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Exploring emotional traces in families' recollection of experiences

A study based on luxury hotel reviews

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Purpose

From experiences recollections, this study aims at exploring the place of emotions in the souvenir's step of the family consumption process of luxury hotels stays.

Methodology

In order to explore the emotional dimension, this exploratory research is based on a triple qualitative approach (software, manual and a psychology-based approach). 1055 e-reviews, following a family stay in 4 and 5-star hotels, were collected.

Findings

The findings highlight an omnipresent emotional dimension in the recollections of experiences of consumers who have travelled with their families. These emotional traces differ according to the hotel's positioning. Overall, positive emotions are much more prominent in the most luxurious hotels while negative emotions are more related to the 4-star hotels. Moreover, the 4-star hotels reviews mainly associate emotions with the tangible aspects of the offer. Those in 5-star hotels are more structured through intangible aspects.

Research limitations/implications

The study of family decision-making dynamic with a focus on the role of each family member is a first perspective. That of experiences recollections apart from the digital approach is also to be considered.

Practical implications

On the one hand, the objective is to extend literature about the role of emotions in a service consumption process, and especially in a family context, trying to understand the post-purchase step of these customers. On the other hand, it is interesting for hotel managers to identify to which aspects of the offer (e.g. comfort, room, catering, decoration) the emotional traces that have remained in the customers' memory are associated.

Originality

This work considers the family unit in a new way, that of its emotional memories' traces of luxury hotels experiences. The post-consumer stage of the purchase process based on many spontaneous online reviews analysis is investigated.

Key-words:

Recollections of experience, emotion, experience, family, children, souvenirs, hotels, luxury

Introduction

“Hippolyte the rabbit awaits your children to take them on a real adventure: a welcome package on arrival, cat-shaped cookies, a mini bathrobe... Everything has been arranged to ensure that children enjoy their stay at Le Bristol!”^{vi} This promotional strategy of Hotel Le Bristol Paris, which makes use of several service innovations, is designed to adapt and live up to families’ expectations. The quotation above reflects a managerial reality based on evolving tourist expectations regarding experiences in which emotional content plays a central role and is, in fact, counted on; this is particularly true in the context of family holidays (Huff and Cotte, 2016), and many resorts and tourist attractions focus primarily on families. Household consumption has often been studied in literature with respect to the influence of group members before or during a holiday (e.g. Kang *et al.*, 2003; Rojas-de-Gracia *et al.*, 2017). However, little research has examined the post-holiday stage of family experiences, either with or without children (Beerli-Palacio and Martín-Santana, 2017). Moreover, there is a lack of work regarding the place of emotions in the recollection of experiences (Tung and Ritchie, 2011; Sthapit and Björk, 2017). This stage has been studied very little (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1999), particularly in the luxury sector, where emotion forms an integral part of the purchasing process (Kim *et al.*, 2016). The consumption of this type of service, which is by nature experiential and emotional, is not easy for the individual to review upstream (Bronner and de Hoog, 2018). Few studies have examined the effects of family members as fellow travellers (i.e. companions) on a consumer experience (e.g. Hanks *et al.*, 2017); recently, the work of Merrilees and Miller (2019) highlighted an increase in positive emotions when a customer is accompanied by his or her family. However, the literature does not address the emotions felt during a family service experience and, in particular, the traces that remain in their memory concerning these emotions. Yet, knowing this appreciation is essential to further improve the offers and to enrich works about the post-consumption step of the family purchase process.

With regard to hotel experiences, the image, the booking intention and the hotel occupancy rate are often conditioned by opinions shared online (e.g. Gavilan *et al.*, 2018). In March 2019, a CoachOmnium studyⁱⁱ indicated that 80% of hotel guests search and choose their hotel via the Internet (75% go to online opinion/reservation sites, especially Booking.com and TripAdvisor), and 78% of them find these opinions more reliable and useful than the number of stars a hotel has. On the basis of experiences related online (Tung and Ritchie, 2011; Sthapit and Björk, 2017) and of the emotional elements as remembered by consumers, the objective is to define the place of emotions in the post-consumption stage after a family’s experience as tourists. At the intersection of the literature relating to the recollection of experiences and works concerning the role of emotions in a household consumption process, this study aims to explore the place of emotions in the memories of a family tourism experience at French luxury hotels.

First, we approach the literature on consumer experiences with a particular focus on the role of emotions in the process of family tourism consumption. Second, we present the exploratory research conducted, based on a qualitative methodology with a triple approach (software, manual and software psychologising approach). Last, the results are presented and discussed. Both academic and managerial issues are important. The objective is to extend literature about

the post-consumption stage while understanding the emotional traces of memory that persist in the consumer's mind. Several managerial perspectives regarding family offers and hotels communication strategies are addressed.

The role of emotions in the consumption experience: in what way are they family-specific?

The consumption experience reflects people's lives as they relate to an act of consumption. It inevitably fits into a timeframe that is not limited to the mere episode of consumption (e.g. Belk, 1974). The consumption experience is socially constructed and involves different kinds of interactions: among others, social interactions, interactions between place and consumption and between time and consumption (Bouchet, 2004). The tourism experience reflects a combination of a customer's emotional, cognitive and behavioural commitments that are related to tourism activity and extend over time (Tsung and Richie, 2011). Regarding a specific group of consumers, which often includes a large number of actors whose youngest members play a central role in the experience (Drenten, 2018), a family's experience as tourists would be structured as follows: before the activity begins (preparation, planning), during the stay and after the stay (when the experience is recalled). This last step is an assessment source. In marketing, the family is studied either through the group members' influence over individual consumption or as a decision unit considered as a whole (Spiro, 1983; Lee and Beatty, 2002). The first approach takes into account the power of the social group on individual behaviour, whereas the second one integrates family choice and simplifies it to its nuclear dimension (parents, children). The current research is partly in line with the second approach because it considers the family as a consumption unit but does so by broadening the definition of the family sphere (children, brotherhood, parents, couple and grandparents). Regarding travelling, the family structure takes into account couples with or without children, single-parent or blended families and even grandparents and their grandchildren³ (Kwai-Choi Lee and Collins, 2000; Therkelsen, 2010).

The consumption experience: from a time-based experience to the interest of studying recollections of experience

Overall, the literature identifies three main temporalities relating to the same consumer experience: anticipation (before), purchase (during) and memory or recollection (after). Moreover, when accumulated, recollections of experiences ultimately form the 'experience souvenirs' and can predict future purchases (Arnould *et al.*, 2002), which justifies the focus on this stage of the purchasing process. According to these three temporalities, different influences appear within the family group:

- Before the experience:

Various kinds of research have examined the process of choosing a holiday destination within the family framework, i.e. before the experience (Decrop, 2005). These studies deal with families' motivations to travel (need to escape) or with the advantages that spending time with each other offers to intrafamilial relations (Durko and Petrick, 2013).

