions, respectively, through the process of emotional contagion during service failure and service recovery.

By evaluating the shopping experience of customers, Kim, Ju, and Johnson (2009) explored the relationship between salespersons' appearance and customers' emotions, store image, and purchases in the case of shopping for garments, shoes, or other accessories in department stores. Their questionnaire data revealed that customers are influenced by salespersons' appearance cues (e.g., hair, accessories, color, and clothing). On the basis of these cues or expressions (comfortable or uncomfortable), customers' responses are reflected in their emotions, store image, and purchases.

Lin and Lin (2011) and Yuksel (2008) studied how the nonverbal communication of service people can drive and direct customers' emotions to perceive service quality. Yuksel (2008) reported that the favorable eye contact and body movements of service employees influence customers to perceive positive emotions and favorably perceive employees. The study also found that customers evaluate employees' positive nonverbal cues as feelings of trustworthiness, competency, transference, and courtesy. Lin and Lin (2011) claimed that the emotions of customers depend on the affective delivery of service people during service encounters.

Some studies on nonverbal communication have been conducted in relation to customer satisfaction. Jung and Yoon (2011) and Söderlund and Rosengren (2008) noted that the nonverbal communication of employees influences customer satisfaction but is preceded by an emotional orientation experienced by customers. Jung and Yoon (2011) found that employees' kinesics and proxemics play significant roles in determining customers' positive emotions. They also reported that customer satisfaction is determined based on the customers' positive and negative emotions evoked by service employees' nonverbal cues. Moreover, smiling service employees can produce more customer satisfaction than their nonsmiling counterparts, regardless of the gender of customers and employees (Söderlund & Rosengren, 2008). The aforementioned studies indicated the moderating role of nonverbal communication in service quality and customer satisfaction. However, they placed minimal attention on the nuanced and generic feelings over nonverbal cues during service encounters from customer–employee dyads, thereby increasing the need for the current study. Essentially, the existing literature requires a comprehensive theoretical framework of nonverbal communication for contributing to customer–employee relationship and engagement in hospitality management.

2.5.2 Affiliative conflict theory

ACT, also referred to as equilibrium theory, was introduced by Argyle and Dean (1965) in the article *Eye Contact, Distance and Affiliation*. The theory is based on the characteristics of interactants, which are self-managed to balance intimacy through nonverbal cues. Coutts (1975) and Burgoon (1995) later advanced ACT to suit interpersonal performance, visual behavior, and interpersonal distance in social skills and psychology, where interactions are influenced by nonverbal cues.

ACT postulates that during social interaction, specifically in nonverbal interactions, people try to balance their communication to maintain a comfortable relationship. ACT suggests that individuals or interactants consciously maintain and thus establish a comfortable intimacy equilibrium for each interaction. The overall amount of intimacy remains similar if interactants are comfortable in their nonverbal cue displays. If one interactant increases or decreases the intimacy expressed in cues, then the other interactant will do the same. The amount of dyadic intimacy is also changed or monitored by interactants to restore equilibrium with a self-presumed response. For example, Figure 2.2 explicitly shows the affiliation process in a face-to-face nonverbal interaction. Across the arrows, two individuals (i.e., sender and receiver) are shown; to affiliate to each other, they compete for needs or desires to balance intimacy by tending to display similar cues. Arrows from the sender and the receiver shown in lines toward Balancing Intimacy in Figure 2.2 demonstrate that in developing a relationship, individuals negotiate and try to balance out their behavioral acts to maintain a comfortable level of intimacy during a face-to-face nonverbal interaction. In short, interactants (i.e., receiver/sender) with a moderate need of affiliation tends to be intimate with the counterparts (i.e., sender/receiver) by restoring equilibrium with self-presumed response/cues.

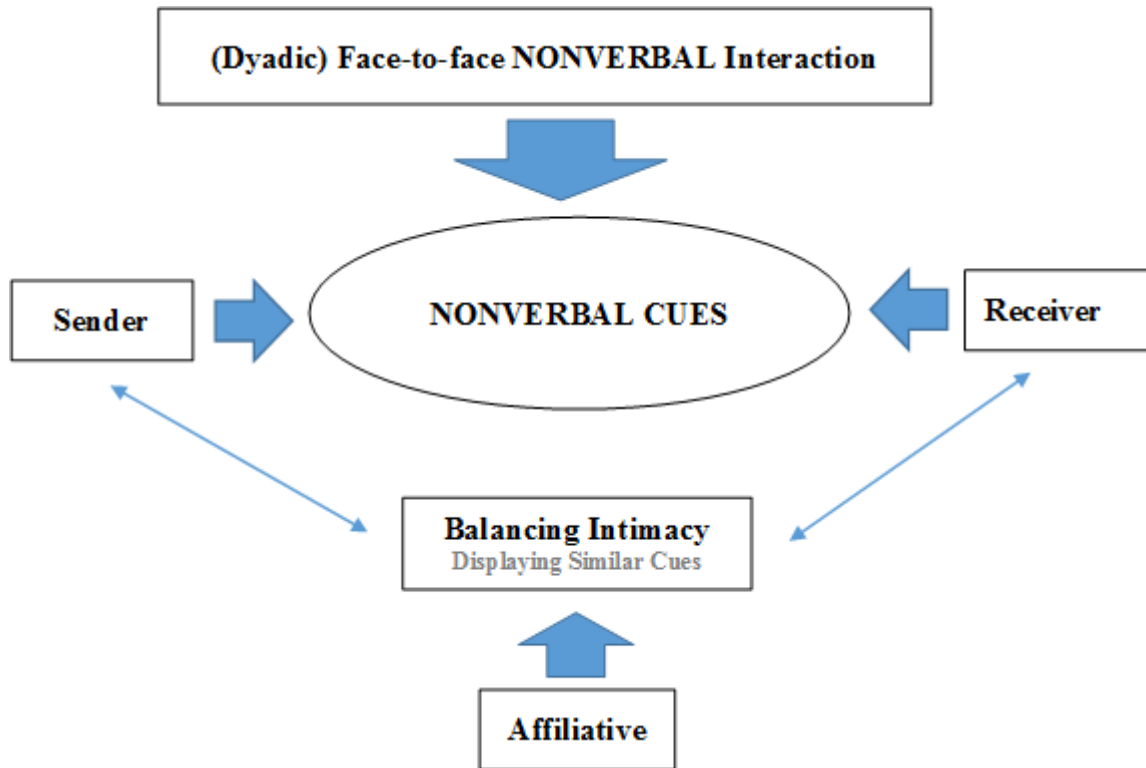


Figure 2.2 Affiliative conflict theory

Source: Adapted from Argyle and Dean (1965)

ACT has been applied in many social science domains, such as sociometry (the study of interpersonal relationships), personality and social psychology, and communication. Ghitulescu (2018) demonstrated that individuals' proactive and collaborative behaviors positively affect affiliative outcomes, such as employees' work experience and success, motivation, and retention. The study further revealed that collaborative behavior complements proactive behavior. Hence, the process enhances the effect of proactivity on satisfaction and consequently decreases its effect on conflict. On the basis of various videotaped conversational segments of a male–female dyad, Burgoon et al. (1984) verified that high levels of eye contact, close proximity, and smiling convey less emotional arousal but greater composure. They also proved that high levels of eye contact and close proximity create dominance and control between the interactants. Coutts

and Schneider (1976) established the notion that approach and avoidance forces motivate the display of immediacy behavior in social interaction. They found that friends engage in more individual and mutual gazes than strangers do. Friends also spend longer times smiling, whereas strangers gaze less frequently and smile briefly.

In sum, ACT represents a balance between the interactants' approach tendencies, such as gratification of affiliative needs, and avoidance tendencies, such as fear of being rejected. This adjustment serves to maintain the intimacy equilibrium (Coutts, Schneider, & Montgomery, 1980). This premise of ACT describes the bilateral need for co-creating memorable experiences between interactants (customer–employee) that will be helpful for rapport building and for promoting human and customer capital within the milieu of business organizations.

2.5.3 Uncertainty reduction theory

On the basis of the information theory postulated by Shannon and Weaver (1999), uncertainties exist during the initial interaction between people, especially when the probability for alternatives in a given situation is high; thus, the probability of uncertainties occurring becomes equally high. The reduction of uncertainty is related to the number of limited alternatives (West & Turner, 2010). Berger and Calabrese (1975) later modified and developed this theory as URT, which first appeared in *Some Exploration in Initial Interaction and Beyond: Toward a Developmental Theory of Communication*. URT was further advanced by Berger and Gudykunst (1991) and Berger and Bradac (1982). It remains the only theory in communication domains that explicitly focuses on the initial interaction between interactants before the actual communication process (West & Turner, 2010).

URT contends that interactants, when interacting, need information or clues about the other interactants to minimize or reduce their uncertainty. URT conceptualizes uncertainty in relation to the quantity and probability of outcomes that can occur in a given situation (Berger & Bradac, 1982). On the basis of the central tenet of URT, two types of uncertainty emerge during mutual interaction stages. Cognitive uncertainty occurs when the interactants are uncertain about their own and their counterparts' attitudes. Conversely, behavioral uncertainty occurs when the interactants are uncertain in their prediction and justification of their own and their counterparts' actions. Mutual information helps interactants anticipate each other's behavior, which is necessary in the development of reciprocal relationship. However, URT developers Berger and Calabrese (1975) and Berger and Gudykunst (1991) found that in a first-time meeting, individuals are motivated to minimize or reduce their uncertainty about their personal behavior and their counterparts' behavior. URT posits that interactants experience uncertainty on two grounds: first, as part of the proactive process of forecasting future behavior or what may be the next meeting; and second, as the retroactive process of justifying their already demonstrated behavior.

The applicability of nonverbal communication to URT is evident. The theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Berger & Gudykunst, 1991) is built on several axioms and theorems (Table 2.1), many of which are applicable to nonverbal communication. Axiom 2 claims, "As nonverbal affiliative expressiveness increases, uncertainty levels will decrease in an initial interaction situation. In addition, decreases in uncertainty level will cause increases in nonverbal affiliative expressiveness" (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 103). An instance from this study setting can be applicable, given that the positive or

welcoming facial expressions of a service employee (sender) can decrease the uncertainty in the given interactive situation from the customer's (receiver's) end. Furthermore, Axiom 4 argues that "High levels of uncertainty in a relationship cause decreases in the intimacy level of communication content. Low levels of uncertainty produce high levels of intimacy," and Axiom 5 asserts that "High levels of uncertainty produce high rates of reciprocity. Low levels of uncertainty produce low reciprocity rates" (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 103, 105). Both axioms suit the experience co-creation paradigm built on the nonverbal cue exchange between people. With respect to its theoretical contribution, the URT assertion in co-creation may academically contribute to hospitality and marketing domains. Figure 2.3 depicts URT as adapted to give importance to the level of uncertainty associated with the cognition. The arrows in the middle of the diagram indicate that the interactants' affiliative expressiveness is inversely related. They illustrate that affiliative expressiveness determines the decrease and increase of uncertainty between interactants. The diagram concerns the interactants' inclination of nonverbal affiliative expressiveness in the opposite direction. Figure 2.3 further clarifies that in an initial interaction, if nonverbal affiliative expressiveness increases, then uncertainty levels decrease. Conversely, if nonverbal affiliative expressiveness decreases, then uncertainty levels increase.

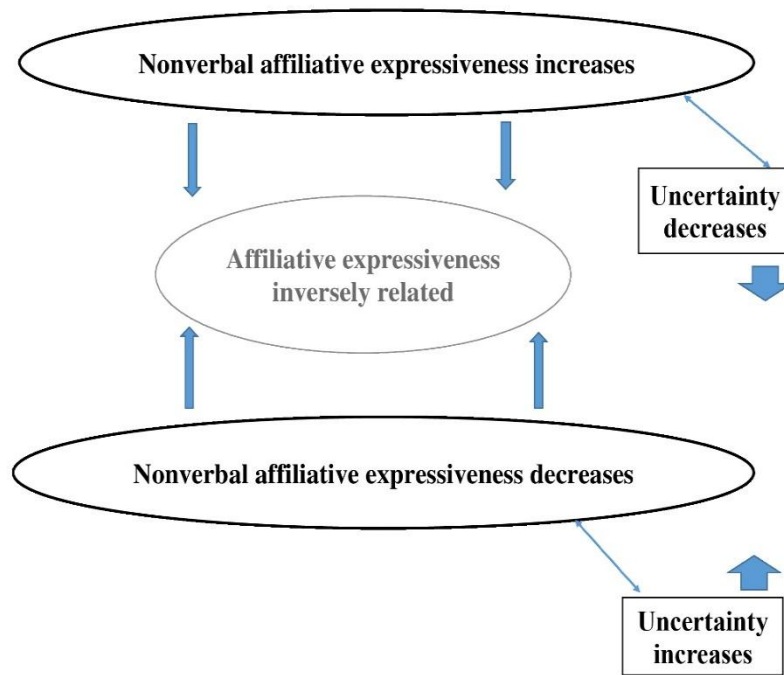


Figure 2.3 Uncertainty reduction theory

Source: Adapted from Berger and Calabrese (1975)

Selected theories of URT are as follows: “Theorem 7: The nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and intimacy level of communication content are positively related. Theorem 8: Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and information seeking are inversely related. Theorem 9: Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and reciprocity rate are inversely related. Theorem 10: Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and liking are positively related. Theorem 11: Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and similarity are positively related” (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 108). These theorems lay the foundation for the significant application of nonverbal communication in the co-creation paradigm. For example, nonverbal affiliative expressiveness between interactants (i.e., guests and employees)

positively affects their reciprocity, which is relational and can cognitively result in experience co-creation.

URT has been applied in different academic fields, such as information technology and communication. The effectiveness of URT in face-to-face interaction-based experience co-creation is evident in extant research. For example, Chang, Fang, and Huang (2015) revealed that uncertainty reduction influences value perception in online consumer reviews. They observed that argument quality, confirmation of prior beliefs, and source credibility reduces the uncertainty of consumers toward businesses. In a survey study, Parks and Adelman (1983) demonstrated that frequent interactions reduce uncertainty between interactants and put them at ease. Another study found that communication competency and responsiveness help interactants reduce uncertainty and result in communication satisfaction (Neuliep & Grohskopf, 2000).

Table 2.1 Axioms and theorems of uncertain reduction theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 103)

No.	Axioms	No.	Theorems
1	Given the high level of uncertainty present at the onset of the entry phase, as the amount of verbal communication between strangers increases, the level of uncertainty decreases. As uncertainty is further reduced, the amount of verbal communication increases.	1	The amounts of verbal communication and nonverbal affiliative expressiveness are positively related.
2	As nonverbal affiliative expressiveness increases, uncertainty levels decrease in an initial interaction situation. In addition, decreases in uncertainty levels cause increases in nonverbal affiliative expressiveness.	2	The amounts of communication and intimacy level of communication content are positively related.
3	High levels of uncertainty in a relationship cause decreases in the intimacy level of communication content. Low levels of uncertainty produce high levels of intimacy (of communication content).	3	The amounts of communication and information-seeking behavior are inversely related.
4	High levels of uncertainty produce high rates of reciprocity. Low levels of uncertainty produce low rates of reciprocity.	4	The amounts of communication and reciprocity rate are inversely related.
5	Similarities between persons reduce uncertainty, whereas dissimilarities increase uncertainty.	5	The amounts of communication and liking are positively related
6	Increases in uncertainty levels produce decreases in liking, whereas decreases in uncertainty levels produce increases in liking.	6	The amounts of communication and similarity are positively related.
		7	Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and intimacy level of communication content are positively related.
		8	Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and information-seeking are inversely related.
		9	Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and reciprocity rate are inversely related.
		10	Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and liking are positively related.
		11	Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and similarity are positively related.
		12	Intimacy level of communication content and information-seeking are inversely related.
		13	Intimacy level of communication content and reciprocity rate are inversely related.
		14	Intimacy level of communication content and liking are positively related.
		15	Intimacy level of communication content and similarity are positively related.
		16	Information-seeking and reciprocity rate are positively related.
		17	Information-seeking and liking are negatively related.
		18	Information-seeking and similarity are negatively related.
		19	Reciprocity rate and liking are negatively related.
		20	Reciprocity rate and similarity are negatively related.
		21	Similarity and liking are positively related.

Specifically, URT's axioms (e.g., 2, 4, and 5) and theorems (e.g., 8–11) possess the attributes of cognitive significance of interactive engagement. They indicate that the interpretation of nonverbal expressiveness between interactants influences communication quality. The amount of positive and similar expressive cues, the amount of relationship certainty and uncertainty, and the probability of further interactive engagement are determined. They also drive interactants toward communication satisfaction and reciprocity when those characteristics are co-created equally and cognitively between interactants, thereby resulting in a dramatic increase in interactive engagement.

In sum, action words, such as “co-create,” “communicate,” and “interact,” require collaboration between people for their meaningful implication. As a theoretical construct, the leading word “communication” enables emotion, affiliation, and certainty to function well in co-creating experience. Transmissible, affiliative, and cognitive nonverbal cues warrant experiences in interaction as acknowledged by ECT, ACT, and URT, respectively, and by analyses. Methods of cue display between interactants can be critically reviewed in the above proposed theories on co-creating experience, which can explore the new perspective of the co-creation literature in the marketing and hospitality fields.

2.6 Conceptual framework

The following framework is presented based on a comprehensive literature review on the topics of nonverbal communication, experience co-creation, and related theories. The framework consists of the study insights and concepts, such as face-to-face dyadic nonverbal communication between an employee and a customer as a medium of experience co-creation. The framework explicitly illustrates that experiences from the exchange of nonverbal cues can be co-created in customer–employee dyads by the underlying function

of a set of nonverbal cues' characteristics, namely, affective, affiliative, and cognitive, adapted from ECT, ACT, and URT, respectively (Argyle & Dean, 1965; Hatfield et al., 1993; Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Figure 2.4 presents the conceptual framework.

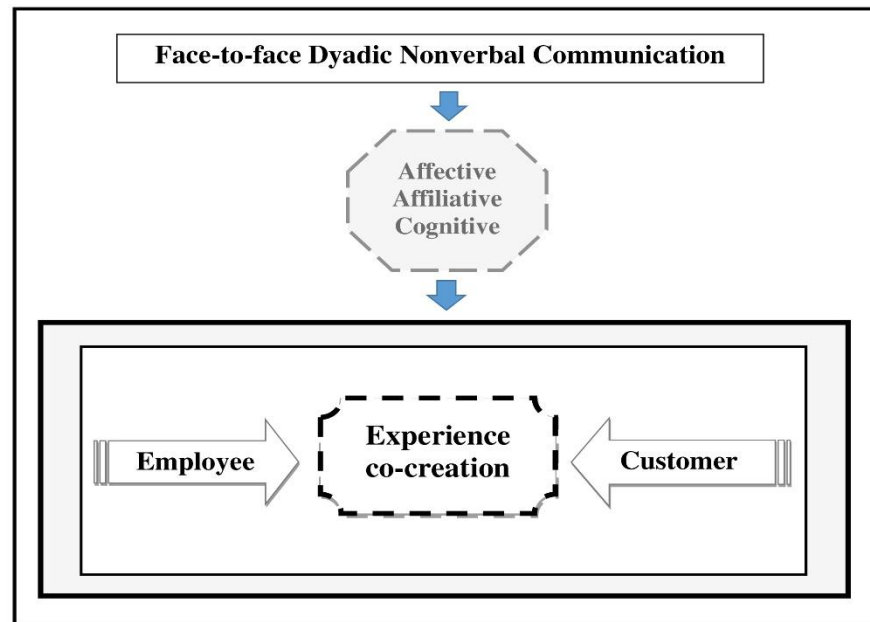


Figure 2.4 Conceptual framework

The framework reiterates the built-in theoretical underpinning of nonverbal communication and its innate nature of co-creation. Thus, as a unit of analysis, nonverbal interaction in customer–employee dyads can be advantageous as a medium of experience co-creation in service-oriented organizations, including those in hospitality.

The framework indicates that successful nonverbal interactions between employees and consumers can result in experience co-creation and stresses the integration of nonverbal interaction doctrines with operant resources (i.e., employees' communication expertise and knowledge) to systematize the continuum co-creation practice. The conceptual framework further suggests that the adapted traits of nonverbal communication (i.e., affective, affiliative, and cognitive constructs) demonstrate the innate function in

triggering mutual experiences between individuals. Moreover, the framework implies that nonverbal interaction competencies (i.e., operant resources) among service employees may contribute to consumer experience and heighten the level of customer–employee long-term relationship and rapport.

The adapted characteristics of nonverbal cues that play moderating roles in face-to-face interaction-based experience co-creation are described as follows.

2.6.1 Affective

Nonverbal communication evokes emotions between communicators. The sender and receiver (i.e., two communicators or interactants) mutually exchange or react to each other's intended messages through expressive emotions, such as facial expressions and gestures (Darwin & Ekman, 1998; Hatfield et al., 1992). Theoretically, this process occurs affectively; hence, it has been meaningfully examined in successful face-to-face interactions in interpersonal relationships, such as those involving doctor–patient, child–mother, and referee–player dyads, and in this case, the customer–employee dyad as the unit of analysis (Pugh, 2001; Verbeke, 1997). Defects in cue display have negative effects on the service process, with service failure arising from improper nonverbal interaction. Bodily interactions, called kinesics, are an essential moderator of expressive emotions, with which the interactants' messages are transmitted to each other (Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1989; Griffin, 2009). Verbal communication cannot be meaningfully prompted without proper emotional expressions systematized from bodily actions, such as eye contact and welcoming face and hand orientations. Jointly attempting to achieve meaningful service and high service quality by decoding cues may evoke value perception

in the construction of memorable service consumption experience (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000; Jiang, Hoegg, Dahl, & Chattopadhyay, 2010).

2.6.2 Affiliative

Nonverbal cue responses connect interactants by checking and balancing cues' projection during dyadic interactions. Interactants may not always display the necessary cues; this situation creates a vacuum in the interaction or urges them to compensate by projecting further cues to maintain intimacy (Argyle & Dean, 1965). Interactants (i.e., senders and receivers of cues) remain mutually alert and intuitively careful to adjust responses (e.g., change, increase, or add cues) to maintain the intimacy equilibrium. The nature of compensatory adjustments in cue/response exchange can be useful for guest–employee interaction because both interactants desire communication satisfaction, better service transaction, service quality, and company compliments and appraisal (Burgoon, 1995; Coutts, 1975). The affiliation of the cue displayers (i.e., customer and employee) in a given interactive environment may create rapport, positive emotion, and engagement and thus induce experience co-creation (Ghitulescu, 2018; Prebensen & Xie, 2017).

2.6.3 Cognitive

Before seeking information on design certainty and uncertainty in an interactive situation, the positive nonverbal expressiveness of a sender decreases the receiver's uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). The affiliative nonverbal expressiveness of communicators shapes the positive information that helps them anticipate each other's behavior, which contributes to reciprocal relationship development; thus, the affiliative nonverbal expressiveness of interactants is important in an initial interaction situation (Berger & Bradac, 1982; Berger & Gudykunst, 1991). From the experience co-creation

perspective, the interactants' mutual cognitive certainty or cognitive evaluation is conducive to the co-creation process. The cognitive certainty process can monitor mutual attitudes and make the interactants equally comfortable (Berger & Gudykunst, 1991; Chang, Fang, & Huang, 2015). Furthermore, in experience co-creation from the guest–employee engagement perspective, affiliative expressiveness and cue similarity increase the intimacy and reciprocity between interactants (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Neuliep & Grohskopf, 2000).

The conceptual framework used here serves as a summarized and systematic representation of the conceptual insights of this study. This study should not be assumed as having purposes similar to those of conventional hypothesis-based research, which identifies variables for investigation and the hypothesized relationships between those variables. The conceptual framework of the current study is based on research objectives that project insights that belong to a wider body of knowledge. This approach helps reveal the need to situate the research within the context of theory and the literature.

The purposes of and reasons for the conceptual framework of the study can be discussed in several ways. This framework demonstrates the study's concepts, such as nonverbal communication, dyadic interaction, and experience co-creation, along with presenting ideas on the concepts that this work seeks to investigate. The framework can also be used as a lens and can help researchers understand how the study is posited systematically. In sum, given that no research is isolated, the conceptual framework of the study may help researchers remain accessible across the study. This work outlines discipline-specific and inherent characteristics, which is an extremely effective approach for successful social science research.

2.7 Concluding remarks

The material reported above explored nonverbal communication in hotels as a medium of experience co-creation. First, it reviewed the nonverbal communication in consumer experience, followed by the conceptualization of experience as required for the study (e.g., the framework of nonverbal cues' experience during guests' and employees' face-to-face interactions in hotels). It also depicted that the existing hospitality literature on service employees' communication competencies showed a lack of comprehensive understanding of nonverbal communication as a skillset together with verbal ones. The experiential characteristics of nonverbal cues and their innate influence on the quality of dyadic interactions were not empirically investigated in previous studies. To address this gap, the present study required to conceptualize experience that is to be explored from nonverbal communication in guest–employee dyads. Factually, the gap in knowledge identified was related to the nonverbal communication experience constructs. Specifically, the knowledge about the nature and creation of consumer experiences of nonverbal communication on theoretical and managerial levels was limited. The missing understanding of the experience of nonverbal communication could be ascribed to its complexity, making it one of the most challenging endeavors to research.

Second, the literature review introduced the paradigm of S-D logic toward postulating value proposition as experience and co-creation embedded in the mutual exchange of nonverbal cues in guest–employee dyads (Vargo, Lusch, Akaka, & He, 2016). The main paradigm shift from G-D logic was underlined by discussing the changing role of consumers and the emergence of the S-D logic, such as consumers' interest changing from firms' operand to operant resources. As such, moving away from the G-D logic, S-D

(i.e., value in exchange) emerged as an innovative practice that recognizes firms and consumers in a conjoint resource integration for experience and value creation (Cambra-Fierro, Pérez, & Grott, 2017). In the similar framework of S-D logic, the interactional value co-creation (i.e., value in exchange—functional, experiential, and symbolic/expressive values) potential of face-to-face nonverbal interaction could advance the theoretical foundation of S-D logic in improving the periphery of operant resources (i.e., employees' communication competency). Conversely, the influence and integration of nonverbal communication within the guest–employee experience (i.e., nonverbal communication in the dyadic perspective) were limited, such as the embedded experience co-creation process in guest–employee dyads. Despite the fundamental influence of nonverbal communication in the successful bilateral interaction in service-oriented business, including those in hospitality, scholars have indicated a considerable gap in understanding the role of nonverbal communication in consumer experience (Pugh, 2001; Verbeke, 1997) and experience co-creation in the dyadic perspective (i.e., between guests and employees; Jaakkola, Helkkula, & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2015).

Furthermore, the high-quality interaction concept in a successful experience co-creation process (i.e., value creation under S-D logic), such as to engage customers emotionally, was empirically unexplored. In face-to-face interactions, nonverbal communication facilitates interactants to engage emotionally and psychologically. Moreover, theories, such as ECT, ACT, and URT, have elevated the exchange of nonverbal cues as an essential catalyst to co-create guests' and employees' interactive experience affectively, affiliatively, and cognitively (Argyle & Dean, 1965; Hatfield et al., 1993; Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Although several studies have recognized a plethora of

nonverbal communication in a service context, considerable works have focused on a single approach of nonverbal communication, such as on employees' nonverbal behavior. Thus, the present work adopted co-creation framework to include guests' nonverbal behavior to fill the gap in the knowledge. Nevertheless, there existed a lack of studies that have focused on the exploration of nonverbal communication by examining experiential attributes (i.e., value creation between interactants) and their effects on consumer experience and experience co-creation.

Thus, this study addresses the research gap in making an original contribution to knowledge by conceptualizing and empirically exploring nonverbal communication in hotels as a medium of experience co-creation. Thus, the knowledge, that is, nonverbal communication in S-D logic, should be combined to conceptualize nonverbal communication in experience co-creation as a novel concept. Thus, the conceptual framework of experience co-creation from nonverbal communication in guest–employee dyads was postulated to demonstrate its co-creation process systematically.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

3.1 Research paradigm

This study seeks an understanding of nonverbal communication-enhanced experience co-creation in face-to-face dyadic interactions between hotel employees and guests. To address this aim, three research objectives are established to obtain a rich and nuanced understanding of (1) kinesic experiences, (2) kinesic cues in mutual engagement in terms of co-creation of experience, and (3) the process that underlies kinesics-based experience co-creation between employees and guests in hotels. These objectives hold several critical implications for the chosen paradigm, as outlined below.

From the ontological and epistemological points of view, the scope of this study involves exploring new insights into the world as being internally prevailing, the semiotic world of signs and symbols, how individuals make meaning in relation to interactions between individuals' experiences and their ideas, and what people can never know is real. The ultimate goal of this study is to develop an original, novel concept. Given its reductionist standpoint of reasoning reality as observable, positivism is considered inappropriate because it cannot uncover deep layers of reality (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2018). Positivism is suitable for epistemologically and conventionally testing existing theories. Primarily quantitative research strategies and highly structured methods have been adopted from these theories (Saunders & Lewis, 2014) to develop measurement scales and test models of experience (Kim, 2014; Kim et al., 2011). A positivist paradigm thus limits the scope of the study and distances the researcher from individual experiences (Christie, Rowe, Perry, & Chamard, 2000). Instead, a paradigm that permits the researcher

to hold explorative power through the interpretation, multiplicity, context, depth, and knowledge of nonverbal communication-enhanced experience co-creation is required for the present study (Ramey & Grubb, 2009).

In contrast to positivism, constructivism, which is often combined with interpretivism (Merterns, 1998), lets individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Constructivism is generally advocated as the ideal paradigm to address the shortcomings of positivism when exploring human experiences and interactions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Goldkuhl, 2012; Holloway & Galvin, 2016). Such characteristic of constructivism can be realized by adopting qualitative methods, including nonparticipant or participant observation; in-depth, formal, or informal interviews; and the collection and analysis of relevant documents and cultural artifacts, focus group interviews, and photographic or videographic techniques (Creswell & Poth, 2018; McCarty & Liu, 2017). In terms of practice, constructivist inquiries can generate or inductively develop new theories or patterns of meaning, provided that the ranges of questions are large and general; in this manner, participants can construct a situation and meaning that is typically forged in discussions or interactions with others (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Thus, as a research paradigm, the constructivism stance appropriately serves the objectives of this study when integrated into the epistemological assumption of “the meaning of the term knowledge, the limits and scope of knowledge, and what constitutes a valid claim to know something” (Tribe, 2004, p. 46). This stance encourages the researcher to address the need for data interpretation that develops from the need for interaction between the investigator and the object of investigation to explore profound meaning and co-construct findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Ponterotto, 2005). Thus, the

characteristics and philosophical processes mentioned above facilitate the present study's use of constructivism as its research paradigm.

This study intends to collect data via video elicitation focus group interviews, for which the constructivist paradigm can be the rationale for adhering to the relativist position and promoting the soundness of the reality that is to be constructed in the mind of interviewees (Hansen, 2004). Furthermore, the constructivist position of the researcher may reveal the hidden meaning of data through deep reflection (Schwandt, 2000; Sciarra, 1999). This reflection can be prompted by interactive researcher–interviewee dialogue (Hamilton, 1994). The constructivist approach also accommodates the emphasis on the “beauty on the beholder side” (Chen et al., 2011, p. 130). It focuses on psychological learning through the cognitive process that occurs because of interactions with others (Young & Collin, 2004).

The study of nonverbal cues in the theoretical framework and its elucidation of co-creation principles have an affective influence between communicators, emphasizing the suitability of seeking findings from the real-world interactions of human beings.

With constructivist consideration as the research paradigm, the objective of this study is reflected in the arguments of Hamilton (1994), who claimed that “human perception derives not only from evidence of the senses but also from the mental apparatus that serves to organize the incoming sense impressions” (p. 63). With this premise in mind, constructivism is considered a suitable research paradigm for this work.

3.1.1 Researcher as a constructivist

The theoretical foundation of this work mainly serves to promote the logical understanding of the study initiatives. For example, theories imply how two individuals are mutually engaged in face-to-face nonverbal cue exchanges to co-create their mutual experiences in the study setting. In addition, this study's objectives have yet to be investigated. As such, adopting constructivism does not pose a theoretical conflict while the researcher constructs and interprets individual experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A constructivist, by not being a positivist and being an interpretivist (Denzin, 2001), plays a role in developing individuals' understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals share the subjective meanings of their experiences, which are varied and multiple, leading the constructivist researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing the meaning into a few categories or ideas embedded in theoretical sensitivity (Creswell, 2007).

Theoretically, constructivist research is relativist, transactional, and subjectivist (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Thus, a constructivist researcher rigorously places his/her position in three noticeable attitudes as a relativist, transactional, and subjectivist investigator while simultaneously ascribing to the constructivist stance. The relativist stance emphasizes the diversity of interpretations that can be applied to the world as much as possible in the participants' view of the situation, whereas the transactional stance delves into integrities aroused from the interactions between the elements of rhetorical situations (Light, 2017) and the constructed realities of individuals. Finally, as a subjectivist, the researcher includes the psychological world of individuals and thus constructs an impression of the world as he/she sees it (Mann & MacLeod, 2015).

The process of construction entails additional open-ended questions, with the researcher listening to or recording what individuals say or do. Thus, a constructivist researcher often addresses the interaction process between individuals. Such a researcher also interprets what he/she finds—an interpretation shaped or developed by his/her own experiences and background. Thus, the constructivist's intent is to decipher or interpret how others view the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2007).

However, as the interactive link between the investigator and the object of investigation, a constructivist researcher must not have theoretical bias while simultaneously ascribing to the constructivist stance because the findings are created as an investigation proceeds inductively (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). This argument can likewise be extended in the context of this study by reiterating that theories are used to appreciate the study position. Such theories may help the researcher realize and monitor the theoretical influence in the discussion. Thus, the constructivist role simultaneously has an additional advantage in positioning an effective discussion.

Theories generally demonstrate the discipline of the study setting, which keeps the researcher observant of the ability to accurately explain and understand the research findings according to the data. This approach demonstrates the maturity of a discipline, the aim of which is the systematic study of a particular phenomenon (Henn, Weinstein, & Foard, 2009).

Therefore, in exploratory qualitative research, the use of theories provides an intended context, which keeps the researcher from isolation because no research is isolated. Thus, although theories are used as a structural force through which the research

is initiated systematically, a constructivist may adopt a parallel stance toward theoretical sensitivity during the discussion of the study (May, 2001).

3.2 Research approach

On the basis of the overall purpose and objectives of the research, this exploratory study uses a constructivist research paradigm and a qualitative research strategy. Therefore, this study evolves inductively, rationally, and conventionally. This exploratory study is an inductive attempt to generate original insights and core understandings and is designed to supplement key issues by offering new knowledge and contribute to future research agenda (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ford et al., 2018; Woo, O'Boyle, & Spector, 2017).

The characteristics of this study keep its research approach away from deductive reasoning because, similar to a typical hypothesis-based research, it does not engage in testing the logical consequences of theory or posed assumptions that are highly specific, relatively limited in number, and focused on the design of the data collection procedures and instruments only to guarantee that sufficient data are collected to test whether such consequences or assumptions are supported or rejected (Given, 2008). Rather, this study seeks to generate new knowledge that can be woven into the conceptual framework or pattern of the meanings of such knowledge. The inductive approach allows the researcher to empirically collect data to decipher by analyzing such data for patterns, connections, and relationships in view of interpreting their importance and generating meaningful theoretical explanations. An inductive researcher typically adopts qualitative strategies to assess rich, narrative, or descriptive information that is not captured by statistical analysis (Altinay, Paraskevas, & Jang, 2016).

The existing body of theoretical and empirical knowledge serves as the primary starting point of this study. The researcher begins with theoretical observations about what he is going to study. Here, theories are devised to explain what is established rather than the other way around, such that the theories embedded in this study are not going to be tested deductively (O'Reilly, 2012). Instead, the issues that are discussed in the objectives are constructed and interpreted. However, scholars tend to believe that within the limits of the inductive approach, the researcher can seek sophisticated inductivism, which enables him/her to move back and forth iteratively between theory and analysis and data and interpretation when needed (O'Reilly, 2012). This approach underlines the strengths and advantages of inductivism and concurrently observes theoretical insights, thereby clearly elucidating problems and issues and focusing on previously disregarded inclusions and relationships. On this basis, the overall exploration and the new theoretical contribution of this study occurs inductively (Denzin, 2001; Peacock, 2001; Zatori & Beardsley, 2017). Figure 3.1 presents the overall research methodology.

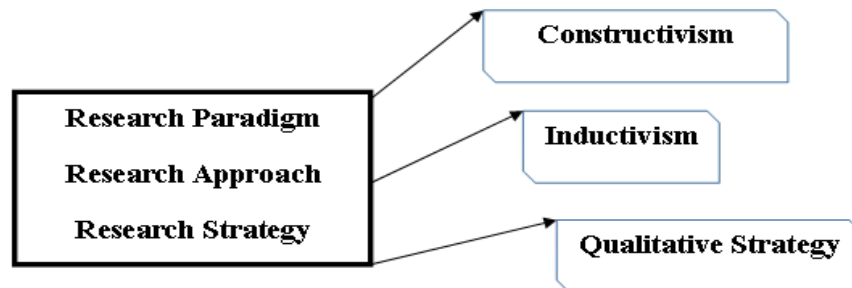


Figure 3.1 Overall research methodology

3.3 Research strategy

Under the rigor of a qualitative approach, the present study uses video elicitation focus group interviews aided by an observation method (Hickson, 1977; Gallagher et al.,

2005; Gorawara-Bhat et al., 2007; Mazur, 1977; Oorsouw et al., 2011; Zaletel et al., 2012) based on the modifications of video elicitation guidelines and focus group interview questions (Dallimore, Sparks, & Butcher, 2007; Gabbott & Hogg, 2000; Gifford, Ng, & Wilkinson, 1985; Henry & Fetters, 2012; Krueger & Casey, 2002; Lim et al., 2016). The details of this study's research design are explained in the following sections.

As stated, the present work implements a qualitative research strategy for several reasons. First, the study is exploratory (Stake, 1995) because it focuses on the exploration of experience (Matteucci, 2013; Prebensen & Foss, 2011; Ryan, 2010) and thus helps understand individuals as a player and a resource integrator in experience co-creation (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). Second, its objectives are focused on the in-depth inquiry of the topic in relation to *what*, *how*, and *in which way*, as opposed to seeking deductive inference (Patton, 2002). Third, a qualitative study allows the researcher to understand the events deeply rooted in the overall phenomena of the world, including feelings or processes of thought, personal insights, and observations; such phenomena are quite complex to explore and learn through expressible quantity processes, such as quantitative or software-based methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Lastly, a qualitative research approach enables the researcher to play an active role in exploring the study objectives (Creswell, 2005; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, using the qualitative approach to fulfill the objectives of this study is justified.

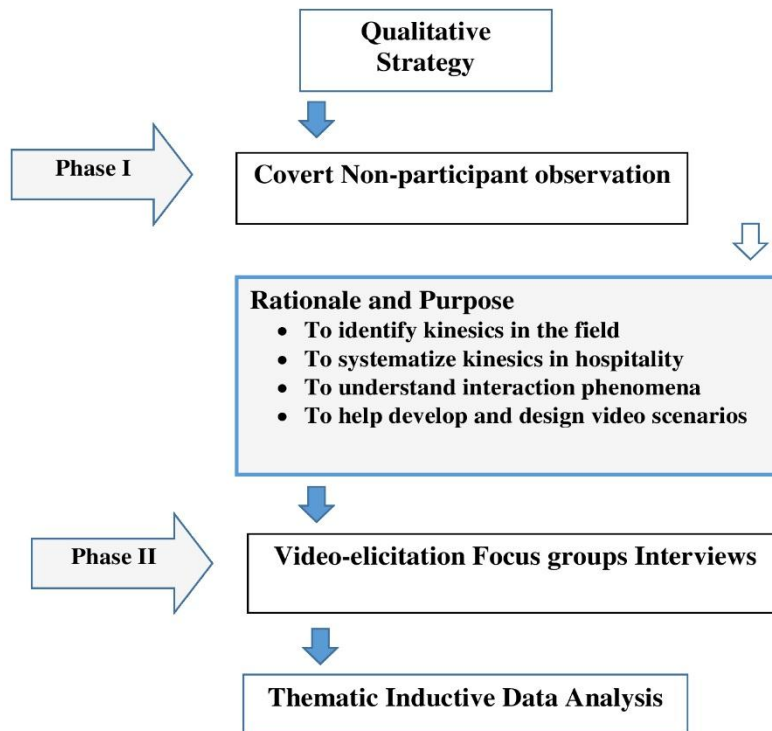


Figure 3.2 Research plan

This qualitative study has two steps. First, covert nonparticipant observation is performed to develop and design video scenarios. Second, video elicitation focus group interviews are conducted to achieve the study objectives. Figure 3.2 presents the research plan.

3.4 Phase I: Covert nonparticipant observation

3.4.1 Observation as a research method

Observation is a useful method, and it presents considerable value in capturing and apprehending social action and interaction as they occur (Caldwell & Atwal, 2005). Using the observation technique in this work cannot directly achieve the study objectives; however, it can establish the principal research method, namely, the selected video elicitation focus group interviews. To a large extent, nonverbal cue designs in video filming

(the primary method of the study) require a real-life occurrence in the study setting (“What is going on here?”) regarding face-to-face dyadic customer–employee interactions in the hotel lobby. Furthermore, given the study’s theoretical framework, capturing face-to-face dyadic customer–employee interaction as a single unit of analysis is recommended. This approach requires a detached, third-person view of the interaction. As an observer, the researcher can observe and identify the nonverbal cues that are practiced and applied consciously and unconsciously in the hotel lobby.

The observation method has a continuous legacy in the study of nonverbal communication. In the past decades, seminal works in nonverbal communication have been conducted using observation method. Hickson (1977) examined the nonverbal and verbal communication on a commuter bus in Washington, D.C. Mazur (1977) studied the cultural differences in proxemic norms on public benches in the park. Contemporary studies on nonverbal communication (Gallagher et al., 2005; Gorawara-Bhat et al., 2007; Oorsouw et al., 2011; Zaletel et al., 2012) have also applied observation techniques. In certain research questions and objectives in behavioral studies similar to the present work, observation techniques can be deemed as requirements because they facilitate the researcher’s utilization of his/her five senses in developing “written photographs” (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Nonverbal expressions, cues, feelings, and interactions can be checked effectively via observation. Observation allows researchers to absorb first-hand experiences and be receptive to discoveries rather than assuming what the context looks like (Schmuck, 1997). It helps them explore valid data for analysis in producing video plots and subsequent interview plans. In the current work, the results of observation facilitate the development and design of video scenarios.

Finn, Elliott-White, and Walton (2000) argued that observation is one of the most realistic and natural research tools for researchers to find effective ways to share and earn experience with/from research participants. In this manner, the research uncovers human behavior through the best possible details and profound meanings. Observation offers the option of exploring facets that participants are unwilling or reluctant to discuss or disclose in the interview session (Marshall & Rossman, 1995), which helps the researcher explore valid data for useful analysis. George Herbert Mead, an American philosopher, sociologist, and psychologist, argued that understanding birds mean to fly like a bird, eat with its small beak, and sleep in a hanging nest. This philosophical argument makes a convincing stance for observation in behavioral studies (Griffin, 2009).

The greatest strength of observation is that it adopts a direct, intuitive approach to hospitality and tourism research, as well as enables the researcher to explore, develop new ideas, and look for new insights to test ideas and further supplement research plans (McKercher & Lui, 2013; Morgan et al., 2017).

3.4.2 Nonparticipant observation

This study focuses on the investigation of kinesic cues in hotels as a medium of experience co-creation, which is a newly conceived approach in nonverbal communication research. Consequently, empirically validated sets of kinesic cues, which can be adopted to achieve the objectives of this research, are currently unavailable in the existing literature. The researcher conducted a study by utilizing covert nonparticipant observation to understand and explore the kinesic cues typically displayed in face-to-face interactions between customers and employees in the hotel lobby.

The researcher conducted the observation study in November 2017 by utilizing nonparticipant observation on the kinesic interactions between guests and employees. Specifically, the rationale and purpose of nonparticipant observation aim to (1) identify kinesics in the field, (2) systematize kinesics in hospitality, (3) understand interaction phenomena (“What is going on here?”), and (4) help develop and design video scenarios. The details of the study are explained below.

3.4.3 Covert stance

The researcher applied covert nonparticipant observation to gain first-hand understanding of kinesics. Through controlled and structured nonparticipant observation, the researcher systematically understood and recorded the frequencies and practice of nonverbal cues in dyadic interactions.

Observation is an effective way to collect data and understand real behaviors, provided that the observer (the researcher) does not influence the participants to change their behavior from the actuality and the natural situation. Such change in behavior or interaction between individuals is recognized as the Hawthorne effect. Nonparticipant observation in the hotel context (i.e., data collection from face-to-face interactions of guest–employee dyads) is challenging because individuals modify their behaviors when they learn that they are being observed or studied (Oswald, Sherratt, & Smith, 2014; Park, 2018; Smith & Coombs, 2003). Hence, the researcher conducted nonparticipant observation covertly by pretending to be a guest at the research site (hotel lobby). This approach allowed the researcher to understand a dyadic kinesic interaction between a guest and an employee from the close and natural end of such exchange and be attentive to data collection. Had the researcher utilized overt observation, the natural and spontaneous cue

display between the interactants (guests and employees) could be rendered unspontaneous or unnatural by the participants if they knew that they were being observed.

In the above background, the researcher acknowledged that the adoption of covert observation in the study could be a subject of debate within the scientific community (Oliver & Eales, 2008). This situation is sometimes condemned because it may violate participants' privacy. The basis of that condemnation may become a legitimate concern (e.g., breaching privacy) with the rights of research subjects (Walters & Godbold, 2014). Nevertheless, scholars (Spicker, 2011; Roulet et al., 2017) tend to relieve some specific research (e.g., psychology: behavioral science) from the condemnation of covert observation based on research subjects (e.g., subjects that were not directly related to issues such as violence, drug dealing, sex abuse, and sex workers). The research participants of these mentioned areas had rights to consider the rights of the victims, not only the committers (Haggerty, 2004; Roulet, et al., 2017).

The above discussion reflects that the research subject, such as the nonverbal interactions of certain individuals in a familiar hotel setting, might be relieved from breaching participants' privacy, which can be speculated with violence, drug dealing, sex abuse, and sex workers (Spicker, 2011). Although the goal of the covert observation was not vulnerable to participants' privacy, the main reasons for limiting disclosure became practical and methodological. The methodological argument was a strong one (Kimmel, 1996). Thus, undeclared and undisclosed research in familiar settings (e.g., nonverbal interaction observation in hotels) was to be accepted as a standard part of academic enquiry (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018; Kimmel, 1996).

3.4.4 Observation site and access

Entering an organization is a difficult task if the researcher focuses on a topic that generates sensitivity, such as unwillingness or reluctance from the participants to discuss or disclose information in the interview session; moreover, difficulties occur when the topics are related to conscious or unconscious behavioral attributes (i.e., nonverbal behaviors in dyadic interactions; Okumus, Altinay, & Roper, 2007). Lee (1993) noted that “fieldworkers are the kinds of people who can put up with constant and dedicated hard work, loneliness, powerlessness and confusion, and, quite possibly, some suffering at the hands of those being studied” (p. 120). Gummesson (2000) suggested that in such situations, researchers adopt physical access that can ensure their ability to become close to the object of the study, maintain constant physical access to the research site, and help them understand what is happening at the investigated site, as well as how and why such events occur.

