

A THREE-COMPONENT TRIANGULAR THEORY  
OF HOTEL BRAND LOVE

By

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**Abstract:** With the trends of promoting reward membership program, launching technological innovations, and rebranding in the hotel industry, hotel brand love should be examined in hospitality studies because several innovative hospitality strategies are implemented to establish customers' love feelings toward hotel brands. Based on the triangular theory of human love, the main purpose of this study is to establish and test a three-component theoretical structural model of hotel brand love, and to provide practical implications and suggestions to hotel branding and marketing managers. A total of 425 usable responses were collected through Qualtrics. Participants select one of five sample hotel firms (Marriott International Inc, Hilton Worldwide, InterContinental Hotels Group, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc, and Hyatt Hotels Corp) with one of its sub-brands to respond questionnaire. Results of this study found that both intimacy for a sub-brand and passion for a sub-brand were significantly related to ideal-self-sub-brand congruence; however, commitment for a sub-brand was not significantly related to ideal-self-sub-brand congruence. Besides, this study proved the positive influences that ideal-self-sub-brand congruence has on brand love for the sub-brand. Then, brand love for the sub-brand significantly exerted positive influence to brand love for the corporate brand. Moreover, brand love for the sub-brand significantly exerted positive influences on revisit intention for the sub-brand, positive WOM for the sub-brand, and price premium for the sub-brand. In examining the proposed moderating effects, this study found that customer involvement of a sub-brand significantly improves the positive influence from brand love for that sub-brand to brand love for its corporate brand. Additionally, public self-consciousness significantly improved the positive influence from brand love for the sub-brand to price premium for the sub-brand.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter includes sections of customer-brand relationship, hotel brand love: why we need it, problem statement, purposes of the study, objectives of the study, and significance of the study.

## **Customer-Brand Relationship**

The word “brand” originally comes from the old Norse word *brandr*, which means to burn (Blackett, 2003). Blackett (2003) explained that early businessmen stamped ownership on livestock by burning them. Such a burned stamp allowed trade buyers to distinguish owners of cattle in a market. Currently, brands are not simply taken as a mark to show who the suppliers are. People live with diverse brands and take brands to represent their identity (Ahuvia, 2005), social position (Zaglia, 2013), or personal taste (Granot, Greene, & Brashear, 2010). The role of the brand in human life has changed overtime from a trade stamp to a relationship partner (Fournier, 1998; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012). Aaker (1997) even proposed the concept of brand personality to demonstrate how human characteristics can be associated with a brand to attract consumers. The increasing complexity and closeness in customer-brand relationship motivates marketing scholars to clarify how customers associate themselves with brands (Breivik & Thorbjørnsen, 2008; Fournier, 1998; Keller, 2012; Reimann, Castaño, Zaichkowsky, & Bechara, 2012; Smit, Bronner, & Tolboom, 2007).

The customer-brand relationship established by Fournier (1998) was generally applied by brand researchers (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Maxian, Bradley, Wise, & Toulouse, 2013; Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci, 2010). Based on modified life-history case studies, Fournier (1998) proposed a six-faceted brand relationship quality (BRQ) construct. The BRQ model includes six dimensions: love and passion, self-connection, interdependence, commitment, intimacy, and brand partner quality (Fournier,

1998). Among these six dimensions of the BRQ model, brand love was proposed as the most intense and profound customer-brand relationship (Fournier, 1998).

The complexity of customer-brand relationship attracts scholars from diverse disciplines to contribute their knowledge in explaining the relationship, such as psychology (Maxian et al., 2013; Schmitt, 2012), neuroscience (Reimann et al., 2012; Venkatraman, Clithero, Fitzsimons, & Huettel, 2012), sociology (Reingen, Foster, Brown, & Seidman, 1984; Zaglia, 2013), culture (Aaker, Benet-Martinez, & Garolera, 2001; Healy & McDonagh, 2013), and fashion (Bridson & Evans, 2004; Fionda & Moore, 2009). Because of the complex nature of consumer behavior, no one theory or model is able to comprehensively explain customers' brand relationship (Simonson, Carmon, Dhar, Drolet, & Nowlis, 2001). Moreover, with the advancement of information technology and the increasing innovation of brand experience design, customers are able to experience more senses of brands than before, resulting in closer customer-brand relationship (Kim & Ko, 2012; Kristensson, Matthing, & Johansson, 2008). In line with this trend, this study specifically focuses on brand love to explain the close customer-brand relationship in the hotel industry.

Previous studies of brand love explained concept of love toward one single brand (Albert, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2008; Batra et al., 2012), consumers' love feelings toward a brand (Maxian et al., 2013; Rossiter, 2012), and antecedents and outcomes of brand love for one brand (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Kwon & Mattila, 2015; Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). Nowadays, with the goal to satisfy diverse demands of customers, several companies have started to develop their brand portfolio by creating multiple brands in one company (Aaker, 2004; Morgan & Rego, 2009; Varadarajan, DeFanti, & Busch, 2006). The trend of developing brand portfolio has

been extended to the hotel industry, motivating major hotel companies create diverse brands at different locations (Wang & Chung, 2015). Lei, Dawar, and Lemmink (2008) further proposed negative spillover effects among brands in a brand portfolio, and examined that such spillover can be passed from a sub-brand to its parent brand. This implies that traditional brand love studies which consider customers' relationship with one brand are not applicable to explain the real brand relationship, especially when the brand belongs to a brand portfolio. Hence, studying customer-brand relationship should consider hierarchical structure of brands in one brand portfolio, and clarify establishments of relationships with not only one experienced sub-brand but also its corporate brand.

In the hospitality academy, most of the dimensions in the BRQ model have been clarified with profound implications. Self-connection was applied by Kang, Tang, Lee, and Bosselman (2012) to explain customers' attitude and purchase behavior at coffee shops. Interdependence was implemented as co-creation by Grisseemann and Stokburger-Sauer (2012) to demonstrate how travel agencies improve customer satisfaction, loyalty and expenditure. Commitment was used by Tanford, Raab, and Kim (2011) to explore influences of reward program membership on hotel brand loyalty. Intimacy, which generated rich layers of meaning (Reis & Shaver, 1988), was shown on the work of Bailey and Ball (2006) in exploring meanings of hotel brand equity. Brand partner quality was examined by So, King, Sparks, and Wang (2013) in analyzing the influences from customer brand identification to brand loyalty. Additionally, Xie and Heung (2012) applied the BRQ model as antecedents to examine service failure in high-class hotels. Nevertheless, brand love is seldom been noticed in hospitality studies (Kwon & Mattila, 2015). Taken together, due to the lack of knowledge

in hotel brand love, this study focuses on proposing a three-component perspective to explain how customers identify hotel brand love and what the outcomes of hotel brand love are.

### **Hotel Brand Love: Why We Need It**

Hotel brand love should be examined because several innovative hospitality strategies are implemented to establish customers' love feelings toward hotel brands. First, reward membership program has been proposed by several major hotel firms to maintain customer commitment toward their hotel brands (Mattila, 2006; Tanford et al., 2011). Mattila (2006) pointed out that emotional bond should be added into a membership program to effectively enhance customer affective commitment. Tanford et al. (2011) further reported that customers with high affective commitment of membership programs are high-tier members and are less likely to switch to other programs by competitors' price discounts. To strengthen customers' perception of reliability and trustworthy toward hotel brands, several hotel reward membership programs cooperated with credit card companies to propose cards, such as Citi Hilton HHonors credit card, Marriott Rewards credit card issued by Chase Bank, and Starwood Preferred Guest Credit Card from American Express. These cards not only extend accompany of hotel brands with their customers but also deepen customers' engagement with hotel brands in other activities. For these card users, hotel brands might be their loved life partners.

Second, many hotel brands are launching technological innovations to customize services like a live and nearby partner to customers (Reston, 2014; Wilmer, 2013). With the use of app on electronic devices such as smart phone or iPad, customers can enjoy diverse

interactions with a hotel brand for experiencing their ideal stay. On the other side, hotel brands also turned their role from passive order receiver into active service provider. With these technological innovations, hotel brands are like sweet friends to automatically inform customers today's weather, memorize customers' service and food preference, or broadcast customers' favorite songs when they entering their hotel room. With technological innovation, hotel brands effectively enrich customers' interactions with these brands and strengthen customers' affective linkage to them (Reston, 2014; Wilmer, 2013).

Third, rebranding and new brands are proposed to catch customers' heart (Baker, Davis, & Weaver, 2014; Hanson, Mattila, O'Neill, & Kim, 2009; Jones, Day, & Quadri-Felitti, 2013). Hotel firms conduct rebranding for their properties to distinguish themselves with other competitors and assist the properties fit more with their target customers and the located environment (Hanson et al., 2009). To follow model trends and customers' contemporary tastes and concerns, hotel firms also proposed new concepts of hotel brands to satisfy customers' needs. Without traditional concern for luxury or high class hotel brands, generation Y's considerable attentions toward lifestyle and boutique hotel brands become a global phenomenon (Jones et al., 2013). Meanwhile, the awareness of sustainability also welcomes the birth and support for green hotel brands (Baker et al., 2014). These emerging rebranding projects and new brands reflect the determination for hotel brands to become customers' loved partners.

## **Problem Statement**

In studying hotel brand love, several characteristics in experiencing hotel brands should be considered. First, many hotel brands are sub-brands nested in brand portfolios. For example, there are nine sub-brands of Hyatt Hotels Corp: Andaz, Hyatt Regency, Hyatt Place, Hyatt House, Hyatt Hotels, Park Hyatt, Grand Hyatt, Hyatt Zilara and Hyatt Ziva, and Hyatt Residence Club. When customers enjoy their stay at Hyatt Place, first they may experience a hotel sub-brand (Hyatt Place), and then refer their stay experience of that sub-brand to judge the corporate brand (Hyatt Hotels Corp). Hence, a customer's relationship development with a hotel brand (when it is a sub-brand under a brand portfolio) is not simply toward the single hotel sub-brand; rather, it is developed to both the hotel sub-brand and its corporate brand (Lei et al., 2008).

Second, ideal self-brand congruence should be taken as a key antecedent of hotel brand love, rather than actual self-brand congruence (Drigotas, Rusbult, Wieselquist, & Whitton, 1999; Knee, Hadden, Porter, & Rodriguez, 2013). Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, and Nyffenegger (2011) proved that actual self-brand congruence has a stronger effect on emotional brand attachment than ideal self-congruence by testing brands in fast-moving consumer goods, durable consumer goods, services, and retailing. Based on construal-level theory, Malär et al. (2011) explained that customers perceive psychologically close with actual self than ideal self. Due to the short psychological distance, customers normally develop emotional linkage with something related to their actual self, rather than ideal self. However, things might be the opposite for hotel brands. During a trip, customers have the tendency to seek novelty (Assaker, Vinzi, & O'Connor, 2011), involve in pleasure and relaxation (Loureiro, Almeida, & Rita, 2013), participate creative activities (Tan, Luh, & Kung, 2014), and enjoy surprise and excitement from ideal aesthetic hotel design (Weaver,



2009). These needs for an ideal hotel stay are much closer to customers' ideal self than actual self. In a romantic relationship, people also prefer to love someone with attractive ideal characteristics (Drigotas et al., 1999; Knee et al., 2013). Thus, in developing hotel brand love, ideal self-brand congruence should be considered as the key antecedent.

Third, in examining outcomes of brand love, price premium should be added with revisit intention and positive word-of-mouth (WOM) as brand loyalty (Batra et al., 2012). Seasonality is the nature of hotel room prices (Espinet, Fluvià, Rigall-I-Torrent, & Saló, 2012). Fluctuation of hotel room price may influence customers' perceived price value of a hotel brand, and then change their behavioral intentions toward the brand (Chiang & Jang, 2006). In a romantic relationship, people are willing to dedicate resources and perform self-sacrifice for loved partners (Whitton, Stanley, & Markman, 2007). In line with this argument, customers may be also willing to pay higher expense for their loved brands. However, the relationship between brand love and willingness to pay more was not significantly supported in the study of Albert, Merunka, and Valette-Florence (2013) when they asked participants to personally indicate a favored brand for the survey. Empirical examination about price premium as outcome of hotel brand love should be done to enrich our knowledge of brand love under such context.

Fourth, customer characteristics should be considered as moderators in establishing antecedents and outcomes of hotel brand love (Kwon & Mattila, 2015). Although prior empirical studies have proposed antecedents and outcomes of brand love, customer characteristics were neglected in these arguments (Albert et al., 2013; Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012; Yim, Tse, & Chan, 2008). Understanding the role of customer characteristics in enhancing casual relationships of hotel

brand love can clarify who potential hotel brand lovers are (Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012). In hotel brand love, two major customer characteristics should be considered, customer involvement and public self-consciousness. Customer involvement can represent the depth and psychological closeness for a customer to engage with a hotel brand (Goodman, Fichman, Lerch, & Snyder, 1995; Loureiro et al., 2013). It can be applied to examine how to enhance the process from brand love for a sub-brand to brand love for its corporate brand. Public self-consciousness is the awareness of self in influencing others in a social environment, such as aware of self appearance, concern style of doing things, or make good self impression (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). Since brands are used as signals to represent self, the concept of public self-consciousness becomes an important moderator for brand researchers to clarify when customers' brand preference and brand attachment are strengthened (Bushman, 1993; Malär et al., 2011).

### **Purposes of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to establish and test a three-component theoretical structural model of hotel brand love, and provide practical implications and suggestions to hotel branding and marketing managers.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study include the followings:

1. To assess the effects of intimacy, passion, and commitment for a sub-brand on ideal self-sub-brand congruence;
2. To test the effect of ideal self-sub-brand congruence on brand love for a sub-brand;
3. To examine the effect of brand love for a sub-brand on brand love for the corporate brand;
4. To assess the moderating effect of customer involvement of a sub-brand on the relationship between ideal self-sub-brand congruence and brand love for a sub-brand;
5. To examine the effect of brand love for the sub-brand on revisit intention, positive WOM, and price premium for a sub-brand; and,
6. To test the moderating effect of public self-consciousness on
  - (1) the relationship between brand love for a sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand;
  - (2) the relationship between brand love for a sub-brand and revisit intention for the sub-brand;
  - (3) the relationship between brand love for a sub-brand and positive WOM for the sub-brand; and
  - (4) the relationship between brand love for a sub-brand and price premium for the sub-brand.

### **Significance of the Study**

### **Theoretical Contribution**

This study can provide several theoretical contributions. First, the three-component triangular perspective was proposed to systematically interpret the process for customers to perceive hotel brand love. There is no consistent perspective to systematically explain how brand love is identified in prior empirical studies of brand love (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012; Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012). Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010) argued brand love is formed through sense of community and brand identification; Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) proposed hedonic product and self-expressive brand as the key brand characteristics to induce brand love; Loureiro and Kaufmann (2012) noted brand experience can enhance the positive effects of brand image and brand satisfaction on brand love; and Long-Tolbert and Gammoh (2012) pointed out the interpersonal interaction is the key to improve brand love in the service industry. Based on the triangular theory of love proposed by Sternberg (1986), this study borrows the three-component perspective to propose that the formation of hotel brand love is based on perceiving intimacy, passion, and commitment in a hotel brand experience. Through applying the three-component perspective of human love into studying hotel brand love, this study is able to examine hotel brand love based on a systematic theoretical foundation. By doing so, the results of this study are able to keep maintain consistency with previous love studies in psychology on the fundamental concept of what love is. Such consistency in defining components of love between human love studies and hotel brand love studies can also extend our knowledge of love's components from human love to hotel brand love.

Second, this study extends the knowledge of brand love from a single brand into a brand portfolio. Brand portfolio strategy is applied by hotel firms to satisfy diverse customer needs, leverage market risks, and expand market shares (Aaker, 2004). Due to the profound

improvement on financial performance, major hotel firms all use brand portfolio strategy as their key corporate strategy to compete with their competitors. Currently, Marriott International Inc. and InterContinental Hotels Group own more than 10 sub-brands, which cover more than five brand segments in their brand portfolio. When customers stay at one hotel sub-brand under a hotel brand portfolio, such as JW Marriott under Marriott International Inc., they naturally develop a customer-brand relationship with both the sub-brand (JW Marriott) and the corporate brand (Marriott International Inc.). Through a stay at JW Marriott, customers are able to identify their brand love toward JW Marriott and then extend the experience to identify their brand love toward its corporate brand, Marriott International Inc. The higher level relationship with the corporate brand, such as Marriott or InterContinental, is also identified by customers during a hotel stay. However, an observation found from previous brand love studies is that no matter whether qualitative (Fournier, 1998), quantitative (Albert et al., 2013; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012; Maxian et al., 2013; Rossiter, 2012; Yim et al., 2008) or mixed method (Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012) is used, focus remained on the one-customer-to-one-brand situation. Conceptualizing the love spillover from a hotel sub-brand to its corporate brand is different from previous brand love studies (Batra et al., 2012; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Kwon & Mattila, 2015; Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012) and is able to extend the concept of brand love as a hierarchical structure in a brand portfolio, thereby generating new theoretical implications.

Third, moderating effects of customer involvement and public self-consciousness can be examined to clarify how to enhance hotel brand love and how to improve the positive

influences of hotel brand love. Previous brand studies have proved the importance of finding significant moderators to explain the customer-brand relationship, such as former brand experience in strengthening brand loyalty (Bennett, Härtel, & McColl-Kennedy, 2005) or the perceived construal level in moderating the evaluation of brand extensions (Kim & John, 2008). Furthermore, through the meta-analytic approach for summarizing previous studies of brand personality, Eisend and Stokburger-Sauer (2013) proved that due to the complexity of human behavior, significant moderators can play valuable roles in explaining deeper information on the customer-brand relationship. However, most of the previous studies in brand love concerned its direct antecedents and outcomes (Albert et al., 2013; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Ismail & Spinelli, 2012). Moderating effects on enhancing the casual relationship have long been neglected (Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). In this study, customer involvement and public self-consciousness are proposed as moderators. Customer involvement represents customers' psychological closeness and engagement with a brand (Goodman et al., 1995), while public self-consciousness reflects peoples' self-awareness toward others in a social setting (Fenigstein et al., 1975). Both of these moderators fit the context for customers to interact with and experience a hotel brand.

Customer involvement has recently been used by service brands to generate feedback for developing new services (Chien & Chen, 2010), improving service strategy (Sigala, 2012), or motivating customer engagement in an online platform (Shobeiri, Mazaheri, & Laroche, 2014) and service co-creation (Kristensson et al., 2008). In the hotel industry, hotel firms are trying different approaches, such as social media (Cheng & Edwards, 2015) and loyalty programs (Xie & Chen, 2014), to improve involvement by their customers to strengthen the customer-brand relationship. Just like human love feelings, which can be

strengthened through longitudinal accumulated mutual involvement in a relationship (Montgomery & Sorell, 1998), hotel firms' efforts in improving customer involvement makes customer involvement a potential moderator in strengthening customers' love feelings toward a hotel brand. Hence, customer involvement is hypothesized in this study as enhancing the love spillover from a hotel sub-brand to its corporate brand. In former studies of the spillover effects in a brand portfolio, discussions are still examining the directionality of spillover effects in a brand portfolio, while potential moderators in improving these spillover effects remain unexplored (Lei et al., 2008). Therefore, examining the moderating effect of customer involvement in this study can generate new knowledge in explaining how to enhance spillover effects in a brand portfolio.

Public self-consciousness has been a concern as customers' fear or face loss in hospitality service encounters (Lee, Sparks, & Butcher, 2013) and customers' face concern during tourism experiences (Wan & Poon, 2014). In this study, public self-consciousness is proposed as the moderator in enhancing love spillover from a hotel sub-brand to its corporate brand. With the desire to be recognized as a specific social group and the fear of losing consistency in social behaviors (Bushman, 1993), people with high public self-consciousness are likely to extend their love feelings from their loved sub-brand to its corporate brand. Due to the lack of knowledge about moderators in explaining approaches to strengthen the spillover effects in a brand portfolio (Lei et al., 2008), testing public self-consciousness as the moderator has the potential to provide theoretical findings. For example, public self-consciousness is proposed as the moderator in enhancing the positive effects of brand love for a sub-brand to revisit intention, positive WOM, and the price premium for the sub-brand. Although several previous studies have proved the stable relationship between brand love

and brand loyalty, there is still a lack of knowledge about personal characteristics that could make people to possess stronger loyal intentions toward a loved brand (Batra et al., 2012; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Hence, testing the moderating effect of public self-consciousness in the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty is able to fill this knowledge gap.

### **Practical Contribution**

By examining the triangular theory of hotel brand love, this study can also propose several practical contributions. First, the empirical results of this study can show hotel managers what the significant drivers of hotel brand love are. Empirically examining three components of love together in a structural model for hotel brand love can validly reveal which components hotel managers should put more resources in to enhance the love feelings of their customers. In addition, the proposed ideal self-sub-brand congruence can also be assessed in the structural model to guide hotel managers on whether to match their brand image with target customers' actual self or ideal self as the better approach to win their love. The significant support for the effectiveness of ideal self-sub-brand congruence on improving brand love can make hotel managers rethink the positioning of their hotel sub-brands.

Second, based on the findings of this study, hotel managers can realize who the potential brand lovers are and what might be the most effective way to cultivate their brand lovers. Customer involvement and public self-consciousness are proposed as moderators in this research model. Significant support for these moderators can provide valuable information for hotel managers to realize where their potential brand lovers are and lead them to think about possible ways to cultivate their potential lovers. For example, the effectiveness



of customer involvement in strengthening the effect of brand love for a sub-brand on brand love for its corporate brand can direct hotel managers' thinking on how to engage customers to interact with a hotel sub-brand. For those who are willing to or frequently engage with the brand, they might be the brand lovers. In addition, the extent of customers' public self-consciousness can be reflected by their appearance and behavior. Based on the significant support of public self-consciousness, customers with high public self-consciousness can be identified as the lover for the corporate brand as well. These customers may be willing to participate in the membership of the brand portfolio or engage with other sub-brands of the brand portfolio. Furthermore, customers with high public self-consciousness may exhibit stronger brand loyalty. These customers should be assisted in enhancing their revisit intention, positive WOM, and likelihood of paying more to enjoy more hotel services and experiences.

Third, hotel managers can understand what the expected outcome might be for their brand lovers. The importance of hotel brand love lies in its possibility to win financial returns so that hotel brand managers or marketing managers are able to seek support from the executives to invest resources for improving it. Three types of brand loyalty are proposed in this research model. All three of them are able to contribute significant financial profit to hotel brands. Revisit intention motivated by brand love can improve the occupation rate of hotel brands. High revisit intention of a hotel brand's customers ensures the long-term optimistic occupation rate and profitability of the brand. Positive WOM enable a hotel brand to welcome more new customers. The accumulation of new customers can broaden a hotel brand's scope to open more properties in a growing market. Price premium ensures stable profitability and reduces discount treatment from competitors. A hotel brand with many

lovers who accept the price premium may also reveal chances for the brand to propose additional services and experiences for higher value of a stay.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

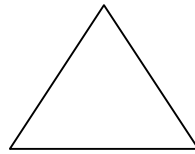
This chapter includes sections of triangular theory of love, customer-based brand equity, brand love, three components for brand love, brand love in a brand portfolio, brand loyalty, and summary of research hypotheses.

The proposed hotel brand love is based on the theoretical foundations of the triangular theory of love and customer-based brand equity. Each theory and their linkage with hotel brand love are explained in following sections.

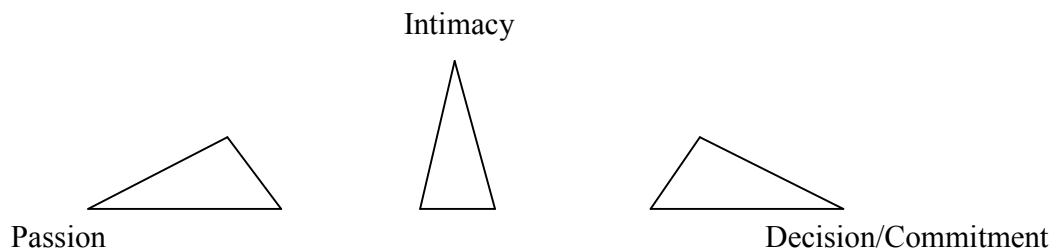
### **Triangular Theory of Love**

Sternberg (1986) established the triangular theory of love with three components: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. Sternberg (1986) defined the intimacy component as the perceptions of bondedness, connectedness, and closeness in a love relationship; the passion component as the physical attraction-related phenomenon that drives romance in love; and the decision/commitment component as the decision to fall in love in the short term and the commitment to sustain the love in the long term. A balanced love occurs when these three components are nearly equally matched, as in the top of Figure 1. Unbalanced love occurs when one components plays a larger role than the other two, as in the bottom of Figure 1. The oversize of the passion component represents the relationship when physical attraction dominates; the oversize of the intimacy component represents when two lovers who are good friends, while physical aspects and commitment for the future have become marginal; and the oversize of the decision/commitment component represents a relationship in which physical attraction and emotional feelings have waned or were not there in the beginning of the relationship (Sternberg, 1986). Yim et al. (2008), based on these three components, sought to establish customer-firm affection and proposed customer-firm affection as a second-order construct with three first-order dimensions: intimacy, passion, and commitment.

### BALANCED TRIANGLE



### UMBALANCED TRIANGLE



Source: Sternberg, 1986, p. 128.

### Figure 1. Shape of Triangles about Balance of Love

Based on the shape of triangles regarding the balance of love, the properties of the triangle vertices were described by Sternberg (1986) as in Table 1. This table reveals that high commitment in a love relationship leads to a longer, more stable, and more controllable relationship status; in contrast, high passion in a love relationship is more experience oriented, with higher psychophysiological involvement, and might put more emphasis on mutual interactions in the short-term period. Among these love properties, it is interesting to find out that intimacy does not play an absolutely low role in any of them, while passion and commitment are rated as low in more than two properties. It seems that intimacy is the basic component for two persons to get together and take the chance of starting a relationship. Then, the property of

the love relationship is mainly determined by the perceived passion and commitment in the relationship. Yim et al. (2008) applied these three components of human love into customer-firm affection and argued that customers may perceive strong intimacy and passion for firms used infrequently, while perceiving strong intimacy and commitment toward daily-used brands. The findings of Yim et al. (2008) revealed that in applying the three love components to brand love, based on different frequencies of brand usage, the properties of the brand love are also different.

**Table 1. Properties of Triangle Vertices**

Property	Component		
	Intimacy	Passion	Commitment
Stability	Moderately high	Low	Moderately high
Conscious controllability	Moderate	Low	High
Experiential salience	Variable	High	Variable
Typical importance in short-term relationships	Moderate	High	Low
Typical importance in long-term relationships	High	Moderate	High
Commonality across loving relationships	High	Low	Moderate
Psychophysiological involvement	Moderate	High	Low
Susceptibility to conscious awareness	Moderately low	High	Moderately high

Source: Sternberg, 1986, p. 120.

**Table 2. Taxonomy of Kinds of Love**

Kind of Love	Component		
	Intimacy	Passion	Commitment
1. Nonlove	-	-	-
2. Liking	+	-	-
3. Infatuated love	-	+	-
4. Empty love	-	-	+
5. Romantic love	+	+	-
6. Companionate love	+	-	+
7. Fatuous love	-	+	+
8. Consummate love	+	+	+

Note: + means component present; - means component absent.

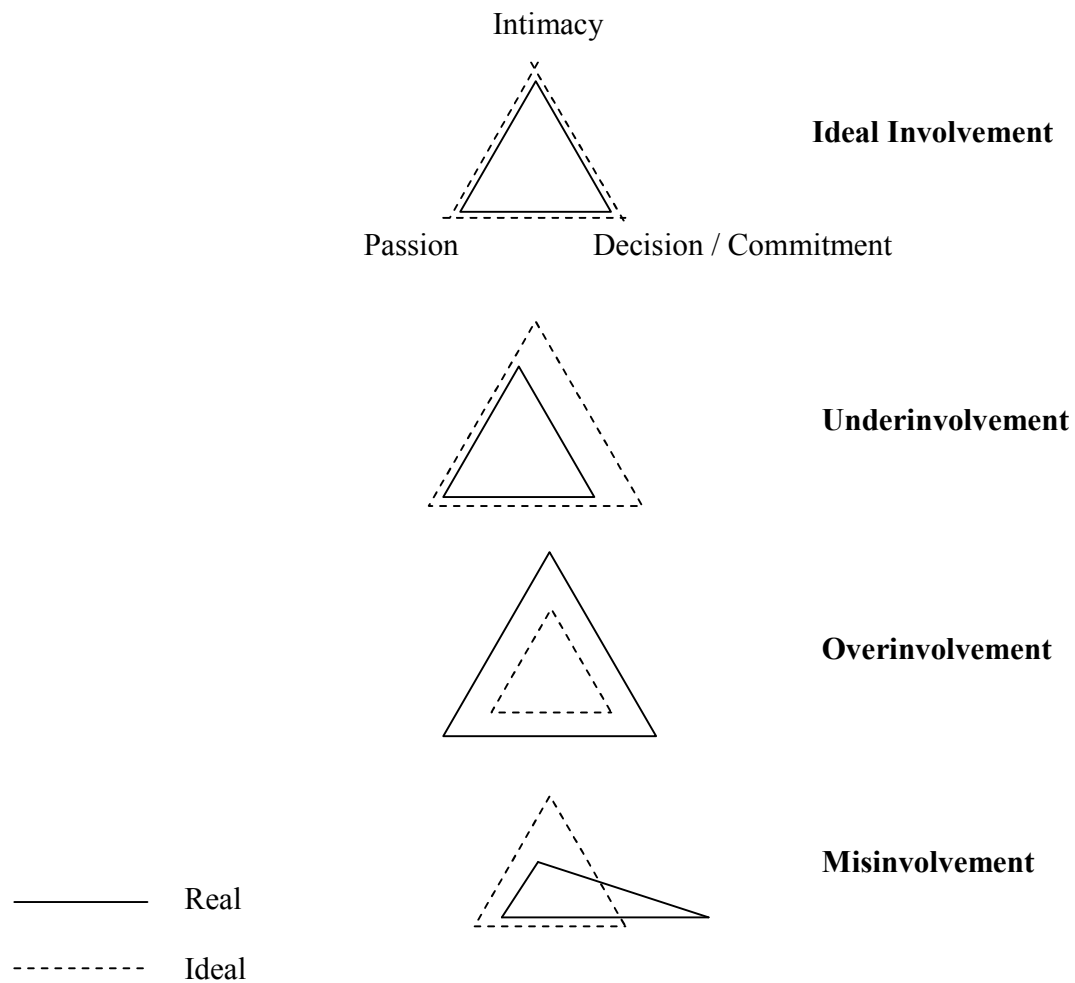
Source: Sternberg, 1986, p. 123.

