The Role of Commercial Hospitality on Customer´s Behavioral Intention: A Proposed Model for FoodService Retail

This study proposed a commercial hospitality model for restaurant revisit intention through the relationship among word-of-mouth, loyalty, and patronage. Using Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), and based on the analysis of 213 customers' responses, results presented the following: commercial hospitality has a positive influence on word-of-mouth, loyalty, and patronage. Also, these constructs have a positive influence on the intention of customers revisiting the restaurant. As to implications, this study contributes to hospitality and customer behavior areas by integrating such constructs and proposing an empirical model of behavioral intentions. Also, this study offers a useful tool to manage the level of commercial hospitality in restaurants and other business within the hospitality industry.

Keywords: commercial hospitality; restaurant; customer behavior

1. Introduction

The hospitality industry, a facet of the retailing market, is of high importance to the global economy and job opportunities in different parts of the world (WTTC, 2018). In general, the hospitality industry is marked by offering different sorts of services to customers; for example, accommodation (hotels), entertainment (events), and food and beverage -- through restaurants (Teng, 2011).

In Brazil, the annual growth of restaurant segment is around 10%. This segment creates aroung of 450 thousands of job opportunities a year, being waiter and waitress, the majority of job opportunidies (Brazilian Bars and Restaurants Associations, 2019).

The academic knowledge in this area has been widely developed from hotel and tourism studies (Kim, Bai, Kim, and Chon, 2018). However, studies focusing on the role of commercial hospitality in restaurants, a central element in this industry, still demands attention. Teng (2011) highlights that few studies have empirically explored the components of commercial hospitality to the dining and accommodation experiences of customers. To fill such a gap, the main objective of this study is to propose an empirical model regarding commercial hospitality in restaurants.

Commercial hospitality is a concept that must be considered by restaurant managers due to its potential to put the restaurant at a competitive advantage. A variety of studies has shown that approaching customers with warmth, courtesy, and treating them as a special guest can result in positive outcomes (Blain and Lashely, 2017; Lugosi et al., 2016; Lahsley, 2015).

The commercial hospitality has an imperative purpose: make customers the central focus of business while delivering a positive experience for them (Kandampully, Zhang, Jaakkola, 2018). To do this, hosts should understand and satisfy customer needs to add value to their consumption experiences (Lashely, 2008).

Beyond excellent food, drinks, and a comfortable atmosphere, excellent hospitality is of the highest importance for placing restaurant service at the top of a competitive market segment. Delivering a positive experience via hospitable approaches makes word-of-mouth, by its patrons a favorable medium for the restaurant-in turn resulting in repearted visits. The literature on hospitality shows that customers' positive experiences are positively related to customers' word-of-mouth (Zhang, Law, and Li., 2010). Such positive experiences are important, because it motivates old and new customers to visit. Although word-of-mouth is a great asset, it is through continued customer satisfaction and positive dining experiences that result in customer loyalty (Ma, Qu, and Eliwa, 2014).

This study definies loyalty as frequent restaurant visits during specified periods, and an inclination to pratronize the business (Enis and Gordon, 1970). On the other hand, patronage is conceptualized as the customers feeling like a part of the business and advocating in favor of the restaurant (Line and Hanks, 2016).

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the hospitality area by proposing an initial model of commercial hospitality for restaurants by integrating such constructs -- word-of-mouth, loyalty, and patronage in a single model and responding to Teng´s call (2011) on the need of studies about dining and accommodation experiences. From a managerial perspective, this study offers a tool that can be used by managers to measure the level of hospitality delivered in their restaurants and take actions to improve the customer revisitation in favor of their business.

To a general view, this paper is structured in three parts. After this introduction, the theoretical background of hospitality, word-of-mouth, loyalty, and patronage are presented. The next part presents the method and the data analyses. And finally, the discussion, implications, and limitations are shown.

