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Do Solo Travelers Perceive Discrimination From Hotel and Cruise Service Providers, and Can Providers Overcome Perceptions to Achieve Customer Loyalty?

An Examination of the Impact of Singlism on the Travel Industry

By

Reinaldo Llano, Jr.

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

Degree of

Executive Doctor of Business Administration

in the

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2020

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The content and format of the dissertation are appropriate and acceptable for the awarding of the degree of Doctor of Business Administration

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Abstract

United States demographics have been shifting since the 1950s in more ways than one. Single consumers are a fast-growing market segment, yet their treatment by service providers is not adequately studied in academic research, let alone the travel industry. This dissertation examines whether single solo travelers who stay in hotels or on cruises perceive discrimination during both the shopping experience and service delivery experience, and if these service providers can achieve customer loyalty by providing a quality service experience. The research model measures perceived discrimination, service satisfaction perceptions, overall service satisfaction, customer loyalty and service quality perceptions using the SERVQUAL model and tests the relationship between service satisfaction and customer loyalty. The role of service quality as a mediator is also tested. While varying levels of perceived discrimination was not found due to the small number who perceived discrimination, evidence of some potential negative effects that perceived discrimination can have on the service experience was supported. Additionally, results also support the influence of a negative service experience, due to perceptions of discrimination, affecting overall satisfaction. Findings suggest that hotel and cruise service providers should focus on providing high levels of service quality and service satisfaction as a way to mitigate any effects perceived discrimination could have on service quality perceptions, overall service satisfaction, and customer loyalty intentions. This study adds to the academic literature on single travelers, while testing the validity of a key service quality measure (LODGSERV) in the U.S with hotel and cruise service providers. Managerial implications and future search opportunities are also discussed.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Background

A previously published study in the psychological sciences ignited a conversation about the inherent and deep-rooted discrimination towards singles happening in the U.S., based on an "Ideology of Marriage and Family" (DePaulo & Morris, 2005, p. 57). In this study, DePaulo and Morris (2005) introduced the term *singlism,* which the authors described as an "anti-singles sentiment" referring to the "negative stereotyping, interpersonal rejection, economic disadvantage, and discrimination" (p. 60) experienced by singles. Subsequently, articles supported DePaulo and Morris's findings validated the phenomenon of singlism (Byrne & Carr, 2005; Kaiser & Kashy, 2005; Koropeckyj-Cox, 2005; Williams & Nida, 2005).

The study of singlism within business research is vital to understanding how businesses treat and serve single consumers; however, more research is needed. Panko (2010), Close and Flowler (2008), and Donthu and Gilliland (2002) stressed the need for more research on singlism and consumers. This study focuses on the treatment of individuals who identified as single and their experiences with travel service providers, specifically hotel and cruise service providers.

About the Travel Industry

The travel industry is complex, consisting of many types of service providers (e.g., hotels, bed and breakfast, cruises, airlines, travel agencies, and tour operators). Table 1 details a list of the travel and tourism industries and definitions.

Table 1.
IBISWorld Industry Report Definitions

Industry Report Name	**Industry Definitions**
48111A International Airlines in the U.S. Industry Report	The International Airlines industry provides air transportation passengers and cargo over regular routes and schedules. These services include any flights that either end or originate internationally. Scheduled air passenger carriers, including commuter and helicopter carriers (except scenic and sightseeing), are included in this industry. Airlines that provide international mail transportation on a contract basis are also included in this industry.
48111B Domestic Airlines in the U.S. Industry Report	The industry provides domestic air transportation for passengers and cargo over regular routes and on regular schedules. Network carriers operate a significant portion of their flights using at least one hub where connections are made for flights on a spoke system. Regional carriers provide service from small cities, mostly using smaller aircraft and jets to support the network carriers' hub and spoke systems. Airlines that transport mail are included in this industry.
48311 Ocean & Coastal Transportation in the U.S. Industry Report	This industry provides deep-sea, coastal, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway water transportation. The deep-sea shipping activity includes U.S.-flagged vessels and non-U.S.-flagged vessels (operators must be primarily U.S.-based). Marine transportation establishments that use the St. Lawrence River are considered a part of the Great Lakes Water Transportation System and are thus included in this report. This industry also includes deep-sea passenger transportation, such as cruise ships.
56151 Travel Agencies in the U.S. Industry Report	This industry includes businesses that sell, book and arrange travel, tour and accommodation services for the general public and commercial clients. The industry also encompasses companies primarily engaged in providing travel arrangement and reservation services, including online-only booking systems.

Table 1.
IBISWorld Industry Report Definitions

Industry Report Name	**Industry Definitions**
56152 Tour Operators in the U.S. Industry Report	Businesses in this industry are engaged primarily in assembling and arranging tour packages. This industry also includes travel and wholesale tour operators, which means industry operators may include travel and accommodations within the package of their provided tours. However, businesses that primarily provide accommodations are not included in the industry and travel agencies that sell tour packages, but do not provide the actual tours themselves are not included in this industry.
72111 Hotels & Motels in the U.S. Industry Report	Operators in this industry provide short-term lodging in hotels, motor hotels (motels) and resort hotels. Establishments may also offer food and beverage services, recreational services, conference room and convention services, laundry services, parking and other services. This industry excludes hotels that have casino facilities attached.
NN002 Tourism in the U.S. Industry Report	Tourism is defined as visitors spending during travel primarily for business, convention or conference travel, government business, and the more familiar tourism for leisure, vacation or to visit friends and relatives. Major industries that benefit from tourism expenditure include domestic and international air transportation, accommodation services, food services, drinking places, automotive rental and travel agencies.
Source: IBISWorld 2018 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g)	

The combined industries listed in Table 1 account for USD $1 trillion in revenue in the United States (IBISWorld, 2018c, p. 4; IBISWorld, 2018a, p. 3), representing 4.9% of U.S. gross domestic product (GDP). Separately, the USD $193.9 billion from hotels (IBISWorld, 2018e) and the USD $22.1 billion from cruises (IBISWorld, 2018a) accounted for USD $216 billion (or 21.6%) of total direct tourism spending, which equaled 1.1% of U.S. GDP in 2018. In terms of customer engagement, hotels serviced 778 million domestic trips by U.S. residents (IBISWorld, 2018e, p. 42), while cruises serviced 12.41 million customer embarkations in the U.S. during 2016 (Statista, 2018a). The size and scope of these combined service providers alone make them compelling for study.

Hotels and cruises also differ in number of service providers and geographic areas. IBISWorld data for 2018 reported (2018e) 91,509 hotel and motel establishments in the U.S. (p. 38) and 1,136 ocean & coastal transportation establishments (IBISWorld, 2018a, p. 31), an 81:1 hotel to cruise ratio, and this trend is projected to continue to grow (see Tables 2 and 3). The difference in the hotel to cruise ratio makes hotels considerably more ubiquitous throughout the U.S., whereas cruises are limited by the need to depart from one of the 24 U.S. port cities.

Table 2.
IBISWorld Key Statistics on Hotel & Motels Industry Data in the US (2018)

	Revenue ($m)	IVA ($m)	Establishments (Units)	Enterprises (Units)	Employment (Units)	Wages ($m)	Domestic Trips by US Residents (Million)
2009	133,040.90	66,236.90	79,844	69,507	1,423,014	35,903.50	620.8
2010	136,481.00	70,149.70	80,481	69,979	1,400,682	36,711.80	634.8
2011	143,408.00	74,673.30	81,337	70,544	1,441,650	38,104.20	650.1
2012	149,837.50	77,793.20	82,607	71,536	1,486,585	39,353.70	653.8
2013	156,526.70	80,369.50	83,050	72,165	1,521,155	40,641.70	654.4
2014	165,406.90	85,216.40	86,428	75,785	1,538,730	41,431.00	669
2015	173,386.80	89,600.30	89,725	78,945	1,578,039	43,670.90	696.3
2016	180,972.90	91,217.60	87,383	77,181	1,603,993	44,458.00	726.2
2017	186,895.40	95,877.30	89,118	78,624	1,636,354	45,883.40	743.5
2018	193,725.40	98,789.20	91,509	80,595	1,665,812	47,131.00	778.1
2019	197,200.60	100,381.10	92,785	81,699	1,692,040	47,978.30	803.6
2020	199,989.30	101,595.00	93,941	82,708	1,714,415	48,689.40	814.8
2021	203,215.60	103,256.60	95,299	83,898	1,739,519	49,495.40	822.3
2022	206,683.30	105,126.70	96,806	85,226	1,768,726	50,413.60	832.3
2023	211,073.70	107,553.80	98,537	86,740	1,804,546	51,551.60	844.3

(Source: IBISWorld, 2018e, p.42)

Table 3.
IBISWorld Key Statistics on Ocean & Coastal Transportation Data in the US (2018)

	Revenue ($m)	IVA ($m)	Establishments (Units)	Enterprises (Units)	Employment (Units)	Wages ($m)	Total recreation expenditure ($b)
2009	31,600.30	8,442.70	1,150	829	48,419	3,743.00	376
2010	34,542.10	10,277.80	1,157	810	44,011	3,507.60	381
2011	35,321.80	8,367.30	1,163	814	45,966	3,740.10	389.6
2012	36,643.40	9,994.00	1,089	762	49,515	3,947.80	397.4
2013	37,257.90	10,143.70	988	685	45,991	3,586.30	404.1

Table 3.
IBISWorld Key Statistics on Ocean & Coastal Transportation Data in the US (2018)

	Revenue ($m)	IVA ($m)	Establishments (Units)	Enterprises (Units)	Employment (Units)	Wages ($m)	Total recreation expenditure ($b)
2014	37,767.70	8,882.00	1,119	759	46,914	3,934.50	413.5
2015	36,825.90	10,133.10	1,141	787	45,282	3,983.20	423.5
2016	36,105.70	12,230.70	1,134	780	42,747	3,745.80	432.4
2017	37,043.60	11,011.30	1,136	780	43,304	3,804.40	442.7
2018	38,252.40	11,324.70	1,136	779	44,117	3,886.30	450.4
2019	39,399.30	11,836.50	1,141	781	44,871	3,962.80	456.5
2020	40,441.20	11,969.00	1,139	778	45,563	4,032.60	463.4
2021	41,453.30	12,197.20	1,143	780	46,312	4,105.80	471.8
2022	42,405.40	12,204.80	1,151	783	46,974	4,171.70	478.5
2023	43,432.40	12,503.80	1,159	787	47,701	4,243.50	485.4

(Source: IBISWorld, 2018a, p. 33)

Additionally, hotel guests choose a hotel based on the city it is in, while cruise passengers select a cruise based on the departure port and the vessel's travel itinerary. Taken together, the data suggest hotels are more accessible to consumers than cruises.

When planning for travel, consumers, whether single or group travelers, often compare hotels and cruises. While hotels are physical buildings that provide sleeping accommodations for guests who travel to a fixed destination, cruises are traveling vessels, which include accommodations, used to transport passengers to one or more destinations. The similarities and differences between cruises and hotels make these two types of service providers a suitable pairing for the design of this research study.

Singlism within the Travel Industry

DePaulo and Morris (2005) argue that being single (not married) disadvantages individuals in society. Yet, existing research on singlism in the hotel and cruise industry is limited (Rhee & Yang, 2015; Chung, Oh, Kim, & Han, 2004; Vina & Ford, 2001), thereby constraining our understanding. When it comes to travel and tourism, individual consumers appear disadvantaged, which is discriminated against, compared to couples traveling together or

three or more travelers (i.e., groups). For example, single travelers consistently pay a higher rate per person at hotels, compared to couples who essentially split the full room-rate; additionally, many hotels offer group discounts on room-rates. On a cruise, single travelers pay a supplemental fare, often half of the second person's full-fare for a cabin. Despite the increased per-person costs for individuals traveling alone, travel service providers may be assuming that the individual traveler generates less revenue (Goodwin & Lockshin, 1992).

Similarly, airlines and travel agencies all welcome the opportunity to serve families as well as small and large groups in comparison to an individual because of the revenue potential these groups offer. Furthermore, tour operators typically charge single travelers a supplemental charge to cover room costs if they are unwilling to share a room (Bianchi, 2016).

Single travelers may also see and feel obvious differences when it comes to pricing, marketing, and advertising strategies among hotel and cruise operators. Cruises communicate, albeit in footnote disclaimers, a price differential for single travelers compared to group travelers. However, single travelers selecting a hotel may not automatically be aware of, or think about, the price differentials for one person in the room versus two.

Despite the differences stated above, cruises and hotels stand out among service providers in the travel and tourism industry as an appropriate comparison set because of the similarities in the services provided. These similarities include providing varying degrees of accommodation choices for travelers; in-room and restaurant-based food and beverage services for their guests; varying degrees of gym and spa services to travelers; and on-site leisure activities for their guests.

Single Travelers as a Market Segment

Existing hotel and cruise industry research data are often proprietary or exclusively available to membership-based industry groups (Chung et al., 2004). This limitation makes acquiring existing data on single travelers challenging, necessitating custom research such as that presented in this study.

Hotels. The economic impact of the hotel industry is undeniable, yet the economic impact of singles within the industry is less clear, perhaps in some part because of the marketing strategies used by the industry. Schultz (1994) notes hotel industry's history of focusing its marketing on all types of travelers through product segmentation and advocates for a shift to a consumer-centric marketing strategy. A decade later, Chung et al. (2004) and Rhee and Yang (2015) provide the only two studies that both categorized and measured a single traveler who travels specifically for pleasure as a unique market segment for hotels.

Cruises. A quick search using keywords "cruise and market segmentation" on academic search engines (ABI/Inform, Business Source, ProQuest, etc.) returned only eight academic articles published between 1991-2019 compared to 127 using the keywords "hotel and market segmentation" published between 1976-2018. Vina and Ford (2001) conducted the only study that encompassed market segmentation of single travelers in the cruise industry, documenting consumer preferences by marital status. The lack of research on cruises provides an opportunity for this study to add value.

Finding and describing the single traveler. Academic research has devoted sporadic attention to the single traveler throughout the past thirty years (Chung, Baik, & Lee, 2017; Bianchi, 2016; Kim & Parent, 2016; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010; Laesser, Beritelli, & Bieger, 2009; Wilson & Little, 2005; Mehmetoglu, Dann, & Larsen, 2001; Dev & Glanzberg, 1990). In

2009, however, Laesser, Beritelli, and Bieger made a significant contribution to the literature when they conceptualized a new category "solo traveler." Laesser et al.'s (2009) research proposed and tested an "a-priori segmentation of four types of solo travel" delineated on the combination of departure and arrival statuses.

Departure status captured if a person was from a single, one-person household, compared to a collective or multi-person household, whereas arrival status captured if they traveled alone or as part of a group (Laesser et al., 2009). This approach resulted in four groups of travelers:

1. SINGLE-SOLO: travel by persons who come from a single household and travel alone
2. SINGLE-GROUP: travel by persons who come from one-person households, traveling with a group of other people
3. COLLECTIVE-SOLO: travel by persons who do not live alone, but travel solo
4. COLLECTIVE-GROUP: travel by persons who come from collective households but depart by themselves to travel as part of a group

The research presented here focused on the SINGLE-SOLO traveler.

Laesser et al.'s (2009) study revealed differences among the four types of solo travelers with regards to accommodation preferences. Of the SINGLE-SOLO travelers studied, a majority (69.57%) preferred accommodations with friends and relatives and expressed no interest in cruise accommodations. These strongly expressed preferences for accommodations with friends and relatives by the SINGLE-SOLO traveler and no interest in cruises signals a potential market opportunity for service providers to make inroads with this customer segment.

Potential market size of the SINGLE SOLO traveler. To determine the potential market size of the SINGLE-SOLO traveler segment, this study utilized the U.S. Census. The U.S. Census defines "unmarried" as those individuals who are at least fifteen years of age and

have never married, are divorced, or are widowed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). The annual population growth of unmarried individuals outpaced the total population (231% total and 3.45%, respectively) as well as the married population (82.4% and 1.2%, respectively) from 1950-2017 (see Figure 1). The number of householders living alone is estimated to be 33.2 million households and grew +9.2% between 2006 and 2016 (see Figure 2).