Most love relationships have a mix of different weights of three love components shown in Table 1. To further specify types of love, Sternberg (1986) proposed the taxonomy in Table 2. It should be noted that it is hard to determine the absolute absence of any of the components in a real love relationship; hence, most of the love relationships fall between two types of love summarized in Table 2 (Sternberg, 1986). First, nonlove happens when there is no intimacy, passion, and commitment in a relationship. Second, liking is perceived when a person feels intimacy with someone. Third, infatuated love represents the perceived passion, which is the sense of emotion from human physical attractiveness. Fourth, empty love only ensures that two people get together for a long period, without having emotional feelings toward each other. Fifth, romantic love happens when there is a coexistence of both intimacy and passion, adding emotional feelings to a close couple. Sixth, companionate love represents two people who are very close and have a stable long-term relationship, but lack emotional feelings toward each other. Seventh, fatuous love represents people who maintain a long-term love relationship based on human physical attractiveness, without considering intimacy between each other. Eighth,

consummate love is the balanced love mentioned in Figure 1, which includes passion, intimacy, and commitment together.

Rossiter (2012), based on the taxonomy for love from Sternberg (1986), developed brand studies in the product categories of laundry detergent, coffee, computers, and fashion clothing. Empirical results of Rossiter (2012) revealed that 45% of consumers have at least one loved brand in fashion clothing, 26% of consumers have at least one loved brand in computers, 18% of consumers have at least one loved brand in coffee, and 17% of consumers have at least one loved brand in laundry detergent. It seems that brands used for social purposes (such as fashion clothing) can cause consumers to generate stronger love feelings than brands used privately at home (such as laundry detergent). By asking participants to rate their relationship toward the selected brand from hate, dislike, neutral, liking, to love, Rossiter (2012) proved that consumers who exhibit love toward a brand use it more frequently and have the intention to recommend the brand to others compared to brands they just like or feel neutral toward. Such findings proved the importance of brand love in determining consumers' brand usage and the effectiveness of loving feelings in sharing brand experiences with others. Because hotel brands are experiences in social settings with human interactions in service delivery, consumers' love feelings toward hotel brand are worth exploring.





Source: Sternberg, 1986, p. 129.

**Figure 2. The Match between Real and Ideal Involvement**

Furthermore, the match between the real and ideal relationship is the inner comparison of a person to judge the extent of involvement in a love relationship (Sternberg, 1986). The expected ideal relationship may be formed based on previous experiences in a love relationship, observation of other love relationships during life experiences, or related information absorbed from culture and media. As shown in Figure 2, the first panel is the ideal involvement, which shows that a person's real love relationship matches his or her ideal relationship; the second

panel is under-involvement, which shows that the current real relationship is under the expected ideal relationship; the third panel is over-involvement, which shows that the real relationship is greater than the expected ideal status; and, the final panel is mis-involvement, which occurs when components are not identified by the same weight, and one or two components are under-involved while others are overinvolved (Sternberg, 1986). As summarized by Murstein (1988), feelings of inadequacy may be the driver for people to search for ideal partners. The need to find the ideal self is one natural need and tendency to reduce personal inadequacy (Sperling, 1985). Drigotas et al. (1999) further proposed that in a love relationship, the company of a close partner can assist people in achieving the ideal self.

In this study, intimacy, passion, and commitment are proposed as the initial driver for the hotel brand love model. Based on perceived intimacy, passion, and commitment, the mental matching process in customers' minds allows them to determine the extent of ideal-self brand congruence. The ideal-self brand congruence then improves customers' perceived hotel brand love.

### **Customer-Based Brand Equity**

Aaker (1991) defined brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities associated with a brand and the value of a product or service generated from the brand name and symbol. Because brand equity is formed from the individual consumer's perspective, Keller (1993) further proposed customer-based brand equity and defined it as influences of brand knowledge on customers' responses to the marketing activities of the brand. Customer-based brand equity exists when customers become familiar with a brand and hold strong, unique, and favorable brand

associations toward the brand in their memory (Keller, 1993). Brand knowledge, which consists of brand awareness and brand image, is the basement to establish customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993). The accumulation of brand knowledge toward a brand assists customers in being familiar with the brand; thus, the process of building customer-based brand equity, including choosing brand identities, developing supporting marketing programs, and leveraging secondary associations, are implemented to enhance customers' brand knowledge (Keller, 1993). For managing brand equity in the service industry, Berry (2000) noted that service firms should dare to be different, determine their own fame, make an emotional connection, and internalize the brand. The formation of brand love is based on the accumulation of brand equity, which enhances brand image and brand awareness for customers to perceive the value of the brand (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012).

In the hospitality academy, customer-based brand equity has been considered an important concept to evaluate brands in related fields. Table 3 summarizes previous hospitality studies that focus on developing dimensions of customer-based brand equity for a specific field in hospitality, including hotels (Bin, Huimin, & Haiying, 2010; Xu & Chan, 2010), upscale hotels (Hsu, Oh, & Assaf, 2012), midscale hotels (Kim, Jin-Sun, & Kim, 2008), economy hotels (Shen, Yuan, Zhang, & Zhao, 2014), destinations (Boo, Busser, & Baloglu, 2009; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007), restaurants (Kim & Kim, 2004), airlines (Chen & Tseng, 2010), and casinos (Tsai, Cheung, & Lo, 2010; Tsai, Lo, & Cheung, 2013). Through summarizing previous studies on customer-based brand equity, it is interesting to find that researchers are highly interested in its implications in the hotel industry, especially the deeper explorations in diverse segments of hotel brands. Such a phenomenon reveals the complexity of hotel branding, which requires significant attention in clarifying customer-brand relationship. Common dimensions of customer-

based brand equity show relations with the three love component of Sternberg (1986). For example, intimacy is the closeness between two people, which improves the brand association between a consumer and a brand. Passion in a love relationship means the sense of romance from the physical attractiveness of a partner, which can be perceived in a brand relationship through brand image, quality of experience, and brand awareness. Commitment is the determination to maintain the love relationship for a long time, which represents the concept of brand credibility, management trust, brand reliability, and brand loyalty in a brand relationship.

**Table 3. Dimensions of Customer-Based Brand Equity in the Hospitality Academy**

Fields	Dimensions of Customer-Based Brand Equity	Sample references
Hotel	Perceived quality Perceived risk Information costs save Brand credibility Brand awareness Brand image Brand association Quality of experience	Bin et al. (2010), and Xu and Chan (2010)
Upscale hotel	Perceived quality Brand awareness Brand image Management trust Brand reliability Brand loyalty	Hsu et al. (2012)
Midscale hotel	Brand loyalty Perceived quality Brand awareness Brand association Perceived value	Kim et al. (2008)
Economy hotel	Perceived quality Brand association Brand awareness	Shen et al. (2014)
Destination	Brand awareness Brand Image Perceived quality Brand loyalty Brand value	Konecnik and Gartner (2007), and Boo et al. (2009)

Restaurant	Brand loyalty Brand awareness Perceived quality Brand image	Kim and Kim (2004)
Airline	Brand awareness Brand Image Perceived quality Brand loyalty	Chen and Tseng (2010)
Casino	Brand loyalty Perceived quality Brand image Brand awareness	Tsai et al. (2010), and Tsai et al. (2013)

In this study, the initial driver of hotel brand love, the three love components, can be considered as customers' experience evaluation based on brand knowledge toward a hotel sub-brand. Through obtained brand knowledge, customers have the information to identify their intimacy, passion, and commitment toward a hotel sub-brand. Then, the perceived three love components are internalized to match customers' expected ideal brand experience. Based on the match between brand image and ideal self-image, customers own their overall match with the hotel sub-brand as ideal self-sub-brand congruence. The hotel brand love enhanced by ideal self-sub-brand congruence can be considered a strong emotional connection in customer-based brand equity. Then, brand loyalty, the core of brand equity, can be enhanced through the strong emotional connection as a predicable outcome of brand love (Aaker, 1991).

### **Brand Love**

Albert et al. (2008) explored the concept of brand love and defined 11 dimensions as follows: passion toward the brand, long duration of the relationship with the brand, congruity between customer self-image and brand image, dreams favored by the brand, memories aroused

by the brand, pleasure provided by the brand, perceived attraction of the brand, uniqueness of the relationship and/or of the brand, beauty of the brand, trust established through the brand experience, and declaration of affect. Albert et al. (2008) further noted some dimensions that may emerge when customers possess strong brand love: function perceptions, such as the quality of the brand and a good price of the brand; commitment to sustain a long-term relationship with the brand and psychological well-being caused made by the brand; and attachment.

Not being satisfied with the prior understanding about what brand love is, Batra et al. (2012) applied a grounded theory approach and proposed seven core elements of brand love: self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviors, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, positive overall attitude valence, attitude certainty and confidence, and anticipated separation distress (p. 10). Batra et al. (2012) also noted that quality belief is an antecedent of brand love and that the outcomes of brand love include stronger repurchase intention, willingness to pay more, engagement in delivering positive WOM, and resistance to negative information.

Several empirical studies in brand love have revealed the need to examine its antecedents and outcomes in a specific brand type, industry or product, such as wine (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012), fashion brands (Ismail & Spinelli, 2012), and the iPod (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). The study of Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010) tested the same structural equation model for the iPod, favorite clothing brand, and Panadol and found inconsistent findings for these three brands. Their empirical results revealed that among these three brands, customers rated the lowest score for Panadol in sense of community, brand identification, brand love, brand loyalty, and active engagement. While the relationship between brand love and active engagement was significant for the iPod and favorite clothing brand, it was not significant for Panadol (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). Moreover, the effect of brand loyalty on active engagement was only supported in

favorite clothing brand, rather than either the iPod or Panadol (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). It seems that customers may not generally fall in love with all types of brands. Even for those loved brands, the paths to develop brand love and the behavioral outcomes of brand love might be different (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). The evidence for such an argument can also be found in a study of Albert et al. (2008). Albert et al. (2008) explored customers' love feelings toward brands and found key association words to classify homogeneous groups, such as elegant, fashion, quality, and relaxed atmosphere. These key words are certain attributes of brands that are more likely to arouse customers' love feelings.

More recently, Kwon and Mattila (2015) followed the framework of Batra et al. (2012) and proposed a research model for hospitality brand love by examining the relationships among self-brand connection, emotional attachment, word of mouth, and self-construal. With participants in the U.S. and Korea, Kwon and Mattila (2015) examined their research model in hospitality brands, including coffee shops, restaurants, airlines, and hotels. The empirical results of Kwon and Mattila (2015) revealed that self-brand connection can directly improve word of mouth or indirectly improve word of mouth through the mediation of emotional attachment; in addition, self-construal can serve as the moderator to significantly enhance the positive relationship between self-brand connection and word of mouth.

Although the work of Kwon and Mattila (2015) plays a pioneering role in introducing the concept of brand love into hospitality brand studies, several further steps still need to be clarified through this study to add new knowledge of brand love. First, the widely accepted three love components of Sternberg (1986) were not examined in Kwon and Mattila (2015). Because Yim et al. (2008) showed the significant importance of these three love components and the varying importance among components based on characteristics of brands, it is valuable to examine these

three love components in hotel brands. Second, with the trend of establishing brand portfolios in the hotel industry (Wang & Chung, 2015) and the findings of spillover effects in a brand portfolio (Lei et al., 2008), brand love studies should consider the issue of love spillover between sub-brands and their corporate brand. Third, more suggested outcomes of brand love from Batra et al. (2012), such as revisit intention and willingness to pay a price premium, are worth examining to provide empirical evidence to support the brand love framework.

### **Three Components for Brand Love**

The three components for hotel brand love are proposed as intimacy for a sub-brand, passion for a sub-brand, commitment for a sub-brand, and ideal self-sub-brand congruence. The justifications for the hypotheses are addressed as follows.

#### **Three Love Components**

Intimacy, passion, and commitment are three love components proposed by Sternberg (1986). To assist subsequent empirical studies of the triangular theory of love, Sternberg (1998) further developed a total of 45 items for measuring intimacy, passion, and commitment in human love (see Table 4). The intimacy component represents closeness between two people; hence, the measurement items cover the concepts of active support, warm relationship, in times of need, share myself and my possessions, communicate well, feel close to, comfortable relationship, really understand the partner, the partner really understands me, and share deeply personal information about myself with the partner. The passion component reflects the romantic sense aroused from physical attraction to a partner; therefore, the measurement items cover the



concepts of the partner excites me, thinking about the partner frequently, very romantic, very personally attractive, idealize the partner, physical contact with the partner, something almost “magical” about my relationship with the partner, adore the partner, relationship with the partner is passionate, when I see romantic movies and read romantic books I think of the partner, and fantasize about the partner. The commitment component represents the decision to remain together for a long time; hence, the measurement items cover the concepts of committed to maintaining my relationship with the partner, I would not let other people come between us, have confidence in the stability of my relationship, could not let anything get in the way of my commitment to the partner, expect my love for the partner to last for the rest of my life, always feel a strong responsibility for the partner, commitment to the partner as a solid one, view my relationship with the partner as permanent, and plan to continue in my relationship with the partner.

**Table 4. Items for Measuring Three Love Components in Human Love**

Component	Items
Intimacy	1. I am actively supportive of _____’s well-being
	2. I have a warm relationship with _____
	3. I am able to count on _____ in times of need
	4. _____ is able to count on me in times of need
	5. I am willing to share myself and my possession with _____
	6. I receive considerable emotional support from _____
	7. I give considerable emotional support to _____
	8. I communicate well with _____
	9. I value _____ greatly in my life
	10. I feel close to _____
	11. I have a comfortable relationship with _____
	12. I feel that I really understand _____
	13. I feel that _____ really understand me
	14. I feel that I really can trust _____
	15. I share deeply personal information about myself with _____
Passion	1. Just seeing _____ excites me
	2. I find myself thinking about _____ frequently during the day

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	3. My relationship with _____ is very romantic 4. I find _____ to be very personal attractive 5. I idealize _____ 6. I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as _____ does 7. I would rather be with _____ than with anyone else 8. There is nothing more important to me than my relationship with _____ 9. I especially like physical contact with _____ 10. There is something almost “magical” about my relationship with _____ 11. I adore _____ 12. I cannot imagine life without _____ 13. My relationship with _____ is passionate 14. When I see romantic movies and read romantic books I think of _____ 15. I fantasize about _____
Commitment	1. I know that I care about _____ 2. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with _____ 3. Because of my commitment to _____, I would not let other people come between us 4. I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with _____ 5. I could not let anything get in the way of my commitment to _____ 6. I expect my love for _____ to last for the rest of my life 7. I will always feel a strong responsibility for _____ 8. I view my commitment to _____ as a solid one 9. I cannot imagine ending my relationship with _____ 10. I am certain of my love for _____ 11. I view my relationship with _____ as permanent 12. I view my relationship with _____ as a good decision 13. I feel a sense of responsibility toward _____ 14. I plan to continue in my relationship with _____ 15. Even when _____ is hard to deal with, I remain committed to our relationship

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Source: Sternberg, 1998, p. 45-47.

The intimacy component represents closeness between two people. Without the passion component, the singular perceived intimacy can also occur when thinking of love for a father, a mother, a best friend, a sibling, and a lover (Sternberg, 1986). Moreover, with different relationships, the perception of “closeness” might be generated by different sources (Sternberg, 1986). For example, the perceived closeness with parents is mainly because of the sense of being family members for a long time and the experience of being raised by parents. At the same time, the perceived closeness with a good friend might be due to similar interests, accumulated

cooperation on course work, shared leisure experiences, or easiness in working and communicating with each other. Perceived intimacy can also be applied in managing hotel brand experiences. For example, generation Y consumers who love night bars might feel strong intimacy with the W Hotel because it is a lifestyle hotel that seeks to provide professional, fun, night bars specifically for this target market. Generation Y consumers who love the W Hotel understand that as long as they stay with the brand, they can perfectly fit with the wow feelings caused by cool night bars. Similarly, customers who are concerned with sustainability, healthy diet, and exercise might experience intimacy with the Westin Hotel because the whole environmental design reflects their emphasis on eco-friendly and well-being. Lovers of the Westin Hotel know that they can directly ask for running routes around the hotel property of the Westin Hotel at the front desk, and they can always receive professional information without problems. They also know that when they want to enjoy nutrient-rich meals, there will be a menu with diverse dishes for them to choose from at the Westin Hotel.

The passion component can be perceived through satisfied needs of self-esteem, nurturance, succorance, affiliation, submission, dominance, or self-actualization (Sternberg, 1986). Most of the time, the passion component coexists with the intimacy component in achieving a close romantic relationship (Sternberg, 1986). Sometimes, the passion component might work first for a relationship, such as being attracted by the beauty of a girl. Then, a guy gets the chance to meet the girl and they come to know each other, resulting in the growth of mutual intimacy. Sometimes, two students become good friends with strong intimacy due to having the same interests and cooperating on projects in the same courses. Then, due to the accumulated mutual communication and understanding, each of them experiences joyful affiliation, self-actualization, or submission, resulting in increasing passionate feelings toward

each other. In designing brand experiences, the passion component has been applied in motivating multi-sensory feelings toward a hotel brand. Both tangible and intangible elements such as color, music, temperature, perfume, lighting, layout, design style, personality, emotion, and touch are all approaches to arouse passion toward a hotel brand (Bellizzi & Hite, 1992; Bitner, 1992; Han & Ryu, 2009; Horng, Chou, Liu, & Tsai, 2013; Lin, 2010; Ryu & Han, 2011; Ryu, Lee, & Kim, 2012). For example, HUALUXE is a hotel brand proposed by InterContinental Hotels Group especially for Chinese travelers. When Chinese travelers enter a HUALUXE Hotel, the visual shock from the splendid classical Chinese garden, the smooth touch of wooden furniture, and the smell of Chinese tea at the front desk could arouse their strong passionate feelings toward the hotel brand.

The commitment component can be interpreted as the decision to identify with a certain lover in the short term and the commitment to maintain a love relationship in the long term (Sternberg, 1986). It should be noted that in the real situation, commitment with a partner does not mean the couple is in an absolutely loyal love relationship (Sternberg, 1986). Married couples still might decide to divorce when facing problems. In the hotel customer-brand relationship, it is possible for a customer to be loyal to more than one hotel brand, such as frequently switching between the Double Tree and Hilton Garden Inn, which are all in the upscale segment of Hilton Worldwide. For maintaining a long-term relationship with a hotel sub-brand of Hilton Worldwide, customers might join HHonors to accumulate points, be promoted into higher-tier membership, and use HHonors Points to enjoy free hotel stays. Once HHonors members feel unsatisfied with the HHonors program or find a better hotel loyalty program, they might switch their commitment to other firms. Mattila (2006) found that emotional ties between a customer and a hotel brand are the key to maintaining brand commitment, rather than soft

rewards from the loyalty program, because terms of loyalty programs are easily copied among hotel firms. To effectively catch customers' commitment, Mattila (2006) suggested that hotel firms should carefully analyze the stay history of their loyalty program members, and then actively provide personal stay preferences for these customers' next stay. Such individually targeted behavior can enhance emotional bonds with customers, improve customers' perceived intimacy and passion as well as sustain their commitment toward a hotel brand.

### **Three Love Components and Ideal-Self-Sub-Brand Congruence**

Self-image is defined as how people think of themselves (Sirgy, 1982). Through different perspectives of thinking about self-image, the concept can be separated into four types: (1) actual self, which reflects how one person actually thinks of himself/herself; (2) ideal self, which reflects how one person would like to think of himself/herself; (3) social self, which reflects how one person feels others think of him/her; and (4) ideal social self, which reflects how one person would like others to think of him/her (Jamal & Goode, 2001; Mehta, 1999; Sirgy et al., 1997). Regardless of the image of self, individuals also consider the image of services, products, and brands (Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy et al., 1997). Moreover, due to the natural need for self-esteem and self-consistency, customers prefer to seek congruency between their self-image and their used-brand image (Kressmann et al., 2006; Malhotra, 1988; Sirgy, 1982). This matching process in involving the brand image with consumers' self-image is self-congruity (Sirgy, 1982). Thus, the ideal self-brand congruence is evaluated based on brand image and customers' ideal-self-image (Sirgy et al., 1997).

In the triangular theory of love, Sternberg (1986) argued that the extent of involvement of a love relationship is based on the match between real status and ideal status in three love

components (as shown in Figure 2). In hotel brand love, the match between real and ideal status for the three love components is customers' subjective perception toward the overlap between their expectation and real brand experience. The higher the perceived status of the three love components, the higher the overall love involvement in a love relationship, and the higher overall ideal involvement in a love relationship (Sternberg, 1986). Thus, ideal-self-brand congruence can be proposed as the outcome of customer-perceived love components to represent the extent of ideal involvement in a brand love relationship.

Evaluation of ideal-self-sub-brand congruence was taken as the overall match between self-image and the brand image, which was evaluated after a real stay to experience the love components of a hotel sub-brand. Accumulated brand experience can assist consumers in understanding the relationship between self-image and the brand image (Plassmann, Ramsøy, & Milosavljevic, 2012). Thus, when a hotel brand is perceived as strong in the three love components, it means the brand is getting closer to ideal self-image (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Tuškej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013). Tuškej et al. (2013) also proved that value congruence, which defined as the match between brand value (actual) and expected value (ideal), was the key antecedent to enhancing customers' identification with the brand. Therefore, perceived strong intimacy, passion, and commitment toward a sub-brand can assist consumers in recognizing the high extent of ideal-self-sub-brand congruence.

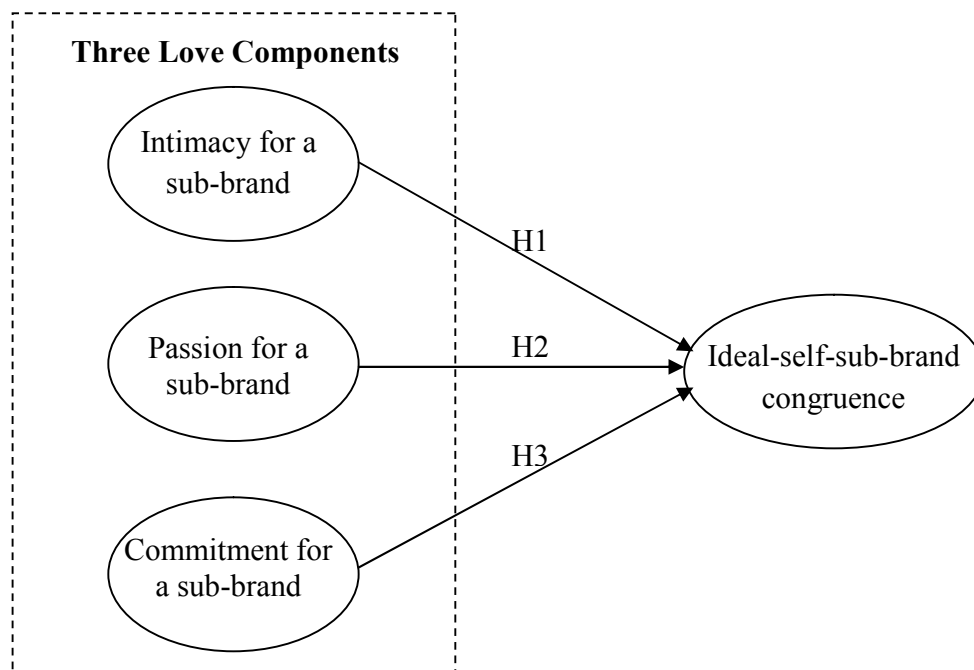
From the customers' perspective, information delivered through brand advertising can effectively assist them in perceiving a sense of self-brand congruence when the advertised brand image represents customers' self-image (Dolich, 1969). Focusing on service brands, Zhang and Bloemer (2008) identified consumer-brand congruence as the similarity between customers' personal image and their perceptions of a service brand's image and found that such congruence

directly improved customers' brand satisfaction, brand trust, affective brand commitment, and brand loyalty. Moreover, ideal-self-brand congruence is important, especially when the brand is used by customers to represent their ideal self in social settings to establish social relations, gain face or prevent losing face (Bao, Zhou, & Su, 2003; Reingen et al., 1984). Because brands in the hospitality industry are always experienced in social settings with social exposure, customers' concern for ideal-self-brand congruence is strong due to face concerns (Lee et al., 2013; Wan & Poon, 2014). Hence, it becomes a natural tendency for hotel customers to be concerned with high intimacy, passion, and commitment in a brand relationship for improving ideal-self-sub-brand congruence. Figure 3 shows the relationship between three love components and ideal-self-sub-brand congruence. Based on the arguments mentioned above, I propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Intimacy for a sub-brand exerts a positive influence on ideal-self-sub-brand congruence.

Hypothesis 2: Passion for a sub-brand exerts a positive influence on ideal-self-sub-brand congruence.

Hypothesis 3: Commitment for a sub-brand exerts a positive influence on ideal-self-sub-brand congruence.



**Figure 3. Three Love Components and Ideal-Self-Sub-Brand Congruence**

### **Ideal-Self-Sub-Brand Congruence and Brand Love for the Sub-Brand**

In a love relationship, self-deficiency is one of the reasons motivating people to seek ideal partners (Murstein, 1988). Living with an ideal partner not only improves self-esteem (Ditto & Lopez, 1992; Higgins, 1987) but also increases the feeling of self-enhancement (Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991). When a brand strongly presents a consumer's ideal self-image, the consumer can enjoy the feeling of self-enhancement while experiencing the brand (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967). Such enjoyment motivates the consumer to fall in love with the brand. The love feeling generated from the match between the ideal self and brand image can also be supported by Sternberg (1986), as shown in Figure 2. The ideal involvement in a love relationship happens when people's real relationship is highly similar to their ideal relationship. From the perspective of leisure participation, self-actualization is the inner demand of people to



be their ideal self during leisure activities (Hamm & Cundiff, 1969; Kelly, 1990). High ideal-self-sub-brand congruence represents the ability of the hotel sub-brand to assist customers in enjoying self-actualization during their stay, such as experiencing luxury (Walls, Okumus, Wang, & Kwun, 2011) or living in an exotic atmosphere (Aramberri & Liang, 2012).

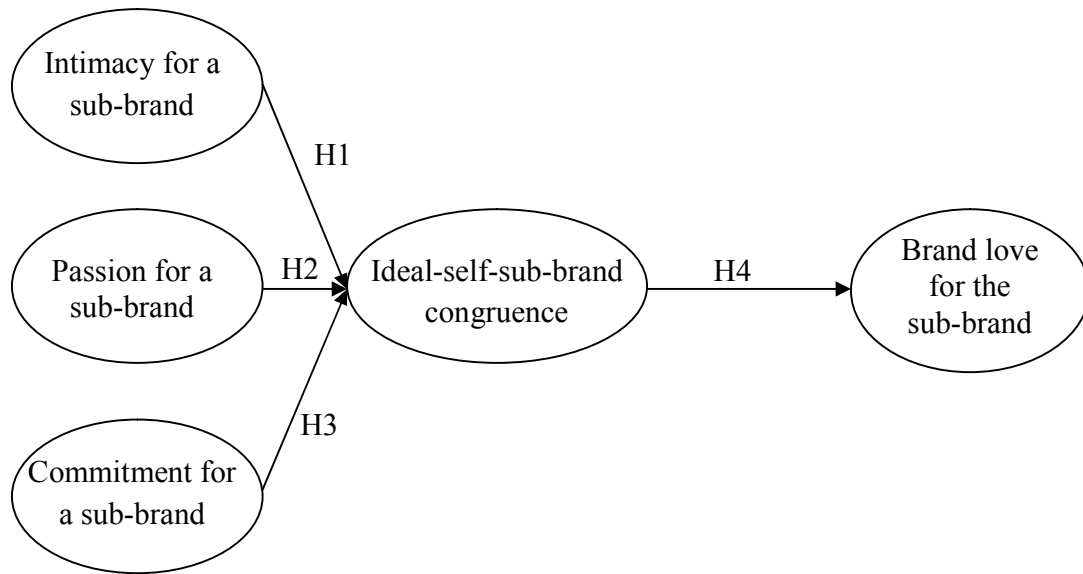
Effects of the identification of mutual congruence can be found as value congruence in both management (Edwards & Cable, 2009; Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989) and marketing studies (Back & Lee, 2009; Kressmann et al., 2006; Zhang & Bloemer, 2008). In management studies, Meglino et al. (1989) based on dyad data between employees and their supervisors in a large industrial products plant, examined value congruence and found that employees who have value congruence with their supervisors were more satisfied with their job and had stronger organizational commitment. Edwards and Cable (2009) conceptualized employees' value congruence as the subjective fit of employees based on the match between individual values and perceived values in an organization and found that employees' value congruence is significantly related to communication among employees, employees' confidence in predicting events and decisions in the organization, friendship and mutual like among employees, and trust toward the organization. These research findings mentioned above revealed that congruence toward an organization can lead individuals to establish a long-term and emotional relationship with the organization. Love feelings toward an organization are virtually identical to such long-term and emotional relationships toward an organization.

In marketing studies, Kressmann et al. (2006) surveyed 600 participants about their brand relationship with their used car and found that customers' congruity with a brand can significantly improve brand relationship quality and brand loyalty. Zhang and Bloemer (2008) selected two types of service brands in their survey, bank brands and clothing brands, and found

that value congruence between customers and a service brand has positive influences on brand satisfaction, brand trust, affective commitment toward the brand, and brand loyalty. Back and Lee (2009) further considered country club members' brand congruence and loyalty and found that image congruence between club members and their club significantly influenced loyalty through member satisfaction. These marketing studies mentioned above again revealed the possible generation of love feelings toward a brand, which is highly congruent with customers. The call for ideal-self-brand congruence in enhancing customers' love feelings toward the brand has been applied by public brands, with which customers can enjoy the brand experience publicly, especially clothing apparel brands such as Banana Republic, Nike, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Birkenstock (Parker, 2009).

Taken together, the effects of congruence found in both management and marketing mentioned above all reveal the significance of frequent interaction, long-term relationship, and emotional linkage, which are similar to the fundamental factors of love feelings. The nature of "publicly" enjoying the brand experience in hotel brands makes customers consider "ideal"-self-brand congruence as the key to perceiving brand love feelings (Parker, 2009). In human love, scholars also noted that because of self-deficiency, people always have the tendency to seek ideal congruence in a love relationship to improve self-esteem and self-enhancement (Ditto & Lopez, 1992; Higgins, 1987; Murstein, 1988; Raskin et al., 1991). The rich evidence discussed above implies the possibility for ideal-self-sub-brand congruence to improve customers' love feelings for the hotel sub-brand (see Figure 4). Based on the above, I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Ideal-self-sub-brand congruence exerts a positive influence on brand love for the sub-brand.



**Figure 4. Brand Love for the Sub-Brand Added on the Model**

### **Brand Love in a Brand Portfolio**

Brand love in a brand portfolio was proposed with brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand. Explanations for the relationships were delivered as follows.

#### **Brand Love from a Sub-Brand to a Corporate Brand**

The concept of portfolio is originally comes from financial investment for investors to diversify their investments to reduce uncertainty and maximize future returns (Markowitz, 1991). Like the financial portfolio, the concept of brand portfolio is applied by firms to create more than two brands to diversify their supplies, expand market share, reduce risks in investments, and maximize profitability (Cardozo & Smith, 1985; Morgan & Rego, 2009; Varadarajan et al., 2006). Brand portfolio strategy is defined by Aaker (2004) as the structure of a brand portfolio

and the interrelationships, roles, and scope of its portfolio brands. Chailan (2010) argued that it is much more complex to manage a brand portfolio than one single brand because practicing brand portfolio strategy requires the combination of both firm strategy and marketing strategy. Brand portfolio strategy is conducted to support the structure of a brand portfolio with detailed plans about the scope, interrelationships, and roles of portfolio brands for leveraging risks and creating synergy (Aaker, 2004). The portfolio brands are called as sub-brands in this study.