2. Literature review

2.1 Commercial hospitality and word-of-mouth

Commercial hospitality is defined as 'rituals of arrival' that incorporate the stranger, in this case, being customers and the strengths they bring into the group harmoniously within a restaurant´s environment (Lashley, 2015). The most important aspect of commercial hospitality is to satisfy the needs and expectations of customers in their consumption´s experiences, even when demanding for specific cares, for instance, the hospitality experience of parents and cares with children in restaurants (Lugosi et al., 2016).

Pizam and Shani (2009), take into account four dimensions of characterising commercial hospitality. First, hospitality as a profession focuses on skills, tools and employees' features (2) hospitality as a behavior consists of welcoming and friendly service to customers, (3) hospitality as an experience consists of doing whatever is possible to ensure the service encounter is a memorable experience, (4) hospitality, as a philosophy, demands to deliver courteous service. In short, commercial hospitality is to put the customer at the center of the restaurant´s operation to deliver them positive experiences (Lashley, 2015).

Indeed, previous research in hospitality indicate that, interpersonal interaction, psychological connection, openness to different cultures, and generosity influence the customer´s experience and their satisfaction with the service (Blain and Lashely, 2017; Hemmington, 2014; Tend, 2011), which we hypothesize that influence the customer´s word-of-mouth in favor of the restaurant. Based on this, the first hypothesis is proposed in **H1:** There is a positive relationship between commercial hospitality in a restaurant and word-of-mouth.

2.2 Commercial hospitality in restaurants and customer loyalty

Commercial hospitality in restaurants consists of receiving, welcomes, and interaction with customers -- providing food, beverage, and also positive experiences with the whole restaurant´s environment (Lashley, 2015).

Yoo and Bai (2013) argue that hospitality marketers recognized that attracting new customers to their business is a hard task. Thus, maintaining customer´s loyalty is a great strategy for business profitability. Indeed, customer loyalty is vital for hospitality business (Tanderford, 2016). The high frequency of loyal customer visits, and their many purchases, are more than the non-loyal customers (Yoo and Bai, 2013).

Indeed, Jasinskas, Streimikiene, Svagzdiene, and Simanavicius (2016) argued that, conformity of expected quality with the quality experienced has a significant influence on the customer's loyalty. Jones (2008) showed that the quality of interaction with staffs and the restaurant´s environment is the first aspect that influences the customer evaluations, which in turn can influence their intention to maintain a relationship with the restaurant, leading to the increase of loyalty (Veselinova and Samonikov, 2017). Still, according to Mansour and Ariffin (2016) commercial hospitality has a positive influence on the customer experience, and experience influences the customer behavioral intention in favor of the business. Therefore, the second hypothesis is proposed in **H2:** There is a positive relationship between commercial hospitality in a restaurant and customer loyalty.

2.3 Commercial hospitality and customer patronage

Commercial hospitality is a philosophy of business which puts the customer at the center of the restaurant´s operations to create memorable experiences (Ariffin, Nameghi, and Zakaria, 2013). As highlighted by Kukanja et al., (2016), the focus on the satisfaction of customers'

needs depends on the quality of hospitality delivered by staffs. In fact, the quality perceived by the customer with the food and restaurant service (Abdullah, Hamir, Krishnaswamy, and Rostum, 2018; Bae, Slevitch, and Tomas, 2018) influences their satisfaction with the service delivered by the restaurant, which in turn influences the customer´s intention to patronize the restaurant.

Frequent patronage can be recognized by offering the customer's preferred drink on arrival, cooking a favorite dish, or offering personalized food services. Personal greeting and farewells are also important to develop a service relationship given to the nature of this sort of encounter (Jones, 2008).

Teng (2011) describe the high level of importance placed on customer service leads clients to patronize a restaurant that meets their expectations. In this sense, the customer´s patronage behavior is a consequence of a high-quality level of service deliveried and must be supported by physical surroundings and other resources. To achieve such service level the commercial hospitality is evidentiated as a significant factor (Bojanic and Reid, 2016).