Furthermore, these works deal with the repartition of intrafamilial roles regarding the choice of destination (Rojas-de-Gracia *et al.*, 2017). On the one hand, marketing researchers have addressed the joint purchase decision process by a husband and wife and report that couples generally disagree with each other during the buying process (Spiro, 1983). On the other hand, the role of children has been highlighted by an abundance of literature (e.g. Kwai-Choi Lee and Collins, 2000; Götze *et al.*, 2009; Therkelsen, 2010). Western adolescents and children greatly influence their parents' product choices (e.g. Pettersson *et al.*, 2004), even if some parents are indifferent to the reasons for a child's desires (Nicholls and Cullen, 2004). The increasing power of children in the decision-making process for travelling is underlined (e.g. Therkelsen, 2010) with them taking on the roles of users, influencers and negotiators (Blichfeldt *et al.*, 2011).

- During the experience:

During a tourism experience, seven review criteria stand out in literature regarding *hospitality management*: (1) hospitality and frontline employees (e.g. Golubovskaya *et al.*, 2017); (2) comfort of tangible products: room, bed and bathroom (e.g.; Mohsin and Lengler, 2015); (3) location (e.g. Crompton and Keown, 2009); (4) environment and atmosphere relating to the experience (e.g. Heide and Grønhaug, 2009); (5) cleanliness (e.g. Mohsin and Lengler, 2015); (6) quality-price ratio (e.g. Martínez and Guillén, 2011) and (7) peripheral or supplementary services (e.g. Chin and Tsai, 2013). While these criteria may reflect expectations (before-stage), they are based exclusively on research focusing on the specific consumption episode (during) and not on what remains in the consumer's mind as memories.

- After the experience:

Little research has observed a decisive step in the family's consumption process: the recollection of experience step (Arnould *et al.*, 2002; Paller and Wagner, 2002; Beerli-Palacio and Martín-Santana, 2017; Cao *et al.*, 2018) and, especially, the narratives of remembered experiences that are believed to condition the individual's future consumption behaviour. For example, Khoo-Lattimore *et al.* (2018) note that, immediately after a family tourism experience, five themes should be regarded as recollection elements: location of accommodation, quality of interactions, child-friendly amenities, safety and family-oriented programmes. In the French hotel sector, Clauzel and Montargot (2013) show that, in the higher ranges, particularly five-star hotels, customers rarely mention tangible elements in online reviews because the intangible aspects play such a critical role. The authors note a differentiation within the ranges between independently managed hotels and chain hotels, but it is interesting to note that this difference does not appear in the reviews of five-star hotels, where excellence and perfection are expected in the same way across all types of hotels. The tangible elements (all the physical aspects of the service: bed, bathtub etc.) are not even mentioned because they cannot be faulted (Clauzel and Montargot, 2013). Indeed, consumers in these establishments do not forgive the slightest failure in service. Other studies show that the three most salient elements of a service experience relate to the first impression: the beginning of the experience and the final impression (Kahneman, 2000; Bergeron *et al.*, 2008) but especially at the most emotionally charged moment of the experience (e.g. Kahneman, 2000). In this case, emotions are the most important factor when it comes to making future decisions.

The emotional dimension of the consumer experience

Today's consumers expect a more emotional experience (Bronner and de Hoog, 2018). By its nature, and because of consumers' expectations with regard to fun, feelings or even fantasies, a consumption experience is highly emotional (e.g. Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). Moreover, travel motivations are guided by personal (push factors: the internal and psychological elements that drive them to travel) and interpersonal dimensions (pull factors: the social or situational attributes that attract people), as the push-pull factor theory suggests (Caber and Albayrak, 2016). Indeed, service encounters are inherently a social experience for individuals and often occur in the presence of multiple customers, most of whom are delighted to be around others, especially in a tourist context (Torres, 2016). In this regard, there is still little emphasis in the research on the role of emotion in joint family decisions (Obrador, 2012; Gram *et al.* 2018), although in a service setting the effects of co-presence on individual emotional reactions have been demonstrated (Arnould and Price, 1993; Papathanassis, 2012). Decrop and Snelders (2004) indicate that the social dimension has primacy over other aspects of holiday planning, especially regarding the family. In this sense, recent literature shows the interest of studying the family target – a specific group (more actors, importance of children, higher positive and negative tensions) (Drenten, 2018) to which companies are paying more and more attention, especially in the field of tourism. According to TripAdvisor (February 2019),ⁱⁱⁱ the “family activities” category saw the strongest growth (+204%) in bookings between 2017 and 2018.

Park *et al.* (1995) associate emotions such as love, affection, sympathy, anger and guilt with several stages of the family purchase decision-making process. These emotions are moderate depending on the importance of the decision and have either a positive or a negative valence. One important positive emotion influencing familial decisions is love, although there are diverse and conflicting views regarding this emotion because it could generate negative emotions if there is conflict between the couple. Children who experience these negative emotions are more likely to criticise the holidays, while parents, in this case, are more likely to seek consonance (Gram *et al.*, 2018). Concerning the role of emotions in the family context, the work focuses more on specific family events, such as deaths or weddings (Otnes *et al.*, 1997), than on the tourist context. A few studies suggest some emotions when they are interested in the reasons for consumer dissatisfaction after visiting a restaurant or a hotel (Andersson and Mossberg, 2004). Others point to the implementation of emotional coping strategies (emotional adjustment) in order to avoid negative emotions that would be related more to daily family tensions (and would emerge during the holidays) than the holidays themselves (Penz and Hogg, 2011; Obrador, 2012). According to Gram *et al.* (2018), negative emotions during a consumption experience are often compensated for by positive elements if the proposed activities are particularly suitable for children. These investigations highlighting the role of emotions rarely focus on the emotions that remain in the customer's mind after consumption. The experience through memories approach allows us to study this theoretical lack in the literature concerning the place of emotions when recollecting one's experience – in other words, the memory traces of emotions after a family trip. Our work is positioned at the

intersection of research that places emotions at the core of the experience (Bronner and de Hoog, 2018) and literature on experience recollection (e.g. Arnould *et al.*, 2002).

Methodology

Data collection

In order to explore the role of emotions in the recollection of experiences, the collected data are based on the content of reviews posted online after a family stay. Online reviews make it possible to study customers' spontaneous feedback about their experience (Ayeh *et al.* 2013) on a platform widely used in Europe (Zaman *et al.* 2016) and, thus, to identify the most salient elements that consumers have committed to memory. This methodology also ensures that the researcher does not need to intervene, which reduces the bias of interpretation.

In 2017, as part of this research, 1,055 online reviews that had been posted after a family trip were collected from TripAdvisor, which allows users to review a service with a text comment. These comments are used as the source material for the current study. On the platform, all the reviewers who were observed ticked "family" among the following possibilities: couple, family, friends, alone. The data relate to four- and five-star hotels (56% vs. 44%). We observed data from 102 hotels, including 55 independent hotels and 47 chain hotels (e.g. brands such as Accor (Novotel, Mercure), Hyatt, Carlton and Crowne Plaza). The literature shows the central role of emotions in luxury points of sale (Kim *et al.*, 2016), suggesting that this could also be applicable in other sectors such as the service sector. However, the luxury-hospitality sector has not been studied in this sense. This suggests many challenges to studying emotions in the luxury tourism sector, which justifies our choice to study high-end hotels. In France, the high-end hotel sector is represented by two possible positioning options: four-star and five-star hotels. In order to study the entire high-end category, we considered both categories.