In nonparticipant observation, the researcher is required to maintain an appropriate distance, such that he/she can comprehend all the actions undertaken, such as the nonverbal cue displays in face-to-face guest–employee interactions in this case (Hartmann, 1988).

Therefore, the researcher of this study made comprehensive visits to 13 full-service hotels in Kowloon and Wan Chai in Hong Kong, SAR to explore convenient accessibility and understand interaction volumes. Kowloon and Wan Chai as hotel locations were selected because they had a more significant number of guests’ mobility in comparison with other locations in Hong Kong (Fang, Li, & Li, 2019). From prior experience, the researcher considered full-service hotels because they generally tend to have open lobbies, easy access, and a considerable frequency of guest–employee interactions. The researcher

ascertained that the face-to-face dyadic guest–employee interactions in the majority of full-service hotels occurred most frequently at three points, namely, door (i.e., hotel entrance), middle of the lobby (i.e., greeter’s point), and the front desk. The researcher identified eight hotels where nonparticipant observation was feasible, convenient, and accessible to maintain an appropriate distance in the field work.

3.4.5 Checklist development and deductive observation

The observation guide was developed from Smart, Peggs, and Burrige (2013), whereas the cue observation checklist was adapted from Zaletel et al. (2012), who utilized various kinesic cues to understand patients’ nonverbal behavior in their daily life in nursing homes. Consequently, specific kinesic cues that are deemed as irrelevant for the context of this study, such as “pressing the lips together/biting them,” “making grimaces,” and “supporting one’s head with an arm,” were excluded from the checklist. Instead, cues that are suitable in face-to-face interactions in the hospitality context, such as smiling, eye contact, and nodding, were considered.

In the checklist, the researcher carefully categorized kinesic cues into several constructs that correspond to the hospitality setting during face-to-face dyadic guest–employee interactions, such as eye contact (i.e., direct eye contact; averted eye gaze; too little, too much, moderate amount, and a lot of eye contact when answering questions; looking at and around; and appropriate eye contact), nodding, smiling (i.e., smiles frequently, smiles with politeness, smiles without facial expression, smiles that are reciprocal, light laughter, and slight smile), and bodily movements [i.e., open body posture, circular gesture, touching, active body movement, torso movements, hand gestures (i.e., waving, raising, and indicating direction), and shaking hands]. In addition, the researcher

cross-checked the developed observation checklist for relevance, suitability, and importance of kinesic cues in face-to-face interactions from previous studies (see Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Gabbott & Hogg, 2001; Jung & Yoon, 2011; Sundaram & Webster, 2000; Yuksel, 2008) and modified them on the basis of the requirement of the objectives and nature of the present study. Cues from hand gestures (i.e., hand waving, raising, and direction) were also included in the observation checklist because Islam and Kirillova (2017) verified that appropriate cue displays from the service people's hands (i.e., hand waving, raising, and direction) are effective in obtaining guests' favorable perception of service quality. The observation checklist, as adapted from Zaletel et al. (2012), was recorded deductively. Necessary and spur-of-the-moment field notes were also taken.

3.4.6 Observation procedure and analysis

The researcher arranged for a convenient seat and position at and around the hotel lobby to observe the guest–employee kinesic interactions for 5–15 minutes. Saturated data were obtained by recording 10 dyadic interactions in the eight full-service hotels in Kowloon and Wan Chai. Deductive data collection kept the researcher aligned with the required and essential objects of the research, which was convenient and effective in evaluating the useful insights needed for further investigation, if any (Peggs & Burrige, 2013). Other essentials were also accounted for, such as the physical environment of the lobby and the surroundings of the setting, for which the researcher developed a written photograph of the context that was utilized in the subsequent video scenarios developed.

Nonparticipant observation in this study essentially aimed at understanding and systematizing kinesics in hospitality. This work also aims to monitor the phenomena of interactions, such as how nonverbal interactions transpired in different interaction points.

Three points of dyadic hotel guest–employee interactions were observed, namely, front entrance, greeter’s meeting point, and front desk. Guest–employee kinesic cues were displayed differently in the three interaction points. The phenomena of interactions also varied. For example, interaction at the entrance was faster than those at the greeter’s point and front desk. Hand gestures, smiling, and eye contact were commonly observed in all interaction points.

The researcher also observed different and frequent cues, including other subtle factors, such as informal and unplanned activities, the constructions of symbolic meanings (from nonverbal communication, bodily cues, or movements), and anticipated events that did not transpire. As a covert observer, the researcher was attentive to who interacted with whom, who spoke to whom, who listened to whom, silence, environmental physiology, and how kinesics occurred between the observed interactants (Bernard, 2018; Smart et al., 2013).

Face-to-face nonverbal cue exchanges in guest–employee dyads at the entrance point occurred rapidly. The mutual kinesic cue exchanges between the guests and employees lacked diversity. Eye contact and smiling were frequently displayed by employees and guests. Doormen (employees) frequently displayed “hand direction,” whereas guests usually exhibited the inference of facial expressions. Similar projections of cues between guests and employees were also observed, including smiling, eye contact, and facial expressions. At this interaction point (front entrance), the display of kinesic cues by employees was observed to be higher than that by guests. Frequently observed cues included torso movements (a little body movement), facial expressions, smiling, eye

contact (direct), hand gestures (hands crossed forward and hand direction). Except for “hands crossed forward,” all cues corresponded to the deductive checklist.

The pace of interaction at the greeter’s point was slower than that at the entrance. At this interaction point, guests and employees engaged in verbal and nonverbal interactions. The frequency of cue displays was nearly balanced. Cue exchanges were diverse and went beyond the deductive checklist, such as “holding hands crossed at the back,” “bow,” and “busy gesture” from employees and “hands into trouser pockets” from guests. Smiling, eye contact, open body orientation, face-to-face standing, and nodding were also frequently observed.

Similar to the interactions at the greeter’s point, the nonverbal interactions in guest–employee dyads across the front desk were also accompanied by verbal communication. Cues unavailable in the checklist were also observed, such as “finger pointing” (from employees), “standing face-to-face,” “looking at something” (from guests), “body leaning” (from guests), and “utilizing both hands” (from employees). Guests and employees displayed dissimilar cues. The body movements of employees outnumbered those of guests.

3.5 Phase II: Video elicitation focus groups

3.5.1 Development of video stimuli

As previously mentioned, the study requires the development of simulated video scenarios of the face-to-face nonverbal interactions between a guest and employees at the hotel lobby to achieve the study objectives. Previous research on nonverbal interaction has often utilized simulated video scenarios and highly recommended them as effective

research stimuli (Henry & Fetters, 2012). Gabbott and Hogg (2000) used video scenarios to understand nonverbal communication in service recovery Dallimore et al. (2007) used four videotapes to explore expressive emotions in service encounters. By utilizing video scenarios, Lim et al. (2016) investigated the role of nonverbal cues in customer satisfaction. Gifford et al. (1985) investigated the role of nonverbal behavior in employment interviews by using four video clips. All these studies developed video scenarios to accomplish their research objectives, for which the researchers were required to develop a script/scenario (screenplay), incorporate relevant and objective related nonverbal cues, train and rehearse role players, and obtain needed technical assistance and logistic support from professional agencies.

3.5.2 Procedures

3.5.2.1 Treatment profile of kinesic cues

In this study, three sets of kinesic cues were treated in the different scenarios at three unique interaction points (Table 3.1). The kinesic cues explored, identified, and systematized from deductive nonparticipant observation along with exploratory field notes (procedures mentioned in Section 3.4.6) were considered credible and capable of ensuring the actual occurrence of kinesic cues in face-to-face dyadic interactions at the hotel lobby. In the hospitality context, kinesic cues such as the treatment of eye contact, smiling, and hand gestures were observed as essential prompts in the interaction within customer–employee dyads (Sundaram & Webster, 2000). Hence, these cues commonly remained present in each scenario of the study.

In the scenarios, the variation of cue projections was also included, which generated the actuality of the interaction and helped the study participants express their experiences

in cue variations. For example, in an interaction sequence, a guest smiles and makes eye contact with the employee; however, the employee becomes busy in his/her work without appropriate attention. In another sequence, both parties appropriately and mutually smile and make eye contact with each other. In the study of Phase I, the variation in cue displays was also observed. Lim et al. (2016), Gabbott and Hogg (2000), and Yuksel (2008) also utilized cue variations in their respective studies to understand the different dimensions of displayed nonverbal cues during guest–employee interactions.

Table 3.1 Treatment profile of kinesic cues in three scenarios

Scenario	Cues	Interaction point	Source
1	Torso movements (a little body movement)	Hotel front entrance door	Nonparticipant observation
	Tired facial expression (close face)		Zaletel et al. (2012)
	Smile		Dallimore et al. (2007)
	Long eye contact		Gabbott and Hogg (2000)
	Laughter		Gifford et al. (1985)
	Eye gaze		
	(Standing) holding hands crossed forward		Lim et al. (2016)
	Hand direction		Sommers et al. (1989)
2	Quick eye contact		Yuksel (2008)
			Zaletel et al. (2012)
	Body gesture (attentively polite and caring body movement)	Middle of the hotel lobby	Nonparticipant observation
	Bow		Zaletel et al. (2012)
	Holding hands crossed at the back		Dallimore et al. (2007)
	Smile		
	Eye contact (with other object)		Gabbott and Hogg (2000)
	Looked around for a little while		Gifford et al. (1985)
	No smile		
	Hands into trouser pockets		Lim et al. (2016)
	Open body orientation (standing eagerly, enthusiastic attitude)		Sommers et al. (1989)
	Shaking head “No”		Yuksel (2008)
Hand gesture (directing via hand movements)			
Close facial expression (a little bit disappointed)			
Busy gesture (responding to a call from a walkie-talkie)			
	Raising hand	Front desk	Nonparticipant observation
	Standing (eager and oriented and attentive to the individual)		Zaletel et al. (2012)
	A couple of eye contacts		Dallimore et al. (2007)
	Quick look (at something)		

3	Short eye contact	Gabbott and Hogg (2000)
	No smile	Gifford et al. (1985)
	Body leaning	
	Standing face-to-face	Lim et al. (2016)
	Smile	Sommers et al. (1989)
	Shaking hand	
	Smiles a little	Yuksel (2008)
	Finger pointing (showing something in the paper by index finger)	
	Hand gesture (as if describing something as large or small in size)	
	Looking around	
	Nodding “Yes”	
	Comfortable facial expression (with smile and eye contact)	
	Utilizing two hands (offering or handing something)	
	Long eye contact	
	Hand waving	
	No hand waving	

3.5.2.2 *Three scenarios*

Three scenarios were designed to provide manipulations of the affective display of kinesic cues in guest–employee dyads. In the scenarios, the choice of words generically followed those from nonverbal communication literature, such as “torso movement,” “eye gaze,” “nodding,” “hand gesture,” and “close face.” To reduce the confounding effects and produce effective and realistic interactive scenarios, scenario-wise accounts are explained as follows to standardize the aspects of the face-to-face nonverbal interactions in the hotel lobby.

(1) As observed in the practical field, the dyadic face-to-face interaction developed in Scenario 1 at the hotel front entrance door lasts for a while (Table 3.2). The interaction of guest–employee dyads at the hotel entrance is the first meeting link. The foremost uniqueness of this interaction is that it mostly occurs nonverbally. Consequently, the interaction occurs quickly in the place where the employee may have the opportunity to show the guest the quality of the hotel’s image (Boella, 2017) mainly through his/her

nonverbal communication performance. This situation can be called a golden opportunity, through which the first face-to-face interaction hub can evoke the meaning of service quality of a particular hotel and the relational attributes that the customer may anticipate. This interaction at the entrance may also form a central indication of socialization and experience in guest–employee dyads throughout the upcoming services in which they are to interact (Countryman & Jang, 2006). Thus, this nonverbal encounter that abruptly creates the moment of truth can play a major role in the guest’s first impression and in the relational stimuli that can be foreseen to be maintained and developed gradually in subsequent verbal and nonverbal interactions in guest–employee dyads (Hai-yan & Baum, 2006).

Table 3.2 Content of Scenario 1

Content	
Interaction site	Guest–employee interaction at the hotel front entrance door
Role players	Guest and employee
Screenplay	The guest is exhausted after a long journey, as shown in her torso movements (a body movement) and tired facial expression (close face). The employee smiles and makes long eye contact with the guest. The guest laughs, averts her eye gaze, and smiles. The employee stands while holding hands crossed forward and shows enthusiasm (interested to receive the guest), keeps the door open, and directs the guest by hand toward the front desk. The guest makes a quick eye contact with the employee and enters.
Setting/Props	A big glass door (transparent) is behind the guest and employee. The guest wears a casual dress, and the employee wears a full professional uniform. They interact in front of the door.
Time	18 seconds
Video	https://www.dropbox.com/s/yd9rwrpc8n0wkfs/scenario1.mp4?dl=0

(2) Scenario 2 involves a guest–employee interaction (Table 3.3) at the middle of the hotel lobby (i.e., between the hotel front entrance door and the front desk). At this interaction point, guest relation staff typically receives guests, and their interaction involves verbal and nonverbal components. The strangeness of the hotel lobby to the guest before initiating the formal service transaction (i.e., during check-in) may be eliminated by

the quality interaction from the employee (Bardi, 2011). The visible effect of this encounter is that it ensures a warm welcome because of its interaction timeframe and nature, such as being longer than the hotel entrance interaction and the involvement of verbal and nonverbal communication. After the entrance, this encounter may help the guest further assess the quality of the premises and service (Baker, Bradley, & Huyton, 2011). The nonverbal attention and care through open gesture, enthusiastic facial expressions, and eager intention of escorting the guest across the check-in area by using favorable bodily movements (i.e., hand gestures, expressions of attentive listening, and attention) are possible at this interaction time, and thus play a central role to the communication of feelings between service providers and consumers (Lim et al., 2016). After the hotel front entrance interaction, this interaction point presents the opportunity to impress guests for the second time. This interaction point may also help guests visualize the promised services and the unique characteristics, image, and service quality of the hotel through the employee's affective personality and behavior, as expressed through verbal and nonverbal communication (Naqshbandi & Munir, 2011). The quality of this interaction and the potentials of the interactive engagement attributes may prompt a guest to decide whether he/she is to move toward the next interaction point (i.e., front desk) for further services of the hotel (Durna, Dedeoglu, & Balikcioglu, 2015).

Table 3.3 Content of Scenario 2

Content	
Site	The guest–employee interaction at the middle of the hotel lobby (as if it were in the greeters' point)
Role players	Guest and employee
Screenplay	The guest comes with a light trolley luggage toward the desk and encounters the employee (greeter). The employee welcomes the guest [as shown in his humble gesture (body movement is attentively polite and seems caring)], bows (keeps head slightly down), and holds his hands crossed at the back. The guest smiles and stops, looks as if he is searching for something, keeps his eye contact toward the front desk instead of the employee, and looks around for a little while. The employee quickly

	looks at the guest's trolley luggage, and his face remains unsmiling as if the employee is trying to understand the guest's motives. The guest asks the employee for some assistance while he remains standing. (The luggage is at his side. Sometimes the guest puts his hand on the handle of the luggage and sometimes into his trouser pockets.) The employee shows his open body orientation (standing eagerly and shows an enthusiastic attitude), but shakes his head unfavorably (as if saying "no" to the guest's inquiry) and uses hand gestures (directing via hand movements) to suggest that the guest have a seat on the sofa. The guest sits, his facial expression becomes close, and he tries to smile at the employee. The employee listens to the guest attentively; however, the employee does not smile, becomes busy (as if responding to a walkie-talkie), and disappears from the screen.
Setting/Props	The guest wears an executive casual attire, and the employee is in full professional uniform with a mobile/walkie-talkie. They interact beside the stool.
Time	47 seconds
Video	https://www.dropbox.com/s/kjy42im373anf7f/scenario2.mp4?dl=0

(3) Scenario 3 is based on the face-to-face dyadic interaction at the front desk (Table 3.4). This scenario is quite different than the previous two scenarios of interactions (at the hotel entrance and at the middle of the lobby) because the service sales transaction or procedure (e.g., check-in) occurs at this interaction point. Scholars tend to believe that when a guest observes an employee's nonverbal cues, specifically when the employee is working for him/her, this front desk interaction may reflect the quality of the overall service in a hotel. Check-in procedures may sometimes be comparable regardless of the hotel size and rank; however, what makes one hotel establishment stand out from others is the attitude and skills of the staff (Baum & Odgers, 2001; Hai-yan & Baum, 2006).

Table 3.4 Content of Scenario 3

Content	
Site	Guest–employee interaction at the front desk
Role players	Guest and employee
Screenplay	The employee (receptionist) calls the guest (for the check-in procedure) with a raised right hand that continues pointing straight. The employee stands eagerly, looks oriented to the guest, and attentively makes a couple of eye contacts. The guest moves forward, quickly looks at the desk once (which has a computer monitor and necessary stationery), and makes a short eye contact with the employee but does not smile. The guest moves close to the waist-high desk, leans on it, and leaves his luggage behind. Meanwhile, the employee looks engaged in checking something in the computer monitor, and in 2–3 seconds, stands face-to-face with the guest, smiles, and shakes the guest's hand. The guest also stands face-to-face. The guest smiles a little and keeps looking at the registration procedure. The employee points at something in the paper using her index finger and relays something by hand

	gesture (as if describing something as large or small in size). The guest looks around and leans on the desk again. He asks her something; she nods favorably, as if saying “yes” to his inquiry; and the guest looks comfortable, as shown in his facial expression with a smile and eye contact. The employee is seen carefully listening to the guest. The employee delivers the guest key with two hands with a long eye contact and a little smile. The employee waves her hand toward the guest. He looks at her, but he does not wave his hand toward her.
Setting/Props	A waist-high reception-style desk with a computer monitor (i.e., impression), and some files. The guest wears a T-shirt, and the employee is in full professional uniform. They interact across the desk.
Time	47 seconds
Video	https://www.dropbox.com/s/i1u2lv937lwd8t9/scenario3.mp4?dl=0

Finally, for the guest, this interaction point concludes the behavior and attitude of the employee, which ultimately and largely influences service quality and guest satisfaction (Lim et al., 2016). Impression management is critical in the front desk, and if it does not work properly, then guest retention may become difficult (Siguaw & Enz, 1999). The kernel of word of mouth through guest–employee long-term relationship, rapport, and cognitive attributes can be highly implanted from this interaction (Baum & Devine, 2007; Bardi, 2011)

3.5.3 Video production procedures

3.5.3.1 Role player recruitment and training

Role players (four males and two females) with one to two years of professional experience in hospitality as frontliners were recruited by personal acquaintance and snowballing to perform as guests and employees. Their employment experience in the hospitality business was expected to have helped the recruited role players express their cues in video filming, aside from allowing them to easily comprehend the sequences of scenarios from their practical experiences. Furthermore, they were suitable to perform the guest’s role because they frequently experienced the guests’ interactive behavior verbally and nonverbally.

First, with the assistance of a professional theater actor, the researcher developed a “role player guide” that contained the detailed explanation of their role and performance concerns. The said guide was provided to the role players before training and rehearsal sessions so they could prepare and be oriented to apprehend the research needs, their role, and the researcher’s expectation in their role play for the video stimuli (Dallimore et al., 2007; Gabbott & Hogg, 2000). The role players were especially briefed regarding the interaction theme, that is, how the guest and the employee convey meanings through expressive cue (kinesics) exchanges in the face-to-face dyadic interaction within the hotel.

In the training sessions, the role players were invited as pairs to exercise and display expressions from the list of cues in his/her part in the dyadic interaction scenario. Afterward, they practiced and were mentored for appropriate expressions where they lacked accuracy. They first exercised with the script and were then monitored in their performance without script. They were advised to keep exercising until video production was scheduled and to remain as natural as possible during shooting.

3.5.3.2 Video shooting and editing

The researcher hired two helpers, both PhD candidates (Information Technology Services and School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM), The Hong Kong PolyU) experienced in videography, to shoot the scenario and perform the editing. All scenarios were shot at the premises of SHTM. For instance, its lobby area was used because it suggested hotel lobby features. The researcher and camera operator prepared a shot checklist according to the screenplay to confirm that every sequence was shot. The study intended to investigate the kinesic experience, identifying kinesic cues in terms of experience co-creation and understanding the underlying process of kinesics-based

experience from the face-to-face dyadic interaction between guest and employee. Thus, the camera was set, and the lens steered to focus on the vivid and subtle cues or nonverbal expressions that would be exchanged by the guest and employee in the interaction sequences of the scenarios.

Digital editing of the video clips was conducted to ensure the following: (1) bright and clear exposure of nonverbal expressions of role players, (2) maintaining and attaching interaction sequences as a meaningful whole, and (3) slow-motion mode and screenshot of cue displays as an individual clip if needed in the in-depth focus group discussion (FGD). Editing would also help the researcher explore the nuanced experience, engagement, and relational attributes of the guests and employees and thus facilitate delving into experience co-creation.

3.6 Data collection

The nature of the current research framework and objectives allows the researcher to adopt video elicitation focus group interviews. The focus group technique with video elicitation included four focus groups with six participants each. These participants were assigned to identify either as hotel guests or hotel employees (in a single session) to find them conjointly in the simulated videos, with which their mutual experiences about kinesics were effectively shared in the same spot of an interactive and reciprocated discussion (Krueger & Casey, 2002). These scenarios also corresponded to the co-creation principles.

Contents in visual stimuli and visual stimuli as experience-sharing tools helped the researcher comprehensively explore the relationship between visual stimuli and the

participants' experience (Smith & Barker, 2004). Visual aids appeared to record the impossible (Harper, 2002). For example, a person has some habits depicted on the visual contents and thus becomes stimulated to find him/her in the visual frame. Thus, an event a person sees as his/her own and that generates an affective sense to retrieve something that has disappeared belongs alone to the visual aids, which lead to profound, interesting, and important dialogs (Harper, 2002). Furthermore, Harper (2002) argued that that when two or more people discuss the meaning of interactions that are vivid in visual aids, they try to ascertain something together, which can be an ideal model for exploratory experience research.

Focus group interviews can be defined as an effective research technique through which data are generated via the group interaction around a topical discussion chosen by the researchers. Thus, such interviews ensure a joint interaction within a group and their elucidation on the importance of the topics that the researcher intends to contribute to society (Merton, 2008). When the research objectives required the researcher to prompt participants to share and compare their experiences on a particular issue with one another and thus develop the importance of the issue and construct ideas, then the focus group research method was likely appropriate (Breen, 2006). In this study, the topic was kinesic interaction experience between individuals, and it was explored through video elicitation as a comprehensive discussion stimulus.

Using the video elicitation technique as an interview stimulus was not new in nonverbal communication research (Furley & Schweizer, 2016; Gabbott & Hogg, 2000; Ishikawa et al., 2012; Gallagher et al., 2005; Lim et al., 2016). Most research on nonverbal communication has been conducted in the fields of psychology (Furley & Schweizer, 2016;

Bahns et al., 2016; Fichten et al., 1992) and healthcare (Ishikawa et al., 2012; Zaletel et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2010). These studies have attempted to highlight the importance of nonverbal communication in people's daily life and its influence in the development of social interactions and human wellbeing. In both disciplines, face-to-face nonverbal interaction between individuals, such as child–mother and physician–patient interaction, has been significantly observed to understand the deep meaning of their respective relationship through the technique of video tape elicitation. Thus, the researcher of the current study apprehended the significance of video elicitation in nonverbal communication research from previous research trends.

Research through video elicitation has also been performed in social sciences. In the evolution of society and its surroundings, human interactions in different stages of daily life play an influential role in human relationships. Hence, the video elicitation technique is mostly used in behavioral or interaction-oriented research (Henry & Fetters, 2012). Video elicitation is suggested in interaction studies for several reasons. First, in video elicitation, participants can naturally recollect their interactions that have already occurred in the form of thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and experiences. Second, while participants find their roles and participations in “already occurring” events by watching on video, they can easily reexperience or recreate and relate the interactions. They can even alter their rational system or emotions in response to the events in video scenes. Third, in video elicitation, participants can share their original feelings or thoughts while recalling events that involve their partner interactant. Lastly, screenplays or video records of interactive events can relate participants' experiences with integrity (Levenson, 1985; Lyle, 2003; Kagan, 1980; Pomerantz, 2005).

3.6.1 Sampling strategy

A purposeful sampling technique was adopted for this study. It is a commonly used sampling method in qualitative research when participants need to fulfill specific criteria (Saunders & Lewis, 2014). As an exploratory study, this approach also allowed the researcher to capture the heterogeneity within a studied population and delivered varied and wide-ranging information (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). Another rationale for utilizing purposeful sampling instead of random sampling is that the former is largely based on the requirement of study objectives to invite suitable focus group participants for video elicitation interview. The video scenarios, which were shown to participants, were developed from the observation insights of nonverbal interaction in full-service hotels. Thus, the participants needed to be essentially involved in the required research setting (i.e., full-service hotels). This study explored the experience of nonverbal behavior occurring in the interactions of guest–frontline employee dyads in the hotel lobby. Hence, frontline employees working at full-service hotels and guests staying at similar type of hotels were eligible for recruitment. Guests and employees (participants) who worked and lived within the theme of the study objectives were involved in the focus group interviews to explore their mutual experiences (Bryman, 2008; Yeomans, 2017).

3.6.2 Sampling criteria

To recruit potential focus group interview participants who were to be segmented into guests and employees, their sample profile must be defined. The sample criteria comprised several requirements. For example, employees and guests were of different genders and ages who were available in Hong Kong during the interview. Guests were from different nationalities. Hotel front desk employees with the required experience, who

formally consented to participate in the study, were likely to be local people of Hong Kong (Chinese ethnicity), although their ethnical background was not the requirement in the sampling criteria. Hotel employees had at least two years of frontline experience in a full-service hotel in Hong Kong, and guests stayed in a similar type of hotel in the previous six months across the world. These criteria ensured their spontaneous link and involvement with the simulated video scenarios in the focus group interview discussions. In addition, these criteria facilitated the vivid and recent recollection of experiences by participants. Hence, experience narratives were explored comprehensively.

3.6.3 Sample size

Focus group studies have increased in social science research. With respect to the sample size, the exact number of required focus group interview sessions and participants for gathering meaningful data are still debated. Scholars believe that no strict rules exist on designing how many focus group sessions are exactly required or at least how many participants should be involved in sessions (Carlsen & Glenton, 2011). As a result, they have suggested that the researcher may stop the sessions if he/she deems that data are saturated theoretically (i.e., the data gathered started to be repetitive).

Carlsen and Glenton (2011) identified 220 papers published in 117 journals and found insufficient reporting of sample sizes. Krueger and Casey (2002) suggested that careful recruitment of six to eight participants per group can be justified. However, more than this number may create chaos in the discussion (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Scholars tend to believe that three to four separate discussion sessions may be worthwhile, provided that they confirm the theoretical saturation of data gathering (Carlsen & Glenton, 2011).

Therefore, for compact, in-depth, and convenient data generation, this study conducted four separate focus groups interviews. Each group was shown all three video scenarios and consisted of six participants (with equal segments of guests and employees), which was effective for theoretical data saturation (Breen, 2006; Carlsen & Glenton, 2011; Krueger & Casey, 2002).

3.6.4 Participant recruitment

First, SHTM, PolyU, and Hotel ICON were considered for approaching participants through a convenient approach and via advertisement (i.e., placing posters and notice boards in the campus) by following the recruitment criteria. Second, after the first and second focus group interviews, the participants facilitated the researcher to invite participants from their contacts for subsequent focus group interviews. All available participants were conveniently approached with their consent, provided that they fulfilled the recruitment criteria.

3.6.5 Instrument

3.6.5.1 Focus group procedure

As a research instrument, FGD involves diverse protocols that follow research objectives. As a sophisticated research tool, FGD require the researcher to obey social, gender, and hierarchical golden rules, such as respecting the elders, ladies first, equality, and freedom of speech (Krueger & Casey, 2014). In qualitative research, the theme of the focus group must empower participants, allow them to feel relaxed, and let them speak by engaging their spontaneous willingness to contribute to the important data generation. Scholars have suggested icebreaker questions in the light of the study objectives to induce the participants' willingness or interest in dialogs in view of gradually taking them into an

objective-based discussion (Trianasari, Butcher, & Sparks, 2018). In the case of the present work, before video elicitation, questions asked included “What annoys you in the hotel lobby?” and “What is your best day at the hotel lobby?” Thus, the moderator/researcher was careful in interacting with and directing the participants to ensure a successful discussion at a particular time (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). The effective focus group moderation in the study is explained as follows.

First, the researcher welcomed the participants at the entrance and invited them to sit according to their group, which helped the researcher record their specific mutual sharing of experience. The researcher introduced himself and the helper (i.e., who monitored the computer projector and paused and ran the video scenarios) to the participant group. The participants were emphasized as valuable instruments in the study. They were reminded that their experience and views were essential for exploring the research objectives. They were briefly informed about the discussion session, which included the probable timeframe of the discussion and research topic and objectives. Any questions regarding the research or any terms related to nonverbal communication were entertained. Participants were clearly informed that each video scenario was developed as a stimulus to mimic their original experience, which would allow them to imagine that the role players in the video stimuli were the exemplification of the participants (guest and employee groups). The researcher started by going around the circle of participants and requesting them to introduce themselves briefly.

Second, as a constructivist, the researcher involved the participants in generating their own ideas for discussion. The researcher carefully posed questions to the guest and employee groups to identify and explain nonverbal cues (i.e., kinesics/body language) from

the simulated dyadic nonverbal interaction in the video scenario. This approach helped the researcher contribute to exploring unique guest and employee experiences in their mutual nonverbal behavior. Each focus group was shown all three video scenarios to encourage solid contributions and prompt participants to share their best possible experience in the given period.

Third, each video scenario was shown in the multimedia projector screen. Moreover, the video scenarios needed to be played according to the needs of the discussion (i.e., vivid recollection and additional thoughts). For example, participants intended to watch x and y moments again, pause scenes (still views), and watch slow-motion viewing. Such facilitation (i.e., slow-motion viewing) aimed to help the participants analyze the interaction experience rigorously in detail and supplement their sentiments with recollection from their own experience (Henry & Fetters, 2012; Paskins et al., 2017). The researcher facilitated the focus groups in such a manner that would encourage the two groups (employees and guests) to discuss between each other to emulate the co-creation principle that is central to this study (Dallimore et al., 2007; Gabbott & Hogg, 2000; Henry & Fetters, 2012). The guests and employees were grouped during the FGDs, such that they could take their stake in terms of their own identity (Krueger & Casey, 2014) and thus prompted to imagine and engage themselves in the scenarios to instigate natural and vivid experiences.

This study was neither an experimental study, followed by a survey questionnaire (e.g., Gabbott and Hogg (2000)), nor a hypothesis testing endeavor (e.g., Lim et al. (2016)). Thus, the video projections based on the needs of discussion helped the researcher and focus groups explore nuanced experiences and contribute to their natural recollection,

thereby generating uninterrupted and spontaneous dialogs. This process facilitated the researcher's data generation as well.

This study sought to explore dyadic interaction as the unit of analysis by using videos as stimuli and facilitating an explanation of how employees and guests choose particular responses. Data generation mainly focused on the participants' feelings, recall, and reflection on the role of players' interactions. In each focus group, the video stimuli were used to encourage accurate recollection of the kinesic cues displayed during their real-life interactions. This approach not only aimed to reiterate what occurred but also sought to explore the role of nonverbal communication in the experiences of hotel employees and guests in terms of the individual actions performed by the role players in the video stimuli.

The videotapes were played without sound for uninterrupted concentration on kinesic cues to enable the group interviewees to share an in-depth recollected experience. The focus group interviews were conducted in English. All the focus group interviews were video- and audio-recorded for effective analysis and review and transcribed verbatim in English. Table 3.5 presents the sociodemographic profiles of hotel guests (G) and employees (E) who participated in the FGDs.

Table 3.5 Sociodemographic profiles of hotel guests and employees

Guest	Age	Number of trips (annually)	Gender	Nationality
G-1	26	2	Male	Nigeria
G-2	34	3	Male	America
G-3	28	4	Male	United Kingdom
G-4	28	3	Male	Pakistan
G-5	30	3	Female	China
G-6	20	3	Male	Kazakhstan
G-7	26	4	female	Singapore
G-8	34	4	Male	Ghana
G-9	28	4	Female	Hong Kong
G-10	33	4	Male	Hong Kong
G-11	25	3	Female	China

Employee	Age	Years of work experience	Gender	Nationality
G-12	36	2	Female	Hong Kong
E-1	25	3	Female	Hong Kong
E-2	30	5	Male	Hong Kong
E-3	26	3	Male	Hong Kong
E-4	27	4	Female	Hong Kong
E-5	35	3	Female	Hong Kong
E-6	31	7	Female	Hong Kong
E-7	25	4	Female	Hong Kong
E-8	30	8	Female	Hong Kong
E-9	26	4	Female	Hong Kong
E-10	38	5	Male	Hong Kong
E-11	29	3	Male	Hong Kong
E-12	38	5	Female	Hong Kong

3.6.5.2 Interview questions

Interview questions were developed in accordance with achieving the study objectives embedded in the in-depth exploration of nonverbal interactions between individuals (see Arborelius & Timpka, 1990; Crandall, Hoffman &, Klein, 2007; Kagan, 1980; Henry & Fetters, 2012) and were grounded in the role of the constructivist focus group interviews (see Freeman, 2006; Martin, 2012; McCarty, 2014; Mortell, Ahmad, & Abdullah, 2018).

Before posing questions, the researcher invited employee and guest groups to imagine and relate their hotel guest or employee status to the role players in the video stimuli. This constructivist study set questions as it gradually evolved according to the participants' identification of nonverbal cues from video stimuli. Moreover, probes and prompts were utilized. The patterns of questions based on the kinesic cues and their related actions projected on the screen (video stimuli) ensured the accomplishment of the study objectives from the constructivist focus group interviews.

Three sets of questions were utilized based on the three interaction points at the hotel lobby (i.e., entrance, middle, and front desk points). Some questions in the sets were made similar to understand specific nonverbal expressions/body movements. Such

approach was applied because similar questions that occurred at different interaction points were investigated as to whether their application and importance had any underlying different experiential and engagement attributes on the basis of the varied interaction points (Krueger & Casey, 2002). For example, experience of nonverbal expressions/body movements at the hotel front entrance interaction could be crucial for the moment of truth and may have different implications in service interactions, such as those at the front desk. The questions during the commencement and conclusion of the FGDs were also raised and repeated in the same vein to investigate the in-depth influence of nonverbal behavior in employee–guest experience according to different interaction points.

To establish the content validity of the focus group interview questions, six academicians (thesis committee members) external to this study were consulted. The six experts had extensive practical and academic experience in hotel management, human resource (HR) management, and training. After the suggested remarks (e.g., to emphasize questions that encourage the participants to continue spontaneous dialog and conversation as a matter of FGD norms) were obeyed, the interview questions were administered to a panel of 20 participants to ensure face validity. The researcher solicited the participants' feedback pertaining to the clarity of the questions, as well as the overall easy correspondence of the questions and their logical flow. Several minor comments regarding understandable wordings of questions (i.e., nonverbal cues and kinesics) were suggested and incorporated (i.e., nonverbal expressions/body movements) into the final version of the focus group interview questions.

3.6.5.3 Focus group moderation

The video elicitation interview site included a quiet room convenient for video watching and interviews, where the participants were invited to participate in the FGD. A suitable room from SHTM was reserved according to the needs and availability of participants. As the interview site, a room at SHTM equipped with multimedia facilities, round-seating arrangement, and microphones was convenient for the recruited participants, who were easily accessible around the interview location (i.e., SHTM situated at the prime location of Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong) to attend the FGDs. Each FGD lasted for 2.5 (+) hours. The data collection lasted for three months (July 21–September 22, 2018).

In the focus group interviews, employees and guests (participants) were encouraged to share their mutual experiences in their dyadic interactions, which could precipitate the “halo effect” through receiving or offering mutual partiality, impression, or the same prejudice and reciprocal agreement. Such situation was critical in gathering diverse and significant data. The interview moderator was attentive and careful in handling this situation. For example, while participants were sharing their mutual experience and relating anecdotes of experience co-creation, they could form a bias or interest in one another during the ongoing discussion (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2003). Thus, scholars have insisted on managing the halo effect as much as possible to ensure diverse and significant data (Jensen & Kornellussen, 2002).

The FGD facilitated guest–employee face-to-face encounters as if they were in the actual environment and help deliver their highly personal opinion and experience in detail, which were considered effective contributions to the study outcomes. In this significant backdrop, the halo effect might have restrained the participants from the natural continuation and contribution to natural and meaningful discussions. Nevertheless, the

researcher managed the halo effect by using follow-up questions, such as “Mr. X, can you explain your reason behind it?,” “Mr. Y, why do you think so?,” “Ms X, would you please give some examples?,” or “Ms. Y, would you like to add something to the statement of Ms X?” Furthermore, the management of the halo effect brought effective variations in data gathering in relation to exploring nonverbal interaction between hotel guests and hosts as a medium of experience co-creation.

3.6.5.4 Pilot study

Before the main focus group interviews, a pilot study was undertaken as a recommended process to validate the quality of the interview instrument and ensure a smooth interview moderation and data collection (Van et al., 2001). Accordingly, the interview instrument was tested in one focus group comprising eight participants (with equal segments of guests and employees) in each session. The participants were made aware of the pilot testing of the instrument.

This process had the following aims: (1) to obtain comments on interview questions from the representatives of focus groups (e.g., to check for meaning); (2) to help refine the question structure and ascertain whether more questions must be added or whether some must be removed; (3) to determine the effectiveness of the researcher as a moderator; and (4) to identify more “dos” and “don’ts” for effectively moderating the main interview sessions within the time estimated, such as 2 hours for each FGD (Breen, 2006). The gained lesson, namely, time management, was improved in the final FGD session. The researcher found no awkward wording or unclear sentences, terms, questions in participants’ understanding. However, the researcher felt that 2 hours could be extended to 2.5 hours to cover the projection of all three video scenarios. Thus, in the final focus groups interviews,

each interview lasted for 2.5 hours. Table 3.6 presents the sociodemographic profiles of hotel guests (G) and employees (E) who participated in the pilot FGD.

Table 3.6 Profile of pilot FGD participants

Pilot FGD			
Guest	Age	Gender	Nationality
Bruce	29	Male	China
Laila	24	Female	Kazakhstan
Martin	23	Male	Hong Kong
Mina	24	Female	Hong Kong
Employee	Age	Gender	Nationality
Aiden	25	Male	Hong Kong
Andrea	24	Female	Hong Kong
Doris	23	Female	Hong Kong
Jenet	23	Female	Hong Kong

3.7 Potential researcher bias

Consistent with the epistemological assumptions of the theoretical framework, researcher bias must be disclosed. The researcher is male. He was born and raised in a Muslim culture in Bangladesh. He is a trainer in hospitality communication in Bangladesh by profession. He has 16 years of experience in teaching verbal and nonverbal communication in the hospitality industry. His critical appreciation for anthropology, psychology, and philosophy can be traced as a primary interest where he lives and works. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English language and Literature in 1996 and 2000 in Bangladesh, respectively. He later earned a postgraduate diploma in International Relations in 2013 in Bangladesh and a Master's of Management in International Hospitality Management in 2016 in Thailand. His Master's thesis was on the perceptions of nonverbal communication in Dhaka Hotels.

The researcher's workplace (government hotel and tourism school) is affiliated with an application hotel (government hotel), where he worked as the front office manager for a year. He was then posted as a trainer in the school where he remains affiliated. The

entrance of the school is across the front office (hotel lobby). Thus, for at least 16 years, he has observed interactions in the hotel lobby. For him, the hotel lobby has served as a waiting area either for entering the classroom or catching the bus.

The hotel where the researcher worked and is affiliated with is top-listed in Dhaka for its safety and security. Specifically, it is owned by the state tourism organization and has an average occupancy rate of over 50% international NGO workers and professional visitors (foreign nationalities). The researcher used to witness interactions between guests and employees from the East and the West. He is aware of cross-cultural influences in the perception of nonverbal communication. He has observed verbal communication to be a hindrance in meaningful communication when knowledge of international languages (e.g., English) is limited. By contrast, he found nonverbal communication to be extremely helpful in accurately understanding the needs of guests and hosts. He still remembers an interaction between a guest from Italy and a host from Bangladesh. The Italian guest was visiting Bangladesh to sell paintings. He could speak neither English nor Bengali, but he was able to sell his paintings by describing their meanings using nonverbal cues.

Shedding light on the key identities of the researcher, social status, ethical potentialities (Feighery, 2006) and capacity for investigation (Finlay, 2002) permits the exploration of existing insights, stimulates novel conceptualizations or new directions for further research, and allows this study to attain a secure position in the hospitality academia (McIntosh, 2010).

3.8 Data analysis

If social research serves to disseminate the unexperienced essentials in society, then the first mission of a scientific study is to make the unfamiliar familiar, such that it may be grasped as a phenomenon and manifested through whatsoever methodological procedures may be appropriate in certain situations (Duveen, 2001). However, data analysis in qualitative research generally consists of preparing and organizing data. The examples of data for analysis include text data (e.g., transcripts) that can be derived from multiple methods, such as interviews, FGDs, observations, photographs, and videos in the form of print, verbal, electronic, or recorded information (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Berg, 2007; Patton, 2002). The analysis entails reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and a discussion (Creswell, 2007).

Holloway and Todres (2003) argued that the qualitative research strategy is diverse, for which thematic data analysis can be regarded as a foundational approach given its key benefit of flexibility (Boyatzis, 2009). Currently, thematic analysis (TA) is a major technique in social scientific representation related to exploratory study in human experience because of its effective, nuanced, and generic data treatment (Timberlake, 2015).

3.8.1 Inductive TA approach

The present study adopted inductive TA, which is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within a dataset. The method tersely organizes and provides a nuanced description of datasets with rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Joffe, 2012). Other than the psychology and healthcare domains, the experience and social interaction studies in hospitality and tourism also widely employ the TA approach. Wang,

Kirillova, and Lehto (2017) applied TA to understand the food experience sharing of travelers on social network sites. Similarly, Shani and Uriely (2012) utilized TA to explore the experience of hosting friends and relatives. Harkison, Hemmington, and Hyde (2018) investigated how the luxury accommodation experience is created by investigating the perceptions of managers, employees, and guests. Nawijn, Isaac, Gridnevskiy, and Liempt (2018) explored the expected intensity of the emotional responses of a potential visit of Dutch people to a concentration camp memorial site through a thematic data analysis approach. Shani, Uriely, Reichel, and Ginsburg (2014) studied the importance of emotional labor for hospitality service firms. Knobloch, Robertson, and Aitken (2017) investigated the experience, emotion, and eudaimonia of tourists. Harkison (2018) applied the TA method to understand the experience co-creation for competitive advantage in hospitality organizations.

This study investigated kinesic experiences, identified kinesic cues in terms of experience co-creation, and contemplated the underlying process of kinesics-based experience in face-to-face dyadic interactions between guests and employees. Hence, the inductive TA approach was an appropriate method in data analysis with regard to the study objectives related to the world of human experience and interaction (Krueger & Casey, 2014; Silverman, 2016). In the interactions of focus groups with the exploration of specific study objectives, as well as with most forms of qualitative data, the analysis and data collection are considered continuous (Carey & Asbury, 2012; Green & Thorogood, 2018; Silverman, 2013). In the current study, analysis started after the first focus groups, but more than that of coding, categorization, and theme development were continuous processes as the research evolved (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A sizeable amount of data was collected

from FGDs, which equated to 11 hours and 13 minutes, 175-page transcripts, and a total of 83,907 words. The continuous analysis stages in this study were utilized as discussed in the following section.

3.8.2 Data analysis procedure

The guidelines of TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006) were used in this study for data analysis (Table 3.7). Data analysis was inductive and not based on the study’s conceptual framework. Instead, the conceptual framework helped the researcher observe the boundary or periphery of data analysis. The data analysis for overreaching study objectives enabled the researcher to (1) identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions; (2) identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in terms of co-creation of experience during face-to-face interactions; and (3) outline the process that underlies kinesics-based experience co-creation between guests and employees in hotels.

Table 3.7 Phases of TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87)

Phase	Description of the process
1	Familiarizing yourself with your data Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and rereading the data, and noting down initial ideas
2	Generating initial codes Coding the interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire dataset and collating data relevant to one another
3	Searching for themes Collating codes into potential themes and gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4	Reviewing themes Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire dataset and generating a thematic “map” of the analysis
5	Defining and naming themes Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells and generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6	Producing the report The final opportunity for analysis, which involves the selection of vivid, compelling extract examples; final analysis of selected extracts; relating the analysis to the research question and literature; and producing a scholarly report of the analysis

The researcher utilized the guidelines of Braun and Clarke (2006) to fit the study objectives. The following sections explicitly describe how the framework of Braun and Clarke (Table 3.7; 2006) was used in the data analysis process of the present study.

3.8.2.1 Familiarization with data

After the completion of each FGD, the researcher watched and listened to the audio–video file and took preliminary notes on the overall feeling of the discussion along with the nonverbal expressions of the participants to understand their position in the interactive group discussions (e.g., facial expressions show their feelings while they agreed or disagreed on a particular discussion topic). Basically, this stage enabled the researcher to read each focus group transcript (raw data) from beginning to end to obtain a sense of the entire discussion, the story line, or the phenomenon of bilateral nonverbal interaction in the guest–employee dyad in hospitality settings. This stage mostly involved not more than that of reading data as data. Easygoing engagements were available for seeking data patterns that were interesting and meaningful to use, which Braun and Clarke (2006) addressed as reading the data actively. Nevertheless, the researcher was mindful not to be perused excessively under preliminary noticing(s), provided that they possibly reflected either the most evident features of the data or what the researcher offer to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2014, 2006).

3.8.2.2 Generation of initial codes

Braun and Clarke (2014) accounted coding as a process of identifying the aspects of the data that relate to the study objectives. In qualitative research data analysis, coding can therefore be understood as a manner of organizing the data meaningfully. Moreover, coding can be appreciated as a method for organizing and grouping similarly coded data

into categories or families because they share some characteristics—the beginning of a pattern (Saldaña, 2015). Furthermore, code(s) is a word or phrase that symbolically assigns a collective, salient, essence-capturing, or evocative characteristic for a portion of language-based or visual data (Saldaña, 2015). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that the coding framework used by a researcher depends on whether an analysis is conducted inductively (data-driven) or deductively (theory-driven). The current investigation is an instance of the former type of analysis, where codes generated were credibly linked to the data.

As previously mentioned, this study underwent inductive TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006); hence, codes in this study should be generated in a bottom–up or data-driven approach. Therefore, the researcher considered initial coding with (bracketed) notes in Microsoft (MS) Word (Krueger & Casey, 2014) because such data were interesting, important, or significant (Bryman, 2012). Conversation linking phrases or discourse markers {e.g., [example from transcript] “I think what makes me happy (felt happy) from the video...” [hotel guest] “(smiled and felt relaxed) For me, I also agree with (S) (hotel employee)”} apparently emerged, given that the data were collected from interactive FGDs through video stimuli projected toward hotel guests and employees. Hence, during the initial coding, the researcher also removed discourse markers. Thus, the researcher had to add or rearrange some phrases or markers during the initial coding to create consistency and clarity or fill the gap without influencing the meaning and sequence, such as “to me” instead of “I think at the baseline of the video” or “(showed hand wave) hand waving” instead of “hand gesture.”