According to Lei et al. (2008), the directionality of spillover effect in a brand portfolio mainly occurs from a sub-brand to its parent brand because experience activities usually happen at the sub-brand level. Because a sub-brand is the locus of initial activations in a brand portfolio, the spillover from a sub-brand to its parent brand is stronger than from a parent brand to its sub-brands. In line with the argument, love spillover might happen in the direction from a sub-brand to its parent brand (Lei et al., 2008). Through experiencing a sub-brand, customers can develop an association with its parent brand and extend their emotional linkage with the parent brand (Xu & Chan, 2010). Based on customer-based brand equity, the three-component matching process to develop brand love toward a hotel sub-brand can be considered as the way to accumulate brand knowledge of its parent brand (Prasad & Dev, 2000). The accumulated brand knowledge in the love relationship may enhance the love spillover in the hotel brand portfolio, as argued by Lei et al. (2008). For example, customers who love Hyatt Place may extend their love toward the corporate brand, Hyatt.

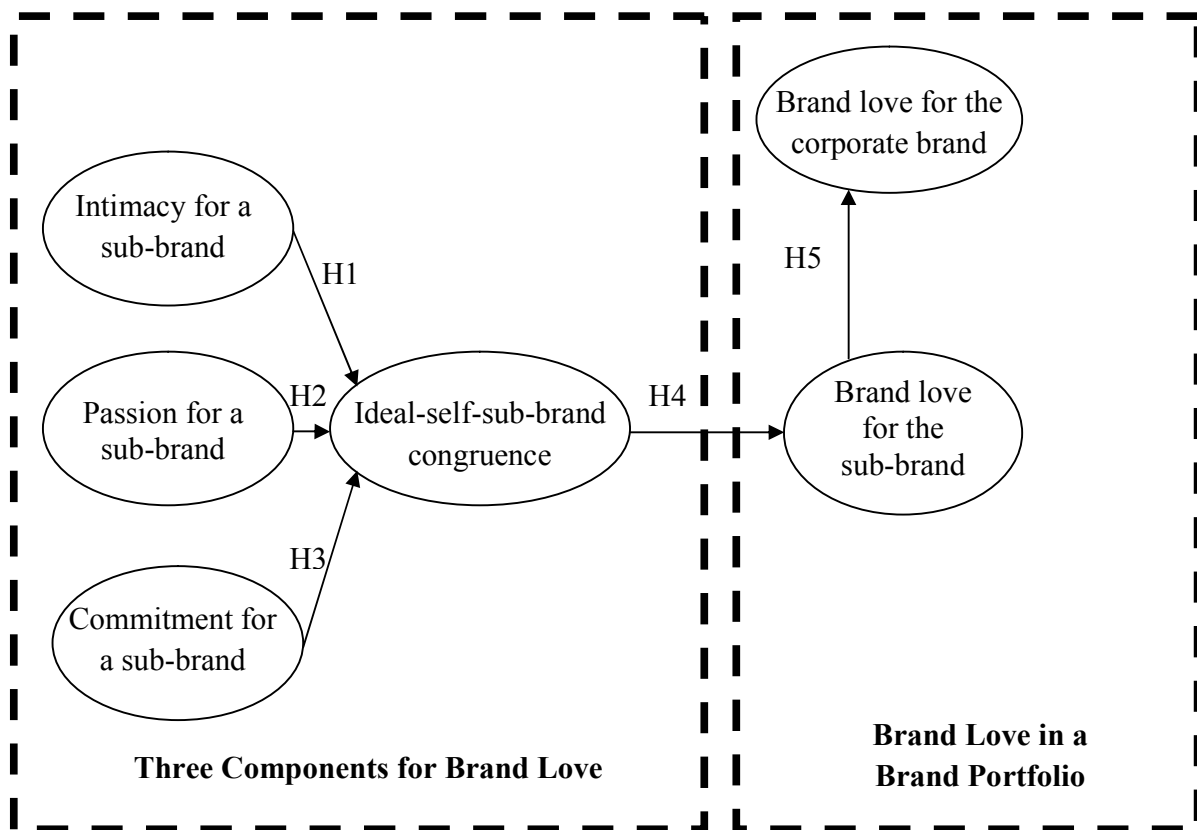
Seeing the potential of positive spillover effect among sub-brands in a brand portfolio, several hotel firms have developed their brand portfolio by creating more than two hotel brands to satisfy diverse customer demands. According to Wang and Chung (2015), hotel brand portfolio strategy can be conceptualized into four dimensions: (1) brand portfolio scope, defined

as the range of sub-brands and brand segments offered by a firm; (2) intra-portfolio competition, defined as internal competition among a hotel firm's sub-brands; (3) brand portfolio location, defined as the geographic distribution and coverage of a firm's sub-brands; and (4) brand portfolio element, defined as shared use of brand elements among sub-brands. Based on differences in resources and business focus, different firms have different strategies for investing in these four dimensions (Wang & Chung, 2015).

Hotel brand membership, or a hotel loyalty program, has been applied in the hotel industry as a way to enhance the relationship spillover from sub-brands to a corporate brand in a hotel brand portfolio (Ha & Stoel, 2014; Tanford, 2013; Tanford et al., 2011; Xie & Chen, 2013; Xie & Chen, 2014). For example, Hilton HHonors is proposed by *Hilton Worldwide* as the hotel brand membership to provide rewards for customers who frequently stay at sub-brands of *Hilton Worldwide*. In a hotel loyalty program, the more stays accumulated, the higher level of membership the customer has and the better rewards the customer can enjoy from the hotel firm, which results in the customers' stronger engagement and retention toward the hotel corporate brand (Xie & Chen, 2013). Tanford et al. (2011) selected seven hotel firms for analyzing the relationship between their reward brand membership and customer commitment and found that hotel brand membership can enhance customers' value commitment toward a hotel firm. Moreover, affective commitment is stronger for customers who are high-tier members than for low-tier members. In findings of Tanford et al. (2011), the accumulated stay at hotel sub-brands for generating affective commitment toward a hotel firm supported the love spillover from hotel sub-brands to the corporate brand. Tanford (2013) further proved that customers in the tier levels of base, middle and elite spent 53%, 66% and 78%, respectively, of their hotel stays at sub-brands under their membership hotel firm, revealing that brand relationship established in the

hotel sub-brands can be extended to their corporate brand. Xie and Chen (2014) explained that the program value provided in a hotel brand membership assists customers to continue engaging in relationship development with a corporate brand. Thus, in a hotel brand portfolio, when customers have high brand love toward a sub-brand, it can assist in the accumulation of brand love toward its corporate brand. Based on the above, I propose the following (see Figure 5):

Hypothesis 5: Brand love for the sub-brand exerts a positive influence on brand love for the corporate brand.



**Figure 5. Brand Love in a Brand Portfolio Added on the Model**

## **Customer Involvement**

Customer involvement with a brand reflects the perceived personal relevance of the brand (Baker, Cronin Jr, & Hopkins, 2009). Highly involved customers are those who invest much time and resources in their relationship with a brand (Goodman et al., 1995). Previous studies have found the useful applications of customer involvement in new product development (Lin & Germain, 2004), new service involvement (Lundkvist & Yakhlef, 2004), and service innovation (Magnusson, Matthing, & Kristensson, 2003). Bloemer and Ruyter (1999) found that in service settings, highly involved customers have higher positive emotion with stronger service loyalty. Shao, Baker, and Wagner (2004) further found the moderating effects of customer involvement in changing customers' expectation of service quality and purchase intention. Chen and Tsai (2008) also proved that customer involvement can enhance the positive relationship between perceived value and loyalty. Studies of Bloemer and Ruyter (1999), Shao et al. (2004), and Chen and Tsai (2008) revealed customer involvement as an important moderator to enhance customers' long-term relationship and emotional linkage with a brand.

In human love relationships, the extent of involvement also serves as a contextual setting for people to judge their partners (Buunk, Dijkstra, Fetchenhauer, & Kenrick, 2002). Accumulated dating experiences can be considered as increasing involvement in a love relationship to enhance the love feelings toward a partner (Johnson & Leslie, 1982). Continuous involvement with an ideal partner might assist people in extending their love of the partner to the partner's family. Hence, Kephart (1967) argued that when people decide to take a further step in a current romantic relationship, such as marriage or engagement, family background information becomes critical information to know. Once a couple gets married, their love can be paid not

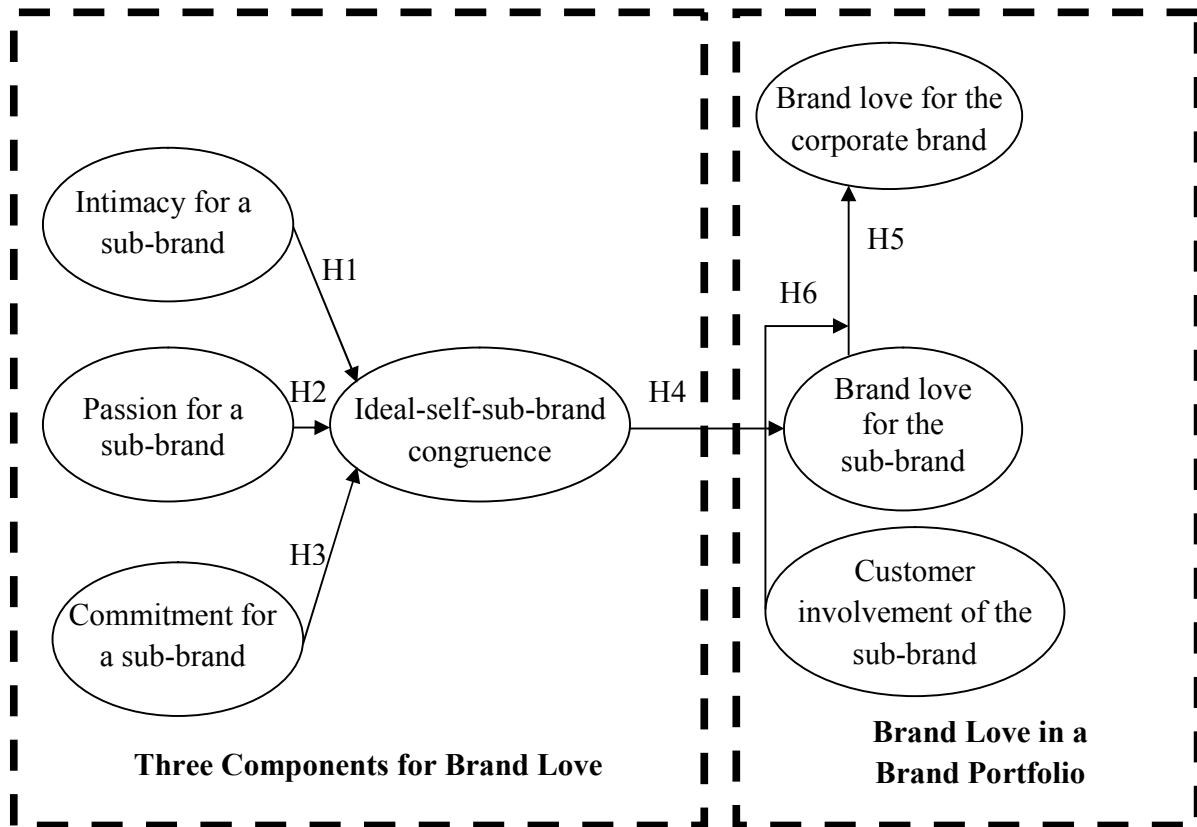
only to the better half but also to the whole new family, including the family of the spouse. That is, involvement in human love has the potential to make people extend their love relationship from one ideal partner to a whole family.

When customers are involved with loved brands that fit ideal self-congruence, the involvement can generate the highest level of involvement quality: ideal involvement (shown as the first panel of Figure 2). The ideal involvement represents the highest utility in a love relationship enjoyed by a person who is in the relationship (Sternberg, 1986). With the tendency to be considered a sincere person in front of others (Harter, 2002), customers might follow the love feelings to love subjects related to their love brands, such as the corporate brand of the loved sub-brand. Thus, consumers who firmly love Grand Hyatt might naturally feel they also like Hyatt Hotels Corp. because they want to maintain authenticity in social behaviors, including brands that should be consumed in social settings. Furthermore, during involvement with a hotel sub-brand, it is common for consumers to access more information about the corporate brand and then perceive more positive feelings toward the corporate brand. For example, consumers who frequently stay at Hilton Garden Inn and provide feedback to the sub-brand are normally in the HHonors program for accumulating points. Earned points in the HHonors program can further enhance these consumers' positive feelings toward the corporate brand, Hilton Worldwide. Taken together, when customers are involved with their loved sub-brand, the involvement can enhance the spillover of their love feelings from the sub-brand to its corporate brand. Based on the above arguments, I propose the following (see Figure 6):

Hypothesis 6: Customer involvement of the sub-brand positively moderates the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand. Specifically, the



higher the customer involvement of a sub-brand, the stronger the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand.



**Figure 6. Three Components for Brand Love**

### Brand Loyalty

Outcomes of hotel brand love are proposed with revisit intention for the sub-brand, positive WOM for the sub-brand, and price premium for the sub-brand. Explanations for the paths are reported as follows.

### Brand Loyalty

Dick and Basu (1994) conceptualized customer loyalty as “the relationship between customers’ relative attitude toward an entity (brand/service/store/vendor) and patronage behavior” (p. 100). The relative attitude toward the entity is formed by cognitive antecedents (including accessibility, confidence, centrality, and clarity), affective antecedents (including emotion, feeling states/mood, primary affect, and satisfaction), and conative antecedents (including switching cost, sunk cost, and expectation) (Dick & Basu, 1994). The repeat patronage in a loyalty relationship causes consequences such as search motivation, resistance to counterpersuasion, and word-of-mouth (Dick & Basu, 1994). Moreover, Dick and Basu (1994) combined both relative attitude and repeat patronage as two dimensions to clarify four specific types of loyalty: loyalty (high relative attitude and high repeat patronage), spurious loyalty (low relative attitude and high repeat patronage), latent loyalty (high relative attitude and low repeat patronage), and no loyalty (low relative attitude and low repeat patronage). Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol (2002) argued that trustworthiness, consisting of trust in front-line employee behaviors and trust in management policies and practices, can enhance loyalty through value. For loyalty in the service industry, Caruana (2002) proposed that service satisfaction is the mediator between service quality and service loyalty. For loyalty in sales marketing, Palmatier, Scheer, and Steenkamp (2007) noted that customers may perceive two types of loyalty: salesperson-owned loyalty and loyalty to the selling firm.

Brand loyalty was defined by Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) as “biased behavior response expressed over time by some decision-making unit with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands” (p. 80). To improve loyalty for hotel brands, Barsky and Nash (2002) argued for the importance of evoking employees’ positive emotion during brand experience; Back (2005) focused on upper middle-class brands and found that social and ideal social image

congruence can significantly enhance brand loyalty through brand satisfaction; Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) proved that brand experience can significantly enhance brand loyalty; and, Nam, Ekinici, and Whyatt (2011) proposed that customer satisfaction serves as a mediator between brand equity and brand loyalty. Loyalty can be separated into four phases: cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty, and action loyalty (Oliver, 1999). Cognitive loyalty is a brand belief after receiving brand attribute information; affective loyalty reflects the liking or attitude toward a brand based on cumulatively satisfying experiences; conative loyalty is customers' behavioral intention, which represents a brand-specific commitment in repurchase; and, action loyalty is the integration of the prior phases to repeat engagements (Oliver, 1999). AS with prior studies using conative loyalty in analyzing the effects of brand love (Albert et al., 2013; Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Yim et al., 2008), this study also applies conative loyalty in our structural model. Three constructs of conative loyalty are added in this study: revisit intention, positive WOM, and price premium.

Revisit intention was proposed by prior empirical studies as customers' behavioral loyalty for a loved brand (Batra et al., 2012; Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012). Customers' willingness to purchase a service/product/brand for the second time and the intention to take the brand as the first choice in the market were commonly used to measure revisit intention (Kim, Kim, & Kim, 2009; Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012). For loved wine brands, Loureiro and Kaufmann (2012) found that customers possess higher intention to buy the brand the next time and are more willing to repeat the brand purchase behavior. For loved brands in technology, clothing and medicine, Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010) also found that customers frequently purchase their loved brands and consider the loved brands a top priority when they have related needs.

Positive WOM for a brand is an engaged behavior in which customers spend resources to spread positive information for the brand, such as how charming the brand image is, how sweet the brand experience is, or how nice the utility gained from the brand is (Brown, Barry, Dacin, & Gunst, 2005; de Matos & Rossi, 2008; Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Jeong & Jang, 2011). Dick and Basu (1994) noted that positive WOM is the main outcome of a stable trustworthy customer-supplier relationship. Passion-driven behavior, which includes customers' willingness to spend resources for the loved brand, has been proven as one of the dimensions of brand love (Batra et al., 2012). When customers enjoyed excellent brand experiences, they always want to share that moment with others as an effort to appreciate the brand (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008).

Price premium was defined by Rao and Bergen (1992) as customers' volunteered behavior to pay more than the current price for a product that can be justified by the customers' subjective perceived value of the product. Willingness to pay the price premium occurs when customers feel that the overall value of a brand is higher than the current paid price for it (Homburg, Koschate, & Hoyer, 2005; Persson, 2010). Homburg et al. (2005) further interpreted that cumulated brand satisfaction is the foundation supporting customers' willingness to pay more. The cumulated brand satisfaction strengthens the relationship between customers and the brand; thus, the close and long-term customer-brand relationship becomes the additional value that reflects the customers' psychological reliability and safety toward the brand. In such a close and long-term customer-brand relationship, brand love becomes the additional value to shape customers' willingness to pay the price premium (Batra et al., 2012).

The study of Batra et al. (2012) revealed that revisit intention, positive WOM and price premium are the three key outcomes of brand love. Revisit intention in a love relationship ensures the chance to enjoy positive feelings and benefits from the loved brand. The desire to

enjoy the experience again motivates customers' revisit intention to the hotel sub-brand. Positive WOM is usually conducted by customers after they commit to a satisfied and identified brand (Brown, Barry, Dacin, & Gunst, 2005). For the hotel industry, positive WOM is valuable because customers' individual brand knowledge can be shared freely to enhance other people's brand knowledge toward the hotel brand. Price premium in a love relationship reflects people's tendency to sacrifice, support, or be dedicated to beloved partners. With the natural of seasonality in hotel room price and the ease with which customers can compare prices with competitors, the significance of the price premium is worth being examined. Based on the reasons mentioned above, I propose the following hypotheses (see Figure 7):

Hypothesis 7: Brand love for the sub-brand exerts a positive influence on revisit intention for the sub-brand.

Hypothesis 8: Brand love for the sub-brand exerts a positive influence on positive WOM for the sub-brand.

Hypothesis 9: Brand love for the sub-brand exerts a positive influence on price premium for the sub-brand.

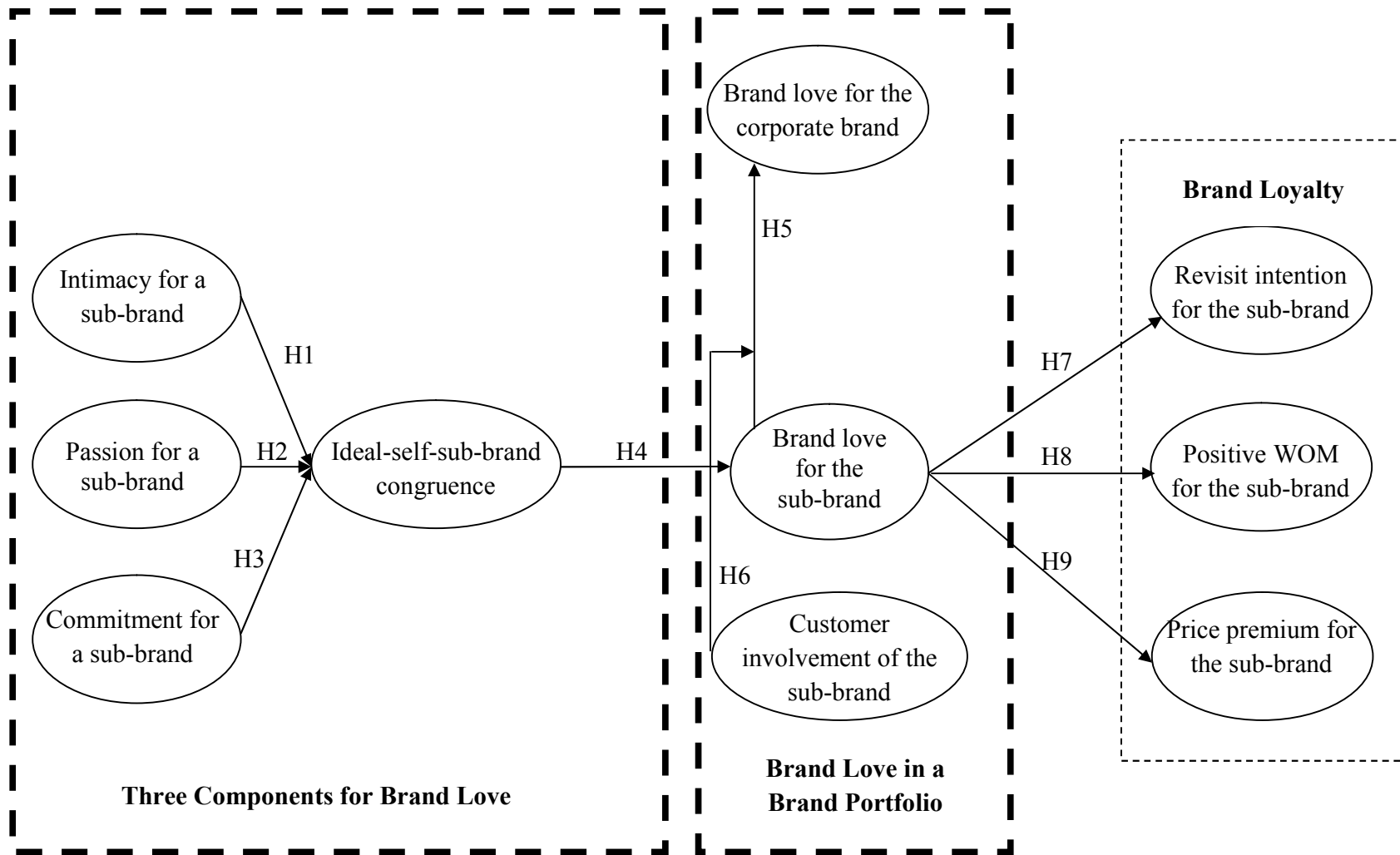


Figure 7. Brand Loyalty Added on the Model

## **Public Self-Consciousness**

Public self-consciousness was defined by Fenigstein et al. (1975) as the concern and awareness of the self as a stimulus in social settings. People with high public self-consciousness consider themselves social objects and are concerned about people's opinions toward their own style, behavior, and attitude. Bushman (1993) summarized that those with high public self-consciousness are more likely to use self-presentation strategies to obtain approval from others, are more willing to follow normative standards in a social context, are more likely to prevent themselves from being in negative reference groups, and are much more sensitive about interpersonal rejection. Additionally, the empirical results of Bushman (1993) revealed that people with high public self-consciousness prefer to purchase national brand labels than bargain brand labels. Such a finding explains the tendency for people with high public self-consciousness to take purchased brands as signals for expressing themselves.

According to regulatory focus theory, customers can engage in the self-regulatory process through either a prevention focus to avoiding negative outcomes or a promotion focus to approach positive outcomes (Higgins, 1998). The concern for public self-consciousness is a typical self-regulatory process to prevent face loss in the social settings, while creating a positive impression for others. Regulatory focus motivates people's behaviors in two ways: (1) avoidance behavior may be conducted due to prevention-focused concerns to satisfy the need for security, and (2) approach behavior may be applied under promotional-focused concern with the need for personal growth (Brockner & Higgins, 2001). With high public self-consciousness, customers who love a hotel sub-brand may extend their love feelings toward its corporate brand as an avoidance behavior for ensuring their sense of identity security or as an approach behavior for receiving more benefits and rewards through the relationship.

Consumers with high public self-consciousness seek self-expression (Fenigstein et al., 1975), and emotional pleasing is one key method to satisfy the need for self-expression (Fournier, 1998). Because brand love itself ensures emotional pleasing, high public self-consciousness may improve the love spillover from a sub-brand to its corporate brand. The need for showing the self in a social setting may also encourage customers with high public self-consciousness to extend their identification from a hotel sub-brand to the corporate brand. As in human love relationships, people with high public self-consciousness may extend their love toward their partner to the partner's family (Kenny & Acitelli, 2001). Such a love extension reflects these people's tendency to act as a social object and to identify with specific social groups. Thus, I propose the following (see Figure 8):

Hypothesis 10: Public self-consciousness positively moderates the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand. Specifically, the higher the public self-consciousness, the stronger the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand.

Customers with high public self-consciousness prefer to maintain relationships with their identified brands (Bushman, 1993). Such behavior can be explained as the individual demand to improve face gain and reduce face loss in social settings (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Traditionally, consumers in collectivist cultures, such as China, Taiwan, and Korea, are concerned with public self-consciousness much more than those in individualistic cultures because their value systems highly emphasize individual face as the reputation of an individual, a family, and even people who live in the same place (Bao et al., 2003; Dubois, Czellar, & Laurent, 2005). Due to the high



concern of public self-consciousness, consumers in collectivist cultures are eager to be loyal to their loved brands through repeatedly purchasing the brand, showing off their usage of the loved brand to others, and not being worried about or even happy to pay high price for the loved brand (Dubois et al., 2005; Liao & Wang, 2009; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Currently, with diverse stimulations of branding campaigns, customers in both collectivist and individualistic cultures are affected by social influences in their brand consumption (Crosno, Freling, & Skinner, 2009; Kim & Ko, 2012). Crosno et al. (2009) even suggested that firms involve brand social power in their brand equity to address customers' increasing needs for public self-consciousness.

Public self-consciousness is similar to the concept of face concern, which consists of the desire to gain face and the fear of losing face. Hwang, Francesco, and Kessler (2003) defined face as "the image that people strive to maintain before others in pursuit of recognition and inclusion" (p. 74). The desire to gain face is the extent of people's desire to have their positive self-image recognized by other people, and the fear to losing face is the extent of people's fear of getting embarrassed in front of the public (Hwang et al., 2003). Thus, the reason why high public self-consciousness strengthens customers' brand loyalty toward their loved hotel sub-brand can be explained by two approaches. First, for the purpose of seeking to gain face, being consistent in brand love feelings and brand loyalty can lead to positive self-image in public. Second, for the purpose of preventing loss of face, it might reduce the risk of being embarrassed if people are found to perform consistently in brand love feelings and brand loyalty.

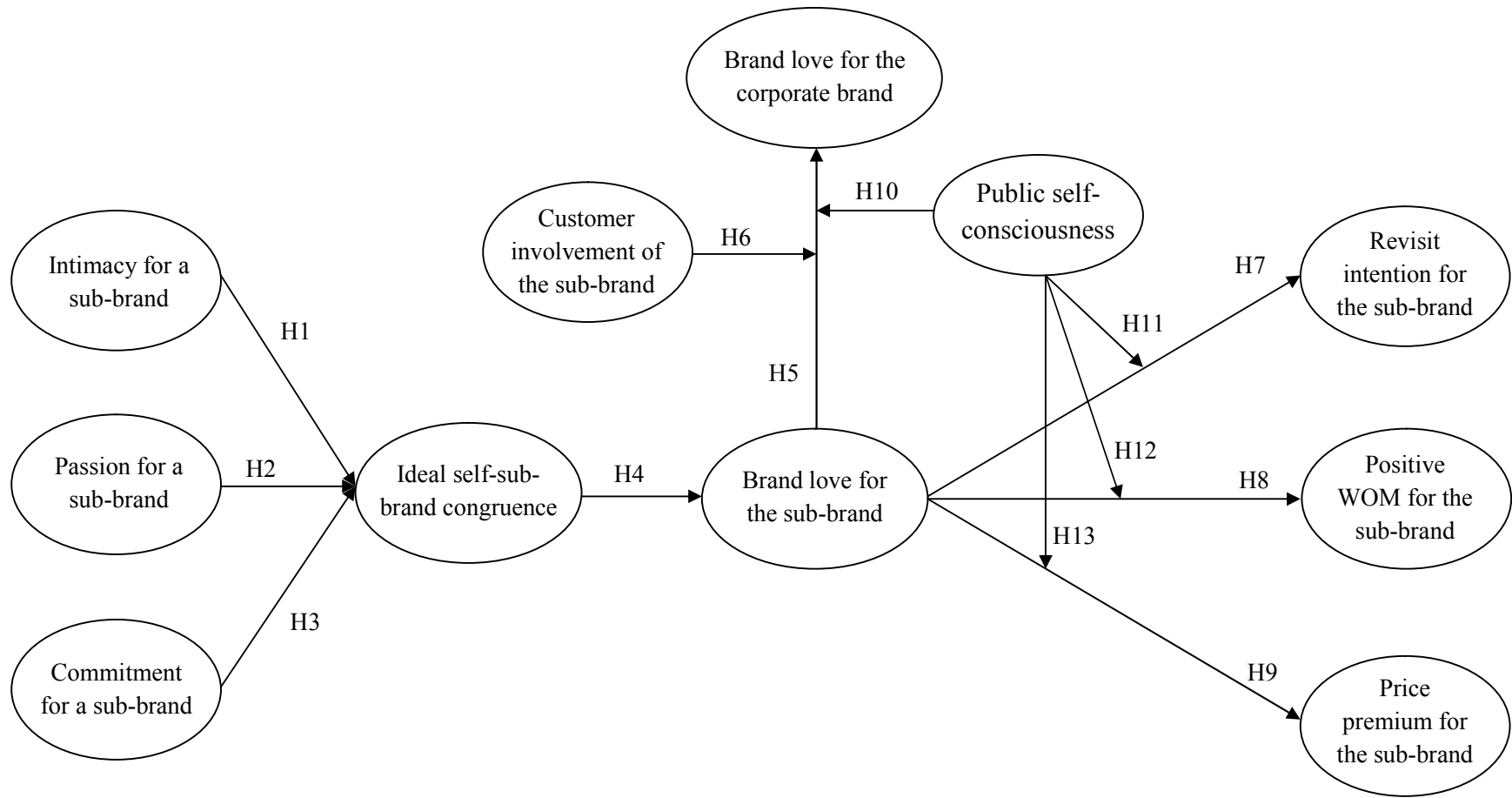
Revisiting a loved hotel sub-brand can satisfy the need for self-expression of customers. Because observing other customers and being observed by others are part of the nature of the hotel brand experience (Miao & Mattila, 2013), frequently visiting a loved hotel brand is a behavior signal that shows others who a person is in a social context. Moreover, delivering

positive WOM for a loved brand can not only strengthen the declaration to others about who the person is but also enhance self-confidence toward the self-relevant brand (Chung & Darke, 2006). To maintain the declaration of social identity, these consumers may be more likely to pay a price premium for their loved brands (Zhou & Nakamoto, 2001). Hence, for a loved hotel sub-brand, customers with high public self-consciousness are more likely to revisit, deliver positive WOM, and pay a price premium for maintaining a relationship with the brand. Based on the arguments mentioned above, I propose the following (see Figure 8):

Hypothesis 11: Public self-consciousness positively moderates the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and revisit intention for the sub-brand. Specifically, the higher the public self-consciousness, the stronger the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and revisit intention for the sub-brand.

Hypothesis 12: Public self-consciousness positively moderates the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and positive WOM for the sub-brand. Specifically, the higher the public self-consciousness, the stronger the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and positive WOM for the sub-brand.

Hypothesis 13: Public self-consciousness positively moderates the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and price premium for the sub-brand. Specifically, the higher the public self-consciousness, the stronger the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and price premium for the sub-brand.



**Figure 8. Proposed Overall Model**

### **Summary of Research Hypotheses**

All the research hypotheses in path relationships are summarized as following:

Hypothesis 1: Intimacy for a sub-brand exerts a positive influence on ideal-self-sub-brand congruence.

Hypothesis 2: Passion for a sub-brand exerts a positive influence on ideal-self-sub-brand congruence.

Hypothesis 3: Commitment for a sub-brand exerts a positive influence on ideal-self-sub-brand congruence.

Hypothesis 4: Ideal-self-sub-brand congruence exerts a positive influence on brand love for the sub-brand.

Hypothesis 5: Brand love for the sub-brand exerts a positive influence on brand love for the corporate brand.

Hypothesis 7: Brand love for the sub-brand exerts a positive influence on revisit intention for the sub-brand.

Hypothesis 8: Brand love for the sub-brand exerts a positive influence on positive WOM for the sub-brand.

Hypothesis 9: Brand love for the sub-brand exerts a positive influence on price premium for the sub-brand.

All the research hypotheses in testing moderating effects are summarized as following:

Hypothesis 6: Customer involvement of the sub-brand positively moderates the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand. Specifically, the higher the customer involvement of a

sub-brand, the stronger the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand.

Hypothesis 10: Public self-consciousness positively moderates the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand.

Specifically, the higher the public self-consciousness, the stronger the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand.

Hypothesis 11: Public self-consciousness positively moderates the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and revisit intention for the sub-brand.

Specifically, the higher the public self-consciousness, the stronger the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and revisit intention for the sub-brand.

Hypothesis 12: Public self-consciousness positively moderates the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and positive WOM for the sub-brand.

Specifically, the higher the public self-consciousness, the stronger the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and positive WOM for the sub-brand.

Hypothesis 13: Public self-consciousness positively moderates the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and price premium for the sub-brand.

Specifically, the higher the public self-consciousness, the stronger the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and price premium for the sub-brand.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHOD**

This chapter includes sections of research design, instruments, sampling, data collection, procedural remedies for controlling common method biases, and data analysis.

## **Research Design**

This study is a quantitative study which was established based on descriptive and causal research design. The descriptive research design was used to present demographical information of participants. The structural equation modeling and the hierarchical multiple regression analysis were applied to examine hypotheses proposed in this research model. The research model is consisted by three sections: three components for brand love (includes intimacy for a sub-brand, passion for a sub-brand, commitment for a sub-brand, and ideal self-sub-brand congruence), brand love in a brand portfolio (includes brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand), and outcomes of brand love (includes revisit intention for the sub-brand, positive WOM for the sub-brand, and price premium for the sub-brand). To empirically test the proposed hypotheses, a cross-sectional online survey with self-administrated questionnaire was used for data collection.

## **Instruments**

### **Survey Questionnaire**

A self-administrated online questionnaire was used to survey frequent travelers in the US who ever stayed at any sub-brand of our selected five hotel firms (case hotel firms including: Marriott International Inc, Hilton Worldwide, InterContinental Hotels Group, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc, and Hyatt Hotels Corp). The overall survey includes five sections: (1) Screening questions, (2) opinion toward one hotel firm and one

of its sub-brands, (3) perceived three love components of the selected sub-brand, (4) opinion toward the selected sub-brand, and (5) personal background information (see APPENDIX A). In the first section, participants were asked to choose one hotel firm that they stay most frequently for leisure purposes. Those who never stay with one of the selected hotel firms were appreciated and were automatically be switched to the end of the survey without the need to complete any other sections of the survey. Based on participants' selected firm, they answered questions from section two to section four. Then, participants provided their personal information in section five. All the measurement scales and items used were adapted from previous studies. A seven-point Likert-type scale was used (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).

In section one and section two, four items extracted from brand love scale of Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) were applied to survey participants' brand love toward their selected hotel firm and their most frequently stayed sub-brand of the hotel firm. Based on the selected sub-brand, participants answer scale items from section three to section four.

In section three, 12 items extracted from Sternberg (1998) were revised to measure three love components in hotel brand love. There were four items for intimacy, four items for passion, and four items for commitment. To further explore differences between expectation and experience for these three components at a recent stay, these 12 items were asked twice with guidance to ask participants firstly answer the 12 items by their expectation toward a recent stay, and then answer another 12 items by their experience of a recent stay.

In section four, eight items were presented to ask participants' ideal-self-sub-brand congruence and customer involvement of the sub-brand. The four items of ideal-



self-sub-brand congruence were developed by Huber, Vollhardt, Matthes, and Vogel (2010). The four items of customer involvement were established by Baker et al. (2009). Then, a total of nine items were used to survey participants' brand loyalty toward the sub-brand. The six items were adapted from Kim, Kim, and Kim (2009) to measure revisit intention and positive WOM. The three items were adapted from Buil, Martínez, and de Chernatony (2013) to measure price premium.

In section five, three items were adapted from Malär et al. (2011) to survey participants' public self-consciousness. The demographic information added in section includes birth year, gender, ethnic background, marital status, annual household income, and highest level of education. All the scale items are summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5. Summary of Measurement Items**

Scale name	Items	Sources
Brand love	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This is a wonderful hotel brand.</li> <li>2. This hotel brand makes me feel good.</li> <li>3. I love this hotel brand!</li> <li>4. I am passionate about this hotel brand.</li> </ol>	Carroll and Ahuvia (2006)
Ideal-self-sub-brand congruence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The ideal of myself is very similar to the character of the hotel brand.</li> <li>2. Staying at the hotel brand, I want to show the best of me.</li> <li>3. I wouldn't like to change anything about this hotel brand.</li> <li>4. This hotel brand reflects my ideal self.</li> </ol>	Huber et al. (2010)
Customer involvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I feel like I have personal involvement with this hotel brand.</li> <li>2. I feel more strongly about this hotel brand than other non-(Marriott/Hilton/IHG/Starwood/Hyatt) hotel brands.</li> <li>3. I feel like my involvement with this hotel brand will last indefinitely.</li> <li>4. My involvement with this hotel brand is enduring.</li> </ol>	Baker et al. (2009)

Intimacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When I stayed at this hotel brand, I mentally felt close to it.</li> <li>2. When I stayed at this hotel brand, I had a comfortable relationship with it.</li> <li>3. When I stayed at this hotel brand, I felt that I really understood it.</li> <li>4. When I stayed at this hotel brand, I felt that I really could trust it.</li> </ol>	Sternberg (1998)
Passion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When I stayed at this hotel brand, I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this hotel brand did.</li> <li>2. When I stayed at this hotel brand, I would rather stay with it than any other brands.</li> <li>3. When I stayed at this hotel brand, I adored it.</li> <li>4. When I stayed at this hotel brand, my relationship with it was passionate.</li> </ol>	Sternberg (1998)
Commitment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When I stayed at this hotel brand, I was committed to maintaining my relationship with it.</li> <li>2. When I stayed at this hotel brand, I viewed my commitment to it as a solid one.</li> <li>3. When I stayed at this hotel brand, I viewed my relationship with it as permanent.</li> <li>4. When I stayed at this hotel brand, I planned to continue in my relationship with it.</li> </ol>	Sternberg (1998)
Revisit intention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For my next trip, I will consider this hotel brand as my first choice, rather than other non-(Marriott/Hilton/IHG/Starwood/Hyatt) hotel brands.</li> <li>2. I have a strong intention to visit this hotel brand again in the future.</li> <li>3. I will increase the frequency of my visit for this hotel brand.</li> </ol>	Kim et al. (2009)
Positive WOM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I definitely would recommend this hotel brand to my close colleagues.</li> <li>2. I definitely would tell my close friends something good about this hotel brand.</li> </ol>	Kim et al. (2009)

	3. I definitely would suggest this hotel brand to my family members and relatives.	
Price premium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The price of this hotel brand would have to go up quite a bit before I will consider switching to other non-(Marriott/Hilton/IHG/Starwood/Hyatt) hotel brand.</li> <li>2. I am willing to pay a higher price for this hotel brand than for other non-(Marriott/Hilton/IHG/Starwood/Hyatt) hotel brands.</li> <li>3. I am willing to pay a lot more for this hotel than for other non-(Marriott/Hilton/IHG/Starwood/Hyatt) hotel brands.</li> </ol>	Buil et al. (2013)
Public self-consciousness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I usually pay attention to make a good impression.</li> <li>2. One of the last things I do before I leave my house is look in the mirror.</li> <li>3. I am usually aware of my appearance.</li> </ol>	Malär et al. (2011)

### **Pilot Test**

The purpose of pilot test is to ensure reliability, validity, and readability of scale items and questionnaires of this study. The reliability can be ensured through analyzing reliability coefficients for each measurement scales. The validity and readability can be ensured by revising measurement items based on comments from the pilot test. After passing IRB application, the pilot test was conducted by snowball sampling with 40 participants who are academic researchers or frequent travelers. Data collected from these 40 participants from this pilot test was analyzed by using SPSS 19. According to Kline (2011), “reliability coefficients around .90 are considered excellent, values around .80 are very good, and values around .70 are adequate” (p. 70). Before data collection, the results of pilot test showed that all the reliability coefficients of the measurements were very good or excellent (see Table 6). Besides, during answering the survey, these 40

participants provided comments on revising scale items for improving validity and readability. Then, the author cooperated with one professor in hospitality, one professor in marketing, and two assistant professors in hospitality to achieve mutual agreements in revising scale items, which again ensures validity and readability of the survey. After revising the survey based on comments from 40 participants and these four professors, one American pastor was invited to check the updated version of the whole survey for providing comments to improve its validity and readability.

**Table 6. Results of the Pilot Test**

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Note based on Kline (2011)
Intimacy for a sub-brand	.93	Excellent
Passion for a sub-brand	.88	Very good
Commitment for a sub-brand	.97	Excellent
Ideal self-sub-brand congruence	.88	Very good
Brand love for the sub-brand	.94	Excellent
Brand love for the corporate brand	.88	Very good
Customer involvement of the sub-brand	.90	Excellent
Revisit intention for the sub-brand	.88	Very good
Positive WOM for the sub-brand	.97	Excellent
Price premium for the sub-brand	.89	Very good
Public self-consciousness	.86	Very good

## Sampling

### Selected Hotel Firms

In this research model, hotel brand love for both a sub-brand and its corporate brand are included. Participants select one of five hotel firms with one of its sub-brands to respond questionnaire. Based on number of owned hotel sub-brands and the percentage of hotel brand membership found in Tanford et al. (2011), Marriott International Inc,

Hilton Worldwide, InterContinental Hotels Group, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc, and Hyatt Hotels Corp are five selected hotel firms in this study. Sub-brands located in the US of the selected five firms were included in this survey for participants to choose. For example, Moxy is a sub-brand under Marriott International Inc and is only located in Europe. Thus, Moxy is not selected in this study. Selected hotel firms and their sub-brands are show in Table 7.

**Table 7. Selected Hotel Firms**

Name of selected firms	List of sub-brand names
Marriott International Inc (12 selected sub-brands)	JW Marriott Ritz-Carlton Renaissance AC Hotels Marriott Courtyard Springhill Suites Fairfield Inn Residence Inn TownePlace Suites Marriott Executive Apartments Autograph Collection
Hilton Worldwide (10 selected sub-brands)	Waldorf Astoria Hilton Conrad Hilton Grand Vacations Double Tree Embassy Suites Hilton Garden Inn Hampton Inn Homewood Suites Home2 Suites by Hilton
InterContinental Hotels Group (7 selected sub-brands)	InterContinental Crowne Plaza Holiday Inn Holiday Inn Express Staybridge Suites Candlewood Suites Hotel Indigo
Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc	W Hotel

(9 selected sub-brands)	Four Points Westin Luxury Collection Sheraton Hotel St Regis Element Le Meridien aloft Hotel
Hyatt Hotels Corp. (6 selected sub-brands)	Hyatt Place Hyatt House Hyatt Park Hyatt Grand Hyatt Andaz

### **Sampling Plan**

The target population of this study is frequent travelers in the US who ever stayed at one of sub-brands under five selected hotel firms (Marriott International Inc, Hilton Worldwide, InterContinental Hotels Group, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc, and Hyatt Hotels Corp) and are included in the email database at a data collection company, Qualtrics. The main purpose of the study is to establish and test the proposed research model and an online survey with convenience sampling was used in this study to collect data. An email invitation was sent to the target population with a link for the questionnaire surveys via Qualtrics.

### **Sample Size**

The data analysis technique for direct paths in this study is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which should be practiced with special requirements on sample size. Model complexity and measurement model characteristics are the two criterions to determine sample size (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). The structural

model of this study was consisted of 9 constructs measured by 33 items. The model had three exogenous variables (intimacy, passion, and commitment), six endogenous variables (ideal self-sub-brand congruence, brand love for the sub-brand, brand love for the corporate brand, revisit intention, positive WOM, and price premium) and eight direct paths. The degrees of freedom (*df*) is defined as the difference between the number of observations and the number of estimated parameters. It is counted by  $df_m = p - q$ , where  $p$  is the number of observations and  $q$  is the number of estimated parameters. With the assistance of Mplus for calculation, the whole model has 116 free parameters.

There is no single formula or widely accepted method to determine the sample size for SEM. First, Nunnally (1967) argued that each variable should come with 10 participants. Since there are 33 items in this structural model, 330 is the minimum sample size based on Nunnally (1967). Second, Bentler and Chou (1987) suggested that each estimated parameter needs at least five participants and the total sample size should above 50. With 116 parameters in this study, 580 is the minimum sample size according to Bentler and Chou (1987). Third, Hair et al. (2006) pointed out that a minimum sample size of 500 is needed when there are more than seven constructs in a structural model, and is 150 when there are less or equal to seven constructs with more than three items for each construct. With nine constructs in this whole structural model, 500 is the minimum sample size based on Hair et al. (2006).

However, sample size higher than 500 is considered as large sample size (Qureshi & Compeau, 2009). Large sample size may lead hypotheses easier to be passed in path analysis (Fornell & Larcker, 1981a). Chi-square test, which is preferred to be non-significant for overall model fit in SEM, has the tendency to be significant with large

sample size (Kline, 2011). Besides, pursuing large sample may be meaningless if assists achieving significant paths with very low standardized coefficients (Kline, 2011). The minimum sample size counted by methods of Bentler and Chou (1987) and Hair et al. (2006) are higher than 500 which may cause these problems of large sample size.

To prevent the problems of large sample size, this study followed the suggestion of Nunnally (1967) and set the minimum sample size of this study as 330.

### **Data Collection**

Online survey was used for data collection in this study. Evans and Mathur (2005) argued that online survey has significant advantages than other forms of data collection. Major strengths of online survey includes global reach, flexibility, speed and timeliness, convenience, ease of data entry and analysis, question diversity, low administration cost, ease of follow up, large sample easy to obtain, control of answer order, required completion of answers, and knowledge of respondent vs. non respondent characteristics (Evans & Mathur, 2005). Due to the advantages of online survey, several brand researchers used this approach for data collection (Li, Li, & Kambele, 2012; Malär et al., 2011; Mazodier & Merunka, 2012).

After IRB approval and pilot test, we accessed participants by e-mail invitation through frequent travelers' email database at Qualtrics. An email invitation which includes the purposes of the survey, procedures to join this survey, contact information of the principal investigator, confidentiality of participants, participants' right, and a link for the survey was sent. Volunteered participants can directly click on a hyperlink followed with the invitation to complete the survey. A screening question was used to see if the



participants have stayed at any sub-brands under these selected five hotel firms. All the responses were stored by the online platform for the principal investigator to retrieve for further data analysis.

### **Procedural Remedies for Controlling Common Method Biases**

Common method biases are the variances attributed to the measurement model rather than the measured constructs (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). As summarized by Podsakoff et al. (2003), potential sources to cause common method biases include common rater effects, item characteristic effects, item context effects, and measurement context effects. To reduce these biases, this study applied three procedural remedies suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003). First, this study applied psychological separation of measurement by dividing the whole survey into several sections. For the beginning of each section, introducing sentences were added to allow participants focus on preparation for answering the next section. By doing so, the chances of participants to mentally connect relationships among measurements cross sections can be reduced. Second, this study informed participants of protecting anonymity on the cover letter of our survey. Protecting anonymity can reduce participants' tendency to behave social desirability (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Crowne and Marlowe (1964) defined social desirability as "the need for social approval and acceptance and the belief that it can be attained by means of culturally acceptable and appropriate behaviors" (p. 109). Knowing the protection of anonymity in this study, participants are able to honestly answer the survey based on their real feelings toward their selected loved hotel brand. Third, this

study improved scale items for reducing common method biases. Podsakoff et al. (2003) pointed out that problems of item ambiguity, vague concepts, and item social desirability should be solved during improving scale items. Before official survey distribution, this study improved scale items in the pilot study. In the pilot study, a total of 40 participants who are academic researchers or frequent travelers took the initial version of the survey, and provided comments on item revision. Then, four professors from hospitality and marketing checked revision of scale items for several times until reaching mutual agreement on the revision. Finally, one American pastor was invited to read and check the updated version of the whole survey, making sure readability and clarity of the whole survey.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Descriptive Data Analysis**

The purpose to conduct descriptive data analysis was to get general understanding of survey participants. Participants' demographic information was classified as birth year (Before 1925; 1925-1933; 1934-1942; 1943-1951; 1952-1960; 1961-1970; 1971-1981; 1982-1989; 1990-1996), gender (male; female), ethnic background (Caucasian; African American; Asian; Hispanic; Native American; other), marital status (married; single; divorced; widowed), annual household income (\$10,000 or less; \$10,001 ~ \$29,999; \$30,000 ~ \$49,999; \$50,000 ~ \$79,999; \$80,000 ~ \$99,999; \$100,000 ~ \$149,999; \$150,000 or more), highest level of completed education (some high school or less, high

school diploma, trade or technical school, undergraduate college degree, graduate college degree).

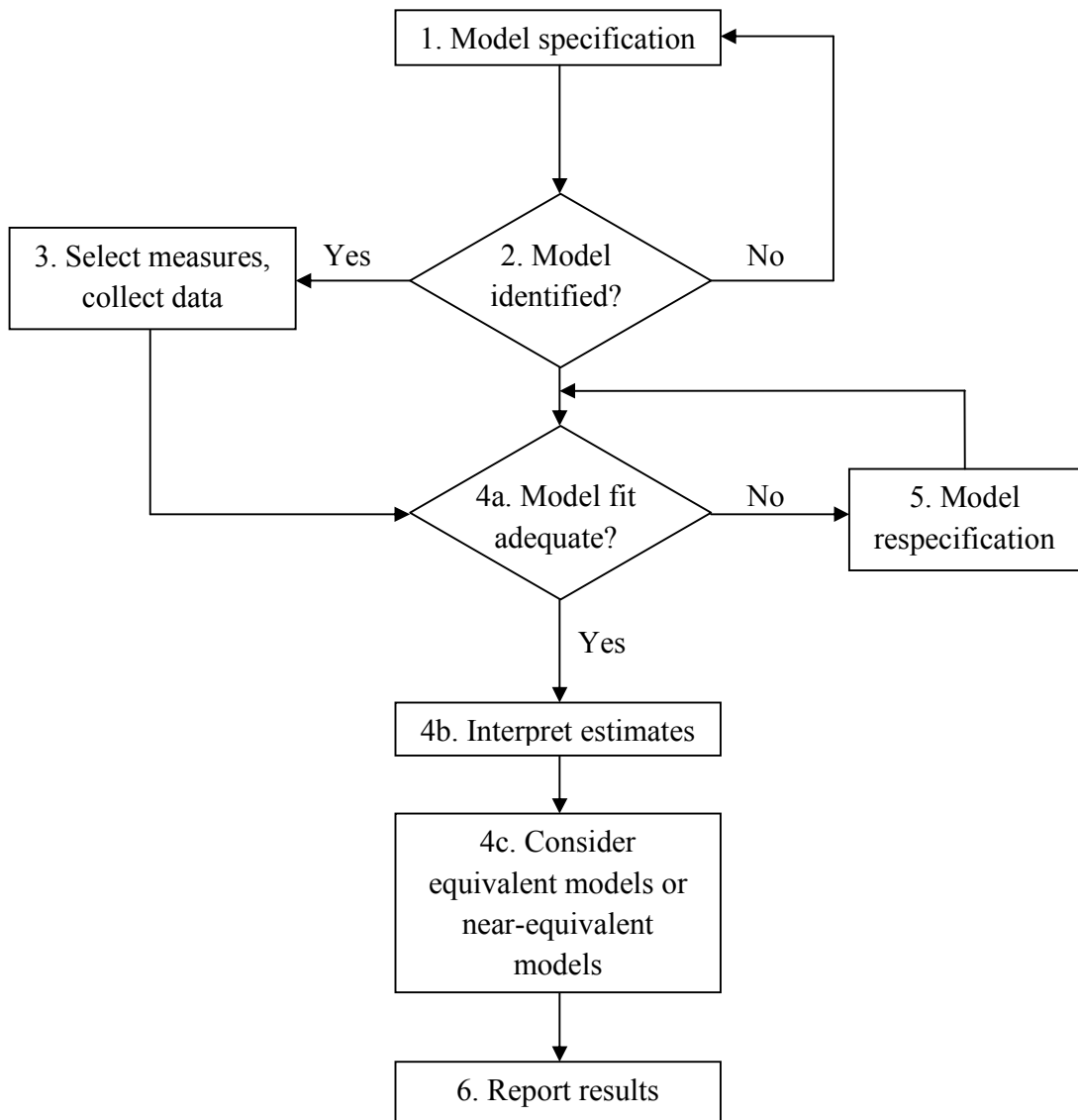
Besides, participants' selected hotel firm and their selected sub-brand for this survey were also classified as followings: (1) Marriott International Inc (includes sub-brands such as JW Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, Renaissance, Marriott, Courtyard, Springhill Suites, Fairfield Inn, Residence Inn, TownePlace Suites, Marriott Executive Apartments, Autograph Collection), (2) Hilton Worldwide (includes sub-brands such as Waldorf Astoria, Hilton, Conrad, Hilton Grand Vacations, Double Tree, Embassy Suites, Hilton Garden Inn, Hampton Inn, Homewood Suites, Home2 Suites by Hilton), (3) InterContinental Hotels Group (includes sub-brands such as InterContinental, Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Staybridge Suites, Candlewood Suites, Hotel Indigo), (4) Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc (includes sub-brands such as W Hotel, Four Points, Westin, Luxury Collection, Sheraton Hotel, St Regis, element, Le Meridien, aloft Hotel), and (5) Hyatt Hotels Corp (includes sub-brands such as Hyatt Place, Hyatt House, Hyatt, Park Hyatt, Grand Hyatt, Andaz).

### **Structural Equation Modeling**

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to examine the proposed structural model in this study. Byrne (2010) explained that the term SEM conveys two characteristics of the procedure: (1) causal relations in a research can be presented by a set of structural equations, and (2) the structural relations can be modeled to assist visual comprehension and conceptualization of the theory/theories under a study. SEM can be applied to investigate measurement issues, examine structural relationships among

variables, or serve both purposes simultaneously (Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996). As summarized by Reisinger and Turner (1999), the usefulness of SEM has attracted marketing researchers' applications in several research fields, including consumer behavior, organizational buying behavior, channel management, product policy, pricing strategy, advertising, sales force management, retailing, international marketing, services marketing, and service satisfaction.

This study used the software Mplus 7 to analyze data. The procedure to conduct SEM in this study followed the six basic steps proposed by Kline (2011). The six basic steps include: (1) specify the model, (2) evaluate model identification (if not identified, go back to step 1), (3) Select the measures (operationalize the constructs) and collect, prepare, and screen the data, (4a) estimate the model: evaluate model fit (if poor, skip to step 5), (4b) estimate the model: interpret parameter estimates, (4c) estimate the model: consider equivalent or near-equivalent models (skip to step 6), (5) respecify the model (return to step 4), and (6) report the results (Kline, 2011). The flowchart of these steps is shown in Figure 9. Detailed explanations for each step are addressed in following sections.



Source: Kline, 2011, p. 92.

**Figure 9. Flowchart of the Basic Six Steps of SEM**

***Step 1: Specify the Model***

Representing hypotheses in the form of a structural model is specification. Specification is the most important step because it provides a blue print for following statistical analysis. Additionally, all the proposed paths in a structural equation model

should be specified based on theoretical and logical supports. A structural equation model is tested to support casual relationships proposed based on theoretical and logical supports. In this study, the process in literature review to justify the proposed structural equation model with theoretical supports is specification.

### ***Step 2: Evaluate Model Identification***

Two fundamental requirements are generally used to identify all the structural equation models: (1) The degrees of freedom of a model must be equal to or higher than zero ( $df_M \geq 0$ ), and (2) all the latent variables (including residual terms) must be attached with a scale (metric). That is, researchers cannot freely link casual relationship with all the constructs in a structural equation models. Besides, each construct in a structural equation model should be measured by at least three items.

### ***Step 3: Select the Measures and Data Collection***

Good measures are determined by both score reliability and validity. Kline (2011) defined score reliability as “the degree to which scores in a particular sample are free from random measurement error, is estimated as one minus the proportion of total observed variance due to random error” (p. 69). Cronbach’s alpha, which ranged from 0 to 1, is a widely accepted indicator to report internal consistency reliability of scales. Higher value of CR indicates higher reliability of a scale. The Cronbach’s alpha should be at least .70 to be considered as acceptable (Hair et al., 2006; Kline, 2011).

Kline (2011) defined score validity as “the soundness of the inferences based on the scores, and information about score validity conveys to the researcher whether

applying a test is capable of achieving certain aims” (p. 71). The average variance extracted (AVE) is a commonly used tool to detect construct validity. The AVE is an indicator to represent total variance in indicators captured by their constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981b). The value of AVE should be higher than .5 to ensure the variance captured by a scale is larger than variance of measurement errors (Hair et al., 2006).

After data collection, data was checked to prevent the problems of missing data, outliers and collinearity (Kline, 2011). First, with the use of SPSS 19 for detecting missing data, only the fully completed samples were included as usable response in this study. Second, for the definition of outliers, this study followed Kline (2011) as “scores more than three standard deviations beyond the mean” (p. 54). Samples identified as outliers were deleted from usable responses for this study. Third, collinearity was detected by calculating a squared multiple correlation ( $R^2_{\text{smc}}$ ), tolerance ( $1 - R^2_{\text{smc}}$ ), and the variance inflation factor (VIF) (Kline, 2011). The determination of extreme multivariate collinearity was based on the  $R^2_{\text{smc}} > .90$ , tolerance values  $< .10$ , and  $\text{VIF} > 10.0$  (Kline, 2011).

#### ***Step 4: Estimate the Model***

This step to estimate the model includes three substeps. First, evaluate model fit (if poor, skip to step 5). This substep is to evaluate the fitness between the initial model and the data. If model fit is low, then step 5 is needed to respecify the model with the same data. Convergent validity is occurred when variables in measuring the same construct are at least moderately correlated while discriminant validity is achieved when variables in measuring different constructs are not highly correlated. The confirmatory

factor analysis (CFA) is a tool for testing model fit. Both chi-square and fit indexes are used to evaluate CFA. The normed chi-square (NC), which is counted by  $NC = \chi^2_M / df_M$ , might be influenced by sample size. The fit indexes are mostly reported with root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness of fit (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) (Kline, 2011). Other reported fit indexes include adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI), normed fit index (NFI), incremental fit index (IFI), and relative fit index (RFI) (Bentler, 1990; Hair et al., 2006). The acceptable range for each fit index is summarized in Table 8.

**Table 8. Fit Indexes and Acceptable Range**

Fit index	Acceptable range	Sources
NC ( $\chi^2/df$ )	< 5	Bollen (1989)
RMSEA	< .1	Kline (2011)
GFI	$\geq .9$	Hair et al. (2006)
CFI	$\geq .9$	Hair et al. (2006)
SRMR	< .1	Hair et al. (2006)
AGFI	$\geq .9$	Hair et al. (2006)
NFI	$\geq .9$	Hair et al. (2006)
IFI	$\geq .9$	Bentler (1990)
RFI	$\geq .9$	Bentler (1990)

Second, interpret parameter estimates. It may happen when the overall model fit is good while not all the paths are supported. Parameter estimates for each path should be further explained to reveal meanings behind a structural equation model (Kaplan, 2009). Third, consider equivalent or near-equivalent models (skip to step 6). The initial model is established based on the researcher' proposed idea and an equivalent model explains the same data and the same variables with different configuration of hypotheses. Then, the



researcher should explain why the preferred model is the best one to explain the interested research issue than other equivalent or near-equivalent models.

#### ***Step 5: Respecify the Model***

This step should be used when the model fit of the initial model is poor in step 4a. The process to do respecification should be based on theoretically justifiable changes. The rational considerations should dominate the decision on model respecification, rather than purely statistical concerns. All the respecified models should also be identified. The respecification is done when a researcher find an estimable model.

#### ***Step 6: Report the Results***

The final step is to completely and accurately report the analysis. Results of key indicators generated during these basic steps of SEM, such as Cronbach's alpha for score reliability and fit indexes for CFA, should be included in the report.

#### **Moderating Effects Testing**

A moderator is the third variable that influences the zero-order correlation of two other variables (Kline, 2011). Baron and Kenny (1986) defined a moderator as “a qualitative (e.g., gender, race, class) or quantitative (e.g., level of reward) variable that affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent or predictor variable and a dependent or criterion variable” (p. 1174). The moderators used in this study are quantitative and measured by continuous observed variables.

Multiple-group analysis and hierarchical multiple regression are two common methods to test moderating effects. Multiple-group analysis is used when moderators are categorical variables (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004). To further assess the moderating effects of a moderator which measured by categorical variable, researchers need to sort the whole sample into multiple groups based on categories of the moderator, and then compare differences among these groups for testing the moderating effect (Frazier et al., 2004). Since the moderator in this study is measured by continuous observed variables, the multiple-group analysis is not suitable to be applied in this study. Hence, this study applied hierarchical multiple regression to test the proposed moderating effects.

The hierarchical multiple regression is widely applied in testing moderating effects for a simple regression (Evans, 1985). Using the hierarchical multiple regression to test a moderating effect requires comparison of two least-squares regression equations (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Aguinis (1995) demonstrated that given there is a dependent variable  $Y$ , a predictor  $X$  with another predictor  $Z$  as the moderator, the Equation 1 which shows the main effects to predict  $Y$  by both  $X$  and  $Z$  is:

$$Y = a + b_1X + b_2Z + e \quad (1)$$

where

$a$  = the least-squares estimate of the intercept

$b_1$  = the least-squares estimate of the population regression coefficient for  $X$

$b_2$  = the least-squares estimate of the population regression coefficient for  $Z$ , and

$e$  = a residual term.

Then, the Equation 2 is formed by adding a newly created variable, which is counted by the product of both predictors ( $X*Z$ ), into Equation 1 as the third term of the regression. The Equation 2 is presented as followings:

$$Y = a + b_1X + b_2Z + b_3X*Z + e \quad (2)$$

To examine the significance of the hypothesized moderating effect, the coefficient of determination of Equation 1 and Equation 2 are compared. The F-statistic is used for the comparison. The significance of the  $F$ -statistic indicates can be determined by the  $t$ -statistic.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

This chapter includes sections of demographic profile of respondents, assessment of the full measurement model, assessment of the structural model, the moderating effect of customer involvement of the sub-brand, moderating effects of public self-consciousness, and summary of hypotheses testing results.

## **Demographic Profile of Respondents**

The target population of this study is three million active panelists in Qualtrics (a private research software company) who are frequent travelers living in the US. Based on former response rate received by Qualtrics, a total of 50,000 invitation emails was randomly sent to the target population. A total of 1,105 people clicked the survey website link and 488 of them participated and completed the survey. Finally, 425 usable responses were collected with usable response rate of .85% (425 out of 50,000). Demographic characteristics of the respondents were shown in Table 9. Among these 425 respondents, 55.29% of them were female and 44.71% of them were male. Besides, based on the generation classification proposed by Pendergast (2010), 4.94% respondents were in Silent Generation, 34.35% were in Baby Boomer, 38.35% were in Generation X, and 22.35% were in Generation Y. Around 66% of the respondents were Caucasian, followed by 13.41% African American, 10.59% Asian, 5.88% Hispanic, and .71% Native American. More than half of the respondents were married (55.29%), 28.00% respondents were single, 12.71% respondents were divorced, and 4% respondents were widowed. In terms of annual household income, 28.94% respondents earned 50,000-\$79,999, 17.65% earned \$30,000-\$49,999, and 15.76% earned \$100,000-\$149,999. In the highest earned education, 42.59 % respondents got undergraduate college degree, 23.53% got graduate college degree, and 17.88% got high school diploma. Additionally, around half of the respondents (50.35%) had membership with their selected hotel firm with average length of 8.58 years. Taken together, most respondents were married female Caucasian who earn a highest degree in Undergraduate college or higher, and had annual household income ranged from \$50,000 to \$79,999.

**Table 9. Respondent Demographic Characteristics**

Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender:		
Male	190	44.71
Female	235	55.29
Birth Year:		
Silent Generation (1925-1942)	21	4.94
Baby Boomer (1943-1960)	146	34.35
Generation X (1961-1981)	163	38.35
Generation Y (1982-1996)	95	22.35
Ethnic Background:		
Caucasian	280	65.88
African American	57	13.41
Asian	45	10.59
Hispanic	25	5.88
Native American	3	.71
Other	15	3.53
Marital Status:		
Married	235	55.29
Single	119	28.00
Divorced	54	12.71
Widowed	17	4.00
Annual Household Income:		
\$10,000 or less	14	3.29
\$10,001-\$29,999	59	13.88
\$30,000-\$49,999	75	17.65
\$50,000-\$79,999	123	28.94
\$80,000-\$99,999	58	13.65
\$100,000-\$149,999	67	15.76
\$150,000 or more	29	6.82
Education:		
Some high school or less	6	1.41
High school diploma	76	17.88
Trade or technical school	62	14.59
Undergraduate college degree	181	42.59
Graduate college degree	100	23.53
Membership of the Selected Firm		

Yes (Mean= 8.58 years)	214	50.35
No	211	49.65

Table 10 shows the most frequently stayed hotel brands of respondents. There were 36.94% respondents selected a sub-brand under Marriott International Inc., 34.82% selected a sub-brand under Hilton Worldwide, 15.53% selected a sub-brand under InterContinental Hotels Group, 4.24% selected a sub-brand under Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc., and 8.47% selected a sub-brand under Hyatt Hotels Corp. Marriott was the mostly selected sub-brand of Marriott International Inc., Hampton Inn was the mostly selected sub-brand of Hilton Worldwide, Holiday Inn Express was the mostly selected sub-brand of InterContinental Hotels Group, Sheraton Hotel was the mostly selected sub-brand of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc., and Hyatt was the mostly selected sub-brand of Hyatt Hotels Corp. Among these 36 selected hotel sub-brands, Marriott received 13.88% respondents as the top one selected sub-brand, followed by Hampton Inn with 9.41%, Hilton with 7.29%, and Holiday Inn Express with 7.06%.

**Table 10. Respondents' Most Frequently Stayed Hotel Brands**

Firms	Sub-brands	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Marriott International Inc.</b>		<b>157</b>	<b>36.94</b>
	Marriott	59	13.88
	Courtyard	28	6.59
	JW Marriott	19	4.47
	Residence Inn	15	3.53
	Fairfield Inn	11	2.59
	Springhill Suites	9	2.12
	Ritz-Carlton	5	1.18
	TownePlace Suites	4	.94
	Renaissance	3	.71
	Autograph Collection	2	.47
	AC Hotels	1	.24

	Marriott Executive Apartments	1	.24
<b>Hilton Worldwide</b>		<b>148</b>	<b>34.82</b>
	Hampton Inn	40	9.41
	Hilton	31	7.29
	Hilton Garden Inn	28	6.59
	Embassy Suites	24	5.65
	Double Tree	13	3.06
	Hilton Grand Vacations	6	1.41
	Homewood Suites	4	.94
	Waldorf Astoria	1	.24
	Conrad	1	.24
	Home2 Suites by Hilton	0	0
<b>InterContinental Hotels Group</b>		<b>66</b>	<b>15.53</b>
	Holiday Inn Express	30	7.06
	Holiday Inn	27	6.35
	Crowne Plaza	4	.94
	InterContinental	3	.71
	Staybridge Suites	2	.47
	Hotel Indigo	0	0
	Candlewood Suites	0	0
<b>Starwood Hotels &amp; Resorts Worldwide Inc.</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>4.24</b>
	Sheraton Hotel	7	1.65
	Westin	4	.94
	Four Points	3	.71
	W Hotel	2	.47
	Luxury Collection	1	.24
	Le Meridien	1	.24
	aloft Hotel	0	0
	St Regis	0	0
	Element	0	0
<b>Hyatt Hotels Corp.</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>8.47</b>
	Hyatt	16	3.76
	Hyatt Place	13	3.06
	Grand Hyatt	5	1.18
	Hyatt House	2	.47
	Andaz	0	0
	Park Hyatt	0	0

Based on the classification proposed by Smith Travel Research (2015) for segmenting hotel brands, this study further proposed Table 11 to summarize respondents' most frequently stayed hotel brands by segments. There were 8.71% respondents selected their most frequently



stayed hotel brand in the luxury segment, 36.24% selected a brand in the upper upscale segment, 28.71% selected a brand in the upscale segment, and 26.35% selected a brand in the upper midscale segment. Additionally, JW Marriott was the highest selected brand in the luxury segment, Marriott was the highest selected brand in the upper upscale segment, Courtyard and Hilton Garden Inn were the highest selected brands in the upscale segment, and Hampton Inn was the highest selected brand in the upper midscale segment.

**Table 11. Respondents' Most Frequently Stayed Hotel Brands by Segments**

Segments	Sub-brands (Frequency)	Frequency	Percent (%)
Luxury	JW Marriott (19)	37	8.71
	Ritz-Carlton (5)		
	Grand Hyatt (5)		
	InterContinental (3)		
	W Hotel (2)		
	Waldorf Astoria (1)		
	Conrad (1)		
	Luxury Collection (1)		
Upper upscale	Marriott (59)	154	36.24
	Hilton (31)		
	Embassy Suites (24)		
	Hyatt (16)		
	Sheraton Hotel (7)		
	Hilton Grand Vacations (6)		
	Westin (4)		
	Renaissance (3)		
	Autograph Collection (2)		
	Marriott Executive Apartments (1)		
Le Meridien (1)			
Upscale	Hilton Garden Inn (28)	122	28.71
	Courtyard (28)		
	Residence Inn (15)		
	Double Tree (13)		
	Hyatt Place (13)		
	Springhill Suites (9)		
	Homewood Suites (4)		
	Crowne Plaza (4)		
	Four Points (3)		
Staybridge Suites (2)			

	Hyatt House (2) AC Hotels (1)		
Upper midscale	Hampton Inn (40) Holiday Inn Express (30) Holiday Inn (27) Fairfield Inn (11) TownePlace Suites (4)	112	26.35

### Differences between Expectation and Experience in Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment

This study proposed intimacy, passion, and commitment as three former antecedents of hotel brand love. To explore the concept of comparing expectation and experience in a love relationship proposed by Sternberg (1986), this study applied paired t-test to examine difference between expectation and experience in intimacy, passion, and commitment. Results of the paired t-test are shown in Table 12. The experienced mean value of intimacy was significantly higher than expectation ( $t\text{-value} = 2.60, p < .01$ ), same as passion ( $t\text{-value} = 2.29, p < .05$ ) and commitment ( $t\text{-value} = 2.10, p < .05$ ). Among four items of intimacy, “when I stayed at this hotel brand, I mentally felt close to it” ( $t\text{-value} = 3.46, p < .001$ ) and “when I stayed at this hotel brand, I had a comfortable relationship with it” ( $t\text{-value} = 4.63, p < .001$ ) were the two items that significantly higher than expectation. Among four items of passion, “when I stayed at this hotel brand, I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this hotel brand did” ( $t\text{-value} = 4.17, p < .001$ ) and “when I stayed at this hotel brand, I adored it” ( $t\text{-value} = 2.50, p < .01$ ) were the two items that significantly higher than expectation. Among four items of commitment, “when I stayed at this hotel brand, I viewed my relationship with it as permanent” ( $t\text{-value} = 2.02, p < .05$ ) was significantly higher than expectation. Taken together, all the significant results of the paired t-test were positive, revealing that after a recent stay at a mostly

stayed hotel brand, respondents perceived stronger intimacy, passion, and commitment toward the brand. To examine respondents' perception and intention toward their stayed hotel brand, in the following structural model, these three components measured as "experience of a recent stay" were used in hypotheses testing.

**Table 12. Differences between Expectation and Experience in Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment**

Expectation before a recent stay	Mean (SD)	Experience of a recent stay	Mean (SD)	Differences <sup>1</sup>	<i>t-value</i> <sup>2</sup>
<b>Intimacy</b>	5.45 (1.03)	<b>Intimacy</b>	5.52 (1.01)	.07	2.60**
I expected that I mentally felt close to this hotel brand.	5.06 (1.25)	When I stayed at this hotel brand, I mentally felt close to it.	5.20 (1.29)	.14	3.46***
I expected that I had a comfortable relationship with this hotel brand.	5.48 (1.11)	When I stayed at this hotel brand, I had a comfortable relationship with it.	5.65 (1.04)	.17	4.63***
I expected that I really understood this hotel brand.	5.46 (1.20)	When I stayed at this hotel brand, I felt that I really understood it.	5.45 (1.20)	-.01	-.41
I expected that I really could trust this hotel brand.	5.79 (1.06)	When I stayed at this hotel brand, I felt that I really could trust it.	5.76 (1.04)	-.03	-.66
<b>Passion</b>	5.00 (1.31)	<b>Passion</b>	5.06 (1.32)	.06	2.29*
I expected that I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this hotel brand does.	4.87 (1.48)	When I stayed at this hotel brand, I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this hotel brand did.	5.06 (1.47)	.19	4.17***
I expected that I would rather stay with this hotel brand than any other hotel brands.	5.36 (1.29)	When I stayed at this hotel brand, I would rather stay with it than any other brands.	5.32 (1.34)	-.04	-.75
I expected that I adored this hotel brand.	4.93 (1.51)	When I stayed at this hotel brand, I adored it.	5.04 (1.48)	.11	2.50**
I expected that my relationship with this hotel brand was passionate.	4.84 (1.56)	When I stayed at this hotel brand, my relationship with it was passionate.	4.84 (1.58)	0	-.26
<b>Commitment</b>	5.31 (1.18)	<b>Commitment</b>	5.36 (1.21)	.05	2.10*
I expected that I was committed to maintaining my relationship with this hotel brand.	5.23 (1.35)	When I stayed at this hotel brand, I was committed to maintaining my relationship with it.	5.30 (1.34)	.07	1.71
I expected that I viewed my commitment to this hotel brand as a solid one.	5.29 (1.31)	When I stayed at this hotel brand, I viewed my commitment to it as a solid one.	5.34 (1.31)	.05	1.44
I expected that I viewed my relationship with this hotel brand as permanent.	5.11 (1.39)	When I stayed at this hotel brand, I viewed my relationship with it as permanent.	5.18 (1.41)	.07	2.02*
I expected that I planned to continue in my relationship with this hotel brand.	5.60 (1.12)	When I stayed at this hotel brand, I planned to continue in my relationship with it.	5.62 (1.14)	.02	.44

Note: <sup>1</sup> Differences = Experience of a recent stay – Expectation before a recent stay

<sup>2</sup> \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

### Assessment of the Full Measurement Model

Based on the six steps for implementing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) proposed by Kline (2011), this study analyzed the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) model first before assessing the whole structural model. A total of 40 items were used: intimacy for a sub-brand (four items), passion for a sub-brand (four items), commitment for a sub-brand (four items), brand love for the corporate brand (four items), brand love for the sub-brand (four items), ideal self-sub-brand congruence (four items), customer involvement of the sub-brand (four items), revisit intention for the sub-brand (three items), positive WOM for the sub-brand (three items), price premium for the sub-brand (three items), and public self-consciousness (three items). Based on the use of Mplus 7, Table 13 summarized fit indices received from the CFA with acceptable range suggested by previous scholars. The normed chi-square (NC), which is counted by  $NC = \chi^2_M/df_M$ , was 3.97 (2717.201/685), locating in the acceptable range suggested by Bollen (1989). The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was .08, passing the acceptable range argued by Kline (2011). The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was .05, passing the acceptable range proposed by Hair et al. (2006). The comparative fit index (CFI) was .89 and the Tucker Lewis index (TLI) was .88, closing to the acceptable range noted by Hair et al. (2006).

**Table 13. Fit Indices of CFA**

Fit Indices	Results of CFA	Acceptable range	Sources
NC ( $\chi^2/df$ )	3.97	< 5	Bollen (1989)
RMSEA	.08	< .1	Kline (2011)
SRMR	.05	< .1	Hair et al. (2006)

CFI	.89	$\geq .9$	Hair et al. (2006)
TLI	.88	$\geq .9$	Hair et al. (2006)

Table 14 further lists standardized loadings, t-value, average variance extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha of each construct from CFA. Besides, Table 15 shows correlation among constructs. All the correlation was positively significant at  $p < .001$ , revealing the potential relationships among constructs for examining a structural model. Composite reliability was checked by Cronbach's alpha (Hair et al., 2006). The Cronbach's alpha of these constructs ranged from .78 to .95, which passed the acceptable range of  $> .70$  (Hair et al., 2006; Kline, 2011), representing high composite reliability.

Three types of validity were ensured before hypotheses testing: (1) construct validity; (2) convergent validity; and (3) discriminant validity. First, construct validity was tested by checking AVE of each construct on Table 14. The AVE of these constructs ranged from .72 to .90, which passed the acceptable range of  $> .50$  (Hair et al., 2006), representing high construct validity. Second, convergent validity was tested by checking standardized loadings of each item. The standardized loading of all the items were higher than .70 with significant *t-value* at  $p < .001$ , showing items were strongly linked to corresponding constructs (Hair et al., 2006). Third, discriminant validity was tested by checking all the cross-loadings were lower than factor loadings (Hair et al., 2006). That is, the square root of each construct's AVE should be higher than its correlation with other constructs. The square root of each construct's AVE was shown on Table 15, ranging from .86 to .95. Since all the constructs' square roots of AVE are higher than their correlation with other constructs, the requirement of discriminant validity was passed.

**Table 14. Results of CFA**

Constructs / Items	Std. loading	<i>t-value</i>	AVE	Cronbach's alpha
<b>Intimacy for a sub-brand (AINT)</b>			.79	.91
When I stayed at this hotel brand, I mentally felt close to it. (AINT1)	.80	41.75***		
When I stayed at this hotel brand, I had a comfortable relationship with it. (AINT2)	.84	52.71***		
When I stayed at this hotel brand, I felt that I really understood it. (AINT3)	.89	70.66***		
When I stayed at this hotel brand, I felt that I really could trust it. (AINT4)	.86	56.64***		
<b>Passion for a sub-brand (APASS)</b>			.81	.92
When I stayed at this hotel brand, I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this hotel brand did. (APASS1)	.86	61.80***		
When I stayed at this hotel brand, I would rather stay with it than any other brands. (APASS2)	.85	55.42***		
When I stayed at this hotel brand, I adored it. (APASS3)	.86	60.54***		
When I stayed at this hotel brand, my relationship with it was passionate. (APASS4)	.89	77.55***		
<b>Commitment for a sub-brand (ACOMM)</b>			.87	.95
When I stayed at this hotel brand, I was committed to maintaining my relationship with it. (ACOMM1)	.90	91.33***		
When I stayed at this hotel brand, I viewed my commitment to it as a solid one. (ACOMM2)	.93	124.63***		
When I stayed at this hotel brand, I viewed my relationship with it as permanent. (ACOMM3)	.92	101.84***		
When I stayed at this hotel brand, I planned to continue in my relationship with it. (ACOMM4)	.87	69.01***		
<b>Brand love for the corporate brand (BLF)</b>			.77	.90
Marriott International Inc./Hilton Worldwide/InterContinental Hotels Group/Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc./Hyatt Hotels Corp. is a wonderful hotel company. (BLF1)	.72	28.64***		
Marriott International Inc./Hilton Worldwide/InterContinental Hotels Group/Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc./Hyatt Hotels Corp. makes me feel good. (BLF2)	.80	41.28***		
I love Marriott International Inc./Hilton Worldwide/InterContinental Hotels Group/Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc./Hyatt Hotels Corp. (BLF3)	.92	84.05***		
I am passionate about Marriott International	.86	57.87***		

Inc./Hilton Worldwide/InterContinental Hotels Group/Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc./Hyatt Hotels Corp. (BLF4)				
<b>Brand love for the sub-brand (LSUB)</b>			.82	.92
This is a wonderful hotel brand. (LSUB1)	.82	45.51 <sup>***</sup>		
This hotel brand makes me feel good. (LSUB2)	.85	54.61 <sup>***</sup>		
I love this hotel brand. (LSUB3)	.92	98.14 <sup>***</sup>		
I am passionate about this hotel brand. (LSUB4)	.88	66.85 <sup>***</sup>		
<b>Ideal self-sub-brand congruence (ISC)</b>			.79	.91
My ideal self is very similar to the character of this hotel brand. (ISC1)	.84	52.67 <sup>***</sup>		
Staying at this hotel brand, I want to show the best of me. (ISC2)	.86	61.44 <sup>***</sup>		
I would not change anything about this hotel brand. (ISC3)	.78	37.25 <sup>***</sup>		
This hotel brand reflects my ideal self. (ISC4)	.91	88.22 <sup>***</sup>		
<b>Customer involvement of the sub-brand (INVO)</b>			.84	.94
I feel like I have personal involvement with this hotel brand. (INVO1)	.87	64.09 <sup>***</sup>		
I feel stronger about this hotel brand than other non-(Marriott/Hilton/IHG/Starwood/Hyatt) hotel brands. (INVO2)	.86	63.84 <sup>***</sup>		
I feel like my involvement with this hotel brand will last indefinitely. (INVO3)	.91	92.10 <sup>***</sup>		
My involvement with this hotel brand is enduring. (INVO4)	.91	91.67 <sup>***</sup>		
<b>Revisit intention for the sub-brand (REVI)</b>			.74	.82
For my next trip, I will consider this hotel brand as my first choice, rather than other non-(Marriott/Hilton/IHG/Starwood/Hyatt) hotel brands. (REVI1)	.82	42.22 <sup>***</sup>		
I have a strong intention to visit this hotel brand again in the future. (REVI2)	.83	42.59 <sup>***</sup>		
I will increase the frequency of my visits to this hotel brand. (REVI3)	.72	27.11 <sup>***</sup>		
<b>Positive WOM for the sub-brand (WOM)</b>			.90	.95
I definitely would recommend this hotel brand to my close colleagues. (WOM1)	.93	105.22 <sup>***</sup>		
I definitely would say positive things to my close friends about this hotel brand. (WOM2)	.92	94.59 <sup>***</sup>		
I definitely would suggest this hotel brand to my family members and relatives. (WOM3)	.93	110.27 <sup>***</sup>		
<b>Price premium for the sub-brand (PRIC)</b>			.81	.88
The price of this hotel brand would have to go up quite a bit before I would consider switching to other non-(Marriott/Hilton/IHG/Starwood/Hyatt) hotel brands.	.75	31.20 <sup>***</sup>		



(PRIC1)				
I am willing to pay a higher price for staying at this hotel brand than for other non-(Marriott/Hilton/IHG/Starwood/Hyatt) hotel brands.	.92	76.43 <sup>***</sup>		
(PRIC2)				
I am willing to pay a lot more for staying at this hotel brand than for other non-(Marriott/Hilton/IHG/Starwood/Hyatt) hotel brands.	.90	67.42 <sup>***</sup>		
(PRIC3)				
<b>Public self-consciousness (PC)</b>			.72	.78
I usually want to make a good impression on others.	.72	22.88 <sup>***</sup>		
(PC1)				
One of the last things I do before I leave my house is look in the mirror.	.73	23.43 <sup>***</sup>		
(PC2)				
I am usually aware of my appearance.	.83	30.53 <sup>***</sup>		
(PC3)				

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Note: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

**Table 15. Correlation table**

Constructs	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Intimacy for a sub-brand	.89	5.52	1.01	1.00								
2. Passion for a sub-brand	.90	5.06	1.32	.79 <sup>***</sup>	1.00							
3. Commitment for a sub-brand	.93	5.36	1.21	.82 <sup>***</sup>	.86 <sup>***</sup>	1.00						
4. Brand love for the corporate brand	.88	5.66	.97	.73 <sup>***</sup>	.73 <sup>***</sup>	.70 <sup>***</sup>	1.00					
5. Brand love for the sub-brand	.91	5.70	1.00	.81 <sup>***</sup>	.78 <sup>***</sup>	.78 <sup>***</sup>	.85 <sup>***</sup>	1.00				
6. Ideal self-sub-brand congruence	.89	5.14	1.17	.80 <sup>***</sup>	.86 <sup>***</sup>	.79 <sup>***</sup>	.71 <sup>***</sup>	.77 <sup>***</sup>	1.00			
7. Revisit intention for the sub-brand	.86	5.49	1.01	.77 <sup>***</sup>	.78 <sup>***</sup>	.81 <sup>***</sup>	.68 <sup>***</sup>	.75 <sup>***</sup>	.79 <sup>***</sup>	1.00		
8. Positive WOM for the sub-brand	.95	5.87	1.01	.75 <sup>***</sup>	.64 <sup>***</sup>	.71 <sup>***</sup>	.63 <sup>***</sup>	.72 <sup>***</sup>	.63 <sup>***</sup>	.74 <sup>***</sup>	1.00	
9. Price premium for the sub-brand	.90	4.79	1.39	.61 <sup>***</sup>	.75 <sup>***</sup>	.71 <sup>***</sup>	.58 <sup>***</sup>	.63 <sup>***</sup>	.74 <sup>***</sup>	.71 <sup>***</sup>	.50 <sup>***</sup>	1.00

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

### Assessment of the Structural Model

After CFA, the structural model was applied to examine relationships among constructs. There were three exogenous variables (intimacy for a sub-brand, passion for a sub-brand, and commitment for a sub-brand) and six endogenous variables (ideal self-sub-brand congruence, brand love for the sub-brand, brand love for the corporate brand, revisit intention for the sub-brand, positive WOM for the sub-brand, price premium for the sub-brand). Using Mplus 7, Table 16 summarized fit indices received from the structural model with acceptable range suggested by previous scholars. The normed chi-square (NC) was 4.22 (1912.288/453), locating in the acceptable range suggested by Bollen (1989). The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was .09, passing the acceptable range argued by Kline (2011). The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was .06, passing the acceptable range proposed by Hair et al. (2006). The comparative fit index (CFI) was .90 and the Tucker Lewis index (TLI) was .88, closing the acceptable range noted by Hair et al. (2006).

**Table 16. Fit Indices of the Structural Model**

Fit Indices	Results of the structural model	Acceptable range	Sources
NC ( $\chi^2/df$ )	4.22	< 5	Bollen (1989)
RMSEA	.09	< .1	Kline (2011)
SRMR	.06	< .1	Hair et al. (2006)
CFI	.90	$\geq$ .9	Hair et al. (2006)
TLI	.88	$\geq$ .9	Hair et al. (2006)

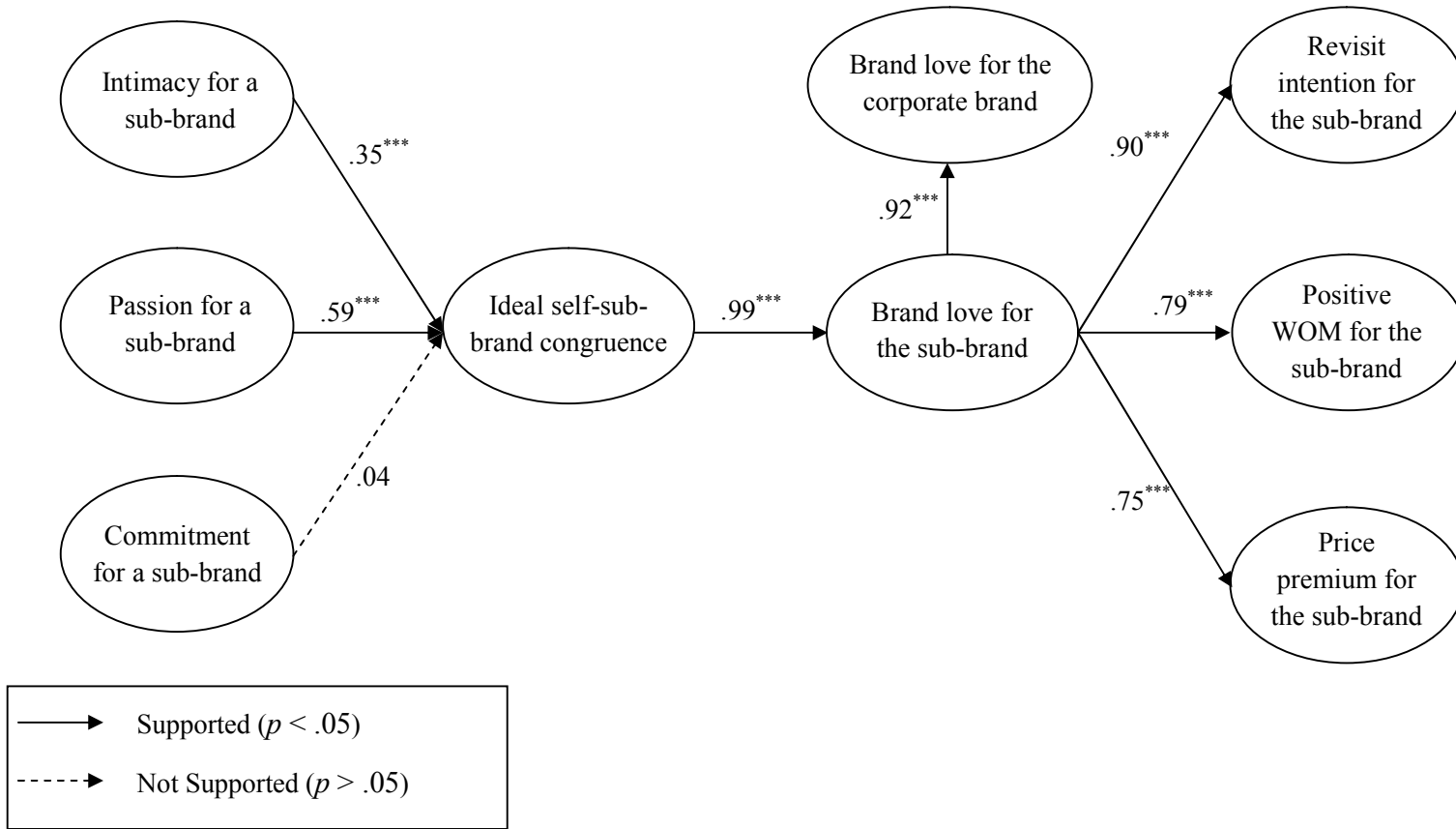
The results of hypotheses testing are shown in Table 17 and visualized in Figure 10. The proposed effects of intimacy for a sub-brand ( $\beta = .35, p < .001$ ) and passion for a sub-brand ( $\beta = .59, p < .001$ ) to ideal self-sub-brand congruence were positively significant, supporting H1 and

H2. However, H3 was not supported because commitment for a sub-brand was not positively and significantly related to ideal self-sub-brand congruence ( $\beta = .04, p > .05$ ). Then, ideal self-sub-brand congruence positively and significantly linked to brand love for the sub-brand ( $\beta = .99, p < .001$ ), supporting H4. Brand love for the sub-brand further improved brand love for the corporate brand ( $\beta = .92, p < .001$ ), making H5 significantly supported. Finally, H7, H8, and H9 were supported as brand love for the sub-brand performed positive relationship with revisit intention for the sub-brand ( $\beta = .90, p < .001$ ), positive WOM for the sub-brand ( $\beta = .79, p < .001$ ), and price premium for the sub-brand ( $\beta = .75, p < .001$ ).

**Table 17. Results of the Structural Path Estimates**

Path to	Path from	H <sub>0</sub>	Standardized estimate	<i>t-value</i>	Result
Ideal self-sub-brand congruence	Intimacy for a sub-brand	H1	.35	6.53 <sup>***</sup>	Supported
	Passion for a sub-brand	H2	.59	9.22 <sup>***</sup>	Supported
	Commitment for a sub-brand	H3	.04	.59	Not Supported
Brand love for the sub-brand	Ideal self-sub-brand congruence	H4	.99	77.99 <sup>***</sup>	Supported
Brand love for the corporate brand	Brand love for the sub-brand	H5	.92	72.74 <sup>***</sup>	Supported
Revisit intention for the sub-brand	Brand love for the sub-brand	H7	.90	63.27 <sup>***</sup>	Supported
Positive WOM for the sub-brand	Brand love for the sub-brand	H8	.79	35.16 <sup>***</sup>	Supported
Price premium for the sub-brand	Brand love for the sub-brand	H9	.75	28.28 <sup>***</sup>	Supported

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$



Note: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

**Figure 10. Standardized Structural Path Coefficients**

### **The Moderating Effect of Customer Involvement of the Sub-Brand**

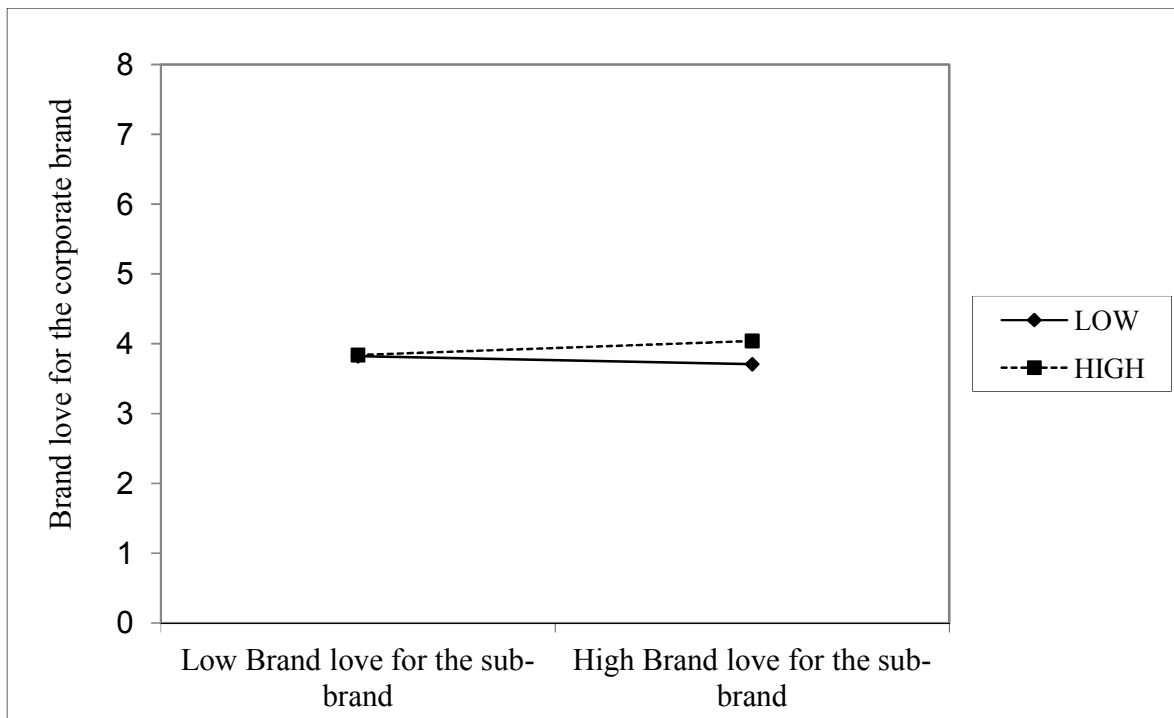
Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was applied to test moderating effects in this study. Table 18 shows results of testing H6 based on brand love for the corporate brand as the dependent variable. In the first step brand love for the sub-brand and customer involvement of the sub-brand were entered into the regression equation, resulting  $R^2$  as .73,  $F$  as 557.73 ( $p < .001$ ), and  $\Delta F$  as 557.73 ( $p < .001$ ). Same as the above finding of SEM in supporting H5, the positive relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand was also positively and significantly supported ( $\beta = .11, p < .01$ ). In the second step, the interaction of brand love for the sub-brand and customer involvement of the sub-brand was added into the regression equation, resulting  $R^2$  as .74,  $F$  as 389.18 ( $p < .001$ ), and  $\Delta F$  as 15.02 ( $p < .001$ ). Moreover, the interaction variable was significantly related to brand love for the corporate brand ( $\beta = .77, p < .001$ ). Accordingly, customer involvement of the sub-brand positively moderates the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand. When customer involvement of the sub-brand is high, the positive relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand is stronger; in contrast, when customer involvement of the sub-brand is low, the positive relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand is weaker. Thus, H6 was supported. Figure 11 visualizes the moderating effect of customer involvement of the sub-brand on the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand. As shown in the figure, the positive relationship between brand love

for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand was stronger when customer involvement of the sub-brand is high than when the moderator is low.

**Table 18. Results of the Moderating Effect of Customer Involvement of the Sub-Brand**

Variables	Brand love for the corporate brand	
	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Main effects</i>		
Brand love for the sub-brand	.11**	-.37**
Customer involvement of the sub-brand	.76***	.44***
<i>Interaction</i>		
Brand love for the sub-brand × Customer involvement of the sub-brand		.77***
$R^2$	.73	.74
$\Delta R^2$	.73	.01
Adjusted $R^2$	.72	.73
$F$	557.73***	389.18***
$\Delta F$	557.73***	15.02***

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$



**Figure 11. The Moderating effects of Customer Involvement of the Sub-Brand**



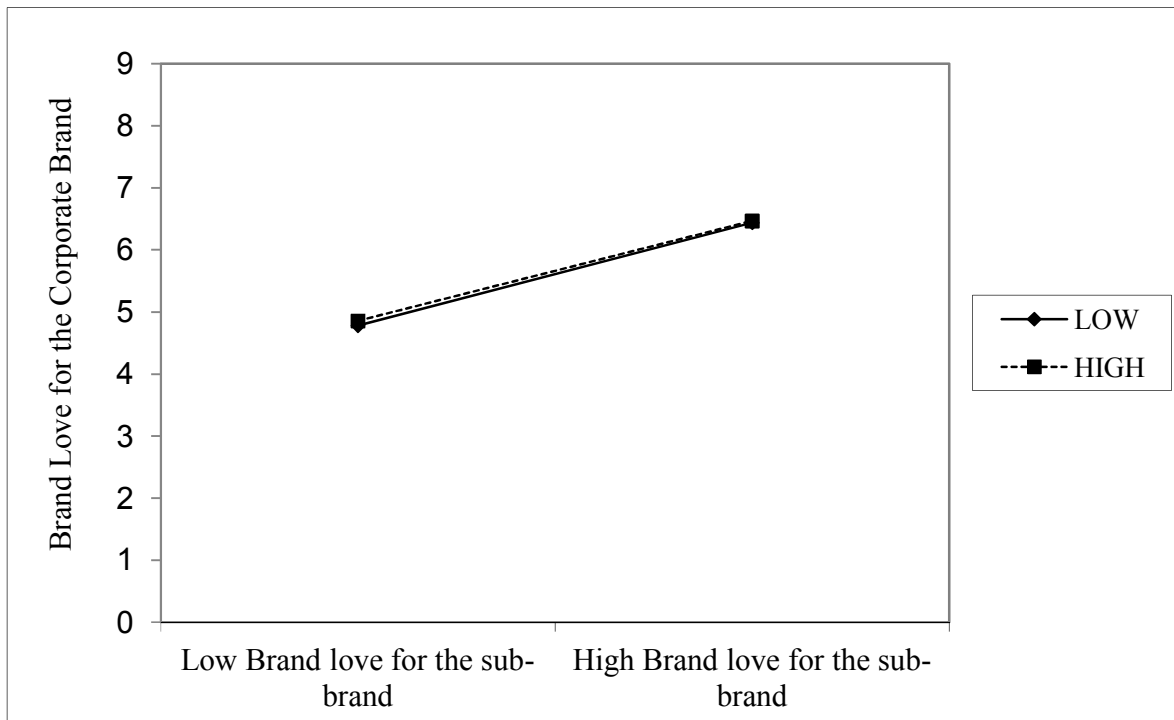
### Moderating Effects of Public Self-Consciousness

Table 19 shows results of testing H10 based on brand love for the corporate brand as the dependent variable. In the first step, brand love for the sub-brand and public self-consciousness were entered into the regression equation, resulting  $R^2$  as .72,  $F$  as 553.18 ( $p < .001$ ), and  $\Delta F$  as 553.18 ( $p < .001$ ). In the second step, the interaction of brand love for the sub-brand and public self-consciousness was added into the regression equation, resulting  $R^2$  as still .72 and  $F$  as 368.07 ( $p < .001$ ), and  $\Delta F$  as .13 ( $p > .05$ ). Unfortunately, the interaction variable was not significantly related to brand love for the corporate brand ( $\beta = -.08$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Hence, H10 was not supported. Figure 12 visualizes the non-significant moderating effects of public self-consciousness on brand love for the corporate brand.

**Table 19. Results of the Moderating Effects of Public Self-Consciousness in H10**

Variables	Brand love for the corporate brand	
	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Main effects</i>		
Brand love for the sub-brand	.82***	.87*
Public self-consciousness	.07*	.12
<i>Interaction</i>		
Brand love for the sub-brand × Public self-consciousness		-.08
$R^2$	.72	.72
$\Delta R^2$	.72	.00
Adjusted $R^2$	.72	.72
$F$	553.18***	368.07***
$\Delta F$	553.18***	.13

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$



**Figure 12. Moderating effects of Public Self-Consciousness on Brand Love for the Corporate Brand (H10)**

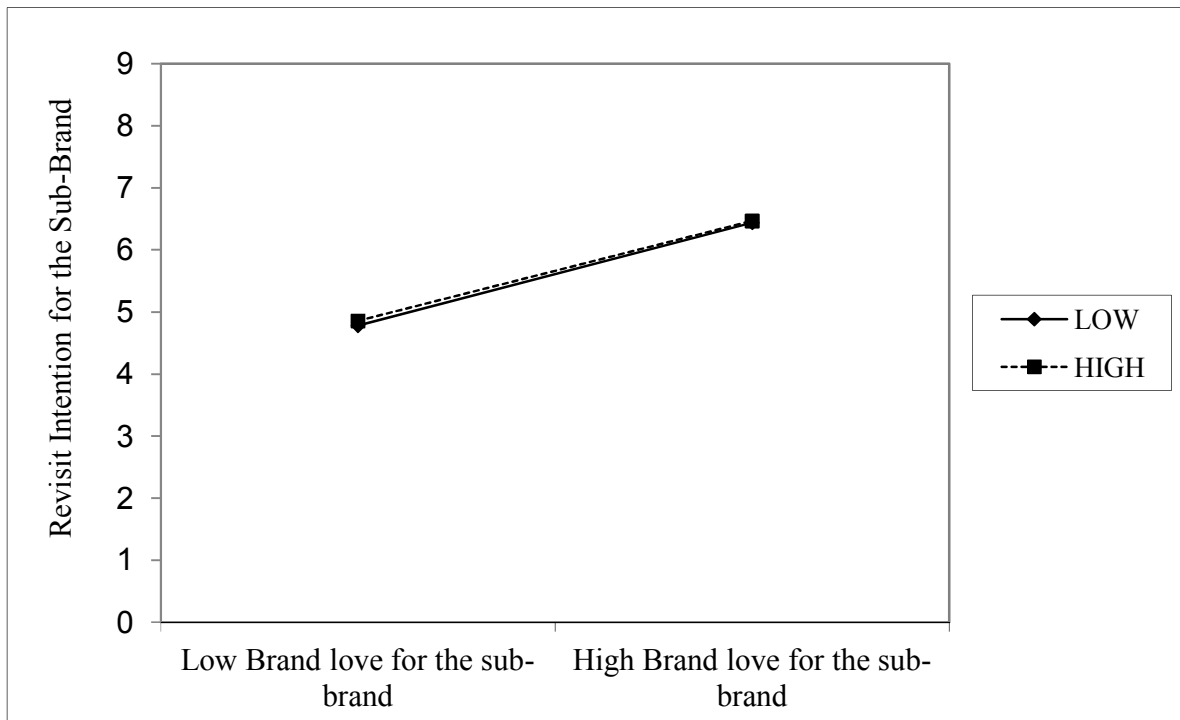
In testing H11, revisit intention for the sub-brand was set as the dependent variable. The first step was to enter brand love for the sub-brand and public self-consciousness into the regression equation, resulting  $R^2$  as .56,  $F$  as 273.45 ( $p < .001$ ), and  $\Delta F$  as 273.45 ( $p < .001$ ). The positive and significant relationship between Brand love for the sub-brand and revisit intention for the sub-brand ( $\beta = .72, p < .001$ ) was consistent with the finding from above SEM model to support H7. In the second step, the interaction of brand love for the sub-brand and public self-consciousness was added into the regression equation, resulting  $R^2$  as .57,  $F$  as 182.38 ( $p < .001$ ), and  $\Delta F$  as .67 ( $p > .05$ ). Unfortunately, the interaction variable was not significantly related to revisit intention for the sub-brand ( $\beta = .23, p > .05$ ). Hence, H11 was not supported. Figure 13 visualizes the non-significant moderating effects of public self-consciousness on

revisit intention for the sub-brand. The non-significance of H11 might be explained by satiation, a phenomenon that happens when the customers have already consumed a considerable amount of the same services or products, and therefore cannot gain more utility from consuming more of such services or products any further (Park & Jang, 2014). As a lover of a hotel sub-brand, one might have already maximized his or her stays with the loved sub-brand and thus perceived the feeling of satiation toward it. Because of satiation, customers with high public self-consciousness will not have the intention to increase more stays with their loved hotel sub-brand.

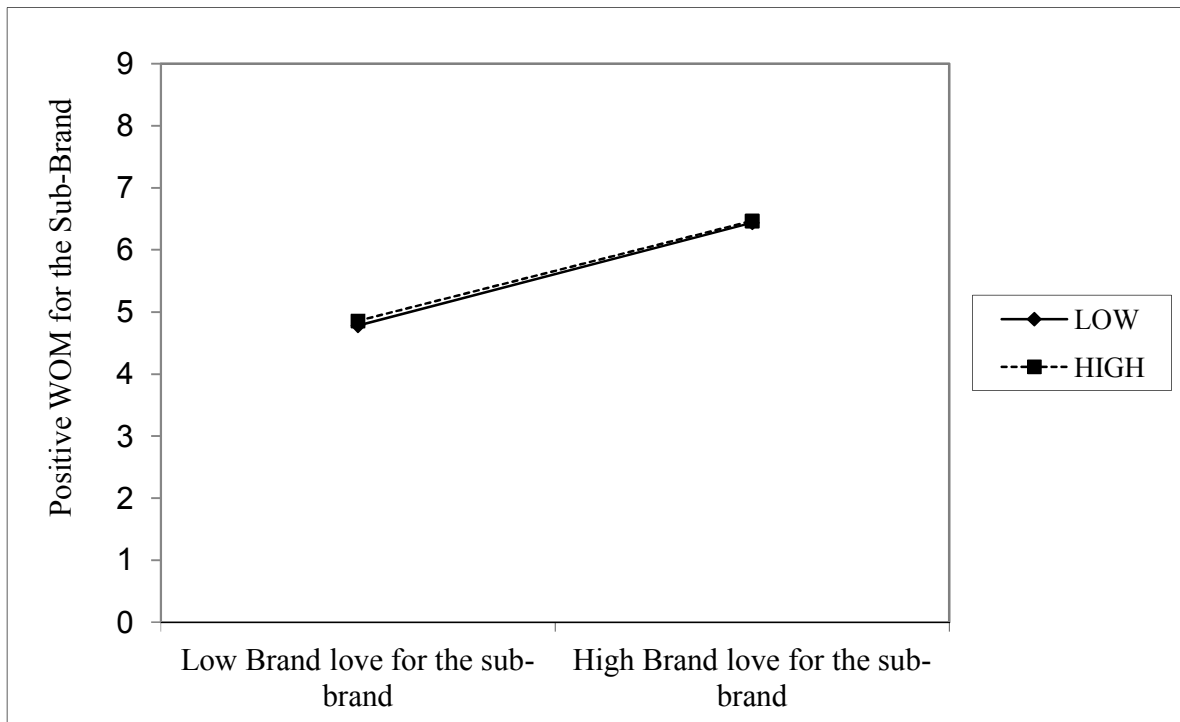
In testing H12, positive WOM for the sub-brand was set as the dependent variable. The first step was to enter brand love for the sub-brand and public self-consciousness into the regression equation, resulting  $R^2$  as .51,  $F$  as 222.22 ( $p < .001$ ), and  $\Delta F$  as 222.22 ( $p < .001$ ). Same as the above finding in SEM to support H8, brand love for the sub-brand and positive WOM for the sub-brand was positively and significantly related ( $\beta = .69, p < .001$ ). In the second step, the interaction of brand love for the sub-brand and public self-consciousness was added into the regression equation, resulting  $R^2$  as still .51,  $F$  as 148.22 ( $p < .001$ ), and  $\Delta F$  as .63 ( $p > .05$ ). However, the interaction variable was not significantly related to positive WOM for the sub-brand ( $\beta = -.24, p > .05$ ). Therefore, H12 was not supported. Figure 14 visualizes the non-significant moderating effects of public self-consciousness on positive WOM for the sub-brand. The rejection of H12 might be explained by both individualism and low-key luxury. In countries where individualism is a more predominant culture factor, customers may concern less about showing off in order to gain face than people from more collectivist cultures (Bao et al., 2003; Dubois et al., 2005). With data collection completed in the US, strongly dominated by individualism culturally, such consumers, even with high public self-consciousness, may not have a strong tendency to perform more positive WOM. Besides, close examination and

discussions on modern trend of low-key luxury also reveal that those customers may want to keep their private luxury leisure experience to themselves, without sharing the stay experience to others (Brun, Brun, & Castelli, 2013). That is, some consumers with high public self-consciousness might prefer low-key luxury, and such preference could deter them from demonstrating more positive WOM behavior for their loved hotel sub-brands.

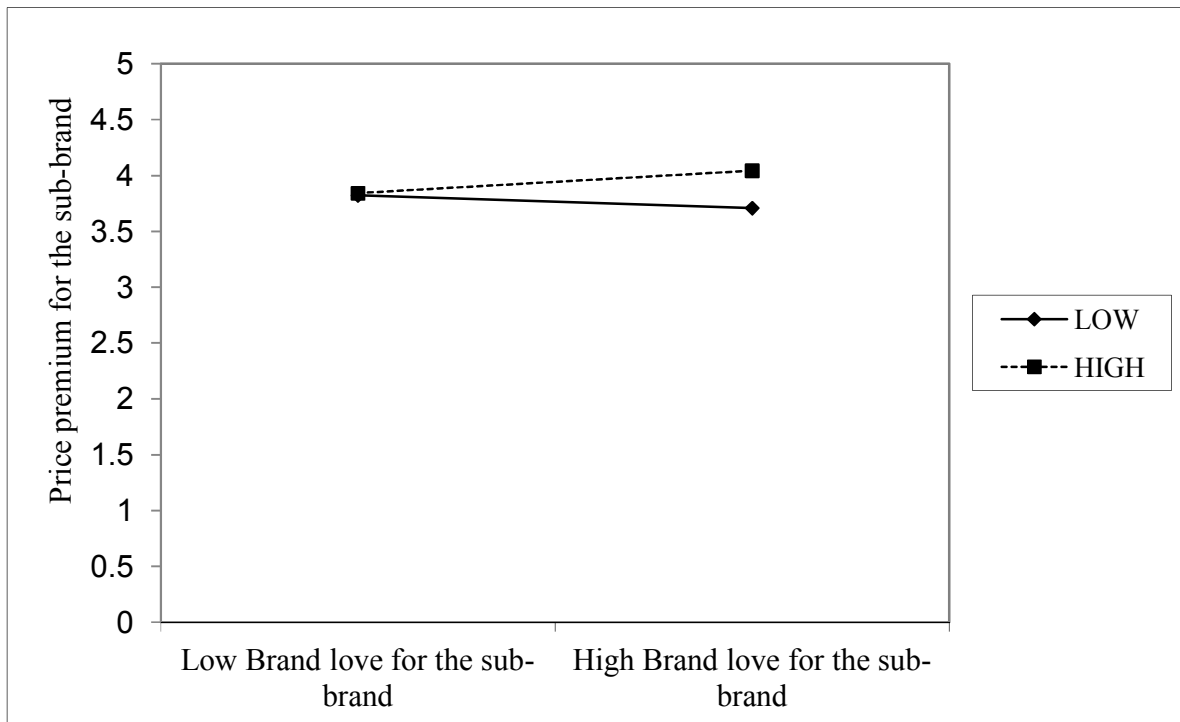
In testing H13, price premium for the sub-brand was set as the dependent variable. In the first step, brand love for the sub-brand and public self-consciousness were entered into the regression equation, resulting  $R^2$  as .41,  $F$  as 147.45 ( $p < .001$ ), and  $\Delta F$  as 147.45 ( $p < .001$ ). Consistent with above finding in SEM to support H9, brand love for the sub-brand and price premium for the sub-brand was positively and significantly related ( $\beta = .57, p < .001$ ). In the second step, the interaction of brand love for the sub-brand and public self-consciousness was added into the regression equation, resulting  $R^2$  as .43,  $F$  as 104.85 ( $p < .001$ ), and  $\Delta F$  as 11.97 ( $p < .01$ ). Furthermore, the interaction variable was significantly related to price premium for the sub-brand ( $\beta = 1.13, p < .001$ ). Hence, H13 was supported. When public self-consciousness is high, the positive relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and price premium is stronger; in contrast, when public self-consciousness is low, the positive relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and price premium is weaker. Figure 15 visualizes the significant moderating effects of public self-consciousness on price premium for the sub-brand. As shown in the figure, public self-consciousness can strengthen the positive relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and brand love for the corporate brand. Table 20 summarized the results of testing H11, H12, and H13 with public self-consciousness as the moderator.



**Figure 13. Moderating effects of Public Self-Consciousness on Revisit Intention for the Sub-Brand (H11)**



**Figure 14. Moderating effects of Public Self-Consciousness on Positive WOM for the Sub-Brand (H12)**



**Figure 15. Moderating effects of Public Self-Consciousness on Price Premium for the Sub-Brand (H13)**

**Table 20. Moderating Effects of Public Self-Consciousness in H11, H12, and H13**

Variables	(H11) Revisit intention for the sub-brand		(H12) Positive WOM for the sub-brand		(H13) Price premium for the sub-brand	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Main effects</i>						
Brand love for the sub-brand	.72***	.59***	.69***	.82***	.57***	-.04
Public self-consciousness	.08*	-.07	.05	.21	.14***	-.59**
<i>Interaction</i>						
Brand love for the sub-brand × Public self-consciousness		.23		-.24		1.13***
$R^2$	.56	.57	.51	.51	.41	.43
$\Delta R^2$	.56	.01	.51	.00	.41	.02
Adjusted $R^2$	.56	.56	.51	.51	.41	.42
$F$	273.45***	182.38***	222.22***	148.22***	147.45***	104.85***
$\Delta F$	273.45***	.67	222.22***	.63	147.45***	11.97**

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

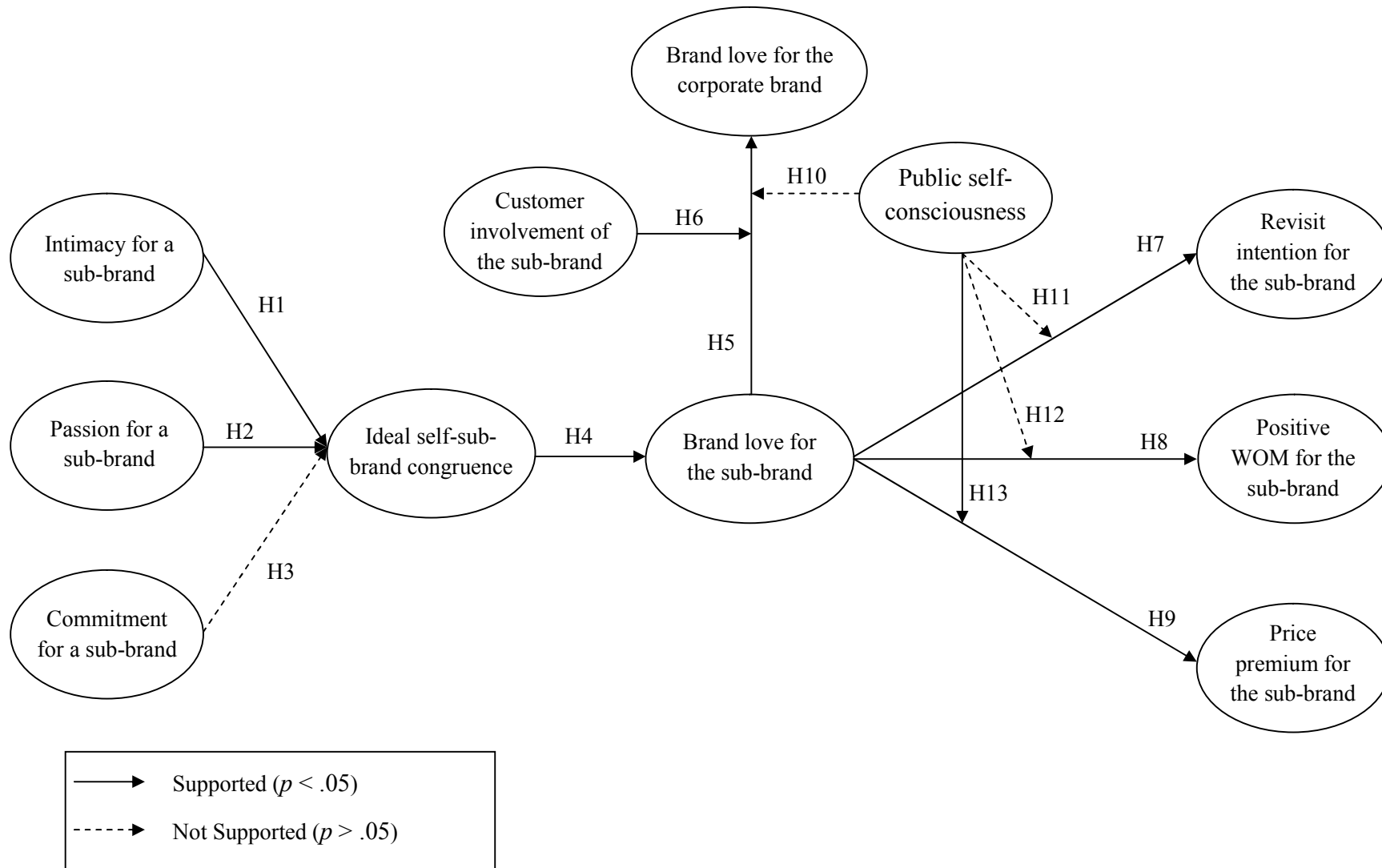


## Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results

Results of the whole hypotheses testing were summarized in Table 21 and Figure 16. Based on the supported H1 and H2, the findings revealed that intimacy for a sub-brand and passion for a sub-brand are the two major former antecedents of hotel brand love to enhance ideal self-sub-brand congruence. Then, ideal self-sub-brand congruence can improve customers' brand love for the sub-brand, as the supported H4. Different from the three-component human love proposed by Sternberg (1986), this study found that commitment for a sub-brand was not able to serve as a former antecedent of hotel brand love for the sub-brand. Additionally, brand love for the sub-brand can further extend to improve brand love for the corporate brand, as the supported H5. Meanwhile, following the supported H6, with the moderating effect of customer involvement of the sub-brand, the extension of brand love from the sub-brand to the corporate can be stronger. On the other hand, brand love for the sub-brand can also influence brand loyalty for the sub-brand itself in revisit intention (the supported H7), positive WOM (the supported H8), and price premium (the supported H9). The moderating effects of public self-consciousness were examined on outcomes of brand love for the sub-brand. Although H10, H11, and H12 were not supported, it was interesting to find public self-consciousness can perform as a strong moderator to enhance the relationship between brand love for the sub-brand and price premium for the sub-brand (the supported H13).

**Table 21. Results of Hypotheses Testing**

H0	Proposed relationships	Results
H1	Intimacy for a sub-brand → Ideal self-sub-brand congruence	Supported
H2	Passion for a sub-brand → Ideal self-sub-brand congruence	Supported
H3	Commitment for a sub-brand → Ideal self-sub-brand congruence	Not Supported
H4	Ideal self-sub-brand congruence → Brand love for the sub-brand	Supported
H5	Brand love for the sub-brand → Brand love for the corporate brand	Supported
H6	Brand love for the sub-brand × Customer involvement of the sub-brand → Brand love for the corporate brand	Supported
H7	Brand love for the sub-brand → Revisit intention for the sub-brand	Supported
H8	Brand love for the sub-brand → Positive WOM for the sub-brand	Supported
H9	Brand love for the sub-brand → Price premium for the sub-brand	Supported
H10	Brand love for the sub-brand × Public self-consciousness → Brand love for the corporate brand	Not Supported
H11	Brand love for the sub-brand × Public self-consciousness → Revisit intention for the sub-brand	Not Supported
H12	Brand love for the sub-brand × Public self-consciousness → Positive WOM for the sub-brand	Not Supported
H13	Brand love for the sub-brand × Public self-consciousness → Price premium for the sub-brand	Supported



**Figure 16. Results of Hypothesized Model**

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter includes summary of findings, theoretical implications, practical implications, and limitations for future research. Each section is presented as follows.

## Summary of Findings

### Three Components for Brand Love

Based on the triangular theory of love proposed by Sternberg (1986), this study conceptualized intimacy, passion, and commitment as the three key drivers for brand love. Results of this study found that both intimacy for a sub-brand ( $\beta = .35, p < .001$ ) and passion for a sub-brand ( $\beta = .59, p < .001$ ) were significantly related to ideal-self-sub-brand congruence; however, commitment for a sub-brand ( $\beta = .04, p > .05$ ) was not significantly related to ideal-self-sub-brand congruence. Between the effect of intimacy for a sub-brand and that of passion for a sub-brand on ideal-self-sub-brand congruence, passion performed stronger influences than intimacy did on ideal-self-sub-brand congruence. Such finding can be explained by the former work of Yim et al. (2008). Yim et al. (2008) argued that passion-driven customer-firm affection happens more often in transactional services, while commitment-driven customer-firm affection happens more often in relational services. Relational services are mostly used by consumers at a certain frequency with unchanged service experiences, such as having haircut services at a salon with the same designer once a month (Yim et al., 2008). In contrast, hotel brand experience with the same sub-brand is more akin to the experience of transactional services, because consumers usually experience the same sub-brand at different locations and at no specific frequency. Hence, the key to maintain brand love lies more in passion (the inner excitement about a brand experience) and intimacy (connectedness in the brand relationship), rather than in commitment. The non-significant effect of commitment in this research model may also be explained by the modern trend of hotel design and the

demand from the current market. As argued by Pizam (2015), different from the slogan “The Best Surprise Is No Surprise” from the Holiday Inn Corporation back in 1975, the rising popularity of lifestyle and boutique hotel brands is due to modern consumers’ need for individualized wow feelings. The need for stronger positive sensory stimulations in a hotel brand stay experience determines the core roles of passion and intimacy in evaluating brand love toward a hotel brand.

Both passion and intimacy can enhance consumers’ ideal-self-sub-brand congruence, just like those motivated by perceived passion and intimacy would enjoy a love relationship with an ideal partner (Drigotas et al., 1999). This study proved the positive influences that ideal-self-sub-brand congruence has on brand love for the sub-brand ( $\beta = .99, p < .001$ ). The strong relationship between ideal-self-sub-brand congruence and brand love for the sub-brand proves the importance of matching consumers’ ideal self in generating hotel brand love. Such finding adds new knowledge to the study of Malär et al. (2011). Malär et al. (2011) examined the relationship between self-brand congruence and emotional brand attachment in four types of daily used brands, including fast-moving consumer goods, durable consumer goods, services, and retail. With 6943 samples in study 1 and 4150 samples in study 2, both studies of Malär et al. (2011) showed that ideal-self-brand congruence is not significantly related to emotional brand attachment. Interestingly, empirical results of this study showed strong significant positive relationship between ideal-self-sub-brand congruence and brand love for the sub-brand. The inconsistent findings can be explained by the differences between daily used brands and hotel brands. As argued by Malär et al. (2011), consumers show more emotional brand attachment toward daily used brands that reflect their actual self image,

because people have a tendency to demonstrate authenticity in social settings. Consumers can easily fall in love with those daily used brands that represent their actual self, so that they would be recognized as genuine in front of others (Harter, 2002). Different from the “authentic approach” concerning the actual self image for daily used brands, this study proposed a “tourism approach,” that focuses on the choosing of a hotel brand that matches closer to the consumer’s ideal self image. Regarding brands utilized for tourism purposes, consumers aim to experience something different from their work domain and daily life, to fully refresh themselves and enjoy relaxation, and to stay at places that provide ideal environment and services (Assaker et al., 2011; Loureiro et al., 2013; Tan et al., 2014; Weaver, 2009). The demand for ideal experiences in tourism shows the importance of ideal-self-brand congruence in tourism brands, including the case hotel brands utilized for leisure purposes in this study.

On the other hand, this study further examined the differences of consumers’ perception of the three love components before and after their recent stay. Results of the comparison revealed that intimacy ( $t\text{-value} = 2.60, p < .01$ ), passion ( $t\text{-value} = 2.29, p < .05$ ), and commitment ( $t\text{-value} = 2.10, p < .05$ ) all show significant difference. The mean for intimacy improved from 5.45 to 5.52, from 5.00 to 5.06 for passion, and from 5.31 to 5.36 for commitment. Just like the dating experience with an ideal partner in enhancing human love (Montgomery & Sorell, 1998), staying with an ideal hotel brand also improves consumers’ perception of these three components in hotel brand love. To take a closer look at this comparison and test each item of these three components, it is then found that, from a customer’s expectation prior to a recent stay to after that stay, five items in particular increased significantly. In intimacy, the item “I mentally felt close to

the hotel brand” improved from 5.06 to 5.20 ( $t\text{-value} = 3.46, p < .001$ ), while the item “I had a comfortable relationship with the brand” increased from 5.48 to 5.65 ( $t\text{-value} = 4.63, p < .001$ ). Such findings showed the effective increase of perceived intimacy by experiencing stays at the hotel brand. In passion, the item “I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as the brand” increased from 4.87 to 5.06 ( $t\text{-value} = 4.17, p < .001$ ), and the item “I adored the hotel brand” improved from 4.93 to 5.04 ( $t\text{-value} = 2.50, p < .01$ ). These findings also proved that accumulated brand experience can effectively improve consumers’ perceived passion toward their identified ideal hotel brand. In commitment, “I viewed my relationship with the hotel brand as permanent” rose from 5.11 to 5.18 ( $t\text{-value} = 2.02, p < .05$ ), showing that a stay experience with an ideal hotel brand strengthens the consumers’ identification with the brand relationship as permanent.

### **Brand Love in a Brand Portfolio**

This study found that brand love for the sub-brand significantly exerted positive influence to brand love for the corporate brand ( $\beta = .92, p < .001$ ). Such finding resonates with the study of Lei et al. (2008) that also found spillover effect in a brand portfolio mainly occurred from a sub-brand to its corporate brand. Measuring brand love for the sub-brand and the corporate brand with the same items, the mean for the sub-brand was 5.70, while the mean for the corporate brand was 5.66. Such finding supports the argument of this study that under a hotel brand portfolio, consumers normally experience a sub-brand first, develop brand relationship and emotional connection with the sub-brand, and then extend their love for the sub-brand onto its corporate brand. Seeing this



phenomenon, hotel firms proposed brand membership programs in order to strengthen the relationship extension from a sub-brand to its corporate brand (Ha & Stoel, 2014; Tanford, 2013; Tanford et al., 2011; Xie & Chen, 2013; Xie & Chen, 2014). Approaches to enhance the love spillover effect from a sub-brand to its corporate brand are conceptualized as the examined moderating effects in this study, and are addressed in following sections.

### **Brand Love and Brand Loyalty**

This study examined the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty. Empirical results of this study showed that brand love for the sub-brand significantly exerted positive influences on revisit intention for the sub-brand ( $\beta = .90, p < .001$ ), positive WOM for the sub-brand ( $\beta = .79, p < .001$ ), and price premium for the sub-brand ( $\beta = .75, p < .001$ ). Batra et al. (2012) conceptualized revisit intention, positive WOM, willingness to pay price premium, and resistance to receive negative information toward the brand as four major outcomes of brand love. With empirical test, Batra et al. (2012) proved the positive significant effects of brand love on revisit intention, positive WOM, and resistance to receive negative information. Early in the work of Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), brand love was also proved to be significantly and positively related to repurchase intention and positive WOM. More recently, Kwon and Mattila (2015) advanced on the basis of Batra et al. (2012), and proved that positive WOM is an outcome in a brand love model with data from both Korean and U.S. hospitality consumers. Although outcomes of brand love have been examined by several previous studies, the role of willingness to pay price premium was not tested until the completion

of this study. Taken together, findings about the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty in this study not only reaffirm the effectiveness of brand love on improving revisit intention and positive WOM in former studies (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Kwon & Mattila, 2015), but also contribute new empirical evidence of price premium as one strong outcome of hotel brand love.

### **Moderating Effect of Customer Involvement of the Sub-Brand**

To further examining the effective approaches to enhance the spillover effect of hotel brand love from a sub-brand to its corporate brand, this study proposed customer involvement of the sub-brand as the moderator in the spillover process. Empirical results of this study proved that customer involvement of a sub-brand significantly improves the positive influence from brand love for that sub-brand to brand love for its corporate brand ( $\beta = .77, p < .001$ ). Customer involvement not only reflects the customers' perceived relevance with a hotel brand (Baker et al., 2009), but also reveals their time and resources invested in the brand relationship (Goodman et al., 1995). Based on the argument of Lei et al. (2008) that customers accumulate their affective connections with a corporate brand from their encounter with the sub-brands in that brand portfolio, this study added the concept of enhancing the spillover effect by investing involvement with a sub-brand. The significant support from such evidence adds new knowledge of love spillover effect in a brand portfolio. Moreover, by utilizing the concept of customer involvement into practical promotion policies, membership programs, customer engagement activities, and advertising strategies, hotel firms can effectively win customers' hearts, and extend that affection from their sub-brands onto their corporate brands.

### **Moderating Effects of Public Self-Consciousness**

Different from testing customer involvement regarding customers' external investments with a brand (Goodman et al., 1995), public self-consciousness is the moderator to explore the inner characteristic of certain customers for hoteliers to set their target markets in hotel branding (Bushman, 1993). Since that brands are used as a social element to represent one's self in front of others, and also that the experience of hotel brands requires human interactions in social settings (Crosno et al., 2009; Reingen et al., 1984), the extent of customers' public self-consciousness becomes an interesting concept worth exploring in this research model. This study proposed the moderating effects of public self-consciousness in two main parts in the research model: first, regarding its moderating effect on the love spillover within a brand portfolio; and second, regarding its moderating effect on brand loyalty.

First, for the love spillover effect in a brand portfolio, public self-consciousness was hypothesized to enhance the positive influence of brand love for the sub-brand to brand love for the corporate brand. Such moderating effect was not supported ( $\beta = -.08, p > .05$ ). This hypothesis was based on the social tendency that people tend to behave authentically and prefer to be considered sincere (Harter, 2002). Hence, this study proposed that such tendency should happen more frequently in the behaviors of those with high public self-consciousness. However, the moderating effect of public self-consciousness was not supported in the love spillover effect in a brand portfolio.

The extensiveness of brand segments owned by the five case hotel firms included in this study might be one major reason that could explain the non-significant moderating

effect. Wang and Chung (2015) proposed hotel brand portfolio strategy, and argued the scope of brand portfolio as one of the dimensions with the number of segments as the measurement item. As summarized by Wang and Chung (2015), Marriott International Inc. owns seven brand segments, InterContinental Hotels Group owns six brand segments, Hilton Worldwide owns four, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. owns four, and Hyatt Hotels Co. owns four as well. Take Marriott International Inc. for example: it has JW Marriott in the luxury segment (sorted in luxury segment by STR) and also Fairfield Inn in the modern essentials (sorted in upper midscale by STR). A customer with high public self-consciousness may perceive high fit with JW Marriott, while at the same time feeling deeply unfit with Fairfield Inn. Therefore, such a customer may be uncomfortable to extend his or her love from JW Marriott to Marriott International Inc. as a whole, considering the risk of losing the sense of distinction and superiority, and a clear social connection to JW Marriott alone. Studies of luxury brands and fashion products also revealed that consumers with high public self-consciousness would carefully select their brand usage to represent their taste and social status (Giovannini, Xu, & Thomas, 2015; Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara, 2012; Workman & Lee, 2011). To see a more significant moderating effect of public self-consciousness on the love spillover effect in a brand portfolio, future studies may need to empirically test the moderating effect with hotel firms that have only one brand segment, such as Morgans Hotel Group Co., whose eight hotel sub-brands all fall in the boutique segment, or as Vail Resorts Inc., whose six hotel sub-brands all lie within the luxury resort segment.

Second, for the relationship between brand love and brand loyalty, this study proved that public self-consciousness significantly improved the positive influence from brand love for the sub-brand to price premium for the sub-brand ( $\beta = 1.13, p < .001$ ), while the moderating effects of public self-consciousness on revisit intention for the sub-brand ( $\beta = .23, p > .05$ ) and positive WOM for the sub-brand ( $\beta = -.24, p > .05$ ) were not supported. By considering public self-consciousness as a similar concept of seeking face gain, this study proposed that customers with high public self-consciousness might invest more resources in maintaining or improving their face, such as improving loyalty toward a loved hotel brand. Interestingly, empirical results of this study showed that only price premium improved regarding those who are highly self-conscious in public. The non-significant moderating effects on revisit intention might be explained by the concept of satiation proposed by Park and Jang (2014). Satiation happens when consumers have already enjoyed enough utility from a certain type of service or products, and experiencing additional unit of such service or product would no longer increase any utility (Park & Jang, 2014). It is then logical to infer that consumers with high public self-consciousness might have already enjoy considerable stays with their loved hotel brands; hence, due to perceived satiation, they may not want to further increase their frequency of visitations to the same hotel brand.

On the other hand, the non-significant moderating effects on positive WOM might be explained by the population of low-key luxury consumers. Although this study proposed that positive WOM is one strategy consumers would adopt in order to gain their face in social settings, such phenomenon is actually more commonly found in collectivist cultures, where people have a tendency to show off in front of others for gaining face

(Bao et al., 2003; Dubois et al., 2005). In cultures that are more individualist, the population of low-key luxury consumers is rising, representing the increasing demand for enjoying luxury experience privately (Brun, Brun, & Castelli, 2013). Since all the samples of this study were collected in the U.S., a society where individualism is highly predominant, the customers with high public self-consciousness here would tend to be more low-key luxury consumers, rather than extravagant luxury consumers. That is, high public self-consciousness customers in this sample population might stay at their loved hotel brand more for personal oriented reasons (e.g. hedonic experience), rather than social orientated reasons (e.g. status seeking) (Mo, Roux, & Cergam, 2009). Taken together, the cultural characteristics of low-key purchasing attitude and the demand for hotel stays out of personal oriented reasons might discourage these high public self-consciousness customers from bragging the positive aspects of their loved hotel brand in front of others. Future studies might need to look into this question, and compare the same moderating effects in collectivist cultures from that in individualist ones, in order to fully explore any possible cultural differences.

Nonetheless, the significant moderating effects to price premium found in this study is particularly worthy of pointing out. Because of the aforementioned perceived satiation and the low-key purchasing attitude, the willingness to pay more for a brand experience becomes one remaining feasible approach for high public self-consciousness consumers to contribute more for their loved hotel brands. In the proposed arguments, high public self-consciousness people want to behave consistently in social settings (Hwang et al., 2003). Therefore, it is predictable that they would be willing to pay more for staying at their loved hotel brands. Another explanation of this effect comes from

Long Tolbert, Kohli, and Suri (2014), who argued that people with high public self-consciousness are always afraid of being alone. Hence, when they find their highly fitted brands are now sold at a higher price, they would have no choice but to comply with the raised price in order to maintain a continuous relationship with their congruent brands. Moreover, from the perspective of upholding personal social status (Gillies, 2005), high public self-consciousness consumers may indeed actively prefer if their loved brands would be sold at a higher price. By paying more for a loved hotel brand, high public self-consciousness consumers could collectively increase the market price of those hotel brands, thus creating a monetary barrier to keep other consumers with less paying ability or willingness from experiencing the brands. With a limited amount of consumers who can access the hotel brand, such rich high public self-consciousness consumers can keep using the brand to represent their social status and self image.

## **Theoretical Implications**

### **Antecedents of Hotel Brand Love**

This study applied the triangular theory of love by Sternberg (1986), and proved that both intimacy and passion for a sub-brand can significantly improve ideal-self-sub-brand congruence. The ideal-self-sub-brand congruence then significantly improved brand love for the sub-brand. Such finding clarifies the role of the three components of human love in hotel brand love, revealing the importance of enhancing customers' perceived intimacy and passion in a hotel brand experience. Based on Sternberg (1986), a love relationship with high passion, moderate intimacy, and low commitment is normally

performed as psychophysiological involvement in a romantic love. The supported outcomes of hotel brand love as tested in this study, especially its significant positive influences to revisit intention, to positive WOM, and to price premium, further proved that hotel brand love can actually be maintained as a long-term relationship.

Yim et al. (2008) also applied the three components of human love by Sternberg (1986): they named them as customer-firm affection and empirically examined the effectiveness of them in fast-food restaurant and hair salon, and they found that brand love mainly consists of intimacy and passion, while commitment is not as necessary. Yim et al. (2008) explained that commitment might play a significant role in a brand experience when a customer uses the brand on a daily basis or at a very high frequency for a long period of time. This study is in agreement with the study of Yim et al. (2008) on the importance of intimacy and passion in brand love. However, the potential for commitment to be a significant driver in hotel brand love still remain possible and awaits further explorations. Participants in this study selected their frequently stayed hotel sub-brands for private travel purposes to complete the survey. In the actual hotel brand usage, some hotel customers are members of the health club of a hotel property, and they might view that property as a second home for exercise and relaxation, where they visit several times per week. For this type of hotel brand usage, these customers may see the hotel property as a lover, with all three components present as drivers for their love feelings. The possibility of such scenario suggest the need for a closer look into the issue of level differentiation in studying hotel brand love, ranging from love for one hotel property, love for one sub-brand, to love for one firm.



This study is a pioneer research that leads brand love studies into the level of a brand portfolio. Including the previous work by Yim et al. (2008), former studies in brand love consider customers' love feelings toward only one single brand (Ahuvia, 2005; Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Kwon & Mattila, 2015; Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012; Maxian et al., 2013; Rossiter, 2012; Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012). Nowadays, nonetheless, it has become more common for most hotel firms to develop their brand portfolios by creating several sub-brands at different brand segments and locations (Wang & Chung, 2015). Following the argument of Lei et al. (2008) that suggests customers experience a sub-brand in a brand portfolio first and would then extend the positive feelings toward the sub-brand to its parent brand, the plan of this research model started from examining customers' perceptions of intimacy, passion, and commitment toward a hotel sub-brand. In this study, brand love for the sub-brand, determined by these three perceived love components for the sub-brand, is also proved to exert positive effects on brand love for the corporate brand. Therefore, the findings in this study support the argument about the need to consider different levels of brand love within a hotel brand portfolio.

On the other hand, different from previous studies that argued actual-self-brand congruence as the key to enhance emotional brand attachment (Malär et al., 2011), this study proved ideal-self-brand congruence is the key bridge between three love components and hotel brand love. The importance to concern the actual self in daily used brands was explained as the "authentic approach" by Malär et al. (2011), while this study proposed the concept of "tourism approach" to explain the importance of ideal self in tourism brands. Customers who use a brand through the authentic approach consider the

brand usage as one way to represent their “real me” (Malär et al., 2011). Brands used in the authentic approach are normally used at a considerably higher frequency or even on a daily basis, and are also commonly used in a social setting, i.e. in front of other people (Harter, 2002; Malär et al., 2011). In contrast, customers in tourism experiences often demand to enjoy something new, to get rid of the normal work life, to relax and to have fun, and even to satisfy the desire for an ideal atmosphere that is hard to achieve at home (Assaker et al., 2011; Loureiro et al., 2013; Tan et al., 2014; Weaver, 2009). Hence, customers may hope that brands used in tourism experiences are able to reflect their ideal self, and not their actual self. Since this empirical study was conducted by asking about the participants’ frequently stayed hotel for their private tourism purposes, based on our proposed tourism approach in brand experience, ideal self dominates the process to create love feelings toward a hotel brand.

### **Vertical and Horizontal Outcomes of Hotel Brand Love**

Considering the proposed issue of level differentiation of hotel brand love in this study, outcomes of brand love for a sub-brand can be categorized into vertical and horizontal outcomes. Vertical outcome is conceptualized as the effects one sub-brand creates on its corporate brand, or the effects one corporate brand creates on its sub-brand(s); and horizontal outcome is conceptualized as the effects one sub-brand creates on the attributes, aspects, or characteristics of that sub-brand, or the effects one corporate brand creates on its own attributes, aspects, or characteristics, namely, the effects generated at the same level (Reid, Luxton, & Mavondo, 2005; Varadarajan et al., 2006). Previous brand studies regarding the umbrella effect had proved that corporate brands can

exert both vertical (to its sub-brand(s)) and horizontal outcomes in a brand portfolio (Sullivan, 1990). Findings of this study further proved the possibility for one sub-brand to significantly create both vertical (to its corporate brand) and horizontal outcomes in the hotel industry.

First, concerning the vertical outcome of brand love, this study proved that brand love for a sub-brand significantly improves brand love for a corporate brand. This finding not only echoes the work of Lei et al. (2008) regarding the spillover effect among brands in a brand portfolio, but also contributes new knowledge about the outcomes of brand love. Most of the previous empirical studies on brand love continue to examine customers' brand loyalty at the same level for the loved brand as a major outcome (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Kwon & Mattila, 2015; Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012). In hospitality studies, Loureiro and Kaufmann (2012) found that customers are willing to share positive things and make repurchase for their loved wine brands. A more recent study of Kwon and Mattila (2015) examined the significance of positive WOM as the outcome of several brands in hospitality, including coffee shops, restaurants, airlines, and hotels. By applying the vertical outcomes into hospitality studies, wine researchers are able to further explore the love spillover effect from one single wine brand to a winery company, while other hospitality brands can also be examined to create more knowledge of brand love in hospitality brand portfolios.

Second, in horizontal outcome of brand love, this study proved that brand love for a sub-brand significantly improves revisit intention, positive WOM, and price premium for the sub-brand. These findings confirm the argument of Batra et al. (2012) that

customers have the tendency to maintain loyal behavioral intentions toward their loved brands. Previous studies have already empirically proved the significant effects of brand love on enhancing revisit/repurchase intention and positive WOM (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Kwon & Mattila, 2015; Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012; Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012). This study further proved the effectiveness of brand love on improving customers' willingness to pay price premium, thus revealing potential market opportunities for hoteliers to utilize this behavioral intention to improve financial performance.

### **Enhancing the Outcomes of Hotel Brand Love**

This study proposed customer involvement and public self-consciousness as two moderators to enhance both vertical and horizontal outcomes of brand love for a sub-brand. For the vertical outcome of brand love for a sub-brand, this study proved that customer involvement of the sub-brand does strengthen the positive influences from brand love for the sub-brand to that for the corporate brand. This significant moderating effect of public self-consciousness proved the argument of Lei et al. (2008) that customers' perceptions toward a sub-brand might be extended to its corporate brand. Previous studies about hotel loyalty program also take an interest in the process of building customers' loyalty to a hotel firm though stays at its sub-brands (Tanford et al., 2011; Xie & Chen, 2014). The importance of customer involvement can be shown by integrating both love spillover and hotel loyalty program together. To contribute more knowledge of customer involvement in a brand portfolio, future studies may further examine the tangible and intangible resources used for customer involvement, different

forms of customer involvement, length of customer involvement, and customer-sub-brand interactions in customer involvement,

For the horizontal outcomes of brand love, this study proved that public self-consciousness strengthens the positive influences from brand love for the sub-brand to price premium for the sub-brand. Among the three proposed moderating effects, i.e. revisit intention, positive WOM, and price premium, it is interesting and worth noticing that only price premium was significantly improved by the moderating effect of public self-consciousness. The non-significant moderating effect to revisit intention could be explained by perceived satiation (Park & Jang, 2014), which leads to these customers not feeling the need to add more stays with their loved hotel brand. The non-significant moderating effect to positive WOM, on the other hand, could be explained by the low-key purchasing attitude, which reflects customers' tendency and preference to enjoy luxury experiences privately rather than to share their joyful brand experiences out of vanity or gaining face (Brun et al., 2013; Dubois et al., 2005; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998; Workman & Lee, 2011). Since customers with high public self-consciousness are not prone to either revisit more often or give positive WOM for a love hotel brand, paying price premium becomes one, if not the only feasible approach for them to show support for a loved brand. From a passive perspective, when the cost of a loved hotel brand goes up, these customers with high public self-consciousness have no choice but to conform to their fellow crowd customers and subscribe to the newly increased price, because they are normally afraid of being left alone and cut off from winning social identity (Tolbert et al., 2014). From an active perspective, however, willingness, or even the deliberate support to pay more for a loved hotel brand might also be one way for the customers with high

public self-consciousness to set higher monetary thresholds that separate them from other social groups, so that the limited access to that brand can uphold the value of it, which is in turn associated to the brand users themselves.

## **Practical Implications**

### **Arousing Intimacy and Passion in Brand Experience**

Results of this study revealed that intimacy and passion were the two key drivers that enhance the customers' ideal-self-brand congruence, and then also improve their hotel brand love through the enhanced ideal-self-brand congruence. Based on the findings, hotel managers need to design a brand experience that arouses their target market's intimacy and passion toward the brand, and such aroused brand intimacy and brand passion ought to aim at strengthening the connection between the customers' ideal self-image and the brand image.

The term "intimacy" means the perceptions of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in a relationship (Sternberg, 1986). By comparing the customers' perceived intimacy before and after their recent stay at a frequently stayed hotel brand for private leisure purposes, the results showed that "I mentally felt close to it" and "I had a comfortable relationship with it" improved significantly after a recent stay. To make the consumers feel close to a hotel brand, hotel managers should serve their target consumers by understanding their needs and dreams in tourism. Also, to maintain a comfortable relationship, hotel managers need to have a complete oversight on all the details in

service deliveries, and to thoroughly analyze the customers' brand experience process and feedbacks.

As argued by Pizam (2015), since it is not easy or even possible to achieve individualized hotel brand experience, the direction that hoteliers could pursue instead could be "mass customization," which may be accomplished by designing a brand specifically for a specified niche market. For example, W Hotel is a luxury lifestyle hotel brand located at major big cities, a sub-brand designed mainly for high-income generation Y consumers. When this target market, i.e. high-income generation Y consumers, experience a W Hotel property, they can perceive high intimacy toward W Hotel, because the entire service, product, and the atmosphere perfectly match their taste and their dream of the wow experiences. That is, hotel managers need to fully understand their brand first, set a clear positioning in the market, design all the brand experience to fit the target market's expectations. By doing so, when the target consumers come to experience the hotel brand, they can perceive a strong intimacy toward the brand, feel the strong ideal-self-brand congruence, and then fall in love with the brand at the end.

The term "passion" means the physical attractions of a partner which can create romantic feelings in a love relationship (Sternberg, 1986). By comparing the customers' perceived passion before and after their recent stay at a frequently stayed hotel brand for private leisure purposes, the results showed that "I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this hotel brand did" and "when I stayed at this hotel brand, I adored it" improved significantly after a recent stay. The physical attractions and romantic feelings of a hotel brand may be viewed as (or translated into) the physical environmental design, the style of the brand experience, the color usage of each space,

the music design in each location, and even the temperature and the fragrance for each section of the property (Horng et al., 2013; Ryu et al., 2012). Again, hoteliers need to identify their brand positioning first, fully understand the target market, and then to utilize the physical, visual, and sensorial design to arouse the consumers' passion toward their hotel brands. For example, Walt Disney World Resort hotels aim to create fun experiences for children and their parents who wish to enjoy dreams and fantasy in Disney stories (Williams, 2006). To win over the passion of this target market, i.e. children, Walt Disney World Resort hotels design themed hotel rooms with vivid colors and dreamy, fantasia-like music to amuse their consumers. The entire facility design and the proposed activities are planned based on children's perspective. Therefore, children who visit Walt Disney World Resort hotels can perceive a strong and direct passion for this brand, establish a strong ideal-self-brand congruence, and ultimately view Walt Disney World Resort hotels as their loved hotel brands.

### **Assisting the Spillover of Brand Love from a Sub-Brand to the Corporate Brand**

Results of this study found that customer involvement of a sub-brand can strengthen the positive influence from brand love for the sub-brand to brand love for the corporate brand. Involvement can come from customers investing time, resources, and efforts for a brand relationship, such as providing constructive feedbacks for service quality improvement, sharing information about activities held by a hotel, or planning more stays specifically at the hotel brand (Hochgraeffe, Faulk, & Vieregge, 2012; Loureiro et al., 2013; Shobeiri et al., 2014; Sigala, 2012). Hotel loyalty program is also a common approach that hotel firms adopt to encourage more customers engagement with



their brands (Ha & Stoel, 2014; Xie & Chen, 2014). To further motivate customers' involvement with a hotel brand, hotel firms should apply modern technology to keep records of their customers' preferences and orders, especially those within their brand membership programs. Through analyzing these historical records, hotel firms can recognize on their own terms whether a consumer has had previous stays in the past, offer suitable packages for customers, provide interesting incentives to encourage positive WOM, or participate in co-creation process for a new brand development. Moreover, the application of mobile apps can also be introduced and adopted by hotel firms to interact with their customers (Wang, Xiang, Law, & Ki, 2015). Through such interactions, hotel firms can systematically collect related information for analysis, and come to a clearer understanding about how to improve the love spillover.

### **Strengthening Brand Lovers' Loyalty**

This study proved that customers who love a hotel brand do possess strong revisit intention for the brand, would say positive things about the hotel brand to others, and are willing to pay price premium for the hotel brand. To reinforce these three behavioral intentions into actual actions, hotel managers need to locate their methods to motivate these loyal behaviors. For increasing revisit to the hotel brand, hotel firms can analyze the customers' historical stay records, and then recommend properties owned by the same hotel brand according to their preferred locations. In addition, the suitable timing to make contact with certain customers for potential revisits to the brand can also be calculated based on former stay records. For example, hotel managers in the Luxury Collection found out that an SPG (Starwood Preferred Guest) member always stays at their hotel

brand located at European historical cities around spring. Based on this information, each year before spring, the hotel managers could deliver their greetings to this guest and introduce a couple of ideal properties from within the Luxury Collection, such as Hotel Imperial in Vienna or the Convento do Espinheiro in Portugal, for potential purchases.

For improving positive WOM, hotel managers can provide incentives to loyal customers for interviews or focus group sharing. Through these deeper communications, hotel managers can get a hold of the channel through which their loyal target market engage in positive WOM, and then propose activities or benefits tailed for these channels to improve such positive WOM. For example, generation Y customers in the US often use Twitter to share their positive WOM (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel, & Chowdury, 2009), while generation Y customers in China normally use Sina Weibo instead (Cheng & Edwards, 2015). Hotel Indigo is one sub-brand of InterContinental Hotels Group designed mainly for the generation Y market. Knowing such differences in social media usage, brand managers of Hotel Indigo in the US could propose certain incentives for generation Y to engage in positive WOM on Twitter, while use Sina Weibo as the major social media channel to motivate positive WOM in China.

For tapping into brand lovers' willingness to pay price premium, hotel managers can add value to the current services and products, or extend additional services and products to the current brand experience. For example, most customers can easily perceive the value difference of offered shampoos between Dove and L'Occitane. Whether the breakfast is offered free with limited choices of items in a crowded space, or, charged with price premium, comes with diverse options served by personal attendants in a nice table with sea view also means a huge difference in value. Furthermore, such

extended additional services and products can be provided according to the customer's personal preference and demand. Just to name a few, city tour with a personal tour guide, private concert to celebrate honeymoon at the hotel garden, or birthday surprise with free luxury meal are all the possible additional services to win over the hearts of the customers willing to pay price premium.

### **Identifying Brand Lovers Who are Willing to Pay Price Premium**

This study found that public self-consciousness enhances the positive influence from brand love for the sub-brand to price premium for the sub-brand. Public self-consciousness is a personal trait that represents the extent an individual shows him- or herself as an attractive social subject (Bushman, 1993; Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1987). People with high public self-consciousness have a tendency to purchase well-known national brands than bargain brands (Bushman, 1993). In fashion studies, building upon social comparison theory, Workman and Lee (2011) had proven the strong relationships between public self-consciousness and vanity. Borrowing from the scale of Malär et al. (2011), this study measured public self-consciousness with items such as "I usually want to make a good impression on others," "one of the last things I do before I leave my house is look in the mirror," and "I am usually aware of my appearance." In the study of Workman and Lee (2011), the concept of customer vanity was evaluated by applying the four dimensional construct from Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein (1995), which consists of the emphasis for physical appearance, a positive or inflated view toward physical appearance, the concern for achievement, and a positive or inflated view toward achievement. These measurement items in both public self-consciousness and customer

vanity all reveal that the potential consumers willing to pay price premium care about their physical appearance, social status, respect and praise from others, and the achievements that could be known in social settings. Such information can be taken as clues to identify potential consumers with a high public self-consciousness. Hotel marketing and HR departments should work together to train employees to better identify these characteristics of public self-consciousness. Then, these identified customers can be invited to join honor programs, VIP memberships, special luxury events, professional workshops, individualized life and career celebrations, or advanced services and tours. By doing so, hotel firms are able to actually benefit from the potential willingness for price premium of these customers, strengthen the brand lovers' affective connections, and effectively improve the financial performance of their brands.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Although this study has contributed several valuable implications to both academia and industrial practice, there are still few limitations that need to be addressed. First, the usable response rate of this study is very low, only .85%. Because of the low response rate, sample bias could happen from the differences between survey receivers who did participate in this survey and who didn't. Second, not all the hotel brand segments were covered in this study. Hotel sub-brands of both midscale segment and economy segment were not analyzed in this study. Third, samples were only collected in the US. As explained in the discussion section concerning the failure of moderating effects of public self-consciousness, cultural difference is suggested as a crucial reason

behind the non-significant moderating effects of public self-consciousness. In collectivist cultures, people are a lot more concerned about face gain and face loss. The existence or lack of the idea of face in the cultural environment could matter significantly, if not decisively, when discussing the moderating effect of public self-consciousness, especially in improving positive WOM. Fourth, this study only used Qualtrics' database for data collection. It causes the natural limitation that only people included in this specific database were contacted by this study. Fifth, since data collection was done by one source at a time, the potential risk of common method biases may exist in this study. Based on Podsakoff et al. (2003), this study applied both "protecting respondent anonymity and reducing evaluation apprehension" and "improving scale items" as procedural remedies for preventing these common method biases. However, the used remedies might not be able to fully solve the problem of common method biases (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Based on findings of this study, several directions for future research are proposed as followings:

### **Explore the Role of Public Self-Consciousness in Love Spillover in a Brand Portfolio**

This study explained that the non-significant moderating effect of public self-consciousness in love spillover in a brand portfolio might be due to the width of the investigated brand segments owned by the five sample hotel firms. For example, lovers of JW Marriott with high public self-consciousness might not extend their love feelings to the entire Marriott International Inc. in general, because such extension, concerning its inclusion of lower segments, would damage their distinguished social identification exclusively with the luxury segment. However, previous literature of public self-

consciousness mentioned the need to keep consistent social behavior (Bushman, 1993). The need for performing consistency can in turn be satisfied through being loyal to not only a sub-brand but also its corporate brand, or through developing all of one's brand experiences within the same brand segment. Such question requires future qualitative studies to explore more thoroughly.

### **Brand Segments as Moderator on Enhancing Effects of Ideal-Self-Sub-Brand Congruence**

With the fashionable design of W Hotel, or with the romantic atmosphere delivered by Ritz-Carlton, it may be easier for customers to perceive passion toward these luxury sub-brands than sub-brands in the economic segment, such as Super 8 and Motel 6. That is, sub-brands in the luxury brand segment might allow consumers to perceive more ideal-self-sub-brand congruence than other lower brand segments. The concept of perceiving one's ideal self in a brand experience reveals better feelings and higher value in such experiences. Hence, sub-brands in the upper brand segments might perform better than other lower brand segments in causing the customers to perceive ideal-self-sub-brand congruence.

### **Generation as Moderator on Improving Effects from Three Love Components**

Generation Y customers grow up in a fully branded environment with diverse choices and chances (Parment, 2012). Pendergast (2009) pointed out that generation Y customers are normally with very little brand loyalty, would value fun in brand experiences, and prefer interactive brand experiences. Jennings et al. (2010) added that

generation Y travelers seek novel experiences and aim to have fun. Because of the characteristics of generation Y customers, the demand for enjoying ideal self might not occur only in tourism, but also in daily life. That is, the “authentic approach” proposed by Malär et al. (2011) in explaining customers’ relationship with daily used brands might not be applicable on generation Y customers. Even for daily used brands, such as Abercrombie & Fitch (A&F) for clothes and Apple for technology, these customers still prefer to use brands that can represent their ideal self (Chernev, Hamilton, & Gal, 2011). The lifestyle seeking tendency of generation Y customers exist in different brand segments, not only in the luxury segment. Such trend has motivated hotel firms to open lifestyle hotels for this target market, not only in the luxury segment but also in the economic segment; the lifestyle hotel brands W hotel (luxury segment as classified by STR), aloft Hotel (upscale segment as classified by STR) owned by Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc., and the Moxy Hotel (economy segment as classified by STR), recently created by Marriott International Inc. through cooperation with IKEA, are just three of these brands that exemplify the usage of this strategy. Based on the above, among the three components of hotel brand love, generation Y customers might be more passion-oriented, while senior generations might be more intimacy- and/or commitment-oriented. Such interesting generational differences should be further explored to provide meaningful implications for hotel firms to maintain brand relationship with different target markets.

### **Brand Membership as the Moderator on Strengthening Love Spillover in a Brand Portfolio**

This study found the significant moderating effect of customer involvement in enhancing the positive influences of brand love for a sub-brand to that for its corporate brand. Such finding revealed the possible effectiveness of proposing activities and programs for consumers to be more engaged with the sub-brand and therefore extend their affective connections from the sub-brand to the corporate brand, or even to other sub-brands under the same corporate brand. Hence, variables used by previous studies in hotel loyalty programs might be potential moderators for future studies to examine, such as the length of the membership, the frequency of using membership rewards, the degree of satisfaction of a loyalty program, the difficulty in getting rewarded in the program, the tier level in the loyalty program, the frustrations in benefiting from the program, and memberships with other hotel firms (Mattila, 2006; Tanford, 2013; Tanford et al., 2011; Xie & Chen, 2013).

### **Extending Love Spillover into the Concept of Brand Player**

In human love, player means someone in a love relationship who doesn't exercise exclusive loyalty to one single partner (Lasswell & Lasswell, 1976). Based on personal preferences in love style, people develop different love relationships with their partner(s) (Woll, 1989). The concept of "player" in human love might be potential applicable to the study of hotel brand love to describe customers' brand relationship development. The term "brand player" can be conceptualized as the customers who fall in love with more than one hotel brand. Following the former discussions regarding the spillover effect, brand players' extent of play can be evaluated from loving hotel sub-brands under one brand portfolio into loving hotel sub-brands across different firms. For example, for



brand players who love luxury brand experiences, they might develop love relationships with InterContinental (owned by InterContinental Hotels Group), Grand Hyatt (owned by Hyatt Hotels Co.), and Luxury Collection (owned by Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc.) at the same time. Then, the decision making for these brand players to allocate limited time, resources, and efforts among these luxury hotel brands becomes interesting to explore. With the growing trend of creating more than two sub-brands in one brand segment by hotel firms (Wang & Chung, 2015), more studies about brand player need to be done in order to contribute new knowledge in hotel brand love.

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## **APPENDICES**

Both survey questionnaires and Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval are attached as followings.

## APPENDIX A.

### Survey Questionnaires

#### Section I.

1. Please choose **one** of the following hotel companies that you stay at most frequently for **leisure purposes**. Please choose **one** only.

Marriott International Inc. (e.g. JW Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, Renaissance, AC Hotels, Marriott, Courtyard, Springhill Suites, Fairfield Inn, Residence Inn, TownePlace Suites, Marriott Executive Apartments, Autograph Collection)

\*If Marriott is selected, the survey will continue to Part A and Part F

Hilton Worldwide (e.g. Waldorf Astoria, Hilton, Conrad, Hilton Grand Vacations, Double Tree, Embassy Suites, Hilton Garden Inn, Hampton Inn, Homewood Suites, Home2 Suites by Hilton)

\*If Hilton is selected, the survey will continue to Part B and Part F

InterContinental Hotels Group (e.g. InterContinental, Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Staybridge Suites, Candlewood Suites, Hotel Indigo)

\*If InterContinental Hotels Group is selected, the survey will continue to Part C and Part F

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. (e.g. W Hotel, Four Points, Westin, Luxury Collection, Sheraton Hotel, St Regis, element, Le Meridien, aloft Hotel)

\*If Starwood is selected, the survey will continue to Part D and Part F

Hyatt Hotels Corp. (e.g. Hyatt Place, Hyatt House, Hyatt, Park Hyatt, Grand Hyatt, Andaz)

\*If Hyatt is selected, the survey will continue to Part E and Part F

None of the above

\* If this option is selected, the survey will be finished directly, with the screen showing "Thank you for your participation!"

## Part A. Marriott International Inc.

### Section II.

1. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about Marriott International Inc.

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Neither agree or disagree
- 5 = Somewhat agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

	Strongly disagree	—————▶					Strongly agree
Marriott International Inc. is a wonderful hotel company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Marriott International Inc. makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I love Marriott International Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am passionate about Marriott International Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Are you a member of the Marriott Rewards program?

Yes, proximately for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

(If this is selected, the following items will be shown for the participant to answer.)

No. (If this is selected, the survey will skip the following three items to the next question.)

	Strongly disagree	—————▶					Strongly agree
I like the Marriott Rewards program more than other rewards programs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a strong preference for the Marriott Rewards program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would recommend the Marriott Rewards program to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Please choose one brand of Marriott International Inc. that you have **MOST FREQUENTLY USED FOR LEISURE PURPOSES** (Choose one only).

- Ritz-Carlton
- JW Marriott
- Autograph Collection
- Renaissance
- AC Hotels
- Marriott
- Courtyard
- Springhill Suites
- Fairfield Inn
- Residence Inn
- TownePlace Suites
- Marriott Executive Apartments

4. Approximately how much did you pay per night on your most recent stay at the hotel brand you chose above for leisure purposes?

- ≤ \$100
- \$101-\$150
- \$151-\$200
- \$201-\$250
- \$251-\$300
- ≥ \$300

5. In the past 12 months, approximately how many nights did you stay at the hotel brand you chose above for leisure purposes?

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9 or more

6. Think about the Marriott hotel brand you chose above and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This is a wonderful hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This hotel brand makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I love this hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am passionate about this hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Section III.**

7. Based on your **EXPECTATION before your recent stay** at this Marriott hotel brand you chose above, think about this Marriott hotel brand in particular, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I mentally felt close to this Marriott hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I had a comfortable relationship with this Marriott hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I really understood this Marriott hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I really could trust this Marriott hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this Marriott hotel brand does.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I would rather stay with this Marriott hotel brand than any other hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I adored this Marriott hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that my relationship with this Marriott hotel brand was passionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I was committed to maintaining my relationship with this Marriott hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I viewed my commitment to this Marriott hotel brand as a solid one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I viewed my relationship with this Marriott hotel brand as permanent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I planned to continue in my relationship with this Marriott hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Based on your **EXPERIENCE of your recent stay** at this Marriott hotel brand you chose above, think about this Marriott hotel brand in particular, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Marriott hotel brand, I mentally felt close to it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Marriott hotel brand, I had a comfortable relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Marriott hotel brand, I felt that I really understood it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Marriott hotel brand, I felt that I really could trust it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Marriott hotel brand, I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this hotel brand did.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



When I stayed at this Marriott hotel brand, I would rather stay with it than any other brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Marriott hotel brand, I adored it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Marriott hotel brand, my relationship with it was passionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Marriott hotel brand, I was committed to maintaining my relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Marriott hotel brand, I viewed my commitment to it as a solid one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Marriott hotel brand, I viewed my relationship with it as permanent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Marriott hotel brand, I planned to continue in my relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

#### Section IV.

9. Think about the Marriott hotel brand that you usually stay at for leisure purposes, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
My ideal self is very similar to the character of this Marriott hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staying at this Marriott hotel brand, I want to show the best of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not change anything about this Marriott hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This Marriott hotel brand reflects my ideal self.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like I have personal involvement with this Marriott hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel stronger about this Marriott hotel brand than other non-Marriott hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like my involvement with this Marriott hotel brand will last indefinitely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My involvement with this Marriott hotel brand is enduring.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. Think about the Marriott hotel brand that you usually stay at for leisure purposes, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
For my next trip, I will consider this Marriott hotel brand as my first choice, rather than other non-Marriott hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a strong intention to visit this Marriott hotel brand again in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will increase the frequency of my visits to this Marriott	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

hotel brand.							
I definitely would recommend this Marriott hotel brand to my close colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I definitely would say positive things to my close friends about this Marriott hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I definitely would suggest this Marriott hotel brand to my family members and relatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The price of this Marriott hotel brand would have to go up quite a bit before I would consider switching to other non-Marriott hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to pay a higher price for staying at this Marriott hotel brand than for other non-Marriott hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to pay a lot more for staying at this Marriott hotel brand than for other non-Marriott hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Part B. Hilton Worldwide

### Section II.

1. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about Hilton Worldwide.

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Neither agree or disagree
- 5 = Somewhat agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

	Strongly disagree		Strongly agree				
Hilton Worldwide is a wonderful hotel company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hilton Worldwide makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I love Hilton Worldwide.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am passionate about Hilton Worldwide.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Are you a member of the Hilton HHonors program?

Yes, proximately for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

(If this is selected, the following three items will be shown for the participant to answer.)

No. (If this is selected, the survey will skip the following three items to the next question.)

	Strongly disagree		Strongly agree				
I like the Hilton HHonors program more than other rewards programs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a strong preference for the Hilton HHonors program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would recommend the Hilton HHonors program to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Please choose one brand of Hilton Worldwide that you have **MOST FREQUENTLY USED FOR LEISURE PURPOSES** (Choose one only).

- Waldorf Astoria
- Conrad
- Hilton Grand Vacations
- Hilton
- Double Tree
- Embassy Suites
- Hilton Garden Inn
- Hampton Inn
- Homewood Suites
- Home2 Suites by Hilton

4. Approximately how much did you pay per night on your most recent stay at the hotel brand you chose above for leisure purposes?

- ≤ \$100
- \$101-\$150
- \$151-\$200
- \$201-\$250
- \$251-\$300
- ≥ \$300

5. In the past 12 months, approximately how many nights did you stay at the hotel brand you chose above for leisure purposes?

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9 or more

6. Think about the Hilton hotel brand you chose above and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This is a wonderful hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This hotel brand makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I love this hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am passionate about this hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Section III.

7. Based on your **EXPECTATION before your recent stay** at this Hilton hotel brand you chose above, think about this Hilton hotel brand in particular, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I mentally felt close to this Hilton hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I had a comfortable relationship with this Hilton hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I really understood this Hilton hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I really could trust this Hilton hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this Hilton hotel brand does.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I would rather stay with this Hilton hotel brand than any other hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I adored this Hilton hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that my relationship with this Hilton hotel brand was passionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I was committed to maintaining my relationship with this Hilton hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I viewed my commitment to this Hilton hotel brand as a solid one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I viewed my relationship with this Hilton hotel brand as permanent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I planned to continue in my relationship with this Hilton hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Based on your **EXPERIENCE of your recent stay** at this Hilton hotel brand you chose above, think about this Hilton hotel brand in particular, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hilton hotel brand, I mentally felt close to it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hilton hotel brand, I had a comfortable relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hilton hotel brand, I felt that I really understood it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hilton hotel brand, I felt that I really could trust it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hilton hotel brand, I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this hotel brand did.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hilton hotel brand, I would rather stay with it than any other brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

When I stayed at this Hilton hotel brand, I adored it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hilton hotel brand, my relationship with it was passionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hilton hotel brand, I was committed to maintaining my relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hilton hotel brand, I viewed my commitment to it as a solid one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hilton hotel brand, I viewed my relationship with it as permanent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hilton hotel brand, I planned to continue in my relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

#### Section IV.

9. Think about the Hilton hotel brand that you usually stay at for leisure purposes, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
My ideal self is very similar to the character of this Hilton hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staying at this Hilton hotel brand, I want to show the best of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not change anything about this Hilton hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This Hilton hotel brand reflects my ideal self.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like I have personal involvement with this Hilton hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel stronger about this Hilton hotel brand than other non-Hilton hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like my involvement with this Hilton hotel brand will last indefinitely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My involvement with this Hilton hotel brand is enduring.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. Think about the Hilton hotel brand that you usually stay at for leisure purposes, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
For my next trip, I will consider this Hilton hotel brand as my first choice, rather than other non-Hilton hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a strong intention to visit this Hilton hotel brand again in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will increase the frequency of my visits to this Hilton hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I definitely would recommend this Hilton hotel brand to my	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

close colleagues.							
I definitely would say positive things to my close friends about this Hilton hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I definitely would suggest this Hilton hotel brand to my family members and relatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The price of this Hilton hotel brand would have to go up quite a bit before I would consider switching to other non-Hilton hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to pay a higher price for staying at this Hilton hotel brand than for other non-Hilton hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to pay a lot more for staying at this Hilton hotel brand than for other non-Hilton hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Part C. InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG)

### Section II.

1. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about IHG.

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Neither agree or disagree
- 5 = Somewhat agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

	Strongly disagree	—————▶					Strongly agree
IHG is a wonderful hotel company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
IHG makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I love IHG.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am passionate about IHG.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Are you a member of the IHG Rewards Club program?

Yes, proximately for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

(If this is selected, the following three items will be shown for the participant to answer.)

No. (If this is selected, the survey will skip the following three items to the next question.)

	Strongly disagree	—————▶					Strongly agree
I like the IHG Rewards Club program more than other rewards programs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a strong preference for the IHG Rewards Club program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would recommend the IHG Rewards Club program to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



3. Please choose one brand of IHG that you have **MOST FREQUENTLY USED FOR LEISURE PURPOSES** (Choose one only).

- InterContinental
- Crowne Plaza
- Hotel Indigo
- Holiday Inn
- Holiday Inn Express
- Staybridge Suites
- Candlewood Suites

4. Approximately how much did you pay per night on your most recent stay at the hotel brand you chose above for leisure purposes?

- ≤ \$100
- \$101-\$150
- \$151-\$200
- \$201-\$250
- \$251-\$300
- ≥ \$300

5. In the past 12 months, approximately how many nights did you stay at the hotel brand you chose above for leisure purposes?

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9 or more

6. Think about the IHG hotel brand you chose above and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This is a wonderful hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This hotel brand makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I love this hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am passionate about this hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Section III.

7. Based on your **EXPECTATION before your recent stay** at this IHG hotel brand you

chose above, think about this IHG hotel brand in particular, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I mentally felt close to this IHG hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I had a comfortable relationship with this IHG hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I really understood this IHG hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I really could trust this IHG hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this IHG hotel brand does.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I would rather stay with this IHG hotel brand than any other hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I adored this IHG hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that my relationship with this IHG hotel brand was passionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I was committed to maintaining my relationship with this IHG hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I viewed my commitment to this IHG hotel brand as a solid one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I viewed my relationship with this IHG hotel brand as permanent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I planned to continue in my relationship with this IHG hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Based on your **EXPERIENCE of your recent stay** at this IHG hotel brand you chose above, think about this IHG hotel brand in particular, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this IHG hotel brand, I mentally felt close to it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this IHG hotel brand, I had a comfortable relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this IHG hotel brand, I felt that I really understood it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this IHG hotel brand, I felt that I really could trust it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this IHG hotel brand, I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this hotel brand did.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this IHG hotel brand, I would rather stay with it than any other brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this IHG hotel brand, I adored it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this IHG hotel brand, my relationship with it was passionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

When I stayed at this IHG hotel brand, I was committed to maintaining my relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this IHG hotel brand, I viewed my commitment to it as a solid one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this IHG hotel brand, I viewed my relationship with it as permanent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this IHG hotel brand, I planned to continue in my relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

#### Section IV.

9. Think about the IHG hotel brand that you usually stay at for leisure purposes, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
My ideal self is very similar to the character of this IHG hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staying at this IHG hotel brand, I want to show the best of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not change anything about this IHG hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This IHG hotel brand reflects my ideal self.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like I have personal involvement with this IHG hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel stronger about this IHG hotel brand than other non-IHG hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like my involvement with this IHG hotel brand will last indefinitely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My involvement with this IHG hotel brand is enduring.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. Think about the IHG hotel brand that you usually stay at for leisure purposes, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
For my next trip, I will consider this IHG hotel brand as my first choice, rather than other non-IHG hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a strong intention to visit this IHG hotel brand again in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will increase the frequency of my visits to this IHG hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I definitely would recommend this IHG hotel brand to my close colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I definitely would say positive things to my close friends about this IHG hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I definitely would suggest this IHG hotel brand to my family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

members and relatives.

The price of this IHG hotel brand would have to go up quite a bit before I would consider switching to other non-IHG hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to pay a higher price for staying at this IHG hotel brand than for other non-IHG hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to pay a lot more for staying at this IHG hotel brand than for other non-IHG hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Part D. Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc.

### Section II.

1. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc.

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Neither agree or disagree
- 5 = Somewhat agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

	Strongly disagree	—————▶					Strongly agree
Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. is a wonderful hotel company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I love Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am passionate about Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Are you a member of the Starwood Preferred Guest program?

Yes, proximately for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

(If this is selected, the following three items will be shown for the participant to answer.)

No. (If this is selected, the survey will skip the following three items to the next question.)

	Strongly disagree	—————▶					Strongly agree
I like the Starwood Preferred Guest program more than other rewards programs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a strong preference for the Starwood Preferred Guest program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would recommend the Starwood Preferred Guest program to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

others.

3. Please choose one brand of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. that you have **MOST FREQUENTLY USED FOR LEISURE PURPOSES** (Choose one only).

- Le Meridien
- aloft Hotel
- Four Points
- Westin
- Luxury Collection
- W Hotel
- Sheraton Hotel
- St Regis
- element

4. Approximately how much did you pay per night on your most recent stay at the hotel brand you chose above for leisure purposes?

- ≤ \$100
- \$101-\$150
- \$151-\$200
- \$201-\$250
- \$251-\$300
- ≥ \$300

5. In the past 12 months, approximately how many nights did you stay at the hotel brand you chose above for leisure purposes?

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9 or more

6. Think about the Starwood hotel brand you chose above and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			
This is a wonderful hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This hotel brand makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I love this hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am passionate about this hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Section III.

7. Based on your **EXPECTATION before your recent stay** at this Starwood hotel brand you chose above, think about this Starwood hotel brand in particular, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I mentally felt close to this Starwood hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I had a comfortable relationship with this Starwood hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I really understood this Starwood hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I really could trust this Starwood hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this Starwood hotel brand does.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I would rather stay with this Starwood hotel brand than any other hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I adored this Starwood hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that my relationship with this Starwood hotel brand was passionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I was committed to maintaining my relationship with this Starwood hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I viewed my commitment to this Starwood hotel brand as a solid one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I viewed my relationship with this Starwood hotel brand as permanent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I planned to continue in my relationship with this Starwood hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Based on your **EXPERIENCE of your recent stay** at this Starwood hotel brand you chose above, think about this Starwood hotel brand in particular, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Starwood hotel brand, I mentally felt close to it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Starwood hotel brand, I had a comfortable relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Starwood hotel brand, I felt that I really understood it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Starwood hotel brand, I felt that I really could trust it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Starwood hotel brand, I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this hotel brand did.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

When I stayed at this Starwood hotel brand, I would rather stay with it than any other brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Starwood hotel brand, I adored it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Starwood hotel brand, my relationship with it was passionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Starwood hotel brand, I was committed to maintaining my relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Starwood hotel brand, I viewed my commitment to it as a solid one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Starwood hotel brand, I viewed my relationship with it as permanent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Starwood hotel brand, I planned to continue in my relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

#### Section IV.

9. Think about the Starwood hotel brand that you usually stay at for leisure purposes, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
My ideal self is very similar to the character of this Starwood hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staying at this Starwood hotel brand, I want to show the best of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not change anything about this Starwood hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This Starwood hotel brand reflects my ideal self.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like I have personal involvement with this Starwood hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel stronger about this Starwood hotel brand than other non-Starwood hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like my involvement with this Starwood hotel brand will last indefinitely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My involvement with this Starwood hotel brand is enduring.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. Think about the Starwood hotel brand that you usually stay at for leisure purposes, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
For my next trip, I will consider this Starwood hotel brand as my first choice, rather than other non-Starwood hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a strong intention to visit this Starwood hotel brand again in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



I will increase the frequency of my visits to this Starwood hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I definitely would recommend this Starwood hotel brand to my close colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I definitely would say positive things to my close friends about this Starwood hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I definitely would suggest this Starwood hotel brand to my family members and relatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The price of this Starwood hotel brand would have to go up quite a bit before I would consider switching to other non-Starwood hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to pay a higher price for staying at this Starwood hotel brand than for other non-Starwood hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to pay a lot more for staying at this Starwood hotel brand than for other non-Starwood hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Part E. Hyatt Hotels Corp.

### Section II.

1. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about Hyatt Hotels Corp.

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Neither agree or disagree
- 5 = Somewhat agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

	Strongly disagree	—————▶	Strongly agree				
Hyatt Hotels Corp. is a wonderful hotel company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hyatt Hotels Corp. makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I love Hyatt Hotels Corp.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am passionate about Hyatt Hotels Corp.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Are you a member of the Hyatt Gold Passport program?

Yes, proximately for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

(If this is selected, the following three items will be shown for the participant to answer.)

No. (If this is selected, the survey will skip the following three items to the next question.)

	Strongly disagree	—————▶	Strongly agree				
I like the Hyatt Gold Passport program more than other rewards programs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a strong preference for the Hyatt Gold Passport program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would recommend the Hyatt Gold Passport program to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Please choose one brand of Hyatt Hotels Corp. that you have **MOST FREQUENTLY USED FOR LEISURE PURPOSES** (Choose one only).

- Andaz
- Hyatt Place
- Hyatt House
- Hyatt
- Park Hyatt
- Grand Hyatt

4. Approximately how much did you pay per night on your most recent stay at the hotel brand you chose above for leisure purposes?

- ≤ \$100
- \$101-\$150
- \$151-\$200
- \$201-\$250
- \$251-\$300
- ≥ \$300

5. In the past 12 months, approximately how many nights did you stay at the hotel brand you chose above for leisure purposes?

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9 or more

6. Think about the Hyatt hotel brand you chose above and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This is a wonderful hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This hotel brand makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I love this hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am passionate about this hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Section III.

7. Based on your **EXPECTATION before your recent stay** at this Hyatt hotel brand

you chose above, think about this Hyatt hotel brand in particular, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I mentally felt close to this Hyatt hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I had a comfortable relationship with this Hyatt hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I really understood this Hyatt hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I really could trust this Hyatt hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this Hyatt hotel brand does.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I would rather stay with this Hyatt hotel brand than any other hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I adored this Hyatt hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that my relationship with this Hyatt hotel brand was passionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I was committed to maintaining my relationship with this Hyatt hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I viewed my commitment to this Hyatt hotel brand as a solid one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I viewed my relationship with this Hyatt hotel brand as permanent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expected that I planned to continue in my relationship with this Hyatt hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Based on your **EXPERIENCE of your recent stay** at this Hyatt hotel brand you chose above, think about this Hyatt hotel brand in particular, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hyatt hotel brand, I mentally felt close to it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hyatt hotel brand, I had a comfortable relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hyatt hotel brand, I felt that I really understood it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hyatt hotel brand, I felt that I really could trust it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hyatt hotel brand, I could not imagine another hotel brand making me as happy as this hotel brand did.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hyatt hotel brand, I would rather stay with it than any other brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hyatt hotel brand, I adored it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hyatt hotel brand, my relationship with it was passionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

When I stayed at this Hyatt hotel brand, I was committed to maintaining my relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hyatt hotel brand, I viewed my commitment to it as a solid one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hyatt hotel brand, I viewed my relationship with it as permanent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I stayed at this Hyatt hotel brand, I planned to continue in my relationship with it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

#### Section IV.

9. Think about the Hyatt hotel brand that you usually stay at for leisure purposes, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My ideal self is very similar to the character of this Hyatt hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staying at this Hyatt hotel brand, I want to show the best of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not change anything about this Hyatt hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This Hyatt hotel brand reflects my ideal self.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like I have personal involvement with this Hyatt hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel stronger about this Hyatt hotel brand than other non-Hyatt hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like my involvement with this Hyatt hotel brand will last indefinitely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My involvement with this Hyatt hotel brand is enduring.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. Think about the Hyatt hotel brand that you usually stay at for leisure purposes, and indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree $\longrightarrow$ Strongly agree						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
For my next trip, I will consider this Hyatt hotel brand as my first choice, rather than other non-Hyatt hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a strong intention to visit this Hyatt hotel brand again in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will increase the frequency of my visits to this Hyatt hotel brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I definitely would recommend this Hyatt hotel brand to my close colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I definitely would say positive things to my close friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

about this Hyatt hotel brand.							
I definitely would suggest this Hyatt hotel brand to my family members and relatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The price of this Hyatt hotel brand would have to go up quite a bit before I would consider switching to other non-Hyatt hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to pay a higher price for staying at this Hyatt hotel brand than for other non-Hyatt hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to pay a lot more for staying at this Hyatt hotel brand than for other non-Hyatt hotel brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Part F. Respondents' Demographic Information

### Section V.

Please answer the following questions to provide information about yourself. The information will be used for research purposes only.

1. Please indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree			→	Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am concerned about the way I present myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I usually want to make a good impression on others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
One of the last things I do before I leave my house is look in the mirror.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am usually aware of my appearance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Your birth year:

- Before 1925
- 1925-1933
- 1934-1942
- 1943-1951
- 1952-1960
- 1961-1970
- 1971-1981
- 1982-1989
- 1990-1996

3. Your gender:

- Male
- Female

4. Your ethnic background:

- Caucasian
- African American
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Native American
- Other

5. Your marital status:
- Married
  - Single
  - Divorced
  - Widowed
6. Your annual household income:
- \$10,000 or less
  - \$10,001~\$29,999
  - \$30,000~\$49,999
  - \$50,000~\$79,999
  - \$80,000~\$99,999
  - \$100,000~\$149,999
  - \$150,000 or more
7. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- Some high school or less
  - High school diploma
  - Trade or technical school
  - Undergraduate college degree
  - Graduate college degree (Master's and/or Ph.D.)

***Thank you for your time and participation in this research!***



## APPENDIX B.

### Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

#### Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Wednesday, July 23, 2014  
IRB Application No: HE1452  
Proposal Title: Customer Brand Love for Hotel Brands

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 7/22/2017

Principal Investigator(s):

Yao-Chin Wang 12 N Univ Pl Apt 7 Stillwater, OK 74077	Hailin Qu 148 HES Stillwater, OK 74078
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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

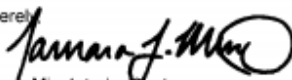
The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Tamara Mix, Interim Chair  
Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Monday, January 05, 2015 Protocol Expires: 7/22/2017  
IRB Application No: HE1452  
Proposal Title: Customer Brand Love for Hotel Brands

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt  
**Modification**

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) **Approved**

Principal Investigator(s):

Yao-Chin Wang	Hailin Qu
12 N Univ Pl Apt 7	148 HES
Stillwater, OK 74077	Stillwater, OK 74078

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The requested modification to this IRB protocol has been approved. Please note that the original expiration date of the protocol has not changed. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. All approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

The reviewer(s) had these comments:

Modification to add 12 items to the survey instrument. No increased risks.

Signature :



Hugh Crethar, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Monday, January 05, 2015  
Date

**VITA**

YAO-CHIN WANG

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: A THREE-COMPONENT TRIANGULAR THEORY OF HOTEL BRAND LOVE

Major Field: HUMAN SCIENCE

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Human Science at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July, 2015.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Business Administration in Human Resource Management at National Changhua University of Education, Changhua City, Taiwan in 2011.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Economics at National Chung Cheng University, Chiayi County, Taiwan in 2009.

Experience:

Ad Hoc Reviewer for *International Journal of Hospitality Management* (2014-Present), *Tourism Management* (2014- Present), *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Cases* (2014- Present), 2016 Winter Marketing Educators' Conference (AMA), 52nd Annual Society for Marketing Advances (SMA) Conference, 21st Asia Pacific Tourism Association (APTA) Annual Conference, and the World Conference on Hospitality, Tourism and Event Research (WHTER) & International Convention and Expo Summit (ICES) in 2013 and 2015.

Professional Memberships:

International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education