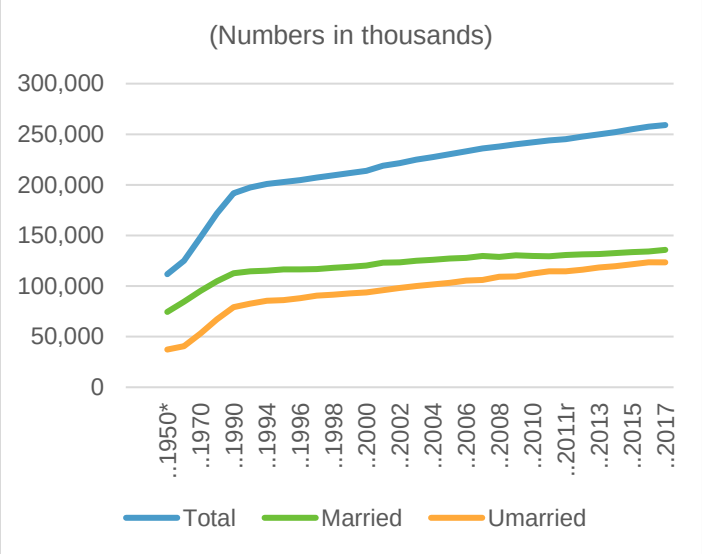
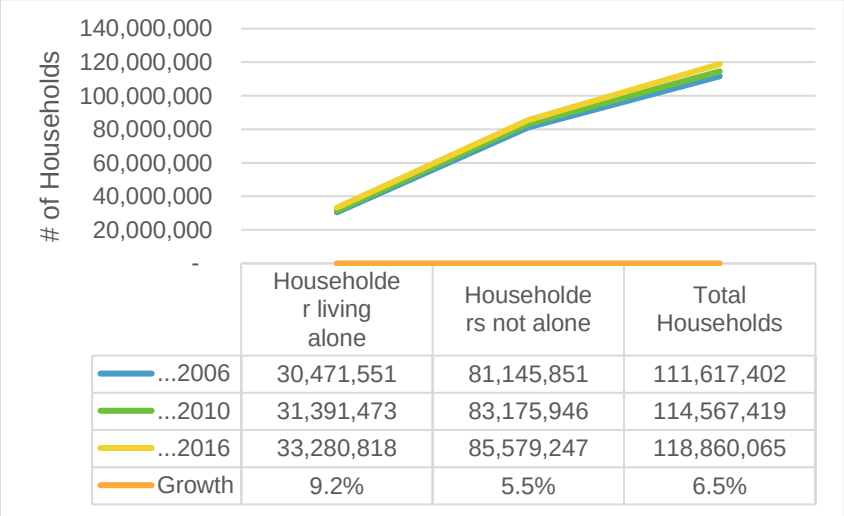


*Figure 1.*Marital Status of the Population 15 Yrs. Old+ from 1950 to Present. *(*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017*)*



	Householder living alone	Householders not alone	Total Households
...2006	30,471,551	81,145,851	111,617,402
...2010	31,391,473	83,175,946	114,567,419
...2016	33,280,818	85,579,247	118,860,065
Growth	9.2%	5.5%	6.5%

Figure 2. Household and Families: 2016 American Community Survey. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016)

Statista (2017b) estimated the number of domestic leisure trips by solo travelers during 2016 to be 1,748 million, with projected growth to 1,871 million by 2020. Statista (2018a) also estimated 12.41 million guests cruised in North America during 2016 but did not provide a breakout by marital status. The rapid population growth rates of both unmarried and single households together with projected growth in the travel industry suggest that future demand for hotel and cruises by SINGLE-SOLO travelers is likely to grow.

Potential economic impact. This research study calculated an economic impact for solo travelers by, multiplying the average daily rate (ADR) of hotels in the U.S. and the average profit made per cruise passenger (APMpCP) by an estimated percentage of the single population. The most recently available data from Statista (2017a) estimated an ADR of USD $123.97 for 2016 whereas Statista (2018b) estimated an APMpCP of USD $184 for 2014. Therefore, if at least 5% of the 1,748 million domestic trips during 2016 were taken by the solo traveler segment, then solo travelers would account for more than 87.4 million trips. Similarly, if 5% of the 12.41 million cruise passengers in 2014 were by the solo traveler segment, then solo travelers would account for nearly 621,000 cruise passengers. Using the aforementioned Statista ADR and APMpCP estimates, an appraised economic impact would be just over USD $10.8 billion to the hotel industry and USD $114 million for the cruise industry. Given this potential economic impact, researching and serving the solo traveler was considered worthy of investment.

Theoretical Foundations of Study

Up till now, despite the size of their potential economic impact, there is very little known about whether the SINGLE-SOLO traveler perceives discrimination when dealing with hotels or cruises; and, if the degree to which their perceived discrimination has any impact on their loyalty intention. Thus, successfully measuring the impact of a solo traveler's perceived discrimination

on post-purchase loyalty intentions requires a theoretical research model that captures appropriate measures and is grounded in a theory that may help both predict and explain the results. Oliver's (1980) expectation-confirmation theory (ECT) met these criteria and was used as a theoretical foundation for this study. In previous research, ECT has helped explain post-purchase behavior (i.e., customer loyalty intentions) as a function of the antecedents of expectations (in this case the perception of discrimination), perceived performance (as measured by service quality and service satisfaction), and the disconfirmation of beliefs (expectations and overall service satisfaction), thus making it an appropriate theoretical base for this study.

Relevant literature. Goodwin and Lockshin (1992) challenged marketers to reevaluate their treatment of singles in the marketplace when they "shop, eat in restaurants, travel or attend entertainment events" (p. 27), and detailed reasons why this market segment is an important group that required further attention. A decade later, Donthu and Gilliland's (2002) research demonstrated notable differences between single consumers and their married couterparts based on marketing-specific psychographic variables, while also capturing differences between singles by choice and singles by circumstance. DePaulo and Morris (2005), defined singlism in part to inspire further research on the discrimination of single people, while Laesser et al. (2009) introduced a conceptual framework so researchers could study the solo traveler. During this same time period and related to this topic of discrimination is Conway Dato-on and Burns' (2008) study of perceived discrimination by U.S. Hispanics within a retail environment, which provided a measurement tool applicable to a service interaction scenario. More recently, Klinner and Walsh's (2013) study provided further illustrations on how to measure consumer perceptions of discrimiation in a service delivery context.

Oliver (1977) introduced a framework for studying service satisfaction, and subsequently reaffirmed (1980) expectation-confirmation theory as "a cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions." Liu, Che, Zhan, Ling and Wang's (2018) study affirmed the effects of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) provided a conceptual model for measuring service quality (SERVQUAL) to capture the gaps between the service provider and customer expectations. Parasuraman et al.'s (1985) model also facilitated additional hypotheses that service quality impacts satisfaction and customer loyalty intentions. The combined academic contributions of these authors informed this study's theoretical research model and research questions posited below.

Research Questions

The research questions this study raised are important for marketing practitioners in any service industry, but especially for marketers operating within the travel industry. Chief among these questions was, how much discrimination (if any) does the SINGLE-SOLO traveler perceive when engaging with hotel and cruise providers, and does this perception affect their service satisfaction? Other related questions this research addressed include:

- Does a SINGLE-SOLO traveler with a perception of discrimination develop low service satisfaction expectations?
- Does a SINGLE-SOLO traveler with a perception of discrimination experience low customer loyalty?
- Does service quality mediate the relationship between a SINGLE-SOLO traveler with a perception of discrimination and their perceptions of service satisfaction?
- Does a higher perception of service satisfaction lead to higher customer loyalty among SINGLE-SOLO travelers?

Theoretical Research Model

Figure 3 reflects this study's theoretical research model, which captures a SINGLE-SOLO travelers perceived discrimination levels and their effects on the evaluation of both service satisfaction and customer loyalty, with service quality as a potential mediating variable. The development of this model anticipated that there would be different levels for perceived discrimination and those levels would have different results on the subsequent evaluations of service satisfaction, service quality, and customer loyalty (i.e., SINGLE-SOLO travlers with higher levels of perceived discrimination could evaluate service satisfaction and customer loyalty intentions more negatively than those with a lower level of perceived discrimination). The relationship between each variable in this model are fully explicated in the literature review within Chapter 2.

Purpose of the Study

To date, a limited number of studies are available studying singlism within any business industry, and none explicitly apply Laesser et al.'s (2009) SINGLE-SOLO traveler constructs to the hotel and cruise industries. Therefore, this research made the following contribution to academic research:

1. Extended the literature on DePaulo and Morris' (2005) phenomenon of singlism by testing the levels of perceived discrimination by single travelers within two similar yet distinct travel industry subcategories.
2. Extended the literature on Laesser et al.'s (2009) solo traveler framework in three ways by specifically studying: (1) the SINGLE-SOLO traveler segment's travel experience; (2) the SINGLE-SOLO traveler experience within the hotel and cruise industry; and, (3) the SINGLE-SOLO traveler sector in the U.S.

3. Provided market segmentation data on the SINGLE-SOLO traveler for hotel and cruise providers to help better serve this customer segment.
4. Tested the validity of the SERVQUAL model within the U.S. with hotel providers, adding to the existing literature stream that has reported varying disagreements on its validity and applicability to the hotel industry. (Carrillat, Jaramillo, & Mulki, 2009; Carrillat, Jaramillo, & Mulki, 2007; Saleh & Ryan, 1991).
5. Tested the validity of the SERVQUAL model with U.S. cruise providers and introduce a new stream, as there is limited research in this area to date.
6. Added to the academic literature by providing meaningful research on perceptions of discrimination, perceptions of service quality, perceptions of service satisfaction, and customer loyalty intentions for a relatively understudied, yet economically relevant segment: the solo traveler.
7. Helped service providers understand at what point recovery from perceptions of discrimination are possible through service quality and service satisfaction to positively influence customer loyalty intentions.

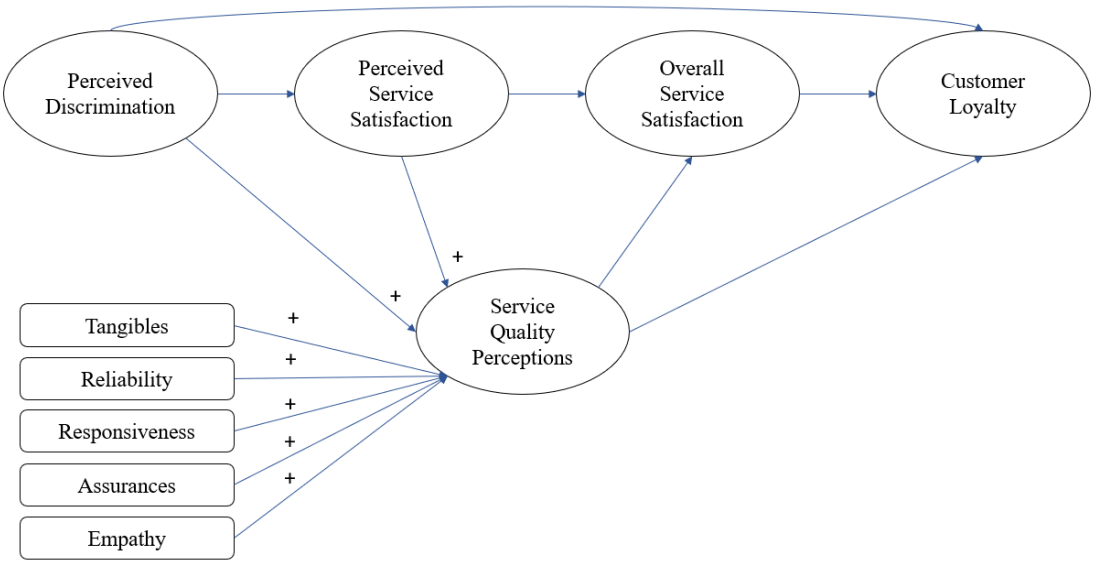


Figure 3. Theoretical Research Model

Study Organization

The remainder of the paper is presented in several chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the literature, explores the constructs of interest, explicates the relationships in the model, and develops hypotheses for each. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and sample population. The final two chapters will present an analysis of the data collected, interpret the results, and share management implications and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the existing literature on singlism, perceived discrimination, solo travelers, service quality, service satisfaction, and consumer loyalty within the context of the travel industry, focusing on hotel and cruise service providers. Chapter 2 also discusses and explains the mediating effect of service quality on service satisfaction and customer loyalty and the mediating effect of perceived satisfaction on customer loyalty. In doing so, this study examines the relevant theories and discusses the theoretical framework used in this research. Finally, Chapter 2 develops and presents this study's hypotheses, which were tested.

Singlism

DePaulo and Morris (2005) defined singlism as the stereotyping, stigmatization, and discrimination experienced by singles in society. The definition of singlism sparked a debate about whether singles experience discrimination, who might be discriminating against singles (intentionally or unintentionally), and resulted in some possible explanations for why such discrimination occurs. Subsequent research supported DePaulo and Morris's (2005) key findings that singles are indeed stigmatized (Bruckmüller, 2013; Pignotti & Abell, 2009; Morris, Sinclair, & DePaulo, 2007; DePaulo & Morris, 2006; Byrne & Carr, 2005; Kaiser & Kashy, 2005; Koropeckyj-Cox, 2005; Williams & Nida, 2005).

DePaulo and Morris's (2005) study sparked other lines of academic inquiry. These other research areas consisted of measuring perceptions about singles compared to married individuals (Slonim, Gur-Yaish, & Katz, 2015; Pignotti & Abell, 2009; Byrne, 2009; DePaulo & Morris, 2006; Dion, 2005; Koropeckyj-Cox, 2005), and examining single's overall happiness or lack thereof (Williams & Nida, 2005).

While DePaulo and Morris (2005) introduced the concept of singlism, the study of singles as a sector of society predates these authors' study. Byrne (2009) noted that the study of "the single life" dates to the 19th century (p. 760). However, Donthu and Gilliland (2002) pointed out that while there are many articles on singles in the social sciences, little research exists on singlism within the business literature. Singles, also referred to in the literature as "the solo consumer" (Goodwin & Lockshin, 1992, p. 27) or "the single consumer" (Donthu & Gilliland, 2002, p. 77), remains mostly ignored in both the advertising and marketing literature (Donthu & Gilliland, 2002) and entirely ignored in the travel industry.

Within the business literature, Panko (2010), Close and Fowler (2008), and Donthu and Gilliland (2002) have sounded the alarm about the increasing need to understand the single consumer, the single consumer's potential economic strength and impact, and the opportunities the single consumer presents to marketing practitioners and service providers. This research study answered these authors' call for additional research on singlism within the travel industry, specifically: Did singles experience singlism (i.e., discrimination because they are singles) when engaging as consumers with hotels and cruise service providers?

Perceived Discrimination

The definition of singlism set forth by DePaulo and Morris (2005) specifically included discrimination. Perception of discrimination is an existing construct utilized in the literature to

test and measure whether consumers experience discrimination. Conway Dato-on and Burns (2008) outlined a definition for discrimination: unequal treatment based on some characteristic (ethnic or otherwise) that separates a group of consumers from the majority of consumers. These authors also summarized the methods of measuring discrimination used in the literature and presented valid scales for discrimination's measurement. More specifically, Conway Dato-on and Burns (2008) utilized questions related to shopping motivation and the service provider's image to construct a measurement of perception of discrimination.

Conway Dato-on and Burns (2008) emphasized the following three important points as to why focusing on "consumers' perceptions of discrimination rather than a statistical measurement of discrimination outcomes" (p. 32) can help marketers craft strategies to help change perceptions regardless of the provider's point of view regarding discrimination:

1) marketing researchers embrace the study of the perception of experience over the reality of experience;
2) perceived discrimination represents real problems in society beyond just the individual's perception;
3) the lack of research on perceived discrimination in consumer transactions warrants more research attention.

Perceived discrimination in the travel industry. The service industry is a high customer-contact industry (Madera, Lee, & Kapoor, 2017). Because more than half of U.S. employees work in the service industry, making the service industry the largest sector of the economy (Madera et al., 2017), the impact of customer-contact is linked to continued economic prosperity. Yet, little literature on perceived discrimination within the travel industry exists; the few articles found are divided into the following substreams:

1) measuring discrimination based on race, gender, age, and sexual orientation with a focus on developing and validating scales (Araña & León, 2013; Klinner & Walsh, 2013; Molero, Recio, Garcia-Ael, Fuster & Sanjuan, 2013);
2) measuring the effects of discrimination on service employees perpetrated by employers or customers (Madera et al., 2017; Martin & Gardiner, 2007);
3) measuring the effects of price discrimination by travel service providers (Puller & Taylor, 2012; Langenfeld & Li, 2008; Jiang, 2007), including online platforms (Mattila & Choi, 2014);
4) measuring discrimination from the customers' perspective (Mattila & Choi, 2014; Walsh, 2009; Conway Dato-on & Burns, 2008, Riesch & Kleiner, 2005); and,
5) measuring perceived discrimination in the context of service delivery (Klinner & Walsh, 2013).

While this past research captured and validated the negative effects of discrimination and found discrimination to be pervasive, none exclusively focused on the treatment of consumers who identify as single. Nevertheless, of all these studies, Conway Dato-on and Burns (2008) as well as Klinner and Walsh (2013) provided the most useful scales for use in this study to measure perceptions of discrimination from the consumer's perspective during the service delivery experience.

The negative impacts of perceived discrimination. A 2009 meta-analysis of the perceived discrimination literature focused entirely on the relationship between perceived discrimination and mental and physical health outcomes and found "perceived discrimination has a significant negative effect on both mental and physical health" (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009, p. 531). Given the size and scope of the service industry and the service industry's high

customer-contact characteristics (Madera et al., 2017), Pascoe and Smart Richman's (2009) findings should concern all service providers. Conway Dato-on and Burns (2008) highlighted similar conclusions, suggesting "those who perceive high levels of discrimination are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and other negative health outcomes" (p. 32). These collective negative impacts could significantly hamper the experience provided by both hotels and cruises, challenging these service providers' ability to deliver on a core value propositions (e.g., a relaxing and comforting escape for customers).

The SINGLE-SOLO Traveler

Laesser et al. (2009) introduced the SINGLE-SOLO traveler construct in 2009, and in the subsequent 10 years, scant research has been published using this construct in the context of service delivery. The few articles available focused primarily on studying female travelers who travel alone or are single and travel together (McNamara & Prideaux, 2009; Chiang & Jogaratman, 2006; Wilson & Little, 2005; and Jordan & Gibson, 2005). Similarly, a few studies focused on travel motivation and behavior (Mehmetoglu et al., 2001) or provided insights on travelers that included a segment on solo travelers (Laesser et al., 2009; So & Lehto, 2006) or single travelers (Neuts, Chen, & Nijkamp, 2016). Findings from these studies explained why individuals elected to travel by themselves and how women who travel alone feel about the experience, but none focused on the service experience or perceptions of discrimination by the SINGLE-SOLO traveler.