In terms of coding, Bryman (2012) outlined an argument that, for some researchers, a theme is more or less the same as a code, whereas for others, it transcends any one code and is constructed out of the groups of codes. On the basis of this argument, the researcher of the present study, on some occasions, considered a certain code as a theme on its own and, on some occasions, a particular theme that emerges from different codes (see example in the following phase). An idea in social science research exists as no single agreed approach to coding or even terminology to characterize the process is available; thus, terms, such as codes, themes, categories, and labels, may be used vice versa (Hammond & Wellington, 2012; Mann, 2016). However, the main goal of the researcher is reflected not in the words but in their meaning (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2015). The foremost concern of the researcher was to look for the semantic and latent meaning/insight that FGD participants made about their understanding of the phenomenon of kinesics behavior under study. In other words, as a constructivist, the researcher retained flexibility and did not follow rigid rules in this specific process of initial coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The core of qualitative research is to look for the meaning or sentiments people make about their social behavior or phenomenon (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2017).

3.8.2.3 Searching for themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) recommended that searching for themes should begin when all data have been initially coded. Searching for themes can be considered the phase where the purposive interpretation of the data actually starts. The process involved the sorting and collation of codes and the extraction of their associated data into primary or potential themes on the basis of the systematic and analytic reflection of the researcher. The aim was to identify the set of main themes and subthemes that helped collate all the

coded data extracts at the end of this stage. The researcher found the credibility of searching themes in the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006). They noted:

“A theme might be given considerable space in some data items, and little or none in others, or it might appear in relatively little of the dataset. So, researcher judgement is necessary to determine what a theme is. (...) Furthermore, the ‘keyness’ of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question.” (p. 82)

In this line of essence, this stage involved the analysis of the data at the lowest level of abstraction (Attride-Stirling, 2001). As in the previous stage, the researcher intended to maintain juxtaposition with the original data and intended to reserve additional interpretive analysis for later stages. Accordingly, patterns between codes and the identification of themes (i.e., kinesic experience) were performed at two levels: semantic/manifest/explicit and latent. What was said or discussed or what was visual and apparent in the data were the focus of semantic-level theme identification. The latent level focused beyond what was said or discussed, which was on the underlying thoughts (i.e., experience and co-creative themes) to interpret or constitute and deliver senses or implication of the phenomenon under research (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Yin, 2017).

The researcher found performing this phase manually and on MS Word convenient (Braun & Clarke, 2006). All the codes were assembled on a Word document, printed out, and highlighted in distinctive colors to appear as a group or family based on commonalities and patterns between them. The codes were separated according to commonalities and patterns and were then again posted on a Word document. Thus, the codes were readily accessible for examination, such as “searching for themes” as the “building blocks” of analysis. Accordingly, the researcher was able to arrange and rearrange group-wise in

different MS Word files and separate and reparate according to types as needed into theme sets. Each group or pile was distinguished by utilizing a short phrase that apprehended the key meaning of the codes it accommodated, and these phrases constituted the first-order or initial themes. When all the codes were reduced into theme sets in this method, the researcher rescrutinized each set. This aided the researcher to determine whether one or more codes assigned to one set would fit better within another, needed to be differentiated to make an alternate theme, or ought to be disposed because of the shortage of relevant or strong supporting material. The researcher’s constant acquaintance and awareness of the line of data facilitated this procedure, given that prompting these decisions often required going back to the level of the original data to check the validity of the identified themes and codes (Braun & Clarke, 2014, 2006). Nevertheless, on occurrences where more than one sense or meaning in a code was significant, these codes were apportioned to more than one theme. Table 3.8 illustrates this process with initial themes and their associated codes.

Table 3.8 Example of processing initial themes

Initial theme	Data extracts	Coded for	
Hotel guest			
Intention of individuality	“The employee tended not to smile or maybe tried to avoid having eye contact with me. I actually was confused and felt sad. I felt maybe my caliber of people was not supposed to be there, maybe I was in the wrong place.”	Guest or employee induces subjective meaning from kinesics exchange	
Intention to have a value-added interaction	“You can see the nonverbal cues of the guest that his smile had disappeared after the staff said something. So he put his hands into his pockets, showing me that he was looking forward to the right answer but he was not getting one.”		
Hotel employee			
Intention of individuality	“If the guest really showed that he was listening to me it was focused into his eyes. If I felt that ‘okay, he seems that he doesn’t care about me,’ even he was polite in his words and in his body gesture, but sometimes you can still feel the atmosphere that what kind of people they are in their body language.”		
Intention to have a value-added interaction	“When the guest is not showing you signals you do not know whether you should go to approach the guest. If they did not show you anybody		

language it meant that the guest did not want you to have any interaction with them.”

3.8.2.4 Reviewing themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that the goal of this stage is to review and refine the different themes and consider whether they cohere with the coded extracts. At the outset, themes were scrutinized for internal homogeneity by reading all the coded data extracts that belong to each theme and for external homogeneity by examining the existence of adequate differentiation among themes (Patton 2002). This process was also suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a two-level theme reviewing (see the initial thematic map in Figure 3.3).

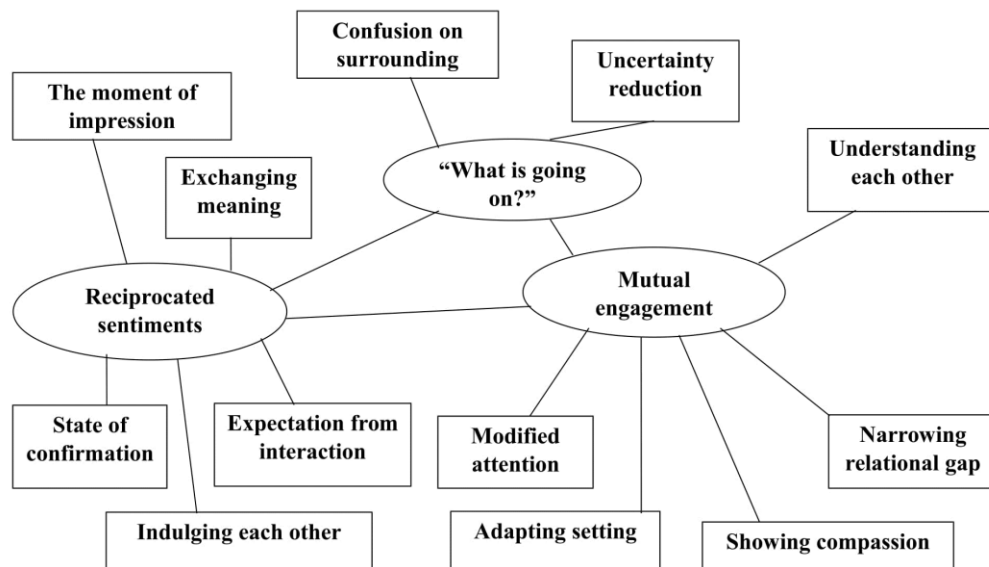


Figure 3.3 Initial thematic map

Some sub-themes were collapsed into one, and some were renamed and thus developed toward finalizing the thematic map (Figure 3.4). Thus, the researcher made

revisions over several times. After several revisions, two main themes (i.e., kinesics and experience) were finalized with three sub-themes each (Figure 3.5). During the phase of internal homogeneity check, the researcher aimed to scrutinize engagement dynamics for the experience co-creation between guests and employees, which were semantic and latent in dataset within the developed themes. In this process, the researcher identified two distinctive thematic concepts embedded in the experience co-creation purposive for Study Objective 2 (e.g., the construction of experience co-creation with the characteristics of kinesics behavior shaped from guest side as complacent kinesic expressions or body language and from the employee side as imperative kinesic expressions or body language). Thus, this phase was accomplished with Braun and Clarke as follows (2006):

“(...) as coding data and generating themes could go on ad *infinitem*, it is important not to get over-enthusiastic with endless recoding. It is impossible to provide clear guidelines on when to stop, but when your refinements are not adding anything substantial, stop!” (p. 92)

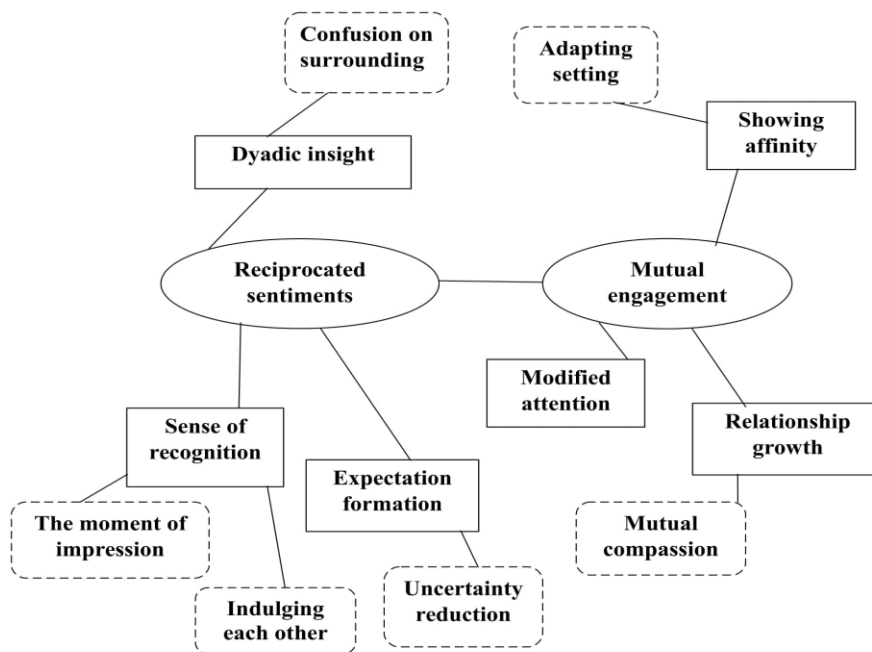


Figure 3.4 Developed thematic map

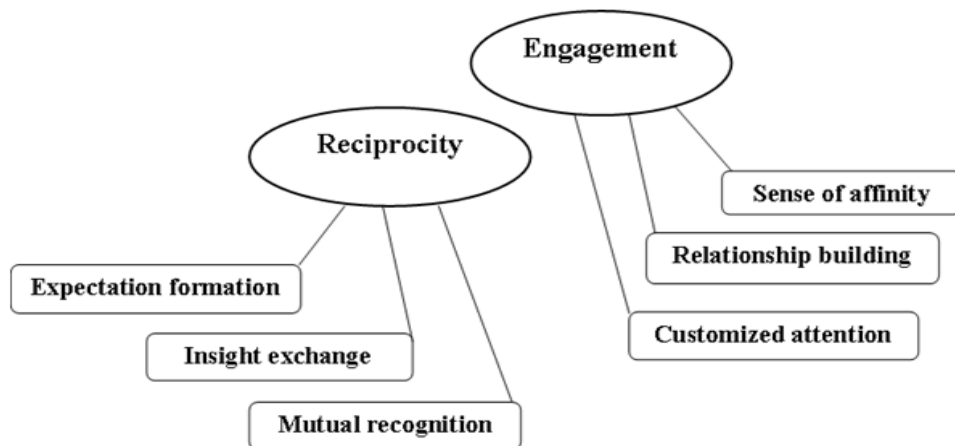


Figure 3.5 Final thematic map

3.8.2.5 *Defining and naming themes*

The thematic mind maps, developed in the preceding phase, served the purpose of defining the themes because they provide a visual representation of the themes and how they fit together and the overall story they tell about the data. Short descriptions were developed for each theme that encompassed its scope and content in relation to the research objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Basically, the implication of this phase is as follows:

“By ‘define and refine’, we mean identifying the ‘essence’ of what each theme is about (as well as the themes overall), and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures. It is important not to try and get a theme to do too much, or to be too diverse and complex.” (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 92)

Moreover, data within each theme were also analyzed to scrutinize the existence of potential sub-themes. In the present study, the themes derived cover the entire process that underlies the kinesics-based experience co-creation, which may be reflected as a relatively large area of exploration. As recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), sub-themes are “(...) useful for giving structure to a particularly large and complex theme, and also for demonstrating the hierarchy of meaning within the data” (p.92). Working titles that were

developed during the previous stages were finalized, considering that the names of themes should be succinct and could afford a clear sense of what the theme is about (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.8.2.6 Producing the report

Procuring the report is indicated as the chapter of results and discussion to tell the complicated story of study data in a way that convinces the reader of the merit and validity of the researcher analysis. The report of the current study was produced in the following chapter as reflected in Braun and Clarke (2006):

“Extracts must be embedded within an analytic narrative that compellingly illustrates the story you are telling about your data, and your analytic narrative must go beyond the description of the data and make an argument in relation to your research question.” (p. 93)

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through a constructivist lens, this study adopted a rigorous qualitative approach and used inductive thematic data analysis to identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions and identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in triggering co-creation of experience during these interactions. In addition, the process that underlies kinesics-based experience co-creation between guests and employees in hotels was outlined. The scope of this study involved exploring new insights into the world as existing within. The semiotic world of signs and symbols and how individuals evoke emotion and meaning concerning interactions between individuals' experiences and their sentiments, which are co-sharable and inter-thinkable, motivate individuals to elicit a relational response. Such a phenomenon of interactions between individuals has yet to be documented before, which this study attempted, with the ultimate goal of exploring its original framework.

This chapter presents and discusses the findings in the context of reviewed literature in nonverbal communication, S-D logic, and hospitality management. However, the reviewed literature in communication can be considered in the streams of nonverbal behavior and psychology. To help in understanding the subsequent sections of the results and discussion (i.e., Sections 4.2 and 4.3) in the light of coherent narratives of the study (Merriam & Grenier, 2019), first, this chapter briefly focuses on the overview of findings (Section 4.1), such as kinesics (body language) experience and engaging kinesic cues in guest–employee dyads. Second, Section 4.2 objectively discusses in detail two major themes, including their sub-themes that have emerged from the data. Third, Section 4.3 describes kinesic cues that engage guests and employees in the experience co-creation in

hospitality settings. Finally, Section 4.4 presents Study Objective 3 in an in-depth discussion to understand the process that underlies kinesics-based experience co-creation in hotels.

4.1 Overview of findings

In light of the three research objectives, experience and its co-creation occurred contextually in the dyadic nonverbal interactions between the hotel guests and the employees. Corresponding to Study Objective 1, which was to identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions, two major domains of experiential dimensions emerged from the data, namely, (1) *reciprocity* and (2) *engagement*. In *reciprocity*, hotel guests and employees experienced interaction in a mutually beneficial manner to fulfill expected objectives and build the kinesic experience in hotels. In *engagement*, participants (guests and employees) were motivated to build a relational foundation of loyalty to each other in moderating the means to foster mutual relationships. Overall, the participants' expressive emotions (i.e., smiles, nods, facial expressions, and body orientations) exhibited during the moment of truth promoted the experience as an actor's subjective response to dyadic kinesic cue exchange, mediated by the guests' and employees' beliefs and their elicitation of relational response.

Study Objective 2 was to identify kinesic cues that engaged hotel guests and employees in experience co-creation during face-to-face interactions. The findings revealed that the joint creation of value by the employees and guests allowed them to become engaged in co-constructing memorable experiences to suit their individual contexts. Guests and employees seemed interested in becoming engaged with each other

for their experience co-creation in two ways, namely, imperative kinesic expressions from employees and complacent kinesic expressions from guests. Findings showed that for the hotel guests, *imperative kinesic expressions* of employees are reflected as a sense of value, such as stimuli of willingness to help, sincerity, consciousness, and helpful portrayal apparent in the body language of hotel employees. By contrast, for the hotel employees, *complacent kinesic expressions* of guests are reflected as a sense of value, such as stimuli of pleasure, self-satisfaction, absence of anxiety, an easygoing mood, and being undemanding. These expressions are advantageous in a given situation and are apparent in the body language of guests without potential risk or defect. Thus, the mutual exchange of imperative (employee) and complacent (guest) kinesic expressions trigger the engagement of the participants in co-creating memorable experiences.

Study Objective 3 was drawn from the first two objectives to outline the process that underlay kinesics-based experience co-creation between guests and employees in hotels. This objective explained experience co-creation process in hotels by examining its core experience dimensions. Specifically, how the dimensions of kinesic experience occurred between hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions and advanced co-creation were coherently discussed in light of the S-D logic and theories of nonverbal communication.

4.2 Kinesic experience in guest–employee dyads (Objective 1)

Two major themes emerged from the data, namely, *reciprocity* and *engagement*. Under each major theme, three unique sub-themes were observed as follows: for *reciprocity*, the sub-themes were (1) mutual recognition, (2) insight exchange, and (3) expectation formation; and for *engagement*, the sub-themes were (1) customized attention,

(2) relationship building, and (3) sense of affinity. All sub-themes are discussed in coherent narratives in accordance with thematic phases that encompass the sentiments of hotel guests and employees (study participants). Figure 4.1 shows the themes of kinesic experience in guest–employee dyads in hotels.

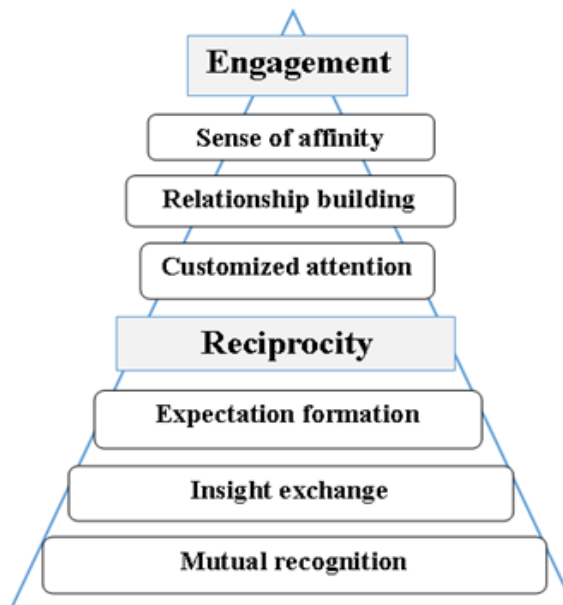


Figure 4.1 Themes of kinesic experience in guest–employee dyads in hotels

4.2.1 Kinesics as reciprocity

Kinesics as *reciprocity* is the first main theme that was noted by most hotel guests and employees in the study. Both groups valued the sense of reciprocity as the nucleus to fulfill expectations and build eventual kinesic experiences in hotels. The domain of *reciprocity* identified how hotel guests and employees were purported to exchange kinesic cues to break the ice and reconcile their strangeness to each other in a new place (i.e., hotel premises). The participant groups (guests and employees) indicated self-efficacy; that is, the confidence in their ability to exhibit kinesics (body language), which was credible and

sensible to exchange mutual sentiments (e.g., individual interpretation of cues that were exchanged), and expectations of desired cues for further experience. Overall, the guests and employees were mutually keen and determined to exchange a favorable kinesic cue with another favorable kinesic cue, in which body language is rewarded by establishing meaningful face-to-face interactive experiences (i.e., signal or stimuli of recognition, meaningfulness, and mutuality through nonverbal cue exchange) in hotels. Overall, the *reciprocity* theme involves three sub-themes: (1) mutual recognition, (2) insight exchange, and (3) expectation formation. Each sub-theme is described in the following subsections with exemplification of data extracts.

4.2.1.1 Mutual recognition

Guests and employees were interested in recognizing each other by showing their initial attention by kinesic cue exchange, which was generally viewed as a critical way of reciprocation to create the benefits of mutual acknowledgment in guest–employee dyads. Mutual recognition by kinesics behavior (body language) enabled guests and employees to reconcile their strangeness during service encounters, thereby helping shape initial hospitality experiences, such as certainty, comfort, and motivation. According to a guest, “[It’s] really a great experience opening when you display body language, some cues, or show some approval for somebody else or some acknowledgment and they reciprocate you” (G-3). Mutual recognition also allowed the execution of mutual bonds and initiate the trail of intimacy between the guests and employees. By contrast, the lack of exchange of favorable kinesic cues may signal guests’ and employees’ frustration and insecurity, as described by another guest, “If I didn’t get any acknowledgment when I came in, I would feel resentment or sadness or anger or any of these strong emotions” (G-6). An employee

stated that in the absence of recognition signals, hotel guests might wonder, “Have I arrived in the right place?” (E-1). Overall, this sub-theme contributed to structuring memorable experiences in hotels and driving individual kinesis experiences to a meaningful whole, such as fulfilling expectations, adjusting or adapting cues for further experience, and grounding and fostering relationships by affinity cues in guest–employee dyads.

Our findings showed that the guests and employees increasingly wanted to accentuate the need for recognition to emphasize the superiority of individuals’ distinctive identity. Their feelings confirmed that they were in search of individuality and acknowledgment of each other; thus, “I am the hotel guest” and “I am the hotel employee” were the mottos that expressed their sentiments. Furthermore, the action of *mutual recognition* seemed to determine the hotel guests’ and employees’ preliminary gateway to their subsequent experience, which would be either memorable or forgettable. This situation moderated guests’ and employees’ mental states of pleasure and sadness during their usual face-to-face interactions in hotels. In addition, an interviewee said,

“Right before entering the hotel, the employee was nodding to me, which made me feel respected and recognized. (...) His attention was really following me with pleasure, even though it was just a few seconds.” (G-3)

While commenting on the episode of a guest entering a hotel, guests and employees felt that reciprocation of kinesis cues (i.e., nodding their head as a response to another cue, such as smiles and eye contact) let them feel respected and recognized, and their mutual attention by kinesis signals facilitated memorable experiences. By contrast, transmitting a *bad mood* toward hotel guests was felt if hotel employees (1) did not offer a *welcome* gesture by exhibiting due attention in standing body posture and (2) remained unwilling to smile. This observation is evident in the following comment:

“The staff (front desk) was sitting instead of standing up to welcome the guest. She (employee) was sitting, not smiling. If she was in a bad mood, of course, the guest will be also in a bad mood.” (E-7)

These findings indicated that psychological participation is more critical than physical participation in interactional value perception; the unfavorable disposition of an employee would affect the guests (i.e., through a similar return of emotions). The authenticity of employees’ emotional expressions directly affects guests’ emotional states, as asserted in ECT (Hatfield et al., 1993). Participation from the physical perspective includes body movements, whereas interactants’ cognitive actions, such as learning and tracing information, result in the determination of psychological participation. However, these findings can also be argued following the premises of environment fit paradigm. The level of alignment between the characteristics of individuals, such as values, goals, and identity, and those of the environment (i.e., organizational culture and co-interactant) influence their attitude and behavior (Cable & Edwards, 2004; Pervin, 1968). In the vein of this justification, our findings show that services for guests and services from employees have monetary and experiential value. Guests’ service expectations and employees’ service responsibilities require mutual recognition for their co-existence, co-empowerment, and shared memorable experiences in hotels. The empirical quantitative study of Jamal and Adelowore (2008) on the consumer–employee relationship in marketing may be further worthy to refine the above argument that consumers and employees generally prefer each other with an image that is fitting and identical; for example, how and why they stand for each other through shared sociality and dignity. The similar notion reflected our context that attention- and acknowledgment-oriented cues (body language) exchange generated

feelings of recognition, respect, pleasure, and motivation in guest–employee dyads. Thus, the reverse resulted in ignorance, sadness, and inhospitality.

With regard to the sense of recognition, most guests and employees specifically noted the hotel entrance as having utmost importance in creating a first impression because (1) “showing recognition to each other gives a positive impression when we first step into the hotel” (E-9), and (2) recognition serves as “an icebreaking and confirmation (...). It is also a signal to tell you to go further” (E-6). Similarly, the hotel guest asserted that “I felt very welcomed because of the staff, who acknowledged me to approach to the lobby” (G-3). According to a senior front desk manager (E-11), the first impression was the “first experience” and “the key in the hotel industry.” The study participants further reiterated that a nonverbal “hello” at the door exhibited in kinesic cues was effective for their first memorable experience in hotels. Before exhibiting this gesture, the doorman’s waiting posture and the hand placement when opening the door, which was accompanied by a hospitable facial expression, impressed the hotel guests and made them feel acknowledged. A similar recognition impression was also felt by hotel employees when their kinesic performance, such as their smiles and greetings, were reciprocated by guests in kinesic cues. In the following excerpts, the criticality of first impressions was voiced by participants who were recognized by their body language:

“Once [the guest] saw [the] doorman of the hotel stationed at the entrance, waiting for her and smiling at her, [and then nodding and opening] the door, [she] could see his hands, and his gesture was pleasant. He opened the door and [gestured] ‘hello.’” (G-2)

“When I greeted [the guest], she responded to me, and it was a great feeling for me. After [being near to] the door, she further nodded her head and smiled back, which made me feel relaxed.” (E-8)

At the hotel entrance, the state of guests' and employees' first impressions in kinesic cues supported the findings of Willis and Todorov (2006), who implied that recognition performed and reciprocated nonverbally (i.e., receiving guests with a smile and its reciprocation) at first sight affects the first impressions between interactants. Thus, to highlight the value of recognition, Smith (2007) suggested that individuals should be proactive during their face-to-face nonverbal cue exchange. This suggestion was also observed in this study. For example, G-4 reflected that "the smile is really a recognition thing for you when you come into the hotel. It is natural that I want to be greeted and be seen." The seminal paper of Sundaram and Webster (2000) is relevant in its suggestion of nonverbal recognition behavior in hotels. This paper argued that verbal communication is not suitable for delivering information with an impression effect. By contrast, nonverbal communication that occurs with kinesics (i.e., facial expression and posture) is important to signify information with impression in guest–employee dyads. In a restaurant setting, Jung and Yoon (2011) found that kinesics has a significant effect on customers' positive first impression. In education and healthcare, namely, in teacher–student and patient–doctor interaction, kinesics is important for the implication of effective first impressions. When teachers enter a classroom with a pleasant body language, the students feel relaxed in class (Babad, Bernieri, & Rosenthal, 1991). Furthermore, doctors' smiling and caring body orientation at first sight calms patients' trauma during physical check-ups (DiMatteo et al., 1979). Although these studies were not directed toward the need for *mutual recognition*, the feelings of relaxation and comfort among students and patients can be considered a form of first impression effect. The findings of the present work also showed

the effect and need for mutual recognition for the first impression by kinesic cue exchange in hospitality dyads.

Beyond the entrance, guests and employees still seemed to continue seeking the acknowledgment and sense of individuality in subsequent interaction points, such as the lobby area (i.e., interaction between guest and greeter or guest service agent) and the front desk during check-in. Perhaps they increasingly wanted to assure self-identity and self-efficacy for beneficial collaboration in hotels until their relationship progressed. The findings demonstrated that after the entrance, the guests and employees wanted to reinforce their mutual recognition across the hotel. Thus, they seemed to remain mutually bonded by exchanging acknowledgment signals. However, a comparison of the findings on mutual recognition at the entrance and that in the lobby area, including the check-in process, indicated that the feelings of recognition were not in similar streams. Recognition through kinesic exchange at the hotel entrance mostly delivered or caused the experience of the first impression (i.e., pleasure, the absence of which caused dejection or inhospitality in guest–employee dyads). However, the recognition value by kinesic cues at lobby area and check-in process affects their motivation, satisfaction, and including those feelings of frustration if they do not appropriately recognize each other. The following describes the motivation for future interaction with the hotel during the check-in process:

“[...] Because of her [guest] response, I felt quite positive and motivated, and I also felt the recognition because I [felt] that I was the one who made her feel better, and that gave me a sense of satisfaction as well.” (E-7)

The findings confirmed that recognition by kinesics can advance the identity image and self-esteem of individuals. For example, from a professional perspective, a hotel employee may remain out of the way from the focus of a memorable experience. Generally,

his/her feelings of the semiotic world of signs and symbols were never acknowledged but did exist. However, the hotel employee desires to be recognized. When hotel employees are recognized, they feel relaxed, motivated, and satisfied. A guest's nodding and smile, as reciprocation or response to an employee's greetings, bring a sense of professional achievement to the employee. The feelings of hotel staff were expressed during rush check-in moments. When kinesic expressions of the hotel employee toward the guest were not exhibited properly, a simple reciprocated recognition drove employees to experience motivation and satisfaction. They saw the gesture as a matter of job achievement or self-worth evaluation. The value of these sentiments is associated fairly well with Butler (1999), who noted that a task involvement activity often results in challenging attributions and increasing effort, whereas typically, an individual is positioned in activities and has opportunities to learn and develop competency. Thus, when hotel employees' cues were reciprocated by guests, the former experienced intrinsic motivation, which could be defined as striving to engage in activities due to self-satisfaction. Therefore, during rush moments or under pressure, hotel employees felt successful as long as their efforts were recognized.

By contrast, hotel guests' and employees' frustration or demotivation occurred when they were not treated based on their identity. For example, after the entrance, guests wanted once again to become identified or acknowledged at the hotel lobby. One guest said, "I am a guest, see me in the due manner" (G-12). By contrast, an employee expressed, "The guest was smiling, he was approaching the employee, which means maybe he had a good experience at the entrance, and he passed through a very nice employee at the entrance" (E-6). The hotel employee might think that he/she did not need to acknowledge the guest again, but the hotel guest recalled his/her previous experience: "My only

emotions would be, I would be on the way to the manager, I would take necessary actions, I might even write to the hotel to ask for a discount. This staff avoided me” (G-8). During check-in, another guest vented, “The receptionist didn’t actually look at my face, gave no attention. The first thing was that ‘passport.’ ‘This is your room key’ [hand gesture]. ‘You may go now...’ like that” (G-9).

These sentiments reinforced that individuals wanted to be acknowledged with the due signal of manner and respect in every initial projection of cues during interaction, regardless of the location (whether at the door or the front desk). They seemed to restore and advocate their identity at the first exchange of kinesics, which was the conscious or unconscious exchange of identical gaze in guest–employee dyads. This trend of behavior likely occurred because humans are rational beings who aspire for rewards, such as recognition and reciprocity. In addition, when the nature of rewards in a given situation is not clear or casual, individuals act on the expectation of rewards; our findings indicated recognition by kinesic cues as a reward (Littlejohn & Foss, 2010). By contrast, in view of ACT, people try to balance their communication to maintain a comfortable relationship during social interactions, specifically in nonverbal interactions. Individuals’ proactive and collaborative behaviors positively affect affiliative outcomes, such as motivation and satisfaction in interactions (Argyle & Dean, 1965). Thus, perhaps a common view among guests and employees was that the habit of a quick smile and spontaneous body orientation were a desired behavior for recognition. The moment of instant responsiveness by kinesic cues affected individuals’ emotions. Therefore, the hotel guests and employees pointed out recognition behavior as a good habit. If this habit was not used in time, apathy or frustration

from staying in hotels would occur; thus, the process of having a memorable experience seemed uncertain and participants perceived uncomfortable situations in hotels.

4.2.1.2 *Insight exchange*

In hotels, guests and employees seemed aware of inciting the meaning of nonverbal cues that they exchanged. They tended to criticize the symbolic sense of kinesic cues to realize the prospects of their relational elements: “[...] A couple of good and bad issues occurred in their interaction [...]; the first bow was for respect, the second bow was a way of showing that I (employee) am actually listening to you (guest) (G-2). After having a *recognition* experience, hotel guests and employees were likely to fulfill the requirements of a successful interaction (i.e., *expectation formation*) to meet their goals, such as meaningful values in interaction or in exchange, such as G-9, who was searching for meaningful values from the interaction: “the guest was very angry. Unintentionally or intentionally, why is he (employee) standing up? Looking and talking to me like that? And he’s like ordering me. This situation looked very insincere.” Thus, they preferred to judge the meaningful value of cues. Overall, the findings revealed that hotel guests and employees could mutually perceive the quality of interaction, and the quality of the counterpart’s traits from the exchange of nonverbal cues (i.e., advantages, usefulness, and meaningfulness). The guests and employees were also in a state of labeling particular insights to the particular cue, whether they were superficial or deep (i.e., sincere); for example, the sentiment of G-7 in this regard was as follows: “I’ve seen a lot people just put the key on the counter [...] and say, ‘Here’s the key,’ and it’s rude. It’s not actually any kind of body language.” The insight of the guest seemed to underscore that suitable and

trustworthy expressive emotions could contribute to a successful face-to-face dyadic interaction.

The analysis of findings indicated that most guests and employees agreed that individuals, by human nature, could display or exchange kinesic cues consciously and unconsciously; however, face-to-face interactions may be unable to cast meaningful cues or may not be aimed at benefiting the counterparts due to the lack of awareness of the effect of cues. For example, E-10 commented, “Anyone can nod, anyone can have eye contact and anyone can bow. Whether it is sincere, suitable or not, as employees, we should understand what could make a difference on whether customers would want to come back to the hotel again or not.”

Thus, knowledge of kinesic cue displays is important for individuals’ interaction satisfaction. In a given situation, such as in the hospitality setting, the effective clarification of an appropriate cue display sense, such as in nodding, eye contact, and bowing, may make a difference in guests’ appraisal. The similar emphasis during check-in was augmented further from G-9’s spontaneous feelings: “All went natural. Maybe she was doing this procedure many times. I felt that she knew what to do. I felt like the check-in time was short, smooth.” Such sentiments demonstrated that experiential messages from kinesic cues, such as reliability, smoothness, and quickness, in the hospitality setting could be a realistic expectation in guest–employee dyadic interactions. The insights observed in these findings mirror those of the previous theoretical concepts that have postulated the effect of kinesics in a typical service encounter (Gabbott & Hogg, 2000; Yuksel, 2008), but not in the context of experiential perceptions in a dyadic form.

As evident in the literature (Gabbott & Hogg, 2000; Sundaram & Webster, 2000), insights into kinesic cues could generally be similar across different interaction points in hotels. The literature does not adequately indicate whether observing various insights in different situations is possible. In the present study, the analysis of findings confirmed that insights into the kinesic exchange that were induced by guests and employees during interactions in different points of hotels were not similar. At the hotel entrance, the way of exploring insights of cues was focused on judging the personality characteristics of the cues' players (i.e., guests and employees). Conversely, in the hotel lobby and check-in counter, insights into kinesic cues seemed to be concentrated on the characteristics of interactions, not on players. The reasons could be due to the length of the encounter. Interaction length at hotel entrance is considerably shorter for those of the lobby and front desk. For example, hotel employees obtained insights from the guests' kinesic or body movements during their hotel entrance:

“I can tell from the pace of her walk and how she enters the door that she has a very goal-oriented behavior [...] Maybe [she needs] to get in as quickly as possible to meet a friend in the hotel” (E-5).

“I could roughly guess the background of the guest or his status when he arrived at the hotel. Here, the guest might be coming for a business trip because she looked busy. She might need to rush to a meeting or he was tired of the meeting schedules” (E-9).

By contrast, hotel guests' regarding hotel employees' kinesics at the entrance were as follows:

“(...) his hands are crossed, so I understand that maybe a kind of professional and also to me as submissive.” (G-7)

“He (doorperson) was very gentle. His greetings by nodding tell that this is a good place. The people are disciplined here...” (G-3)

The above findings demonstrated that kinesic cues played a role in introducing guests and employees to each other. In one example, the hotel employee identified the guest through her body language as a business traveler and a goal-oriented woman who looked personally busy with schedules and meetings. Hotel guests induced the insights of the employees' personalities, such as being gentle, professional, submissive, and disciplined. These insights kept them aware of how to behave and act toward each other based on developed perceptions or judgments, which are the starting points in developing their reliance on each other. Expressive emotional identification affects and trains interactants to achieve respective interactional goals, such as trust, respect, and satisfaction (Ashkanasy, Härtel, & Daus, 2002). These findings substantiate the previous literature that although personality identifications through nonverbal cues are conceivable in a general face-to-face interaction context (Bonaccio, O'Reilly, O'Sullivan, & Chiochio, 2016; Mehrabian, 2017), they do not provide a clear and consistent discussion of different sequences, such as guest–employee dyads in a hotel context and doctor–patient dyads in a hospital context, by which individuals are likely to judge each other's personality or characteristics. The idiographic perspective of Cone (1986) can provide insights based on the findings of the present work on why guests and employees identified each other's personalities at the entrance. Cone stated that individuals are not merely a collection of separate traits but are a well-integrated organism. Individuals act and react as a system to various situations with past experiences in similar situations and with future intentions contributing to present behavior. Cone also argued that individuals shape their personality by self-learning and by others' learning to gain personality benefits, such as trust, respect, and satisfaction. Individuals acquire knowledge through experience that leads them to an

enduring change in personality. Perhaps, that is the reason why guests and employees displayed such kinesics (i.e., a sign of business traveler and gentle in manner) with which they let each other become attentive to achieve or retain their respective objectives (i.e., trust, respect, and satisfaction). Possibly, they might have previous memorable experiences by behaving in the above manner as Cone indicated. Furthermore, Kraus (1995) indicated that personality is moderated by the current behavior style. For individuals to show a target personality, they (1) must be suitably motivated (i.e., pleasure/pain, hope/fear, or acceptance/rejection), (2) should have the ability (i.e., time, physical effort, or social deviance) to perform the behavior, and (3) must be triggered (i.e., signal) to perform the behavior. These factors must occur simultaneously; otherwise, the behavior will not occur, and the personality will not be perceived. Thus, at the entrance or at the initial phase of face-to-face interaction, hotel guests, such as business travelers, wanted to trigger or shape their personality by their walking style or bodily movements to elicit the attention of the doorman at the beginning of interaction, such that they will be treated properly. Meanwhile, the doorman, through his submissive, gentle, and professional body language, will let the guests feel that the hotel staff are ready for such a customer.

By contrast, most guests and employees revealed their insights into kinesic exchange in the hotel lobby and check-in counter, which seemed to focus on the characteristics of interaction. In one instance, after entering, a hotel guest continued his interaction in the lobby with a greeter and at the check-in counter with the receptionist. Given the placements of kinesics and body orientation, such as at the lobby, the employee kept his hands at the back constantly during conversation, which gave the guest a sense of unfavorable and unsuccessful interaction and implied uncertain prospects of service

consumption. For instance, while the hotel guest and employee were negotiating in the scenario-ii set in the hotel lobby, G-11 commented, “If I kept my hands behind my back while talking, it would almost say like, ‘I’m listening, but I am not listening to you. I am just waiting until you finish talking and I don’t understand what you’re communicating.’” This situation indicated that the guest was seeking favorable cues from the employee that could give him interactional value or value in exchange, thereby obtaining information on their ongoing interactional relationship. As asserted in URT (Berger & Bradac, 1975), an interactant, when interacting, needs information or clues about the other interactant to understand or predict the quantity and probability of outcomes that can occur in a given situation. The central tenet of URT further confirms that when the interactants remain undefined or uncertain to each other in their exchange of nonverbal cues, two types of uncertainty emerge during mutual interaction stages, namely, (1) cognitive uncertainty—uncertainty about their own and their counterparts’ attitudes— and (2) behavioral uncertainty—uncertainty in their prediction and justification of their own and their counterpart’s actions. Thus, mutual information helps interactants anticipate each other’s behavior, which is necessary for reciprocal relationship development. Hence, in the above context, hotel employee’s constant style of *keeping his hands at the back* while talking could not give the guest cognitive and behavioral certainty, but triggered the sense of service improbability and indicated that he was not attentively listening to the guest. By contrast, interaction was observed to be comfortable and esteemed due to finding meaning from asking guests, who seemed to have traveled a long distance, to have a seat. For example, E-2 proposed the following insights into such a situation in the lobby interaction: “He offered the guest [a seat], which made the guest comfortable, because the guest might

be coming from a long distance, so if you offered him a seat, it could make him more comfortable.” With regard to check-in interaction, similar insights were established by the hotel guest and the employee.

“At the very beginning, the guest came over to the counter, listening but he was only crossing his arms. It meant that ‘Ok, I’m not patient. I’m tired.’ But later on, after she broke the ice, he started to put his arms on the desk. It showed that ‘I would like to have a closer relationship with you.’” (E-1)

“When she was pointing [showed pointing gesture], she was not doing like this, but she was doing this, like a palm (showing the size/measure by hands), like putting all the fingers together. It would be easier to draw the guest’s attention and get to know what the staff had mentioned and get the information from the staff.” (G-8)

These findings showed that guests and employees were aware of using meaningful cues to generate quality interaction or beneficial interaction. Although previously, the guest was impatient and tired, by putting his arms on the desk, he/she presented a trustworthy image to the employee. In a similar vein, the hotel employee could produce an interaction by using palm gestures and figure pointing to ensure comprehensive information for the guest who simultaneously experienced an interaction that was easy, attentive, and successful. The findings related to reasons of different insights, such as criticism of personality experience at the entrance and criticism of interaction experience at the hotel lobby and check-in counter, can be examined through the ideas Blumer (1969) and Griffin (2012), who argued that individuals are best understood in a practical, interactive relation to their environment. These scholars postulated this relation as a symbolic interaction that is mainly formed by individuals’ own meanings and thoughts. Individuals act toward others based on the meanings that are given to others.

In this line of symbolic premises of interaction, hotel guests and employees mutually acted and perceived following the symbolic sense that they found from the cues

in the interactive relation to their particular environment, such as entrance, lobby, and check-in counter. Thus, their thoughts motivated them to act and perceive their kinesic exchange differently. By demonstrating kinesics/body language as an exchange of insights, this study holds the value of human behavior that was moderated by symbolic meanings induced by individuals. The exchange of kinesics in guest–employee dyads in hotels help exchange insights into their personality and characteristics of interaction with which they may assume the potential of experiencing beneficial collaboration.

4.2.1.3 Expectation formation

Most guests and employees indicated that they should cultivate and expect from each other such kinesics that might fulfill their beneficial experiences in hotels. They felt that to balance their kinesic exchange, they should expect desired cues that were not fulfilled during their face-to-face interaction. They seemed to reflect that they should notice the changes in their mutual kinesic exchange, such as the changes in facial expressions or modes of body language during the interaction. They believed that the observation on changes in facial expressions or body language helped them determine their performance in measuring and proposing cues for quality interaction (i.e., high or low quality). In certain circumstances, the changes in body language urged them to expect the additional cues' performance that could compensate critical situations (i.e., unfavorable cue exchange or needed the improvement of exchange); for example, E-3 stated, "Although the employee had tried his best, he could have improved [further] by helping the guest, which can [impress] the customer further. Just smiling and everything he performed was not enough. What [other important gesture] could he do?" The employees observed this situation (i.e., the guest seemed disheartened in the employee's unfavorable kinesic exchange at the

lobby) from their previous professional experience that it was evident that in a critical situation (i.e., service failure), guests might have formed further expectation of favorable cues. For example, in this scenario, the employee invited the guest to have a seat through hand gesture, which could be an additional cue expectation formation after the guest seemed disheartened. Participants (i.e., guests and employees) agreed that they expected other beneficial signals for memorable experiences (i.e., helpful body orientation and being escorted to seats, elevator, or room) that may exceed expectations, thereby influencing their emotion of eagerness for each other. Thus, reconciling cues' expectation may uplift the quality of interaction (i.e., high-quality interaction). S-D logic also emphasized the contribution of high-quality interaction in guests' and employees' psychological and emotional engagement for effective experience management (Chathoth et al., 2019). Necessarily, mutual expectation formation for desired kinesics implied guests' and employees' intention to create and co-exist in such an interactive environment that could be fulfilled by spontaneous signals of enthusiasm and eagerness. G-1 claimed, "The employee should never show [a 'no' gesture] to the guest. He should explain to the guest or find another way to deal with this situation, so that [the guest will] be eager to stay in the hotel." This statement indicated that guests expected signs and stimuli in body language that avoided a negative gesture or unhelpfulness in critical moments, such as failure to offer the desired service and the circumstances of serving several guests simultaneously.

The analysis of findings indicated that high-quality interaction cues (i.e., those that evoke emotion, enthusiasm, and eagerness; and those that correspond to relational attributes) helped hotel guests and employees collaborate with each other for memorable

experiences. The discrete intention of beneficial collaboration is evident in the following sentiments of hotel guests and employees:

“I want to advise the employee to notice the changes in facial expressions of the guest because everybody could see that the guest was coming with a smile, and then his facial expressions changed all the time and in the end, he (the guest) was very angry and disappointed. The employee should notice this and respond to him...” (G-5)

“When he (the employee) offered the guest a seat, he just listened and nodded. But when he shook his head to reject the guest, I think he should at least apologize to the guest. I think he did not give any signal of apologies and just asked the guest to sit down and listen to him.” (E-12)

These sentiments of the guests and employees seemed to solve the crisis of their kinesic exchange through the value of the exchange, which is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary (i.e., the guests and employees; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Vargo & Lusch, 2006). As such, the exchange value of hospitality to remain collaborative partners balances the benefits or experience outcomes, as suggested by Smith and Colgate (2007). Hotel guests and employees felt that a considerate attitude and a sense of social courtesy were expected in two-sided communication fulfillment. By contrast, the changes in body language, such as from cheerfulness to anxiety and from pleasure to disappointment, calls for a positive reciprocation from the counterpart or co-interactant. The guests expected such cues that could mitigate an individual’s anger or disappointment, such as sympathetic cues or cues that could signify courtesy (i.e., apologetic body language). The guests also believed that a service provider may not always be able to serve guests according to their demands. Sometimes, guests may face rejection regarding their service choices. They thought that body language that portrays service providers’ wholeheartedness, gentility, and humility could still be beneficial and useful in promoting beneficial collaboration between guests

and employees. Scholars who have studied communication streams further lend support to the above sentiments that during social interactions, specifically in nonverbal interactions, people attempt to balance their communication to maintain a comfortable relationship (Burgoon et al., 1984). This situation reflects the ACT, as postulated in the literature review that individuals or interactants consciously maintain and thus establish a comfortable intimacy balance for each interaction (Argyle & Dean, 1965). Thus, the interactants should be intent to each other to exchange kinesic cues to be relational, such as maintaining intimacy by checking and balancing cue projections during face-to-face interactions.

When face-to-face interactions became devoid of feelings or signals of further relational development and beneficial collaboration, guests and employees began to feel lonely and that their presence was meaningless and unimportant in hotels. Mostly, for example, during an awkward or unfavorable situation, they expected to be accompanied by their counterpart. They thought that such accompaniment would help them realize their importance and anticipate the potential for solving problems. For example, a hotel guest and an employee expressed their sentiments as follows:

“The employee should take the guest as an important person because at that situation, there were only two people and in that condition, the employee should take care of the guest. So the employee should not [consider] himself too important and take care of his own [concerns] first.” (G-1)

“The guest is just in front of the employee. He did not change his facial expression significantly. I will just [consider] this is as business etiquette, I’m nothing special in this hotel.” (E-6)

In one of the scenarios (interaction in the lobby), a guest was expecting assistance from a hotel employee, but the former was not served and instead experienced signals of “no” and “rejection.” Finally, the employee left the guest and responded to a phone call. This situation continued although the individuals’ facial expressions changed in

accordance with their counterparts' cues during the face-to-face interactions (i.e., sign of employees' rejection made the guests disappointed). If a static (i.e., unchanged movement, especially in an uninteresting way) hotel employee does not change his facial expressions to enthusiasm or interest, this practice may cause the guest to feel insignificant or regard the employee as insincere. This situation would instigate guests to feel that they are not special in the hotel.