According to Sparks et al., (2008) patronage is directly linked to the service encounter that forms the central part of the hospitality experience. Sharma (2015) highlights that perceived service quality positively influences customer satisfaction and patronage intentions. In a similar view, Williams (2012) says that commercial hospitality directly correlates with higher consumption of goods and repeat patronage. Based on this, the third hypothesis is proposed, **H3:** There is a positive relationship between commercial hospitality in a restaurant and customer patronage.

2.4 Word-of-mouth and intention to revisit the restaurant

Word-of-mouth refers to interpersonal communications among customers concerning their personal consumption experiences (Litvin Goldsmith, and Pan, 2008). Indeed, word-of-mouth is seen as a source that has more credibility than publications (Chen, 2012).

A report has found that 80 percent of people say that word-of-mouth has the most significant influence on where they decide to eat, four times more than social media (Garrahan, 2015). Peppers and Rogers (2011) stress how a customer visiting a restaurant on a recommendation from a friend will invariably be more satisfied with the service they received and significantly more likely to revisit the restaurant.

It is important to say that loyal customers act as credible advocates through social media and influence others in favor of the business (See-To and Ho, 2014). In service contexts, like in restaurants, word-of-mouth exerts an important role because its experience cannot be tested before (Ng, David, Dagger, 2011) if the customer is looking for a restaurant for the first time.

Research conducted by Jeong and Jang (2011) found that satisfactory experiences with restaurant service employees trigger positive customer motivation to help the restaurant and express positive feelings to others. See-To and Ho (2014) showed that word-of-mouth has a direct impact on purchase intention. Jaliland and Salimipour (2017) indicated that food quality, perceived value, and personal interaction influence customer behavior, hence an intention to revisit a restaurant. Based on these arguments, the fourth hypothesis is proposed. **H4:** There is a positive relationship between customer word-of-mouth and the intention to revisit the restaurant.

2.5 Loyalty and intention to revisit the restaurant

According to Lugosi et al., (2016), gestures of hospitality and service interactions create customer loyalty, thus encouraging further revisitation of the restaurant. Some outcomes of a

customer loyalty behavioral study in casinos concluded that loyalty influences the number of hours spent in the place and the frequency of visitation (Baloglu, Zhong, and Tanford, 2017). Futhermore, Dogdubay and Avcikurt (2013) identified that in specialty restaurants, tasty food, fresh food, and overall cleanliness were the most critical factors to determine customer loyalty as well revisit intention. Thus, the fifth hypothesis is presented in **H5:** There is a positive relationship between customer loyalty and the intention to revisit the restaurant.

2.6 Patronage and Intention to Revisit the Restaurant

Patronage consists of making the customer feel like part of the business (Kandanpully, 2012). Customers who engage with a business in this way are more likely to develop a co-dependency in some sense, due to their perceived value of well-being when they frequent the restaurant. For example, loyal customers exhibit higher intentions to revisit restaurants than non-loyal customers, regardless of sanitation letter grades (Kim, Yang, and Mattila, 2018).

These customers will often back and support the business in different ways, such as the creation of communities of patrons through recommendation, fueled by a desire to share the experience (Kauffman and Panni, 2013). This emotional relationship the customer has with the restaurant is likely to lead him to want to revisit the restaurant to fulfill the relationship (Peppers and Rogers, 2011).

Patronage is directly linked to the service encounter that forms the central part of the hospitality experience (Sparks et al., 2008). Looking at the facts from this viewpoint, the establishment and reinforcement of the perceived value of the restaurant is a significant factor in contributing to first time and repeat visitation (Reid and Bojanic, 2010).