Defining the SINGLE-SOLO Traveler. Goodwin and Lockshin (1992) defined the solo consumer as "anyone participating in consumption as a unit of one" (p. 28), based on how Rook defined solo consumption, "doing things alone in the marketplace" (as cited in Goodwin & Lockshin, 1992, p. 28). Laesser et al. (2009) provided the first conceptual framework of solo

travelers based on a priori segmentation of four types of solo travel: SINGLE-SOLO, COLLECTIVE-SOLO, SINGLE-GROUP, and COLLECTIVE-GROUP. These four types of travelers are based on both the departure status of the traveler (i.e., single person household "single" or multi-person household "collective"), and arrival status of the traveler (i.e., solo travel or group travel).

This study embraced both Goodwin and Lockshin's (1992) definition of the solo consumer and Laesser's et al. (2009) SINGLE-SOLO traveler construct and used the SINGLE-SOLO traveler construct in the proposed model. Therefore, this study investigated only the SINGLE-SOLO traveler who engaged in the consumption of services provided by hotels and cruises as a unit of one.

Stigmatization of SINGLE-SOLO Travelers. The service marketing and service delivery literature offer limited insights into the SINGLE-SOLO traveler. Prior to 2005, the literature clearly indicated a default setting in society, a natural belief that people really prefer to be with other people, thus stigmatizing aloneness and resulting in "people who are perceived as lonely" being "treated as second-class customers" (Goodwin & Lockshin, 1992, p. 28). Goodwin and Lockshin (1992) explained this stigmatization using the Causes of Loneliness Attribution's matrix (CLA) and attribute its effects on the marketing of, and services provided for, vacation travel and holiday travel. Specifically, Goodwin and Lockshin's (1992) findings revealed how the industry viewed and treated SINGLE-SOLO travelers:

- single travelers, as a segment, were marginalized in marketing and services provided (i.e., offers targeted to families or pairs; the levying of hefty single traveler supplements; advertising featuring happy families, couples, and groups traveling),

- the travel industry assumed unequal treatment resulted in only economic consequences (e.g., not negative health and pyscological outcomes), and
- the travel industry matched solo travelers with roommates to resolve perceived economic consequences of unequal treatment.

These findings may explain why any search for travel products that serve the SINGLE-SOLO traveler consistently yielded limited results. It was therefore posited that:

H1: SINGLE-SOLO travelers perceive varying levels of discrimination.

Marketing to SINGLE-SOLO travelers. Donthu and Gilliland (2002) addressed the gap in literature on the single consumer by conducting a study that profiled the single consumer in comparison to their married counterparts and distinguished between two types of single consumers (i.e., single by choice and single by circumstance such as death of a spouse). Overall, results of Donthu and Gilliland's (2002) study showed single consumers to be more variety-seeking, innovative, brand-conscious, impulsive buyers, and greater consumers of television media than non-single consumers. Even though singles rated higher in convenience-seeking than non-singles, no statistical variance existed between the groups. Single consumers were also found to be less averse to risk and less price conscious than non-single consumers. While Donthu and Gilliland's (2002) findings provided marketers with critical insights on the single consumer market (i.e., need for adventure and variety, brand association, and impulsiveness), little evidence exists to suggest that service marketers have changed how SINGLE-SOLO travelers are viewed or treated.

Service Satisfaction

In 1977, Oliver (1977) tested an alternative interpretation regarding the "relative effect of initial expectation level and the degree of positive or negative disconfirmation on affective

judgments following product exposure" (p. 480). The findings suggested the effects of expectation and disconfirmation provide an important framework for the study of service satisfaction. In the same year, several studies were also conducted to better understand service satisfaction (LaTour & Peat, 1978; Day, 1977; Ölander, 1977; Oliver, 1977). A few years later, Oliver (1980) reaffirmed two primary constructs—performance-specific expectations and expectancy disconfirmation— as instrumental in the formation of consumers' satisfaction.

In 1980, Oliver further confirmed that as perceived performance exceeds the initial expectations (positive disconfirmation), the customer's service satisfaction increases. Swan and Trawick's (1981) study supported Oliver's (1980) model. Additionally, Syzmanski and Henard (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of the empirical evidence and found positive correlations between the expectations and disconfirmation model Oliver (1980) outlined in his research. Syzmanski and Henard (2001) also confirmed that the strength of the relationship between disconfirmation and satisfaction is the most dominant predictor in the more than fifty studies evaluated. Therefore, this study posited that overall, SINGLE-SOLO travelers who perceived a higher level of discrimination and a negative service experience will perceive an overall negative service satisfaction rating.

H2: Perceived discrimination by SINGLE-SOLO travelers will have a negative impact on service experience.

H3: A negative service experience due to perceived discrimination by a single-solo traveler will have a negative impact on overall service satisfaction.

Customer Loyalty

This study adopts Oliver's (1999) definition of customer loyalty as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future,

thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" (p. 34). According to the literature, customer loyalty further divides into two dimensions: attitudinal and behavioral (Liu et al., 2018). Attitudinal loyalty measures a customer's overall attitudes with trust, word-of-mouth recommendation, and commitment as widely accepted observable variables of attitudinal loyalty (Liu et al., 2018). Liu et al.'s (2018) findings confirm that customer satisfaction is strongly correlated with commitment, which Bloemer and Kasper established as a "manifestation of loyalty" (as cited by Liu et al., 2018, p. 967), also seen as a deep level of attitudinal loyalty (Liu et al., 2018, p. 967).

Several meta-analyses assess the strength of the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Liu et al., 2018; Tanford, 2016; Watson, Beck, Henderson, & Palmatier, 2015; Curtis, Abratt, Rhoades, & Dion, 2011). Two of these studies included tourism (Lui et al., 2018) and hospitality industries (Tanford, 2016), though none referenced single travelers. The consensus of these meta-analyses suggest that the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are significantly correlated. Therefore, this study proposed the following hypothesis:

H4: A negative service experience will have a negative impact on customer loyalty.

H5: Perceived discrimination by SINGLE-SOLO travelers will have a negative impact on customer loyalty.

Service Quality

Lewis and Booms described service quality as "a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations" (as cited in Parasuraman et al., 1985, p. 42). A direct link between service quality, consumer satisfaction, and customer

loyalty has been established in the literature (Keith & Simmers, 2013; Humnekar & Phadtare, 2011; Carrillat et al., 2009; Akbaba, 2006). Businesses best positioned to capitalize on future growth are paying attention to guest experience and working to improve customer perceptions of service quality (Keith & Simmers, 2013). Therefore, the importance of measuring service quality, commonly identified as an antecedent to service satisfaction by scholars (Lee, Lee, & Yoo, 2000; de Ruyter, Bloemer, & Peeters, 1997; Cronin & Taylor, 1992), becomes vital to understand the full impact of service satisfaction on customer loyalty.

Parasuraman, et al (1985) introduced SERVQUAL as a tool for measuring service quality that could be used across industries. A few years later, in response to Parasuraman et al.'s (1985) SERVQUAL, Cronin and Taylor (1992) developed the SERVPERF scale. SERVPERF "directly captures customers' performance perceptions in comparison to their expectations of the service encounter" (Carrillat et al., 2007).

SERVQUAL. Researchers using Parasuraman et al.'s (1985) model in various industries (e.g., banking, retail, airlines, hospitals, tourism, hotels) found it to be valid for measuring service quality (Saleh, & Ryan, 1991; Carrillat et al., 2007; Humkenar & Phadtare, 2011; Lewlyn, Barkur, Varambally, & Farahnaz, 2011; Keith & Simmers, 2013). Congruently, scholars have also studied at length the differences between SERVQUAL or SERVPERF as instruments for measuring service quality and have found SERVQUAL to be the better measure of the two (Keith & Simmers, 2013; Lewlyn et al., 2011; Carrillat et al., 2007). Carillat et al.'s (2007) meta-analysis covering seventeen years of research across five continents found SERVQUAL the most appropriate measure of service quality in service industries, which tend to have a higher level of customization.

Based on Parasuraman et al.'s (1985) SERVQUAL scale, Knutson et al. (1990) proposed a service quality index specifically for use in the lodging industry (LODGSERV), which subsequent research found valid (Keith & Simmers, 2013; Getty & Getty, 2003; Patton, Stevens, & Knutson, 1994). Therefore, this study used the LODGSERV scale for measuring the experience of the SINGLE-SOLO traveler with both hotels and cruise service providers.

Service quality as a mediator. Studies have measured the degree to which service satisfaction mediated the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty (Lee et al., 2000; Caruana, 2002). Because service quality is widely-accepted in the literature as an antecedent of service satisfaction, this study measured whether service quality has a mediating effect on the relationship between service satisfaction and customer loyalty for those who perceived discrimination during shopping and stay. Therefore, the following hypotheses were tested:

H6: Service quality and perceived satisfaction mediate the effect of perceived discrimination on overall service satisfaction.

H7: Service quality and perceived satisfaction partially mediate the effect of perceived discrimination on customer loyalty.

Conceptual Model

Figure 4 below indicates the expected relationship between perceived discrimination, service satisfaction, and customer loyalty with service quality as a mediating variable.

Chapter 3 captures the methodology best suited to answer the research questions laid out above and test each of the seven hypotheses.

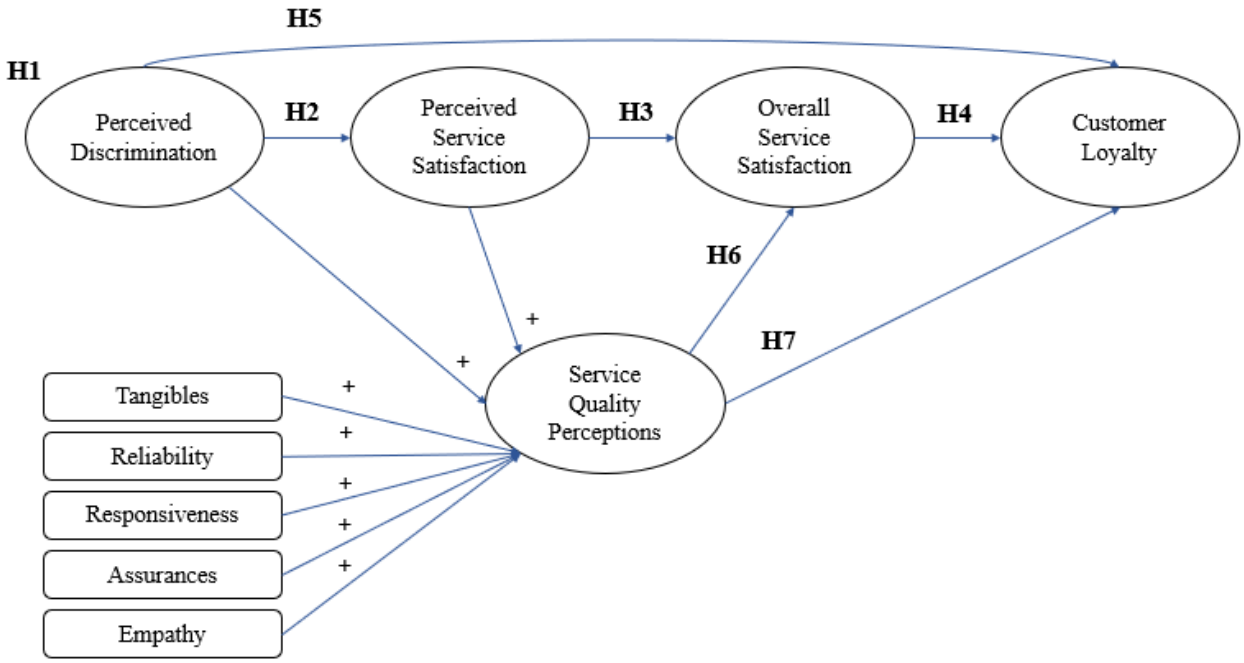


Figure 4. Conceptual Model

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methods that were utilized in this dissertation. The chapter begins with a description of the sample utilized for the research study, including sample size, eligibility questions, and demographic information. Following this, is a discussion of the measures employed in the survey as well as a description of the survey data collection methods utilized and the procedures executed for the survey. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the data analysis methods used.

Sample

The research format for this dissertation study was a quantitative survey that used a non-probabilistic convenience sample of adults (i.e., 18 years or older).

The sample for this survey consisted exclusively of SINGLE-SOLO travelers. These SINGLE-SOLO travelers recently (the past year) completed leisure travel involving services provided by either a hotel or cruise. Three eligibility questions 1) marital status, 2) purpose of trip (leisure or business), and 3) whether the consumer traveled alone were used to disqualify those individuals who were not the focus of this study (i.e., SINGLE-SOLO travelers).

According to Aderson and Gerbing (1988), a partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS) approach has relative strength when it comes to application and prediction, especially for “causal-predictive analysis in situations of high complexity but low theoretical

information" (p. 412). Thus, this study utilized this methodology with the target sample size of 180 participants. This sample size approach followed a popular rule of thumb for robust partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) estimation of "ten times the number of the maximum number of paths aiming at any construct in the outer model and inner model" (Barclay et al. 1995; as cited in Hair et al., 2012, p. 420). Key demographic information on gender, age, race and sexual orientation were also collected.

Measures

The variables measured in this study are those proposed in Figure 4: perceived discrimination, service satisfaction perceptions, overall service satisfaction, customer loyalty, and service quality. All measures in this survey instrument were modified for the context of hotel stay and cruise travel from existing measures developed and validated by others, with sources for each measure listed next to each variable in the appendix for convenience purposes. The sources were not visible to the respondents in the final questionnaire but are noted here for ease of reference. All items were scored on a seven-point Likert scale anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree.

Perceived discrimination. Since similar research regarding perception of discrimination by customers of hotel and cruise providers could not be found, perceptions of discrimination was measured using a 9-item scale comprised of: a 3-item scale developed and tested by Conway Dato-on and Burns (2008) with another group (Hispanics) that measured perceived discrimination while shopping; and a 6-item scale tested by Klinner and Walsh (2013) that measured the discriminatory level of service experienced by customers during service delivery.

Service satisfaction perceptions and overall service satisfaction. Both service satisfaction perceptions and overall service satisfaction scales within the hotel and cruise

industries are plentiful in the literature. Therefore, proven scales from two recent studies were utilized to measure service satisfaction perceptions (Subramanian, Gunasekara, & Gao, 2016) and overall service satisfaction (Tabaku & Cerri, 2016). Service satisfaction perceptions was measured using a shortened version (eight items) of Subramanian et al.'s (2016) 20-item scale. The shortened questions focused on Staff (two items), Price (three items), and Image (three items) and exclude questions regarding Physical Product, Service, and Location that were irrelevant to this study. Overall service satisfaction was measured using a 4-item scale validated by Tabaku and Cerri (2016) that were adopted from the studies of Andreassen and Lindestad, Caruana, Olorunniwo and Hsu" (as cited in Tabaku & Cerri, 2016, p. 484).

Customer loyalty. Several scales exist to measure customer loyalty for hotels. This study measured customer loyalty using a 3-item scale validated by Subramanian et al. (2016).

Service quality perceptions. LODGSERV is based on SERVQUAL and was developed by Knutson et al. (1990) to measure service quality specifically in the hotel context. Keith and Simmers (2013) conducted a study on hotel service quality that utilized the LODGSERV measure, "and its five dimensions as summarized by Patton et al." (p. 122).

Procedures

A questionnaire was administered to SINGLE-SOLO travelers who completed travel with hotel or cruise service providers within the last year. All questionnaires were delivered online using the Qualtrics survey tool. The electronic survey utilized randomization for all constructs with multiple questions. SINGLE-SOLO travelers were identified using a third-party research firm and were invited to voluntarily participate, with the promise of confidentiality, using the online survey.

Data Analysis

SPSS Statistical software (SPSS) and SmartPLS was used to analyze the relationships in this study. Before the relationships were analyzed, a factor analysis was conducted to ensure all items within each construct were correlated, shared a common variance that is also highly intercorrelated, to validate each construct (Burns & Burns, 2008). Any item within a construct not appropriately correlated was reviewed and discarded as inappropriate. Between groups analysis was used to measure differences between those who perceive levels of discrimination and those who did not and the dependent variables. Regression analysis, specifically Partial Least Squares (PLS), was performed to test the relationship between constructs for each of the hypotheses.

CHAPTER 4 – DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter discusses the results of the research conducted in this dissertation. The chapter begins with a description of the survey participants, including response rates and participant characteristics for the sample collected. Following this, the reliability of scales and data analysis methods and statistical procedures are discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the hypothesis testing and results and a between groups analysis.

Response Rates and Final Sample

On Wednesday, May 15th, 2019, the Qualtrics online survey tool was executed, as stated in the methodology chapter, thus beginning response collection. One week later, after consulting with the Dissertation Chair, it was decided to modify the following survey restrictions imposed to successfully gather the necessary number of completed surveys: the window for past travel was increased from the past six months to the past year; and the requirement to have an even split of complete responses based on the service provider (hotel or cruise) was also loosened. On Thursday, May 23rd, the data collection was completed. The final sample size was 190 respondents, which was ten more than the originally proposed 180.