Evaluating the patterns or reasons why guests and employees formed the above mutual expectations agrees with the ideas of Emerson (1976). The scholar argued for social behavior and the forms of social organization produced by social interaction by showing how X's behavior reinforced Y's behavior (in a two-party relationship) and how Y's behavior in a contingent fashion reinforced X's behavior in return. The argument of Emerson (1976) can be appropriately zoomed in the theory of nonverbal communication, such as ECT (Hatfield et al., 1994). Particularly, ECT postulates that the authenticity of individuals' emotional expressions directly affects their counterparts' emotional states, as indicated in the above context. For example, unexpected kinesics (i.e., untrustworthiness and unfavorable signs) involves feelings that guests and employees saw as unfavorable, such as seeing how a smooth relationship process was changing into disappointment or anger. By contrast, the benefits are feelings or memorable experiences that guests and employees tended to expect from each other in building the relationship, such as companionship, certainty, and sociality. Sometimes, displayed kinesics are unexpected, but customized cues balance the voids and result in enthusiasm and eagerness for bilateral experiential engagement. As guests and employees determine expectation formation on the

value of their relationship, they might decide that the benefits compensate for the potential costs.

Similarly, the theories of nonverbal communication, such as URT (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) and ACT (Argyle & Dean, 1965), indicate that during dyadic face-to-face interactions, cues expectation is initially formed on the basis of information received from the counterpart's attitudes, beliefs, and goals expressed in those cues (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Thus, they try to adjust and balance whether it is necessary on the basis of the early evaluation. They become willing to negotiate patterns to ascertain the relative positions of the parties (Argyle & Dean, 1965). Thus, in this study, the guests and employees were probably interested to sustain their expectations. Sometimes, they expected the additional cues' performance from each other. For example, some guests expect an escort upon checking in because they are tired, new to the hotel, and have a reservation. Sometimes, guests may not know the direction or position of the check-in counter. Thus, upon arrival, they expect an escort or additional service by a hotel employee with an enthusiastic body orientation to guarantee a smooth and memorable check-in. These expectations are recorded as follows:

“In some hotels, the check-in counter might be located at the upper floor. So, maybe the gentleman (employee) could provide more assistance by asking the lady (guest) what is her purpose for visiting the hotel. If she is taking a room, he might also escort her to check in and help her with the luggage, etc.” (E-8)

“The hotel industry is really looking for and expecting more from them (employees). [He could refer] me to his colleagues for the check-in and make the whole process [worry-free].” (E-4)

Conventionally, in hospitality management, the service quality paradigm (e.g., courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence, a provision of caring, individualized attention, and willingness to help guests) is emphasized in creating

memorable experiences (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). The findings of this study show that guests' and employees' sentiments were also in accordance with this expectancy confirmation paradigm in terms of kinesic cues through which guests could perceive the quality of interaction with regard to how well an expected service is delivered (Oliver, Balakrishnan, & Barry, 1994).

However, the findings supported the above behavioral expectations of individuals (i.e., guests and employees); even during the additional cues' performance, hotel employees must be empathetic toward guests' expectations for due kinesic expressions. This study further intends to assert that emotional cue expectations play a role in communication satisfaction and reciprocity, as postulated in URT (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). URT indicates that if interactants decode cues as serving their expected fulfillment in their counterparts' nonverbal behavior, then such cues cognitively affect their interactive engagement and reinforce communication quality and reciprocity between interactants. If the interactants could not decode the favorable meaning in their counterparts' cues, then uncertainty increases, and the probability of interactive engagement becomes critical. The findings also stretch the perspective on kinesic cue expectation and confirmation, the relationship of which tended to be weak due to insincere, undesirable, or unfavorable kinesic signals. The culture of deep emotional expression or kinesic practice may build a foundation for a long-term relationship in guest–employee dyads. Zhao, Xu, and Wang (2019) noted that if guests' kinesic expectations were exceeded and fulfilled, then their communication enthusiasm and satisfaction would increase.

4.2.2 Kinesics as engagement

The second major theme in the study, kinesics as *engagement*, ran through most guests' and employees' kinesic experience in hotels. The findings under this main theme revealed a state in which guests and employees seemed to practice kinesics in the pursuit of perceiving engagement during hospitality encounters. Most participants felt encouraged to build a relational ground to become loyal to each other toward building potential mutual relationships, which could be viewed as a substantial value outcome of the *reciprocity* experience (i.e., the first major theme in the study).

The theme of *engagement* implied the influence of S-D logic in the practice of kinesic cue exchanges in hotels. This theme showed how hotel guests and employees were innately aware of initiating beneficial collaboration with each other. This theme demonstrated the continuous potential of kinesic cue exchanges in guest–employee dyads to show more expressive means (i.e., cues that evoke loyalty and relationships) that were not expressed in the first phase of the kinesic experience (i.e., *reciprocity*). This lack of expressive means was due to either the lack of actors' consciousness or the early stage of experience. However, such expressions were seriously expected and desired in guest–employee dyads. Here, the construction of *engagement* is manifested in three ways, namely, (1) customized attention, (2) relationship building, and (3) sense of affinity. The detailed narratives of these sub-themes are presented in the following data extracts.

4.2.2.1 Customized attention

Hotel guests and employees managed their interaction quality by improvising their kinesic/body language during face-to-face interactions. They demonstrated kinesic cues to each other, which they presumed suitable for improving and managing their mutual

hospitality. Most guests' and employees' kinesic projections tended to constantly shift and change based on their needs. Thus, they had to adopt customized cues to benefit each other, such as (1) being negotiable toward the potentials of mutual engagement and (2) being comfortable with each other in preparing the ground for developing mutual relationships through expressive emotions. Their practice of customized cues also represented the uniqueness of their thoughts, considerations, and feelings regarding how they live and work in the world in which hotels are a specific context. One guest exclaimed,

“The employee seems to change his mind and body language. Maybe [the employee] is thinking of changing the situation to [assist the guest], and then he [gestures with] his hand [for the] guest to take a seat. Standing in front of the guest, [the employee expresses] something like, ‘How I can help you?’” (G-3)

These observations indicated how the employees felt when customizing their attention to the guests to manage the situation and demonstrating a helpful attitude to ensure the guests' convenience. Therefore, in one moment, an employee showed awareness to adjust his kinesics based on guests' signals of service demands. In another moment, the guest focused on judging the employee's kinesics to consume an improved service experience. The following example can further illuminate this issue: “The staff (doorperson) appeared to care for the guest from the time she was coming in until she went into the lift. Maybe the staff thought she was tired” (G-1). This situation confirmed that the moment of truth during face-to-face interactions was critical for customizing attention to continue memorable experiences. A frontliner (E-8) added, “You need to observe [the guest's] emotions all the way through to see how he's changing and feel that is he comfortable with your service.” This sentiment indicated that customized attention surfaced during critical moments, such as in handling complaints, ensuring safety and comfort, and managing relationship crises when they occurred. For example, “The guest

was looking impatient, maybe didn't like long check-in procedures, that's why the employee again and again looked at him while working and kept smiling to [alleviate] his impatience" (E-7).

The participants said that hotel employees should not show that they were performing their jobs as routine schedules. A sincere kinesic display can make a change either in creating or destroying the experience. Most participants argued that they should be sensible about their effective kinesics that plays roles in their mutual experiential benefits (i.e., consideration, safety, satisfaction, and comfort). For example, at the hotel entrance, the critical role of customized attention is demonstrated in the following situation:

"[It seems as if] the employee can not anticipate or know what a guest actually needs. The guest needs help. She signals to the employees [as if to ask]: 'Can you come up and give me a hand?' You have to think about what to do before the guest voices out [his/her need]." (E-3)

"I could see that she might have gone through a long flight because her facial expression [reflected exhaustion]. I just wanted to greet her [with a] smile, and she nodded to me. I tried to make her comfortable because I wanted to make her feel welcome." (G-7)

"When the employee saw the guest approaching, and then nodded [while opening] the door, he actually wanted to make sure [that she would enter] the door [comfortably and] safely." (G-5)

The kinesic moment of guests' meeting or serving their needs should be thoroughly judged. Examples included their body orientation and happy or tired appearance. Other judgments included how to customize kinesics after detecting and decoding different symbols of need, such as a tired body posture that might imply the need for assistance or an enthusiastic body posture that might imply the need for a reciprocal treatment, as well as anticipating their urge for eye contact to seek assistance and smile to express appreciation. All possibilities should be customized before being voiced out. Given their long travel times, guests may become fatigued and unable to walk energetically. Thus,

employees need to consider these symbolic cues to take guests into the hotel through a sufficiently open door for their safety. Prior to this action, guests should be cheered by nonverbal greetings to demonstrate the feeling that everything is smooth, thereby letting them feel safe and comfortable.

On the basis of the extant literature on nonverbal communication in sports (Aldeen & Rahman, 2018; Furley & Schweizer, 2016), football players are accustomed to customizing kinesic cues (i.e., showing pain through facial expressions) to receive the favor of the referee. Similarly, in the hospitality setting, guests' symbolic cues, such as tiredness and labored walking, might have also been customized to draw the attention of hotel employees' caring attitudes. Similarly, the literature of emotional labor discusses that service employees are generally expected to convey displayed emotions in front of customers (Hochschild, 2012). For example, in surface acting, an employee can try to change his/her surface behavior (i.e., nonverbal expressions, such as a smile) to exhibit the required or appropriate emotions. For example, sometimes, service interactions do not provide pleasant experiences to customers, especially when employees encounter demanding and stressful, angry, or annoying customers in the service process (Ko & Jeng, 2016). In this challenging situation, an employee may put on a smile and pretend to be cheerful and friendly without actually feeling the emotions. As such, the role of employees can redirect the awkward situation from further deterioration (Pugh, 2001). By contrast, in terms of experiential sentiments, the above findings are also corroborated to a previous qualitative study on healthcare (Marcinowicz, Konstantynowicz, & Godlewski, 2010) where a physician's kinesics (i.e., eye contact, smiles, and facial expressions) was experienced by patients as the sentiments of caring and commitment during face-to-face

interactions. The findings of the present study affirm that along with the sense of commitment and care that is required in hospitality situation, kinesics also serves the sentiments of safety and consideration in a given critical situation.

Beattie (2016) and Mehrabian (2017) indicated that kinesics is a silent communication method that can determine how individuals experience interaction through their purpose of kinesics (body language). An unthoughtful improvisation with regard to understanding individuals' kinesics appeal may cause interactants' silent frustration. URT (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) reflects that the topic or purpose of kinesics (e.g., smiles, gestures, and eye contact) facilitates interactants to feel their probability of relationship across the interaction. If the displayed cues do not exceed the desired amount of indication of relationship, then anxiety or uncertainty will arise, and the interactants will decrease interest to participate in the interaction. Accordingly, the findings demonstrated that information decoded from an individual's kinesic cues should be used to determine his/her need. In critical or inconvenient moments (i.e., guests' frustration, rejection, and anger), individuals may become anxious, uncertain, or stressed. Most participants argued that this type of situation is critical in creating or establishing mutual engagement and rapport by offering and managing customized cues in accordance with the demands of the situation. In the scenario of lobby interaction, a complicated situation occurred in guest–employee dyads. The scenario, in which a guest was not properly treated, was explained by most guests and employees as awkward. An example was when a service inquiry was rejected by an employee, as shown as follows: “[The guest] was looking fine when entering or coming forward to the employee, and started to talk, but suddenly got a ‘no’ [response] from the employee. I don’t know why [the employee did that] without thinking too much

about [the guest's] request" (E-5). After rejection, the employee appeared sensible about his kinesic behavior and started to customize his kinesic cues to restore the situation toward a memorable atmosphere. He invited the guest to take a seat by showing a sign of warm invitation through hand gesture, which was felt as a relational approach by a hotel guest. "The employee [asked] the guest to sit down to calm him down as he sensed that the guest might have suffered dissatisfaction or might have had a long conversation. This was the right way to handle the guest if he was not in a good mood" (G-2). In addition, two frontliners offered their opinions on how an awkward situation can be improved by customizing kinesic cues based on certain situations.

"I would suggest what he should do was to keep talking, smiling even he was going to turn down or reject the guest's request, he could still put on a smiley face. I mean it would make the guest and himself more comfortable" (E-9).

"You could already see that was a complaint. [If] the guest was coming to complain, we would let them finish. Sometimes they just want to express their anger, you don't stop them, just listen to them..." (E-6).

Rejection toward guests is discouraged in a hospitality context. Employees must be skilled in handling complicated guests. Strong consideration should be made to show a "no" sign to guests. Practically, "An inexperienced or new employee may be unable to handle a complicated guest" (E12). Furthermore, "A long experience [with] awkward situations gives a hotel staff skills [to know] what to do or what is [good] for guests" (E-9). A conceived scenario from Hochschild (2012) in the context of the airline industry may be worthwhile in the above connection. In the example of deep acting in the context of service encounter, she noted that a flight attendant is trained to handle an angry passenger by considering him/her as a scared first-time flier. This type of organizational direction helps the flight attendant create self-induced true emotions, thereby enabling him/her to

change his/her inner emotional state toward the customer from irritation to pity and compassion. The literature in the stream of emotional labor and nonverbal behavior in the service context metaphorizes service delivery as a theater; this metaphorical theater presents the scenario of face-to-face interactions in service customer–employee dyads as if they are a dramatic composition and a theatrical representation, wherein an actor (employee) performs (service transaction/delivery) on stage (service milieu) in front of an audience (customer; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grove & Fisk, 1992; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006; Hochschild, 2012; Pugh, 2001). Nevertheless, to ensure guests’ memorable experience, Bharwani and Jauhari (2013) emphasized in their theoretical paper the importance of hospitality emotional intelligence in handling awkward situations because of guest engagement; for example, employees should be aware of expressing emotions. Employees should handle interpersonal relationships with guests sensibly and empathetically. They must be responsive to guests to exhibit signs of “Sure! Yes, I can!” However, the details of dos and don’ts, such as the possible characteristics of employees’ responsiveness to expressive emotions or kinesics, were not clearly discussed.

The above views on adapting suitable expressions focused on the need for employees’ behavioral intelligence in handling awkward situations in hospitality. Employees must develop their kinesic attributes that can be customized during awkward situations, such as how to temper guests’ anger and make them feel comfortable and how to predict complaint-oriented body language, such as “his hands [were in] his pockets, which meant that he really wanted an answer at that moment.” During the moments that showed the guests’ anger and inconvenience, their anger may be alleviated by the employees’ sincere, attentive, and comprehensive customization of body language. The

findings showed that the participants indicated that the customized invitation to sit at the hotel lobby increased guests' comfort and certainty in receiving required services. In the critical issue of customer engagement, the findings can be a significant addition to the emergent literature on emotional intelligence in the hospitality sector.

In conclusion, for the sake of meaningful relationship development, individuals should think of *customized attention* by kinesic exchange during face-to-face interactions as the effective strategy to facilitate their mutually beneficial co-existence (Vargo & Lusch, 2017). Furthermore, ECT (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006; Pugh, 2001; Verbeke, 1997) suggests that interactants' kinesic exchange (i.e., smiles and facial expressions) at their counterparts may be contagious, in which they change the affective state of each other and thus influence their perceptions and evaluations of the quality of the ongoing situation, such as in this study's context—the enhancement of beneficial co-existence in guest–employee dyads. Similar sentiments were evident in our findings. “At first, when he [was] looking around, I felt quite uncomfortable because [his behavior was] a sign that he was not very interested here... [He] might have felt isolated here during my business with him. I could initiate smile at him that could change her isolation. Also, I could give him some leaflets about Hong Kong or something to let him know what he could do around... He might find the situation easier. He might feel friendly as well” (E-7). Thus, the participants seemed to emphasize the need for attentive awareness during face-to-face interaction for mutual wellbeing in the semiotic world. They believed that the interaction environment or circumstances influenced them to customize their cue exchange, and they revealed their method of *customized attention*. First, an inspection should be conducted over the body language of counterparts because the feelings evident in their body movements is an

important indicator of further customization. During waiting times, such as during check-ins, some moments may be needed for processing. In these circumstances, guests may be isolated for a while, which might facilitate a further relationship opportunity after a thoughtful customized effort. As exemplified above, during check-ins, guests might be entertained with other activities (i.e., offering a leaflet about local attractions). Moreover, being caring to help them may aid them forget the moments of isolation by being offered additional services, such as explaining hotel rules and existing offers that can influence their memorable experiences with the hotel.

4.2.2.2 Relationship building

Customized cue practices in hotels directed the way in which guests and employees obtained stimuli to build their relationship. Our findings indicated how the exchange of appropriate kinesics (i.e., signals of understanding, respect, politeness, and friendliness) in guest–employee dyads dramatically contributed to transforming their consciousness toward mutual relationship building. Although relationships can be formed in various dimensions, certain traits (i.e., interest, devotion, respect, and trust) should be shown to emphasize strong relationships because “relationship development in a hotel context is very important, [and] maybe it can change a lot” (E-1). For example, in a certain situation, the signal of relationship was received by the guest as follows:

“I really like her posture though, I really like her hand position on the belly, [which shows that] she’s really polite. She’s nodding and expressing a lot of respect toward the guest, [and the guest might like that behavior] because [it shows] her understanding [of] the guest.” (G-7)

In these sentiments, how the kinesic cues or body language of the hotel employee were noticeable during the check-in interaction, such as polite gestures expressed in the display of employees’ hand placed in front (i.e., on the stomach), as well as attentive

nodding, contributed to the relationship building drawn by the relational attributes of signaling sincerity, warmth, and respect toward the guests. The guests' feelings tended to result in memorable experiences from the front office personnel's kinesic behavior. Scholars of S-D logic have considered hotel front desk personnel's behavior and communication competencies as prerequisites in offering memorable experiences to guests. These behavioral and communicational aspects are important operant resources in experience co-creation (Kasnakoglu, 2016; Lusch et al., 2007). In the present work, the guests' memorable experience with regard to front desk personnel's kinesics could be a resource-rich stimulus in the discourse of customer knowledge sharing and customer engagement benefits in S-D logic. Previous research has confirmed that appropriate knowledge on the display of nonverbal cues of service employees contributes to effective guest–employee rapport management (Bernieri, Gillis, Davis, & Grahe, 1996; DiMatteo, Friedman, & Taranta, 1979; DeWitt & Brady, 2003). Scholars have noted that a guest's perception of having a pleasant interaction with a service employee, distinguished by a personal attachment between the two interactants, can be called *rapport* (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). Rapport functions as a social cement that connects two interactants (i.e., guests and employees; DiMatteo et al., 1979). Thus, rapport generated from exchange of nonverbal cues creates the probability of reciprocal trust and understanding and lays the foundation for future interpersonal relationship development between guests and employees (Bernieri, Davis, Rosenthal, & Knee, 1994; Ross & Weiland, 1996).

Furthermore, as findings demonstrated, hotel guests and employees felt that they should be willing to devote time and attention to each other and that they were committed to accommodating the differences and challenges (i.e., urgent and efficient check-in

process and apathetic posture due to long travel) that typically emerged during face-to-face interactions at hotels. The findings showed that good relationships were generally developed by a sense of fairness and equality in the distribution of the kinesics to maintain mutual trust and respect. These sentiments were explicitly evident in guest–employee dyads. Examples are the following:

“Don’t create difficult situations for [guests]. [Remember] that they are your respected guests. Sometimes they are tired. They [have to] feel your cooperation.” (E-3)

“I believe that the guest’s leaning posture was really important, [and] the guest was really relaxed. He was really willing to speak to [the employee] ... You want to [speak] to [the employee] because you trust her.” (G-4)

We have the safety distance in our mind, right? We don’t want to get too close to strangers. [The door] was opened at an angle by [the employee], just enough for the [guest] to get in, and the [guest] stepped in. That meant the [guest] trusted this guy standing close to her and didn’t mind getting a bit close to him because she knew that she was using the services and she trusted this hotel.” (G-9)

The hotel guests and employees agreed that the relationship process was elevated due to the kinesic cues that signaled mutual willingness, trust, respect, belongingness, and closeness. The participants showed how kinesic cues created a friendly atmosphere to establish a potential relationship by displaying how (employees’) cooperation- and (guests’) relaxation-oriented cues stimulated their friendliness and willingness to trust each other. For an uplifting relationship, they paid no attention to the touching distance with their counterpart who was strange to them in a new place. Thus, they showed that devotion to each other was vital to a successful relationship. Mutual awareness of needs and relational appeals, such as leaning posture to show closeness and willing body language in speaking to counterparts, played a role in promoting trustworthiness and closeness in guest–employee dyads. The processing of relationship building in the above patterns could

be justified by Bandura and Walters (1977), who argued that individuals affect each other's goals through the behaviors that they exchange. Every time, individuals tend to seek positive behaviors to become engaged in fulfilling their goals (i.e., respect, trust, and relationships). Individuals seek to learn from each other's behavior to develop mutual trust to strengthen their relationship. With regard to continuous or engaging interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences, Goldie (2016) pointed out the success of human behavior in the positive valence of symbolic coding, mental images, cognitive organization, and symbolic rehearsal. In a similar vein, hotel guests and employees trusted each other based on the kinesic image of politeness, sincerity, respect, and belongingness, and conducted relational learning (i.e., trust) and rehearsal. "[The guest and employee] were smiling. They were standing close. [The guest] was looking satisfied... When the guest received the keycard, he [looked at it], then at the receptionist, then at the keycard again" (E-4). The feeling of looking at the keycard and, subsequently, looking at the employee and again at the keycard showed the attribute of relational learning and engagement, thereby further affecting the quality of the relationship in guest–employee dyads. "We look at the customer's face to understand their satisfaction" (E-1). In a similar manner, the literature on engagement and relationship marketing confirmed that relationship quality is an antecedent of customer engagement (Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012). However, no clear indications are found for the attributes of a quality relationship. A recent study by Itani, Kassar, and Loureiro (2019) conceptualized certain attributes, such as trust, satisfaction, commitment, love, and self-connection, to model a hypothesis—the effect of relationship quality on customer engagement. The findings of the present work are consistent with their findings, that is, guests' communication satisfaction drawn from

receiving a keycard in polite gestures (i.e., an indication of sincerity and respect) of the front desk employee, as mentioned above, demonstrated that relationship quality affected customer engagement. The findings of Itani, Kassar, and Loureiro (2019) were observed, although the present study explored the attributes of relationship quality and the implication of engagement from using kinesic cues in face-to-face interactions between guests and employees, not the customer–firm relationship.

Another remarkable finding that emerged from the study is the role of understanding in relationship building in guest–employee dyads. Across the lobby area, guests and employees noted that relationship building may begin from the mutual understanding in kinesic exchange. “If you (the employee) do it proactively and take the first step, then the guest would follow your steps” (E-9). The sentiment of understanding was further elaborated by E-10: “You shouldn’t look harsh to them (employees). You (guest) also need to be friendly, keep your eye contact, and smile at the employees [because] they are working for you in the hotel. Why [would] you make their job harder?” Guests and employees indicated that the signal of mutual understanding must be adjusted for the sake of relationship building. Anyone, either guest or employee, may initiate relationship building by exchanging kinesic cues. If they both agree that they serve each other for beneficial collaboration, then this innate understanding can sufficiently encourage an exchange of dutiful, thoughtful, and considerate cues. They further indicated that the mutual judgment on kinesic exchange and understanding environmental kinesics contributed to narrowing the distance between guests and employees to generate the mode of relationship building. Thus, hotel employees adopted the strategy of relationship building by bowing and shaking hands with guests in the lobby area.

“The staff starts [by bowing to reduce] the distance between the guests, to show them honor, and welcome them again after the entrance... Then, the staff actually pays further attention before check-in.” (E-2)

“Just greet the guest at the lobby; you can shake hands with them. You don’t need to say anything, just shake hands, nod (short bow) and keep smiling. They would understand you’re very welcome... Of course, this is the first step to open the relationship.” (E-10)

In the hotel lobby, most guests focus on the efficient check-in process, and they want to finish it quickly. Therefore, in these circumstances, customized cues that are planned proactively help them build relationships. ACT (Argyle & Dean, 1965) may corroborate such context by narrating that individuals tend to compete on needs or desires for intimacy and relationship building. Given this purpose, in a context of social psychological approach that comprises interpersonal relationship, individuals negotiate and pursue to balance out their nonverbal cues to maintain a comfortable level of relationship (Argyle & Dean, 1965; Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 2007). Thus, hotel employees believed that bowing made hotel guests feel honored, thereby facilitating further steps in service consumption. A slight bow tended to boost guests’ relationships, belongingness, and engagement with employees and the hotel. By contrast, occasionally or based on the situation, such as during busy hours, hotel employees suggested to shake guests’ hands with a smile and a short bow to influence relationship building.

Hotel employees also suggested that wholehearted and sincere facial expressions or body posture, as well as a sense of adjusting kinesic cues to exhibit face-to-face interaction, were critical for building relationships. “You can observe that by looking at their eyes, faces. Are they now happy or angry? You can see the relationship by looking at their eyes directly... in [this sense], we affect each other” (E-7). Sometimes, individuals are not exposed, and they are unwilling to build relationships due to their tiredness or other

business-related concerns, (i.e., long journeys and tiring jobs); however, for the sake of a beneficial and memorable experience, the relationship-building process should continue. “[Keep] looking at them, looking at their eyes, keep asking them about their travels. Dramatically, they would change their mind and start a fine conversation with you. That could be the opportunity to develop a deeper relationship” (E-7).

In the social psychology literature, understanding as a feeling and a behavioral trait between individuals is emphasized to retain a relationship (Gross & John, 2003), but not in the way of using kinesic components in memorable experiences (i.e., communication satisfaction and honor). By contrast, the S-D logic for customer engagement in hospitality and marketing focuses on enhancing customer satisfaction, developing long-term mutually beneficial relationships with customers, and building customer loyalty. In S-D logic, scholars have mostly underscored the provision of technology-mediated consumer engagement by exercising enthusiasm, attention, interaction, and identification (Asche & Kreis, 2014; Rihova, Buhalis, Gouthro, & Moital, 2018). In terms of the face-to-face interaction context, dialog is clear about the attributes of relationship building, such as understanding, respect, and trust. The findings of this study may contribute to the proposition of S-D logic in terms of mutually beneficial relationships with customers by using employees’ kinesic expressions.

4.2.2.3 Sense of affinity

Most guests and employees tended to depict their sentiments of affinity as inherent likeness and as connections toward signals or cues attributed through sympathy, empathy, patience, and harmony. They seemed to believe that an ongoing relationship can be nurtured by such kinesics that could represent the *sense of affinity* during face-to-face

interactions in hotels. Thus, they characterized the implication of affinity-oriented cues as the leverage of high-level intimacy and sharing. They indicated that in the hospitality sector, building relationships is difficult in guest–employee dyads, and achieving progress may require further effort by practicing affinity kinesic exchange. The data also suggested that affinity-oriented cues contributed to fostering ongoing relationships or strengthening relationships. Participants discussed that the role of affinity kinesics is critical during complicated interactional situations (i.e., after a long travel and impatient waiting for long time). For example, during hotel entrance and check-in, a hotel guest and an employee shared their experiences of affinity, as observed in the following sentiments:

“[She] was coming towards him, and she looked a little bit distressed. When he smiled at her the first time, she smiled back, which may give her relief from the distress she had from the long flight... She also expressed her hospitality although she was distressed.” (G-1)

“I saw a guest who was queuing for a long time and seemed impatient. I just calmed him down [...] and then looked at him and gave him a [sympathetic] smile with a [slight] frown to show concern for him. That would make the guest feel much better most of the time.” (E-7, recalling an experience from memory)

The findings indicated that the guest and the employee were motivated to exchange fellow-feeling through sympathetic kinesics or body language. They seemed to exchange sympathy with each other in a particular situation. For example, sympathy was implied in comforting the impatience of a guest and in expressing concern for a fatigued hotel employee. The hotel guest, in her distressed situation after a long journey, showed kindness in returning a smile to the hotel employee (doorman) who was “incredibly tired [...]; he has been standing out there for several hours a day” (G-5). Similarly, the employee showed a refreshing smile to let the guest feel relieved: “[it] seemed that she had forgotten that she was tired” (G-7). The initiation of hospitality from the guest’s end was an interesting feeling and revealed sympathy for a fatigued hotel doorman who “had to greet people and

keep a look of impartiality and professional posture and everything for many laborious hours” (G-5). Perhaps the hotel guest wanted to engage the employee to enjoy feelings of hospitality, which the guest used to offer rather than enjoy from her counterpart in general. The findings manifested that the mutual affinity shown in kinesic exchange secured social connections that reinforced further relationships. By contrast, during check-in, the sense of affinity emerged when the hotel guest was looking impatient because of remaining in the queue for a long time. The hotel employee showed appropriate concern and a hand gesture to indicate “just a second, please,” and a slight frown to express “I am concerned about you, do not worry.” This sympathetic implication, the hotel employee reported, made the guest feel comfortable and contributed to check-in satisfaction. Furthermore, along with sympathy, the feeling of empathy was also observed from the guest’s and the employee’s kinesic exchange. They contextualized the situations in which the feelings of empathy were evident during face-to-face interaction in hotels. For example, while receiving a guest:

“[With] my patients, sometimes I cannot control their mood because they’re sick [and they become] quickly irritated, annoyed. This is the similar behavior a guest may show because of his tiredness or maybe he is in an uncertain place or is tense for other reasons.” (G-6, recalling an experience from memory)

The guest participant (G-6) was a hospital nurse. She contextualized a similarity of behavior between a patient’s arrival in a hospital and guest arrival in a hotel. She observed that in a hospital, the patient may express irritation and annoyance because of his/her ongoing or post-treatment condition of sickness. She justified this phenomenon in the hospitality context, where a guest may also represent similar behavioral patterns because of his/her tiredness, tension, or uncertainty in a new or strange place (i.e., a hotel) “You have to show some kind of reaction that you are listening, and empathetically looking at him. Although you might not solve all the complicated issues of your customer, at least

show your body language properly” (G-6). She added that when the circumstances are complicated or adverse, in every respect, an employee should display affinity kinesics (i.e., empathetic cues) that will assure guests’ safety in the hotel, and let the guests experience respectful surroundings through affinity-oriented cues to reassure them that no harm or risk would occur to them.

The above contexts of sympathy (i.e., feelings of compassion for counterpart’s critical circumstances) and empathy (i.e., feelings of counterpart’s emotion by placing oneself in the same) signaled in affinity kinesics are consistent with the extant literature in psychology. First, the feelings of guests’ and employees’ sympathy to each other concur well with the work of Eisenberg (2003) and Dickert and Slovic (2009), who argued that individuals require attention to their purpose in a state of need and the particular characteristics of a given situation. Dickert and Slovic (2009) exemplified that an individual with cancer might draw a stronger feeling of sympathy than a person with an ordinary sickness, such as cold or cough. The conditions in which sympathy is required as an appropriate reaction are prearranged into individual and situational differences. Darwall (1998) refined the above analogy and argument that sympathetic concern or sympathy responds to an apparent threat or obstacle to an individual’s wellbeing and involves concern for the individual. For example, when seeing a person on the verge of falling, one is concerned for the person. In a similar manner, the findings of this study validated that hotel guests and employees exchanged kinesic cues during their mutual state of needs. For example, a guest in a long queue who consequently became impatient was appropriately deemed to be sympathized with, as opposed to a guest who did not appear impatient or did not seem to need sympathy. Simultaneously, the hotel employee cared about the guest’s

wellbeing and soothed the concerns about any potential threat or obstacle during service consumption, such as inquiry or check-in.

Second, feelings of empathy in guest–employee dyadic kinesic exchange lend support to the argument of Bellet and Maloney (1991) that individuals’ lifestyle becomes memorable when they can understand or sense what another person is undergoing from within their frame of reference, which is the propensity to situate oneself in another’s situation. Similarly, the feelings of hotel guests also indicated that they should be properly treated in the pursuit of employees’ experiential previous references as guests. If employees are the guests, then they may experience certain feelings during their critical moments, such as during exhausting and uncertain situations. The findings of this study on empathetic kinesics could further be viewed through the lens of positive psychology, in which empathy has been compared with altruism and egotism; for example, altruism is a behavior that aims to benefit another person, whereas egotism is a behavior that is acted out for personal gain (Lopez, Pedrotti, & Snyder, 2018). In this ground of argument, the practice of affinity kinesics may contribute to playing a role in customer engagement and fostering relationships in altruism and egotism. However, in marketing and hospitality, such as advertisement, communication (e.g., Escalas and Stern (2003)), and online review comments (e.g., Bonfanti, Vigolo, and Negri (2016) and Xu and Li (2016)), constructs of sympathy and empathy are also emphasized in customer engagement and relationship development. However, the findings of the present work corroborated it through face-to-face interaction by using nonverbal cues in guest–employee dyads.

Beyond sympathy and empathy, another striking finding to emerge from the guests’ and employees’ sense of affinity are the signals of patience and harmony in face-to-face

interactions. The guests and employees described, by displaying postures of patience and patient listening, that individuals can maintain a peaceful situation in hotels. As evident in the findings, guest grievances are a regular phenomenon in the hospitality sector. Thus, employees are required to understand the philosophy of hospitality. The guests were right, which, they believed, can be reconfirmed and emphasized by offering a patient attitude toward the guests. For instance, while serving a guest who was dissatisfied with service inquiry at the hotel lobby, E-11 claimed, "I just [nodded] my head and to show patience, my voice was soft. And then I tried to put myself in the guest's shoes." During check-in, G-6 vented, "He (guest) was still waiting patiently and not pushing the staff to rush. So I think it also showed the staff was very considerate. Maybe he (guest) was also very patient." By contrast, even in typical circumstances of face-to-face interactions, affinity kinesics could result in peace and harmony in the dyadic relationship. "When the guest was looking back and waved his hand [...], this kind of action gave a signal [of] satisfaction. In the end it seemed that both the guest and employee were in harmony... The whole process was very smooth" (E-9). This situation indicated that the sense of gratitude and kindness endorsed in the body language of an individual may contribute to a feeling of peace and unity in terms of sharing satisfaction. Although the guests' body language expressed the emotional signal of satisfaction by waving their hands after being treated well, employees became emotional and felt motivated to contribute to serve the guests and the company. G-3 further said, "You know, we're just normal people. I don't like the idea that I'm higher because I paid for a service and he's lower because he [provides] a service." These feelings of equality, unity, and harmony supported the notion that guests and employees psychologically and emotionally tended to be engaged with each other to foster

relationships as drawn in S-D logic. However, overall, the findings on *sense of affinity*, as attributed in sympathy, empathy, patience, and harmony, could add higher values to S–D logic in terms of fostering relationships and memorable experiences mediated in face-to-face interactions in hotels.

4.3 Kinesic expressions in guest–employee engagement (Objective 2)

Kinesic experiences in guest–employee dyads during face-to-face interactions in hotels have been described in the preceding section. However, identifying kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in experience co-creation during face-to-face interactions is also of interest. The extant literature confirms that the main concept of co-creation is centered on collaboration with customers (Lusch et al., 2007). Co-creation entails joint (customer–employee) engagement in different points of the dyadic interactions aimed at delivering consumption experiences. However, co-creation in the hospitality context is essentially an engagement-oriented interaction between a customer and an employee to co-create value, and this value in exchange is the nucleus that contributes to their mutual experiential engagement. The similar principles of co-creation were accounted for in this study as set in hospitality management. In view of the preceding stream of experience co-creation, two distinct ways of kinesic expressions, namely, *imperative kinesic expressions* of employees and *complacent kinesic expressions* of guests, were identified from the findings, which tended to engage hotel guests and employees in terms of experience co-creation during face-to-face interactions in hotels. Both manners of kinesic expressions in guest–employee dyads are explicitly and elaborately discussed as follows.

4.3.1 Imperative kinesic expressions

As previously mentioned, the findings identified the *imperative kinesic expressions* of employees as a strategy of guests' engagement with employees for experience co-creation. The sentiments of hotel guests indicated that the *imperative kinesic expression* of employees is a sense of value proposition or could be viewed as a necessary stimulus or symbol that was felt or perceived by them as beneficial collaborations or experiential benefits, such as stimuli of willingness to help, sincerity, consciousness, and helpful portrayal apparent in the body language of hotel employees. For example, G-6 expressed his sentiment in this context, "Nonverbal cues are very powerful. Anyone can nod, anyone can have eye contact and anyone can bow, whether they are sincere or not. As customers, we can understand that is what could make a difference in our feelings about [the employees'] attitude: helpful, useful, conscious, or careless." To engage guests in pursuit of experience co-creation, Batat (2019), Cetin and Walls (2016), and Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) suggested the use of emotional and cognitive stimuli for the beneficial collaborations or values in exchange (Sjödín & Kristensson, 2012), such that guests can perceive values or benefits from the paid or on-going interaction (Grönroos & Voima, 2013). Similarly, in the present study's context, during the face-to-face interactions in hotels, beneficial collaborations or values occurred from imperative or necessary kinesic expressions that employees exchanged, through which the guests tended to determine their engagement with employees in terms of experience co-creation.

The analysis of findings demonstrated that guests were conscious of decoding a beneficial effect from employees' exchanged kinesic cues during face-to-face interactions in hotels. The findings reflected that kinesic cues could appear in different forms, resulting

in different feelings based on how the sender exhibited the cues and how the receiver judged those cues based on the requirements of situations. An experienced traveler (guest) reviewed this context as follows:

“Nonverbal cues or body language is physical when you’re initially meeting [the employee]. It’s really how you base all your judgments on what employees look like, the type of movements that they’re doing, the movements of their arms (hand gestures) or legs (walking) or face (smiling and eye contact) ... All of these things are really the fundamental basis of how you judge a person.” (G-4)

The above findings showed that the fundamental basis of judging individuals, such as how they look like and what their motives are, is kinesic expression or potential for value co-creation—“The type of movements that they’re doing...” (G-4); “[We] can understand that is what could make a difference in our feelings about [the employees’] attitude: helpful, useful, conscious, or careless” (G-6). Accordingly, guests sought how the employees looked peremptory (i.e., positive or assertive in kinesic expressions) and how they displayed necessary cues in which guests could draw attention, realization, and fulfillment of their service requirements or hospitality needs that they aimed at in hotels. They believed that any employee could perform kinesic cues, such as nodding, eye contact, and bowing. However, their significant concern was whether these cues were necessary, trustworthy, and sincere in invoking their feelings. The guests could even distinguish the value proposition from employees’ necessary cues. “They seem quite open to any sort of query, any question... I think that comes across with their posture and hand direction” (G-11). Furthermore, G-4 said that the “fundamental basis of how you judge a person” could be detected in arms (hand gestures), legs (walking movements), or facial expressions (smiles and eye contact).

The findings revealed an explicit orientation of hotel employees' kinesic cues that were characterized by guests as *imperative or necessary kinesic expressions* in co-creating an authentic hospitality experience. The specific kinesic cues that played a role in offering value proposition toward guests' engagement with employees in terms of experience co-creation are discussed as follows.

4.3.1.1 Employees' hand gestures in guests' engagement

In hotels, guests seemed to be engaged with employees during arrival and check-in through the stimuli of employees' willingness to help, understanding about their needs, sociality, and relational evocation. Guests' sentiments on these experiential values were attributed to employees' hand gestures. Typically, in hospitality interaction, hand gestures seem impressive and sometimes a courtesy at best. Hotel guests' feelings about hand signs or symbols in the hospitality ecosystem, which are the reason for their engagement and value co-creation, are demonstrated in the findings of how value can be co-created or emerge in relation to certain entities or practices or from certain contexts. Semioticians have suggested that actors assign value to signs that then become symbols based on particular rules of interpretation that define their social interactions (Akaka et al., 2014). Thus, the present study's findings delved into the force of hand gestures in human experiential sentiments. Guests tended to reflect hand gestures as one of the imperative accompaniments to successful hospitality interactions. However, apparently, neither the process by which hand gestures were generated nor the functions they serve for employees and guests seemed to be sufficiently understood. For example,

“He shows by the welcoming hand sign and eye contact that ‘I am ready to help you.’ He also nodded to agree, so the guest can understand that the staff is ready

to help [the guest] to handle the luggage, and the guest smiles back to say 'Okay.'" (G-3)

"When they extend their arms and step forward, I don't have to worry about my luggage or any other difficulties that I might encounter in the hotel." (G-12)

"She used the hand, guiding me by finger pointing, so that I can understand every detail. She also kept looking at me in intervals to see my reaction, whether I am understanding, and [showed] me a lot of care." (G-5)

"She shook hands with the guest at the beginning, which made him comfortable and easy to interact with. She constantly smiled. It gave good feelings to the guest. It [gave him a] pleasant feeling... and in the end [he felt] honored." (G-10)

On the basis of the interaction situations, the analysis of the cues from employees' hands played a key role in instigating guests' emotions and understanding the meaning of hospitality in the entrance and check-in in aspects of functional and experiential values. In view of functional value, the display method of an employee's hands played a significant role in encouraging guests to benefit from the interaction, such as it may signal them to become relieved from carrying luggage. From the experiential value perspective, the hands' symbolic values helped guests to understand the employees' willingness to help during arrival. Meanwhile, the guest perceived employees' consciousness in transforming themselves into understanding through information, comfort, and honor during the check-in process. The findings showed that understanding guests' needs is an imperative task of hotel employees. The symbolic expression in offering help through hand gestures during the guest arrival imparted to the guest a warm emotion that was evident when the guest smiled back. By contrast, the guest became psychologically and relationally engaged with the employee as the employee was pointing at information that the guest might require, thereby previewing the potential relational reaction in facial expressions. The employee's initiation in shaking hand motivated the guest to be engaged in the experience co-creation

process. The guest felt affiliated by such employee's approach of shaking the hand, which could encourage their further service inquiry (if any). ACT (Argyle & Dean, 1965) asserts that the feelings of affiliation form cue exchange contribute to interpersonal understanding between individuals. Thus, individuals achieve relational value, such as the guest achieving friendliness and honor in the employees' hand gestures in the above context.

In the hospitality context, the role of hand gestures is critical in guests' engagement perspective—"putting their arms in front of their chest means they do not want to help or serve you" (G-5). The cues of employees' hands could construct and destroy the process of guest engagement with employees. "In the counter, when [the employee] passed the room key in two hands, [the gesture] gave me cozy emotions and [made me feel welcome]. I appreciate that she gave me something like a gift and I accepted it..." (G-9). The guest's sentiments clearly indicated that hand cues greatly influenced guest's engagement with the employee for the co-creation of memorable experiences ("something like a gift and I'm accepting it"). The metaphorical analysis of E-3's sentiments ("don't cross your arms, be proactive, walk to your guests, and offer something to them") further showed that in hospitality interaction, cues by *hands* or *arms* have the potential to offer experiential benefits or collaboration by engaging guests.

The consensus of guests' engagement enhancement from cues of employees' hands could be evaluated through the value belief norm of Stern (2000), who postulated that environmental action is the result of owning consistent values, beliefs, and idiosyncratic norms that promote the action. Thus, the formation of guests' engagement was based on cues toward the relevant intention required (Ajzen, 2001). Although tired guests might need to focus on the appeal of hand language, in a strange situation or a new room

reservation moment, guests might need to know the details of deals step-by-step by hand/finger manipulation on a piece of printed paper for the useful understanding of their needs. In view of URT (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) hotel guests can decode acts of hands, such as the motives of employees, whether they are sincere and willing to the quality of service promise that can increase guests' certainty about enjoying pleasurable moments in hotels.

To fulfill these requirements, cues from employees' hands played an active role in attaching guests' experiential value. The ontological value proposition (i.e., showing the relations between the concepts and means in experience co-creation) emphasized by S-D logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2016) regarding cues from employees' hands was explored in this study as one of the operant resources in the vital source of strategic benefit.

Furthermore, the context is corroborated and can be argued by psycholinguistics (McNeill, 1987) that when an interactant sees hand gestures/movements of a counterpart during a face-to-face interaction, they can distinguish its subjective intention; the counterparts can decode even the sincerity of hand gestures. McNeill (1987) added that hand gestures communicate like words; they are consistent in conveying semantic information. For example, in an experimental study, Krauss, Morrel-Samuels, and Colasante (1991) found that hand gestures are communicative, and the interactant imputes meaning to the hand gesture that is closer in meaning to the counterpart, which was explored in the present work in the hospitality context as values or experiential benefits for guests' engagement.

4.3.1.2 Employees' walking movements in guests' engagement

By contrast, guests' emotions of engagement were apparent in the walking movements (i.e., gait) of the employees during critical movements. Their value perception from employees' walking or moving orientation seemed uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary (i.e., hotel guests), as argued by Vargo and Lusch (2016). The walking orientation of employees helped guests to be engaged with the service continuation and facilitated them to have values of feeling at home, having low uncertainty, and warmth at the entrance and hotel lobby, which all seemed a eudemonic application to integration. In the following, the experiential values of walking movements or the contribution of employees' walking body orientation to guests' engagement were observed.

“You know when guest is coming your way, you have to walk five steps first to make sure that he lands in the right place... You have to walk five steps with her to show the direction and make sure she is not lost. [That] would give her a feeling of warmth and safety.” (G-7, recalling an experience from memory)

In the above, G-7 recalled an experience of a feeling of engagement from her hospital profession context that she thought could be a compelling and incorporative insight in the hospitality setting to enhance guests' engagement by body movements, such as the vibe of walking movements. The guest reflected that walking moments and the portrayal of bodily motion toward the guests during their arrival could effectively engage hotel guests in co-creating their memorable experiences, which she found similar to receiving a guest at home. The guest suggested that although verbal communication is not necessary to effectively interact with a counterpart in co-creating her positive sentiments, walking can be an ideal choice to imply a value of a home-like reception toward individuals. Thus, this finding suggested that hotel employees' expressions of home-like

reception animated in their hospitable walks helped the guest feel to feel relaxed, warmth, and be a subject of hospitality. Several walks with the guest could make him/her feel familiar with the hotel and feel engaged with the employees. The narrative indicated that guests may be initially confused and may not know where to go or how to go there. However, a hotel employee's home-like and sociable gesture through several steps with the guest may contribute to co-creating their experiences. Two sentiments (i.e., value) may arise, namely, (1) they are not lost and (2) they are in the right place.

The similar intonation of hospital context with regard to the walking cues of employees was reflected in another memory recalled by G-3: "He was walking toward me, which actually made me feel less stressed when I was unable to [find] the counter in the hotel. He knew that I needed his help. He [looked at] me and moved toward me immediately, which [made me feel secure]." Although the guest was in a large hotel lobby and uncertain about the location of the check-in desk, the hotel employee's attentive walking approach made the guest enthusiastic for further service consumption. Similarly, hope, enthusiasm, and certainty felt in hospitals and with G-3 were also revealed in the context of the simulated lobby interaction scenario. For example, "When [the employee] walked with the guest until he sat, the guest looked hopeful. He might have thought that he would be sitting and would have the answer to his inquiry [after initially receiving negative answers from the staff]" (G-1).

