

Original Researcher Article

## The Interplay Between Smart Hotel Chain Customers' Trust, Brand Loyalty, And Customer Experience In China's First-Rate Cities

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**ABSTRACT**

Customer behaviour at smart hotel sites is heavily impacted by brand loyalty, according to research carried out in China's most prominent areas. Clients were inclined to stick with dependable lodging providers after having positive experiences with trusted support, easy accessibility, and customised interactions. Brand loyalty increases, according to the proof, when customers have faith in technical infrastructure and reliably get top-notch service. Elderly customers valued dependability and continual attentiveness compared to smart establishments, that preferred amongst more youthful, technologically savvy clients. Based on the outcomes, modern technologies and human relationships have a role in creating sustained consumer engagement. Specifically, the outcomes indicate that a sense of reliability and affection weakens the link among smart technology and brand loyalty. The results showed that in highly contested metropolitan regions, smart hotel systems must keep up excellent operational expectations, increase confidence in customers, and deftly integrate smart technology to guarantee sustained commitment. Incorporating modern technologies with efficient personnel assistance, customisation, and service continuity might help smart hotel owners boost brand loyalty, according to the research. Consumer loyalty was additionally increased by expenditures in staff instruction, security of visitor info, and sustainable approaches. In sum, the research showed that confidence, operational excellence, and substantial consumer involvement were just as important as technology advances in ensuring long-term brand loyalty in China's most prestigious regions. .

**Keywords:** *Customer trust; Brand loyalty; Smart hotels; Service Quality; Hospitality management..*

inexpensive costs, Home Inn is a top hotel brand in China (Su et al., 2023). Home Inn, meanwhile, must figure out what makes customers return and perform everything in its power to maintain consumers engaged if it is to thrive throughout this highly crowded field. Considering satisfied guests are inclined to return and even tell their friends about a particular hotel chain, brand loyalty is an important metric for hotel success. By maintaining the standards set by smart hotel chains, franchisees not merely attract and retain customers, but also get an edge in the market via positive word of mouth. Hotels may improve services aspects including service worth, excellence, and restoration by tapping into an ethereal element called branding reverberation. To fulfil the services demands of its clients, SDL views service as the foundation of commerce and creates revenue via a multi-actor process that draws on specialised talents (Du et al., 2025). Personal dedication and recurrent psychological intentions—two factors that particularly growing increasingly responsive to technological touchpoints—are reflected in brand loyalty in the hotel sector. Smart hotel businesses know that customer loyalty is fuelled by online interactions that are both consistent and personalised, in addition to pricing and locality (Gubíniová et al., 2023). The distinctive

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

The ever-changing nature of the hotel industry has prompted professionals to seek out ways to hold on to their customers. Although many studies see customers persistence as an outcome of offerings' beneficial effects on consumer perceptions fostered by loyalty. It's possible for clients to remain inactive due to supply constraints, such as a region-wide exclusive supply of inexpensive motels. Servicing tactics that cater to consumers' tastes and inclinations lead to an increase in retaining clients via loyalty. Emotionally contact and sensations of fulfilment, such as psychological fulfilment and autobiographical travelling, may also be delivered in this way. A rising amount of Chinese and foreign tourists are opting to remain in hotels, leading to unprecedented development in the China's hotel business. Due to this expansion, rivalry among hotels brands has heated up, rendering it more important than ever for operators to set themselves apart to entice returning guests. Famous for its handy locations and

financial and legislative context of China's leading metropolitan areas interacts with consumers interactions, belief in robotics, and brand loyalty. Several investigations have explored this interaction concurrently, whereas the current academic research on accommodation has investigated technological advances comprehension and service excellence in solitude.

## 2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The rapid expansion of China's hospitality industry and its substantial outbound tourism are two fundamental elements in China's traditional settings that are seeing rapid development. These are expected to be 608,000 lodging establishments in China, providing 18.9 million rooms, upon January 1, 2020. But the majority of the nation's hotels—90%—still lack distinctive identities. Rebuilding and expanding the brand will be the primary goals over the next ten to twenty years. Also, during the last ten years, more money has been invested by Chinese visitors than by any previous group. The rise in foreign travelling is largely responsible for this. Worldwide and regional full-service hospitality managers would do smart to study Chinese customer experiences and how businesses relate to technological innovation if they want to effectively serve their Chinese customers (Mody & Hanks, 2020). brand loyalty for effectiveness, personalised service, and simplicity of use have surged in China's richest regions, and the lodging business possesses been no exception due to the fast advancement of smart technology. In Chinese cities like Beijing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Shanghai, smart hospitality firms utilised AI, digital applications, and robots to boost client loyalty and structural efficiency. Consumers' faith in the provider impacts their level of satisfaction and their impression of the service's excellence in this dynamic context. Building loyalty with clients is crucial for longterm partnerships, particularly in today's technologically advanced world. Consumers want guarantees that their info will be kept private and secure, and they want their systems to always be reliable. Being confident makes individuals extra outgoing, and this in turn increases brand loyalty, which in turn increases the likelihood of repeat business and favourable word of mouth. Smart hotel operators in China's busy cities know that happy guests are more likely to stay at their properties and recommend them to others (Moller, 2024).