Respondent Demographics

Several demographic questions were asked to paint a profile of the survey respondents and are summarized in Table 4. Based on responses:

- A majority (85.3%) of respondents selected Hotel accommodations versus Cruise accommodations (14.7%). This is not surprising given there exists a 63:1 usage ratio of hotels to cruises (778 million domestic trips served by hotels vs. 12.41 million customer embarkations).
- Most of these SINGLE-SOLO traveler respondents self-identified as Single (66.3%), with the balance identifying as Divorced, Widowed, or Separated (33.7%).
- Respondents self-identified their Race/Ethnicity in the following proportions: White (67.9%), Black/African American (17.4%), Asian (4.2%), Hispanic/Latino (4.2%), Other (4.2%), American Indian/Native American (1.1%), Preferred Not to Answer (1.1%). When compared to current U.S. Census data, respondent ethnic demographics track similar, except for Hispanics who make up 18% of the U.S. populations (US Census, 2019).
- A majority of respondents (84.7%) indicated their sexual orientation is Heterosexual or Straight, while the remaining respondents (15.3%) identified as Bisexual (4.7%), Gay or Lesbian (8.4%), Other (1.6%), or Preferred Not to Answer (0.5%). The number of non-heterosexual respondents is more than three times higher than recent reports that estimate 4.5% of U.S. Americans identify as LGBT (Newport, 2018).
- Most of respondents (78.9%) indicated that they traveled alone for pleasure at least four times a year, with the remaining (21.1%) indicating they traveled alone for pleasure from as few as five times to as many as forty times a year.
- Nearly a fifth of respondents (19.5%) also indicated they had felt discrimination during other service encounters outside of this experience, while the remaining respondents (80.5%) did not.

Table 4.
Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Type of Accommodations	Hotel	162	85.3%
	Cruise	28	14.7%
Marital Status	Single	126	66.3%
	Divorced, Widow, Separated	64	33.7%
Race	American Indian / Native American	2	1.1%
	Asian	8	4.2%
	Black / African American	33	17.4%
	Hispanic / Latino	8	4.2%
	Other	8	4.2%
	White / Caucasian	129	67.9%
	Prefer Not to Answer	2	1.1%
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual	9	4.7%
	Gay or Lesbian	16	8.4%
	Heterosexual or Straight	161	84.7%
	Other	3	1.6%
	Prefer Not to Answer	1	0.5%
Times a Year Traveled Alone for Pleasure	0	1	0.5%
	1	34	17.9%
	2	50	26.3%
	3	45	23.7%
	4	20	10.5%
	5	8	4.2%
	6	9	4.7%
	7	6	3.2%
	8	6	3.2%
	12	6	3.2%
	21	1	0.5%
	24	1	0.5%
	25	1	0.5%
	36	1	0.5%
	40	1	0.5%
Felt Discriminated Against During Other Service Experiences	No	153	80.5%
	Yes	37	19.5%

Descriptive Statistics

The first step in the data analytics process taken was to use SPSS to generate descriptive statistics (see Table 5). Descriptive statistics provided valuable summary information about the results, including the skewness and kurtosis of a distribution. Since the values for both skewness

and kurtosis were not zero, it can be surmised that the distribution of the data is not perfectly normal (Burns & Burns, 2008). Based on this data, a Test of Normality was run to confirm the previous finding. However, prior to running a Test of Normality, SPSS was utilized to create new variables from the existing variables by computing an average mean score for the following latent variables utilized in the model (see Table 6):

- Perceived Discrimination (combining PDQ1, PDQ2, PDQ3)
- Perceived Service Satisfaction-Staff (combining PSSS1 and PSSS2)
- Perceived Service Satisfaction-Price (combining PSSP1, PSSP2, and PSSP3)
- Perceived Service Satisfaction-Image (combining PSSI1, PSSI2, and PSSI3)
- Perceived Service Satisfaction (combining PSSS, PSSP, and PSSI)
- Overall Satisfaction (combining OS1, OS2, OS3, OS4)
- Tangibles (combining T1, T2, T3, T4, and T5)
- Reliability (combining RL1, RL2, RL3, and RL4)
- Responsiveness (combining RS1, RS2, and RS3)
- Assurances (combining A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5)
- Empathy (combining E1, E2, E3, E4, and E5)
- LODGSERV (combining Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurances, and Empathy)
- Customer Loyalty (combining CL1, CL2, CL3)

In the descriptive statistics for the new latent variables, both skewness and kurtosis were also not zero, thus confirming that data distribution is not perfectly normal (Burns & Burns, 2008).

Table 5.
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	No.	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Standard Deviation	Excess Kurtosis	Skewness
PDQ1	1	1.95	1.0000	1	7	1.541	2.471	1.800
PDQ2	2	2.37	2.0000	1	7	1.782	.293	1.178
PDQ3	3	2.47	2.0000	1	7	1.784	-.296	.962
PSSS1	4	5.74	6.0000	1	7	1.456	2.148	-1.558
PSSS2	5	5.81	6.0000	1	7	1.380	2.488	-1.587
PSSP1	6	5.24	6.0000	1	7	1.482	.174	-.868
PSSP2	7	5.16	6.0000	1	7	1.522	.158	-.825
PSSP3	8	4.43	4.0000	1	7	1.698	-.825	-.180
PSSI1	9	5.53	6.0000	1	7	1.328	.718	-.939
PSSI2	10	5.58	6.0000	1	7	1.256	.620	-.909
PSSI3	11	5.19	5.0000	1	7	1.435	.187	-.696
OS1	12	5.74	6.0000	1	7	1.323	1.434	-1.305
OS2	13	5.74	6.0000	1	7	1.286	1.429	-1.289
OS3	14	5.46	6.0000	1	7	1.408	.904	-1.223
OS4	15	5.56	6.0000	1	7	1.378	.723	-1.066
T1	16	5.74	6.0000	1	7	1.244	1.418	-1.149
T2	17	5.26	6.0000	1	7	1.420	.045	-.812
T3	18	5.63	6.0000	1	7	1.366	1.223	-1.213
T4	19	5.61	6.0000	1	7	1.324	1.396	-1.231
T5	20	5.74	6.0000	2	7	1.156	.750	-.979
RL1	21	5.73	6.0000	1	7	1.292	1.673	-1.289
RL2	22	5.68	6.0000	2	7	1.258	1.038	-1.157
RL3	23	5.44	6.0000	1	7	1.431	-.303	-.726
RL4	24	5.59	6.0000	1	7	1.418	1.509	-1.258
RS1	25	5.58	6.0000	1	7	1.407	.998	-1.165
RS2	26	5.09	5.0000	1	7	1.491	-.274	-.512
RS3	27	5.22	5.0000	1	7	1.451	-.304	-.540
A1	28	5.62	6.0000	1	7	1.303	1.603	-1.212
A2	29	5.71	6.0000	1	7	1.328	1.556	-1.319
A3	30	5.37	6.0000	2	7	1.322	-.359	-.577
A4	31	5.49	6.0000	1	7	1.336	1.016	-1.073
A5	32	5.64	6.0000	1	7	1.313	1.124	-1.173
E1	33	5.37	6.0000	1	7	1.495	.878	-1.064
E2	34	5.21	5.0000	1	7	1.409	-.021	-.554
E3	35	5.02	5.0000	1	7	1.515	-.540	-.368
E4	36	5.29	6.0000	1	7	1.535	.620	-.976
E5	37	5.19	5.0000	1	7	1.535	.217	-.767
CL1	38	5.59	6.0000	1	7	1.491	1.371	-1.284
CL2	39	5.57	6.0000	1	7	1.470	1.388	-1.292
CL3	40	5.47	6.0000	1	7	1.539	1.151	-1.201

Note: PD = Perceived Discrimination; PSSS = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Staff; PSSP = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Price; PSSI = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Image; OS = Overall Satisfaction; T =Tangible; RL = Reliability; RS = Responsiveness; A = Assurances; E = Empathy; CL = Customer Loyalty

Table 6.
Descriptive Statistics for Latent Variables in the Study

Variable	No.	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Standard Deviation	Excess Kurtosis	Skewness
PD	1	2.2667	2.0000	1	7	1.45810	.503	1.102
PSSS	*2*	*5.771*	*6.0000*	*1*	*7*	*1.36139*	*2.235*	*-1.529*
PSSP	*3*	*4.9456*	*5.0000*	*1*	*7*	*1.29983*	*-.043*	*-.421*
PSSI	*4*	*5.4333*	*5.6667*	*1.33*	*7*	*1.20598*	*.302*	*-.680*
PSS	5	5.3833	5.5000	2.33	7	1.01879	-.051	-.542
OS	6	5.6737	6.0000	1	7	1.23768	.825	-1.089
T	*7*	*5.5968*	*6.0000*	*2.20*	*7*	*1.07388*	*-.011*	*-.776*
RL	*8*	*5.6118*	*5.7500*	*2*	*7*	*1.12877*	*-.092*	*-.708*
RS	*9*	*5.2965*	*5.3333*	*1.33*	*7*	*1.26004*	*-.124*	*-.567*
A	*10*	*5.5653*	*5.8000*	*1.80*	*7*	*1.14506*	*.367*	*-.890*
E	*11*	*5.2158*	*5.4000*	*1*	*7*	*1.30362*	*.511*	*-.713*
LS	12	5.4572	5.5533	2	7	1.08256	-.021	-.641
CL	13	5.5456	6.000	1	7	1.42084	1.567	-1.282

Note: PD = Perceived Discrimination; PSSS = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Staff; PSSP = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Price; PSSI = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Image PSS = Perceived Service Satisfaction; OS = Overall Satisfaction; T =Tangible; RL = Reliability; RS = Responsiveness; A = Assurances; E = Empathy; LS = LODGSERV; CL = Customer Loyalty

Table 7 summarizes the Test of Normality performed using SPSS, reflecting that all Shapiro-Wilk Test results reaffirm the earlier finding that all latent variables deviate significantly (.000) from normality. The box plots in Figure 5 further illustrate that all frequency distributions for these latent variables are asymmetric, with each containing numerous outliers. Since the data does not have a normal distribution, this provides additional support for using PLS-SEM in analyzing the data (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 7. Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Perceived Discrimination	.213	190	.000	.832	190	.000
Perceived Service Satisfaction	.062	190	.071	.969	190	.000

Overall Satisfaction	.193	190	.000	.882	190	.000
LODGSERV	.083	190	.003	.957	190	.000
Customer Loyalty	.178	190	.000	.864	190	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

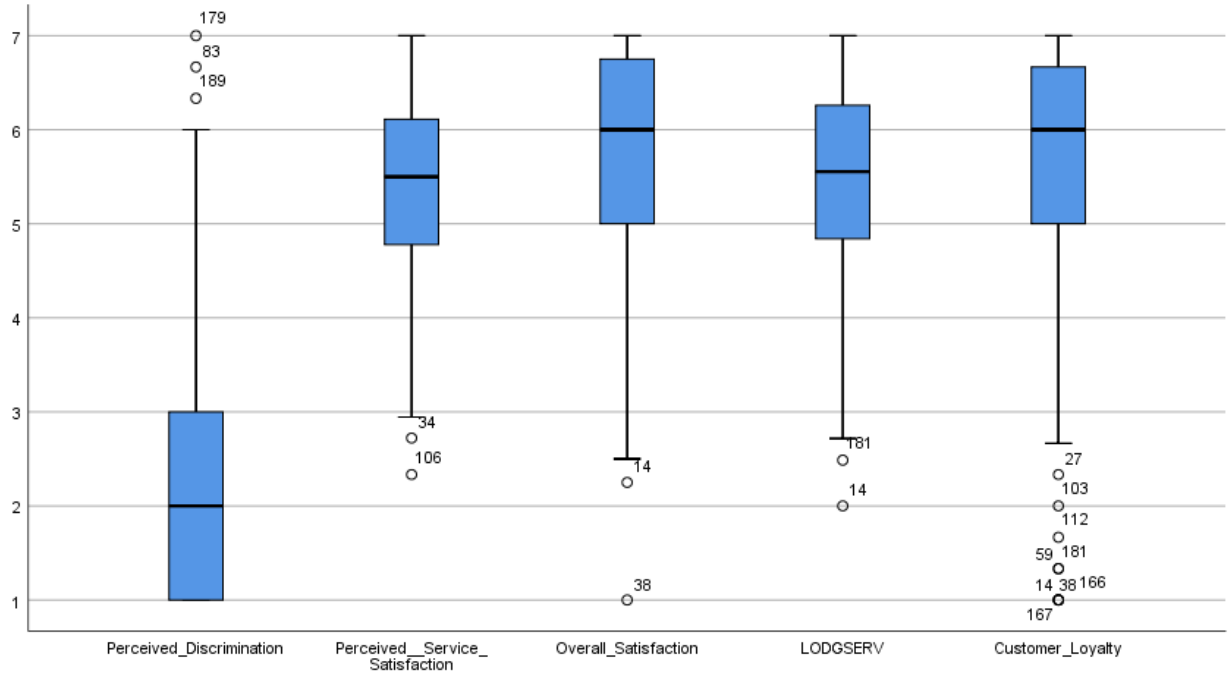


Figure 5. Boxplots of Latent Variables

Reliability of Scales Analysis

All of the scales used in this study were all previously validated scales. Having said that, it is important to look at reliability of the scales being used. Using SPSS, a reliability analysis was conducted. Table 8 summarize the results reflecting internal consistency reliability for each latent variable in the model, including the newly formed constructs for PSS and LS. Looking at Cronbach's alpha values, all latent variables, except PSSP (α = .777), are above .8 and are therefore considered highly acceptable for assuming homogeneity of items (Burns & Burns, 2008). OS (.937), LS (.970), ad CL (.943) in particular have an excellent strength association with α values greater than .9, while just below.8, PSSP is still considered to have a good strength

association with α value between .7 to <.8 (Burns & Burns, 2008). The next step is to perform a factor analysis to test that items load as predicted.

Table 8.
Internal Consistency Reliability of Latent Variables

Latent Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
PD	3	.813
PSS	8	.855
PSSS	*2*	*.915*
PSSP	*3*	*.777*
PSSI	*3*	*.884*
Overall Satisfaction	4	.937
LS	22	.970
T	*5*	*.882*
RL	*4*	*.858*
RS	*3*	*.837*
A	*5*	*.917*
E	*5*	*.920*
CL	3	.943

Factor Analysis. SPSS was used to perform an exploratory factor analysis. Table 9 summarizes the results of the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) conducted on each latent variable in the questionnaire completed by Single-Solo Travelers concerning their perceptions of discrimination while traveling with hotel or cruise service providers, and their perceptions of service indicators and future intentions for repatronage.

Table 9.
Principal Component Analysis Rotated Component Matrix[a]

Previously Validated Construct		Component				
		1	2	3	4	5
Perceived Discrimination	SECTION I:					
	I experienced discrimination while shopping for a hotel (cruise).				**-.755**	
	I felt at a disadvantage when selecting a hotel (cruise) because I was a single traveler.				**-.892**	
	I believed hotels (cruises) discriminated against single travelers.				**-.843**	

Table 9.

Principal Component Analysis Rotated Component Matrix[a]

PSS-Staff	SECTION III:					
	The staff treated me with full respect.		**.833**			
	The staff was friendly towards me.		**.775**			
PSS-Price	SECTION IV:					
	There was sufficient value for the money paid for the hotel (or cruise).	.323	**.519**			.483
	The hotel (cruise) had a consistent pricing policy.	.337	.443			**.495**
	The hotel (cruise) had a low guest room price.					**.714**
PSS-Image	SECTION V:					
	The hotel (cruise) is popular.			**.834**		
	The hotel (cruise) has a high reputation.	.313		**.809**		
	The hotel (cruise) has strong brand differentiation.			**.792**		
Overall Satisfaction	SECTION VI:					
	Overall, I was very satisfied with the services offered by the hotel (cruise).	.489	**.560**			
	I was satisfied with my decision to stay at this hotel (cruise).	**.577**	.521	.317		
	Overall, the service offered at this hotel (cruise) met my expectations.	**.613**	.540			
	Compared to other hotels (cruises) I've stayed in I was very satisfied with this hotel (cruise).	**.588**	.555			
PSQ-Tangibles	SECTION VII:					
	The hotel (cruise) personnel were clean, neat and appropriately dressed.	.404	**.550**	.363		
	The hotel (cruise) served food and beverages that were consistently high in quality.	.506		**.530**		
	The hotel (cruise) gave me a room that was visually attractive.	**.541**	.356	.477		
	The hotel (cruise) décor was consistent with its image and price range.	**.674**	.315	.302		
	The hotel (cruise) buildings, lobbies, and public areas were visually attractive.	**.579**		.439		
PSQ-Reliability	SECTION VIII::					
	The hotel (cruise) utilities and equipment worked well.	.315	**.534**	.466		
	The hotel (cruise) was consistent.	**.568**	.517	.305		
	The hotel (cruise) quickly corrected anything that was wrong.	**.631**	.322	.314		
	The hotel (cruise) provided promised/advertised services in a timely manner.	**.612**	.341			
PSS-Responsiveness	SECTION IX:					
	The hotel (cruise) provided prompt and quick service.	**.586**	.460			
	The hotel (cruise) adjusted personnel to help when a line formed at the front desk.	**.654**				.401
	The hotel (cruise) staff made extra effort to handle my special requests.	**.776**				

Table 9.