Yet, although the Novelli law (2009) has grouped four- and five-star hotels in France into the same high-end category, they are still distinguishable by a lower number of criteria in four-star than in five-star hotels (cf. Appendix). For this reason, we decided to explore the possible differences between the two classifications of hotels. The hotels studied are located in areas where tourism consumption is the highest in France. Three areas were chosen because they concentrate more than half of France's total hotel capacities: Ile-de-France near Paris (42% of the sample; 38.8 billion euros of tourist consumption)^{iv}, Rhône-Alpes (28% of the sample; 19.7 billion euros of tourist consumption)^v and PACA (south-east of France) (31% of the sample; 18.9 billion euros of tourist consumption)^{vi}. Technically, the sampling is based on the authors manually collecting the data, namely the comments posted on TripAdvisor. We used an automatic ranking function from TripAdvisor to identify hotels. We selected the hotels that appeared first for each selected category. A category is represented by a range (four or five stars) \times a location \times a consumption situation (we have selected customers who have ticked "family" in the "type of traveller" tab).

Three qualitative approaches to exploring the data

In order to interpret and understand the consumers' rhetoric in depth, a multiple and complementary analysis of the data ensured the convergence of results, as Decrop (1999) or, more recently, Flick (2018) suggests. As we seek to explore the emotions that emerge from the discourse, it appeared all the more critical to triangulate three different approaches (Oppermann, 2000):

1. The first analysis is based on a software analysis (with Iramuteq, a module of R). In addition to the difficulty of manually studying a large volume of data, a direct manual analysis of the raw data could have entailed the risk of certain themes or clusters escaping our attention. Based on occurrence and co-occurrence rates, this analysis identifies the similarities between text segments (significant words and groups of words chosen in the comments). The dendrogram obtained made it possible to indicate the most salient vocabulary and to categorise it according to a thematic approach. The online reviews relating to four-star hotels show a high degree of detail and lead to many (seven) classes that fall into two dimensions (Graph 1). These classes are also characterised by a strong interdependence (Graph 2).

- Regarding the four-star hotels, there are seven classes broken down into two dimensions (Graph 1). The first dimension alone represents 30.8% of occurrences. It includes classes 1 (17%) and 4 (13.8%), both of which highlight a strong association of the following terms: those related to the experience as a whole (club, holidays, village), those related to more peripheral elements of the service (spa, swimming pool) and outdoor activities. The valence is more negative here than in the evaluations of five-star hotels (see below). The second dimension combines the five other classes. Each class evokes the main theme: visits to monuments (Class 6, 17% of co-occurrences) associated with the evaluation of the frontline employees. The reviewers are looking for a certain level of comfort and immediate proximity to local transportation (Class 5, 12%). Positive evaluations of catering are directly linked to the consideration of children (Class 2, 12%) and to offers specifically targeted at families and/or children (Class 3, 16.6%). Finally, there is one class that is a little more independent. It refers to the details (almost certainly expected) that make the hotel stay enjoyable, as well as the cleanliness of the room, a suitable bathroom or even small unexpected gifts, especially for very young customers (Class 7, 11%).
- The evaluations of five-star hotels are more structured (less confusing) than four-star hotel ratings and focus very explicitly on three elements (Graph 2). The welcome at reception has to be impeccable, and the frontline employees have to be attentive and discreetly devoted (Class 1, 42%). Comments on the central offer focus on the room and give very clear priority to catering items (Class 2, 42%). Class 3 (15% of occurrences), independent of the other two, emphasises the emotional and symbolic dimension associated with the most luxurious hotels.

[Here Graph 1: Dendrogram of four-star hotel reviews]

[Here Graph 2: Dendrogram of five-star hotel reviews]

2. The second approach consisted of a manual content analysis that made it possible to deepen our understanding of the identified dimensions and to bring up illustrative quotations. Multiple coding was conducted in several steps. Independently, two coders identified and pooled the categories related to the study's objective and compared them with the themes emerging from the previous software analysis. Each researcher established his relationship independently, and there is a strong consensus about this.
 - The manual analysis identifies that emotions constitute a guiding thread of the hotel experience, whether it concerns a four- or a five-star hotel. As described in the following section, what clearly distinguishes the two ranges from each other is the nature of these emotions, as well as their valence and the elements that trigger them.
3. Finally, a third complementary analysis is based on LIWC (linguistic inquiry and word count) software built by psychologists to dissect the respondents' speeches around 92 dimensions reflecting different types of processes (emotional, social, psychological, perceptual, language). This approach makes it possible to obtain scores between 0 and 100 for all these dimensions, which are validated by the psychology literature (e.g. Pennebaker *et al.*, 2015) and used in many fields, especially in management. This software is particularly suitable for measuring a speech's emotional dimensions (Kahn *et al.*, 2007).
4. Our scores represent a proportion of words allocated to the category in relation to the total number of words (Table 1). The LIWC analysis of content reviews from consumers of four- and five-star hotels (Table 1) reveals a set of common features with some nuances:
 - The analytic thinking scoring is high for both hotel categories, but in the comments regarding five-star hotels, the thinking appears more structured and formal, less narrative and more analytical (+4.94%).
 - The clout scores (speech influence level) are moderate in both cases, but the comments on four-star hotels are more modest and less assertive. The higher we go upmarket, the more confident the reviewers are, who often appear to be "expert" – or at least more self-confident – consumers. There is a firmer sense of certainty in reviews pertaining to five-star hotels (+44.95%).
 - The "discrepancy" appears stronger in reviews of five-star hotels: Consumers provide more advice and offer more ideas ("it could have been better if...", "should", "would") (+13.56%).
 - The insight ("perspicacity") is higher in four-star than in five-star reviews (+62.5%). Visitors of four-star hotels justify their statements more (+51.67%), and their words are more balanced.
 - In both ranges, scores relating to the authenticity of the comments are average, but they appear more cautious or nuanced for four-star hotels (+11.46%) and more personal for five-star hotels (+4.87%).

[Here Table 1: LIWC analysis of customers' online reviews]

Findings: The ubiquitous emotional dimension of family experience recollections

A comparison between the different results described above highlights that, in terms of logic, the cognitive processes seem to have more weight in the reviews for four-star hotels than in their five-star counterparts since, in the latter case, emotion is more common. Three narrative dimensions, whose thread is emotion, appear in the results: the perceived atmosphere of the hotel, the tangible aspects of the hotel offer, which ascribes particular importance to catering, and the offer's social dimension.

While the thread of the comments is clearly emotional, the nature and the valence of the emotions seem to play a different role depending on the establishment's star rating. Regarding the LIWC approach, the tone of the rhetoric is, overall, highly emotional for all hotels and has a rather positive valence. It is interesting to note, however, that the positive emotions are much more ingrained in consumers' memories in five-star hotels (+15.4% of words). By contrast, negative emotions – including anxiety (+33.33% of the words compared with these terms in reviews of five-star hotels) and anger (+100% compared with these terms in reviews of five-star hotels) – are more salient emotions in four-star hotels (+13.4%) with a more extreme valence (see Table 1).

Emotion's role in the atmosphere dimension

References to the hotel's atmosphere (from location to décor) appear in reviews of both four- and five-star hotels, but the consumers' points of focus are different.