In viewing patronage as a relationship between the customer and the business, Cousins et al. (2011) describe the high level of importance placed on customer service delivery by customers, positively leading them to frequent a restaurant that meets these expectations. Also, Kukanja et al., (2016) highlight that restaurant´s employees are a key element to develop a patronage behaviour thorugh a hospitable service. Based on this, the sixth hypothesis is proposed in **H6:** There is a positive relationship between customer patronage and intention to revisit the restaurant.

3. Method

This section describes the following steps: questionnaire development, data gathering, data analysis plan, and the results.

3.1. Measurement Instrument

The first step was to review previous literature on such subjects to identify affirmatives to measure the five constructs; afterward, the affirmatives were adapted to this study and then validated by four experts in the Hospitality area. To this end, each affirmative was presented and in the sequence, the experts indicated in which construct the affirmatives fit best—See Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Constructs, measurement items and sources

Constructs	Measurement items	Sources
Commercial Hospitality	In my opinion, a hospitable restaurant welcomes its customers	Chu and Murmman (2006); Spielmann, Laroche, and Borges (2012); Pijls, Groen, Galetzka, and Pruyn (2017).
	In my opinion, a hospitable restaurant has friendly staff	
	In my opinion, a hospitable restaurant welcomes the guest as a special guest	
	In my opinion, a hospitable restaurant always avoids problems with the customer	
	In my opinion, in a hospitable restaurant the customer is always the main focus.	

	In my opinion, a hospitable restaurant has a nice ambiance.	
Word-of-mouth	When the restaurant is hospitable I recommend it to my friends	Babin, Lee and Kim (2005); Hanrisson-Walker (2001)
	When the restaurant is hospitable I speak well of the place to other people	
	When the restaurant is hospitable I speak well of the service to other people	
	When the restaurant is hospitable I recommend the dishes served to other people	
Loyalty	When the restaurant is hospitable I develop an attachment to the place	McMullan and Gilmore (2003); McMullan (2005); Söderlund (2006).
	When the restaurant is hospitable I always consider it as the first choice	
	I do not exchange one hospitable restaurant for another	
	I have a preference for hospitable restaurants	
	I will always give preference to hospitable restaurants rather than others	
Patronage	If the restaurant is hospitable I will make a point of giving suggestions for improvement	Barber, Goodman, and Goh (2011); Wang and Mattila (2015)
	If the restaurant is hospitable I will feel part of it	
	If the restaurant is hospitable I will contribute in some way to its success	
	If the restaurant is hospitable I will take other people to visit the place	
Revisit intention	When the restaurant is hospitable I always return to the place	Han, Back, and Barret (2009); Yan, Wang, and Chau (2015)
	When the restaurant is hospitable I like to take other people	
	When the restaurant is hospitable I consider the place for special occasions	
	When the restaurant is hospitable I will return multiple times	

The aboe items were evaluated through a 7-point Likert scale based on the following criteria: (1) Totally disagree and (7) Totally agree.

3.1.2. Data Analysis Plan

For data analysis purposes, Structural Equations Modeling (SEM) was applied. There are two basic types of SEM: 1) covariance and 2) variance.

The assumption of type 1 is multi-varied normality, which includes an estimate method referred to as Asymptotic Distribution-Free (ADF) that does not require the distribution condition of group 1, but does demand samples with a large number of cases. Group 2 does not have this assumption and may be used for more complex models. The latter group applies the PLS (Partial Least Square) estimation method or models in which exploration of the corresponding causalities are at an earlier stage (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, 2014)

As a Likert scale was used, the respective variables will rarely adhere to normal distributions and even more rarely will the set adhere to a normal multi-varied distribution. In fact, execution of Mardia's PK test (Jöreskog and Söbom, 2001) revealed that it is significant ($p < 0.05$). As such, the null test hypothesis was rejected.

Application of SmartPLS verified the convergent, descriptive, predictive validities and the size of effects, in addition to Pearson's determination coefficients (R2), composite confidence, Cronbach alpha test, and path coefficients of causalities, and Student's *t* tests performed using the applied software's bootstrapping module, so as to confirm the validity of the regression correlations and coefficients (Hair et al., 2014).