Principal Component Analysis Rotated Component Matrix[a]

PSS-Assurances	SECTION X:					
	The hotel (or cruise) personnel seemed well-trained, competent and experienced.	**.569**	.496			
	The hotel (cruise) made me feel comfortable and confident in my dealings with them.	**.698**	.456			
	The hotel (cruise) seemed to give employees support so they could do their jobs well.	**.623**	.411			
	The hotel (cruise) personnel were both able and willing to give me information about hotel and outside services.	**.693**	.320			
	The hotel (cruise) staff answered my questions completely.	**.679**	.311			
PSS-Empathy	SECTION XI:					
	The hotel (cruise) made me feel like a special and valued guest.	**.655**	.479			
	The hotel (cruise) employees were sympathetic and reassuring if something was wrong.	**.701**	.362			.338
	The hotel (cruise) eliminated unnecessary bureaucracy to make contacting a hotel (cruise) manager or supervisor easier.	**.792**				
	The hotel (cruise) employees were sensitive to my individual needs and wants rather than always going by the book.	**.767**				
	The hotel (cruise) anticipated my individual needs and wants.	**.785**				
Customer Loyalty	SECTION XII:					
	I would like to come back to the hotel (cruise) in the future.	**.660**	.527			
	I would likely speak highly of this hotel (cruise) and recommend it to other single travelers.	**.695**	.494			
	I would more frequently visit this hotel (cruise).	**.742**	.336			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.a

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

A closer look at the PCA in Table 9 reveals that several of the factor loadings, specifically factors 1, 3, 4 and 6, did not match up to previously validated scales. Following rotation, factor 1 loaded on thirty-two items that reflected perceived service satisfaction, overall satisfaction, service quality and customer loyalty and accounted for 30.8% of the variance exemplified by the two highest loading items, “The hotel (cruise) eliminated unnecessary bureaucracy to make contacting a hotel (cruise) manage or supervisor easy” and “The hotel (cruise) anticipated my individual needs and wants.” Twenty-six items loaded on factor 2 accounting for 16.6% of the variance suggesting it was measuring aspects of perceived service satisfaction namely, “The staff treated me with full respect” and “The staff was friendly towards

me." Twelve items loaded on factor 3 accounting for 11.1% of the variance suggesting it was measuring items related to the hotel's (cruise's) image, namely, "The hotel (cruise) is popular" and "The hotel (cruise) has a high reputation." Three items loaded on a factor 4 accounting for 6.6% of the variance suggesting it was measuring perceived discrimination, namely, "I felt at a disadvantage when selecting a hotel (cruise) because I was a single traveler" and "I believe hotels (cruises) discriminated against single travelers." Five items loaded on factor 5 and accounted for 5.1% of the variance. The majority of the items loading on this factor relate to pricing as represented by "The hotel had a low guest room price". Given these results, another look at how items loaded within each factor using SmartPLS is warranted.

Table 10 summarizes the total variance explained showing the data loads on five factors that explain up to 70.238% of the total variance. Almost all correlations for the five factors were in excess of .30 and both the KMO and Barlett's test produced criteria that supported the application of PCA (see Table 11). Communalities varied from .858 to .591. Applying Kaiser's Rule and the scree test (see Figure 6), five factors were deemed important.

Table 10.
Factor Analysis – Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared			Rotation Sums of Squared		
Component	**Total**	**% of**	**Cumulative**	**Total**	**% of**	**Cumulative**	**Total**	**% of**	**Cumulative**
1	21.285	53.212	53.212	21.285	53.212	53.212	12.324	30.810	30.810
2	2.219	5.549	58.760	2.219	5.549	58.760	6.645	16.612	47.423
3	1.780	4.451	63.212	1.780	4.451	63.212	4.442	11.105	58.527
4	1.513	3.782	66.993	1.513	3.782	66.993	2.636	6.590	65.117
5	1.298	3.244	70.238	1.298	3.244	70.238	2.048	5.121	70.238
6	.932	2.331	72.569						
7	.863	2.158	74.727						
8	.834	2.085	76.812						
9	.795	1.988	78.800						
10	.673	1.682	80.482						
11	.629	1.574	82.056						
12	.578	1.444	83.500						
13	.545	1.361	84.861						
14	.487	1.219	86.080						

Table 10.

Factor Analysis – Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared			Rotation Sums of Squared		
	Total	% of	Cumulative	Total	% of	Cumulative	Total	% of	Cumulative
15	.451	1.128	87.208						
16	.396	.991	88.199						
17	.392	.980	89.180						
18	.363	.908	90.088						
19	.343	.858	90.946						
20	.316	.791	91.737						
21	.300	.751	92.488						
22	.277	.693	93.180						
23	.266	.666	93.847						
24	.232	.581	94.427						
25	.230	.575	95.002						
26	.209	.523	95.526						
27	.203	.508	96.033						
28	.190	.474	96.507						
29	.186	.466	96.973						
30	.161	.403	97.376						
31	.153	.382	97.758						
32	.145	.362	98.120						
33	.134	.334	98.454						
34	.118	.296	98.750						
35	.108	.269	99.019						
36	.095	.238	99.257						
37	.090	.226	99.483						
38	.079	.197	99.680						
39	.067	.167	99.847						
40	.061	.153	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

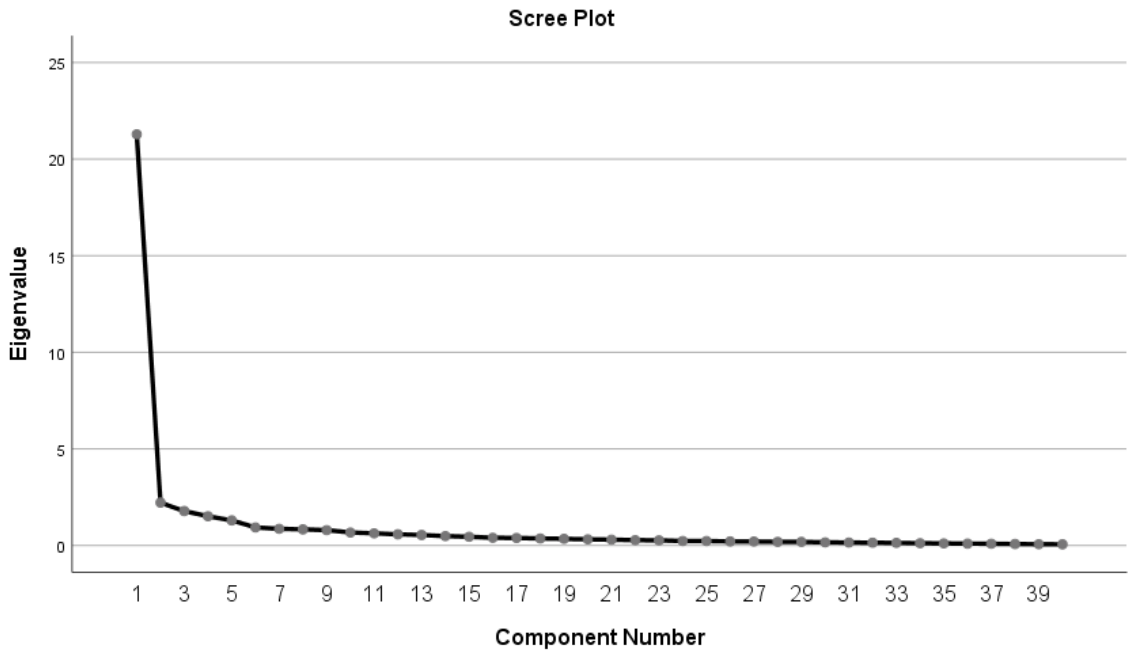


Figure 6. Factor Analysis Scree Plot

Table 11.
Factor Analysis - KMO and Bartlett's test

Variable	KMO & Bartlett's Test		
PD	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.651
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Aprox. Chi-Square	229.134
		Df	3
		Sig.	.000
PSS	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.770
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Aprox. Chi-Square	859.153
		Df	28
		Sig.	.000
OS	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.854
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Aprox. Chi-Square	666.902
		Df	6
		Sig.	.000
LS	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.955
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Aprox. Chi-Square	3693.450
		Df	231
		Sig.	.000

Table 11.
Factor Analysis - KMO and Bartlett's test

Variable	KMO & Bartlett's Test		
CL	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.754
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Aprox. Chi-Square	532.999
		Df	3
		Sig.	.000

Note: PD = Perceived Discrimination; PSS = Perceived Service Satisfaction; OS = Overall Satisfaction; LS = LODGSERV; CL = Customer Loyalty

Data Analysis Using SmartPLS Software

SmartPLS Software (version 3.2.8) was utilized to perform Partial Least Square (PLS) data analysis. The application of PLS-SEM in marketing studies has rapidly grown in popularity during the past decade (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017), suggesting its use as a viable method for analysis. Figure 7 reflects how the model was loaded into SmartPLS.

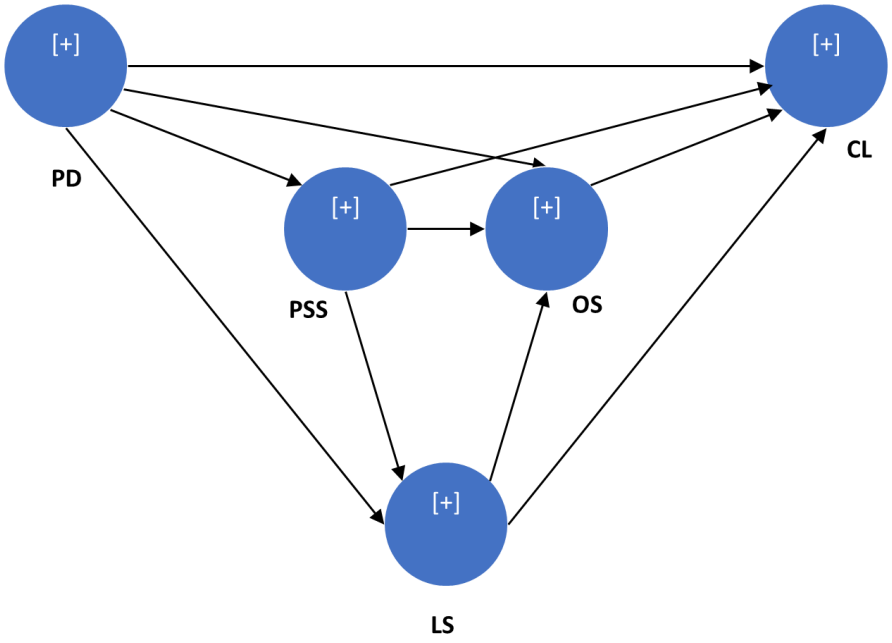


Figure 7. SmartPLS Model Loading
Note: PD = Perceived Discrimination; PSS = Perceived Service Satisfaction; OS = Overall Satisfaction; LS = LODGSERV; CL = Customer Loyalty

Reflective versus formative measures. When using the SmartPLS software, each construct in the model can be set up as either a reflective measure or a formative measure. In this model, PSS and LS were set up as formative measures and PD, OS, and CL were set up as

reflective measures. The latter constructs were set up as reflective because each individual item in the construct are highly correlated with each other and could be left out without significantly altering the meaning of the construct (Hair et al., 2017). The former constructs (PSS and LS) were loaded as formative constructs because they are each comprised of various items that form individual constructs (e.g., PSSS, PSSP, PSSI and T, RS, RL, A, E) that each capture a specific aspect of the construct that cannot be replaced or interchanged (Hair et al., 2017).

SmartPLS factor analysis. SmartPLS provides a systematic approach to factor analysis, explaining how the items loaded on each factor. The results in Table 12 reflect that for the five constructs, perceived discrimination, perceived service satisfaction, overall satisfaction, LODGSERV, and customer loyalty, there were many strong item outer loading results. Specifically, all constructs in the analysis had a majority of items that loaded >.7. All items for perceived discrimination, overall satisfaction, and customer loyalty all loaded perfectly at >.7 reflecting validity to the analysis. For the other constructs, Perceived Service Satisfaction and LODGSERV, there were a few items that were < .7. These three items were removed based on a common rule of thumb that outer loadings should be 0.708 or higher and outer loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 should only be removed if it improves composite reliability (Hair et al., 2017). The second portion of Table 12 demonstrates the results when the three items (PSSP3, PSSI3, and T2) were removed two new items (PSSI1 and PSSI2) fell below the .7 threshold. These two items were also removed and the results (see the third portion of Table 12) show all items were above the .7 threshold. This version of the factors was retained for all subsequent analysis.

Table 12.
Factor Analysis Outer Loadings

Original Model					
	CL	**LS**	**OS**	**PD**	**PSS**

Table 12.
Factor Analysis Outer Loadings

PDQ1				0.905	
PDQ2				0.870	
PDQ3				0.782	
PSSS1					0.769
PSSS2					0.714
PSSP1					0.788
PSSP2					0.741
PSSP3					0.549
	CL	**LS**	**OS**	**PD**	**PSS**
PSSI1					0.709
PSSI2					0.723
PSSI3					0.628
OS1			0.902		
OS2			0.932		
OS3			0.938		
OS4			0.899		
T1		0.725			
T2		0.692			
T3		0.745			
T4		0.795			
T5		0.707			
RL1		0.710			
RL2		0.835			
RL3		0.805			
RL4		0.732			
RS1		0.819			
RS2		0.746			
RS3		0.787			
A1		0.821			
A2		0.879			
A3		0.815			
A4		0.813			
A5		0.808			
E1		0.807			
E2		0.821			
E3		0.771			
E4		0.812			
E5		0.745			
CL1	0.944				
CL2	0.963				
CL3	0.936				
Three Items Removed					

Table 12.
Factor Analysis Outer Loadings

	CL	LS	OS	PD	PSS
PDQ1				0.905	
PDQ2				0.864	
PDQ3				0.784	
PSSS1					0.816
PSSS2					0.758
PSSP1					0.802
	CL	**LS**	**OS**	**PD**	**PSS**
PSSP2					0.750
PSSI1					0.683
PSSI2					0.689
OS1			0.902		
OS2			0.931		
OS3			0.938		
OS4			0.899		
T1		0.723			
T3		0.740			
T4		0.790			
T5		0.706			
RL1		0.708			
RL2		0.836			
RL3		0.807			
RL4		0.738			
RS1		0.823			
RS2		0.745			
RS3		0.789			
A1		0.825			
A2		0.881			
A3		0.815			
A4		0.812			
A5		0.810			
E1		0.810			
E2		0.822			
E3		0.773			
E4		0.811			
E5		0.745			
CL1	0.944				
CL2	0.963				
CL3	0.936				
Two Items Removed					

Table 12.
Factor Analysis Outer Loadings

	CL	LS	OS	PD	PSS
PDQ1				0.908	
PDQ2				0.873	
PDQ3				0.777	
PSSS1					0.865
PSSS2					0.833
	CL	**LS**	**OS**	**PD**	**PSS**
PSSP1					0.820
PSSP2					0.796
OS1			0.902		
OS2			0.931		
OS3			0.938		
OS4			0.899		
T1		0.722			
T3		0.738			
T4		0.790			
T5		0.704			
RL1		0.707			
RL2		0.836			
RL3		0.806			
RL4		0.737			
RS1		0.824			
RS2		0.745			
RS3		0.789			
A1		0.825			
A2		0.881			
A3		0.815			
A4		0.812			
A5		0.810			
E1		0.811			
E2		0.823			
E3		0.773			
E4		0.812			
E5		0.745			
CL1	0.944				
CL2	0.964				
CL3	0.935				

Note: PD = Perceived Discrimination; PSSS = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Staff; PSSP = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Price; PSSI = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Image; OS =

Table 12.
Factor Analysis Outer Loadings

Overall Satisfaction; T =Tangible; RL = Reliability; RS = Responsiveness; A = Assurances; E = Empathy; CL = Customer Loyalty

Statistical Procedure

The SmartPLS software was used to generate the PLS Algorithm report, which provides several key indicators needed to successfully evaluate the model fit. First among these indicators is a key benchmark reflected in the PLS Algorithm Stop Criterion Changes results. In this case, the results reflect the algorithm can be considered very efficient after converging only after 11 iterations. According to Hair et al. (2017), the number of iterations shown in this table "should be lower than the maximum number of iterations (e.g., 300) defined in the PLS-SEM algorithm parameters settings" (p. 123). Now that this first indicator has been met, the next set of indicators were examined, along with the reliability of both reflective and formative measurements in the model.