## 3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Consumers of smart hotel brands in top-rated towns in China were the subjects of this research, which aimed to investigate the relationship between client service, confidence, and brand loyalty. The objective of the research was to identify the factors that impact consumers' pleasure and loyalty to smart hotel brands in relation to their views of enhanced technology offerings, personalised interactions, and contemporary tourism standards. Given the importance of maintaining a competitiveness edge in the ever-changing hotel industry, the focus remained squarely on building brand loyalty as the primary goal. The study's overarching goal was to determine if smart hotel patrons' favourable impressions

of the establishment, together with their faith in its safety features, dependability, and service quality, led to increased brand loyalty. The investigation's secondary objective was to determine whether the effects of technology advancements like digitally personalisation, automatic check-in, and AI-enabled applications improved customers' impressions of the hotel and their propensity to come back or suggest it to others. The research targeted marketplaces with ambitious and techsavvy customers by concentrating on China's top-tier cities. With this study, they want to throw light on how hotel management may improve their loyalty programs by fostering confidence with their guests and maintaining a standard of excellence in every visit.

## 4. LITERATURE REVIEW

A thorough examination of the causality connections between the four cornerstones of business development—engagement, impact, reliability, and dedication—and the client's loyalty. Additionally, the promotional setting provides a new angle on the complex encounter that guests enjoy when vacationing at the hotel. They showed up with a system for classifying whole-service hotel guests' experiences according to three dimensions: pragmatism, reactions, and connections. The customer-business relationship is the first link in a web that begins with faith in the organisation, passes via the influence of the brand, and culminates in loyalty to the firm. Customer enthusiasm, customer confidence, and the organization's authority are all affected by the level of branded participation, but brand loyalty is unaffected (Zeng et al., 2022). Separate studies found that "savvy hotels," a unique kind of technically sophisticated lodging, sprang up in the wake of the epidemic. Particularly among the youngest generations, many Chinese youngsters prefer to stay at home with acquaintances or family. Statistics compiled by China's official corporate sectors show that house building has kept increasing throughout the preceding couple of decades. Their research indicates that smart motels are more popular with clients when it comes to reacting to feedback assessments, thanks to Intelligence. There is much space for development in smart homestay technologies and governance, despite the growing attractiveness of these establishments (Chen et al., 2024). Previous studies analysed the results of public and private industry programs like city ads and government programs, and they explained the connection across customer-oriented advertising and consumer loyalty within the background information of the CPBIUC for recreational facilities in significant towns (Garmaroudi et al., 2021). According to an article, service interruption restoration helps rebuild loyalty and credibility by allowing system suppliers to intervene and fix system faults. This reflects how clients see the credibility, dependability, and expertise of the services providers. Hence, the study sets forth its next investigation goal, which intends to find evidence that brand engagement moderates the correlations among quality characteristics and consumer persistence (Dalimunthe, 2021).

## 5. RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the impact of brand loyalty on customers of smart hotel chains in first -rated cities in China?

## 6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 6.1 Research Design

As part of its mixed-method technique, the study analysed data using SPSS version 25. To create a data summary, the investigator used descriptive statistics. Then, they used odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals to discover connections in the descriptive analysis. Findings were deemed statistically significant if the p-value was less than 0.05. Differences between the groups were shown using analysis of variance, while factor analysis validated the research. Researchers used SPSS and Excel for all the analyses.

### 6.2 Sampling

There were 1,122 people considered by Rao-soft when they chose the sample. After sending out 1,350 surveys, the researcher received 1,280 replies but had to reject 80 owing to incomplete data. For the study, researchers polled 1,200 people in China. Out of a total of 1200 responders, 576 were male and 624 were female. **6.3 Data and Measurement**

Section B of the survey employed a 5-point Likert scale to evaluate respondents' opinions on important criteria after Section A collected basic demographic information. To augment the original data, quantitative secondary data was gathered from credible offline and internet sources.