Moreover, adjustment of the structural equations model with SmartPLS was executed in two stages: evaluation of the measurement models and the structural model (Hair et al., 2014).

3.1.3. Minimum Sample Size

To assess the minimum sample size, the recommendations of Cohen (1998) for Social and Behavioral Sciences was adopted, using the G*Power 3.19 software (Faul et al., 2009). That is the average size of the effect (0.15) and test power equal to 0.80. In addition, to calculate the minimum sample, the construct with the greatest number of predictors (arriving arrows) was

applied (Hair et al., 2014). In figure 1, the "Revisit Intention" construct has three predictors. Therefore, the minimum calculated sample size was 77 respondents.

4. Analysis and Results

We used a randomized online questionnaire which was available on a social network for two months, characterizing a convenience sample. The data gathering occurred in São Paulo City, Brazil, and achieved a total of 213 respondents. Table 1, summarizes the sample characteristics.

Table 1. Sample characteristics.

Characteristics			Characteristics		
Sex	*n*	%	**Income**	*n*	%
Male	79	37%	$250,75---$501,04	87	40.84%
Female	134	63%	$501,05-----$752,25	98	46.02%
Age			Over $752,25	28	13.14%
18-25	15	7.04%	**Children living at home**		
26-35	75	35.21%	0	8	3.75%
36-45	71	33.34%	1	49	23.00%
46-55	43	20.18%	2	137	64.32%
Over 55	09	4.23%	3	14	6.58%
Education			More than 3	5	2.35%
Some/all high school	28	13.15%	**Visits a month**		
Some college	52	24.41%	5—9	207	97.18%
College graduate	119	55.86%	Over 10	6	2.82%
Post-graduate degree	14	6.57%			
Marital Status			**Bill at restaurant**		
Single	123	57.75%	$50---$100.00	176	82.62%
Married	75	35.21%	$100.01---$150.00	25	11.74%
Divorced	15	7.04%	Over $151.00	12	0.47%

Proceeding with the analysis, the first aspect observed was convergent validity, using Fornell and Larcker's criteria (Hair et al., 2014), that is the AVE should be above 0.50 (AVE > 0.50). Table 1 reveals that the adjusted model presents adequate Composite Confidence values and Cronbach Alpha test values, demonstrating that the data is reliable (see reference values in table 1).

Table 1. Convergent validity - Cronbach´s α and reliability

Constructs	**Cronbach´s α > 0.50**	**Composed reliability > 0.80**	**Average Extracted Varience (AVE) > 0.50**	**R^2**
Commercial hospitality	0.534	0.888	0.534	
Word-of-mouth	0.585	0.849	0.585	**0.177**
Loyalty	0.614	0.887	0.614	**0.121**
Patronage	0.528	0.847	0.528	**0.081**
Revisit Intention	0.718	0.911	0.718	**0.622**

Table 2. Evaluation of the Discriminant Validity of the Model – Correlation matrix between the model's constructs with AVE roots on the principal diagonal (highlighted).

Constructs	Loyalty	Patronage	Commercial Hospitality	Revisit Intention	Word of Mouth
Loyalty	**0.784**				
Patronage	0.663	**0.727**			
Commercial Hospitality	0.348	0.284	**0.731**		
Revisit Intention	0.676	0.720	0.315	**0.848**	
Word-of-mouth	0.493	0.524	0.421	0.580	**0.765**