The software analysis of the reviews of four-star hotels highlights the importance of the hotel's location. As mentioned above, one class of the four-star dendrogram (R-analysis) is clearly linked to the visits of monuments (Class 6, 17% of co-occurrences). Location and city transportation are mentioned with a strong valence: The reviewers are looking for a certain level of comfort and immediate proximity to forms of local transportation (Class 5, 12%). The manual analysis of the online reviews of four-star hotels confirms the importance of a hotel's location. Regarding the building itself, the location is very often mentioned positively. It is all about accessibility (close to public transportation) and the presence of pubs, restaurants or shops in the area: “5-minute walk from everything you need...” The hotel's location should simplify the stay for travellers who have planned visits to sights or monuments. There is a relatively pragmatic aspect to the reviews of consumers who had stayed at four-star establishments.

In the case of five-star hotels, the atmosphere refers more to emotional and symbolic elements that are consistent with the hotel's range (Graph 2, Class 3). Art, as well as cultural and historical heritage, is a very salient element. The travellers' evaluations highlight the major

role that an offer's intangible elements play and how they can ensure that the recollection conveys a very positive family experience of luxury hotels (vs. four-star hotels). The room's central offer is often reviewed relative to its location in the hotel and to the meals and the breakfast – *“quality of food, décor in the dining room, gorgeous terrace”*. In addition, the descriptions of five-star rooms focus more on the view or the exceptional size rather than the (expected) comfort of the bedding.

| *“A spectacular view of the Eiffel Tower; very funny to watch it shine”; “There was a window with a wonderful view of the lake and the stairs, this view was like a Cézanne painting.”*

A worn tapestry, old décor or the absence of a spa, however, can be reasons for dissatisfaction.

One positive memory is clearly linked to the building, its symbolic dimension, its décor and its architecture (*“the wonderful neo-classical structure of the exterior”*) and to what it represents or evokes in terms of history and *“heritage”*:

| *“Even if you're not interested in art, you'd have to be soulless not to be struck by the beautiful paintings and sculptures that beautify each space.”*

Thus, Class 3 highlights the importance of the historical legacy of institutions and/or those with artistic references (paintings, drapery, carpets, mirrors) that boost their atmosphere and inform their décor:

| *“This is the most amazing and interesting hotel we've ever been to. It is an art gallery with lots of original artworks by Salvador Dali, but also new artists”; “We could have spent more time admiring the paintings in all the corridors, more time to appreciate them.”*

The décor must be neat and display, above all, symbolic and historical qualities:

“An Art Deco palace, extremely refined [...] a magnificent facade, a very tasteful interior”; “Even if you're not interested in art, you'd have to be soulless not to be struck by the beautiful paintings and sculptures that beautify every space.”

The luxurious décor must, indeed, be significant from a historical point of view (art and history) and can then become an object of exchange and intrafamilial communications:

| *“The rooms are decorated like all the public spaces. The hotel is very close to the promenade, along the pretty seaside town of Beaulieu-sur-Mer, and seems to be a bit of a resurgence of an elegant past. We realised very quickly that our children aged 12 and 9 would have a very different experience”* (Class 3).

For example, the décor is criticised when it is not consistent with the destination (absence of significant symbols) or the level of hotel services:

“Deco of the room OK, but tiny balcony with a broken umbrella that flew away on two occasions. Unacceptable... Spacious bathroom, but damaged shower nozzles.”

The LIWC analysis clearly highlights the importance of the visual elements in the consumption experience of five-star hotels (+61.70% of words cited compared with those of reviews of four-star hotels). As already mentioned, it refers to the places' beauty, the wealth of landscapes and the aesthetics of the furnishings or artworks that adorn the hotels. Regarding four-star hotels, the visual aspect is clearly less prominent: It is the immediately usable and tangible aspects that emerge from the contents (feel, touch, +20.51%):

“I had very high expectations for this place, and I think they were even exceeded. Small touches, such as an evening tea service delivered to the room and before/after drinks on the balcony, are memories that I won't soon forget. The hotel is very generous with extra services and touches throughout our stay”; “The size of the room allows you to have enough beds for three. There is a very large bath; the bathroom really helps relieve stress and bad feelings, with three large hot springs. The hotel itself is in a new building; the soundproofing is good, so I could sleep peacefully.”

Emotions' role in the catering dimension and tangible offer

The concrete elements of the hotel offer (comfort, equipment, meals) logically play a major role in the construction of memories of both four- and five-star hotels. But the opinions of the consumers are not similar in kind.

The tangible elements

Regarding the tangible elements of service in four-star hotels, the software analysis shows that two classes also highlight the centrality of the service delivery (Class 2, 12% and Class 6, 17% of co-occurrences). The third class is a little more independent (Class 7, 11%). It refers to the (expected) details that make the hotel stay enjoyable, as well as the cleanliness of the room, a suitable bathroom or even small, unexpected gifts (such as goodies), especially for very young customers. The manual analysis of the reviews confirms this result. Numerous descriptions of the rooms and bathrooms show sensitivity to their size, layout and cleanliness – three criteria that produce positive and negative judgments. Thus, the layout of the room, which needs to be well conceived to welcome families: *“Very functional rooms with a living room for children”* and appropriate equipment (TV, kettle etc.) are elements that make it possible to render judgment. Consumers expect a certain level of service based on the number of stars, which, if not met, produces frustration:

“It was an elegant hotel. My wife and I travelled with our 9-year-old and had booked a junior suite. In fact, it was planned for two adults. Our child slept on a sofa bed that was hard to unfold. The room was very small, and once the sofa had been unfolded, we didn't know where to put our two travel bags, and it was difficult to open the door! It is possible if you go sightseeing every day and just come to the hotel to sleep. But it's a bit confusing for this hotel category.”

Positive comments mention the attention paid to décor and comfort, especially regarding bedding. The bathroom is reviewed according to the same criteria as the room, but the presence of both a shower and a bath is a real source of satisfaction (Graph 1, Class 7).

Moreover, according to the type of stay (mountain or seaside holidays), peripheral services meet mixed reactions, but the presence of a spa and – to an even greater extent – a swimming pool catches customers' attention, especially when the review mentions that children were part of the trip. Eventually, the price/quality ratio, when mentioned, seems to have a strong influence on the appreciation of the hotel services on the whole.

For five-star hotels, the concrete elements of the offer that are reported are slightly different from those seen for four-star establishments. For this range of hotels, the service is evaluated as a whole, essentially through a positive evaluation of the tangible component. Nevertheless, the concrete elements do not appear on their own and are mentioned relatively little in the online content. Firstly, this is justified by the fact that the consumer is not surprised to find a high level of quality (this is part of this hotel range's expected offer) but also because the recognition is more built around the emotions emerging during the stay, which are directly related to the intangible elements (atmosphere, heritage, symbolism).

When tangible aspects (e.g. bed, bath, plate, cutlery, duvet) are explicitly related, it is to raise a default, a service failure or a breach, all of which are unacceptable in this context. As a result, negative emotions are heightened. For instance, cleanliness is more often mentioned in negative comments (service failure) than in positive ones (the room is supposed to be clean):

“The negative part of this trip was the sauna and other places in the hotel [...] it was really dirty, inconceivable for a five-star hotel.”