Reliability of reflective measurements. Table 13 shows results from the PLS Algorithm that evaluates the internal consistency reliability (ICR), convergent validity (CV), and heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) for all reflective measures. All measures achieved both a Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability greater than .60, and an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) greater than 0.708. Figures 8, 9, and 10 provide a visual representation of the Cronbach's Alpha, the Composite Reliability, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Table 13.
Reliability Analysis

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CL	0.943	0.944	0.963	0.898
LS	0.969	0.971	0.972	0.620
OS	0.937	0.939	0.955	0.842
PD	0.813	0.817	0.890	0.730
PSS	0.848	0.850	0.898	0.687

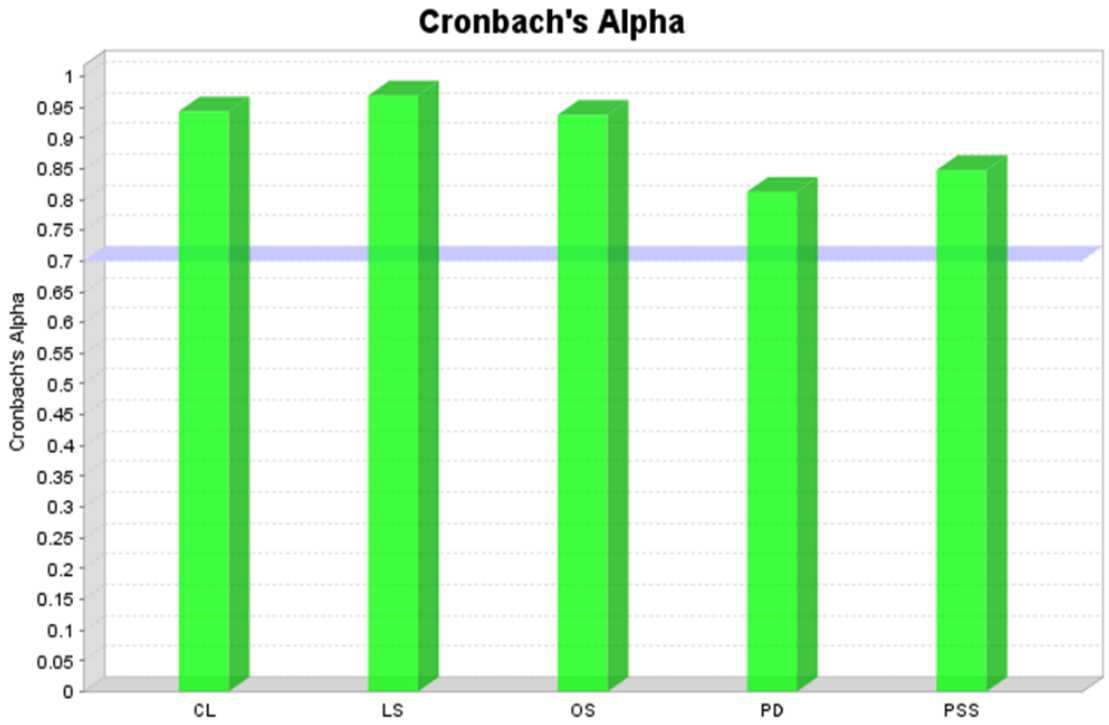


Figure 8. SmartPLS Cronbach's Alpha Graph

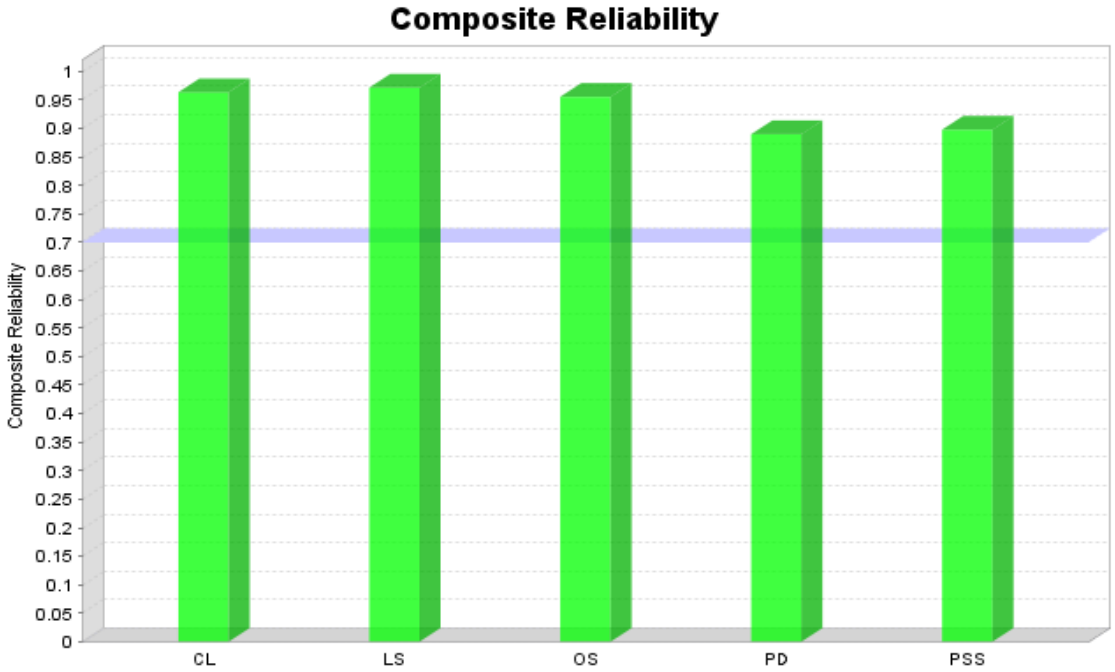


Figure 9. SmartPLS Composite Reliability Graph

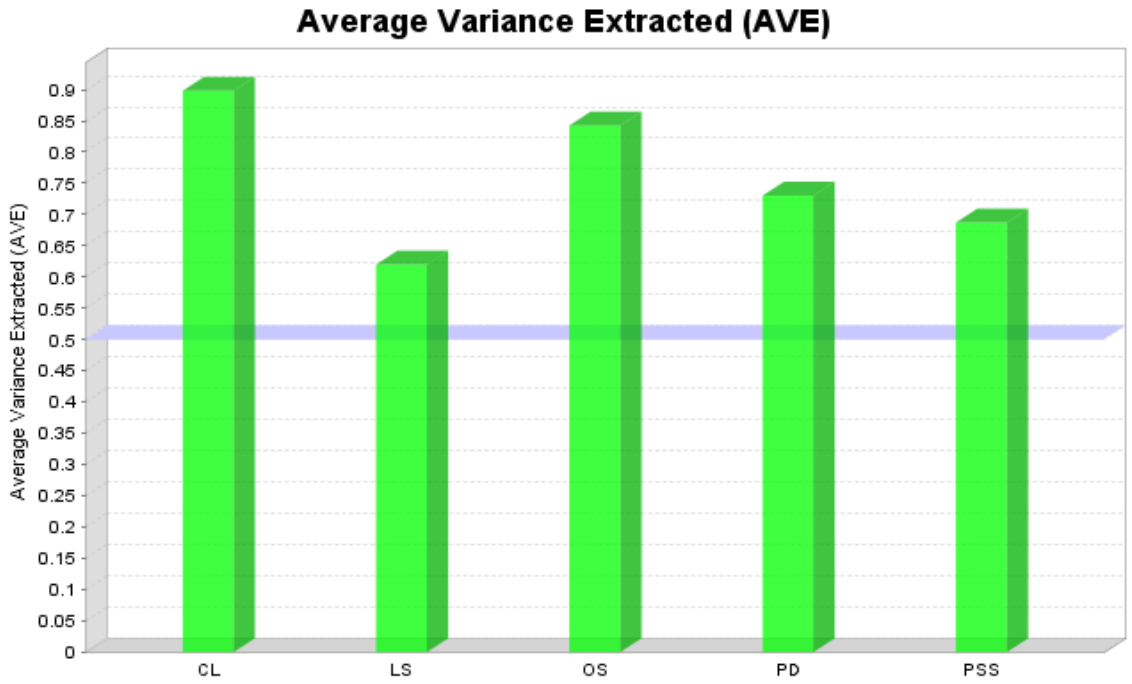


Figure 10. SmartPLS Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Graph

To determine discriminant validity for these reflective constructs we can look to the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) of the correlations in Table 14. All, but two HTMT values are below .90, the suggested threshold value in Hensler et al.'s study results (as cited by Hair et al., 2017) for models that include constructs that are conceptually very similar (e.g., OS and CL). This requires we turn to the confidence intervals results provided by the PLS Bootstrapping for HTMT (see Table 15). All confidence intervals are below 1, which indicates discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, based on indicators provided by ICV, CV, and HTMT results, these reflective constructs are deemed to demonstrate reliability.

Table 14.
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) in PLS Algorithm

	CL	**LS**	**OS**	**PD**	**PSS**
CL					
LS	**0.907**				
OS	0.855	**0.909**			
PD	0.272	0.344	0.382		
PSS	0.776	0.811	0.804	0.336	

Table 15.
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Confidence Interval in PLS Bootstrapping

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	2.5%	97.5%
LS -> CL	0.907	0.908	0.875	0.937
OS -> CL	0.855	0.854	0.778	0.916
OS -> LS	0.909	0.909	0.866	0.943
PD -> CL	0.272	0.274	0.098	0.452
PD -> LS	0.344	0.349	0.174	0.541
PD -> OS	0.382	0.385	0.207	0.568
PSS -> CL	0.776	0.778	0.671	0.875
PSS -> LS	0.811	0.814	0.664	0.923
PSS -> OS	0.804	0.805	0.666	0.924
PSS -> PD	0.336	0.344	0.176	0.528

Reliability of formative measurements. To determine reliability for formative measurements in the model Collinearity Statistics in the PLS Algorithm results, is used as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). Table 16 reflects the Outer VIF Values for the formative measurements of PSSS and LS items in the model. Collinearity is deemed not to be at a critical level since all VIF results, except for two items (A2 = 5.294 and CL2 = 6.070), which were below a VIF value of 5, an acceptable level of collinearity. Hair et al. (2017) suggested removing items with a VIF value higher than 5, but only if the constructs still sufficiently measure the content from a theoretical perspective. Removing these two items significantly impacted the factor analysis and would require additional items be removed, fundamentally changing the constructs, so despite being above the acceptable VIF Value of 5, A2 and CL2 were retained as part of the construct for all subsequent analysis.

Table 16.
Collinearity Statistics (Outer VIF Values) for Formative Measurements

	VIF
PSSS1	4.060
PSSS2	3.737
PSSP1	**2.222**
PSSP2	**2.048**
OS1	3.304
OS2	4.486
OS3	4.737
OS4	3.119
T1	3.148
T3	3.142
T4	3.073
T5	**2.720**
RL1	3.217
RL2	4.494
RL3	3.538
RL4	**2.567**
RS1	3.566
RS2	**2.592**
RS3	3.112
A1	3.522
A2	**5.294**
A3	**2.949**
A4	3.675
A5	3.527
E1	4.334
E2	4.213
E3	**2.963**
E4	3.725
E5	**2.995**
CL1	4.579
CL2	**6.070**
CL3	3.945
PD2	**2.668**
PD3	**2.366**
PD1	**1.448**

Note: PSSS = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Staff; PSSP = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Price; PSSI = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Image; T =Tangible; RL = Reliability; RS = Responsiveness; A = Assurances; E = Empathy

Evaluating the formative measurement model. Once reliability is established, bootstrapping results report is assessed to further evaluate the measurement model for the two formative measures. Table 17 provides a summary of the key outer weights, outer loadings and significant testing results. Looking at the significance level, all formative indicators were significant at a 5% level.

Table 17.
Formative Construct Outer Weights and Significance Testing Results

Formative Constructs	**Formative Indicators**	**Outer Weights (Outer Loadings)**	***t* Value**	***p* Value**	**95% BCa Confidence Interval**	**Significance ($p < 0.05$)?**
Perceived Service Satisfaction (PSS)	Q10_1 -> PSSS	0.313 (0.865)	30.376	0.000	[0.278, 0.352]	YES
	Q10_2 -> PSSS	0.279 (0.833)	26.238	0.000	[0.241, 0.322]	YES
	Q11_1 -> PSSP	0.319 (0.820)	28.332	0.000	[0.280, 0.376]	YES
	Q11_2 -> PSSP	0.295 (0.796)	17.919	0.000	[0.254, 0.353]	YES
LODGSERV (LS)	Q14_1->T	0.058 (0.722)	13.936	0.000	[0.052, 0.065]	YES
	Q14_3->T	0.057 (0.738)	19.401	0.000	[0.050, 0.063]	YES
	Q14_4->T	0.058 (0.790)	23.725	0.000	[0.051, 0.064]	YES
	Q14_5->T	0.050 (0.704)	16.080	0.000	[0.041, 0.058]	YES
	Q15_1->RL	0.055 (0.707)	18.202	0.000	[0.048, 0.063]	YES
	Q15_2->RL	0.067 (0.836)	36.114	0.000	[0.062, 0.074]	YES
	Q15_3->RL	0.063 (0.806)	24.443	0.000	[0.057, 0.069]	YES
	Q15_4->RL	0.057 (0.737)	18.184	0.000	[0.049, 0.065]	YES
	Q16_1->RS	0.067 (0.824)	32.202	0.000	[0.060, 0.074]	YES
	Q16_2->RS	0.052 (0.745)	18.317	0.000	[0.045, 0.059]	YES
	Q16_3->RS	0.056 (0.789)	19.405	0.000	[0.050, 0.063]	YES

Table 17.
Formative Construct Outer Weights and Significance Testing Results

Formative Constructs	**Formative Indicators**	**Outer Weights (Outer Loadings)**	***t* Value**	***p* Value**	**95% BCa Confidence Interval**	**Significance (p < 0.05)?**
	Q17_1->A	0.068 (0.825)	30.793	0.000	[0.063, 0.076]	YES
	Q17_2->A	0.070 (0.881)	47.220	0.000	[0.065, 0.077]	YES
	Q17_3->A	0.064 (0.815)	31.164	0.000	[0.058, 0.070]	YES
	Q17_4->A	0.061 (0.812)	34.216	0.000	[0.055, 0.066]	YES
	Q17_5->A	0.062 (0.810)	27.029	0.000	[0.055, 0.068]	YES
	Q18_1->E	0.066 (0.811)	26.067	0.000	[0.060, 0.072]	YES
	Q18_2->E	0.065 (0.823)	29.075	0.000	[0.060, 0.073]	YES
	Q18_3->E	0.055 (0.773)	19.612	0.000	[0.046, 0.061]	YES
	Q18_4->E	0.062 (0.812)	29.818	0.000	[0.057, 0.069]	YES
	Q18_5->E	0.053 (0.745)	17.098	0.000	[0.044, 0.061]	YES

Note: PSSS = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Staff; PSSP = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Price; PSSI = Perceived Service Satisfaction-Image; T =Tangible; RL = Reliability; RS = Responsiveness; A = Assurances; E = Empathy

SmartPLS Results

After examining reliability, the next step in the process was to assess the structural model results. This began by examining the structural model for any collinearity issues. The results in Table 18 represents the Inner VIF Values for all sets of predictors constructs in the model. Results revealed no collinearity issues exists. All predictors were below Hair et al.'s (2017) recommended threshold of 5.

Table 18.
Inner VIF Values

	CL	LS	OS	PD	PSS
CL					
LS	4.629		2.267		
OS	4.404				
PD	1.130	1.086	1.112		1.000
PSS	2.343	1.086	2.231		

The next result to look at in the PLS report is the R Square values (see Table 19). Based on Hair et al.'s (2017) rule of thumb, the R^2 values of CL (0.773), LS (0.559), OS (0.773), and PSS (0.079) are extremely strong. Since the R^2 measures the strength of the least-square fit to the factors, this is a strong indicator that the strength of the factors in the model are a good fit and the model explains 77.3% of the variance.

Table 19.
R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
CL	0.773	0.768
LS	0.559	0.554
OS	0.773	0.769
PSS	0.079	0.074

After evaluating the R^2, the f^2 results were reviewed (see Table 20), which revealed that, based on guidelines established by Cohen (1988), removal of the LS construct from the model would have an extremely strong effects given the large f^2 values (LS → CL = 0.418 and LS → OS = 1.041). Cohen's guidelines set values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 to represent small, medium, and large effects (as cited in Hair et al., 2017) Similarly, removing PSS from the model would have a very strong effect on LS (PSS → LS = 1.054). Other notable effects include: removing OS (0.033), which would have a small effect on CL; removing PD (0.024 and 0.086) would have a small effect on LS and PSS; and removing PSS (0.050) would have a small effect on OS. The

impact of removing any of the remaining constructs would not affect results. This helps understand the predictive accuracy of the R^2 values.

Table 20.
f Square

	CL	LS	OS	PD	PSS
CL					
LS	**0.418**		**1.041**		
OS	0.033				
PD	0.011	0.024	0.017		0.086
PSS	0.015	**1.054**	0.050		

Path coefficients. Investigating path coefficients contributes to understanding the structural model relationships (see Table 21 and Figure 11). The PLS Algorithm results in Figure 11 revealed that the overall model explained 77.3% of the total variance with OS (0.773) and LODGSERV (0.559) appearing to have the strongest relationship with CL in the model versus PSS (0.079) that appeared to have a weak relationship. Additionally, PD had a negative effect on PSS, LS, and OS, but the direct relationship with CL was positive. To determine if all these relationships were significant, the PLS Bootstrapping report was run (see Figure 12).