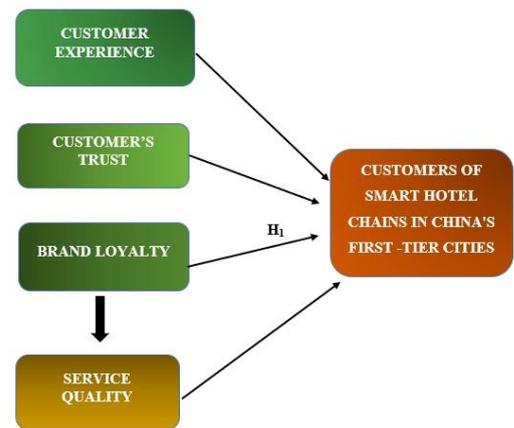
### 6.4 Statistical Software

When it came time for statistical analysis, the researchers reached for SPSS 25 and Microsoft Excel.

### 6.5 Statistical Tools

A summary of the dataset's characteristics was generated by the researchers using descriptive statistics. To determine the reliability of the constructs, researchers used factor analysis. The study's authors sought for group distinctions by using analysis of variance (ANOVA). The direction and intensity of the associations were assessed using expectation levels, 95% confidence intervals, and the Odds Ratio. Researchers deemed a discovery to be statistically significant when  $p < 0.05$ .

## 7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



## 8. RESULT

### • Factor Analysis

Finding new components is the primary objective of doing Factor Analysis (FA) on publicly available data. Regression coefficients are often used by physicians to assist in making a diagnosis when no clear symptoms are present. Finding observable trends, discrepancies, and weaknesses is the main objective of using mathematical models. When evaluating the results of a regression, one method is to use Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) tests. Both the inductive definition and the model's dependent variables are confirmed by this analysis. There is an overlap, as seen by the statistics. To facilitate better comprehension, scientists may choose to decrease the image's size. They could obtain a number between 0 and 1 using MO. There are sufficient samples if the KMO score is between 0.8 and 1. To go forward, according to Kaiser, one needs: Kaiser verified that all these conditions were met: The average is between 60 and 69, with a somewhat more limited range of 0.050 to 0.059. Ground grades that are considered intermediate often vary from 0.70 to 0.79. Using an HPS ranging from 0.80 to 0.89.

They marvel at the range of 0.90 to 1.00.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Testing for KMO and Bartlett's

Sampling Adequacy Measured by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin .850

The results of Bartlett's test of Sphericity are as follows:  
approx. chi-square = 3252.968 df  
= 190; sig =.000

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

| KMO and Bartlett's Test                          |                    |          |
|--|--------------------|----------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. |                    | .850     |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity                    | Approx. Chi-Square | 3252.968 |
|  | df                 | 190      |
|  | Sig.               | .000     |

A lot of people utilise this method to get to the claims in their samples. Researchers will use Bartlett's Test of

Sphericity after determining that the correlation matrices are statistically significant. The sample size is sufficient for the inquiry, according to the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin score of 0.850. The results of the Bartlett sphericity test were negative, as shown by a p-value of 0.00. If Bartlett's Sphericity test is passed by the correlation matrix, researchers may conclude that it is not an identity matrix.

#### ‡ INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

- **Brand Loyalty:**

In the procedure of developing a customer-brand connection, brand loyalty is a key objective variable. Throughout several centuries, the hospitality business has extensively recognised the value of brand loyalty. As a result of the interplay among consumer sentiment and hotel brand, it encourages consumers to invest in the brand repeatedly. There is a strong correlation between brand loyalty and several beneficial consequences, such as the likelihood of a customer making a repeat acquisition (Guan et al., 2021). Consumption decision is positively impacted by brand loyalty. The concept of brand loyalty is seen as having several dimensions, including notably the way people think and act. Entrepreneurs in the hotel business want to cultivate this part of loyalty by offering exceptional services, creating connections, and psychological attachment. Whenever studying brand loyalty in this scenario, it is important to emphasise the cognitive factor. The operationalisation of brand loyalty mainly involves the attitude-based components of customer engagement to a brand. To improve bad conditions and boost purchasing motives, brand loyalty is frequently seen as a cure (Liu & Hu, 2022).