The walking performance or gait of hotel employees that played a role in creating a value provision situation for the guests could be considered heuristic evidence in the hospitality setting. The sentiments of guests demonstrated that the values in exchange they received from the walking approach was beyond that of the intention of hotel employees,

thereby implying that the employees' gait has yet to be developed in a dynamic fashion to reduce the interaction error. G-6 recalled an experience as follows: "[The employees] were walking and passing by me very fast. I was standing at the lobby; I just wanted someone to help me. [They] were very fast, not paying attention. I felt ignored and they were not helpful. I just wanted to know where the washroom was." This finding demonstrated that the gait or walking manner of hotel employees influenced guests' feelings toward relational interest. With respect to managing errors in guest engagement, the gait of an employee could be a critical issue. In philosophy, a relationship is found between an individual's attitude and the way he/she walks (Taylor, 1995). In view of ECT (Hatfield et al., 1994), positive affective displays of employees' walking movements can be positively decoded by guests that can contribute to guests' value perception, such as feeling at home, having low uncertainty, and warmth at the entrance. The expressive emotions displayed by employees directly influence the emotional state of guests. However, this influence is conditional on the degree of authenticity of the employees' emotional display. For example, in this study's context, if the employee did not exhibit sincere gaits, then the contagion of the guest would not be effective and the guest would decode it as an insincere motive of the employee toward assisting guests, which ultimately may affect the guest's disengagement with the employee. Cesario and McDonald (2013) concluded that gait affects relational personality by the embodiment of a walking style [e.g., espousing an assertive style of gait and then self-rating high extraversion (i.e., how friendly, helpful, and social an individual is)]. However, this study's findings added that the gait of hotel employees also affects hotel guests' engagement intention to co-create memorable experiences.

4.3.1.3 Employees' smiling with eyes in guests' engagement

The role of employees' smiles or eye contact as an individual or singular expression toward guests for a successful service encounter is well-known. By contrast, this study's findings showed that in terms of the guest's engagement in co-creating memorable experiences, smiling or eye contact was not evident as a singular effect that contributed to the guest's engagement. Rather, the guest's sentiments indicated that their experiential values were triggered by the hotel employee's smiles with eyes, not separately. "The way he received me and smiled with his eyes, which was so beautiful, [made me think] yes, he was truly prepared to serve me" (G-2). This finding showed how the expressions of the employee's smiling with eyes affected the hotel guest's emotion and increased his trust toward the hotel employee. E-6's views on smiling with eyes further tested the guest's emotional state, as narrated by the above findings: "As in the hotel industry for the service staff, a smile and the eye contact is like a package... If you have a good mixture of smile with eye contact, basically all things are done" (E-6). Overall, the sentiments of the hotel guest's engagement factor with the employee was evident in the following: "A good mixture of smile with eye contact" (E-6), which in social psychology is called *smizing* (i.e., smiling with the eyes) or the Duchenne smile, after the French neurologist Guillaume Duchenne (Ekman, Davidson, & Friesen, 1990). The context of the guest's engagement from *smizing* is elaborated in the following data extracts:

"As the guest approached, he had a gentle smile in his open eyes. [It] showed that he was enjoying his work [to serve] the guest." (G-10)

"The hotel employee was willing to give warm and welcoming feelings, which was a kind of great experience for me. There were a couple of things that the employee did, raising their eye, and opening the door and keeping his smile all the time." (G-11)

“I can see her smile is from the eyes. Her eyes are in a curve and I can see clearly that they are focused. [This] makes me feel awesome and safe [because] her smile is really natural and sincere.” (G-8)

As E-6 indicated, the above findings demonstrated how the composition of a hospitality package, such as the projection of smiling of the hotel employee, contributed to the guest’s encounter satisfaction, thereby influencing their intention of engagement with the employee for further service consumption. Upon entering, the guest seemed determined to participate in the employee’s emotional smiling, which seemed expected by the guest as a mandatory or imperative gesture of hospitality from employees. “Naturally you feel discouraged if the employee does not smile and make you seen [acknowledge your presence]. Something is missing, like, am I really in a right place? (G-3). This attitude of the guest showed that employees’ projection of smiling is an important performance indicator. Furthermore, value perception, such as “*being prepared to serve me*” or “*serving the guest for enjoyment*” (during arrival), as well as “safe and awesome” and “neutral and sincere” (during check-in), emphasized how engagement is triggered, shaped, and ceased due to the relative congruence of the relevant projection of smiling. These sentiments also demonstrated the hospitality value within a specific reference group, such as guests in the service encounter, and the degree of perceived value for actors balancing the (perceived) hospitality requirements (i.e., professionalism, sincerity, and hospitality attitude) inherent in multiple engagement contexts such as entrance and check-in.

Exploring the reasons why smiling served guests’ engagement with employees to emerge in experience co-creation is interesting, as discussed follows. The guests’ sentiments from the shared effect of smiling during entrance and check-in could be tested by the neurological paradigm of smiling. In this paradigm, Duchenne and Boulogne (1990)

qualified the effect of smiling as a role player in the counterpart's trust and the improvement of cognitive perception with regard to the counterpart's expectations in a particular situation. When studying many different expressions of emotions focusing on the smile of pure enjoyment and positive emotions, Duchenne and Boulogne (1990) identified that smiling is natural and trustworthy and found that individuals feel positive emotions for the counterparts' smiling. They identified that smiling is distinguishably affective because it involves an emotional stimulus that causes the contraction of the facial muscle, drawing the angle of the mouth posteriorly to form a smile, and partly closing the eye (i.e., the splitting wrinkle at the outer corner of a person's eye). Messinger, Fogel, and Dickson (2001) also confirmed that smiling, as described by Duchenne and Boulogne (1990), uniquely attaches a positive emotion to the interactant. On the basis of ECT (Hatfield et al., 1994), Pugh (2001) indicated that the characteristics of service providers' particular nonverbal cues in service encounter can be a potent instrument in influencing the customers' service consumption experience. Given the employees' affective service delivery skills and their behavioral mimicry, which are evident in their nonverbal cues, they can impress customers quickly, eventually leading to developing rapport with customers (Gabriel et al., 2015; Pugh, 2001). Nonverbal cue exchange between people or the same expressiveness (e.g., one's smile begets another's smile) connects them quickly, and they engage each other in an interaction with enjoyment (Lim et al., 2016). Customers not only may decode it to be a relevant motive of service experience but also exhibits that cues can change customers' attitudes and thus affect customers' emotions toward the employees. Perhaps in a similar vein, hotel guests received the stimuli of enjoyment, neutrality, and sincerity from employees' smiling during

entrance and check-in (in the study's scenario, the employee role players in both situations tended to exchange similar types of smiles) as value collaboration in the pursuit of the co-creation of memorable experiences.

The guests' emotional state of engagement through employees' smiling can be further examined by the provision of stimulus organism response (SOR) paradigm, as discussed by Choi and Kandampully (2019) under the locus of customer engagement. The authors argued that the stimulus variables that affect the organism must be determined and, sequentially, bring changes in the response in customer–firm interactions. In the present work's context of face-to-face (human to human) interactions, SOR can be applied to understand guest engagement through employees' smiling. For example, employees' smiling served as a stimulus that could let the guests perceive the value/organism, such as enjoyment, neutrality, and sincerity, regarding employees' smiling behavior, which perhaps influenced guest response (i.e., engagement).

4.3.2 Complacent kinesic expressions

The specific kinesic cues that engaged guests with employees in experience co-creation have been discussed. Evidently, this engagement was perceived as imperative or necessary stimuli to infer employees' helpfulness, sincerity, hospitality, and willingness, as expressed in their body language. The findings further identified the *complacent kinesic expressions* of guests as a strategy in employees' engagement with guests in experience co-creation. To the hotel employees, the *complacent kinesic expressions* of guests were a sense of value. They were also the value that could be viewed as a stimuli or symbol that was felt or perceived by employees as a beneficial collaboration or a experiential benefit, such as stimuli of pleasure, self-satisfaction, and being easygoing and undemanding,

especially with advantages in a given situation, which is apparent in the body language of guests without any potential risk or defect. For example, this context of employees' engagement with guests' complacent kinesics was generated by E-2: "If you don't see any kind of positive cue, any kind of pleasant facial expression, any kind of good outlook toward the guests' gesture, you might feel anxious or embarrassed. Are you [behaving properly]? Is there any clarity? Do you need to do something again? You might start to feel slightly concerned."

The above narratives showed how hotel employees expected guests' complacent kinesic cues that could ensure their favorable work intention and an anxiety-free atmosphere in hotels. The guests' sentiments explicitly revealed that their complacent kinesics or body language did not deliver the stimuli for embarrassment; anxiety about further workloads functioned as a form of hotel employees' engagement with the guests in experience co-creation. These findings indicated that if the employees witness the principles of co-creation [e.g., the state of beneficial collaboration (i.e., the sense of safety and confirmation of pleasure, and the signal of satisfaction) was evident in the body language of hotel guests], then the hotel employees became interactive and engaged with the hotel guests in experience co-creation. The above narrative further showed that hotel employees primarily sought anxiety-free expressions in guests' kinesics, such as complacent stimuli attributed to satisfaction, gratitude, being easygoing, and undemanding. Such expressions helped the employees to engage with the guests "because people cannot tell lies with their body language" (E-8).

This study now focuses on identifying the specific kinesic cues that played a role in offering a complacent value proposition toward employees' engagement with guests in experience co-creation.

4.3.2.1 Guests' shoulder posture in employees' engagement

The findings indicated that employees expressed their sentiments on how guests' shoulder posture tended to exhibit their engagement to co-create their experience. Employees' sentiments demonstrated that guests' state of complacent mind and the intention of interaction or service evaluation that they aimed to show toward the employee were strikingly reflected in the guests' shoulder posture. For example, a front desk employee (E-8) recalled from her experience on guests' shoulder posture that "if [the guests] raise their shoulder, know that this is serious; I feel [the need] to stay behind the front desk and just watch the waving movements of their shoulders." This finding indicated that the movements of guest's shoulders moderated the employee's intention on whether to engage or disengage with the guest. This finding further reflected that shoulder posture had such a stimulatory content that affected the employee's feeling of being worried in the work environment: "I feel [the need] to stay behind the front desk" (E-8).

Guests' shoulder posture could also contribute to employees' pleasure and motivation in the workplace. For example, during check-in, employees received signals of guests' complacent feelings from their shoulder posture. The guests' leaning shoulder posture made the employees feel that they placed the guests in a friendly atmosphere. The manner that the employees generated an atmosphere of improved feeling for guests emotionally caused them to experience beneficial collaboration. That is, the employees felt that the guests were consuming their service without failure, and the employees thus tended

to become engaged with the guests. According to E-7, “[The guest] [leaned] his shoulder on the reception desk a couple of times while the employee was working. That made me feel that we’re giving the right atmosphere to the guest...” E-9 also recounted an engagement experience that he/she had at the hotel lobby: “[A] good compliment from the guest [is] putting a hand on your shoulder... They extend their hands on your shoulder and say, ‘Thank you! Very good!’ [This casual gesture implies] a deep relationship and interaction.”

The employees’ feelings of compliments (“Thank you! Very good!”) were triggered by the guests’ shoulder posture. The employees felt unexpected rewards and benefits from the guests’ shoulder signals, which helped them feel emotional through an invocation of a deep relationship, thereby stimulating their engagement. In a similar vein, the shoulder posture of a guest generated an impression of decency, to which the employee (doorman) responded during the guest’s arrival: “She was moving her shoulder, she looked so innocent and also a bit exhausted. I felt [motivated] to help her” (E-3).

The shoulder posture also caused employees’ reluctance to engage with guests, drawing a moment with which employees felt a considerable distance from the guests. For example, guests’ shoulder shrugging provided an impression of rudeness and superiority. This context was recalled by E-12 as follows: “They would be, like, ordering you, ‘Hey, I want to be like this. I’m a frequent guest. I always spend money in your hotel.’ Rude! And their shoulders would be like this [showed shrugging while extending hands] so you can see that they were showing their power.”

The above sentiments were unusual with regard to employees’ engagement with guests. These sentiments shed light on the insight that employees’ value perception from

guests' kinesic exchange was determined by the expectation of complacent stimuli that caused no potential threat to the emotional attachment and wellbeing of employees. Thus, to be engaged with guests, the employees increasingly searched for stimuli to signal (1) guests' satisfaction regarding their service and (2) indication of potential relief from additional workload because a complaint from the guests or service failure attributed to the guests' body language may cause them to renew or redesign the service for the guests. "Some guests may even extend their shoulder and hands directly on the table that meant they are not happy or it is a very serious case. I feel like 'Oh, my God! I've got work to do'" (E-6). These findings showed that employees' value proposition and intention to collaborate with guests was dependent on whether the guests' kinesics could affect the employees' psychological state of engagement, such as feelings of enthusiasm toward guests due to their complacent kinesics, in which employees provided stimuli that the guests were enjoying their performance without complaint.

Guests' shoulder posture or movement played a dual role in employees' engagement and disengagement. Findings on shoulder posture tended to reveal the mindset of employees that can be argued in the rule of approach and avoidance motivation (Elliot, 1999; Feltman & Elliot, 2012). This finding emphasizes that the approach designates a propensity to maintain contact with complacent stimuli. Avoidance indicates a propensity to maintain distance from uncomplacent stimuli. The satisfaction and dissatisfaction of stimuli are at the core of the distinction between approach and avoidance; the complacent stimuli typically lead to approach, whereas the uncomplacent stimuli typically lead to avoidance. URT (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) also confirms that certainty or uncertainty, which aroused from during cue exchange, moderates individuals' feelings for potential

engagement with a counterpart when such counterpart behaves expectedly or unexpectedly—serves or violates the individuals' expectations. For example, if an individual expects his/her counterpart to be easygoing but explores the opposite, he/she begins to withdraw from the interaction and seems disheartened, which gradually leads to uncertainty and disengagement because the person no longer feels confident in his/her cognition to decode his/her counterpart's favorable motive for the interaction. Thus, employees' motivation of engagement was based on the natural stimuli of the shoulder posture of the guests, which was the energization and direction of value co-creation.

Effective value propositions toward employees' engagement were produced from the guests' shoulder posture. The findings on the guests' shoulder posture indicated that the employees expected to absorb relational factors and were eager to be affected by experiential benefits. These findings are significant and suggest that even a micro-clue on employees' engagement with guests should not be overlooked in S-D logic. These findings stretch the S-D logic on employee engagement into the area of value co-creation.

4.3.2.2 Guests' walking movements in employees' engagement

In the previous section (Section 4.3.1.2), guests seemed to espouse their value perception from the employees' gait or walking manner. The findings also indicated that employees found guests' gait or walking manner to affect their state of mind in being engaged with them (guests). Different from the guests' judgment in that section, the employees tended to desire the stimuli from guests' walking, which provided the feelings of how guests appeared to them with stimuli of no potential risk, thereby causing no stress. Hotel employees appeared to be engaged with guests' small steps and slow walking pace,

which provided experiential benefits, such as relaxation, shyness, and good mood. This context was reviewed in the following memorable engagement experience of an employee:

“If he is relaxed and confident in his steps, I feel [motivated to engage] with him. Sometimes, the pacing is so important. [It shows] whether the guy knew what he was doing or showing his personality, because sometimes maybe the guest is too shy and their steps are small. These steps are fine for us.” (E-3)

“If he walks slowly, then maybe he is having a good day, not a bad day. I feel safe because he is not walking to me to give me pressure, ‘Please come, come, no problem.’” (E-9)

The findings confirmed that employees trusted the stimuli of guests’ gait and felt engaged that those stimuli (i.e., relaxation and good mood) did not indicate complaints or stress. The employees seemed to rejoice in their perceived beneficial value from the guests’ walking manner (“These [small and slow steps] are fine for us,” “Maybe he was having a good day,” “Please come, come, no problem”). Furthermore, by contrast, the uncomplacent stimuli, such as complaints and stress, were also perceived from the gait of guests, which discouraged employees to participate in a mutually beneficial collaboration with guests. For example, E-1 recalled a practical scenario: “Some guests, after checking in, walked fast to the counter. This [action] could tell there was something wrong in the room. We felt stressed during the closure of duty [as to] why they would come back soon after checking in... They walked back shortly after check-in because they had questions.”

The fast movement and hurried gait of guests exposed their state of dissatisfaction and need for further inquiry about delivered service, with which employees felt uncertain during their duty closure and gave a signal of disengagement with the guests because they felt stressed and were fearful of a service failure indication. After completing the duty hours, the receptionist felt mentally upset from encountering the above scenario. The employees needed to rectify the guests’ complaints. In S-D logic, the employees’

engagement has yet to be highlighted in promoting customers' memorable experience co-creation. Some scholars, as used in guests' perspective to return, tended to indicate the use of employee engagement to contribute to customers' value co-creation (Grissemann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). Rather and Hollebeek (2019) indicated that if employees are given an organizational environment to perceive beneficial value from the guests, then they will be enthusiastic in returning beneficial collaboration to the guests.

By contrast, this context can be reviewed in the work of Regan (1971). When investigating the effects of perceived benefits and approving of compliance, Regan (1971) found that the perception of benefits affects compliance not because it makes the recipient more engaged with the benefactor (although the benefits have this effect) but because the recipient feels obliged to respond to the benefits. The current study's findings on the value proposition of guests' gait can be an important indication of a successful experience co-creation that contributes to employees' continuing beneficial collaboration with guests. The findings emphasized that employees' own attributions in attempting to perceive their value for engagement or disengagement determine the effort that they are willing to exert toward guests in the future. Affective and cognitive value assessment affects their future behavior toward guests when similar situations, as expressed in the above scenario, are experienced (Weiner, 1974; Argyle & Dean, 1965).

4.3.2.3 Guests' facial cues in employees' engagement

As the findings demonstrated, the employees seemed sensitive in co-creating their value from guests' exchanges of facial cues, such as collaboration, relational preference, and experience. For the employees, guests' facial signals were important in determining their value proposition toward co-creation dimensions. "When you keep looking at the

guest's face, you would know what you need more. [What] we could do would mostly be dependent on the guest's facial reaction" (E-3). This sentiment implies that the stimuli of value were perceived uniquely from the individual guests' facial behavior, which seemed conditional or contextual depending on the facial cues or expressions exchanged by the guests in a given situation. The findings showed that the employees seemed interested in being engaged with the guests, whereas the guests' facial cues signaled benefits, worth, and recognition. For example, E-7 shared her previous experience with facial cues: "[For] a hotel employee, sometimes a simple response was enough. It actually showed that [your work was] meaningful. So, the guests [expressed gratitude through] their facial expressions. You were trying your best to serve. [Just] putting a smile on your face in return was totally enough for me."

This result demonstrated that facial cues, under the rubric of employees' engagement with guests, determined their state of extroversion and conscientiousness to perceive experiential benefits. The employees showed that they tried their best to serve the guests. They were eager to see the reflection of their meaningful performance in the guests' faces. When they experienced a facial cue as "thankful," they seemed highly motivated to engage with the guests. The findings showed the emotion-signaling function of the face. Emotional signals, such as "meaningful," "thankful," and "totally enough for me" are the outcomes of the guests' facial behavior. These complacent feelings in facial cue exchange facilitated employees' engagement. Furthermore, the employees' sentiments indicated that experiential or hedonic value was concerned with the extent to which a facial cue created appropriate experiences, feelings, and emotions.

In a similar vein, during the guests' arrival, the employees seemed to be engaged with the dynamics of the guests' facial behavior: "Finally I've found the hotel" (E-1). By contrast, during check-in, the facial cues of the guests expressed, "you cared for me a lot" (E-10). Both findings reflected that these emotional sentiments expressed in guests' facial cues were the reactions of their kinesic performance or appearance, which they tended to perceive as the outcomes of their kinesic skills or efficacy. For example,

"I think her facial view was that she was very tired, and after finding me standing changed her face to show 'Finally, I've found the hotel,' and then she looked nice, which really gave us a context to open the door eagerly." (E-2)

"The guest was showing satisfactory facial expressions, such as 'You cared for me a lot,' which would give the employee a positive sign that [would lead to] a sense of satisfaction as well." (E-12)

The above narratives showed that in the process of experience co-creation, the employees exerted efforts to use their competency or skills in their daily activities. The employees' perception of their own competency and skills were evident in emotional facial cues that caused them to be engaged with the guests.

All these complacency-focused cues in the guests' faces, such as reciprocated stimuli of certainty during arrival and stimuli of satisfaction during check-in, gave the employees a positive context for their experience co-creation that was inherently beneficiary-oriented and relational, as discussed by Vargo and Lusch (2008b). Thus, the vital aspect of the guests' facial behavior was the role of satisfaction in co-creating a relational experience. The employees seemed pleased with the exchange of complacent facial cues with the guests and were inclined to remain committed to developing beneficial relationships with the guests. In view of ECT, interactants' facial cues play vital roles in a successful dyadic engagement. For example, one person's facial expressions affect the

counterpart. The interactants can decode each other's motives from their facial expressions, which affects them following the value of cues, such as sadness leads to sadness, and pleasure leads to pleasure.

The participants expressed their sentiments in line with existing arguments of S-D logic (Lusch et al., 2007). The interactional values (i.e., satisfaction, certainty, pleasure) that occurred in the guests' facial cues triggered the employees' engagement in terms of experience co-creation. The guests' facial cues were observed as a unique type of value trigger in employees' engagement. An employee said, "It would enhance my willingness to provide much more services to ensure the satisfaction of the guest since his expectation is also my expectation 'Please treat me fairly as well'" (E-3). The employees seemed to argue that they deserved a sense of equality in treatment, whereas their main motto was to serve guests by ensuring quality service for the guests' satisfaction. These sentiments highlighted the need for emotional contagion (Hatfield et al., 1994). Satisfaction can be felt not only by the guests from the satisfactory display of employees' kinesics; employees' satisfaction should also be mimicked and affected by the satisfactory display of guests' kinesics and should be emphasized in integrating their collaboration or value as the price of beneficial treatment. Although the literature on employee engagement in S-D logic has not yet emerged (He, Chao, & Zhu, 2019; France, Merrilees, & Miller, 2015), the findings showed how complacent signals of guests' kinesic behavior affect employees' engagement dimensions.

In sum, employees' and guests' sentiments on the stimuli of the value proposition from each other's kinesic (i.e., imperative and complacent expressiveness) exchange to trigger their engagement with each other help enhance memorable experiences. Guests'

(complacent) and employees' (imperative) body language is relevant given their motives to co-create values (i.e., the sense of safety, confirmation of pleasurable moments, less workload, and a deep relationship) between them, which are decodable affectively, affiliatively, and cognitively. Finally, guests' and employees' sentiments show that their kinesic, specifically the exchange of complacent and imperative expressive ability influences their co-creation outcomes, thereby demonstrating that their complacent and imperative kinesic expressions are a critical boundary condition about the link between engagement and their value co-creation behavior.

4.4 Potential problems and ethical issues in managing kinesics

As mentioned in Section 4.3.1, frontline hotel employees' hand gestures, walking movements, and smile with eye contact in guests' engagement, which is potential in guest experience co-creation, may not only be a sufficient need in the contemporary hotel job markets. Instead, hospitality organizations might require frontline employees to regulate their kinesic expressions according to organizational goals and needs. Consequently, employees have to comply with various expressive requirements (e.g., look the guests in the eyes and put on a smile, regardless of their true feelings to manage guest impressions) regarding their work role as an instrumentality to boost hotels' profit motives (e.g., increase positive word of mouth and loyalty; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, Rupp, & Brice, 2015; Hochschild, 1983). Furthermore, HR professionals are also interested in this instrumentality and demand the experience of genuinely expressed emotions fitted to their business promotion (Alarcon, 2011; Mauno et al., 2016).

In such circumstances, employees' visible facial and bodily displays (e.g., kinesic expressions) to guests, as demanded and instructed by a hotel, may constitute ethical issues

(Fulmer & Barry, 2009; Provis, 2001; Smith & Lorentzon, 2005) because a hotel uses employees as instruments to fulfill the hotel's needs, such as experience co-creation practices to improve the guests' visit to the hotel (Teoh, Wang, & Kwek, 2019). Thus, using employees as instruments may cause several concerns, such as potential risks and harms for employees, such as when employees fail to perform the kinesic expressiveness (e.g., visible facial and bodily displays), as demanded and instructed by organizations, as well as on the basis of their reluctance of expressiveness to customers (Warhurst, Nickson, Witz, & Marie Cullen, 2000). For example, Warhurst et al. (2000), in their study on industrial relations, demonstrated that employees' nonconformity with organizational standards for expressive skills brings frustration and emotional tension in their usual behavior not only to customers but also to their co-workers. Warhurst and Nickson (2007) indicated that in failing to fulfill the requirement of organizations' instructed expressiveness, employees tend to anticipate the loss of wages and written or verbal warning notices from managers, or may even feel threatened not to be allowed to work in a more severe issue, such as guests' complaints regarding their performance.

Consequently, employees start to undergo psychological stress; for instance, when employees cannot meet the expressive requirement, they may invite criticism from their managers and thus feel unhappy (Pugh, Groth, & Hennig-Thurau, 2011). Even employees feel rejecting to perform their expressive role of being emotionally exhausted (e.g., burnout), which brings them depersonalization and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment, which hinders their task performance and threatens their wellbeing (McCance et al., 2010). Furthermore, employees undergo physical strain due to emotional exhaustion. For instance, when interacting with guests, employees have to repeatedly

maintain registrations of gestures, postures and bodily movements for a long time, which may cause them physical strain (Schwarzer, & Leppin, 1989). In such situations, employees breathe deeply, and their heart rate runs faster over an entire working day (Sandmark et al., 1999).

The above discussion demonstrates that frontline employees' burdens, such as work stress, burnout, and physical strain, occur from performing required kinesic expressions, including not only ethical concerns but also economic costs in service-oriented businesses including those in hospitality (Collins et al., 2005). Macik-Frey, Quick, and Nelson (2007) noted that considering employees' nonverbal expressiveness as human instruments may cause health problems, diseases, and disorders. Collins et al. (2005) reported that employees' expressive exhaustion brings to them mental disorders, depression, and anxiety, which may reduce their contribution to the organization, even during their physical presence and working in the workplace.

Thus, employees gradually feel time pressure, performance pressure, job dissatisfaction, and threat of losing their jobs, which makes the workplace becoming a burden for employees and organizations (Allen, Hubbard, & Sullivan, 2005; McCance et al., 2013). The reason is that organizations, such as hotels, benefit from employees who are skilled and active in engagement in making an effort to actually feel nonverbal cues (e.g., deep acting); moreover, these employees can adopt and adapt to hotels' requirements that are necessary to guest experience (e.g., through kinesics expressions) to create guests' feelings of enjoyment, hospitality, comfort, and sincerity in influencing guest engagement, along with other particular objectives, such as increasing positive words of mouth and loyalty (Lin & Lin, 2017; Low & Everett, 2014; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). As a result, there

exists a moral dilemma from a humanitarian perspective, which has thus been intersected between employers (e.g., organizational profitability) and employees (e.g., wellbeing) who suffer from displaying (e.g., surface acting) required expressiveness (Grandey, Rupp, & Brice, 2015).

4.4.1 Alleviation of problems and ethical issues

For that reason, in the following ways, harms and ethics associated with requiring or accommodating both genuine and effortful expressions of hotel employees, as well as for opting not to consider employees' nonverbal expressiveness as human instruments should be conveniently resolved for the sake of preserving employees wellbeing, and retaining organizational profitability without leaving any moral dilemmas between them (Greenwood, 2013; Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994; McCance et al., 2013).

A transparent employment recruitment process with a clear declaration of employees' job responsibilities and the company's requirement may help revive employees' wellbeing and organizational profitability. For example, with respect to kinesic expressiveness, hotel employees have a formal employment contract that specifies roles related to the job position (e.g., delivering check-in services as front desk personnel); thus, they are likely to expect additional role behaviors, such as servicing with a smile, eye contact, enthusiastic body orientation, and other forms of body language (Rousseau, 2004). As such, job commitment known previously (e.g., during recruitment process) implies that employees have a responsibility to perform formal and additional role behaviors to the best of their ability and given willingness—a responsibility that hotel employees also acknowledge can dispose respective liabilities of hotels and employees from potential harms and ethical issues (Greenwood, 2013; Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994).

By contrast, on the hotel side, commitment to employees reflects a general rule intended to regulate behavior that focuses on business ethics, such as not to harm employees or inflict the least harm possible to reach a positive or beneficial effect (e.g., suggest a duty for employees to engage in making an effort to actually feel expressions that may yield desirable organizational results (Keeley, 1988). Such results include enhanced customer satisfaction and employee work engagement coupled with decreasing absenteeism and turnover, which ultimately outline benefits for employees' career and wellbeing in equivalent to those of employees attributed and qualified in genuine expressive ability (Eisenberger & Rhoades, 2001).

Scholars in the stream of organizational behavior and psychology have suggested to involve employees and give freedom in social sharing activities to improve their wellbeing, which becomes at risk during emotional exhaustion (Meisiek & Yao, 2005; Rimé, 2007). As an interpersonal mood sharing, social sharing, such as sharing an event of subjective emotional experiences, may help employees reduce their expressive tension and frustration by communicating those experiences (e.g., interaction experience with irritated or angry guests during their kinesic exhaustion) to their managers. Thus, social sharing may provide a socially suitable way for voicing hotel employees' emotional disturbance to promote health and wellbeing (Luminet et al., 2000).

In this vein, Rodríguez and Gregory (2005) indicated that in involving employees in social sharing, employers may explore suitable training topics in developing nonverbal expressiveness. In this manner, employers can modify the existing training objectives, content, sequence, relevance, and method of imparting training courses to improve employees' wellbeing and professional career. As a result, employees' social sharing may

help employers reconfigure employees' soft skills (e.g., kinesic/body language skills). Such skills are intended to produce an accepted style of kinesic cue exchange during service encounter, which appeals to the senses of guests' engagement in terms of experience co-creation in hotels.

Last but not the least, the know-how of kinesic expressiveness can be learned and usefully applied to guests in hotels through meeting a duty to do no harm by training employees to anticipate and safeguard risks and harms (Nguyen, Groth, & Johnson, 2016). Doing so may partially fulfill a duty of hotels' commitment by equipping employees with relevant professional development and can address the responsibility of reaching a beneficial outcome for employees (Mauno, Ruokolainen, Kinnunen, & Bloom, 2016). Nor need the application of expressive know-how be ethically interrogative since hotel employees can learn how to manage their expressions for the benefit of themselves and guests (Smith & Lorentzon, 2005).

4.5 Kinesics-based experience co-creation (Objective 3)

As its third objective, this study also aims to outline the process behind the kinesics-based experience co-creation between guests and employees in hotels, as shown in Figure 4.2. The arrows in the figure denote the guests' and employees' kinesic experience and co-creation process. As successively indicated through the arrows, six dimensions (i.e., from initiation toward triggering a moment of co-creation) of kinesic experience between hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions are based on two major themes, namely, (1) *reciprocity* and (2) *engagement*. The consecutive five arrows within the periphery of *reciprocity* and *engagement*, demonstrate six kinesic experience elements: (i) mutual recognition, ii) insight exchange, iii) expectation formation are possessed by *reciprocity*, whereas (i) customized attention, ii) relationship building, and iii) sense of affinity belong to *engagement*. These elements highlight the process of co-creation from the initiation to triggering moment that guests' and employees' mutual kinesic experiences enable them to determine their engagement intention with each other, which allows them to co-create mutual experiences. Thus, on the basis of the six kinesic experience elements, the other two arrows from hotel guest and hotel employee line (during face-to-face interactions) indicate their mutual kinesic exchange moment of expressive value triggers that indicate the two distinct decoding (i.e., affective, affiliative, and cognitive) motives of guests and employees during face-to-face interactions. The two co-creative value triggers are i) guests' complacent expressiveness and ii) employees' imperative expressiveness.

Furthermore, before descriptively and analytically understanding the entire process of kinesics-based experience co-creation (Figure 4.2), this study provides a brief outline to highlight the co-creation process. This process is identified from the locus of S-D logic and

nonverbal communication, and its theories are presented in the Introduction and Literature Review sections.

4.5.1 Overview of co-creation process

S-D logic asserts that experiences are the extracts of value (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2018; Vargo & Lusch, 2018). Thus, in the present work, experience co-creation is a form of experiential interaction between hotel guests and employees, and its perceived value resides only in the kinesics (exchange) experience, not in an object, a product, or possession per se (Holbrook, 2006). In the six dimensions of kinesic experience (Figure 4.2) and in the two co-creative value triggers (i.e., complacent and imperative kinesic expressiveness), the extracts of value are determined by the interactive relativistic (i.e., comparative, favorable, unfavorable, situational, and personal) preferences of guests and employees in hotels (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Holbrook, 2006; Majdoub, 2014). Thus, in guest–employee dyads, the co-creation process evolving from the dimension of kinesic experience is subjective and context-oriented (Vargo & Lusch, 2008b, 2008c). Co-creation in guest–employee dyads implies that the two parties are engaged in a mutual experience collaboration and in the creation of high-quality interaction (i.e., processes that evoke emotion and meaning between individuals, motivating them to elicit a relational response; Chathoth et al., 2016; Burgoon et al., 1989; Griffin, 2009; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). In turn, these are responsible for producing experience elements between two parties (i.e., guests and employees). Consequently, the propensity of experience co-creation in guest–employee dyads is evident in the beneficial collaboration (i.e., acknowledgment, motivation, safety, hospitality, respect, trust, and compassion attributed to kinesic expressions) elicited during face-to-face interactions in hotels.

During face-to-face interactions, the mutual or reciprocal kinesic actions of hotel guests and employees affect each other, that is, guests' kinesic expressions evoke similar emotions in employees, and vice versa (Hatfield et al., 1993). The favorable and unfavorable kinesic cues of both parties mutually affect each other, thereby increasing or decreasing their favorable and unfavorable emotions, respectively. Both parties also demonstrate intimacy through their kinesic exchange. At different points of interaction, guests and employees maintain their affiliation in kinesic exchange through approach and avoidance to reconcile and balance interpersonal relationships. The levels of uncertainty/certainty, as decoded in kinesic exchange, produce intimacy in guest–employee dyads, and such intimacy is relational and cognitively results in experience co-creation.

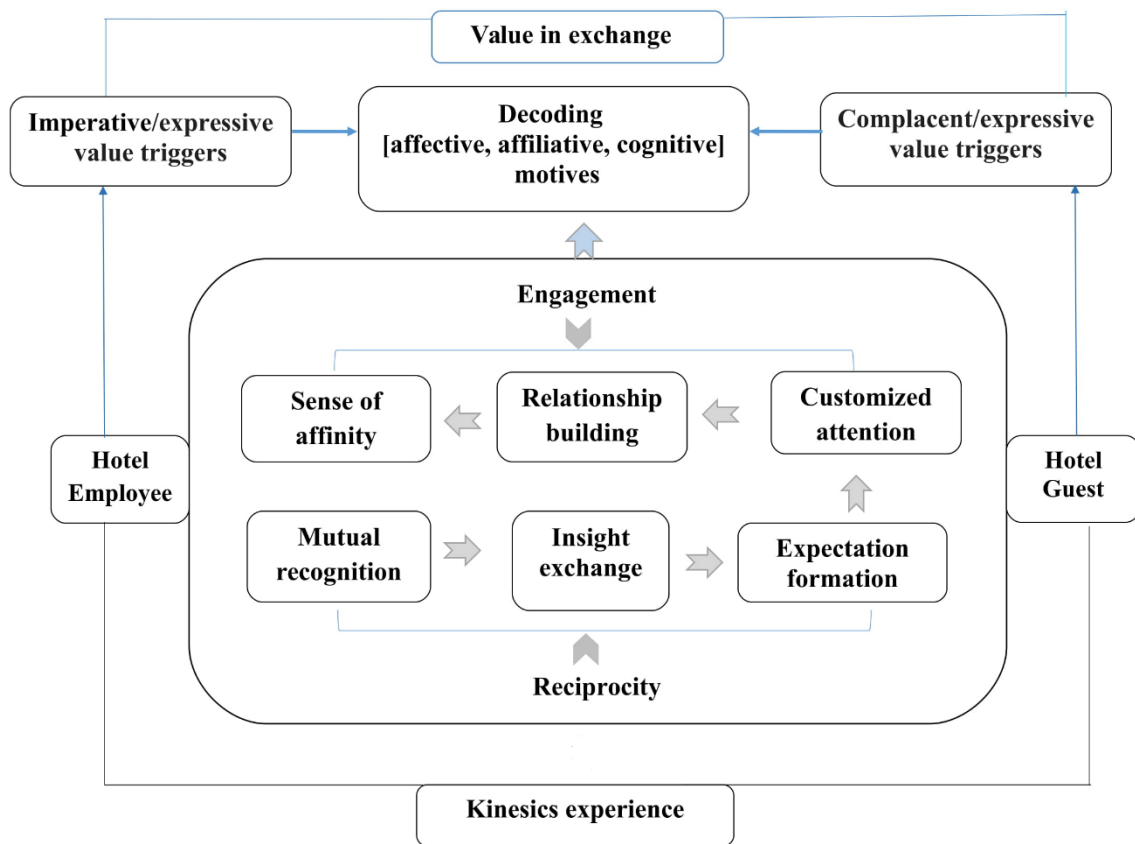


Figure 4.2 Nonverbal communication in hotels as a medium of experience co-creation

The effects of guest-to-employee or employee-to-guest relations determine experience co-creation between guests and employees. Specifically, kinesic cues that influence the engagement of both parties during face-to-face interactions create value in exchange for each other, as revealed in the functions of the attitudes, affection, satisfaction, or behavior-based judgments behind co-creation. Guests and employees can affectively, affiliatively, and cognitively decode the visual- and value-providing motives of each other's kinesic expressiveness to ensure psychological participation in the co-creation process. Both parties do not feel satisfied unless they decode their kinesic expressiveness in triggering a particular type of value, such as the sense of safety, confirmation of pleasurable moments, less workload, and a deep relationship.

Figure 4.2 presents a step-by-step guide that explicitly explains the entire process of kinesics-based experience co-creation between guests and employees in hotels.

4.5.2 Initiation of co-creation process

The primary kinesic experience element is mutual recognition. The co-creation process in guest–employee dyads originates from these two entities' recognition of each other by initiating their attention although kinesic cue exchange. This process is facilitated by welcoming body orientation or facial expressions as the symbols of responsiveness that instigate mutual acknowledgment. Guests and employees look for a gateway through which they can maximize the hospitality experience by confirming mutual acknowledgment. They tend to enter into negotiations to accept each other to co-exist and thus obtain mutual benefits, which is similar to the reciprocal dialogues suggested by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) between firms and consumers. In guest–employee dyads, these reciprocal sentiments of benefiting each other through mutual acknowledgment promote the notion that the building block of dyadic experience and interaction transparency, such as psychological approval, plays a vital role in expected value perception. The visual and symbolic importance of approval or recognition of individuality, such as that between a guest and an employee, indicates that the two parties purport to participate psychologically in the co-creation process. In terms of interactional value perception, their psychological participation seems more critical than their physical participation. Thus, the unfavorable disposition of the employees affects the guests, and vice versa; that is, they seem to reciprocate contagious emotions (i.e., through a similar return of emotions) to each other. As asserted in ECT (Hatfield et al., 1993), the authenticity of the emotional expressions of two parties directly affect each other's

emotional states. As such, the potential of mutual affiliation becomes dependent on each other's emotions. Furthermore, on the basis of S-D logic (Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Holbrook, 2006), individuals' participation in interactions (i.e., seeking value in exchange) from the physical perspective includes body movements, whereas their affective actions, such as learning and tracing information, determine their psychological participation. For instance, the similar notion reflects the context in which attention- and acknowledgment-oriented cue (body language) exchange affectively and affiliatively generates feelings of recognition, respect, pleasure, and motivation in guest–employee dyads. Consequently, the opposite results in ignorance, sadness, discouragement, and inhospitality.

Guests and employees remain attentive to the process of exchanging insights from the kinesic cues they exhibit to each other. They are likely to criticize or appreciate the reciprocated insights, such that they can fulfill the kinesic requirements of a successful interaction (i.e., expectation formation) to meet their relational goals (e.g., respect and rapport). Guests and employees are found to behave in accordance with the ideas of URT (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). For example, they tend to seek beneficial information in cues while matching particular insights to specific cues to determine whether they are superficial (i.e., unauthentic) or deep (i.e., sincere, caring). In doing so, they can determine suitable and trustworthy expressive emotions that can contribute to successful face-to-face dyadic interactions. Both parties seem to display or exchange kinesic cues consciously and unconsciously during face-to-face interactions. Hence, they sometimes appear to be unable to cast meaningful cues or may not appear to aim at benefiting their counterparts due to the lack of awareness of the effects of cues. If interaction satisfaction is not achieved, then it cannot ensure the potential of the relationship. Insights drawn from kinesic exchange tend

to underlie reciprocity and interdependence, as well as trust and commitment in the potential pursuit of mutual engagement, as S-D logic asserted (Desai, 2009).

Together, hotel guests and employees can mutually perceive the quality of interaction and the quality of their counterpart's traits from their exchange of nonverbal cues (i.e., advantages, usefulness, and meaningfulness). Thus, induced or perceived messages help construct mutual expectation for desired cues that may bring beneficial experiences to them. Both parties tend to expect high-quality interaction to deepen the experience of the co-creation process, which they view as effective and beneficial interactional outcomes (i.e., sign of safety and fulfilling requirements). As postulated in S-D logic (Vargo, Lusch, & Morgan, 2006) and URT (Berger & Calabrese, 1975), actors begin to expect high-quality interaction cues (i.e., those that evoke emotion, enthusiasm, and eagerness and correspond to beneficial attributes) when the intention of beneficial collaboration between actors is not imminent or has yet to occur. Thus, guests and employees show sentiments of solving the crisis (i.e., sign of rejection by shaking one's head) of their kinesic display by expecting value in exchange, which should always be uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary (i.e., guests and employees; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Vargo & Lusch, 2006). For example, the exchange value of hospitality in guest–employee dyads aims to remain collaborative partners to balance the benefits or experience outcomes (Argyle & Dean, 1965; Smith & Colgate, 2007).

Hotel guests and employees feel that a considerate attitude and a sense of social courtesy are expected in two-sided communication. By contrast, the changes in body language (e.g., from smiling to wincing and from joy to frustration) should be contemplated

when reacting to the other party positively. Signals are expected to alleviate a person's anger or disappointment, such as sympathetic or courteous cues (i.e., actions that show courtesy). During social interactions, specifically in nonverbal ones, people attempt to balance their communication to maintain a comfortable relationship. This situation reflects the ACT (Argyle & Dean, 1965), which posits that individuals consciously maintain and establish a comfortable intimacy equilibrium for each interaction. Thus, both parties appear committed to exchange kinesic cues to be relational, such as maintaining intimacy by checking and balancing cue projection during face-to-face interactions. For example, if a doorman in a hotel forgets or neglects to display the stimuli or signal of pleasing kinesics (a smile or joyful gesture) at a guest at the outset of the latter's arrival, then the guest may expect those missing cues from the doorman in subsequent interactions, and vice versa (i.e., in the case of the guest).

As mentioned previously, the ongoing reciprocated stage promotes the co-creation process and helps both parties co-exist in the pursuit of perceiving experiential engagement during face-to-face interactions in hotels. This developing process continues to customize attention (i.e., reducing uncertainty, needs of balancing, and improvising suitable cues), such as the display of self-felt kinesics toward achieving each other's affiliation. Thus, the determinants of behavior are the intention to engage in that behavior and the perceived behavioral control. Intentions represent an individual's motivation (Ajzen & Driver, 1992; Campos et al., 2018) to express something. Remarkably, hotel guests and employees have the patience to share interactive experience/hospitality to ensure their benefits because both are expected to grow into each other to build mutual understanding and trust, thereby maintaining the relationship (Ajzen, 1991; Vargo & Lusch, 2018b). Thus, both parties are

likely to display certain kinesic cues to each other, which they presume to be suitable for improving and managing their mutual intimacy (Argyle & Dean, 1965). Guests and employees become attentive to the process of exchanging the value of kinesics in an idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual, and meaningful manner (Vargo & Lusch, 2008) as if they aim to demonstrate a helpful attitude to improve interpersonal convenience.

Furthermore, both parties want to avoid a potential relational complexity (i.e., uncertainty and failure of relationship development), which is contextually dependent. Fostering a high level of mutual understanding in the presence of potential relational complexities is difficult (Desai, 2009). Therefore, during a critical moment of interaction (i.e., service rejection sign, which is an unfavorable sign of relationship development), they seek favorable cues from each other that can provide value in exchange, thereby obtaining information on their ongoing interactional relationship. URT (Berger & Bradac, 1982) asserts that when cognitive uncertainty occurs along with nonverbal expressions that imply dislike between the actors, the situation does not foster a dyadic relationship, unity, and harmony between parties.

Moreover, both parties tend to customize cues that lay a proposition or stimuli for a deeper relationship, certainty, and intimacy, which further advances the experience of the co-creation process. Essentially, customized cue practice dramatically helps guests and employees reach the stage of relationship building (i.e., kinesic signals of understanding, respect, politeness, and friendliness). Guests and employees seem to display trustworthy cues, such that they can be satisfied in fostering their relationship. They feel emotionally attached and are induced to ensure relationship development. Both parties are also likely to be emotionally contagious and allow themselves to understand “harmony and peace”

during the following scenarios: (1) when their interaction occurs smoothly without any complaint or error and (2) when they favorably exchange kinesics/body language during the face-to-face interaction. The opposite arouses their apathy toward relationship development (Berger & Bradac, 1982; Hatfield et al., 1993). The value in exchange and context includes the functional and hedonic outcomes, purposes, or objectives of both parties that are directly served by mutual kinesic expressions.

In this continuous extent of interpersonal relationship development, guests and employees seem committed to each other to foster their adopted relationship by exchanging a sense of affinity (i.e., kinesic cues that signal sympathy, empathy, patience, and harmony). Such a commitment is shown by expressions such as, “I am concerned about you, do not worry.” The mutual affinity shown in kinesic exchange secures social connections that, in turn, reinforce the ground of viable relationships. The sense of gratitude and kindness endorsed in the body language of an individual contributes to a feeling of peace and unity achieved through sharing satisfaction. Such feelings of equality, unity, and harmony support the notion that both parties affectively, affiliatively, and cognitively tend to be engaged with each other to foster relationships, as shown by S-D logic (Vargo, Maglio, & Akaka, 2008), ECT (Hatfield et al., 1993), ACT (Argyle & Dean, 1965), and URT (Berger & Bradac, 1982).

4.5.3 Moments of co-creation

In the continuum of the abovementioned mutual kinesic experience, in certain interaction moments, employees and guests create a unique context in which they appear to decode the motives behind their kinesic expressiveness to each other. The certain moments of interaction are explicitly understood while guests’ and employees’ functional,

hedonic and expressive outcome (Smith & Colgate, 2007; Vargo & Lusch, 2008b) is directly served by their mutual kinesic expressions (Macdonald et al., 2009; Vargo, Maglio, & Akaka, 2008). Such certain moments of interaction further explain their sentiments that attach or associate psychological meaning to individual self-concepts and self-worth (i.e., to create performance quality, appropriate experiences, feelings, and emotions from kinesic exchange), which can make them feel engaged to each other affectively, affiliatively and cognitively in the given context (Argyle & Dean, 1965; Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993; Holbrook, 1994; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; Vargo & Lusch, 2016). The evidence suggests that this particular context is built through guests' complacent expressiveness (i.e., exhibiting satisfaction, no complaints, and anxiety toward employees) and employees' imperative expressiveness (i.e., exhibiting willingness to help and understanding the needs and requirements toward guests) during face-to-face interactions. This particular context mainly alleviates the moments of mutual engagement in terms of co-creation. S-D logic designates this context as a triggering episode of experience co-creation occurring in an idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual, and meaningful manner in dyadic interaction moments (i.e., in guest–employee dyads; Vargo & Lusch, 2017).