Some results of the LIWC analysis confirm this finding. While the reviews of four-star hotels mention much more concrete and tangible components related to touch (*‘nice feeling of the sheets’*), for example (+20.51% of words quoted compared with reviews of five-star hotels), those of five-star hotels more often discuss terms relating to vision, such as see, view and sight (+61.70%).

The catering experience

Regarding the food experience, the online reviews also indicate a difference between four- and five-star hotels stays. In the case of four-star stays, software analysis highlights the centrality of meals in consumer recognition (words around “food”: +11.52%) and shows, in particular, that the very positive evaluations of catering are directly linked to the consideration of children (Class 2, 12%) and to the existence of offers specifically targeting the family and/or children (Class 3, 16.6%). It is not so much the quality of the meals that is considered here but rather whether they meet the children's needs or expectations. The LIWC analysis also confirms the greater frequency of words related to health (+50%) and, more broadly, biology (+10.2% compared with reviews of five-star hotels) in the reviews of four-star establishments. As we noted above regarding the offer's tangible items, visitors to four-star

hotels, who discuss children more often, evaluate the service delivery much more – at least, in part. The service at four-star hotels must be perfectly adapted to the double target of children and adults. If this is not the case, it produces frustration and negative emotions that taint the visitors' memories of their experience. The manual analysis allows checking for several reviews about catering. The customers seem to pay attention to both the quality of the dishes and their diversity and originality:

| *"The dishes were more beautifully presented than tasty."*

Failing at any of these aspects harms appreciation of the hotel as a whole:

| *"Overall, very varied cuisine but not very inventive and often bland."*

The breakfast is also a source of great expectation from the point of view of both quality and quantity.

| *"Very rich, with pastries, organic bread, other kinds of bread, freshly squeezed fruit juices, yoghurt, and you're always asked if you're missing anything", and it was served on "a wonderful terrace with very nice garden furniture [...] where my sister and I enjoyed a dream breakfast"*

These narratives depend on family composition during the stay (daughter, husband, child) (Dimension 2, classes 2 and 3). In the case of five-star hotels, both software and manual analysis clearly show the priority given to catering items (Graph 2, Class 2, 42%) when mentioning the central offer in positive terms. The valence of these evaluations is positive and extreme (frequent use of superlatives and loaded words):

| *"Their breakfast was to die for: breads, orange juice, eggs, all types of milk and fruit juices, meats and cold cuts, etc."; "Excellent stay in this beautiful setting and in perfect comfort. The décor is sumptuous, and there are two mythical places: The Belle Epoque room for a one-on-one dinner, and the Mezzanine topped by a big circular dome, the art deco 'coupole' designed by Gustave Eiffel. The ideal place to start the day with an outstanding breakfast."*

Catering is often mentioned because there are many fine dining or Michelin-starred restaurants inside the hotel. Whether it is breakfast or dinner, several customers pay attention to it:

"The breakfasts are amazing, in a dedicated very original space." The experience of the catering often has an impact on the global appreciation of the stay:

| *"Our dinner met our expectations, and we can definitely say that it was an unforgettable experience."*

The quality of the dishes and the wines is particularly appreciated, and so is the staff's willingness and solicitude:

| *“Icing on the cake: the chef came to greet us at the end of the meal” (Class 2).*

Emotion’s role in the social dimension

Whether explicitly or in a more latent way, emotion is also present. In the textual corpus, the social dimension is mentioned according to two types of actors: fellow customers and frontline employees. LIWC detects exclusively family-related narratives (daughter, dad, mum, aunt, etc.), as well as words associated with the immediate sphere of friends and intimate acquaintances, which it groups into the “friends” category (buddy, spouse, partner). Thus, the words relating to frontline employees are included in the “total social” category. However, this facet of the social dimension emerges clearly from R-module and manual analyses.

Fellow customers’ role in experience recollections

At first, there is a strong social dimension that is centred on the role of other consumers, which can be differentiated in two distinct sub-groups: chosen fellow customers (those with whom the consumer deliberately shares the experience) and unknown fellow customers (those who are sometimes tolerated: neighbours at the hotel, for instance). According to the range of the hotel, these two types of fellow customers are mentioned differently, and sometimes simultaneously.

Regarding the chosen fellow customers, it is in four-star hotels that the family and children are the most cited (+38.09% more words than in reviews of five-star hotels). The emotional dimension observed in the reviews’ content is strongly linked to the presence of children and the possibility of receiving an adapted offer (small gifts, friendliness to children, etc.).

| *“Because it was a Novotel, our family of four was able to stay in one room. A sofa bed had been prepared for our children. They received a plush toy on our arrival. This was also the case during a previous stay in another Novotel. At the hotel, there was also a well-equipped playground, including a slide on which the children played a lot. It was a real bonus during our stay. The children were very happy. Once again, I loved it.”*

Regarding five-star hotels, the chosen fellow customers are less identified than at four-star hotels because the presence of children or family members for these latter customers is rather associated with the role the employees have, as we examine below. Moreover, it seems that it is more the recollections of the experience as a couple or between friends that are mentioned in reviews of five-star hotels (much more than for their four-star hotel counterparts: +37% of words related to the couple).

Regarding unknown fellow customers, the results show different areas of dissatisfaction in four-star hotels that focus on noise. Indeed, the LIWC analysis of perceptual processes makes it possible to note that the “hear” dimension (noise, listen, hearing) is stronger in reviews of four-star hotels (+25% of the words related to the noise in four-star hotels). These results could be explained by the broader family offer and, therefore, a higher density of children in this type of hotel with more noisy common areas:

“Classified as ‘extremely quiet’ by the Michelin guide? What a joke! Built only around ‘terraces’? There are steps everywhere, absolutely everywhere! And no lift! We phoned specifically to say that we came with a pram; no one warned us. Impractical hotel for people who have difficulty moving or have young children.”

The vocabulary, syntax and punctuation elements that were observed demonstrate a certain annoyance and ironic speech, confirming more obvious negative emotions in four-star hotels:

“Absolutely not soundproof, you can follow the conversations of the tourists as they come in off the bus, and who parade around all the time, almost as if they were in your room, the whole day long! And at 5am, you’re suddenly woken up by the noise because workers start their day early... All you need!!”; “However, as with many older buildings, a bit of noise comes from the adjoining rooms. In our case, we had two neighbours next door, one an opera star, and a rude flat couple with kids and two rooms, who deemed it necessary to visit each other every 10 minutes, slamming the door every time until we had a rather strained conversation that resolved the situation. But none of this was the hotel’s fault.”

Frontline employees’ role in experience recollections

The employees’ role is a central component of the reviews, which is not unexpected as they assume a critical role in the field of (luxury) service. The findings relating to the staff’s position in online reviews reveal various emotions relating to their function, which varies according to the hotels’ star classification.

The frontline employees at four-star hotels, especially those at the reception desk, are frequently mentioned in the reviews – very often in a positive light. The main qualities that are cited include their kindness, attention, helpfulness and responsiveness in case of need.

“For instance, when I arrived, I had a twin bed. Ten minutes later, the housekeeper had changed it to a king-size bed.”