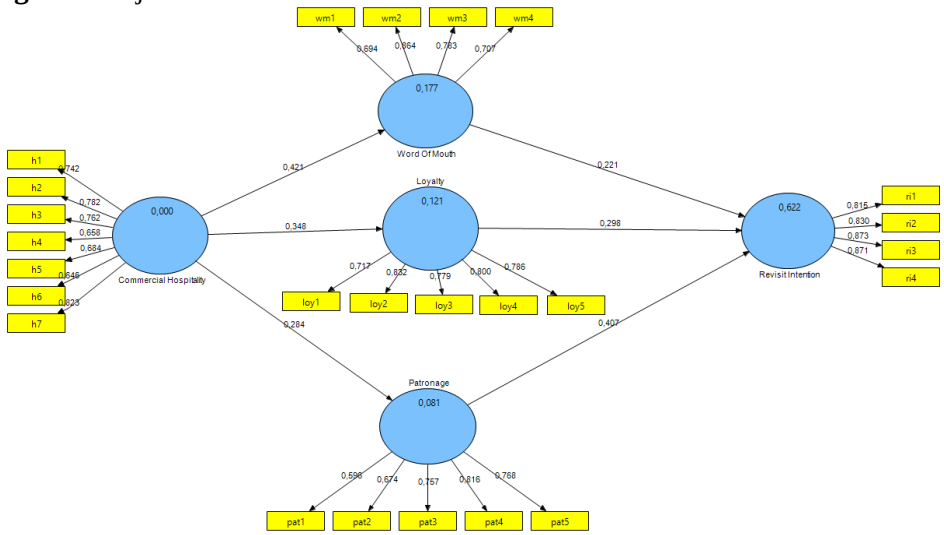
Note: discriminant validity criteria – AVE square roots > than respective correlations.

By the same token, the discriminant validity of the latent variable was shown by confirming that the square root of each variable was greater than the correlation between them and the other latent variables (or constructs) in the models (see table 2).

After adjusting the measurement models, an evaluation of the structural model was performed. Table 1 sets out Pearson's determination coefficient values, which included large (0.622), average-large (0,177), and (0.121; 0,081) low values, indicating acceptable relationships.

In Figure 2, we can locate the regression coefficients and path coefficients (Γ) (Hair et al., 2014) associated to the causality between constructs or latent variables and the extent to which they impact the Revisit Intention. These coefficients indicate how much each construct affects the others with each unit increase. The Commercial Hospitality variable has the highest regression coefficient (0.421) with the Word-of-mouth variable. In other words, when it is increased by a unit, the highest contribution derives from the Commercial Hospitality. The Commercial Hospitality regression coefficient for the loyalty variable was 0.348 and for the Patronage variable, 0.284. For its part, the Word-of-mouth variable presented a regression coefficient equal to 0.221, Loyalty presented a coefficient equal to 0,298, and Patronage presented a coefficient equal to 0,407.

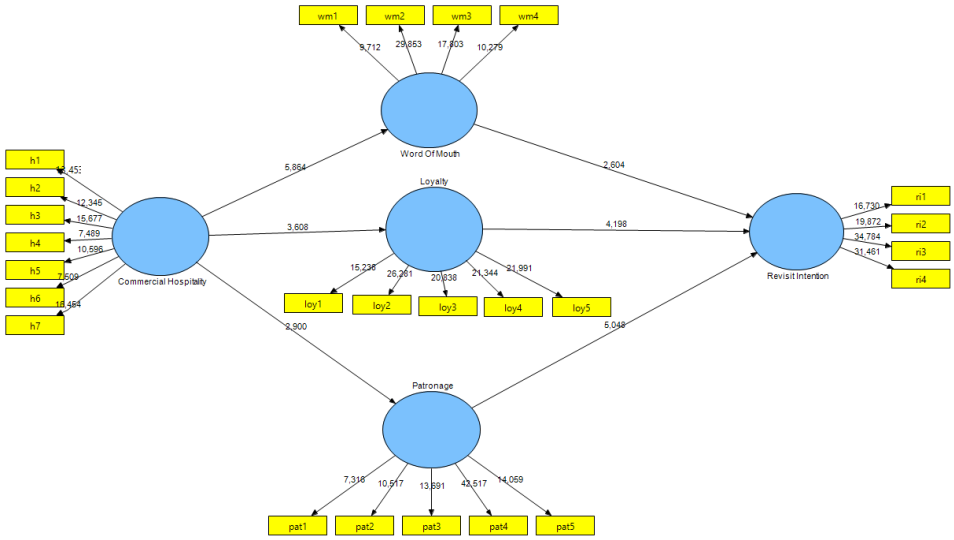
Figure 2 Adjusted Model.