Thus, the process highlights that the joint creation of value occurs through the exchange, context, and integration of efficacy between guests and employees (Aarikka-Stenroos & Jaakkola, 2012; Vargo & Lusch, 2008b). In relation to this, both parties are not always motivated to engage with each other through the exchange of kinesic cues. Rather, their engagement in terms of co-creation depends on their motives to fulfill their beneficial collaboration and respective value perception in the process of exchanging cues.

Accordingly, mutual kinesic exchange must have expressive value triggers that depend on the two distinct motives of guests and employees during face-to-face interactions, that is, guests' complacent expressiveness and employees' imperative expressiveness.

By entailing co-creation as the joint, collaborative, concurrent, peer-like process of producing value (Vargo & Lusch, 2017) through mutual kinesic exchange, both parties want to decode the beneficial value perception from interactive expressions (Argyle & Dean, 1965; Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Hatfield et al., 1993; Vargo & Lusch, 2008a). If guests do not identify the imperative or essential kinesic expressions from employees, then they feel confused as to whether they are in the right place to receive hospitality. Conversely, if the employees identify guests' anxious mood or uncomplacent body orientation, then they remain nervous or uncertain as to whether their performance is a reflection of mismanagement. Guests desire body language that displays motives of willingness to help them and understand/address their needs. By contrast, employees desire body language that displays satisfaction. Otherwise, these two parties withdraw from engagement, which dampens their mood (Hatfield et al., 1993), making them more distant (Argyle & Dean, 1965) and inducing cognitive uncertainty as to whether or not they should foster a relationship with each other (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Consequently, the values in kinesic exchange (e.g., feelings of safety, certainty, warmth, friendliness, sociality, hospitability, motivation, equality, and relaxation) do not occur in the pursuit of experience co-creation.

Nevertheless, the manifestation of co-creation in guest–employee dyads indicates that to co-create value (i.e., to maintain and increase mutual wellbeing and viability), they must engage with each other through interdependent and reciprocally beneficial values

during an exchange (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). For example, for the guests, employees' kinesic expressiveness should be "helpful, useful, conscious;" whereas for employees, guests' kinesic expressiveness should not let them feel "anxious or embarrassed." This distinction depicts kinesics-based experience co-creation between guests and employees as an organically persuasive nature of body language, which involves a symbolic process (Blumer, 1962; Perloff, 2010) wherein both parties seem to mutually benefit from the value of their kinesic exchange in terms of motivational, necessary, helpful, and satisfactory stimuli. In other words, imperative and complacent expressiveness shape attitudes and beliefs by decoding and transmitting the message in a given context. The beliefs and attitudes of guests and employees about kinesics-based experience co-creation are centered on expressive value triggers, which are purposeful and goal-oriented and enable actors to engage beyond the dyad. For example, the guests' complacent kinesic expressions are the stimuli of motivation and certainty for the employees. The employees' imperative or necessary kinesic expressions are the stimuli of willingness to help and in being conscious of the guests' needs, thereby maintaining favorable emotions or avoiding unfavorable emotions and supporting personal values and goals.

The uniqueness of their interaction is intersected by the beneficial value perception from their projected kinesic expressions to each other, which affectively, affiliatively, and cognitively allow them to think and interpret their perceptions based on kinesic expressiveness (e.g., imperative and complacent expressiveness) during face-to-face interactions (Argyle & Dean, 1965; Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Hatfield et al., 1993; Vargo & Lusch, 2008b). The performance of an interaction is likewise meaningful and successful, provided that the guests and employees are positively involved according to their desired

expressive cues. Such beneficial collaboration process affectively, affiliatively, and cognitively bridges the efforts of both parties to engage with each other and necessarily lead them to experience co-creation. The decoding process of mutual motives (i.e., expressive value) helps guests and employees anticipate each other's beliefs, attitudes, and manners in the pursuit of experience co-creation. Thus, both parties are more likely to co-create experience when they feel valued through their respective exchange of complacent and imperative expressiveness during face-to-face interactions.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Thesis overview

The nature and framework of nonverbal interaction should be explored given its influence on guest–employee experience co-creation in hotels. The primary rationale of the present study was highlighted despite most existing literature on hospitality and service management recognizing the influence of nonverbal communication on service encounters and analyzing its effects on customers for service evaluation, quality, and recovery. No study has investigated the potential of nonverbal communication as a factor in customer–employee dyads to enhance experience co-creation. Furthermore, the role of nonverbal communication in customers’ engagement in the creative and emotional process of S-D logic remains unclear in the literature. The current study focused on dyadic kinesic interactions between frontline employees and customers at the hotel lobby as the unit of analysis. Kinesics is the most dominant and noticeable component of nonverbal communication. In line with the identified research gaps, the broad objective of this study was to explore kinesic behavior as a medium of experience co-creation in hotels. This study identified three key objectives to address this aim, that is, to (1) identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions, (2) identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in terms of co-creation of experience during face-to-face interactions, and (3) outline the process that underlies kinesics-based experience co-creation between guests and employees in hotels.

A qualitative research strategy with a constructivist stance was adopted as a research paradigm to accomplish the above objectives. Such an approach focused on the exploration of subjective and co-constructed experiences, thereby helping the researcher

understand the individual as a player and resource integrator in experience co-creation. The study underwent two phases. In Phase I, covert nonparticipant observation was performed in the lobbies of eight full-service hotels in Hong Kong to develop and design stimulus video scenarios. Three videos of guest–employee encounters were produced: (1) an employee greeting a guest at the front door, (2) interaction with a lobby greeter, and (3) check-in. Hospitality and tourism graduate students were hired, trained, and rehearsed to perform typical kinesic scenarios, which were video recorded and served as the video stimuli in Phase II.

A sizeable amount of data were collected from four video-recorded FGDs with 12 hotel employees and 12 guests during Phase II, equaling to 11 hours and 13 minutes or 175 pages of transcript comprising 83,907 words. The data collection lasted for three months (July 21–September 22, 2018). Each focus group consisted of three employees and three guest participants who were recruited based on purposeful sampling. The hotel employees had at least 2 years of frontline experience in a full-service hotel in Hong Kong, and the guests had stayed in a similar type of hotel (anywhere in the world) during the past 6 months. The researcher encouraged the two focus groups (employees and guests) to discuss among themselves to emulate the co-creation principle that was central to this study. The guests and employees were prompted to imagine themselves in the scenarios to instigate natural and vivid experiences. An inductive six-step TA was used to analyze the data. All the FGDs were video or audio recorded and transcribed verbatim in English.

In light of the three research objectives, this study found that experience and its co-creation occurred contextually in the dyadic nonverbal interactions between the hotel guests and the employees. The first objective of the study was to identify the dimensions

of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions. The findings revealed two major themes from the data, namely, *reciprocity* and *engagement*. Three unique sub-themes were identified under each major theme. Mutual recognition, insight exchange, and expectation formation were identified under *reciprocity*; whereas customized attention, relationship building, and a sense of affinity were revealed under *engagement*. In *reciprocity*, guests and employees considered welcoming body language or facial expressions as a symbol of responsiveness that instigated mutual acknowledgment. In addition, they remained conscious of exchanging insights from kinesic cues displayed to each other. They favorably and unfavorably judged the reciprocated insights that met the kinesic requirements for active interaction (i.e., expectation formation) to attain their relational goals, such as respect and rapport. Moreover, they tended to reciprocate each other's emotions (i.e., through a similar exchange of emotions). The trustworthiness of their emotional expressions affected each other's emotional states. Thus, the potential for mutual relationship depended on their emotions. Messages created by kinesic exchange promoted mutual expectation for anticipated cues that might deliver beneficial experiences to both parties. For instance, they expected to receive beneficial information from cues by labeling specific insights related to those cues as either insincere (i.e., unauthentic) or sincere (i.e., caring) because they felt that favorable and trustworthy expressive emotions provided effective face-to-face dyadic interactions. In *engagement*, the continuing reciprocated stage further helped hotel guests and employees coexist in perceiving experiential engagement during face-to-face interactions. This developing process continued in customizing attention (i.e., reducing uncertainty, balancing, and improvising suitable cues), such as the display of self-felt

kinesics, to establish relationships with each other. Essentially, practicing customized cues effectively facilitated guests and employees to reach the relationship-building stage (i.e., kinesic signals of understanding, respect, politeness, and friendliness). Hotel guests and employees took the time to share interactive experience/hospitality for their benefit because both parties expected to grow and build mutual understanding and trust, thereby maintaining the relationship. Thus, guests and employees were likely to customize and display such kinesic cues to each other, which they believed to be suitable to improve and manage mutual intimacy. Guests and employees remained committed to each other to foster their adopted relationship by exchanging a sense of affinity (i.e., kinesic cues that signaled sympathy, empathy, patience, and harmony).

The second objective of this study was to identify kinesic cues that engaged hotel guests and employees in experience co-creation during face-to-face interactions. The findings revealed two means through which guests and employees seemed interested in engaging with each other, namely, imperative kinesic expressions from the employees and complacent kinesic expressions from guests. Moreover, the findings showed that guests and employees were not always interested in engaging with each other through the exchange of kinesic cues. Their engagement in experience co-creation depended on their motives to fulfill their beneficial collaboration and respective value perception in cue exchanges. Therefore, expressive value triggers must be present in mutual kinesic exchange, which depended on two distinct motives: (1) complacent expressiveness from guests and (2) imperative expressiveness from employees during face-to-face interactions. The absence of imperative or necessary kinesic expressions from employees was unfavorable for guests despite being in an appropriate place to receive hospitality.

Conversely, employees who observed anxiety or dissatisfaction in the guests' body language would be uncertain whether their actions were correct. To conclude, the employees and guests seemed interested in engaging with each other in terms of experience co-creation while perceiving the value in kinesic exchange (i.e., the sense of safety, confirmation of pleasurable moments, less workload, and a deep relationship) by decoding (affective, affiliative, and cognitive) motives. These motives were articulated by hotel employees and guests in imperative (i.e., exhibiting willingness to help and understanding the needs and requirements of guests) and complacent kinesic expressions (i.e., exhibiting satisfaction, lack of complaints, and anxiety toward employees).

The third objective of this study was to outline the process that underlay kinesics-based experience co-creation between hotel guests and employees. This objective was drawn from the first two objectives and narrated the entire process of kinesics-based experience co-creation between hotel guests and employees. Experience co-creation in hotel guest–employee dyads was highlighted by examining its core dimensions. Specifically, how the dimensions of kinesic experience occurred between hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions and advanced co-creation were coherently discussed in view of the S-D logic and theories of nonverbal communication. For example, the manifestation of co-creation in guest–employee dyads indicated that they must engage with each other through interdependent and reciprocally beneficial values during exchanges to create value to maintain and increase wellbeing and viability. For the guests, employees' kinesic expressiveness, that is, being “helpful, useful, and conscious,” should be imperative; whereas for the employees, guests' kinesic expressiveness should be complacent, thereby not making them feel “anxious or embarrassed.” This process

signified kinesics-based experience co-creation between guests and employees as an inherently persuasive nature of body language. This process required a symbolic process in which guests and employees tended to benefit from the value of their kinesic exchange mutually, namely, necessary, helpful, satisfactory, and motivational stimuli. Together, *imperative expressiveness* and *complacent expressiveness* shaped attitudes and beliefs by decoding and transmitting messages in a given context. The beliefs and attitudes of guests and employees on kinesics-based experience co-creation were centered on expressive value triggers that were purposeful (i.e., motive), goal oriented, and enabled guests and employees to engage beyond the dyad.

This chapter provides an exclusive summary of the thesis, as mentioned above. It is followed by three sections that systematically reflect on (1) theoretical implications, (2) practical implications, and (3) limitations and suggestions for future studies.

5.2 Theoretical implications

In addition to the well-known phenomena of co-creation principles between consumers and firms (i.e., information technology, computer software, website, and online-reservation within hotels), scholars of S-D logic in hospitality domains, such as Chathoth et al. (2016, 2014, 2013) and Harkison (2018), have made a call for innovative means and systematic empirical investigations of experience co-creation from different resourceful perspectives, such as face-to-face interaction experience in guest–employee dyads. Thus, the present work, which examined the innovative ideas of nonverbal communication in hotels as a medium of experience co-creation, advanced the understanding on resources for utilizing face-to-face interaction as an experience trigger. This study provided theoretical and conceptual contributions in several ways.

First, although nonverbal behavior in service encounters in hotels is not new, this study was an original attempt in examining nonverbal cue experiences in hotel guest–employee dyads empirically. The study was also distinct because no study has examined nonverbal communication as an addition to a dyadic form, such as customer–employee dyads, to enhance mutual experience co-creation in the locus of the S-D logic. The findings of the study were a uniquely appropriate addition to the theoretical foundations of experience co-creation and in fostering guest relationships in hospitality. The study also extended the discourse on operant resource management in the S-D logic in pursuit of employees’ interaction competencies to develop and implement experience co-creation practices comprehensively.

Second, the study illustrated the importance of nonverbal behavior in consumer experience and highlighted the value of deconstructing the concept of nonverbal communication in hospitality into detailed dimensions. Moreover, it emphasized looking closely at the pattern and meaningful experience of nonverbal communication in guest–employee dyads that are critical for different service encounters. In addition, past research has not examined the effects of nonverbal cues on hotel guest engagement. Therefore, empirical instruments for measuring customers’ evaluations of engaging nonverbal cues in the hotel setting are limited. Nonverbal communication was examined based on respective interaction concerns from the standpoint of face-to-face interactions in noncommercial sectors, such as interpersonal relations between nurse–patient, referee–player, cancer-stricken child–mother, teacher–student, and jurors–judges. Such interaction concerns included a patient seeking treatment, a cancer-stricken child wanting to be accompanied by his/her mother, a player searching for judgment, and a case being presented in court.

Thus, the previous findings were not adequately suited to understand service encounters in the contemporary hospitality setting. The present study, which was set in the customer-focused hotel sector, brought out the complexities of nonverbal behavior (i.e., customer appraisal and service attitude) that are absent in the aforementioned settings. Unsatisfactory and inappropriate nonverbal performance in such sectors could result in negative consequences for business sustainability and reputation. This study divided its effects into experience and experience co-creation to improve the understanding of nonverbal behavior. The two elements are critical aspects of the S-D logic, which is the most demanded paradigm that contributes to hospitality management, interpersonal relationships, and consumer experience and engagement. Contemporary hotel guests and employees seemed interested in reaping mutual benefits from nonverbal cue exchanges, specifically kinesic (body language) exchanges. They desired to nurture reciprocity and engagement in sharing a memorable experience in hotels. Moreover, they promoted compassion through cue exchanges with each other to foster their relationship. In addition, they expected cues that ensured their individuality, certainty, and hospitality collaboration to make their experience memorable. Thus, the present study also extended the literature on nonverbal behavior outside hospitality and into disciplines such as psychology, healthcare, justice, and sports.

Third, the study provided empirical support for the argument that the current S-D logic was insufficiently clear to guide face-to-face (human-to-human) verbal and nonverbal interaction in a dyadic form to co-create memorable consumer experiences. Although the S-D logic refers to the semiotic (i.e., signs, cues, and symbols) role of exchange in value co-creation in social and high-quality interaction to engage customers emotionally and

psychologically (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2018; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a), it exclusively involves interactions in a network exchange, such as firms and customers, thereby highlighting the dynamics of social interaction systems. The present study utilized the delivery of this experience co-creation process and succeeded in showing how nonverbal cues could affect high-quality interactions and create interactional values (i.e., experiences) through nonverbal cue exchanges (i.e., facial expressions, smiles, and eye contact) in hotel guest–employee dyads. Furthermore, the study contributed to the S-D logic framework in the potential provision of experience co-creation that could also be triggered from the nonverbal face-to-face interactions of consumers and service providers. Modern hotel guests and employees realized that the experience gained from mutual nonverbal behavior, such as the exchange of cues during face-to-face interactions, mattered to their mutual recognition and laid a basic ground beyond dyadic engagement maneuvered to their experience co-creation. They believed that value perception in cue exchanges (i.e., exhibiting willingness to help, appreciation, acknowledgment and sympathy in nonverbal cues) between customers and employees promoted a favorable co-creation process in hospitality encounters. The decoding of affective, affiliative, and cognitive motives in nonverbal cue exchanges, such as the imperative or necessary and complacent or satisfactory expressiveness in body language, is mutually impressive and enables the co-creation of memorable experiences. The potentials of explored co-creative terms, such as imperative and complacent value triggers, could be utilized in other perspectives in improving operant resources to evaluate the value of the co-creation process in any dyadic form of interaction.

This study contributed to the development of a guest–employee engagement paradigm as a nonverbal behavioral outcome emotionally, cognitively, behaviorally, and relationally rather than simply on a functional level (Schmitt, 2011). Interestingly, the study also offered potential resources and empirical knowledge on hotel employees’ engagement with guests that could be included in the analysis of employee motivation, satisfaction, and willingness to suggest improvements to hotels. The study underscored the importance of employee experience co-creation, in which employees were willing to contribute to the hotels’ efforts in developing guest service offerings. Experience co-creation within the S-D logic could result from the integration of face-to-face interaction resources (i.e., verbal and nonverbal signs or cues) between interactants. Thus, this study demonstrated that numerous perspectives of value in exchange initiatives (i.e., information technology and dining) existed, in which nonverbal cue exchanges were a potential and influential mediator.

Fourth, the study offered a comprehensive framework to understand how experience co-creation occurred in face-to-face guest–employee dyadic interactions, enhanced by the theoretical attributes of nonverbal communication to suit experience co-creation in hospitality management. The framework showed that ECT, ACT, and URT yielded the three adapted characteristics of nonverbal communication in hotel guest–employee dyads, namely, affection, affiliation, and cognition, in which the S-D logic was observed as an inherent construct of nonverbal behavior. This construct was a newly examined concept in the existing literature on experience co-creation, specifically in face-to-face interaction-based experience co-creation. The strength of ECT, ACT, and URT was further reinforced and revitalized in the study as co-creation triggers that could direct

and facilitate potential research within the S-D logic in different dyadic perspectives or variables in the future. Moreover, the study added to the body of knowledge on hospitality in relation to how co-creation could be involved in creating nonverbal behavior experience in guest–employee dyads. Thus, the empirical findings of this work, which consisted of key study concepts and insights attributed to the framework, provided guidance to further illuminate the effect of nonverbal communication and experience on different or specific variables that would remain significant interaction issues (e.g., culture, gender, and religion) in the hospitality and tourism domain in the future. This study theorized a novel position in communication and hospitality management in terms of face-to-face interactions involving two individuals.

Finally, the study context essentially served as a reminder that neither verbal nor nonverbal communication during service encounters should be neglected. Given their expertise in both media of communication, hotel employees, specifically frontliners, could moderate guests' overall perception of service quality and affect their experience and repeat visits, as well as revisit intentions.

5.3 Practical implications

The findings of the current study have several practical implications, which are mainly concerned with the practice of nonverbal communication in hotels. Although practical training and guideline of nonverbal communication for employees and students are not a new idea in hotels and hospitality training institutes, the study findings illuminate the influence of high-quality nonverbal communication in terms of its experiential contributions to consumers' face-to-face interaction. Thus, in the following sections, the implications of three training sessions are discussed; these sessions can be implemented by

HR managers to enhance frontline employees' interpersonal communication competencies in hotels. Then, by referring to the findings as course resources, a complete course design is suggested, including a potential syllabus on nonverbal communication skill development, which can be offered by hospitality management institutes and other institutions of higher learning.

5.3.1 Implications for frontline employees' training in hotels

Specifically, the findings of the study have three important implications for HR managers for developing and organizing training for frontline employees in hotels. This study recommends that hotel employees' practice of kinesics, which contributes to guests' feelings of (1) recognition, (2) engagement, and (3) relationship, should be elaborately suggested. Together, on the basis of the three respective interaction sites, namely, (a) at the hotel front entrance, (b) across the lobby, and (c) during check-in, the implications of three training sessions for frontline employees are suggested as follows.

(1) How to recognize guests by using body language?

- Advantages of guests' recognition
- Display implications for guests' recognition?

(2) How to engage guests by using body language?

- Advantages of guests' engagement
- Display implications for guests' engagement

(3) How to build a relationship with guests by using body language?

- Advantages of guests' relationship
- Display implications for guests' relationship

In addition, visual elicitations of the above implications in the training sessions may contribute to participants' improved understanding, such as to let them feel the dimensions

of nonverbal cues in face-to-face interactions. Thus, to impart the training to participants effectively, this study also suggests (e.g., *Developing visual training aids*) how to develop visual training aids/tools in highlighting nonverbal cues to express recognition, engagement, and relationship ((3) How to build a relationship with guests by using body language?)

HR managers or training personnel are advised to elaborately explain the following training contents to the employees, such that they (e.g., employees) may feel to play the actual display rule of nonverbal communication for the guests in hotels. The aim of the given board description of display implications for frontline employees is to bring the built-in experiential influence of nonverbal communication to the creation of successful face-to-face interactions with guests. The advantage or usefulness of display implications and understanding the feelings of respective display (e.g., through suggested visual training aids) of nonverbal expressions (e.g., recognition, engagement and relationship) will help frontline employees in attempting to display genuine feeling and rationale in the workplace.

Training session (1): How to recognize guests by using body language?

Advantages of guests' recognition:

The findings of the study demonstrate that recognition through employees' body language keeps guests' impressions ongoing and including first experience/impression in hotels. Employees' proactive and cooperative behavior of recognition toward guests may bring some benefits to employees, such as job satisfaction, motivation, and achievements. The reason is that the habit of a quick smile and spontaneous body orientation are a desired behavior for guests' recognition, which help restore and advocate employees' good

behavior and ultimately may return to them to influence their job retention and career promotion.

In addition, the training participants should be reminded that guests' feelings and expectations of recognition by employees' body language are not found in similar streams across the three interaction sites (i.e., (1) at the hotel front entrance, (2) across the lobby, and (3) during check-in). The findings verified that recognition through employees' body language at the hotel entrance mostly offer or cause the experience of first impression, pleasure, achievement (the absence of which caused dejection or inhospitality in guests). Particularly, the recognition assessment by employees' body language at the lobby area (e.g., meeting the lobby greeter/guest service agent) and check-in procedure affects their service consumption motivation and satisfaction, respectively, including those feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction if they do not suitably recognize the guests.

Display implications for guests' recognition:

(a) At the hotel front entrance:

- i. At the moment of entrance/during arrival, hotel employees should nod with a smile to guests as a signal of *nonverbal hello*, which makes guests feel respected and recognized. The movement of guests' entrance can be followed, whether guests' entry is safe and comfortable, by employees with attention and joyful facial expressions.
- ii. During the right moment of entrance, employees' showing hand gesture as signaling *this is your place* or *approach to the lobby* gives guests a positive impression of *icebreaking* (in a new place) and *confirmation* and lets guests feel welcome. This situation indicates that while guests do not feel stopped for the

entrance or obtain no indication of difficulties to enter the hotel, the signal of recognition to guests is displayed.

(b) Across the lobby:

- iii. Across the lobby interaction with guests, employees should be aware of their body language to avoid signaling avoidance to guests. Thus, guests identify employees' *avoiding* body language as letting them feel unaccepted/unrecognized while they remain unseen/overlooked by the lobby greeter/guest service agent. Thus, employees should be trained not to restrain from making eye contact, showing smiling facial expressions toward guests, and their way to the check-in desk as a matter of further impression of recognition to guests.
- iv. Keeping employees' hands behind their backs while talking to guests does not ensure their feeling of recognition. Rather, it puts the impression that employees are not interested in listening to the guests' inquiry. Therefore, employees should be instructed to place their hands in front of their lower stomach to increase their image of attentive attitude to guests.

(c) During check-in:

- v. Hotel guests expect that to let them feel recognized/seen, front desk employees should keep standing while serving them in check-in desk instead of welcoming the guests while sitting. The opposite of this may lead guests to feel disinterested about further service consumption. Hence, employees' bad mood may cause a similar mood to the guests.
- vi. When employees look at the guests' face once and then look at the room key (while delivering the room key with both hands) and then repeat this action during check-

in procedure, guests feel individuality and recognition. Thus, guests tend to feel *something was handed to them as a gift and they accepted it.*

Training session (2): How to engage guests by using body language?

Advantages of guests' engagement:

The findings inform that responsive and sensible body language of employees, which implies benefits or values for guests, determines the guests' intention of engagement with employees. Training participants should know that guests' engagement sets off while two modes of employees' body language occur. The two modes are (1) how employees look positive or assertive in the display of body language and (2) how employees display necessary gestures, body movements, and facial expressions that let guests feel to draw attention, realization, and fulfillment of their service requirements or hospitality essentials aimed at in hotels. Moreover, guests' engagement initiative may establish a unique interactive communication culture in hotels. Guests' engagement may also highlight the perception of high-quality interaction experiences and the demonstration of loyalty to employees that may further motivate employees to contribute to serving guests and the company.

On the basis of the study findings, training participants should know that guests' nonverbal interaction experiences and engagement, which contributed from the signals of employees' body language, are interestingly diverse based on interaction sites. For example, (1) at the hotel front entrance and (2) across the lobby, guests seem interested to engage with guests in employees while their body language signals *willingness to help*, consciousness, and understanding about guests' essentials, sincerity, proactivity regarding guests' inquiry. Moreover, (3) during check-in, guests tend to be engaged with employees

while their body language is attributed in the value of honor, *a lot of care*, attention, and affiliation.

Display implications for guests' engagement:

(a) At the hotel front entrance:

- i. While entering the hotel, guests appear to be engaged with employees in perceiving the helping attitude from employees' hand (e.g., the ready one to motion), which signals *I am ready to help* as an essential to the guest. Simultaneously, the signal *I am ready to help* is further functionally enhanced by employees' nodding head in showing that employees agree to handle the luggage. Thus, employees should follow the display rule of hands at the entrance [e.g., keeping one hand in the lower stomach and moving another hand being sharply curved in the body (e.g., short bow) toward guests' motion] plays a significant role in encouraging guests to benefit from the interaction and understanding the meaning of hospitality and helpful attitude of employees at the entrance.
- ii. Hotel employees' walking movements and the representation of bodily motion toward guests during their arrival can effectively engage guests in creating memorable experiences, which is similar to receiving a guest at home. In the training session, a welcoming walking movement from employees during guests' arrival lets guests feel that they are not lost but in the right place, associated with feelings of warmth and safety in hotels while employees perform three to five steps of forward movement (e.g., walking forward) to receive guests at the entrance.
- iii. Guests, while entering the hotel, feel the value of warm welcome conveyed through employees' raised eyes and smiling, which are to be kept until the guests' safe and

comfortable entry to the hotel. Therefore, employees need to show their willingness and helpfulness in the bodily motion to observe guests' requirement (if any). This particular implication is felt by guests as *a great opening experience* while entering the hotel.

(b) Across the lobby:

- iv. Across the hotel lobby, guests seem to sensitively react to employees' hands/arms crossed in front of their chest, which indicates that they have nothing special to offer, do not want to engage with the guests, or are not ready/willing to serve the guests. Thus, in the lobby area, employees' open body orientation while walking toward guests is suggested to display the signal of willingness in contributing to guests' engagement.
- v. During guests' critical moments, such as being uncertain/unable to look for hotel service in the large lobby, employees' rational observation and sincere visible approach, which are signaled in employees walking movement toward the guests, let the guests feel *less stressed* and *secure*. Thus, employees should carefully watch the body orientation of guests, whether they seem lost/uncertain about tracing their desired services in the lobby. Furthermore, employees should immediately exhibit concerned bodily attention by walking toward the guests to settle their inquiries at the hotel.
- vi. While guests' desired services are not ready to be delivered by employees or when guests are not given assurance to receive inquired services, employees' willingness to escort the guests by several steps of walks should be advised. By leading guests to have a seat through employees' walking manner (e.g., several steps in escorting

of honor), the sense of service assurance is perceived by the guests, which instigates their intention of engagement with employees.

- vii. While guests are looking for help/assistance or have an inquiry (e.g., to know where the washroom) across the lobby area, if an employee walks fast and is passing them without any attentive look at them, then the guests *feel ignored* and grow the notion that the employees are not helpful. Guests expect employees' *visual attention* in assessing whether the employees are concerned or the right people to help them. Thus, to imply *visual attention* to contribute to guests' engagement, employees should not pass guests hurriedly or leave guests unattended; rather, employees should pause their walking movements to take a moment to look at the guests (even employees who are not designated to help) to understand whether the guests need help/service across the hotel lobby.

(b) During check-in:

- viii. The emotions of guests' engagement with employees are apparent while understanding every detail of check-in procedure. This engagement is influenced by employees' hand movements (e.g., finger pointing on the paper/service description) and looking at guests in intervals to understand their reaction whether they agree with every procedure step by step. Thus, employees' direction pointing by their hands/fingers and looking at guests' facial reactions during check-in/service procedures are suggested to let the guests feel *a lot of care*.
- ix. Smile or eye contact, as a single expression toward guests, is effective and well known in hospitality encounter. By contrast, in terms of guests' engagement with employees during check-in procedures, eye contact or smile alone, as a single

effect, does not play a role to engage guests with employees. Instead, eye contact with a smile affects guests' emotion for the intention of engagement to experience trust and relationship.

Employees are suggested to visibly understand the method of eye contact with a smile. Thus, under *smizing* category, Google Images and YouTube can be referred to train employees for visibly understanding eye contact with a smile. This action can effectively enhance employees' expression quality, such as increased control over actual emotions, to improve guests' feelings of trust and relationship (i.e., let them *feel awesome and safe*).

Training session (3): How to build a relationship with guests by using body language?

Advantages of guests' relationship:

The findings indicated that relationship building with guests can be based on mainly several traits manifested in employees' body language (e.g., to imply the sense of understanding, interest, trust, belongingness, politeness, friendliness, and relaxation to guests). Employees' appropriate know-how of relationship-oriented nonverbal cues, as mentioned above, contributes to effective guest–employee rapport management. Rapport, generated from employees' nonverbal signals, plays a pivotal role to sustain or foster relationship with guests and creates the probability of reciprocal trust and understanding of future interpersonal relationship development between guests and employees in hotels.

HR managers should take note that the findings of the study reflect that guests seem to mainly perceive relationship traits in different attributes of employees' body language based on three interaction sites. For example, guests tend to grow or tie relationship with employees while employees display body language signals to offer (1) a sense of

trustworthiness and interest in guests at the hotel front entrance; (2) belongingness, patience, and commitment across the lobby; and (3) relaxation, peace, respect, and fellow-feeling during front desk check-in.

Display implications for guests' relationship:

(a) At the hotel front entrance:

- i.* When guests step into the hotel, the body orientation of employees should be *standing*, and employees should leave a comfortable and relaxed space to facilitate the guests' safe walks into the hotel. Thus, the body orientation of employees seems to contribute to building guests' trusts and conveying reliability. Furthermore, the moment when employees open the door for the guests and show them the way by hands movements to let them enter the hotel relate them to generate feelings of trustworthiness and belongingness.

Thus, guests' facial expressions, specifically during arrival, should be observed by employees. They may remain tired after having a long travel/flight and may remain anxious to visit a new place. This moment is critical for employees to display signal of hospitality by smiling. While guests smile back to employees, it potentially paves the way of building a relationship, which indicates that guests feel relieved from tiredness and ready to consume hotel services in a friendly environment.

A similarity of behavior between a patient's arrival in a hospital and a guest's arrival in a hotel can be highlighted. In a hospital, a patient may express irritation and annoyance because of his/her ongoing or post-treatment condition of sickness. In a hotel context, a guest may display similar behavioral patterns because of his/her tiredness, tension, or uncertainty in a new or strange place (i.e., a hotel). Therefore,

employees should always observe the facial expressions or bodily movements of guests and should display empathetic signals, such as willingness to help (e.g., approaching hands to carry luggage). In this manner, employees can show interested body orientation to share with guests' distress, which may assure guests' feeling of safety in the hotel and let the guest experience respectful surroundings through relational expressions (e.g., showing of willingness to help via interested body orientation to understand one's distress), thereby reassuring guests that no harm or risk will occur to them.

(b) Across the lobby:

- ii. Across the lobby area, it should be noted that relationship building may begin from understanding guests' nonverbal expressions. For example, if employees understand guests' intention through their body language after the hotel entrance, such as their intention to talk about available service offerings, then the intention of narrowing distance is clear in view of expecting a quick check-in. A bowing gesture of hotel employees makes guests feel enthusiastic, which facilitates further steps in service consumption. A slight bow tends to boost guests' belongingness, commitment, and initiate relationships with employees and hotels. By contrast, during busy hours in the hotel lobby, hotel employees' approach of shaking the guests' hands with a smile and a slight bow may initiate relationship building.
- iii. The moment of complaints from guests, who are dissatisfied with service inquiry at the hotel lobby, can also be turned into the ground of relationship building (e.g., to maintain a peaceful situation in hotels) through employees' body language. This body language signals attentive postures of patience, and patient listening helps the

guest refresh grievance and grow patience for waiting for service. Therefore, employees should not show reactive body orientation and should nod their head while listening to guests' complaint while they are standing and remaining beside the guests, being bodily bent and keeping two hands at their back to show patience, while the guests are seated.

(c) During check-in:

- iv. At the beginning of check-in interaction, the body language of hotel employees should be visible (e.g., polite gestures expressed by placing their hands in front, as well as attentive nodding). This body language contributes to relationship building drawn by the relational attributes of signaling sincerity, warmth, and respect toward guests. Thus, guests' feelings seem to result in the impression of friendliness and rapport from the front office personnel's body language. Furthermore, for the potential relationship building with guests, employees should be instructed to smile with eye contact, display a devoted body by showing willingness, and closeness to guests, which ultimately influence guests' feelings of relaxation during check-in procedures.
- v. Employees should be suggested to sustain relationships with guests (e.g., fostering relationship), which can be maintained by employees' body language that signals a sense of empathy toward the guests. For example, compassion can be implied in comforting impatient guests and in expressing concern for fatigued hotel guests. Fatigued or tired guests standing or seating for a long time seem to hurry to be served as early as possible. Thus, employees should display smiling facial

expressions with eye contact to fatigued guests to indicate that they are going to be served soon or next.

Furthermore, the sense of fellow feeling from employees' body language should emerge when hotel guests seem impatient during check-in because of a long queue. The fellow feeling shown in employees' body language secures social connections that reinforce further relationships. Hotel employees should show concern by a hand gesture to indicate "just a second, please" and a slight frown to express "I am concerned about you, do not worry." This sympathetic implication tends to let the guests feel comfortable and relaxed and contributes to check-in satisfaction.

- vi. After finishing check-in procedures, hotel employees' body language may play a role to indicate the interest of keeping a relationship with the guests. For example, while guests leave the check-in area to go to their room or other places, hotel employees should signal *kindness* by waving their hands (e.g., to signal goodbye). Such gestures may contribute to a feeling of peace and unity in guests' mind to foster ongoing relationships with employees and thus with the hotel.

Developing visual training aids

For in-depth training outcomes and comprehensive understanding of the perspective of nonverbal communication for frontline employees, HR managers are suggested to use visual aids in the training sessions. On the basis of the implications mentioned above, the following methods can be adopted as utilizing visual training aids.

- i. The interaction images that elicit and heighten the implication of recognition, engagement, and relationship in employees' body language can be developed

by a professional photographer, an actor, and actress. The concerned trainer can illustrate images with word implications. The first images can be checked by several guests as a pilot test whether the target implications are understood. Thus, the quality of implications in images can be further adjusted or developed to be projected through a PowerPoint (PPT) presentation.

- ii. Travel- and tourism-focused movies/documentaries, where face-to-face interactions in hospitality settings are available, can be suggested to participants to explore the given implications, such as recognition, engagement, and relationship.

Last but not the least, during the training session, HR managers are recommended to conveniently discuss the potential risk that may occur for employees in practicing nonverbal expressions in hotels. Thus, HR managers should indicate that practices of employees' nonverbal expressions can be stressful and reasons for emotional tension, tired performance, job dissatisfaction, and intention to leave the job. Employees may not enjoy displaying body language to guests as requirements of job responsibility, or they may think that hotels are utilizing them as instruments to benefit from the business, such as increasing positive word of mouth and loyalty. By contrast, hotels' profit motives to their expressive performance as instruments to meet guests' favorable expressions in their unfavorable willingness as a return of guests' conflicting emotions may warrant an ethical strain and stress to employees' wellbeing to work for the hotel. However, HR managers may suggest the management to benefit from potential risk issues as mentioned by pointing out the needs of training (e.g., the recommended training sessions in the above sections) on different topics of which maintaining professional standards, moral responsibilities, ethical

leadership from the hotel and the employee perspectives can be three examples that can clarify roles of motives of hotels and employees to be fair and impartial to each other. Several nonverbal communication management strategies for HR managers (e.g., alleviate the potential risk of employees' wellbeing and gradual diminishing of task performance) are suggested as follows.

- i. Employees should be reminded of the hotel's policies by highlighting that their hotel believes in considering any issues, including employees' wellbeing and equitable, fair and just job security. This reminder will let employees feel secured and understand that they will not be compared with those employees who can genuinely and effortlessly perform nonverbal expressions without exhaustion. Thus, they will further feel right to a safe and harm-free workplace—the anticipation of no potential harms, such as withdrawing from responsibility, limiting of fringe benefits, and obstruction of career promotion.
- ii. Employees can also be encouraged and given the freedom to their existing ability to pursue the pleasure of expressions in accordance with their own desires and should be allowed to experiment their learning and implications as imparted from the training session. Thus, employees will be able to alleviate expressive exhaustion by gradually developing their commitment and instinct to manage their own expressions and job-required expressions.
- iii. The information on career prospect by practicing communication competencies and its effects is limited, and the know-how of body language display (e.g., nonverbal cues' display management that can be imparted from suggested training implications) is lacking. Thus, HR managers should be aware that employees may

feel isolated in their chosen career. As a result, employees may remain confused and mentally burdened about the nature of their job/responsibility, the situation, or the guests. Similar jobs responsibility in other hospitality sectors can be discussed for career motivation to stimulate employees' understanding and sentiments in exploring the impression from their job nature and prospect.

Examples are success stories of employees in airline or car rental companies. Particularly, airline passengers become happy to fly when they see a welcoming body language of crews, and car rental companies get customers to their destination with an accompaniment of a smiling driver, which bring them the potential of career path up to the highest position. Thus, hotel employees may feel proud that because of their roles with hand gestural functions, walking movements, and smiling with eye contact, guests leave in an enhanced mood, appraise service better, spend more time engaging with employees, and intend to repeat visit and recommend (e.g., positive words of mouth) the hotel to others, which will ultimately contribute to enriching employees' lifestyle, career promotion, and health benefits.

Consequently, in the aforementioned ways, profit motives between the hotel and the employee can be balanced, and both may have mutual benefits, such as business and career growth, respectively. Thus, the issues of employees' nonverbal behavior as a human instrument may also be assuaged in their developed or newly explored professional attitude because the employees that suit best for the job role are eligible for career growth. Moreover, those who can enjoy nonverbal expressions as a part of their profession may deserve a leadership position in the hospitality sector.

5.3.2 Implications for course syllabus design in hospitality training institutes

The thesis findings have important implications for developing a complete training course on *body language skills* that should be integrated into the curricula of hospitality training institutes. Different from target language skills, such as English/Chinese/Japanese, body language skills are another example of soft skills that should be developed through specialized courses. Undoubtedly, hospitality students/trainees of today are the future employers and employees of profitable global hospitality businesses. For students/trainees to stand out as talented assets to multinational hotel organizations, they need to participate in the sharpening of interpersonal communication skills labeled as soft skills. For example, enhanced abilities of body language in the workplace are directly interconnected to develop personality traits, attitudes, professional qualities, emotional intelligence, and social intelligence to be displayed during face-to-face interactions. Soft skill training programs in hospitality training institutes/schools are still limited due to the lack of practical syllabus and resources. Thus, body language skill development courses may help present-day students/trainees to transform into outstanding corporate resources as bright hoteliers and employers in the future.

Therefore, the current study suggests a course syllabus to hospitality management training institutes/schools, where students are trained in hospitality management courses focused in endeavoring to build their career as frontliners. The body language issues emerging from the findings of the study relate specifically to enhance the communication competencies (e.g., soft skills) of hotel frontliners. In addition, principals/instructors are recommended to utilize the suggested course syllabus at their convenience, which either can be offered as a separate course or can be integrated into existing communication

courses. In the following, the course syllabus and program (e.g., a complete course template) for body language skill development are proposed as a separate course.

Body language skill development course (example)

Course description:

Verbal communication may not be effective and meaningful without a favorable application of body language (e.g., smile, eye contact, facial expressions, and bodily movements). Body language is the most dominant and noticeable component of nonverbal communication, which plays a vital role in conveying a range of emotions and reactions to individuals in successful face-to-face interactions. The course is designed to develop skills of body language display of hospitality management trainees/aspirants as needed for meeting the contemporary industry's demand. For example, hotel frontline employees must be competent and well prepared in the verbal and nonverbal communication in the workplace. The course exclusively includes boundaries of body language issues in hotels. Such issues include guests' expectations from employees' body language, customization of body language in guests' needs, and understanding the values and influences of employees' body language for guest service consumption motivation and satisfaction.

Goal:

The aim of this course is to deliver knowledge and skills regarding the practice of body language for hotel frontline employees/frontline service providers.

Objectives:

Upon the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- a) **Understand the dimensions of nonverbal interaction.** Students will know what the thematic characteristics are and the issues of body language that occur in guest–employee face-to-face interactions in hotels.
- b) **Appreciate the influence of body language.** Students will be able to identify nonverbal cues (e.g., smile, eye contact, facial expressions, and bodily movements) that affect guests' emotions and perception of service quality.
- c) **Develop interaction knowledge.** Students will learn how to interpret cues (e.g., smile, eye contact, nod, hand gesture, walking manner) in different moments of different interaction areas, such as front door entrance, across the lobby, and check-in counter.
- d) **Enhance display skills.** Students will learn strategies for taking control of their body language, allowing them to display nonverbal expressions effectively and

efficiently toward hotel guests. These strategies will help them satisfy guests and enhance their career accomplishment as frontliners.

- e) **Develop emotional intelligence.** Students will grow the ability to form an engagement with guests, understand and acknowledge guests' emotions, have a positive outlook, and be able to prepare for successful face-to-face interactions with guests.

Training methods:

- a) **Brainstorming** (e.g., Students may debate the strengths and weaknesses of verbal and nonverbal communication from the viewpoint of their own information. Thus, they will understand their gradual improvement.)
- b) **Lecture and discussion** (e.g., Instructors will make lesson plans based on the course syllabus. They will use the *Results and Discussion* chapter of the study as resources/references.)
- c) **Group work and presentation** (e.g., Students can be divided into several groups to accomplish their group assignments and presentation. Assignment topics can be chosen from the *Results and Discussion* chapter of the study, or students can be encouraged to explore the importance of nonverbal communication in different areas of hotel management, such as restaurant, kitchen, and housekeeping.)
- d) **Individual assignment** (e.g., Individual assignment topics can answer several fundamental questions based on a comprehensive understanding of nonverbal communication; for example, if the student becomes a manager in a hotel, on which particular component (e.g., eye contact, smile, and hand gesture) of body language will he/she emphasize to improve his/her team members' body language skills?)
- e) **Role play** (e.g., Students will make videos on their own nonverbal role plays, presenting them as guests and employees. Instructors may invite them to play roles in their taught lessons after the class session. Role play class can be treated as a practice hour. Through role plays, students can gradually develop their soft skills, such as personality traits, attitudes, professional qualities, and emotional and social intelligence.)
- f) **Field visits** (e.g., Students will have field visits in different types of hotel, which will help them see real-life scenarios of nonverbal interactions between guests and employees in hotels.)

Training materials:

1. Training manual

Trainers/instructors in institutes/schools are suggested to develop a training manual to conduct the proposed training course effectively. The table of contents should be a useful

guide in conducting training to focus sequential topics from introduction to practicum, thereby enabling students to appreciate the course holistically. The training manual can be developed or adapted in institutes' or instructors' convenience, where the present thesis can be a major basis of reference. However, an outline (e.g., course syllabus) should focus on the study findings as an example.

Contents

- *Glossary* (e.g., course-related terms, such as role play, soft skills, and body language, can be shortly defined)
- *Introduction*
 - Background
 - Purpose of the training
 - Rationale
 - Target groups
 - Expected competencies to be acquired by participants

(e.g., The thesis and the aforementioned course description, objectives, and method can help instructors develop the *Introduction* section)

- *Course objectives and syllabus*
 - Objectives
 - Duration

(e.g., Course objectives have already been described, and course duration can be customized based on the management decision and policy.)

- *Syllabus*

(e.g., Course syllabus is focused on the *Results and Discussion* of the thesis. Instructors can develop teaching materials as mentioned in the *Sections 2.3. and 4.*)

Body language skill development course syllabus			
Practical (P)..... hours			
Theory (T)..... hours			
Course syllabus	T	P	Remarks
1. Introduction to body language in hotels 1.1 Definition 1.2 Thematic dimensions of body language 1.3 Perspective of body language in hotels			
2. Meaning of body language in hospitality 2.1 How to welcome guests 2.2 Symbolic meanings of nonverbal cues 2.3 What do your guests expect from you 2.4 How to adapt body language to solve guests' critical moments 2.5 How to develop relationship with guests 2.6 How to harmonize with your guests			For a bigger class, hours should be increased. Practical hours should include field visits and role plays.
3. Values of body language in hospitality experience 2.1 What are the values of body language 2.2 Role of body language in guest engagement 2.3 Understanding guests' value perceptions 2.4 Nonverbal interaction models in hotels			For a bigger class, hours should be increased. Practical hours should include field visit and role plays.
4. Potential problems and ethical issues in body language 4.1. Deep acting 4.2. Surface acting 4.3 Expressive burnout 4.4 Social sharing			In class, positive and negative consequences of body language can be discussed. Ethical issues, such as wellbeing versus profit motives between the hotel and the employee in the workplace, can be highlighted.

2. PPT presentation

On the basis of this thesis, trainers/instructors can develop and prepare PPT on a particular topic, which may include theory and practice related to body language. PPT may consist of slides, such as background and theories of nonverbal communication, groups of nonverbal communication, why body language is dominant in face-to-face interactions, how it works and affects individuals during face-to-face interactions, and what the problems and ethical issues in kinesic expressions are and how can they be resolved. Thus, PPT can be useful to help students understand the theoretical backgrounds and the importance of the industrial practice of nonverbal communication holistically.

3. Industrial implications

Section 5.3.1 Implications for frontline employees' training in hotels can be a convenient source of sharing with students regarding how body language can be practiced in hotels.

4. Visual training aids

Trainers/instructors can develop visual training aids for effective topical discussion, as indicated in *Section 5.3.1 Implications for frontline employees' training in hotels*.

5.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

In sum, this study made contributions to knowledge that can be applied to improve kinesic experiences and co-creation practices in hotels. It also provided a number of feasible opportunities for future research as reflected by its inherent limitations and beyond.