The staff is also required to be spontaneous and authentic (*“No strained smiles like at Disney”*). Their ability to speak English – or several languages – and give good advice is also a source of satisfaction. More specifically, the visits to monuments are often associated with the evaluation of the frontline employees (Class 6, 17% of co-occurrences).

However, it should be noted that the emotions associated with the workforce are revealed through each of the elements that underpin the experience (Graph 1, classes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6). The service failure is very unsatisfactory for a consumer but becomes acceptable if the service provider offers a solution:

“When we arrived, however, we were informed that there was a problem: For the first night, we would have to stay at the sister hotel a few blocks away. To apologise, they told me that when we got back to the Keppler, they would upgrade us to a suite with a terrace, and that was what happened. The room we had was a good-size superior room, although we had a tiny bathroom. Overall, we liked the hotel very much.”

By comparison, a lapse in service from the frontline employees at five-star hotels is not tolerated by customers and seems, judging by their reviews, to be even less forgivable than at four-star hotels. Consumers evaluate the aesthetic and cultural aspects of the hotel experience in a very positive way (“magnificent”, “charm”, “immense”, “beautiful”, “central”) but do so on the non-negotiable condition that the service offered by the frontline employees and the reception staff perfectly meet the criteria. Indeed, consumers show little tolerance for (or even strongly reject) any mistake or deviation of service.

“Two days in a row, the cleaning staff did not leave any shampoo. Once this problem was reported at the front desk, the shampoo was quickly delivered, but we shouldn’t have had to ask.”

The welcome at reception has to be irreproachable, and the frontline employees have to be attentive and discreet (Graph 2, Class 1, 42%). Across all the identified dimensions in the travellers’ comments, the idea of excellence in service is both expected and pervasive. Families staying in five-star hotels seem particularly sensitive to the staff – not all that much with regard to basic services, which are expected anyway, but concerning individual attention and extras: “little presents adapted to children” (Class 1). The staff members’ role is to adapt perfectly to the presence of children. That is why mentions of children and frontline staff often go hand in hand. The emotional dimensions are strong when it comes to frontline employees, for whom favourable adjectives and superlatives are used. The importance of the intangible in the review of the stay is clear – much more so than with four-star hotels – and more emotional: “magical”, “fabulous”, “unforgettable”.

Discussion, limitations and perspectives

This work explores the emotional dimension of how an experience is remembered after a family stay. In the process, it identifies a narrative thread that runs through the consumers’ discourse around different emotions and depends on the hotel’s grading.

After a thematic data analysis using the R qualitative module, the complementary manual and LIWC analysis permit an estimate of the valence of consumer comments and make it possible to highlight the omnipresence of the lasting emotional dimension in the mind of the customer. Overall, this methodological triangulation shows that memories related to a four-star hotel experience focus on the most tangible components of the offer, while comments about five-star establishments are based much more on the emotions felt. These results are consistent with the work by Kim *et al.* (2016).

In this regard, our work follows the reflections of Bagozzi *et al.* (1999) and, in the luxury sector, those of Bronner and de Hoog (2018), regarding the increased role of emotions during the consumption experience. Here, in the recollection step, emotion appears (implicitly or explicitly) omnipresent according to the hotel grading. As we study the recollections, our paper is in line with works on the consumer’s post-consumption process (e.g. Arnould *et al.*,

2002; Paller and Wagner, 2002). Moreover, we decided to focus more specifically on family stays because there is a lack of academic literature examining this target group (Schänzel *et al.*, 2005; Borges *et al.* 2010).

The recollections of experiences related to four-star hotels focus on the experience as a whole. Particular attention is given to the offer's tangible elements and the comfort related to the location of the establishment. In the recollections of stays at four-star hotel, the frontline employees and the consideration of children are two topics regularly mentioned and are in line with all the other criteria. In catering, for example, the recollections about staff are based on their behaviour towards the family group and their responsiveness to the demands of the youngest family members. This is consistent with Gram *et al.* (2018), who highlight the necessary compensation for negative emotions felt during a stay through activities specifically targeted at children. The role of the staff is also often gauged from the welcome received by the travellers when visiting sights in the vicinity of the hotel. Employees, whatever their status or nature, are appreciated as a whole. As a result, the recollections of experiences reported on TripAdvisor for four-star hotels extend beyond a simple evaluation of the hotel itself and concern the experience more generally, including the destination. The language used in the reviews is globally emotional, and negative emotions are more evident than is the case with the other range.

Comparatively, recollections of experiences at five-star hotel are less tangible and much more emotional. They refer not only to the centrality of architectural and decorative biases but also to the importance of the location with regard to its historical and cultural dimensions. In this regard, children are mentioned in order to emphasise the possibility of conveying to them a cultural heritage that has to be manifest as soon as they enter the establishment and become immersed in the general atmosphere of the place. Thus, the emotion generated by the presence of symbols and the intangible ("*this little supplement of the soul*") is expected and, when it is present, is particularly memorable. It becomes central to the memories of consumers in the longer term, as Bronner and de Hoog suggest (2018).

Table 2 offers a synoptic vision of the results associated with the main conclusions, as well as theoretical and managerial recommendations.

[Here Table 2: Synoptic vision of the results, managerial and theoretical implications]

This research extends the work by Tung and Richie (2011) and Sthapit and Björk (2017) on memories of experiences. In addition, our study of emotional traces:

- highlights the centrality of emotions, more or less negative according to the hotel's grading, in consumer content, which forms a guiding thread of their post-purchase evaluations;
- identifies the emotions spontaneously evoked after a hotel stay, which can be assimilated to the recollections of experiences firmly anchored in memory and, therefore, *a priori*, the most salient;
- deepens reflections on the traces of memory that appear during the study of the post-consumer stage of a purchasing process (Bronner and de Hoog, 2018);

- points to important managerial implications thanks to a better understanding of the family as a target group, including more offers adapted to families – in particular, by taking children into account within the framework of luxury hotel consumption; and
- highlights the centrality of children being considered at the most luxurious hotels and the parents' strong expectations that flow from it: adapted and proactive service, atmosphere, décor and advice regarding cultural visits that would offer the possibility of an intrafamilial transmission, particularly of an artistic and/or historical nature.

Different questions arise regarding the strategy that luxury hotels need to have for families, among others. One can contemplate whether a family stay requires that a specific need regarding accessibility (families with young children or seniors) be addressed. Problems regarding accessibility and proximity to public transportation, shops and other places to visit are frequently cited in the reviews studied.

The review criteria of families who stayed at four-star hotels are more concerned with tangible elements – especially the room, which corroborates Mohsin and Lengler's research (2015). Regarding five-star hotels, the stories of experience recollections are more emotional and more based on intangible elements, like the atmosphere or interpersonal relations with the staff. These results are in line with other research stating that the higher the hotel range, the less often tangible elements are cited (Kim *et al.*, 2016). This can be explained by the fact that these concrete elements (furniture, décor or dishes) are, in essence, taken care of at this kind of hotel. Beyond a certain level of hotel service, what brings satisfaction to the customer is not so much the tangible elements, whose quality is predictable, expected and legitimate because of the cost of the service, but the intangible, unexpected elements or details (like an unexpected little present). By contrast, poor service quality – like a room that is not perfectly tidied or clean, or the absence of a porter – will be unacceptable and lead the visitor to write a very negative review.