Table 21.
Path Coefficients

	CL	LS	OS	PD	PSS
CL					
LS	0.663		0.732		
OS	0.181				
PD	0.052	-0.106	-0.065		-0.281
PSS	0.090	0.711	0.159		

Note: PD = Perceived Discrimination; PSS = Perceived Service Satisfaction; OS = Overall Satisfaction; LS = LODGSERV; CL = Customer Loyalty

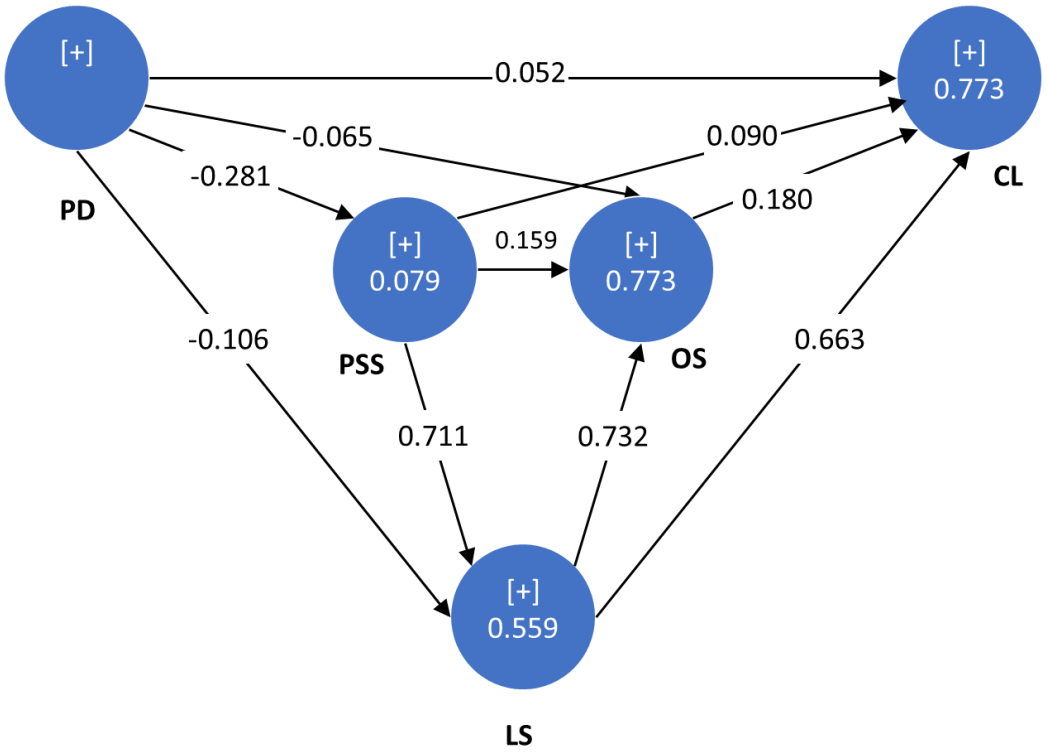


Figure 11. SmartPLS Reflective Model PLS Algorithm Results
Note: PD = Perceived Discrimination; PSS = Perceived Service Satisfaction; OS = Overall Satisfaction; LS = LODGSERV; CL = Customer Loyalty

Table 22 and Figure 12 both reflect the results of the PLS Bootstrapping report. These results confirmed the three path coefficients (LS → CL = 0.663, LS → OS = 0.732, and PSS → LS = 0.711) with the highest impacts were statistically significant at the 5% level. Additionally, PD → OS (-0.065), PD → PSS (-0.281), and PSS → OS (0.159) were also significant at the 5% level.

Table 22.
Significance Testing Results of the Structural Model Path Coefficient

	Path Coefficient	***t* Value**	***p* Values**	**95% Confidence Interval**	***Significance (p < 0.05)?***
LS → CL	0.663	6.505	0.000	[0.464, 0.862]	Yes
LS → OS	0.732	12.035	0.000	[0.588, 0.822]	Yes
OS → CL	0.181	1.590	0.113	[-0.031, 0.406]	No
PD → CL	0.052	1.456	0.146	[-0.017, 0.119]	No
PD → LS	-0.106	1.599	0.110	[-0.258, 0.021]	No

Table 22.
Significance Testing Results of the Structural Model Path Coefficient

	Path Coefficient	***t* Value**	***p* Values**	**95% Confidence Interval**	***Significance (p < 0.05)?***
PD → OS	-0.065	2.009	0.045	[-0.129, -0.008]	Yes
PD → PSS	-0.281	3.838	0.000	[-0.433, -0.161]	Yes
PSS → CL	0.090	1.564	0.118	[-0.027, 0.193]	No
PSS → LS	0.711	10.327	0.000	[0.552, 0.832]	Yes
PSS → OS	0.159	2.364	0.018	[0.041, 0.317]	Yes

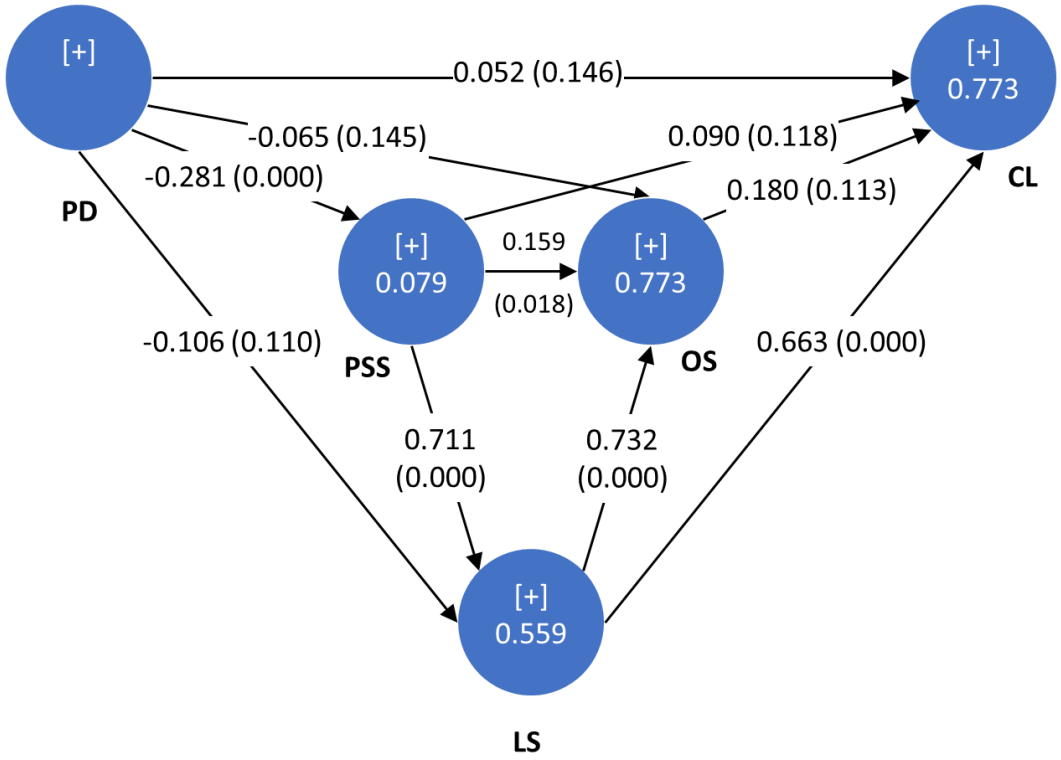


Figure 12: SmartPLS Reflective Model PLS Bootstrapping Results
Note: PD = Perceived Discrimination; PSS = Perceived Service Satisfaction; OS = Overall Satisfaction; LS = LODGSERV; CL = Customer Loyalty

Table 23 summarizes the PLS bootstrapping significant testing results for total effect. All total effects, except for OS → CL (0.113) are significant at the 5% level.

Table 23.
Significance Testing Results of the Total Effects

	Path Coefficient	***t* Value**	***p* Values**	**95% Confidence Interval**	***Significance (p < 0.05)?***
LS → CL	0.795	15.576	0.000	[0.704, 0.892]	Yes
LS → OS	0.732	12.035	0.000	[0.588, 0.822]	Yes
OS → CL	0.181	1.590	0.113	[-0.031, 0.406]	No
PD → CL	-0.237	3.020	0.003	[-0.399, -0.093]	Yes
PD → LS	-0.306	3.788	0.000	[-0.486, -0.159]	Yes
PD → OS	-0.334	4.335	0.000	[-0.489, -0.192]	Yes
PD → PSS	-0.281	3.838	0.000	[-0.433, -0.161]	Yes
PSS → CL	0.684	12.792	0.000	[0.581, 0.789]	Yes
PSS → LS	0.711	10.327	0.000	[0.552, 0.832]	Yes
PSS → OS	0.679	9.991	0.000	[0.547, 0.803]	Yes

Test of Hypothesis

After reviewing the constructs for reliability and the structural model results, I turned to testing the seven hypotheses. Table 24 summarizes the results of the hypothesis testing. Hair et al.'s (2017) mediation analysis procedure was followed to test mediation for H6 and partial mediation for H7.

Table 24.
Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	**Result**
H1: SINGLE-SOLO travelers perceive varying levels of discrimination.	Mean = 2.2667 Standard Deviation = 1.45810 70% of sample size is below 2.67 rating of perceived discrimination (See Frequencies Table). The Hypothesis is <u>not</u> supported.

Table 24.
Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	**Result**
H2: Perceived discrimination by SINGLE-SOLO travelers will have a negative impact on service experience.	Perceived Discrimination → Perceived Service Satisfaction β = -0.281 *t* Value = 3.838 *p* Value = 0.000 PD → PSS has a *p* value of 0.000. The result shows the hypothesis is supported.
H3: A negative service experience due to perceived discrimination by a single-solo traveler will have a negative impact on overall service satisfaction.	Perceived Service Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction β = 0.159 *t* Value = 2.634 *p* Value = 0.018 PSS → OS has a *p* value of 0.018. The result shows the hypothesis is supported.
H4: A negative service experience will have a negative impact on customer loyalty.	Perceived Service Satisfaction → Customer Loyalty β = 0.090 *t* Value = 1.564 *p* Value = 0.118 PSS → CL has a *p* value of 0.118. The result shows the hypothesis is <u>not</u> supported.
H5: Perceived discrimination by SINGLE-SOLO travelers will have a negative impact on customer loyalty.	Perceived Discrimination → Customer Loyalty *Path Coefficient* = 0.052 *t* Value = 1.456 *p* Value = 0.146 PD → CL has a *p* value of 0.146 which is not significant at a 5% confidence level. The results show the hypothesis is <u>not</u> supported.

Table 24.
Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	**Result**
H6: Service quality and perceived satisfaction mediate the effect of perceived discrimination on overall service satisfaction.	Part 1: Perceived Discrimination → Perceived Service Satisfaction *Path Coefficient*^{1} = -0.281 t^{1} Value = 3.838 p^{1} Value = 0.000 Perceived Service Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction *Path Coefficient*^{2} = 0.159 t^{2} Value = 2.364 p^{2} Value = 0.018 Perceived Discrimination → Overall Satisfaction *Path Coefficient*^{3} = -0.065 t^{3} Value = 2.009 p^{3}Value = 0.045 The first part of the mediation analysis procedure tests $p^{1} * p^{2}$ = 0.000, which is significant. The second part looks at the direct relationship p^{3} = 0.045 is significant. The result is complimentary (partial mediation) because $p^{1} * p^{2} * p^{3}$ = *0.003 (a positive number)* Part 2: Perceived Discrimination → LODGSERV *Path Coefficient*^{4} = -0.106 t^{4} Value = 1.599 p^{4} Value = 0.110 LODGSERV → Overall Satisfaction *Path Coefficient*^{5} = 0.732 t^{5} Value = 12.035 p^{5} Value = 0.000 The second part of the mediation analysis procedure tests $p^{4} * p^{5}$ = 0.000, which is significant. The second part looks at the direct relationship p^{3} = 0.045 is significant. The result is complimentary (partial mediation) because $p^{4} * p^{2} * p^{5}$ = *0.005 (a positive number).* Based on Hair's et al. (2017) Mediation Analysis Procedure, the hypothesis is supported.

Table 24.
Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	**Result**
H7: Service quality and perceived satisfaction partially mediate the effect of perceived discrimination on customer loyalty.	Part 1: Perceived Discrimination → Perceived Service Satisfaction *Path Coefficient*^{1} = -0.281 t^{1} Value = 3.838 p^{1} Value = 0.000 Perceived Service Satisfaction → Customer Loyalty *Path Coefficient*^{2} = 0.090 t^{2} Value = 1.564 p^{2} Value = 0.118 Perceived Discrimination → Customer Loyalty *Path Coefficient*^{3} = 0.052 t^{3} Value = 1.456 p^{3} Value = 0.146 The first part of the mediation analysis procedure tests $p^{1} * p^{2}$ = 0.000, which is significant. The second part looks at the direct relationship p^{3} = 0.146 is not significant. The result is indirect-only (full mediation). Part 2: Perceived Discrimination → LODGSERV *Path Coefficient*^{4} = -0.106 t^{4} Value = 1.599 p^{4} Value = 0.110 LODGSERV → Customer Loyalty *Path Coefficient*^{5} = 0.663 t^{5} Value = 6.505 p^{5} Value = 0.000 The second part of the mediation analysis procedure tests $p^{4} * p^{5}$ = 0.000, which is significant. The second part looks at the direct relationship p^{3} = 0.146 is not significant. The result is indirect-only (full mediation). Based on Hair's et al. (2017) Mediation Analysis Procedure, the hypothesis is supported.

The results of the hypothesis testing revealed that hypothesis H1 was not supported. A small number of participants indicated a perception of discrimination (n=22) so there was not a large enough sample size to establish varying levels of discrimination. Hypothesis H4 and H5 were also not supported. Hypothesis H2, H3, H6 and H7 were all supported.

Between Groups Analysis

In preparation for a between group analysis all responses for PD were recoded to yes or no, with each response that received a value of 4 or less coded as no perceived discrimination and every value of more than 4 coded as yes (discrimination was perceived). An attempt to perform a between groups analysis that measured those who perceived discrimination versus those who did not, using the SmartPLS software, was not successful. The PLS Algorithm report ran efficaciously, but the PLS Bootstrapping was not able to run because the size of the group who perceived discrimination was not large enough. Therefore, a one-way ANOVA was performed using SPSS to measure if there are significant differences between key groups.

Results analyzed by perceptions of discrimination. Table 25 summarizes the descriptive for two groups of perceived discrimination across each of the latent variables.

Table 25.

Between Groups Descriptives by Perceptions of Discrimination (PD)

						95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
PSS	PD-No	168	5.3991	1.03478	.07984	5.2415	5.5568	2.33	7.00
	PD-Yes	22	5.2626	.89944	.19176	4.8638	5.6614	3.17	7.00
	Total	190	5.3833	1.01879	.07391	5.2375	5.5291	2.33	7.00
OS	PD-No	168	5.7173	1.19616	.09229	5.5351	5.8995	2.25	7.00
	PD-Yes	22	5.3409	1.50899	.32172	4.6719	6.0100	1.00	7.00
	Total	190	5.6737	1.23768	.08979	5.4966	5.8508	1.00	7.00

Table 25.

Between Groups Descriptives by Perceptions of Discrimination (PD)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
LS	PD-No	168	5.4881	1.06997	.08255	5.3251	5.6511	2.00	7.00
	PD-Yes	22	5.2217	1.17368	.25023	4.7013	5.7420	2.49	7.00
	Total	190	5.4572	1.08256	.07854	5.3023	5.6122	2.00	7.00
CL	PD-No	168	5.5873	1.37859	.10636	5.3773	5.7973	1.00	7.00
	PD-Yes	22	5.2273	1.71327	.36527	4.4676	5.9869	1.00	7.00
	Total	190	5.5456	1.42084	.10308	5.3423	5.7489	1.00	7.00

Between groups test of homogeneity of variances. While there are apparent variations in the means of each group within each variable result, before it can be determined if these variations are significant, it is important to check that the homogeneity assumptions have not been violated (Burns & Burns, 2008). Table 26 summarizes results for the test of homogeneity variances. Levene's Test suggest that there all are non-significant differences in each of the between group variance results, thus indicating homogeneity of variance is accepted.

Table 26.

Between Groups Test of Homogeneity of Variances by PD

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PSS	Based on Mean	.678	1	188	.411
	Based on Median	.550	1	188	.459
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.550	1	185.864	.459
	Based on trimmed mean	.612	1	188	.435
OS	Based on Mean	1.431	1	188	.233
	Based on Median	1.480	1	188	.225
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.480	1	185.127	.225
	Based on trimmed mean	1.287	1	188	.258

Table 26.

Between Groups Test of Homogeneity of Variances by PD

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
LS	Based on Mean	.301	1	188	.584
	Based on Median	.221	1	188	.639
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.221	1	187.366	.639
	Based on trimmed mean	.283	1	188	.595
CL	Based on Mean	.960	1	188	.328
	Based on Median	.796	1	188	.373
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.796	1	183.773	.374
	Based on trimmed mean	.931	1	188	.336

Between groups ANOVA by perceived discrimination. The main ANOVA results are reported in Table 27. The results confirm that there are no statically significant differences between the groups across all latent variables. The lack of statistically significant results may be due in part to the sample size for PD-No = 22 not being large enough in number of observations (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 27.

Between Groups ANOVA by PD

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PSS	Between Groups	.363	1	.363	.348	.556
	Within Groups	195.808	188	1.042		
	Total	196.170	189			
OS	Between Groups	2.755	1	2.755	1.806	.181
	Within Groups	286.763	188	1.525		
	Total	289.518	189			
LS	Between Groups	1.381	1	1.381	1.179	.279
	Within Groups	220.114	188	1.171		
	Total	221.495	189			
CL	Between Groups	2.521	1	2.521	1.251	.265
	Within Groups	379.028	188	2.016		
	Total	381.549	189			

By service provider. Table 28 summarizes the descriptive for two groups of service providers for the latent variable perceived discrimination.