5.4.1 Kinesic experience in cultural differences

Nonverbal communication is profoundly rooted in culture. Culture can be defined as, “a shared system of socially transmitted behavior that describes, defines, and guides people’s ways of life, communicated from one generation to the next” (Matsumoto, 2006, p. 220). Therefore, cultural values and norms affect nonverbal communication and regulate the appropriateness of nonverbal cues displayed in individuals’ interactions (Tiechuan, 2016). Cross-cultural functions and influences are generally acknowledged in academic disciplines, such as anthropology, behavioral sciences, communication studies, economics, linguistics, political science, psychology, sociology, and recently, neurology (Triandis, 2004).

Similarly, the present study acknowledged the potential of cross-cultural influence in its investigation of the role of nonverbal communication in hotels as a medium of experience co-creation. Scholars have confirmed that the coding and decoding methods of nonverbal cues generally differ across cultural norms and values. Individuals can accurately interpret the nonverbal behavior of others from a similar culture (Gabbott & Hogg, 2001). On this basis, in the study setting, this work found a rationale to understand whether nonverbal communication, specifically kinesic experience in guest–employee dyads, was culturally influenced during face-to-face interactions in hotels. Beyond the major study objectives, the current study attempted to understand whether kinesics/body

language in guest–employee dyads was culturally different in the hotel context by asking an additional question (i.e., “What is your experience on kinesics with guests/employees from different cultures during face-to-face interactions in hotels?”). The findings showed that most guests and employees elevated kinesic experience in cultural differences during hospitality encounter as the source of novel hospitality experience in face-to-face interactions. Hotel guests and employees agreed that body language or kinesic cue projection was different according to different nationalities/cultures. They further believed that cultural differences in hospitality encounter might be distinct and could remain more or less unfamiliar. However, it could contribute to learning and exploring hospitality experiences in a new culture of a specific place. For example, G-1 shared that:

“[...] I don’t think there are many problems with cultural differences... the status of the body language of hotel employees or say how to smile, look at people, and greet nonverbally each customer may perceive differently, or subjectively, which is good for the customer experience at the end. He [customer] may learn a new thing if he thinks that the employees’ body language is unfamiliar to him.”

Conversely, hotel employees believed that in international hotels, any discrepancies in kinesic behavior with guests from a different cultural perspective should never occur because they displayed kinesics by following hotels’ standard procedures that might reflect an international acceptance. For example, E-7 reported, “[...] to take the same actions [kinesic exchange] to all the guests, regardless of their cultures. And of course, it may be related to their [international hotels] guests, because their guests are more international and more educated.” This sentiment revealed that awareness of cultural differences in kinesic cues between guests and employees played a role in understanding their mutual kinesic exchange in positive appreciation.

Although the remark of cultural differences was found as the source of new learning experience, differences in the perception of kinesic cue exchanges based on different cultures may contribute to guests' frustration toward service consumption experience. “[...] When you travel to Thailand, if you stay in any Thai hotel, normally they greet you with both of their hands like this [showed greeting with folded hand gesture]. Sometimes, it can be weird to a person who has not been into their culture. For example, in my culture, if you have made some mistakes, you'll apologize in the same way. It gave me a feeling of new learning” (G-4). Nonetheless, scholars tend to believe that as the most dominant and noticeable nonverbal component and as the emotional driver of facial expressions, kinesics can be practiced in narrow influences of cultural values and norms under the scheme of corporate training and managerial mentoring on cross-cultural issues toward nonverbal behavior of hotel employees (Gabbott & Hogg, 2001; Lin & Lin, 2017). However, posing a specific and broad aim, this study suggested further research on kinesic experiences and its co-creation in different cultural variables (i.e., religion and nationality) for additional results to contribute to broader implications in advancing kinesics-based experience co-creation in hotels.

5.4.2 Extension of S-D logic in hotels

Rooted in the S-D logic, this study focused on the hotel lobby to investigate kinesic experiences and the overall experience co-creation process between guests and employees. Consequently, other settings, such as dining and housekeeping areas, were not included in the research focus. Experience co-creation may occur differently depending on specific hotel departments. In the S-D logic domain, experience co-creation occurs in an idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual, and meaningful manner (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

Therefore, a comprehensive kinesic interaction scenario and its influence in the entire hotel service context may not be inferred from this study. In this regard, future research efforts may extend this study to other departments or service settings (i.e., housekeeping and dining areas) to understand experience co-creation comprehensively.

5.4.3 Kinesics in different types of hotel in different hours

The findings of the study were driven from full-service hotels. However, given the nature of various hospitality cultures, kinesic experience and its co-creation in guest–employee dyads may appear different depending on the types of hotel (e.g., resorts and budget hotels), which the study was not able to cover. Perception of kinesic cue exchange between guests and employees may vary due to the different types of hotel in the line of different check-in procedures. For example, the check-in procedure of resorts may be longer than that of business hotels due to their different rules of business. This study focused on full-service hotels, and it suggested research on kinesic experiences in different types of hotel (i.e., resorts and business, budget, and boutique hotels) with different check-in procedures, which could provide interesting findings and enrich the domains of nonverbal communication from a broad perspective. Moreover, there exist some hotels (i.e., Regal Airport Hotel Hong Kong) where no guest–employee interactions occur in the hotel lobby because of the check-in procedure via a kiosk. The investigation of guests’ nonverbal behavior through check-in kiosks could be suggested as an interesting topic for future research.

Kinesics (i.e., the study focus) comprises facial expressions (e.g., eye contact, smiling, and nodding) and bodily movements (e.g., gestures, body orientations, and hand directions) that are essentially expected in employees’ interaction with guests. Given the

nature of business hours in the hotel context, the facial expressions and bodily movements of guests and employees may not be equally exchanged during peak and off-peak hours. Hence, differences in kinesic experiences in the hotel industry depending on peak and off-peak hours could be investigated in the future.

5.4.4 Verbal and nonverbal communication in experience co-creation

The study did not aim to investigate the role of verbal communication in experience co-creation. Thus, future studies can be extended by investigating the role of verbal communication either separately or combined with nonverbal communication in experience co-creation. Research on both communicative modes may clarify the significance of each in guest experience co-creation. Nevertheless, although the area of nonverbal communication is vast, this study can potentially direct future research on the components of other expressive communication styles of hotel employees, such as emotional labor in terms of guests' experience co-creation and the contribution of aesthetic labor across genders' rapport, engagement, and experience co-creation. The studies recommended above may augment operant resources and affect co-creation activities through expressive communication styles, thereby extending and enriching the axioms and foundational premises of the S-D logic.

APPENDIX I. KINESICS OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

**Kinesics Observation Checklist
(Between Guest and Employee)**

Interaction Point.....

Interaction No.....

Time & Date

Morning/Afternoon/Evening

Construct	Attribute	G	E	Remarks
Eye contact Nodding	Direct eye contact			
	Averted eye gaze			
	Too little			
	Too much			
	Moderate amount			
	A lot of eye contact during answering questions			
	Looking at and around			
	Appropriate eye contact			
	Nodding			
Smile	Smile frequently			
	Smile with politeness			
	Smile without facial expression			
	Smile back			
	Light laughter			
	Little smile			

Bodily movements	Open body posture		
	Circular gesture		
Gesture	Touching		
	Active body movement		
Posture	Torso/body movements		
	Hand gesture		
	Shaking hand		
	Attentive and cordial activities		

APPENDIX II. INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDELINES

Interview Question Guidelines for Focus Groups (Hotel Guests and Employees)

Scenario I	Questions
<p><i>Objective-ii: To identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in terms of co-creation of experience during face-to-face interactions</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From this video scenario, please list the nonverbal expressions/body movements the employee/guest has displayed to you? 2. What do you understand to be the meanings of these nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee/guest? 3. What are the nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee/guest that make you engaged/attentive about the employee/guest in this video scenario? Please explain why?
<p><i>Objective-i: To identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What do you think the employee/guest is thinking about you in this scenario regarding your nonverbal expressions/body movements? 5. What do you want to achieve by displaying your nonverbal expressions/body movements to the employee/guest? 6. What are your impressions of the employee's/guest's nonverbal expressions/body movements in this scenario? 7. What impressions would it make if the employee/guest does not display the nonverbal expressions/body movements at the entrance of the hotel? Why do you think so? 8. What is the importance of the nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee/guest at the entrance of the hotel?
<p><i>Objective-ii: To identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in terms of co-creation of</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. At the entrance of the hotel, what nonverbal expressions/body

<i>experience during face-to-face interactions</i>	movements do you like to see in the employee/guest? Why?
<i>Objective-i: To identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions</i>	10. Please share any memorable feelings you got from this interaction with the employee/guest?
Scenario II	Questions
<i>Objective-ii: To identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in terms of co-creation of experience during face-to-face interactions</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From this video scenario, please list the nonverbal expressions/body movements the employee/guest has displayed to you? 2. What do you understand to be the meanings of these nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee/guest? 3. What are the nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee/guest that make you engaged/attentive about the employee/guest in this video scenario? Please explain why?
<i>Objective-i: To identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. How do you feel about the nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee/guest in this scenario? 5. What do you (not) like about the nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee/guest in this scenario? Why? 6. In the context of this scenario, how should the employee/guest display nonverbal expressions/body movements to you? Why?
<i>Objective-ii: To identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in terms of co-creation of experience during face-to-face interactions</i>	7. To make the employee/guest feel comfortable, what nonverbal expressions/body movements should you display to the employee/guest? Why should you do so?
<i>Objective-i: To identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions</i>	8. What goes through your mind when does the employee/guest not display the nonverbal expressions/body movements that you expect?
<i>Objective-ii: To identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and</i>	9. Which particular nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee may indicate that you are

<p><i>employees in terms of co-creation of experience during face-to-face interactions</i></p>	<p>going to have a positive/negative experience with the hotel? Which particular nonverbal expressions/body movements of the guest may indicate that he/she is willing/unwilling to use your services?</p>
<p><i>Objective-i: To identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions</i></p>	<p>10. Please share any memorable feelings you got from this interaction with the employee/guest?</p>
<p>Scenario III Questions</p>	
<p><i>Objective-ii: To identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in terms of co-creation of experience during face-to-face interactions</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From this video scenario, please list the nonverbal expressions/body movements the employee/guest has displayed to you? 2. What do you understand to be the meanings of these nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee/guest? 3. What are the nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee/guest that make you engaged/attentive about the employee/guest in this video scenario? Please explain why?
<p><i>Objective-i: To identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. How do you feel about the nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee/guest in this scenario? 5. How do you feel when your nonverbal expressions/body movements get no response from the employee/guest?
<p><i>Objective-ii: To identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in terms of co-creation of experience during face-to-face interactions</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. What are the negative and positive nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee/guest? Why do you think so? 7. What do you understand to be the nonverbal expressions/body movements that can show the employee's particular attitudes? What are these particular attitudes? Please explain. 8. In this type of interaction scenario, what nonverbal expressions/body movements do you expect from the employee/guest? Why?

<p><i>Objective-i: To identify the dimensions of kinesic experiences of hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions</i></p>	<p>9. Please share any memorable feeling you got from this interaction with the employee/guest?</p>
<p><i>Objective-i: To investigate how kinesics is mutually experienced by hotel guests and employees during face-to-face interactions</i></p>	<p>10. How are the three scenarios distinct from one another in terms of the employee's/guest's nonverbal expressions/body movements? Why do you think so?</p>
<p><i>Objective-ii: To identify kinesic cues that engage hotel guests and employees in terms of co-creation of experience during face-to-face interactions</i></p>	<p>11. Which of the nonverbal expressions/body movements of the employee/guest among the three video scenarios give you the most memorable experience? Please explain.</p>

APPENDIX III. INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM



INFORMATION SHEET

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN HOTELS AS A MEDIUM OF EXPERIENCE CO-CREATION

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Mohammad Shahidul Islam, the School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The project has been approved by the Human Subjects Ethics Sub-committee (HSESC) (or its Delegate) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HSESC Reference Number: 20180510001).

The broad objective of this study is to explore body language (nonverbal expressions/body movements) as a medium of experience co-creation in hotels. With the video scenario presentation, the study will involve a focus group discussion (FGD) comprising six participants (three hotel guests and three hotel employees) that is expected to last about 2.5 hours. You, as a hotel guest/employee, will be asked questions for group discussion pertaining to your personal experience in the face-to-face nonverbal interaction with guest/employee. What we will learn from the FGD will help us understand the experience of nonverbal communication or body language and thus improve the quality of face-to-face guest–employee interaction in hotels.

The interview/discussion should not result in any undue discomfort. All information related to you will remain confidential and will be identifiable by a pseudonym only known to the researcher. You have every right to withdraw from the study before or during the interview/discussion. The whole investigation will take about 2 hours.

If you would like to obtain more information about this study, please contact Mohammad Shahidul Islam (tel. no.: (852)3400- /email: mohd.sh.islam@). If you have any complaints about the conduct of this research study, please do not hesitate to contact Miss Cherrie Mok, Secretary of the Human Subjects Ethics Sub-Committee of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in writing (c/o Research Office of the University) stating clearly the responsible person and department of this study as well as the HSESC Reference Number.

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study.

Mohammad Shahidul Islam
Investigator

Hung Hom Kowloon Hong Kong 香港九龍紅磡

Tel 電話 (852) 2766 5111 Fax 傳真 (852) 2784 3374

Email 電郵 polyu@polyu.edu.hk

Website 網址 www.polyu.edu.hk

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN HOTELS AS A MEDIUM
OF EXPERIENCE CO-CREATION**

I _____ hereby consent to participate in the captioned research conducted by Mohammad Shahidul Islam.

I understand that information obtained from this research may be used in future research and published. However, my right to privacy will be retained (i.e., my personal details will not be revealed).

The procedure, as set out in the attached information sheet, has been fully explained. I understand the benefit and risks involved. My participation in the project is voluntary.

I acknowledge that I have the right to question any part of the procedure and can withdraw at any time without penalty of any kind.

Name of participant _____

Signature of participant _____

Name of researcher -----

Signature of researcher _____

Date _____

Hung Hom Kowloon Hong Kong 香港 九龍 紅磡

Tel 電話 (852) 2766 5111 Fax 傳真 (852) 2784 3374

Email 電郵 polyu@polyu.edu.hk

Website 網址 www.polyu.edu.hk

REFERENCES

- Aarikka-Stenroos, L., & Jaakkola, E. (2012). Value co-creation in knowledge intensive business services: A dyadic perspective on the joint problem solving process. *Industrial marketing management*, 41(1), 15-26.
- Ajzen, I. (2001). Nature and operation of attitudes. *Annual review of psychology*, 52(1), 27-58.
- Ajzen, I., & Driver, B. L. (1992). Application of the theory of planned behavior to leisure choice. *Journal of leisure research*, 24(3), 207-224.
- Akaka, M. A., Corsaro, D., Kelleher, C., Maglio, P. P., Seo, Y., Lusch, R. F., & Vargo, S. L. (2014). The role of symbols in value cocreation. *Marketing Theory*, 14(3), 311-326.
- Alarcon, G. M. (2011). A meta-analysis of burnout, job demands, resources, and attitudes. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 79, 549–562.
- Allen, H., Hubbard, D., & Sullivan, S. (2005). The burden of pain on employee health and productivity at a major provider of business services. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 47(7), 658-670.
- Altinay, L., Paraskevas, A., & Jang, S. C. S. (2016). *Planning research in hospitality and tourism*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Aldeen, O. S., & Rahman, R. A. (2018). The nonverbal behavior of football players: A sociological and psychological study. *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research*, 6(6), 132-141.
- Alves, H., Fernandes, C., & Raposo, M. (2016). Value co-creation: Concept and contexts of application and study. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(5), 1626-1633.
- Alvesson, M., & Sköldbberg Kaj. (2018). *Reflexive methodology: new vistas for qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Andrades, L., & Dimanche, F. (2014). Co-creation of experience value: A tourist behaviour approach. In M. Chen & J. Uysal (eds.), *Creating experience value in tourism* (pp. 95–112). London: CABI.
- Antonakis, J., Fenley, M., & Liechti, S. (2011). Can Charisma can be taught? Tests of two interventions. *The Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 10 (3), 374-396.
- Arborelius, E., & Timpka, T. (1990). General practitioners' comments on video recorded consultations as an aid to understanding the doctor–patient relationship. *Family Practice*, 7(2), 84-90.

- Arnould, E. J., & Thompson, C. J. (2005). Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(4), 868–882.
- Argyle, M. (1990). *Bodily communication*. Madison, CT: International Universities Press.
- Argyle, M., & Dean, J. (1965). Eye-Contact, Distance and Affiliation. *Sociometry*, 28(3), 289-304
- Argyle, M., Salter, V., Nicholson, H., Williams, M., & Burgess, P. (1970). The communication of inferior and superior attitudes by verbal and non-verbal signals. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 9(3), 222-231.
- Arnould, E. J., & Price, L. L. (1993). River magic: Extraordinary experience and the extended service encounter. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20(1), 24-45.
- Asche, M., & Kreis, H. (2014). Apps as Crucial Value Components and their Impact on the Customer Experience. *Marketing Review St. Gallen*, 31(5), 42-51.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Humphrey, R. H. (1993). Emotional labor in service roles: The influence of identity. *Academy of Management Review*, 18(1), 88-115.
- Ashkanasy, N. M., Härtel, C. E., & Daus, C. S. (2002). Diversity and emotion: The new frontiers in organizational behavior research. *Journal of Management*, 28(3), 307-338.
- Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), 385-405.
- Babad, E., Bernieri, F., & Rosenthal, R. (1991). Students as judges of teachers' verbal and nonverbal behavior. *American Educational Research Journal*, 28(1), 211-234.
- Babin, E.A. (2013). An examination of predictors of nonverbal and verbal communication of pleasure during sex and sexual satisfaction. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 30 (3), 270-292.
- Bahns, A., J., Crandall, C., S., Gillath, O. & Wilmer, J., B. (2016). Communication of Similarity Via the Torso: It's in the Bag. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 40, (2),151–170.
- Baker, S., Bradley, P., & Huyton, J. (2011). *Principles of hotel front office operations*. Hampshire: Cengage Learning.
- Ballantyne, D., Williams, J., & Aitken, R. (2011). Introduction to Service-Dominant Logic: From propositions to practice. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40, 179–180.
- Bandura, A., & Walters, R. H. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-hall.
- Bardi, J. A. (2011). *Hotel front office management*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

- Barsade, S. G. (2002). The ripple effect: Emotional contagion and its influence on group behaviour. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47(4), 644-675.
- Batat, W. (2019). *Experiential marketing: consumer behavior, customer experience and the 7Es*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Baum, T., & Odgers, P. (2001). Benchmarking best practice in hotel front office: the Western European experience. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 2(3-4), 93- 109.
- Baum, T., & Devine, F. (2007). Skills and training in the hotel sector: The case of front office employment in Northern Ireland. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 7(3-4), 269-280.
- Bayes, M.A. (1972). Behavioral cues of interpersonal warmth', *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 39 (2), 333-9.
- Bayraktar, C. A., Araci, O., Karacay, G., & Calisir, F. (2017). The mediating effect of rewarding on the relationship between employee involvement and job satisfaction. *Human Factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing & Service Industries*, 27(1), 45-52.
- Beattie, G. (2016). *Rethinking body language how hand movements reveal hidden thoughts*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bellet, P. S., & Maloney, M. J. (1991). The importance of empathy as an interviewing skill in medicine. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 266(13), 1831-1832.
- Bendapudi, N., & Leone, R. P. (2003). Psychological implications of customer participation in co-production. *Journal of Marketing*, 67, 14–28.
- Berger, C., r., & Calabrese, R., J. (1975). Some explorations in initial interaction and beyond: toward a developmental theory of interpersonal communication. *Human Communication Research*, 1, (2), 99–112.
- Berger, C. R., & Gudykunst, W. B. (1991). Uncertainty and communication. In B. Dervin & M. Voight (Eds.), *Progress in Communication Sciences* (pp. 21–66). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Berger, C. R., & Bradac, J. J. (1982). *Language and social knowledge: uncertainty in interpersonal relations*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Bernard, H. R. (2018). *Research methods in anthropology qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bernieri, F. J., Davis, J. M., Rosenthal, R., & Knee, C. R. (1994). Interactional synchrony and rapport: Measuring synchrony in displays devoid of sound and facial affect. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20(3), 303-311.

- Bernieri, F. J., Gillis, J. S., Davis, J. M., & Grahe, J. E. (1996). Dyad rapport and the accuracy of its judgment across situations: A lens model analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(1), 110-229.
- Bharti, K., Agrawal, R., & Sharma, V. (2018). Embrace, before it is too late! Prediction of future studies on value co-creation. *International Journal of Business Excellence*, 14(1), 121-151.
- Bharwani, S., & Jauhari, V. (2013). An exploratory study of competencies required to co-create memorable customer experiences in the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 25 (6). 823 – 843.
- Binkhorst, E., & Den Dekker, T. (2009). Agenda for co-creation tourism experience research. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 18 (2/3), 311-327.
- Bitner, M. J., Booms, B. H., & Tetreault, M. S. (1990). The service encounter: diagnosing favorable and unfavorable incidents. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(1), 71-84.
- Bitner, M. J. (1990). Evaluating service encounters: the effects of physical surroundings and employee responses. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(2), 69-82.
- Birdwhistell, R. L. (1952). *Introduction to kinesics: an annotation system for analysis of body motion and gesture*. Louisville, KY: University of Louisville.
- Birdwhistell, R.L., (1970). *Kinesics and context: Essay on body motion communication*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Blois, K. J. (1992). Carlzon' s Moments of Truth–A Critical Appraisal. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 3(3), 5-17.
- Blomberg, J., & Darrah, C. (2015). An anthropology of services: Toward a practice approach to designing services. *Synthesis Lectures on Human-Centered Informatics*, 8(1), 1-115.
- Blue, G. M., & Harun, M. (2003). Hospitality language as a professional skill. *English for Specific Purposes*, 22(1), 73-91.
- Blumer, H. (1962). Human society as symbolic interaction. In A. M. Rose (Ed.), *Human Behavior and Social Process* (pp. 179–192). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Boella, M. J. (2017). *Human resource management in the hotel and catering industry*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bonaccio, S., O'Reilly, J., O'Sullivan, S. L., & Chiocchio, F. (2016). Nonverbal behavior and communication in the workplace: A review and an agenda for research. *Journal of Management*, 42(5), 1044-1074.
- Bonfanti, A., Vigolo, V., & Negri, F. (2016). Hotel responses to guests' online reviews: An exploratory study on communication styles. In A. Inversini & R. Schlegg (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism* (pp. 397-409). Cham: Springer.

- Boone, R. T., & Buck, R. (2003). Emotional expressivity and trustworthiness: The role of nonverbal behavior in the evolution of cooperation. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 27(3), 163-182.
- Boswijk, A., Peelen, E., & Olthof, S. (2012). *Economy of Experiences*. Pearson Education, Amsterdam.
- Botti, A., Grimaldi, M., & Vesce, M. (2018). Customer Value Co-creation in a Service-Dominant Logic Perspective: Some Steps Toward the Development of a Measurement Scale. In B. Sergio, P. Marco, & P. Francesco (Eds.), *Social Dynamics in a Systems Perspective* (pp. 137-157). Cham: Springer.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (2009). *Transforming qualitative information: thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bourgeon-Renault, D., Urbain, C., Petr, C., Le Gall-Elly, M., & Gombault, A. (2006). An experiential approach to the consumption of value of arts and culture: the case of museums and monuments. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 9(1), 35–47.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol. 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57–71). Washington, DC: APA.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2014). *Successful qualitative research: a practical guide for beginners*. London: SAGE.
- Breen, R. L. (2006). A practical guide to focus-group research. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 30(3), 463-475.
- Briton, N. J., & Hall, J. A. (1995). Beliefs about female and male nonverbal communication. *Sex Roles*, 32(1), 79-90.
- Brotheridge, C. M., & Grandey, A. A. (2002). Emotional labor and burnout: Comparing two perspectives of “people work”. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 60(1), 17-39.
- Bryman, A. (2008). Of methods and methodology. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 3(2), 159-168.
- Buck, R. (1975). Nonverbal communication of affect in children. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 31(4), 644-653.
- Buonincontri, P., Morvillo, A., Okumus, F., & Niekerk, M. v. (2017). Managing the experience co-creation process in tourism destinations: Empirical findings from Naples. *Tourism Management* 62, 264-277

- Burgoon, J. K., Buller, D. B., & Woodall, W., G. (1989). *Nonverbal Communication: The Unspoken Dialogue*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Burgoon, J. K., J. P. Blair & R. E. Strom (2008). Cognitive biases and nonverbal cue availability in detecting deception. *Human communication research. Human Communication Research*. 34 (4): 572–599.
- Burgoon, J. K., Guerrero, L. K., & Manusov, V. (2011). Nonverbal signals. In M.L. Knapp & J.A. Daly (Eds), *The SAGE handbook of interpersonal communication*, (pp. 239-280). Thousand Oaks (Ca.): Sage.
- Burgoon, J.K. (1995). *Interpersonal Adaption: Dyadic Interaction Patterns*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Burgoon, J. K., Stern, L. A., & Dillman, L. (2007). *Interpersonal adaptation: dyadic interaction patterns*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burgoon, J. K., Buller, D. B., Hale, J. L., & de Turck, M. A. (1984). Relational messages associated with nonverbal behaviors. *Human Communication Research*, 10(3), 351-378.
- Burgoon, J. K., Guerrero, L. K., & Floyd, K. (2016). *Nonverbal communication*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Burnett, A., & Badzinski, D.M. (2005). Judge nonverbal communication on trial: do mock trial jurors notice? *Journal of Communication*, 55, (2), 209-224.
- Burgoon, J. K., Birk, T., & Pfau, M. (1990). Nonverbal behaviors, persuasion, and credibility. *Human communication research*, 17(1), 140-169.
- Cabiddu, F., Lui, T.-W., & Piccoli, G. (2013). Managing value co-creation in the tourism industry. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 42, 86–107
- Cable, D. M., & Edwards, J. R. (2004). Complementary and supplementary fit: a theoretical and empirical integration. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(5), 822-834.
- Caldwell, K., Atwal, A., (2005). Non-participant observation: using video tapes to collect data in nursing research. *Nurse Researcher*, 13 (2), 42–54
- Cambra-Fierro, J., Pérez, L., & Grott, E. (2017). Towards a co-creation framework in the retail banking services industry: Do demographics influence? *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 34, 219-228.
- Campos, A. C., Mendes, J., do Valle, P. O., & Scott, N. (2016). Co-creation experiences: Attention and memorability. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 33(9), 1309-1336.
- Campos, A. C., Mendes, J., Valle, P. O. D., & Scott, N. (2018). Co-creation of tourist experiences: A literature review. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(4), 369-400.
- Carey, M., Asbury, J.E. (2012). *Focus Group Research*. New York: Routledge.

- Caris-Verhallen, W. M., Kerkstra, A., & Bensing, J. M. (1999). Non-verbal behaviour in nurse– elderly patient communication. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 29(4), 808-818.
- Carlson, R. A. (1997). *Experienced cognition*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Carlsen, B., & Glenton, C. (2011). What about N? A methodological study of sample-size reporting in focus group studies. *BMC medical research methodology*, 11(1), 26.
- Carlzon, J., & Peters, T. (1989). *Moments of truth*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Carù, A., & Cova, B. (2003). Revisiting consumption experience. *Marketing Theory*, 3(2), 267–286.
- Cetin, G., & Walls, A. (2016). Understanding the customer experiences from the perspective of guests and hotel managers: Empirical findings from luxury hotels in Istanbul, Turkey. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 25(4), 395-424.
- Chahal, H. (2010). Two component customer relationship management model for healthcare services. *Managing Service Quality*, 20(4), 343– 365.
- Chang, S. (2018). Experience economy in hospitality and tourism: Gain and loss values for service and experience. *Tourism Management*, 64, 55-63.
- Chathoth, P., K., Ungson, G., R., Harrington, R., J.& Chan, E., S.W., (2016). Co-creation and higher order customer engagement in hospitality and tourism services: A critical review. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 28, (2), 222-245.
- Chathoth, P., K., Ungson, G., R., Altinay, L., Chan, E., S.W., Harrington, R., J.& Okumus, F. (2014). Barriers affecting organisational adoption of higher order customer engagement in tourism service interactions. *Tourism Management* 42, 181-193.
- Chathoth, P., Altinay, L., Harrington, R., J., Okumus, F.& Chan, E., S.W. (2013). Co-production versus co-creation: A process based continuum in the hotel service context. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 32, 11–20.
- Chan, K. W., Yim, C. K., & Lam, S. S. (2010). Is customer participation in value creation a double-edged sword? Evidence from professional financial services across cultures. *Journal of Marketing*, 74(3), 48-64.
- Chang, HH, Fang, PW, & Huang, CH. (2015). The Impact of On-Line Consumer Reviews on Value Perception: The Dual-Process Theory and Uncertainty Reduction. *Journal of Organizational and End User Computing*, 27(2), 32-57.
- Cheung, F., Tang, C. S. K., & Tang, S. (2011). Psychological capital as a moderator between emotional labor, burnout, and job satisfaction among school teachers in China. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 18(4), 348.

- Choi, H., & Kandampully, J. (2019). The effect of atmosphere on customer engagement in upscale hotels: An application of SOR paradigm. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 77, 40-50.
- Choi, B., & Kim, H. (2013). The impact of outcome quality, interaction quality, and peer-to-peer quality on customer satisfaction with a hospital service. *Managing Service Quality*, 23(3), 188–204.
- Cone, J. D. (1986). Idiographic, nomothetic, and related perspectives in behavioral assessment. In R. O. Nelson & S. C. Hayes (Eds.), *Conceptual foundations of behavioral assessment* (pp. 111-128). New York: Guilford Press.
- Christie, MJ, Rowe, PA, Perry, C & Chamard. (2000). Implementation of realism in case study research methodology. In E Douglas (ed.), *Proceedings of Entrepreneurial SMES - engines for growth in the millenium: International Council for Small Business. World Conference*, Brisbane (pp. 1-21). Brisbane, Qld: Icbs.
- Chung-Herrera, B. G., Enz, C. A., & Lankau, M. J. (2003). A competencies model: Grooming future hospitality leaders. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 44(3), 17-25.
- Collier, J. E., Barnes, D. C., Abney, A. K., & Pelletier, M. J. (2018). Idiosyncratic service experiences: When customers desire the extraordinary in a service encounter. *Journal of Business Research*, 84, 150-161.
- Collins, J. J., Baase, C. M., Sharda, C. E., Ozminkowski, R. J., Nicholson, S., Billotti, G. M., ... & Berger, M. L. (2005). The assessment of chronic health conditions on work performance, absence, and total economic impact for employers. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 47(6), 547-557.
- Constantin, J. A., & Lusch, R. F. (1994). *Understanding resource management: how to deploy your people, products and processes for maximum productivity*. Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin.
- Countryman, C. C., & Jang, S. (2006). The effects of atmospheric elements on customer impression: the case of hotel lobbies. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 18(7), 534-545.
- Coutts, L., m, Schneider, F, W & Montgomery, S. (1980). An Investigation of the Arousal Model of Interpersonal intimacy. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 16, 545-561
- Coutts, I. M. & Schneider, F. W. (1976). Affiliative conflict theory: An investigation of the intimacy equilibrium and compensation hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 34, 1135-1 142.
- Coutts, L. M. (1975). *Affiliative Conflict Theory: Exploration of the Notions of Intimacy Equilibrium and Behavioral Compensation*. Windsor: University of Windsor.
- Crandall, B., Hoffman, R. R., & Klein, G. A. (2007). *Working minds a practitioners guide to cognitive task analysis*. Vancouver, B.C.: Langara College.

- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Cutler, S. Q., & Carmichael, B. A. (2010). The dimensions of the tourist experience. In Morgan M, Lugosi P, Ritchie JRB (eds). *The tourism and leisure experience: Consumer and managerial perspectives*, (pp.3-26). Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Dallimore, K. S., Sparks, B. A., & Butcher, K. (2007). The influence of angry customer outbursts on service providers' facial displays and affective states. *Journal of Service Research*, 10(1), 78-92.
- Darwall, S. (1998). Empathy, sympathy, care. *Philosophical Studies*, 89(2), 261-282.
- Darwin, C., & Ekman, P. (1998). *The expression of the emotions in man and animals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Degotardi, S. (2010). High-quality interactions with infants: relationships with early-childhood practitioners' interpretations and qualification levels in play and routine contexts. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 18(1), 27-41.
- Delmonte, M.M. (1991). Use of non-verbal construing and metaphor in psychotherapy. *Internal Journal of Psychosomatics*, 38 (1-4), 68-75.
- Denzin, N. K. (2001). *Applied Social Research Methods: Interpretive interactionism*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research: 4th ed.* Thousand Oaks California: Sage.
- Desai, D. (2009). Role of relationship management and value co-creation in social marketing. *Social Marketing Quarterly*, 15(4), 112-125.
- DeWitt, T., & Brady, M.K. (2003). Rethinking service recovery strategies, the effect of rapport on consumer responses to service failure. *Journal of Service Research*, 6 (2),193-207.
- Díaz, E., Gómez, M., Martín-Consuegra, D., & Molina, A. (2017). The effects of perceived satisfaction with service recovery efforts: a study in a hotel setting. *Economics and Management.*, 20(4), 203-218.
- Dickert, S., & Slovic, P. (2009). Attentional Mechanisms in the Generation of Sympathy. *Judgment and Decision Making*, 4 (4), 297–306.

- DiMatteo, M. R., Friedman, H. S., & Taranta, A. (1979). Sensitivity to bodily nonverbal communication as a factor in physician-patient rapport. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 4, 18–26.
- Dimberg, U., Thunberg, M., & Elmehed, K. (2000). Unconscious facial reactions to emotional facial expressions. *Psychological science*, 11(1), 86-89.
- Donavan, D. T., Brown, T. J., & Mowen, J. C. (2004). Internal benefits of service-worker customer orientation: Job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors. *Journal of marketing*, 68(1), 128-146.
- Dresser, N. (2011). *Multicultural manners: essential rules of etiquette for the 21st century*. Hoboken (New Jersey): John Wiley & Sons.
- Druckman, D., Rozelle, R. M., & Baxter, J. C. (1982). *Nonverbal communication: Survey, theory, and research*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Du, J., Fan, X., & Feng, T. (2011) Multiple emotional contagions in service encounters. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39, 449-466.
- Dunn, M., J., Rodriguez, E., M., Miller, K., S., Gerhardt, C., A., Vannatta, K., Saylor, M Scheule, C., M., & Compas, B., E., (2010). Direct Observation of Mother–Child Communication in Pediatric Cancer: Assessment of Verbal and Non-verbal Behavior and Emotion. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology* 36 (5): 565-575
- Durna, U., Dedeoglu, B. B., & Balikçioğlu, S. (2015). The role of servicescape and image perceptions of customers on behavioral intentions in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(7), 1728-1748.
- Duveen, G. (2001). Representations, Identities and resistance. In Deaux, K., & Philogène, G. (Eds.), *Representations of the Social* (pp. 257-271). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers
- Echeverri, P., & Skålen, P. (2011). Co-creation and co-destruction—a practice theory based study of interactive value formation. *Marketing Theory*, 11(3), 351–373.
- Edvardsson, B., Enquist, B., & Johnston, R. (2005). Cocreating customer value through hyperreality in the prepurchase service experience. *Journal of Service Research*, 8(2), 149-161.
- Ehrenwald, J. (1996). Patterns of neurotic interaction: A study of empathy and enkinesis in interpersonal relationships. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 50(4), 481-496.
- Eisenberger, R., & Rhoades, L. (2001). Incremental effects of rewards on creativity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81, 728–741.
- Ekinci, Y., Sirakaya-Turk, E., & Preciado, S. (2013). Symbolic consumption of tourism destination brands. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(6), 711–718.

- Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. (1972). Hand movements. *Journal of Communication*, 22, 353–374.
- Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. V. (1969). The repertoire of nonverbal behavior: Categories, origins, usage, and coding. *Semiotica*, 1(1), 49-98.
- Ekman, P., Davidson, R. J., & Friesen, W. V. (1990). The Duchenne smile: Emotional expression and brain physiology: II. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58(2), 342–353.
- Elizur, D. (1987). Effect of feedback on verbal and non-verbal courtesy in a bank setting. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 36 (2), 147-56.
- Elliot, A. J. (1999). Approach and avoidance motivation and achievement goals. *Educational Psychologist*, 34(3), 169-189.
- Ellyson, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (1985). Power, dominance, and nonverbal behavior: Basic concepts and issues. In S. L. Ellyson & J. F. Dovidio (Eds.), *Power, dominance, and nonverbal behavior* (pp. 1-27). New York, NY: Springer.
- Erdly, M., & Kesterson-Townes, L. (2003). Experience rules: a scenario for the hospitality and leisure industry circa 2010 envisions transformation. *Strategy & Leadership*, 31(3), 12-18.
- Erlanson, D. A., Harris, E. L.; Skipper, B., L. & Allen, S., D. (1993). *Doing naturalistic inquiry: a guide to methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Escalas, J. E., & Stern, B. B. (2003). Sympathy and empathy: Emotional responses to advertising dramas. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(4), 566-578.
- Fan, D. X., Hsu, C. H., & Lin, B. (2020). Tourists’ experiential value co-creation through online social contacts: Customer-dominant logic perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 108, 163-173.
- Fang, L., Li, H., & Li, M. (2019). Does hotel location tell a true story? Evidence from geographically weighted regression analysis of hotels in Hong Kong. *Tourism Management*, 72, 78-91.
- Feighery, W. (2006). Reflexivity and tourism research: Telling an (other) story. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 9(3), 269.
- Feltman R., Elliot A.J. (2012) Approach and Avoidance Motivation. In: Seel N.M. (eds) *Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning* (pp. 14-14). Boston: Springer.
- Fichten, C.S., Tagalakis, V., Judd, D., Wright, J., & Amsel, R. (1992). Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Cues in Daily Conversations and Dating. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 132 (6), 751-769.
- Finlay, L. (2002). “Outing” the researcher: The provenance, process, and practice of reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(4), 531-545.

- Fischer, K. W., Shaver, P. R., & Carnochan, P. (1990). How emotions develop and how they organize development. *Cognition and Emotion*, 4, 81-127.
- Fulmer, I. S., & Barry, B. (2009). Managed hearts and wallets: Ethical issues in emotional influence by and within organizations. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 19, 155–191.
- Ford, M. T., Agosta, J. P., Huang, J., & Shannon, C. (2018). Moral emotions toward others at work and implications for employee behavior: A qualitative analysis using critical incidents. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 33(1), 155-180.
- France, C., Merrilees, B., & Miller, D. (2015). Customer brand co-creation: a conceptual model. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 33(6), 848-864.
- Freeman, T. (2006). ‘Best practice’ in focus group research: making sense of different views. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 56(5), 491-497.
- Freitas-Magalhães, A. (2009). *Emotional Expression: The Brain and The Face*. Porto: University Fernando Pessoa Press.
- Friedman, H. S., Prince, L. M., Riggio, R. E., & DiMatteo, M. R. (1980). Understanding and assessing nonverbal expressiveness: The Affective Communication Test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39(2), 333-351
- Frijda, N. H. (1986). *The emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frow, P., Payne, A., & Storbacka, K. (2011). Co-creation: A typology and conceptual framework. In M. Ogilvie & M. Ryan (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2011 Australia and New Zealand Marketing Conference* (pp. 1–6). Perth: Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy.
- Furley, P., & Schweizer, G. (2016). Nonverbal communication of confidence in soccer referees: an experimental test of Darwin’s leakage hypothesis. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 38(6), 590-597.
- Füller, J., & Bilgram, V. (2017). The moderating effect of personal features on the consequences of an enjoyable co-creation experience. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 26 (4), 386-401.
- Füller, J., Jawecki, G., & Mühlbacher, H. (2007). Innovation creation by online basketball communities. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(1), 60-71.
- Furley, P., & Schweizer, G. (2016). Nonverbal communication of confidence in soccer referees: An experimental test of Darwin’s leakage hypothesis. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 38(6), 590-597.
- Gabbott, M. & Hogg, G., (2001). The role of non-verbal communication in service encounters: a conceptual framework. *Journal of Marketing Management* 17 (1/2), 5–26.

- Gabbott, M. & Hogg, G. (2000). An empirical investigation of the impact of non-verbal communication on service evaluation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 34(3/4), 384-398.
- Gabriel, A.S., Acosta, J.D., & Grandey, A.A. (2015). The value of a smile: does emotional performance matter more in familiar or unfamiliar exchanges? *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 30 (1), 37-50.
- Gallagher, T., J., Hartung, P., J., Gerzina, H., Jr., S., W., G., & Merolla., D. (2005). Further analysis of a doctor–patient nonverbal communication instrument. *Patient Education and Counseling* 57. 262–271
- Gamble, T.K., & Gamble, M.W. (2013). *Interpersonal communication: building connections together*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Galvagno, M., & Dalli, D. (2014). The theory of value co-creation: a systematic literature review. *Managing Service Quality*, 24, 643–683.
- Garman, A. N., Corrigan, P. W., & Morris, S. (2002). Staff burnout and patient satisfaction: evidence of relationships at the care unit level. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 7(3), 235.
- Geertz, C. (1986). Making experiences, authoring selves. In Bruner EM, Turner V (eds) *The anthropology of experience* (pp.373-380). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- George, R.T. (1993). Learning by example: the critical-incident technique. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* 30, 58–60.
- Gentile, C., Spiller, N., & Noci, G. (2007). How to sustain the customer experience: *European Management Journal*, 25(5), 395–410.
- Ghitulescu, B. E. (2018). Psychosocial effects of proactivity: The interplay between proactive and collaborative behavior. *Personnel Review*, 47(2), 294-318.
- Gifford, R., Ng, C. F., & Wilkinson, M. (1985). Nonverbal cues in the employment interview: Links between applicant qualities and interviewer judgments. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 70(4), 729-736.
- Given, L. M. (Ed.) (2008). *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gkorezis P., Bellou V. & Skemperis, N., (2015). Nonverbal communication and relational identification with the supervisor Evidence from two countries. *Management Decision*, 53 (5), 1005-1022.
- Gladstone, G., & Parker, G. (2002). When you're smiling does the whole world smile for you? *Australasian Psychiatry*, 10(2), 144-146.
- Goel, V., Gold, B., Kapur, S., & Houle, S. (1997). The seats of reason? An imaging study of deductive and inductive reasoning. *Neuro Report*, 8(5), 1305-1310.

- Goffman, E. (2006). The Presentation of Self. In D. Brissett & C. Edgley (Eds.), *Life as theater: A dramaturgical sourcebook* (pp. 129–139). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Goldie, J. G. S. (2016) Connectivism: a knowledge learning theory for the digital age? *Medical Teacher*, 38(10), 1064-1069.
- Goldkuhl, G. (2012). Pragmatism vs interpretivism in qualitative information systems research. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 21(2), 135-146.
- Gorawara-Bhat, R., Cook, M., A. & Sachs G., A. (2007). Nonverbal communication in doctor–elderly patient transactions (NDEPT): Development of a tool. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 66, (2), 223–234
- Grandey, A. A. (2000). Emotional regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5(1), 95-110.
- Grandey, A. A., Fisk, G. M., Mattila, A. S., Jansen, K. J., & Sideman, L. A. (2005). Is “service with a smile” enough? Authenticity of positive displays during service encounters. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 96(1), 38-55.
- Grandey, A. A., Rupp, D., & Brice, W. N. (2015). Emotional labor threatens decent work: A proposal to eradicate emotional display rules. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 36(6), 770-785.
- Greene, M.G., Adelman, R.D., Friedmann, E., & Charon, R. (1994). Older patient satisfaction with communication during an initial medical encounter. *Social Science & Medicine*, 38(9), 1279-1288.
- Green, J., & Thorogood, N. (2018). *Qualitative methods for health research*. London: Sage.
- Greenwood, M. (2013). Ethical analyses of HRM: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 114, 355–366.
- Gremler, D.D., & Gwinner, K.P. (2000). Customer-employee rapport in service relationships. *Journal of Service Research*, 3 (1), 82-104.
- Gesteland, R. R. (2012). *Cross-cultural business behavior: a guide for global management*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press DK.
- Griffin, E. (2009). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, Higher Education.
- Griffin, E. A. (2012). *A first look at communication theory/Em Griffin*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Grissemann, U.S., & Stokburger-Sauer, N.E. (2012). Customer co-creation of travelservices: the role of company support and customer satisfaction with the co-creation performance. *Tourism Management*, 33 (6), 1483–1492.

- Grönroos, C. (1982). An Applied Service Marketing Theory. *European Journal of Marketing* 16(7): 30–41.
- Grönroos, C. (2011). A service perspective on business relationships: The value creation, interaction and marketing interface. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40(3), 240–247
- Grönroos, C., & Voima, P. (2013). Critical service logic: making sense of value creation and co-creation. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, 41(2), 133-150.
- Gross, J. J., & John, O. P. (2003). Individual differences in two emotion regulation processes: implications for affect, relationships, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(2), 348.
- Grove, S. J., & Fisk, R. P. (1992). The service experience as theater. In John F. Sherry & Brian Sternthal, (eds), *Advances in Consumer Research* (pp. 455–461). Provo, UT. ACR.
- Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. Denzin, Y. Lincoln (eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 105–117). Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage.
- Gummesson, E. (1987). The New Marketing: Developing Long-term Interactive Relationships. *Long Range Planning*, 5(5), 5–20.
- Gummesson, E. (2000). *Qualitative methods in management research*. London: Sage.
- Haggerty, K. D. (2004). Ethics creep: Governing social science research in the name of ethics. *Qualitative sociology*, 27(4), 391-414.
- Hai-yan, K., & Baum, T. (2006). Skills and work in the hospitality sector: The case of hotel front office employees in China. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 18(6), 509-518.
- Hall, J.A., Coats, E.J., & LeBeau, L.S. (2005). Nonverbal behavior and the vertical dimension of social relations: a meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 131 (6), 898-924.
- Hall, E. T. (1959). *The silent language*. Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications.
- Hall, J. A., & Matsumoto, D. (2004). Gender differences in judgments of multiple emotions from facial expressions. *Emotion*, 4(2), 201-206.
- Halverson, A. M., Hallahan, M., Hart, A. J., & Rosenthal, R. (1997). Reducing the biasing effects of judges' nonverbal behavior with simplified jury instruction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82(4), 590-598.
- Hamilton, D. (1994). Traditions, preferences, and postures in applied qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 60–69). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Hammond, M., & Wellington, J. (2012). *Research methods: The key concepts*. London: Routledge.
- Hannigan, T. P. (1990). Traits, attitudes, and skills that are related to intercultural effectiveness and their implications for cross-cultural training: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14(1), 89-111.
- Hargie, O., & Dickson, D. (2004). *Skilled interpersonal communication: Research, theory and practice*. Hove, UK: Routledge.
- Harkison, T. (2018). The use of co-creation within the luxury accommodation experience—myth or reality? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 71, 11-18.
- Harmeling, C. M., Moffett, J. W., Arnold, M. J., & Carlson, B. D. (2017). Toward a theory of customer engagement marketing. *Journal of the Academy of marketing science*, 45(3), 312-335.
- Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation. *Visual Studies*, 17, 13-26.
- Harrison, R. P. (1973). Nonverbal communication. In I. de Solo Pool, W. Schramm, N. Maccoby, F. Fry, E. Parker, & J. L. Fein (Eds.), *Handbook of communication* (pp. 46–76). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.
- Hartmann, R. (1988). Combining field methods in tourism research. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15(1), 88-105.
- Hashim, J., Wok, S., & Ghazali, R. (2008). Organizational behavior associated with emotional contagion among direct selling members. *Direct Marketing: An International Journal*, 2(3), 144-158.
- Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Rapson, R. L. (1994). *Emotional contagion*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Rapson, R. L. (1993). Emotional contagion. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 2(3), 96-99
- Hau L, Anh P., & Thuy P (2017). The effects of interaction behaviors of service frontliners on customer participation in the value co-creation: a study of health care service. *Service Business*, 11(2), 253-277.
- Hecht, M. A., & Ambady, N. (1999). Nonverbal communication and psychology: Past and future. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 7(2), 156-170.
- He, H., Chao, M. M., & Zhu, W. (2019). Cause-related marketing and employee engagement: The roles of admiration, implicit morality beliefs, and moral identity. *Journal of Business Research*, 95, 83-92.
- Helkkula, A., Kelleher, C., & Pihlström, M. (2012). Practices and experiences: challenges and opportunities for value research. *Journal of Service Management*, 23(4), 554-570.