This first study of the emotional dimension of the recollection of experiences at luxury hotels necessarily has some limitations that future research will be able to overcome. Although some authors could find different expectations and perceptions regarding the hotel offer, especially in the luxury sector, depending on the cultural origin of the reviewer, the characteristics of our sample, which is mainly European, did not enable us to distinguish comments written according to this variable. This variable should be explored in the future in order to enable hotel managers to meet the needs of an increasing number of foreign customers. However, studying the satisfaction criteria of French customers in the context of family holidays abroad could be relevant. Moreover, because of the methodology chosen, we ignored the non-connected families' point of view, which is why it would be interesting to extend this research by conducting a more classical qualitative study with this kind of customer.

Furthermore, it would probably be relevant to interview, either together during a focus group or separately during individual interviews or life stories, different members of the same family who experienced the same stay. A combination of these methodologies would present two interests: On the one hand, it would be possible to identify differences in the memory traces left by the stay according to the respondent's age and status. On the other hand, it would be interesting to compare the results obtained by these two mobilised methodologies, namely whether the collected memories were spontaneous or assisted.

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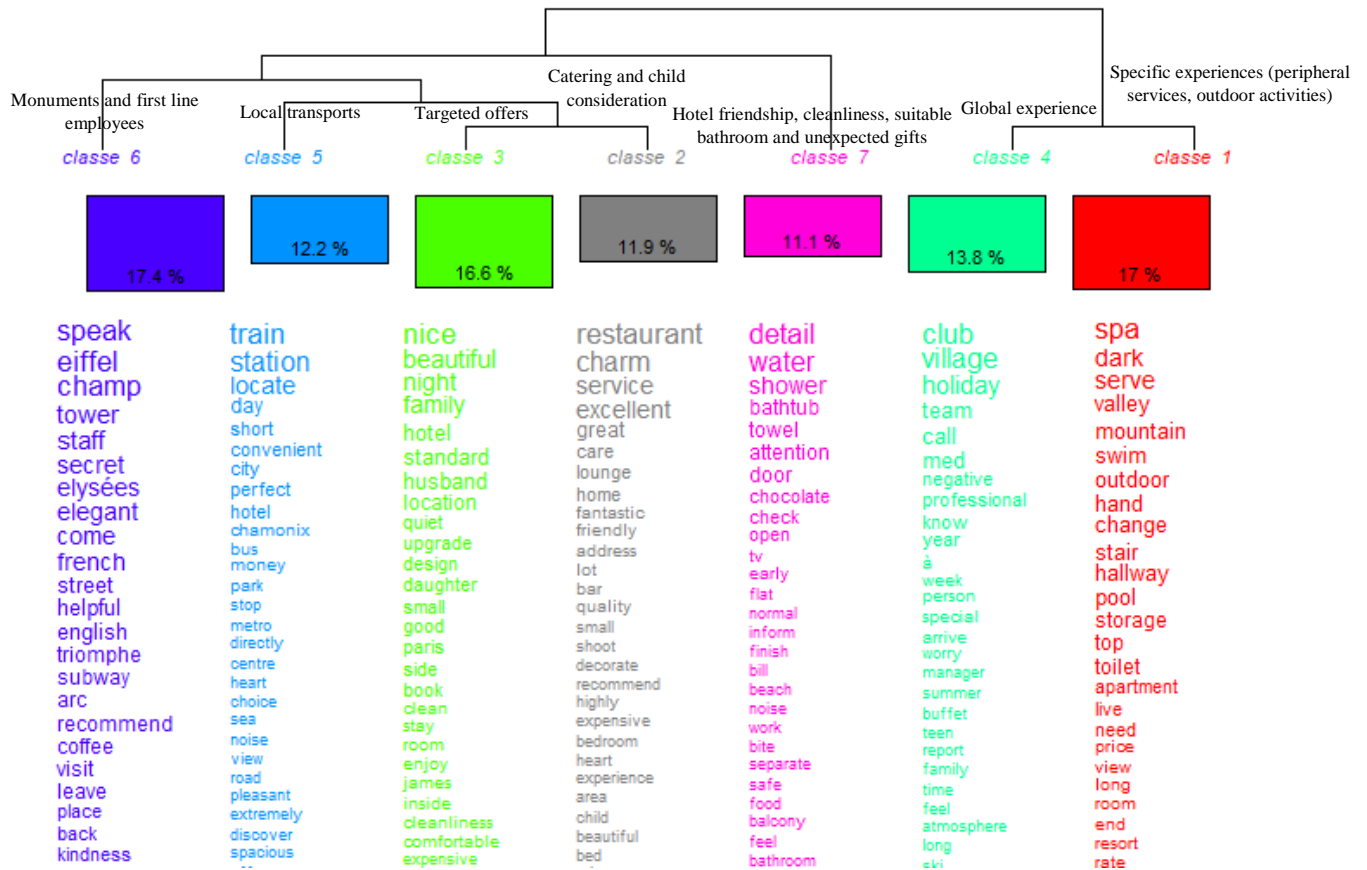
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Graph 1: Dendrogram, in respect to 4-star hotels reviews



Graph 2: Dendrogram, in respect to 5-star hotels reviews



Table 1: LIWC analysis of customers' online reviews

Words category	4-star hotels	5-star hotels
<i>Analytical thinking</i>	-4,71% ¹ (79,95)	+4,94% ² (83,90)
<i>Authentic</i>	-4,64% (52,78)	+4,87% (55,35)
Certainty	-31,01% (1,09)	+44,95% (1,58)
Discrepancy	-11,94% (1,18)	+13,56% (1,34)
Perspicacity	+62,5% (1,43)	-38,46% (0,88)
Causation	+51,67% (0,91)	-34,07% (0,60)
Differentiation	+11,46 (3,21)	-10,28% (2,88)
Positive emotion	-13,34% (5,26)	+15,40 (6,07)
Negative emotion	+13,4% (0,73)	-8,22% (0,67)
▪ Anxiety	▪ +33,33% (0,16)	▪ -25% (0,12)
▪ Anger	▪ +100% (0,08)	▪ -50% (0,04)
See	-38,16% (0,94)	+61,72% (1,52)
Feel	+20,51% (0,47)	-17,02% (0,39)
Hear	+25% (0,50)	-20% (0,40)
Food-Catering	+11,52% (2,13)	-10,33% (1,91)
Biologic	+10,20% (2,70)	-9,26% (2,45)
▪ Health	▪ +50% (0,24)	▪ -33,33% (0,16)
Family	+38,1% (0,29)	-27,59% (0,21)
Friend (<i>close circle such as friends or spouse and neighborhood</i>)	-27,03% (0,27)	+37,04% (0,37)

¹ Compared with 5-star hotels² Compared with 4-star hotels

Table 2: Synoptic vision of the results, along with managerial and theoretical implications