Table 28.
Between Groups Descriptives by Service Provider

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
A Cruise.	28	2.6071	1.65316	.31242	1.9661	3.2482	1.00	6.67
A Hotel.	162	2.2078	1.41909	.11149	1.9876	2.4280	1.00	7.00
Total	190	2.2667	1.45810	.10578	2.0580	2.4753	1.00	7.00

Between groups test of homogeneity of variances. While there are apparent variations in the means of the two service providers, to determine if these are significant, we examined the results in Table 29 to ensure that homogeneity assumptions have not been violated (Burns & Burns, 2008). Similar to the previous test for perceptions of discrimination, Levene's Test suggest that here to there all are non-significant differences in the between group variance result, so homogeneity of variance is also accepted.

Table 29.
Between Groups Test of Homogeneity of Variances by Service Provider

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PD	Based on Mean	.893	1	188	.346
	Based on Median	1.162	1	188	.282
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.162	1	186.531	.282
	Based on trimmed mean	1.084	1	188	.299

Between groups ANOVA by service provider. The main ANOVA results are reported in Table 30. The results confirm that there are no statistically significant differences between the groups for the latent variable perceived discrimination. Similar to the between groups ANOVA

for perceptions of discrimination, the lack of statistically significant results may also be due in part to the sample size for Cruises = 28 not being large enough in number of observations (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 30.
Between Groups ANOVA Descriptives by Service Provider

	Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	3.807	1	3.807	1.798	.182
Within Groups	398.015	188	2.117		
Total	401.822	189			

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSIONS, MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter presents findings based on results of analyses conducted using SmartPLS and SPSS on data collected from SINGLE-SOLO travelers reflecting on their recent experiences with hotel and cruise service providers. These results may be useful for hotel and cruise industry managers while also contributing to academic discussions and future work in the service and tourism fields. The chapter begins by discussing study outcomes. This is followed by managerial implications. Limitations of the study are addressed next, and the chapter closes with considerations of potential ideas for further research.

Research Outcomes

This study set out to examine whether individuals who are single and traveled by themselves (i.e. SINGLE-SOLO travelers) with hotel and cruise service providers perceived varying levels of discrimination, and whether this perception affected their service satisfaction and loyalty intentions. Additionally, the research measured if service quality could significantly mediate the ability of service providers to achieve customer loyalty. The results add new insights to a much-needed area of academic research on single consumers in the travel industry, responding to previous calls for more investigations (Panko, 2010; Close & Flowler, 2008; DePaulo & Morris, 2005; and Donthu & Gilliland, 2002).

In order to accomplish the objectives set by the study and investigate the research questions posed, SINGLE-SOLO travelers who traveled on a cruise or stayed in a hotel within the last year were surveyed using an online platform (i.e., Qualtrics) to measure travelers' perceptions of discrimination, service satisfaction, overall satisfaction, as well as perceptions of service quality and customer loyalty intentions. Previously validated scales were combined and used to test seven hypotheses. This provided a research foundation to examine the treatment of SINGLE-SOLO travelers with travel service providers and captured data on vital service indicators as well as customer loyalty intentions for this growing customer segment. Table 31 summarizes the results for the seven hypotheses in the study.

Table 31.
Summary of Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	**Result**
H1: SINGLE-SOLO travelers perceive varying levels of discrimination.	Not supported.
H2: Perceived discrimination by SINGLE-SOLO travelers will have a negative impact on service experience.	Supported.
H3: A negative service experience due to perceived discrimination by a single-solo traveler will have a negative impact on overall service satisfaction.	Supported.
H4: A negative service experience will have a negative impact on customer loyalty.	Not supported.
H5: Perceived discrimination by SINGLE-SOLO travelers will have a negative impact on customer loyalty.	Not supported.
H6: Service quality and perceived satisfaction mediate the effect of perceived discrimination on overall service satisfaction.	Supported.
H7: Service quality and perceived satisfaction partially mediate the effect of perceived discrimination on customer loyalty.	Supported.

Contrary to H1, no varying levels of perceived discrimination by SINGLE-SOLO travelers were found. In fact, only 11.6% (n=22) of respondents indicated they perceived some form of discrimination (above 4 on the 7-point scale compared to 88.4% who did not perceive discrimination. The lack of support for this hypothesis might be due to a lack of a minimum number of observations (41) recommended by Cohen for this PLS model (as cited in Hair et al.,

2017). With only 22 respondents finding some degree of perceived discrimination, significant varying levels of discrimination could not be established.

Despite no support for H1, results did find support for both H2 and H3. H2 examined whether perceived discrimination by SINGLE-SOLO travelers negatively impacts service experience, and H3 measured whether the negative service experience, influenced by the perception of discrimination, negatively impacted overall service satisfaction. This is important for industry leaders to understand because any initial perception of discrimination could impact the service experience. Although the size respondents who perceived discrimination was a minimal number (n=22), their beliefs were so strong that the sample still coalesces around service dissatisfaction, leading to a degraded service experience relationship. And, a negative service experience, due to perceptions of discrimination, could further impact overall satisfaction, a key antecedent of customer loyalty (Sim, Mak, & Jones, 2006; Oliver, 1980). These findings become even more relevant when examining the results of H4 and H5.

With respect to H4, which predicted that a negative service experience negatively impacts customer loyalty, this study found no support for this hypothesis. However, taken together with H2 & H3, this suggests that a negative service experience alone may not affect customer loyalty intentions. Similarly, no support was found for H5, which proposed that perceived discrimination by SINGLE-SOLO travelers negatively impacts customer loyalty.

Additionally, results indicated that support for H6 (service quality and perceived satisfaction mediating the effect of perceived discrimination on overall satisfaction) and H7 (service quality and perceived satisfaction partially mediating the effect of perceived discrimination on customer loyalty) were found. Based on this finding one can conclude that if a

perception of discrimination exists, then providing higher service quality and higher satisfaction would mitigate the effects of perceived discrimination.

Managerial Implications

The results of this study provide several useful findings that travel service providers should consider as they think about engaging with a market segment that has grown tremendously and is projected to continue growing into the future. The following points explore these findings more directly:

- Perceptions of discrimination among SINGLE-SOLO travelers do not appear to have taken hold among respondents within this market segment. This is evident in the lack of support for H1. One possible explanation is that hotel and cruise service providers may be benefitting from a general lack of awareness of perceived discrimination (e.g., price differentials, up-charges) by this market segment. A continued lack of awareness is not guaranteed, however, and the potential effects of increased awareness are visible in H2 and H3 findings. Therefore, hotel and cruise managers cannot afford to ignore the downfalls to perceived discrimination by a growing demographic. Every measure can and should be taken to assess if and how the organization may be discriminating against SINGLE-SOLO travelers in order to address those problem areas.
- The results of H2 and H3 found that the negative effects of perceived discrimination can have the potential to carry over into both perceptions of service experience and overall satisfaction, both key antecedents of customer loyalty. Therefore, travel service providers must be vigilant in measuring their service quality and overall service satisfaction levels. If service quality and overall satisfaction is high, then it can deter any potential negative

impact if perceived discrimination exists. If service levels and overall satisfaction are low, then companies can focus on making improvements in these two critical areas.

- These two findings discussed above become even more relevant to business success because of the support found for H6 & H7. Both service quality and perceived satisfaction mediate the effects of perceived discrimination on both overall satisfaction and customer loyalty; therefore, travel service providers should focus efforts on ensuring customers have a positive perception of the service experience and that their overall satisfaction is equally positive in order to positively affect customer loyalty. Improvements in service quality and service satisfaction could mitigate any future growth in awareness in SINGLE-SOLO travelers as discriminated group of individuals.

These findings have potential to provide tourism and other service industry providers with helpful information about SINGLE-SOLO travelers to inform business strategies for enhancing customer experience and improving business performance from the pre-consumptive stage through the service delivery stage and into the post-consumption stage. From the initial sales offer to travel with the provider to the service provided during their stay, hotel and cruise managers can improve on everything from pricing, discounts, and the treatment of single travelers during service delivery.

Limitations

Certainly, a recognized limitation in this study is that Perceived Discrimination was unprompted, so participants were blind to the intentions of the study. DePaulo and Morris (2005) point out that there is a general lack of awareness among singles of their stigmatization. In fact, Morris showed that, if prompted, awareness of perceived discrimination increases among singles significantly (as cited in DePaulo & Morris, 2005). Therefore, similar to Morris,

a study measuring the effects of a growth in awareness of stigmatization by SINGLE-SOLO travelers, using experimental design research, may translate into a growth in perceptions of discrimination. Such a study could provide valuable insights in determining what level of increase in awareness by the stigmatized group leads to significant growth in perceptions of discrimination. If awareness continues to grow this can become detrimental to the service provide, especially if service satisfaction, service quality and overall satisfaction are not being delivered on.

A second potential limitation of this study centers on the size of the sample collected for travelers who selected each service provider. Although the travel and tourism industries are a large and diverse industries, this study focused exclusively on hotel and cruise service providers because of their similarities as providers of accommodations to travelers. Yet, the study is limited in that it only contained a small sample size (n=28 or 14.7% or respondents) of SINGLE-SOLO travelers who indicated they traveled with cruise service providers compared to 85.3% (n=162) who stayed at a hotel (see Table 28). Despite higher ratings among those traveling by cruise for each construct measured, a between group analysis revealed no statistically significance. However, the lack of statistical significance may be due to a small sample size.

Future Research

In addition to follow-up research addressing the limitations mentioned, this study has opened up some new opportunities for future research. The present study was limited to just one of the four types of solo traveler Laesser et al. (2019) identified in their research, so future research could also examine the other or all categories of solo travelers in Laesser et al.'s (2009) study and measure differences between the groups (if any). Currently, the industry may be inclined to serve at least two of the four types of solo travelers better than the other two because when solo

travelers travel as part of a group their status as a single traveler may be less obvious to service providers.

Future research could also include more types of service providers (e.g., restaurants and airlines), and it could investigate other discriminated groups who are not visibly different than the majority populations (e.g., LGBT). Also, including a gender demographic question to assess whether there are significant differences across each measure between genders would be instructive. A number of studies in the academic literature focusing on single travelers have placed a specific emphasis on studying women in particular because they found women represented the largest segment of single travelers (McNamara & Prideaux, 2010; Chiang, et al., 2006; Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Wilson & Little, 2005).

Finally, a study of the gap in perceptions between the customer and the employees could add value to the organization's understanding of potential problem areas. This would help identify strategic areas for targeted training for employees responsible for delivering in those key areas of concern, minimizing disruption to overall service delivery efforts.

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APPENDIX A: Example of Survey Cover Letter

Thank you for participating in this study by Reinaldo Llano Jr., a doctoral student in the Executive Doctorate in Business Administration program at Crummer Graduate School of Business, Rollins College,. The purpose of this study is to understand the travel experiences of single individuals (i.e., not married or dating) who traveled on their own for leisurely purposes during the past six months and stayed in accommodations provided by a hotel or cruise service provider. The results of this study may be used to help travel industry service providers understand the single traveler market segment.

In the next few pages, you will first complete a series of simple questions regarding your background and your travel profile. Next you will be asked to answer a series of questions about your recent service experience and your intentions for possible repatronage or the service provider. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be anonymous. All answers obtained will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire

NOTE: The section headers for the various survey parts written below will be adjusted on the final survey visible to participants to be vague enough not to influence participants. The subject headers listed below are only written this way for the purposes of this proposal as a means of connecting construct measurement to questions.

Directions: This section contains a few questions to ensure you are eligible to complete the full survey. Please mark the most appropriate option that best describes you.

Part I: Survey Eligiblity Questions

Did you travel for leisure in the last six months that include a hotel stay or cruise?

- Yes. ..... [Continue]
- No. ..... [Reject]

What was the intended purpose of your trip?

- The trip was taken for business purposes. ..... [Reject]
- The trip was taken for leisurely purposes. ..... [Continue]

Who did you travel with on this trip?

- I traveled by myself during the entire trip. ..... [Continue]
- I traveled with friends or family. ..... [Reject]
- I traveled by myself but joined friends or family at the destination. ..... [Reject]
- I traveled by myself, but as part of a group tour. ..... [Reject]

What type of accommodations did you book for your recent trip?

- An apartment through an Air B&B type of provider. ..... [Reject]
- A Cruise. ..... [Continue]
- A Hotel. ..... [Continue]
- I stayed with family or friends. ..... [Reject]
- Other. ..... [Reject]

What is your current marital status?

- Single ..... [Continue]
- Married ..... [Reject]
- Domestic partnership ..... [Reject]
- Divorced, widowed, or separated ..... [Continue]

Directions: These next few sections of the survey are about your perceptions regarding your recent hotel stay (cruise). Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements presented below by selecting the most appropriate option. There are no right answers or wrong answers. All we are interested in is a number that best shows your perception about the hotel (cruise) experience.

Part II: Perceptions of Discrimination

Perceived Discrimination (Conway Dato-on & Burns, 2008)

(1 = Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree)

1. I experienced discrimination while shopping for a hotel (cruise).
2. I feel at a disadvantage when selecting a hotel (cruise) because I am a single traveler.
3. I believe hotels (cruises) discriminated against single travelers during my stay.

Discriminatory Level of Service (Klinner & Walsh, 2013)

(1 = Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree)

4. Compared to other customers, employees often do not respond to my needs or problems.
5. Compared to other customers, employees are often patronizing toward me.
6. Compared to other customers, employees often take little time to advise me and quickly go to the next customer.
7. Compared to other customers, employees are often very distant to me.
8. I am frequently being critically observed by employees.
9. Compared to other customers, employees often make me wait longer.

Part III: Perceptions of Service Satisfaction

Service Satisfaction (Subramanian, Gunasekara, and Gao, 2016)

Staff (2-items)

(1 = Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree)

10. The staff treated me with full respect.
11. The staff was friendly towards me.

Price (3-items)

(1 = Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree)

12. There was sufficient value for the money paid for the hotel (or cruise).
13. The hotel (cruise) had a consistent pricing policy.
14. The hotel (cruise) had a low guest room price.

Image (3-items)

(1 = Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree)

15. The hotel (cruise) is popular.
16. The hotel (cruise) has a high reputation.
17. The hotel (cruise) has strong brand differentiation.

Overall Service Satisfaction (Tabaku & Cerri, 2016)

Overall Satisfaction (4-items)

(1 = Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree)

18. Overall, I was very satisfied with the services offered by the hotel (cruise).
19. I was satisfied with my decision to stay at this hotel (cruise).
20. Overall, the service offered at this hotel (cruise) met my expectations.
21. Compared to other hotels (cruises) I've stayed in I was very satisfied with this hotel (cruise).

Part IV: Perceptions of Service Quality

LODGSERV and Overall Service Quality Scales for Hotels (Keith & Simmers, 2013)

Tangibles (5-items)

(1 = Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree)

22. The hotel (cruise) had personnel who were clean, neat and appropriately dressed.
23. The hotel (cruise) served food and beverages that were consistently high in quality.
24. The hotel (cruise) gave me a room that was visually attractive.
25. The hotel (cruise) had décor consistent with its image and price range.
26. The hotel (cruise) had buildings, lobbies, and public areas which were visually attractive.

Reliability (4-items)

(1 = Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree)

27. The hotel (cruise) had utilities and equipment that worked well.
28. The hotel (cruise) was dependable, consistent, and able to be counted on.
29. The hotel (cruise) quickly corrected anything that was wrong.
30. The hotel (cruise) provided promised or advertised services on time.

Responsiveness (3-items)

(1 = Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree)

31. The hotel (cruise) provided prompt and quick service.
32. The hotel (cruise) had personnel shift to help when a line forms at the front desk.
33. The hotel (cruise) had staff that gave extra effort to handle my special requests.

Assurances (5-items)

(1 = Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree)

34. The hotel (or cruise) had personnel who seemed well-trained, competent and experienced.
35. The hotel (cruise) made me feel comfortable and confident in my dealings with them.
36. The hotel (cruise) seemed to give employees support so they could do their jobs well.
37. The hotel (cruise) had personnel who were both able and willing to give me information about hotel and outside services.
38. The hotel (cruise) had knowledgeable staff who answered my questions completely.

Empathy (5-items)

(1 = Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree)

39. The hotel (cruise) made me feel like a special and valued guest.
40. The hotel (cruise) had employees who were sympathetic and reassuring if something was wrong.
41. The hotel (cruise) eliminated unnecessary bureaucracy to make contacting a hotel (or cruise) manager or supervisor easier.
42. The hotel (cruise) had employees who were sensitive to my individual needs and wants rather than always going by the book.
43. The hotel (cruise) anticipated my individual needs and wants.

Part V: Customer Loyalty

Customer Loyalty (Subramanian, Gunasekara, and Gao, 2016)

(1 = Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Disagree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Agree 7=Strongly Agree)

44. I would like to come back to the hotel (cruise) in the future.
45. I would likely speak high of this hotel (cruise) and recommend to other single travelers.
46. I would more frequently visit this hotel (cruise).

Directions: Please mark the most appropriate option that best describes you. [This section contains demographic questions for categorization purposes only and will be displayed at the end of the survey.]

Part VI: Demographic Questions

Which do you consider yourself to be?

- Heterosexual or Straight
- Gay or Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Prefer Not to Answer

How would you describe yourself?

- American Indian / Native American
- Asian
- Black / African American
- Hispanic / Latino
- White / Caucasian
- Pacific Islander
- Other
- Prefer Not to Answer

How often do you travel by yourself for leisurely purposes?

- Never
- Once in a while
- About half of the time
- Most of the time
- Always