To determine if the factoring correlations between observable variables and constructs and the regression coefficients (between constructs) were valid, the SmartPLS bootstrapping module was used to generate re-samples and calculate Student's t tests for the two types of relationships cited. For a sample of 213 respondents, the Student's t distribution value was 1.96,

for a confidence interval of 95% and a significance level of 5%. Figure 3 sets out the Student's t test values. All path coefficients or regression coefficient were found significant ($t < 1.96$). In this case, the null hypothesis of the test ($\Gamma = 0$) is rejected.

Figure 3 Student's *t* Test and hypothesis's paths



Finally, the predictive validity (Q^2) and the effect size (f^2) were calculated to determine the accuracy of the adjusted model and how much of each construct is "useful" in the model, respectively. Table 3 sets forth the results of the calculations. A review of Table 3 reveals that all the constructs have predictive validity. Similarly, the size of effects is high and average for the construct, resulting in very high predictive validity.

Table 3. Predictive validity values (Q^2) and size of effects (f^2) for the adjusted model

Constructs	**Q2**	***f2**
Commercial Hospitality	0.372	0.371
Word-of-mouth	0.084	*0.312*
Loyalty	0.06	0.415
Patronage	0.031	0.303
Revisit Intention	0.431	0.516
	Q2 > 0	

*values 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are considered small, average and large.

In this light, analysis of the hypothesis presented in the model can be summarized. Table 4 sets out the summary. A review of Table 4 shows that all hypotheses were supported by the model.

Table 4: Evaluation and decision of hypotheses in the adjusted model

Direct Effect	**(β)** path coefficients	***t*-Values**	***p*-values**	**Hypothesis Testing**
H1: Commercial hospitality → Word-of-mouth	0.421	6.536	0.001	Supported
H2: Commercial hospitality → Customer Loyalty	0.348	3.726	0.001	Supported
H3: Commercial hospitality → Patronage	0.284	3.131	0.001	Supported
H4: Word-of-mouth → Revisit intention	0.221	2.836	0.007	Supported
H5: Customer Loyalty → Revisit intention	0.298	4.238	0.001	Supported
H6: Customer Patronage → Revisit intention	0.407	5.180	0.028	Supported

The path coefficients showed that commercial hospitality have a positive and significant relationship with word-of-mouth (t=6.536, p<0.001), customer loyalty (t=3.726, p<0.001) and patronage (t=3.131, p<0.001), supporting H1, H2 and H3. The same way, the path coefficients showed that word-of-mouth (t=2.836, p<0.001), customer loyalty (t=6.536, p<0.001), and customer patronage have a positive and significant relationship with revisit intention supporting H4, H5 e H6.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The main objective of this study was to propose a model through the relationship among commercial hospitality, word-of-mouth, loyalty, patronage and the intention to revisit a restaurant. These constructs have been investigated in the hospitality industry, for instance, in hotels and tourism segments. However, presenting these relationships in an integrated model for restaurants was still necessary -- this study fills this gap.

The hospitality concept has its own imperative, providing positive experiences to customers (Lashley, 2015). In this sense, Jeong and Jang (2011) say that a positive restaurant experience positively influences the customer´s behavior. Based on the results, commercial hospitality showed a positive effect on customer´s word-of-mouth. It is important to highlight that, this effect was the strongest one, thus treating customers with courtesy will certainly result in the recommendation of the restaurant.