	Four-star hotels	Five-star hotels
Emotional dimension in recollections of experience as a family	<p><u>In general:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive emotions but much more negative emotions Recollections of experiences focus on the experience as a whole and on the tangible dimension <p><u>Atmosphere dimension:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotel location and place – positive emotions <p><u>Tangible elements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service delivery – positive emotion Sense of touch much more mobilised Emphasis on comfort and location <p><u>Catering experience:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children consideration regarding catering Great expectations for breakfast – positive emotion <p><u>Social dimension:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of children and offer adapted to them, positive or negative emotion Unknown fellow customers (noise), negative emotions, extreme valence Frontline employees, positive emotion Service failure, negative emotion; if a solution is proposed, positive emotion 	<p><u>In general:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More positive emotions with extreme valence Experience recollections are less tangible and much more emotional <p><u>Atmosphere dimension:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art, cultural and historical heritage – positive emotion, extreme valence Importance of visuals elements (architecture, décor) and symbols <p><u>Tangible elements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service as a whole – positive emotion Failure of tangible aspects – negative emotions – extreme valence Positive emotion thanks to intangible elements Sense of sight much more mobilised <p><u>Catering experience:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and aesthetic of breakfast or dinner – positive emotion <p><u>Social dimension:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mention of close circle (friends, spouse etc.), positive emotion No acceptance of service failure, negative emotion, strong valence Importance of the offer's intangible elements, positive emotion, extreme valence
Recommendations to the manager for families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop elements regarding logistics information (transportation, proximity) and tangible elements (local signs). Enhance communication regarding breakfast and offer breakfast events (activities, themed breakfasts). Develop promotions for catering and, in this context, for offers targeting children. Offer more training to <i>frontline employees</i> (several languages spoken, advice on visits to monuments). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to hire and train reactive and proactive staff. Invest in high-quality décor that makes sense (consistent with the location and/or the history of the hotel). Propose a children's course, itinerary that allows for learning: historical/symbolic and artistic heritage of the hotel or the destination. Focus attention on cleanliness, which has to be flawless. Ensure a systematic inspection of housekeeping. Establish a criteria grid for cleanliness to be used by household employees and supervisors. Consider new ways to build satisfaction surveys (add emotional scales).
Theoretical issues	<p>At the intersection of the post-purchase consumer's process works (memories) and the role of emotion in a family context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major role of emotions in consumer's luxury experience (Kim <i>et al.</i>, 2016) Specific expectations of the family consumption unit (Borges <i>et al.</i>, 2010) Role of children in luxury consumption (Beerli-Palacio and Martín-Santana, 2017; Gram <i>et al.</i>, 2018) 	

Appendix: Elements of mandatory criteria to differentiate between four-star and five-star rating³

			Classification criteria	4*	5*	
Chapter 1 equipment	Outside the hotel and reception hall and lounge	Outdoor use	No 7: Enhancement of buildings with vegetation and flowering	no	yes	
		Surface area	Minimum surface area (bar, breakfast room)	min. 70 m ²	min. 90 m ²	
		Reception	No 19: Provision of clean luggage trolleys in good condition	no	yes (at least one)	
		Restaurant	No 21: Air conditioning system in working order in the restaurant	no	yes	
	Rooms	Surface (including sanitary)	No 36: Minimum surface area of a single room	14 m ²	20 m ²	
			No 37: Minimum surface area of a room for 2 persons	16 m ²	24 m ²	
			No 38: Minimum surface area of a room for 3 persons	17 m ²	26 m ²	
			No 39: Minimum surface area of a room for 4 persons	20 m ²	30 m ²	
			No 40: Minimum surface area of a room for 5 persons	25 m ²	35 m ²	
			No 41: Minimum surface area of a room for 6 persons	30 m ²	40 m ²	
			Equipment and furniture	No 50: Radio in all rooms	no	yes
		Bedding	No 55: Increased bed dimensions - Minimum dimension - single bed: at least 1.20 x 2.00 m - Minimum dimension - double bed: at least 1.60 x 2.00 m - Minimum size twin beds: at least 2 x 0.90 x 2.00 m	no	yes	
		Furniture in bedroom	No 89: Minibar clean and in working condition	no	yes	
		Telephony and communication	No 92: Telephone with “direct dial-in” (wireless phone required)	no	yes	
		Additional equipment	No 105: FAX and/or printer in room on request	no	yes	
			No 106: Clean and working kettle with courtesy tray	no	yes	
			No 108: Computer in the room on request	no	yes	
			No 117: Shoe kit	no	yes	
		Bathroom equipment	No 132: Telephone in the bathroom	no	yes	
			No 134: Hygiene kit upon request	no	yes	
		Indoor entertainment equipment	No 146: Information journals in the common areas (paper or digital)		3 titles	4 titles, including one in English
			No 150: Indoor board game room with games for all ages		5 games minimum	8 games minimum
	Fitness and relaxation equipment		No 154: Fitness area equipped, clean and in good condition	Min. 4 pcs of equipment	Min. 5 pcs of equipment	
	Chapter 2 customer service	Quality and reliability of customer information		No 168: “Adaptive website” (adaptation to any digital medium with “responsive Web design” technology)	no	yes
				No 170: Website presenting the establishment, its services and prices in two foreign languages	no	yes
Booking processing		No 174: Booking possible by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week	no	yes		
Reception and welcome		Reception skills and services	No 180: The customer is accompanied upon arrival	no	yes	
			No 184: Presence of a concierge service easily identifiable by customers	no	yes	
			No 187: A valet service is available	no	yes	
Rooms		No 199: “Hedging” service	no	yes		
Food service, breakfast, drinks		Restaurant business	Minimum number of product ranges for breakfast	11	13	
			No 207: A restaurant with lunch and/or evening service	no	yes ⁴	
			No 209: Room service 19 hours a day; schedules must be posted	no	yes ⁵	
			No 210: Room service 24 hours a day; schedules must be displayed	no	yes ⁶	
		Beverage service	No 212: A bar with drinks service of all categories	no	yes ⁷	

³ The French hotel grading system is based on three main parts: equipment, customer service and accessibility and sustainable development (the latter is identical for both rankings). These chapters include a total of 241 criteria (including mandatory, “à la carte”, not applicable, mandatory, non-compensable, optional). Each criterion gives a certain number of points: Four-star hotels must obtain a minimum of 334 points, and five-star hotels a minimum of 397 points. This table provides a comparison between four- and five-star hotels with regard to the mandatory criteria.

⁴ For hotels with more than 60 rooms. The restaurant must be located in the establishment or be contiguous with the main building.

⁵ For hotels with fewer than 50 rooms.

⁶ For hotels with more than 50 rooms.

⁷ Subject to the laws governing License IV. Mandatory display of License IV.

Endnotes

- ⁱ www.oetkercollection.com/hotels/le-bristol-paris/offers/family-time
- ⁱⁱ <https://www.coachomnium.com/bonus/bonus-4-etudes-de-clienteles/statistiques.html>
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.tendancehotellerie.fr/articles-breves/communique-de-presse/11013-article/tendance-voyage-2019-par-tripadvisor-la-famille-d-abord>
- ^{iv} <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1288233>
- ^v <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/3578127>
- ^{vi} <http://pro.auvergnerhonealpes-tourisme.com/article/chiffres-cles-du-tourisme-en-rhone-alpes>