- Hemmington, N. (2007). From service to experience: Understanding and defining the hospitality business. *The Service Industries Journal*, 27(6), 747-755.
- Hemsley, G.D., & Doob, A.T. (1978). The effect of looking behavior on communicators' Credibility. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 8,136-44.
- Henn, M., Weinstein, M., & Foard, N. (2009). *A critical introduction to social research*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Groth, M., Paul, M., & Gremler, D. D. (2006). Are all smiles created equal? How emotional contagion and emotional labor affect service relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, 70, 58–73.
- Henry, S. G., Fuhrel-Forbis, A., Rogers, M. A., & Eggly, S. (2012). Association between nonverbal communication during clinical interactions and outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 86(3), 297-315.
- Henry, S. G., & Fetters, M. D. (2012). Video elicitation interviews: A qualitative research method for investigating physician-patient interactions. *Annals of Family Medicine*, 10(2), 118–125.
- Hess, U., & Thibault, P. (2009). Darwin and emotion expression. *American Psychologist*, 64, 120–128.
- Hess, U., & Blairy, S. (2001). Facial mimicry and emotional contagion to dynamic emotional facial expressions and their influence on decoding accuracy. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, 40, 129-141.
- Hickson, M. L., III. (1977). Communication in natural settings: Research tool for undergraduates. *Communication Quarterly*, 25, 23-28.
- Hochschild, A. R. (2012). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hollebeek, L., Glynn, M.S., & Brodie, R.J. (2014). Consumer brand engagement in social media: conceptualisation, scale development and validation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 28 (2), 149-165.
- Hollebeek, L. D., Srivastava, R. K., & Chen, T. (2019). Correction to: SD logic–informed customer engagement: integrative framework, revised fundamental propositions, and application to CRM. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 47(1), 186-186.
- Holloway, I., & Galvin, K. (2016). *Qualitative research in nursing and healthcare*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Holloway, I., & Todres, L. (2003). The status of method: flexibility, consistency and coherence. *Qualitative research*, 3(3), 345-357.
- Holbrook, M. B. (2006). Consumption experience, customer value, and subjective personal introspection: An illustrative photographic essay. *Journal of Business Research*, 59,714–725.

- Holbrook, M.B., & Hirschman, E.C. (1982). The experiential aspects of consumption - consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun. *Journal of Consumer Research* 9(2), 132–140.
- Holbrook, M.B. and Hirschman, E.C. (2015) Experiential consumption. In Cook, D.T. and Ryan, J.M. (eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Consumption and Consumer Studies* (pp. 1–3). Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Holbrook, Morris B. (1994). The nature of customer value: An axiology of services in the consumption experience," In Roland Rust and Richard Oliver (eds), *Service Quality: New Directions in Theory and Practice* (pp. 21-71.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hülshager, U. R., & Schewe, A. F. (2011). On the costs and benefits of emotional labor: a meta-analysis of three decades of research. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 16(3), 361-389.
- Im, J. & Qu, H. (2017). Drivers and resources of customer co-creation: A scenario-based case in the restaurant industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 64. 31–40
- Iphofen, R. and Tolich, M. (2018). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research Ethics*. London: Sage.
- Ishikawa, H., Hashimoto, H., Kinoshita, M., & Yano, E. (2010). Can nonverbal communication skills be taught? *Medical Teacher*, 32, 860–863.
- Islam, M., S. & Kirillova, K. (2017, June). *Guests' perceptions of hospitality employees' non-verbal behavior: Insights from a restaurant sector*. Paper presented at the 3rd Global Tourism and Hospitality Conference, Hong Kong.
- Islam, M. S., & Kirillova, K. (2020). Non-verbal communication in hospitality: At the intersection of religion and gender. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 84, 102326.
- Ismail, A.R. (2010). Investigating British Customers' Experience to Maximize Brand Loyalty Within the Context of Tourism in Egypt: Netnography & Structural Modelling Approach (Doctoral dissertation). London: Brunel University.
- Itani, O. S., Kassar, A. N., & Loureiro, S. M. C. (2019). Value get, value give: The relationships among perceived value, relationship quality, customer engagement, and value consciousness. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 80, 78-90.
- Ivanova-Gongne, M. (2015). Culture in business relationship interaction: an individual perspective. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 30 (5), 608-615.
- Jaakkola, E., & Hakanen, T. (2013). Value co-creation in solution networks. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 42(1), 47-58.

- Jaakkola, E., Helkkula, A., & Aarikka-Stenroos, L. (2015). Service experience co-creation: conceptualization, implications, and future research directions. *Journal of Service Management*, 26(2), 182-205.
- Jamal, A., & Adelowore, A. (2008). Customer-employee relationship: The role of self-employee congruence. *European Journal of Marketing*, 42(11/12), 1316-1345.
- Jauhari, V. (2006). Competencies for a career in the hospitality industry: An Indian perspective. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 18(2), 123-134.
- Jensen, Ø., & Kornellussen, T. (2002). Discriminating perceptions of a peripheral 'Nordic destination' among European tourists. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 3(4), 319-330.
- Jiang, L., Hoegg, J., Dahl, D. W., & Chattopadhyay, A. (2010). The persuasive role of incidental similarity on attitudes and purchase intentions in a sales context. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36, 778-791.
- Joffe, H. (2012). Thematic analysis. *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners*, 1, 210-23.
- Jones, E. E. (1986). Interpreting interpersonal behavior: The effects of expectancies. *Science*, 234(4772), 41-46.
- Jung, H. S., & Yoon, H. H. (2011). The effects of nonverbal communication of employees in the family restaurant upon customers' emotional responses and customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30, 542-550.
- Kagan, N. (1980). Influencing Human Interaction—Eighteen Years with IPR. In A.K. Hess (Ed.), *Psychotherapy Supervision: Theory, Research, and Practice* (pp. 262-283). New York: Wiley.
- Kamukama, N., Ahiauzu, A., & Ntayi, J. M. (2011). Competitive advantage: Mediator of intellectual capital and performance. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 12(1), 152-164.
- Kandampully, J., Zhang, T., & Jaakkola, E. (2018). Customer experience management in hospitality: A literature synthesis, new understanding and research agenda. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(1), 21-56.
- Kang, J., & Hyun, S. S. (2012). Effective communication styles for the customer-oriented service employee: Inducing dedicational behaviors in luxury restaurant patrons. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(3), 772-785.
- Karpen, I. O., Bove, L. L., & Lukas, B. A. (2011). Linking service-dominant logic and strategic business practice: A conceptual model of a service-dominant orientation. *Journal of Service Research*, 15(1), 21-38.

- Keeley, M. (1988). *A social contract theory of organizations*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Kehoe, N. (1975). Nonverbal Communication: Male and Female Perceptions. *Counseling and Values, 19*, 181–185.
- Keller, J., & Bless, H. (2008). Flow and regulatory compatibility: An experimental approach to the flow model of intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34*, 196-209.
- Kim, H., & Chen, J. S. (2019). The memorable travel experience and its reminiscence functions. *Journal of Travel Research, 58*(4), 637-649.
- Kim, J. H., Ritchie, J. R. B., & McCormick, B. (2011). Development of a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences. *Journal of Travel Research, 51* (1), 12-25.
- Kim, J. H., Ritchie, J. B., & McCormick, B. (2012). Development of a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences. *Journal of Travel Research, 51*(1), 12-25.
- Kim, J.-E., Ju, H. W., and Johnson, K. K. P. (2009). Sales associate's appearance: Links to consumers' emotions, store image, and purchases. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 16*, 407-413.
- Kim, J.H. (2014). The antecedents of memorable tourism experiences: The development of a scale to measure the destination attributes associated with memorable experiences. *Tourism Management, 44*, 34–45.
- Kimmel, A. J. (1996). *Ethical Issues in Behavioral Research*, Boston: Blackwell Publishers
- Kirillova, K., Lehto, X., & Cai, L. (2017). Tourism and existential transformation: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Travel Research, 56*(5), 638-650.
- Knapp, M. L., & Hall, J. A. (2007). *Nonverbal communication in human interaction*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Knapp, M. L., Hall, J. A., & Horgan, T. G. (2013). *Nonverbal communication in human interaction*. Singapore: Cengage Learning.
- Knobloch, U., Robertson, K., & Aitken, R. (2017). Experience, emotion, and eudaimonia: A consideration of tourist experiences and well-being. *Journal of Travel Research, 56*(5), 651-662.
- Ko, C. H., & Jeng, S. N. (2016). Exploring the effects of emotional labor in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Organizational Innovation, 9*(2), 158-167.
- Koch, R. (1971) The Challenge of Nonverbal Awareness. *Theory into Practice, 10*, (4), 288-294
- Kolar, T. (2017). Conceptualising tourist experiences with new attractions: the case of escape rooms. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 29*(5), 1322-1339.

- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kraus, S. J. (1995). Attitudes and the prediction of behavior: A meta-analysis of the empirical literature. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 21(1), 58-75.
- Krauss, R. M., Morrel-Samuels, P., & Colasante, C. (1991). Do conversational hand gestures communicate? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 61(5), 743-754.
- Kristensson, P., Matthing, J., & Johansson, N. (2008). Key strategies for the successful involvement of customers in the co-creation of new technology-based services. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 19(4), 474-491.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2002). Designing and conducting focus group interviews. *Social Analysis: Selected Tools and Techniques*, 4(23), 4-24.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2014). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kurihara, T., & Okamoto, N. (2010). Foreign visitor's evaluation on tourism environment. *Journal of the Eastern Asia Society for Transportation Studies*, 8, 912-925.
- Kusluvan, S., Kusluvan, Z., Ilhan, I., & Buyruk, L. (2010). The human dimension: A review of human resources management issues in the tourism and hospitality industry. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 51(2), 171-214.
- Lambert, D. M., & Enz, M. G. (2012). Managing and measuring value co-creation in business-to-business relationships. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 28(13-14), 1588-1625.
- Landrum, B., Knight, D. K., & Flynn, P. M. (2012). The impact of organizational stress and burnout on client engagement. *Journal of substance abuse treatment*, 42(2), 222-230.
- Larsen S. (2007). Aspects of a psychology of the tourist experience. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 7(1), 7-18.
- Lee, B. C. (2012). The determinants of consumer attitude toward service innovation—the evidence of ETC system in Taiwan. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 26(1), 9-19.
- Lee, G., Lee, J., & Tussyadiah, I. P. (2017). The roles of perceived internal and external benefits and costs in innovation co-creation: lessons from Japan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 22(4), 381-394.
- Lee, R. M. (1993). *Doing research on sensitive topics*. London: Sage.
- Lee, R. M., & Renzetti, C. M. (1990). The problems of researching sensitive topics. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 33, 510-528

- Lehto, X., Luo, W., Miao, L., & Ghiselli, R. F. (2018). Shared tourism experience of individuals with disabilities and their caregivers. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 8, 185-193.
- Leiter, M. P., Harvie, P., & Frizzell, C. (1998). The correspondence of patient satisfaction and nurse burnout. *Social science & medicine*, 47(10), 1611-1617.
- Lewis-Beck, M., Bryman, A. E., & Liao, T. F. (2003). *The Sage encyclopedia of social science research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lim, E. A. C., Lee, Y. H., & Foo, M. D. (2017). Frontline employees' nonverbal cues in service encounters: a double-edged sword. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45(5), 657-676.
- Lipson, J. G. (1994). Ethical issues in ethnography. In J. M. Morse (Ed.), *Critical issues in qualitative research methods* (pp. 333-355). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A., & Guba, E. G. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 97-128). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (2002). The only generalization is: There is no generalization. In R. Gomm, M. Hammersley, & P. Foster (Eds.), *Case study method* (pp. 27-44). London: Sage.
- Lin, J.-S. C. & Lin, C.-Y. (2011). What makes service employees and customers smile: Antecedents and consequences of the employees' affective delivery in the service encounter. *Journal of Service Management*, 22(2), 183-201.
- Lin, C.-Y. & Lin, J.-S. C. (2017). The influence of service employees' nonverbal communication on customer-employee rapport in the service encounter. *Journal of Service Management*, 28 (1), 107-132,
- Lin, H., Zhang, M., Gursoy, D., & Fu, X. (2019). Impact of tourist-to-tourist interaction on tourism experience: The mediating role of cohesion and intimacy. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 76, 153-167.
- Littlejohn, S. W., & Foss, K. A. (2009). *Encyclopedia of communication theory* (Vol. 1). Thousand Oaks. CA: Sage.
- Liu, L. A., Chua, C. H., & Stahl, G. K. (2010). Quality of communication experience: definition, measurement, and implications for intercultural negotiations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(3), 469-487.
- Lopez, S. J., Pedrotti, J. T., & Snyder, C. R. (2018). *Positive psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths*. Thousand Oaks. CA: Sage.
- Low, T., & Everett, S. (2014). Industry engagement with tourism research: The impacts of social control and emotional labour. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 12, 134-143.

- Luminet IV, O., Bouts, P., Delie, F., Manstead, A. S., & Rimé, B. (2000). Social sharing of emotion following exposure to a negatively valenced situation. *Cognition & Emotion, 14*(5), 661-688.
- Lundqvist, L.-O. (2008). The relationship between the Biosocial Model of Personality and susceptibility to emotional contagion: A structural equation modelling approach. *Personality and Individual Differences, 45*, 89-95.
- Lusch, R.F., Vargo, S.L., & O'Brien, M. (2007). Competing through Services: Insights from Service dominant, Logic. *Journal of Retailing 83*(1), 5–18.
- Lusch, R. F., & Vargo, S. L. (2014). *Service-dominant logic: Premises, perspectives, possibilities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Macik-Frey, M., Quick, J. C., & Nelson, D. L. (2007). Advances in occupational health: From a stressful beginning to a positive future. *Journal of Management, 33*(6), 809-840.
- Madhavaram, S., & Hunt, S. D. (2008). The service-dominant logic and a hierarchy of operant resources: Developing masterful operant resources and implications for marketing strategy. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 36*(1), 67-82.
- Mackey, W. C. (1976). Parameters of the smile as a social signal. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology, 129*(1), 125-130.
- Majboub, W. (2014). Co-creation of value or co-creation of experience? Interrogations in the field of cultural tourism. *International Journal of Safety and Security in Tourism, 7*(7), 12-31.
- Mandal, F., B., (2014). Nonverbal Communication in Humans. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 24*, 417–421.
- Mann, K., & MacLeod, A. (2015). Constructivism: learning theories and approaches to research. In Cleland J, & Durning SJ (eds), *Researching medical education* (pp.51-66). Chichester, UK: John Wiley and Sons.
- Mann, S. (2016). Interviews as Reflective Practice. In S. Mann (eds), *The Research Interview* (pp. 1-29). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Marcinowicz, L., Konstantynowicz, J., & Godleski, C. (2010). Patients' perceptions of GP non-verbal communication: A qualitative study. *British Journal of General Practice, 60*(571), 83-87.
- Mathis, E. F., Kim, H. L., Uysal, M., Sirgy, J. M., & Prebensen, N. K. (2016). The effect of co-creation experience on outcome variable. *Annals of Tourism Research, 57*, 62-75.
- Martin, D. J. (2012). *Elementary science methods: A constructivist approach*. Belmont: Cengage Learning.

- Matsumoto, D. (2006). Culture and nonverbal behavior. In V. Manusov and M. Patterson, (eds), *Handbook of nonverbal communication* (pp. 219-235). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Matsumoto, D., & Hwang, H. C. (2017). Methodological issues regarding cross-cultural studies of judgments of facial expressions. *Emotion Review*, 9(4), 375-382.
- Matteucci, X. (2013). Photo elicitation: Exploring tourist experiences with researcher-found images. *Tourism Management*, 35, 190-197.
- Mauno, S., Ruokolainen, M., Kinnunen, U., & De Bloom, J. (2016). Emotional labour and work engagement among nurses: examining perceived compassion, leadership and work ethic as stress buffers. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(5), 1169-1181.
- May, T. (2001). *Social research: Issues, methods and process* (3rd Ed.), Buckingham: Open University Press
- Mazur, A. (1977). Interpersonal spaces in public benches in “contact” vs. “noncontact” cultures. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 101, 53-58.
- Maxwell, J. A., & Mittapalli, K. (2010). Realism as a stance for mixed method research. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Sage handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 145–167). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McCance, A. S., Nye, C. D., Wang, L., Jones, K. S., & Chiu, C. Y. (2013). Alleviating the burden of emotional labor: The role of social sharing. *Journal of Management*, 39(2), 392-415.
- McCarty, T. L. (Ed.). (2014). *Ethnography and language policy*. New York: Routledge.
- McCarty, T. L., & Liu, L. (2017). Ethnography of Language Policy. In K. A. King, et al. (Eds.) *Research methods in language and education. Research Methods in Language and Education* (pp 53-66). New York: Springer
- McKercher, B., & Lui, S. L. (2013). The Nine Safeties: How Inexperienced Tourists Manage the Strangeness of China. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 9(4), 381-394.
- McNeill, D. (1987). *Psycholinguistics: A new approach*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
- McIntosh, A. J. (2010). Situating the self in religious tourism research: An author’s reflexive perspective. *Turizam: znanstveno-stručni časopis*, 58(3), 213-227.
- Mehmetoglu, M., & Engen, M. (2011). Pine and Gilmore's concept of experience economy and its dimensions: An empirical examination in tourism. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 12(4), 237-255.
- Mehrabian, A. (1968). Relationship of attitude to seated posture, orientation, and distance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 10, 26-30.

- Mehrabian, A. (2017). *Nonverbal communication*. New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Mehrabian, A. (1971). *Silent messages*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth
- Mehrabian, A. & Williams, M. (1969). Nonverbal Concomitants of Perceived and Intended Persuasiveness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 13 (1), 37-58
- Meisiek, S., & Yao, X. (2005). Nonsense makes sense: Humor in social sharing of emotion at the workplace. In C. E. J. Haertel, W. J. Zerbe, & N. M. Ashkanasy (Eds.), *Emotions in organizational behavior*: 143-165. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Mellick, M. C., Fleming, S., Bull, P., & Laugharne, E. J. (2005). Identifying best practice for referee decision communication in association and rugby union football. *Football Studies*, 8(1), 42-57.
- Menguc, B., Auh, S., Yeniaras, V., & Katsikeas, C. S. (2017). The role of climate: implications for service employee engagement and customer service performance. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45(3), 428-451.
- Mercer, N. (2008). Talk and the development of reasoning and understanding. *Human Development*, 51(1), 90-100.
- Mercer, N., & Wegerif, R. (1999). Is 'exploratory talk' productive talk? In K. Littleton & P. Light (Eds), *Learning with computers: Analyzing productive interaction* (pp. 79-101). New York: Routledge
- Merriam, S. B., & Grenier, R. S. (Eds.). (2019). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merton, R. K. (2008). *Focused interview*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Messinger, D. S., Fogel, A., & Dickson, K. L. (2001). All smiles are positive, but some smiles are more positive than others. *Developmental Psychology*, 37(5), 642-653.
- Mesquita, B., & Frijda, N. H. (1992). Cultural variations in emotions: a review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112(2), 179-204.
- Meuter, M. L., Ostrom, A. L., Roundtree, R. I., & Bitner, M. J. (2000). Self-service technologies: understanding customer satisfaction with technology-based service encounters. *Journal of Marketing*, 64(3), 50-64.
- Miller, R.E., Caul, W.F., & Mirsky, I.A., (1967). The communication of affects between feral and socially isolated monkeys. *Journal of Personality Society Psychology* 7, 231-239.
- Miller, G. R., Mongeau, P. A., & Sleight, C. (1986). Invited Article Fudging with Friends and Lying to Lovers: Deceptive Communication in Personal Relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 3(4), 495-512.

- Minkiewicz, J., Evans, J., & Bridson, K. (2014). How do consumers co-create their experiences? An exploration in the heritage sector. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 30(1-2), 30-59.
- Moore, N.J., Hickson, M., & Stacks, D.W. (2010) *Nonverbal Communication: Studies and Applications*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Morgan, M. (2010). The experience economy 10 years on: Where next for experience management? In M. Morgan, P. Lugosi, & J. R. B. Ritchie (Eds.), *The tourism and leisure experience: Consumer and managerial perspectives* (pp. 218–230). Bristol: Channel View.
- Morgan, M., Lugosi, P., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (2010). *The tourism and leisure experience: Consumer and managerial perspectives*. Bristol: Channel View.
- Morgan, S. J., Pullon, S. R., Macdonald, L. M., McKinlay, E. M., & Gray, B. V. (2017). Case study observational research: a framework for conducting case study research where observation data are the focus. *Qualitative Health Research*, 27(7), 1060-1068.
- Mortell, M., Ahmad, C., & Abdullah, K. L. (2018). A grounded theory pilot study: Exploring the perceptions of patient advocacy in a Saudi Arabian critical care context. *Journal of Health Specialties*, 6(1), 19-22
- Mossberg, L. (2007). A marketing approach to the tourist experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 7(1), 59-74.
- Nambisan, S., & Baron, R. A. (2009). Virtual customer environments: testing a model of voluntary participation in value co-creation activities. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 26(4), 388-406.
- Naqshbandi, D. M., & Munir, R. (2011). Atmospheric elements and personality: Impact on hotel lobby impressions. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 15(6), 785-792.
- Nawijn, J., Isaac, R. K., Gridnevskiy, K., & van Liempt, A. (2018). Holocaust concentration camp memorial sites: An exploratory study into expected emotional response. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(2), 175-190.
- Neuhofer, B., Buhalis, D., & Ladkin, A. (2013). High tech for high touch experiences: A case study from the hospitality industry. In L. Cantoni & Z. (Phil) Xiang (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism* (pp. 290–301). Heidelberg: Springer
- Neuhofer, B., Buhalis, D., & Ladkin, A. (2014). A Typology of Technology-Enhanced Tourism Experiences. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 16, 340–350
- Neuliep, J. W., & Grohskopf, E. L. (2000). Uncertainty reduction and communication satisfaction during initial interaction: An initial test and replication of a new axiom. *Communication Reports*, 13(2), 67–77

- Nguyen, H., Groth, M., & Johnson, A. (2016). When the going gets tough, the tough keep working: Impact of emotional labor on absenteeism. *Journal of Management*, 42, 615–643.
- Nickson, D., Warhurst, C., & Dutton, E. (2005). The importance of attitude and appearance in the service encounter in retail and hospitality. *Managing Service Quality*, 15(2), 195-208.
- Normann, R. (2001). *Reframing business: When the map changes the landscape*. Chichester, New Sussex: Wiley.
- Oatley, K., & Jenkins, J. M. (1992). Human emotions: Function and dysfunction. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 43(1), 55-85.
- O'dell, T. (2007). Tourist experiences and academic junctures. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 7(1), 34-45.
- Oh, H., Fiore, A., & Jeoung, M. (2007). Measuring experience economy concepts: tourism applications, *Journal of Travel Research*, 46, 119-132.
- Okumus, F., Altinay, L., & Roper, A. (2007). Gaining access for research: Reflections from experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(1), 7-26.
- Oliver, J., & Eales, K. (2008). Research ethics: Re-evaluating the consequentialist perspective of using covert participant observation in management research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 11(3), 344-357.
- Oliver, R.L. (2006). Co-producers and Co-participants in the Satisfaction Process: Mutually Satisfying Consumption. In R. F. Lusch and S. L. Vargo (eds), *The Service-Dominant Logic of Marketing: Dialog, Debate and Directions* (pp.118–27). Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe. Brace & World, Inc.
- Oliver, R. L., Balakrishnan, P. S., & Barry, B. (1994). Outcome satisfaction in negotiation: A test of expectancy disconfirmation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 60(2), 252-275.
- Ong, L. M., De Haes, J. C., Hoos, A. M., & Lammes, F. B. (1995). Doctor-patient communication: a review of the literature. *Social Science & Medicine*, 40(7), 903-918.
- Oorsouw, W., M.W.J., v., Embregts, P., J.C.M. & Sohler, J. (2011). Verbal and nonverbal emotional behaviour of staff: A first attempt in the development of an observation instrument. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 32, 2408–2414
- O'Reilly, K. (2012). *Ethnographic methods*. London: Routledge.
- Oswald, D. A. V. I. D., Sherratt, F. R. E. D., & Smith, S. I. M. O. N. (2014). Handling the Hawthorne effect: The challenges surrounding a participant observer. *Review of Social Studies*, 1(1), 53-73.
- Ottenheimer, H. (2012). *The anthropology of language: An introduction to linguistic anthropology*. Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

- Oyner, O., & Korelina, A. (2016). The influence of customer engagement in value co-creation on customer satisfaction: Searching for new forms of co-creation in the Russian hotel industry. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 8(3), 327-345.
- Page, J., & Elfer, P. (2013). The emotional complexity of attachment interactions in nursery. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 21(4), 553-567.
- Palmer, M. T., & Simmons, K. B. (1995). Communicating intentions through nonverbal behaviors conscious and nonconscious encoding of liking. *Human Communication Research*, 22(1), 128-160.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). Servqual: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perc. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12-40.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research. *Journal of Marketing*, 49(4), 41-50.
- Park, S., & Santos, C. A. (2017). Exploring the tourist experience: A sequential approach. *Journal of Travel Research*, 56(1), 16-27.
- Park, J. H. (2018). Cultural implications of international volunteer tourism: US students' experiences in Cameroon. *Tourism Geographies*, 20(1), 144-162.
- Parks, M. R., & Adelman, M. B. (1983). Communication networks and the development of romantic relationships: An expansion of uncertainty reduction theory. *Human Communication Research*, 10, 55-79.
- Paskins, Z., Sanders, T., Croft, P. R., & Hassell, A. B. (2017). Exploring the added value of video-stimulated recall in researching the primary care doctor-patient consultation: A process evaluation. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1-11
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Payne, A.F., Storbacka, K. & Frow, P. (2008). Managing the co-creation of value. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. 36 (1), 83-96.
- Peacock, J. L. (2001). *The anthropological lens: Harsh light, soft focus*. Cambridge University Press.
- Perloff, R. M. (2010). Attitudes: Definition and Structure. In Bathgate, L., Solano, N., Ghezzi, K., et al (eds.), *The dynamics of persuasion: communication and attitudes in the 21st century*, (pp. 40-79). New York: Routledge.
- Perry, B. D. (2002). Childhood experience and the expression of genetic potential: What childhood neglect tells us about nature and nurture. *Brain and Mind*, 3(1), 79-100.

- Pervin, L. A. (1968). Performance and satisfaction as a function of individual-environment fit. *Psychological Bulletin*, 69, 56–68.
- Peters, M., & Pikkemaat, B. (2006). Innovation in tourism. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 6(3/4), 1-6.
- Petitta, L., & Jiang, L. (2020). How emotional contagion relates to burnout: A moderated mediation model of job insecurity and group member prototypicality. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 27(1), 12.
- Phang, C. W., Zhang, C., & Sutanto, J. (2013). The influence of user interaction and participation in social media on the consumption intention of niche products. *Information & Management*, 50(8), 661-672.
- Phillimore, J., & Goodson, L. (2004). Progress in qualitative research in tourism. In J. Phillimore & L. Goodson (eds), *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies* (pp. 3-29). London: Routledge.
- Pine, J. B., & Gilmore, J. H. (1998). Welcome to the experience economy. *Harvard Business Review*, 76(4), 1-9.
- Pine, J. B., & Gilmore, J. H. (1999). *The experience economy: Work is theatre and every business a stage*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Pomerantz, A. (2005). Using participants' video stimulated comments to complement analyses of interactional practices. In Molder H, Potter J, (eds), *Talk and Cognition: Discourse, Mind, and Social Interaction* (pp. 93-113). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Ponterotto, J. G. (2005). Qualitative research in counseling psychology: A primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52, 126–136.
- Pounders, K. R., Barry, J. B., & Close, A. G. (2015). All the same to me: outcomes of aesthetic labor performed by frontline service providers. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43, 670–693.
- Prebensen, N., K. & Xie, J. (2017). Efficacy of co-creation and mastering on perceived value and satisfaction in tourists' consumption, *Tourism Management* 60, 166-176
- Prebensen, N. K., & Foss, L. (2011). Coping and co-creating in tourist experiences. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 13, 54-67.
- Prebensen, N. K., Woo, E., & Uysal, M. S. (2014). Experience value: Antecedents and consequences. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 17(10), 910-928.
- Prahalad, C. K., & Hamel, G. (1997). The core competence of the corporation. In Hahn D & Taylor B. (eds) *Strategische Unternehmensplanung/Strategische Unternehmensführung* (pp. 969-987). Heidelberg: Springer
- Prahalad, C. K., & Ramaswamy, V. (2000). Co-opting customer competence. *Harvard Business Review*, 78 (1), 79–87.

- Prahalad, C. K., & Ramaswamy, V. (2003). The new frontier of experience innovation. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 44 (4), 12-18.
- Prahalad, C. K., & Ramaswamy, V. (2004a). Co-creation experiences: The next practice in value creation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 18 (3), 5-14.
- Prahalad, C.K. & Ramaswamy, V. (2004b) Co-creating unique value with customers. *Strategy & Leadership*, 32 (3), 4-9.
- Prahalad, C. K., & Ramaswamy, V. (2004c). *The future of competition: Co-creating unique value with customer*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Provis, C. (2001). The ethics of emotional labour. *Australian Journal of Professional and Applied Ethics*, 3(2), 1–15.
- Perloff RM. (2003). *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and Attitudes in the 21st Century*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Pugh, S.D. (2001). Service with a smile: emotional contagion in the service encounter. *Academy of Management Journal* 44 (5), 1018–1027.
- Pugh, S. D., Groth, M., & Hennig-Thurau, T. (2011). Willing and able to fake emotions: A closer examination of the link between emotional dissonance and employee well-being. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(2), 377–390.
- Ramaswamy, V. (2011). It's about human experiences . . . and beyond, to co-creation. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40, 195–196.
- Ramaswamy, V., & Gouillart, F. (2010). Building the co-creative enterprise. *Harvard Business Review*, 88(10), 100-109
- Ramaswamy, V., & Ozcan, K. (2018). What is co-creation? An interactional creation framework and its implications for value creation. *Journal of Business Research*, 84, 196-205.
- Rather, R. A., & Hollebeek, L. D. (2019). Exploring and validating social identification and social exchange-based drivers of hospitality customer loyalty. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(3), 1432-1451.
- Regan, D. T. (1971). Effects of a favor and liking on compliance. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 7(6), 627–639.
- Rickly, J. M., & McCabe, S. (2016). Authenticity for tourism design and experience. In D. R. Fesenmaier & Z. Xiang (Eds.), *Design science in tourism. Tourism on the verge* (pp.55–68). Cham: Springer
- Rihova, I., Buhalis, D., Moital, M., & Gouthro, M. B. (2015). Conceptualising customer-to-customer value co-creation in tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 17(4), 356-363.
- Rihova, I., Buhalis, D., Gouthro, M. B., & Moital, M. (2018). Customer-to-customer co-creation practices in tourism: Lessons from Customer-Dominant logic. *Tourism Management*, 67, 362-375.

- Rimé, B. (2007). The social sharing of emotion as an interface between individual and collective processes in the construction of emotional climates. *Journal of Social Issues*, 63(2), 307-322.
- Robinson, S. L., Kraatz, M. S., & Rousseau, D. M. (1994). Changing duties and the psychological contract: A longitudinal study. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37, 137-152.
- Rodríguez, C. M., & Gregory, S. (2005). Qualitative study of transfer of training of student employees in a service industry. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 29(1), 42-66.
- Roser, T., DeFillippi, R., & Samson, A. (2013). Managing your co-creation mix: co-creation ventures in distinctive contexts. *European Business Review*, 25(1), 20-41.
- Ross, W., & Weiland, C. (1996). Effects of interpersonal trust and time pressure on managerial mediation strategy in a simulated organizational dispute. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, 228-248.
- Roulet, T. J., Gill, M. J., Stenger, S., & Gill, D. J. (2017). Reconsidering the value of covert research: The role of ambiguous consent in participant observation. *Organizational Research Methods*, 20(3), 487-517
- Rousseau, D. M. (2004). Psychological contracts in the workplace: Understanding the ties that motivate. *Academy of Management Executive*, 18, 120-127.
- Ruben, M. A., Blanch-Hartigan, D., & Hall, J. A. (2017). Nonverbal communication as a pain reliever: The impact of physician supportive nonverbal behavior on experimentally induced pain. *Health Communication*, 32(8), 970-976.
- Ryan, C. (2010). Ways of conceptualizing the tourist experience a review of literature. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 35(1), 37-46.
- Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sánchez-Fernández, R., & Iniesta-Bonillo, M. Á. (2007). The concept of perceived value: a systematic review of the research. *Marketing theory*, 7(4), 427-451.
- Sandmark, H., Wiktorin, C., Hogstedt, C., Klenell-Hatschek, E. K., & Vingård, E. (1999). Physical work load in physical education teachers. *Applied Ergonomics*, 30(5), 435-442.
- Santos-Vijande, M. L., López-Sánchez, J. Á., & Pascual-Fernández, P. (2018). Co-creation with clients of hotel services: The moderating role of top management support. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(3), 301-327.
- Saunders, M., & Lewis, P. (2014). *Doing research in business and management: an essential guide to planning your project*. Harlow, United Kingdom: Financial Times/ Prentice Hall.

- Schmuck, R. (1997). *Practical action research for change*. Arlington Heights, Illinois: IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing, Inc.
- Schmitt, B. (1999). Experiential marketing. *Journal of marketing management*, 15(1-3), 53-67.
- Schmitt, B. H. (2011). *Experiential Marketing: How to Get Customers to Sense, Feel, Think, Act, Relate*. Riverside: Free Press.
- Schwandt, T. A. (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 189-213). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schwarzer, R., & Leppin, A. (1989). Social support and health: A meta-analysis. *Psychology and Health*, 3(1), 1-15.
- Schneider, B., & Bowen, D. E. (1995). *Winning the Service Game*. Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press.
- Schoenewolf, G. (1990). Emotional contagion: Behavioral induction in individuals and groups. *Modern Psychoanalysis*, 15, 49-61.
- Sciarra, D. (1999). The role of the qualitative researcher. In M. Kopala & L. A. Suzuki (Eds.), *Using qualitative methods in psychology* (pp. 37-48). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Scott, N., Laws, E., & Boksberger, P. (2009). The marketing of hospitality and leisure experiences. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 18(2-3), 99-110.
- Shani, A., & Uriely, N. (2012). VFR tourism: The host experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(1), 421-440
- Shani, A., Uriely, N., Reichel, A., & Ginsburg, L. (2014). Emotional labor in the hospitality industry: The influence of contextual factors. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 37, 150-158.
- Shannon, C. E., & Weaver, W. (1999). *The mathematical theory of communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Sharpley, R. (2009). Tourism, religion and spirituality. In T. Jamal & M. Robinson (eds), *The Sage handbook of tourism studies* (pp 237-253). London; Sage
- Shaw, G., Bailey, A., & Williams, A. M. (2011). Service dominant logic and its implications for tourism management: The co-production of innovation in the hotel industry. *Tourism Management*, 32 (2), 207-214.
- Shostack, G.L. (1977). Breaking Free from Product Marketing. *Journal of Marketing* 41(2), 73-80.
- Siguaw, J. A., & Enz, C. A. (1999). Best practices in hotel operations. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 40(6), 42-53.

- Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Silverman, D. (Ed.). (2016). *Qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Simmel, G. (1921). Sociology of the Senses: Visual Interaction. In R. E. Park and E. W. Burgess (eds), *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (pp. 356-361), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Spicker, P. (2011). Ethical covert research. *Sociology*, 45(1), 118-133.
- Sjödin, C., & Kristensson, P. (2012). Customers' experiences of co-creation during service innovation. *International journal of quality and service sciences*, 4(2), 189-204.
- Smart, B., Peggs, K., & Burridge, J. (2013). *Observation methods*. London: Sage.
- Smith, J. B., & Colgate, M. (2007). Customer value creation: a practical framework. *Journal of marketing Theory and Practice*, 15(1), 7-23.
- Smith, F., & Barker, J. (2004). Contested spaces: Children's experiences of out of school care in England and Wales. *Childhood*, 7(3), 315-333.
- Smith, I. D., & Coombs, S. J. (2003). The Hawthorne effect: is it a help or a hindrance in social science research? *Change: Transformation in Education*, 6(1), 97-111
- Smith, J. B., & Colgate, M. (2007). Customer value creation: a practical framework. *Journal of marketing Theory and Practice*, 15(1), 7-23.
- Snel, J.M.C. (2011). *For the love of experience: changing the experience economy discourse*, (Doctoral Thesis). Amsterdam Business School Research Institute (ABS-RI): Amsterdam.
- Smith, P., & Lorentzon, M. (2005). Is emotional labour ethical? *Nursing Ethics*, 12(6), 638-642.
- Söderlund, M., & Rosengren, S. (2008). Revisiting the smiling service worker and customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 19(5), 552-574.
- Söderlund, M. (2017). Employee display of burnout in the service encounter and its impact on customer satisfaction. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 37, 168-176.
- Sommers, M. S., Greeno, D. W., & Boag, D. (1989). The role of non-verbal communication in service provision and representation. *Service Industries Journal*, 9(4), 162-173.
- Sonnby-Borgström, M., Jönsson, P., & Svensson, O. (2003). Emotional empathy as related to mimicry reactions at different levels of information processing. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 27(1), 2-23.

- Sparks, B. & Callan, V.J. (1992). Communication and the service encounter: the value of convergence. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 11 (3), 213–224.
- Sørensen, F., & Jensen, J. F. (2015). Value creation and knowledge development in tourism experience encounters. *Tourism Management*, 46, 336-346.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research: Perspectives on practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stern, P. C. (2000). New environmental theories: toward a coherent theory of environmentally significant behavior. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(3), 407-424.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Surprenant, C. F., & Solomon, M. R. (1987). Predictability and personalization in the service encounter. *Journal of Marketing*, 51(2), 86-96.
- Sundaram, D.S. & Webster, C., (2000). The role of nonverbal communication in service encounters. *Journal of Services Marketing* 14 (5), 378–391.
- Sweeney, J. C., Soutar, G. N., & Mazzarol, T. (2012). Word of mouth: measuring the power of individual messages. *European Journal of Marketing*, 46(1/2), 237-257.
- Taheri, B., Coelho, F. J., Sousa, C. M., & Evanschitzky, H. (2017). Mood regulation, customer participation, and customer value creation in hospitality services. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(12), 3063-3081.
- Tasci, A. D., & Milman, A. (2019). Exploring experiential consumption dimensions in the theme park context. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(7), 853-876.
- Taylor, C. (1995). *Philosophical arguments*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Teoh, M. W., Wang, Y., & Kwek, A. (2019). Coping with emotional labor in high stress hospitality work environments. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 28(8), 883-904.
- Tepeci, M., & Pala, T. (2016). The effects of job-focused and employee-focused emotional labor on burnout in the hospitality industry in Turkey. *Journal of Global Strategic Management*, 10(2), 95-105.
- Tiechuan, M. (2016). A Study on Nonverbal Communication in Cross-culture. *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 1-5
- Timberlake, O. (2015). *A social constructionist informed thematic analysis of male clinical psychologists' experience of working with female clients who have experienced abuse* (Doctoral dissertation). University of East London. England.

- Trianasari, N., Butcher, K., & Sparks, B. (2018). Understanding Guest Tolerance and the Role of Cultural Familiarity in Hotel Service Failures. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 27(1), 21-40.
- Triandis, H. C. (2004). *Culture and social behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Tribe, J. (2004). Knowing about tourism: Epistemological issues. In Phillimore, J. and Goodson, L. (eds.), *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies* (pp. 46-62). London: Routledge.
- Tung, V. W. S., & Ritchie, J. B. (2011). Exploring the essence of memorable tourism experiences. *Annals of tourism research*, 38(4), 1367-1386.
- Tynan, C., McKechnie, S., & Hartley, S. (2014). Interpreting value in the customer service experience using customer-dominant logic. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 30(9-10), 1058-1081.
- Vannini, P., Waskul, D., & Gottschalk, S. (2013). *The senses in self, society, and culture: A sociology of the senses*. New York: Routledge.
- Van Teijlingen, E. R., Rennie, A. M., Hundley, V., & Graham, W. (2001). The importance of conducting and reporting pilot studies: the example of the Scottish Births Survey. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 34(3), 289-295.
- Van Hooff, J. A. R. A. M. (1972). A comparative approach to the phylogeny of laughter and smiling. In R. A. Hinde (Ed.), *Non-verbal communication* (pp. 209-238). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (eds). (2018). *The Sage handbook of service-dominant logics*. London: Sage.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2017). Service-dominant logic 2025. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 34(1), 46-67.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2016). Institutions and axioms: an extension and update of service-dominant logic. *Journal of the Academy of marketing Science*, 44(1), 5-23.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. L. (2004). Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 68 (1), 1-17.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2008a). From goods to service(s): Divergences and convergences of logics. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 37(3), 254-259.
- Vargo, S.L., & Lusch, R.F. (2008b). Service-dominant Logic: Continuing the Evolution, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 36(1): 1–10.
- Vargo, S. L., Maglio, P. P., & Akaka, M. A. (2008). On value and value co-creation: A service systems and service logic perspective. *European Management Journal*, 26(3), 145-152.

- Vargo, S. L., Lusch, R. F., Akaka, M. A., & He, Y. (2016). Service-dominant logic. In Baker, M.J. and Saren, M. (eds.), *Marketing Theory: A Student Text* (pp.458-475). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2008c). Why “service”? *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 36(1), 25-38.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2016). Institutions and axioms: an extension and update of service-dominant logic. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 44(1), 5-23.
- Vargo, S. L., Lusch, R. F., & Morgan, F. W. (2006). Historical perspectives on service-dominant logic. In R.F. Lusch, & S. L. Vargo (eds), *The Service-Dominant Logic of Marketing: Dialog, Debate, and Directions* (pp.29-42). New York: Sharpe, Armonk.
- Verbeke, W., (1997). Individual differences in emotional contagion of salespersons its effect on performance and burnout. *Psychology and Marketing* 14 (6), 617–636.
- Vinten, G. (1994). Participant observation: a model for organizational investigation? *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 9(2), 30-38.
- Vivek, S. D., Beatty, S. E., & Morgan, R. M. (2012). Customer engagement: Exploring customer relationships beyond purchase. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 20(2), 122-146.
- Volo, S. (2009). Conceptualizing experience: A tourist based approach. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 18(2-3), 111-126.
- Walls, A., Okumus, F., Wang, Y., & Kwun, D. J. W. (2011). Understanding the consumer experience: An exploratory study of luxury hotels. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 20(2), 166-197.
- Walters, S. R. & Godbold, R. (2014). Someone Is Watching You: The Ethics of Covert Observation to Explore Adult Behaviour at Children’s Sporting Events. *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, 11(4): 531-537.
- Wang, S., Kirillova, K., & Lehto, X. (2017). Travelers’ food experience sharing on social network sites. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 34(5), 680-693.
- Warhurst, C., & Nickson, D. (2007). Employee experience of aesthetic labour in retail and hospitality. *Work, Employment and Society*, 21(1), 103-120.
- Warhurst, C., Nickson, D., Witz, A., & Marie Cullen, A. (2000). Aesthetic labour in interactive service work: some case study evidence from the ‘new’Glasgow. *Service Industries Journal*, 20(3), 1-18.
- Warren, C., Becken, S., & Coghlan, A. (2017). Using persuasive communication to co-create behavioural change—engaging with guests to save resources at tourist accommodation facilities. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(7), 935-954.

- Webster, C., & Sundaram, D. S. (1998). Service consumption criticality in failure recovery. *Journal of Business Research*, 41(2), 153-159.
- Weiner, B. (1974). *Achievement motivation and attribution theory: Bernard Weiner, editor and contributing author*. Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press.
- West, R. L., & Turner, L.H. (2010). *Introducing communication theory: Analysis and application*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Wilis, J., & Todorov, A. (2006). First impressions: Making up your mind after a 100-ms exposure to a face. *Psychological Science*, 17, 592– 598.
- Wong, S., C. K. & Lee, P.C. (2017). Competencies of training professionals in the Hong Kong hotel industry, *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 16(4), 384-400.
- Woo, S. E., O’Boyle, E. H., & Spector, P. E. (2017). Best practices in developing, conducting, and evaluating inductive research. *Human Resource Management Review*, 27, 255-264.
- Wood, D., Bruner, J. S., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 17(2), 89-100.
- Wu, L.W. (2017). The bright side and dark side of co-production: a dyadic analysis. *Management Decision*, 55(1), 614.
- Xu, Y., Marshall, R., Edvardsson, B. & Tronvoll, B. (2014). Show you care: Initiating co-creation in service recovery. *Journal of Service Management*, 25(3), 369 –387.
- Yeomans, L. (2017). Book Review: Qualitative Methods in Business Research. *Action Learning: Research and Practice*, 14(3), 298-301.
- Yuksel, A., (2008). Nonverbal Service Behavior and Customer's Affective Assessment, *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 9(1), 57-77
- Young, R., & Collin, A. (2004) Introduction: Constructivism and social constructionism in the career field. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 64, 373-388.
- Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yi, Y., & Gong, T. (2013). Customer value co-creation behavior: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Business Research*, 66, 1279-1284.
- Zaletel, M., Kovacev, A., N., Mikus, R., P. & Kragelj, L., Z. (2012). Nonverbal communication of caregivers in Slovenian nursing homes. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 54,94-101.
- Zhang, M., Hu, M., Guo, L., & Liu, W. (2017). Understanding relationships among customer experience, engagement, and word-of-mouth intention on online brand communities: The perspective of service ecosystem. *Internet Research*, 27(4), 839-857.

Zhao, Y., Xu, X., & Wang, M. (2019). Predicting overall customer satisfaction: big data evidence from hotel online textual reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 76, 111-121.

Zatori, A., & Beardsley, M. (2017). On-site and memorable tourist experiences: Trending toward value and quality-of-life outcomes. In J. S. Chen (Ed.), *Advances in hospitality and leisure* (pp. 17–45). Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited.