Tourism Management Perspectives

Engaging psychologically or behaviourally? A segmentation of the integrated resort customers

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Engaging psychologically or behaviourally?
A segmentation of the integrated resort customers

Running Head: A segmentation study by customer engagement

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Highlights

- Customers were clustered based on their cognitive, affective, and behavioural engagement
- Data were collected from integrated resort customers in Macau-China
- Four clusters were determined and named as the potential, non-engaged, total, and shallow engaged
- Customer loyalty differs based on customer engagement type and level

Engaging psychologically or behaviourally?

A segmentation of the integrated resort customers

Abstract

Academic studies that highlight the importance of customer engagement for sustaining organisational success have generally assumed that engaged customers are a homogenous market segment. This study provides an alternative scholarly perspective by reconsidering the multidimensionality of customer engagement and uses cognitive, affective, and behavioural elements to segment customers. A cluster analysis with data from 574 integrated resort customers in Macau, China supports the three-dimensional structure, and additional analyses show that customers can be segmented into *totally-engaged*, *shallowly-engaged*, *potentially-engaged*, and *non-engaged* groups based on their psychological investment (which consists of cognitive and emotional engagements) and behavioural engagement. The findings both address the dimensional structure of customer engagement in the market segmentation context and provide some valuable theoretical and market segment-related managerial implications.

Keywords: Customer engagement; market segmentation; integrated resort, Macau

1. Introduction

Over the last decade, studies have shown that customer engagement (CE) is an indicator of customer loyalty that determines business success better than other conventional constructs, such as customer satisfaction. As an evolving concept, CE has been extensively investigated from different perspectives in the marketing and tourism disciplines. The common characteristic of these studies is the assumption that engaged customers are a homogeneous group. However, there is clear research gap in the use of CE as a segmentation variable for

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identifying outwardly homogenous market segments, although some researchers have highlighted that customers show heterogeneity in engagement. For example, Rather et al. (2022) show that the engagement levels of first-time and repeat visitors of a destination are different, with the former being more cognitively engaged and the latter more emotionally engaged. So et al. (2021) identify differences in customer groups based on the intensity of their participation in CE-related activities in the airline, hotel, and tourism destination contexts.

Building on the research gaps in the tourism literature on CE, this study applies CE as a market segmentation variable by focusing on an under-researched area, namely integrated resorts. The research has three main objectives: (1) to cluster customers based on their psychological investment (which consists of cognitive and affective engagements) and behavioural engagement levels by adapting the approach of Chen et al. (2019); (2) to determine the group profiles; and (3) to clarify the differences among the identified market segments. By showing CE as a viable segmentation factor, the study provides a solution that addresses emerging issues related to effective segmentation in the tourism context. Integrated resorts are suitable research setting to achieve study objectives because they offer an accommodation experience endowed with a variety of entertainment or leisure activities (e.g. live shows, gaming, concerts, shopping, dining, spa, golf, and exhibitions). The wide range of services would easily attract local and international tourists with distinct characteristics, motivations, and behavioural approaches, thus facilitating segmentation of the market based on different criteria. The findings therefore have noteworthy theoretical and managerial implications, such as adding to the literature on CE, showing its utility as a criterion of market segmentation, and understanding the CE-related behaviours of integrated resort customers.

The paper is structured as follows: Sections 2 and 3 present the literature on CE and market segmentation, respectively, while Section 4 focuses on market segmentation through CE. Section 5 outlines the research method and provides an introduction on the research setting in

Macau, China. Section 6 summarises the study results. Section 7 discusses the findings and concludes the paper with implications, limitations, and further research avenues.

2. Customer engagement

As a strong determinant of customer loyalty, CE and its conceptualisation have attracted widespread interest from researchers. With this purpose, researchers have adopted both unidimensional and multidimensional approaches. The former mostly considers action-focused behaviour (So et al., 2020) while the latter involves both psychological and behavioural components to better explain for the complex nature of CE. Although researchers who adopt a multidimensional perspective use different factors to conceptualise CE, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components are widely adapted (Brodie et al., 2011). In line with the multidimensional approach, Hollebeek (2011, p.555) defines CE as "the level of a customer's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural investment in specific brand interactions".

Rooted in different types of conceptualisations and context dependent characteristics, CE has been examined in different contexts based on different theoretical frameworks, such as service-dominant logic, value co-creation, and relationship marketing. For example, by following the service-dominant logic, Rather (2020) demonstrates that the impacts of cognitive, affective, and behavioural engagements on behavioural intention are mediated by customer experience and identification. Li and Wei (2021) show the mediating role of CE between the servicescape (which consists of physical and social components) and customer citizenship behaviour in the hotel context. Moreover, they reveal that the effect of physical servicescape on customer citizenship behaviour via CE differs by gender. This implies that the nature of CE varies with customer segment. The mediating role of CE is also confirmed in the integrated resorts context by Ahn and Back (2018). Their study additionally shows that customer experience enhances

CE which leads to positive behavioural intentions. Moreover, they exhibit that the hypothesised relationships vary with gender, education, and income.

Recently, Hollebeek et al. (2022) conduct a comprehensive literature review to map the current body of knowledge related to CE. Their network analysis reveals five clusters that reflect the key CE research themes: CE measurement/methods; online CE; value-co-creating capacity of CE; conceptualisation of CE; and customer/consumer brand engagement. Ou et al. (2020) categorise CE-related studies into two distinctive groups: those at the horizontal level (i.e., focus is on the conceptualisation and dimensionality of CE) and those at the vertical level (i.e., focus on identifying the antecedents and consequences of CE). So et al. (2021) perform a systematic literature review that covers journals related to marketing/service and hospitality/tourism areas. In the former, published studies are categorised into four clusters as customer branding in the era of social media; dimensionality, antecedents, and consequences of CE; CE in value co-creation; and conceptual foundations of CE. In the latter, the studies focus on dimensionality, antecedents, and consequences of CE; customer relationship marketing and management to enhance CE; CE on social media; CE through value co-creation; and authenticity and destination sustainability through CE.

Since there are few studies that use CE as a market segmentation criterion, those who have reviewed the literature or categorised existing studies on CE have not yet identified a market segmentation theme. So et al. (2020) who identify the antecedents and consequences of CE through a literature review also note this issue. They call for research to determine whether customers who engage with brands/firms are homogenous or heterogeneous. Therefore, this study responds to the research gap by showing that CE is an effective segmentation variable.

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3. Market segmentation

Market segmentation has long been a subject of interest in the tourism literature as a means of identifying homogenous customer segments amongst a larger heterogenous group. There are two basic market segmentation approaches: priori and post-hoc segmentation (Dolnicar, 2004). The priori approach involves grouping the market through intuition, experience, and secondary data analysis without conducting primary market research and is often used by tourism marketers. On the other hand, the post-hoc approach uses empirical data to divide a market into groups based on the selected variables that define a specific target group and/or market segment. Tourism researchers often follow a post-hoc approach and use variables that segment the market and profile group characteristics. Market segmentation studies in tourism have mostly adopted traditional variables such as geographic (regions, neighbourhoods), socio-demographic (age, gender, social class) and psychographic (lifestyle, personality traits).

In the integrated resorts context, some studies have focused on specific market segments by using the socio-demographic characteristics of visitors. For example, Wan (2015) examines the accessibility of integrated resort facilities in Macau through interviews with 32 respondents with disability. In a similar vein, Mary et al. (2020) and Wan (2023) conduct qualitative research in Macau to investigate the physical constraints and perceived facilitators of older adults in accessing integrated resorts. Using a sample of domestic tourists in Malaysia, Ahn (2020) investigates the role of demographics on customer behaviours and attitudes toward integrated resort brands. His findings reveal that gender, age, income, and marital status impact the perceived spiritual, status, efficiency, aesthetic values, and behavioural intentions of customers. Moreover, personal satisfaction has a significant impact on brand loyalty among low-income and married customers.

Another group of studies compare the attitude and behaviour of different groups of customers. For example, So et al. (2012) compare the behaviours and undertaken activities of gaming and cultural heritage visitors in Macau. Their findings reveal that "light" cultural heritage visitors tend to stay at internationally branded integrated resorts versus "medium" and "dedicated" cultural heritage visitors, while the gaming and cultural heritage visitor market segments show no significant differences. McCartney (2020) examines customer satisfaction with casino and non-gaming attributes and group them by their demographics, satisfaction (overall and experience-based), and revisit intentions in a sample of integrated resorts on the Cotai Strip in Macau. Song et al. (2021) conduct a choice experiment on South Korean tourists who stay at casino-based resorts and compare the preferences of casino users and non-users. In general, casino tourists place importance on the range of facilities in the integrated resorts. Furthermore, casino users have a greater preference for free casino admission compared to non-casino users. Apart from these few studies, there has been a significant gap in the literature hitherto, regarding the segmentation of integrated resort customers using different criteria. More scholarly work is therefore needed to identify the different customer groups with the use of behavioural variables (e.g., CE) in this research setting.

4. Market segmentation through customer engagement

As one of the few scholars who have examined the CE-market segmentation relationship, Brodie et al. (2011) argue that customers can be grouped by their CE level, which ranges from low to high engagement. They further suggest that the customers can be classified as non-engaged, marginally engaged, engaged, and highly engaged groups based on their intensity of engagement. By following this perspective, Chen at al. (2019) use psychological and behavioural investments of customers to define four levels of CE. They state that psychological investment reflects the cognitive and emotional engagements of the customers with the object

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(e.g., firm), while behavioural investment refers to the objective resource allocations of customers in object-related interaction (e.g., time, money, energy). They argue that customers may follow an emotional or rational route from the non-engagement to total engagement level, while their psychological and behavioural investment levels toward an object can be different. This approach shows consistency with the three-dimensional structure of CE (cognitive, affective, and behavioural). Accordingly, Chen et al. (2019) define four levels of engagement: non-engagement, potential engagement, shallow engagement, and total engagement, by cross-referencing behavioural investment with psychological investment at both low and high levels (Figure 1).

*** Please insert Figure 1. here

Although Chen et al. (2019) offer a conceptual segmentation approach based on the CE level of customers, there is still a strong need to empirically validate this perspective. This study adapts their conceptual CE level matrix to segment customers based on their psychological investment (which involves both cognitive and emotional engagements) and behavioural engagement levels.

To the authors' best knowledge, CE has been used as a market segmentation variable only in the So et al.'s (2021) study, in which the association between customer profile and participation in engagement-related activities is examined. Hence, the lack of empirical studies that use CE as a segmentation criterion is considered a knowledge gap in the literature. This study, therefore, tests the validity of Chen et al.'s (2019) conceptual model and enlarges the empirical studies that use CE as a segmentation variable.

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5. Method

5.1. Research setting: Macau

A case study approach is used in this study and Macau, China is selected as the research setting. Macau has become a globally recognised tourism destination following a strategic restructuring policy that aims to jointly develop the gaming industry and other sectors such as tourism, thus facilitating an "integrated resort" model (Macao SAR Government Portal, 2007). Today, it is a destination renowned for its world-class integrated resorts, such as Venetian Macau, Galaxy Entertainment Resort, and Macau Studio City. The integrated resorts include "gaming (i.e., casino) and non-gaming elements (i.e., convention/exhibition centres, mixed-use tourist accommodation units, food and beverage outlets, retail shopping malls, and entertainment such as cinemas and night clubs)" (Lei et al., 2017). Therefore, they successfully combine their casino business with other non-gaming facilities. This unique characteristic means that integrated resorts have more potential to attract different customer segments compared to hotels that only offer casino or holiday experiences, as they have the capacity to offer a wider range of services and activities. Integrated resorts are therefore a suitable context to examine CE in which market segment-based differences play an important role.

5.2. Measures and data collection

Validated scales were used to measure the research constructs. The CE construct was examined by using 10 items adapted from Li (2021), while customer loyalty was measured by using four items derived from Gao and Lai (2015). A seven-point Likert type scale that ranges from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree) was used to measure the scale items. In addition, six demographic and two trip related questions were included in the questionnaire (Appendix 1). The English drafted questionnaire was translated into Chinese for the data collection. Back-translation was subsequently done to ensure semantic equivalence.

The data were collected via Tencent survey platform. This online platform has been widely used to collect data from the Mainland Chinese (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2022; Tian et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2023) who are the primary customers of Macau integrated resorts and hence the target population of this study. Only respondents who have stayed in one of the integrated resorts in Macau were eligible to complete the survey. Moreover, the respondents had to be 18 or older. Although 591 respondents were recruited, 574 data were used for the analysis after excluding 17 that contained straight-liners.

5.3. Data analysis

Before the analysis was conducted, skewness and kurtosis statistics of the items were used to evaluate the normality assumption of the data. As the skewness and kurtosis values were between the commonly accepted threshold of ± 2 and ± 7 respectively (Appendix 2), the data were normally distributed (Hair et al., 2014). The data were analysed in five steps. First, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were clarified. Then, the dimensions of CE were determined by using the principal component analysis. Thirdly, a K-means cluster analysis was performed by using the obtained factors and its results were validated by using a discriminant analysis. Lastly, demographic and trip related characteristics of the clusters were compared by using chi-square tests.

6. Results

6.1. Sample characteristics

As shown in Table 1, slightly more than half of the respondents are female (51.6%) and between 30 and 39 years old (52.3%). Most of them are married (64.1%) and employed full-time (71.8%). Moreover, the participants are well educated, with 68.1% having a Bachelor's degree and 11.7% holding a postgraduate degree. A large majority of the respondents (85.9%) travel for leisure purposes and do not gamble (70.9%).

***Please insert Table 1. here

6.2. Dimensions of customer engagement

The principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was performed on 10 items to identify the underlying dimensions of CE. After dropping an item due to low communality, a three-factor solution that accounts for 73.30% of the variance was obtained. Based on the related literature, the factors were labelled as cognitive, affective, and behavioural engagement. The Cronbach's alpha value of the factors ranged between .761 and .850 which is higher than the commonly accepted threshold value of .700. The factor loadings, means, explained variances, and Cronbach's alpha values are shown in Table 2.

***Please insert Table 2. here

6.3. Cluster analysis

A cluster analysis that uses three CE factors was performed to segment the total sample into homogeneous sub-segments. A series of non-hierarchical K-means cluster analyses, as well as inspection of the dendrogram revealed that a four-cluster solution was appropriate. In addition, a series of variance analyses were conducted to understand whether the dimensions of CE differentiate the obtained clusters. The results of the variance analyses and post-hoc Scheffe tests revealed that there were significant differences between the clusters (Table 3).

By following Chen at al.'s (2019) theoretical classification, psychological investment of the respondents (i.e., engagement), which consists of cognitive and affective components (Carlson & Frone, 2003) was calculated (Table 3). Then, the obtained clusters were labelled as *totally-engaged*, *shallowly-engaged*, *potentially-engaged*, and *non-engaged*, respectively. Table 3 also reports customer loyalty (i.e., the average of the four items) of the identified clusters.

***Please insert Table 3. here

In order to validate the cluster analysis results (Hair et al., 2014, p.238), a discriminant analysis was performed by using four clusters and three CE factors. As shown in Table 4, three discriminant functions are extracted, while Function 1 explains for 85.9% of the variance. A Wilks' lambda test indicates that the variables significantly contribute to the discriminant functions. Moreover, the statistically significant canonical correlations show that the model explains the relationship between the dependent variable and discriminant functions. Cluster formations are also supported by a 97.2% classification accuracy in total. More specifically, Clusters 1 (96.5%), 2 (99.1%), 3 (99.1%), and 4 (92.8%) are properly classified under the groups that represent their characteristics. In a nutshell, the reliability and validity of the four-cluster structure are supported.

***Please insert Table 4. here

6.4. Characteristics of customer groups

The customer groups, which are identified through a cluster analysis, were further investigated based on their socio-demographic, travel- and engagement-related characteristics. As shown in Table 5, there are significant differences among the socio-demographics and travel-related preferences of the group members.

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Customers who are labelled as *totally-engaged* constitute 36.9% of the total sample. Predominantly, these are married males who are between 30 and 39 years old. They typically have a Bachelor's degree and are working as full-time employees. They are mainly motivated to visit integrated resorts for leisure purposes. In addition, these customers have the highest cognitive and affective engagement levels, reflecting their psychological investment. Furthermore, they show the highest behavioural engagement and customer loyalty. In summary, the *totally-engaged* customer group represents the resort guests, who are fully engaged and

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psychologically invested in the integrated resort that they visit. They are the most valuable and important market segment since they show dedicated behaviours towards the company.

The second segment, who are labelled *shallowly-engaged* customers, comprises visitors who have socio-demographic differences from the *totally-engaged* group. For instance, a significant majority of this segment are middle-aged married females. Most of them hold a Bachelor's degree and work full-time. Their average monthly incomes are comparatively higher than all other groups and their travel motivations lean more towards leisure than casino gambling. Compared to other groups, higher percentage of customers travel by business purpose (16.5%). Interestingly, while this group tends to travel for leisure, they are also the most motivated to participate in casino gaming compared to the other groups. As for their engagement-related behaviours, the *shallowly-engaged* customers show less cognitive engagement relative to affective and behavioural engagements. They are seemingly more influenced by their psychological bond with an integrated resort than logical reasoning. This means, by definition, their engagement is shallow. Their behaviours can easily fluctuate depending on whether their emotional aspects are positively or negatively impacted. However, *shallowly-engaged* customers are the second most important market segment of integrated hotels, as they have the second highest mean value (5.74) in terms of loyalty.

The group of *potentially-engaged* customers is almost evenly gender-distributed and shares similar socio-demographic traits (such as age, education level, and occupation) as those of the *shallowly-engaged* customers. Within this group, university students form a minor subset, making up 10.6% of these customers, while full-time workers constitute the majority. Although 27.5% of the group members are motivated by casino gambling, the majority do not appear to be keen to gamble (72.5%). Leisure is the main travel purpose for this customer group. Their cognitive and affective engagements, which reflect their psychological investment, are high, akin to those of *totally-engaged* customers. Therefore, they have immense potential to be

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totally-engaged customers, supported by the fact that their psychological investment, in general, is also high. Despite showing relatively low levels of behavioural engagement, they can potentially become brand advocates and actively engaged guests. Since their loyalty is high, they have the potential to become valuable customers of integrated resorts.

The fourth group who named as the *non-engaged* customers, shows a relatively equal gender distribution and tends to be younger than the other customer cohorts. Like the others, their motivation to travel is predominantly leisure oriented, and they show a lack of interest in casino gambling. However, unlike the other groups, this group accounts for the highest percentage of unmarried individuals. Compared to the other groups, they have the largest percentage of those with a high school/lower level of education (10.1%) and vocational/higher levels of education (20.2%). The majority (63.3%) work full-time and are employed across various business sectors. The average monthly income of 45.9% of these customers is less than 1,400 USD. The reason they are labelled as non-engaged is because they show the lowest cognitive, affective, and behavioural engagements. They do not engage with integrated resorts and show no signs of psychological investment towards these companies or their brands. These are also customers with the least loyalty and in this respect, their likelihood of being loyal and engaged customers is limited.

Following the identification of the customer groups and given their main characteristics, a matrix is developed by using psychological and behavioural investment values as the x and y coordinates, respectively, to visually show their differences. The matrix is divided into four quadrants by using the total means of psychological and behavioural investments (Figure 2).

*** Please insert Figure 2. here

As shown in Figure 2, the results clearly lend support to the classification of Chen at al. (2019). According to the cluster analysis and matrix visualisation, the *totally-engaged* customers are

the most psychologically and behaviourally invested in the companies that they like. Therefore, the levels of both the psychological and active dedication of these customers are the highest. The *shallowly-engaged* customers have high behavioural tendency towards the integrated resorts. However, their psychological tendency is comparatively lower than those of the *totally-engaged* customers. While the *potentially-engaged* customers are at the cusp of becoming *totally-engaged* customers, they are not fully dedicated to the companies and their brands in terms of behavioural investments. Lastly, the *non-engaged* customers, who have the lowest subjective psychological and behavioural investments in integrated resorts, are not expected to have any engagement potential or long-term customer value. This customer group may move into a different category with business strategies that have a high cost and put forth much effort, but the extent to which they are engaged in return for these efforts is unclear. All these and other issues will be discussed in the following sections.

7. Discussion

This research is conducted in Macau which is not often used as the research setting for examining CE, although it is one of the most popular casino and gaming destinations in the world. Integrated resorts in Macau are among the most suitable facilities to investigate CE-related behaviours. These resorts are called "integrated" to emphasise the all-in-one concept and the wide range of services/activities offered, which increase the engagement of their customers and connect them to both the company and its brand. The core assets of integrated resorts are essentially based on a wealth of diverse, luxurious, and unique services or activities, and customers are driven by expectations of having memorable experiences. The results of the current study confirm that most Chinese customers visit integrated resorts for leisure purposes rather than casino gaming, since only 29.1% stated that they gambled. Since the primary motivation to visit is leisure, it can be concluded that the customers might have been attracted

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by the richness and the vibe of these accommodation facilities. Tourists are motivated by different activities that are offered by a resort (Legohérel et al., 2012). Thus, creating a service environment that provides high-quality attractions in different areas of the hotel besides casino gaming such as theme parks, conventions, galleries, and performances is essential for the success of integrated resorts (Sun-Young & Gil-Soo, 2023).

In market segmentation research, activities have been widely used to differentiate customer groups (Eusébio et al. 2017; Finsterwalder & Laesser, 2013; Pesonen & Tuohino, 2017), because they are observable traits and can easily be identified by the practitioners. However, participation in the activities does not reflect the deeply rooted psychological states. In this regard, CE should be a viable option as shown in this study. The different levels of behavioural and psychological investments in a relationship with the resort brand enable the segmentation of customers. In this respect, the results contribute to the literature on CE by highlighting the importance of diversity in offerings to enable CE and suggesting CE as a market segmentation variable.

8. Theoretical and managerial implications

To obtain homogeneous and distinct market segments, the selection of the segmentation variables is a crucial task. This study investigates whether customers can be segmented based on their engagement which consists of voluntary psychological and behavioural investments in a company or its brand. Although a number of studies have shown CE as a promising variable, to the best of our knowledge, only So et al. (2021) have used CE for market segmentation. The findings of this study contribute to a better understanding of CE and using CE as a segmentation variable in a unique hospitality context, namely integrated resorts. According to the cluster analysis results, integrated resort customers represent a heterogeneous market that consists of those who have a relatively similar demographic profile, but significantly different behavioural

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tendencies. In addition, by following the classification of Chen et al. (2019), cognitive and affective engagements are merged as the psychological investment of the customers, whereas behavioural engagement is used as their behavioural investment.

Based on the psychological and behavioural investment levels, the obtained clusters are labelled as the *potentially-engaged*, *non-engaged*, *totally-engaged*, and *shallowly-engaged.* The *totally-engaged* customers have higher psychological and behavioural investments than the other groups of customers. This infers that the *totally-engaged* customers perceive themselves as both psychologically and behaviourally connected to brands or companies. The *potentially-engaged* customers have higher psychological investment than behavioural investment in a company, while the opposite is observed for *shallowly-engaged* customers. The psychological and behavioural investment levels of *non-engaged* customers are low. The findings are in agreement with those in the related literature and previous studies in terms of the multidimensionality of the CE construct (e.g., Brodie et al., 2011) and its relationship with the psychological and behavioural investments of customers.

Given the ambiguity in association between CE and loyalty (Li et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021), the results in this study provide a better understanding of this relationship by showing that customer loyalty differs based on type (i.e., psychological vs behavioural) and level (i.e., high vs low) of CE. This finding supports and enhances previous research and assumes that CE enhances customer loyalty (Brodie et al., 2013). Furthermore, considering the context dependent characteristics of CE, this study extends the literature by investigating CE in integrated resorts, which has been scarcely used as a research setting. In this way, CE behaviour has been evaluated in a new service area. Although the engagement of the customers in the integrated resorts might not be very high, the largest cluster of customers are shown to be fully engaged (36.9%). This indicates that more work on CE is needed to understand domain-specific customer behaviours.

This case study offers important managerial implications for integrated resorts, specifically in Macau which is one of the largest gaming destinations in the world. The findings show that *totally-engaged* customers tend to be married males who are between 30-39 years old with more education and full-time job. The integrated resorts are recommended to prioritise their marketing efforts to target customers with these characteristics given their high loyalty. The *shallowly-engaged* segment is also worthwhile of further examination, given that the loyalty level is the second highest. These customers have a higher salary and are more likely to gamble. The casino marketing team should devote more resources to this segment of customers.

The *potentially-engaged* customers are also a valuable segment for integrated resorts given their high psychological investments. Their characteristics are similar to their *totally-engaged* counterparts but this segment tends to have more female customers. The findings infer that even if female customers are highly engaged with the integrated resorts cognitively and emotionally, their behavioural engagement is not equally as high. As such, integrated resorts might wish to encourage female customers to spread positive word-of-mouth and visit the resort again. On the other hand, *non-engaged* customers tend to be young and single, with a low income. These customers may be variety-seekers, therefore, it is difficult for integrated resorts to engage them. Investment in this segment may not be cost-effective given their low engagement and income. These customers should not be prioritised by integrated resort marketers.

Nevertheless, these managerial implications, although useful, are only relevant to Mainland Chinese customers. Therefore, integrated resorts in Las Vegas, Singapore, South Korea, the Philippines, and others are recommended to consider these implications when they are developing marketing plans that target tourists from Mainland China.

The above implications should be taken into consideration with some unavoidable limitations. First, integrated resorts are a unique context that offers a combination of casino and non-casino

services. Therefore, the findings should be applied with caution to other types of resorts (e.g. spa, ski, holiday) or hotel categories. Secondly, the vast majority of the sample in the study is under 40 years old, so the implications may not accurately represent the population in China. This problem is due to the fact that potential respondents of Tencent Survey tend to be young – over 80% of the subject pool is under 40 – (Tencent Survey, 2022). Future studies are recommended to collect data on platforms with older potential respondents or recruit respondents on site so that more mature individuals can be identified and solicited. Thirdly, cultural differences are not addressed in this study since the data are only collected from Chinese participants. Therefore, future research is recommended to confirm the findings with samples from other cultures. Cultural comparisons can also be a potential avenue for future research work.

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Appendix 1. English Questionnaire

Are you 18 years old or above?
○ Yes
○ No [End of survey]

Have you stayed in any integrated resort in Macau?
○ Yes
○ No [End of survey]

Please indicate your responses to the following items based on your staying experience in the integrated resort you indicated above. (1 = strongly disagree ... 4 = neither agree nor disagree ... 7 = strongly agree)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staying at this integrated resort gets me to think about it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I think about this integrated resort a lot when I am staying at it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Staying at this integrated resort stimulates my interest to learn more about the brand.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel very positive when I stay at this integrated resort.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Staying at this integrated resort makes me happy.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel good when I stay at this integrated resort.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am proud to stay at this integrated resort.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I spend a lot of time staying at this brand compared to other integrated resort brands.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Whenever I am staying at an integrated resort, I will give priority to this brand.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This is one of the brands I will choose when I stay at an integrated resort.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will share my experience about this integrated resort with others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will make positive comment(s) about this integrated resort.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will recommend this integrated resort to others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will plan to revisit this integrated resort (when visiting Macau next time).	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

What is the purpose of visiting Macau in that trip?
○ Leisure
○ Business
○ Gaming
○ Other, please specify _____

Have you participated in casino gaming in that trip?
○ Yes
○ No

What is your current employment status?
○ Full-time
○ Part-time
○ Employer/Self employed
○ Retired
○ Housewife
○ Student
○ Unemployed
○ Others, please specify _____

What is your highest education level?
○ Primary school or below
○ High school
○ Vocational/Higher education
○ Bachelor's degree
○ Postgraduate degree
○ Others, please specify _____

What is your current marital status?
○ Single
○ Married
○ Divorced
○ Widowed
○ Others, please specify _____

What is your family monthly income (Chinese Yuan)?
○ Below 10,000
○ 10,000-19,999
○ 20,000-29,999
○ 30,000 and above

How old are you?
○ 18 - 29
○ 30 - 39
○ 40 - 49
○ 50 or above

What is your gender?
○ Male
○ Female

Appendix 2. Descriptive statistics of research items

	Mean (SD)	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
Staying at this integrated resort makes me think about it.	5.21 (1.211)	-.672	.102	.264	.204
I think about this integrated resort a lot during my stay.	5.06 (1.354)	-.705	.102	.048	.204
Staying at this integrated resort stimulates my interest in learning more about the brand.	5.36 (1.332)	-.815	.102	.134	.204
I feel very positive when I stay at this integrated resort.	5.67 (1.009)	-.810	.102	.583	.204
Staying at this integrated resort makes me happy.	5.94 (.910)	-1.133	.102	2.252	.204
I feel good when I stay at this integrated resort.	5.98 (.844)	-1.069	.102	2.365	.204
I am proud to stay at this integrated resort.	5.11 (1.258)	-.384	.102	-.377	.204
I spend a lot of time staying at this brand compared to other integrated resort brands.	5.13 (1.270)	-.445	.102	-.259	.204
Whenever I am staying at an integrated resort, I will give priority to this brand.	5.35 (1.207)	-.656	.102	-.049	.204
This brand is one of the integrated resort brands I will choose when I stay at an integrated resort.	5.67 (1.019)	-.786	.102	.446	.204

Figure 1

		Low	High
Psychological investment	High	Potential engagement	Total engagement
	Low	Non-engagement	Shallow engagement

Low   High

Behavioural investment

Figure 1. Chen et al.'s (2019) CE segmentation matrix

Figure 2
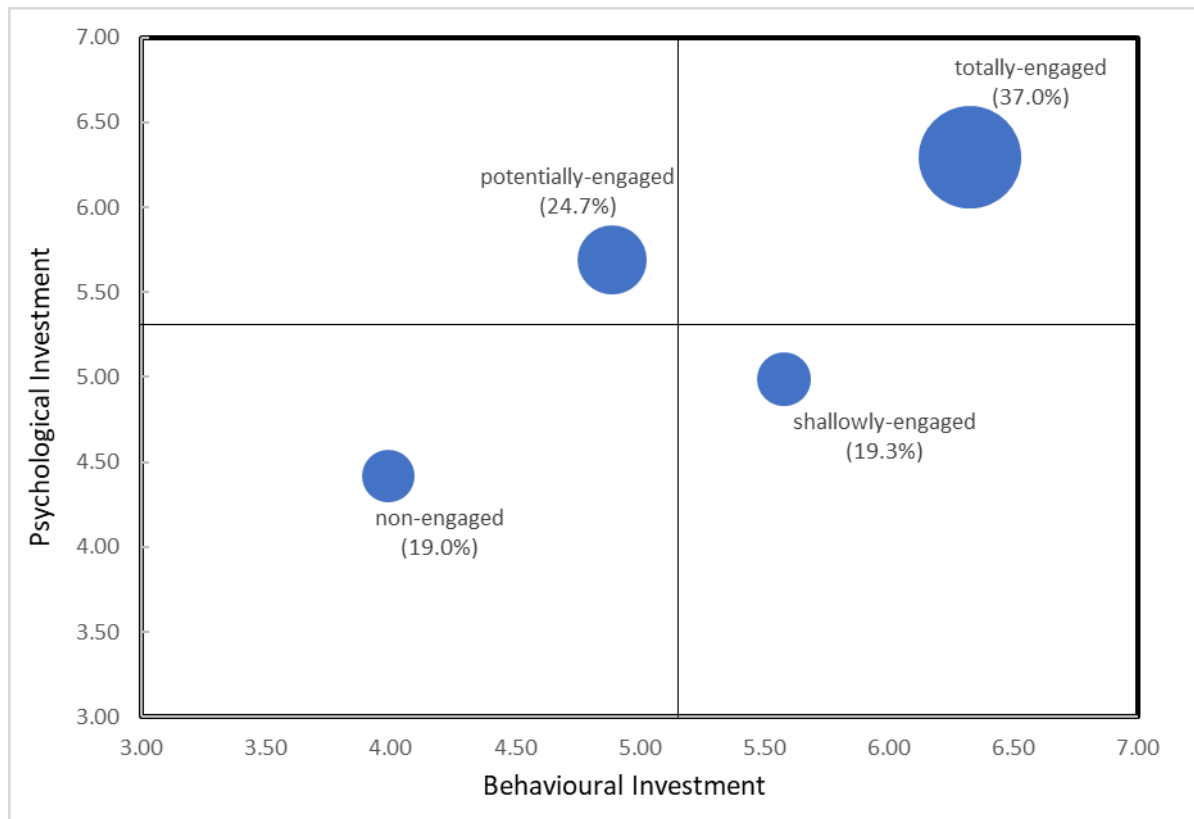
Figure 2. Segmentation matrix

Table 1

Table 1. Sample characteristics (N= 574)

	Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	278	48.4
	Female	296	51.6
Age	29 and below	172	30.0
	30-39	300	52.3
	40-49	73	12.7
	50 and above	29	5.1
Marital status	Single	193	33.6
	Married	368	64.1
	Other	13	2.3
Education	High school or below	42	7.3
	Vocational/Higher ed.	74	12.9
	Bachelor's degree	391	68.1
	Postgraduate degree	67	11.7
Employment	Full-time worker	412	71.8
	Part-time worker	27	4.7
	Employer/Self employed	40	7.0
	Student	45	7.8
	Other	50	8.7
Family monthly income (USD)	Below 1,400	202	35.2
	1,400-2,800	164	28.6
	2,801-4,200	112	19.5
	4,201 and above	96	16.7
Casino gambling	Yes	167	29.1
	No	407	70.9
Purpose of visit	Leisure	493	85.9
	Business	65	11.3
	Gambling	14	2.4
	Other	2	.3

Table 2

Table 2. Dimensions of customer engagement

Dimensions/Items	FL	Means	VE (%)	α
Cognitive engagement		5.20	26.21	.761
Staying at this integrated resort gets me to think about it.	.808			
I think about this integrated resort a lot when I am staying at it.	.847			
Staying at this integrated resort stimulates my interest to learn more about the brand.	.590			
Affective engagement		5.86	24.38	.798
I feel very positive when I stay at this integrated resort.	.639			
Staying at this integrated resort makes me happy.	.834			
I feel good when I stay at this integrated resort.	.833			
Behavioural engagement		5.38	22.70	.850
I will spend a lot of time staying at the brand compared with other integrated resort brands.	.799			
Whenever I am staying at an integrated resort, I will give preference to this brand.	.858			
This is one of the brands I will choose when I stay at an integrated resort.	.780			

Total variance explained 73.30%; KMO = .874; Bartlett's test of sphericity = 2425.88 (p < .001); FL: factor loading; VE: variance explained.

Table 3

Table 3. Comparison of engagement levels of the clusters

	Cluster 1 *Totally-engaged* (n=212;36.9%)	Cluster 2 *Shallowly-engaged* (n=111;9.4%)	Cluster 3 *Potentially-engaged* (n=142;24.7%)	Cluster 4 *Non-engaged* (n=109;19.0%)	F value
Cognitive engagement	6.13	4.25	5.46	4.03	392.96*
Affective engagement	6.45	5.71	5.91	4.80	252.29*
Behavioural engagement	6.32	5.57	4.89	3.99	502.66*
Psychological investment	6.29	4.98	5.68	4.42	595.40*
Customer loyalty	6.34	5.74	5.58	4.80	179.73*

* $p < .001$

Table 4

Table 4. Discriminant analysis results

Function	Eigenvalue	Variance explained	Canonical correlation	Wilks' lambda	Chi-square
1	4.647	85.9	.907	.099	1316.78*
2	.722	13.4	.648	.559	330.91*
3	.038	.7	.192	.963	21.38*
Discriminant loading			Function 1	Function 2	Function 3
Cognitive engagement			.493	.810	-.354
Affective engagement			.486	.050	.874
Behavioural engagement			.620	-.723	-.346

* $p<.001$

Table 5

Table 5. Socio-demographic and travel-related characteristics of the group members

Profile	Totally-engaged	Shallowly-engaged	Potentially-engaged	Non-engaged	Chi-square
Gender					
Male	52.4	43.2	46.5	48.6	2.724 (ns)
Female	47.6	56.8	53.5	51.4	
Age					
29 and below	20.8	34.2	34.5	37.6	18.748**
30-39	59.4	46.8	50.7	45.9	
40-49	16.0	11.7	10.6	10.1	
50 and above	3.8	7.2	4.2	6.4	
Marital status					
Single	21.2	36.9	38.7	47.7	27.735*
Married	76.9	60.4	59.2	49.5	
Other	1.9	2.7	2.1	2.8	
Education					
High school or below	6.6	7.2	6.3	10.1	15.352***
Vocational/Higher ed.	9.9	14.4	10.6	20.2	
Bachelor's degree	67.5	70.3	72.5	61.5	
Postgraduate degree	16.0	8.1	10.6	8.3	
Employment					
Full-time worker	64.0	78.8	73.9	63.3	28.292*
Part-time worker	9.0	2.4	2.1	8.3	
Employer/Self employed	5.4	8.5	5.6	7.3	
Student	10.8	4.7	10.6	7.3	
Other	10.8	5.7	7.7	13.8	
Family monthly income (USD)					
Below 1,400	41.1	24.5	38.0	45.9	38.070*
1,400-2,800	35.1	27.8	27.5	24.8	
2,801-4,200	15.3	21.7	23.9	13.8	
4,201 and above	8.1	25.9	10.6	15.6	
Casino gambling					
Yes	19.8	35.8	27.5	27.5	9.630**
No	80.2	64.2	72.5	72.5	
Purpose of visit					
Leisure	89.2	80.2	90.0	89.9	11.438***
Business	9.9	16.5	7.9	7.3	
Gambling	0.9	3.3	2.1	2.8	

* p< .01; ** p< .05; *** p< .10

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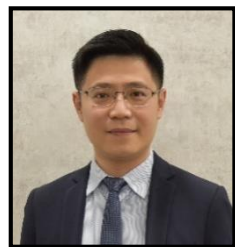
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