Also a relationship between commercial hospitality and loyalty was found. Considering that customers return to the restaurant on different occasions, the continued loyalty depends on the positive they receive. In line with the commercial hospitality perspective, treating customers like as special guests can stablish an emotional connection. In doing so, it is recommended that restaurant managers fufill customers demands for the sake of adding value to the restaurant´s reputation and the customer experience.

The relationship between commercial hospitality and patronage was also found. Beyond visiting the place, some customers tend to develope a high level of attachment with the restaurant, thus promoting or even defending the restaurant from negative comments. This customer behavior occurs because they feel as part of the restaurant that serves as a mean for constructing their ideal self-image (Line and Hanks, 2016).

In sum, the results showed: first, commercial hospitality stimulates the customer´s word-of-mouth (0.421); second, commercial hospitality makes the customer becoming loyalty to the restaurant (0.348); third, commercial hospitality strengthens the emotional ties between customers and the restaurant and thus resulting in a patronage behavior (0.284).

The second part of results showed the followings: patronage is the construct that has a higher impact on the intention to revisit the restaurant (0.407). Theoretically it makes sense, because patronages have a strong emotional connection with the restaurant, thus presenting a high propensity to revisit the place.

Loyalty was the second construct that has the strongest impact on the intention to revisit the restaurant (0.298). The explanation for this result is that loyal customers might have a preference for specific items in the restaurant, but has not yet stablished an emotional tie with the entire place.

Finally, the relationship between word-of-mouth and the intention to revisit the restaurant presented the lowest value (0.221). It means that, having a positive experience lead the customers sharing information about the restaurant, but not necessarily to revisit the place. Probably this behavior is due to a weak emotional tie between customer and the restaurant.

As several researchers indicated, the commercial hospitality experience significantly influences the relationship between customer and host. This study goes beyond—showing that, commercial hospitality influences the customer word-of-mouth, customer loyalty and patronage, and still have a high impact on the intention of revisiting the restaurant.

In sum, this study confirms that commercial hospitality influences the customer´s behavioral intention regarding the restaurant and should be considered to improve the experience of customers when visiting a restaurant.

5.1. Theoretical and practical implications of the study

The findings of this study present implications from theoretical and managerial perspectives. From a theoretical view, the relationships tested in a single model integrates the commercial hospitality construct and customer behavioral intention responses (word-of-mouth, loyalty and patronage) in restaurant environments. The past literature had not conjoined these constructs; they were just shown in separated studies. Thus, an integrated model what was still demanded; in doing so, this study fills this gap.

From a managerial perspective, this study provides a useful tool for understanding customer behavior from the commercial hospitality perspective. Thus, the study shows the importance for restaurant managers to focus on the element of customer service training in commercial hospitality for their service staff, as it would appear that this has a significant influence on the success of a restaurant.

In doing so, restaurant managers must train their staff to welcome customers in a friendly way and treat everyone as a special guest. Importantly, developing an emotional bond between social interactions with customers are crucial for stimulating the intention to revisit the place.

Moreover, training staff to be customer-focused—making their experience paramount—is of fundamental importance; these measure promote customers behaviors in favor of the restaurant. The restaurant manager can monitor the level of hospitality in their restaurant considering the affirmatives used in this study.

By applying the proposed model, restaurant managers and other professionals from the hospitality industry—hotels and tour operators, for example—can diagnose problems areas and perform measures for improving the level of hospitality in their business.

5.1.2. Limitations and Future Research

Like all research, this study is subject to imperfections. Some limitations are related to the range of restaurants used in collecting the data. The type of restaurant was not considered as well. It may limit the results because the level of interaction between customers and employees might influence the level of hospitality perceived.

Also, the study was conducted in a particular country, which can limit the generalizations of the results to other contexts. Further cross-cultural studies with more participants over a longer time-span may lend further insight into customer behavior globally; such studies may also aid to understand the relationship between commercial hospitality and intention to revisit restaurants.

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