#### ‡ DEPENDENT VARIABLE

- **Customers of smart hotel chains in first-rated cities in China:**

To set itself apart from competitors and increase guest confidence contemporary hotels are using novel service methods. One including utilisation of this advancement is the integration of AI technology, like assistance robots, to enhance client connections. People in China's largest towns who sign up for smart home services are often very tech-savvy and value efficiency, customisation, and userfriendliness. Manufacturers all throughout the globe, even teenagers living in urban areas, have seen an increase in the popularity of internet purchasing. In an ideal world, hoteliers would automate guest registration and room management with a mobile app, provide outstanding services powered by AI, and provide recommendations for tailored amenities (Ju & Jang, 2023). Customers are looking for a middle ground between simple sophistication and intricate features since the technical emphasis has not satisfied their insatiable need for productivity. Furthermore, customers favour eco-friendly hotels that prioritise hygiene, security and environmentally awareness by using cutting-edge ecological management practices. People in top-tier cities like Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Beijing, and Shanghai are increasingly seeking for alternate accommodation options considering to their hectic schedules and the pervasiveness

of creativity in their daily lives. For consumers using this outlook, smart hotels represent the next logical step in China's technological growth and the future of urban planning (Górska-Warsewicz & Kulykovets, 2020).

- **Relationship between brand loyalty and customers of smart hotel chains in first-rated cities in China:**

How consumers in China's top-rated cities feel about their favourite smart hotel brands via the lens of brand loyalty. Consumers had stronger emotionally and practical ties to hotel brands because of the flawless technological interactions, personalised amenities, and effective operating capabilities that were offered. Customers were more likely to return and spread the word about the hotel after having a good experience using smart technologies like mobile check-in, in-room IoT management, and assistance capabilities powered by AI. Whenever technologies worked regularly and employees supplemented robotics with human affection, loyalty grew dramatically; this connection was mitigated by service effectiveness and technology dependability (Chang et al., 2022). Problems with technology or insensitive robotics, on the other hand, diminished customer happiness and purchasing intentions. Mediating between apparent worth and brand image, consumers who felt they were getting more for their money via personalised promotions and an updated look and feel experienced more loyalty. Elderly customers valued consistent treatment more than cuttingedge innovation, whereas youthful visitors were more attuned to smart technologies due to demographics variables involving increased technological proficiency and youth ages. If smart hotel companies want to keep their metropolitan clients around for the long haul, they need to put money into strong technologies, employee instruction and information-driven personalisation, according to the administrative consequences.

Strategically incorporated smart offerings, in conjunction with dependable human assistance and explicit benefit offerings, significantly increased brand loyalty amongst visitors in China's top urban areas, according to the survey (Gubíniová et al., 2023).

Researchers have built their whole understanding of the relationship between smart hotel chains' customers and brand loyalty in first-rated cities in China on essential assumptions:

- **“H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between brand loyalty and customers of smart hotel chains in first-rated cities in China.”**
- **“H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between brand loyalty and customers of smart hotel chains in first-rated cities in China.”**

Table 2: H<sub>1</sub> ANOVA Test

| ANOVA          |                |      |             |          |      |
|----------------|----------------|------|-------------|----------|------|
| Sum            | Sum of Squares | df   | Mean Square | F        | Sig. |
| Between Groups | 39588.620      | 434  | 5685.547    | 1067.508 | .000 |
| Within Groups  | 492.770        | 765  | 5.326       |          |      |
| Total          | 40081.390      | 1199 |             |          |      |

This investigation yielded important results. When the p-value is less than .000 and the F-value is 1067.508, Researchers have reached the statistical significance threshold. Scientists reject the null hypothesis and accept "**H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between brand loyalty and customers of smart hotel chains in first-rated cities in China**" considering these findings.

## 9. DISCUSSION

This research found that in China's top-rated metropolitan areas, brand loyalty was significantly related to consumers' experiences at smart hotel brands. Customers' perceptions were improved and their emotive and operational connections to hotel brands were reinforced via the incorporation of new technology. These innovations included smart apps, mobile check-in, and robotics help. Consumers' positive impressions of those innovations increased their likelihood of returning and recommending the lodging establishments, which in turn strengthened their loyalty to the brand. Additionally, it demonstrated that consumer confidence was a key mediator in determining attachment results. Enhanced brand loyalty was the result of visitors' improved trust in the hotel when they believed their confidential information was safe and its amenities were consistently. On the other side, dissatisfaction and a lack of loyalty were caused by technology errors or cold automated exchanges. Perceptions of smart technology varied across

demographics, according to the survey. Reliability and personalised individual treatment were prized by elder visitors, whereas adolescents, who are particularly

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techsavvy, were inclined to respond to novel services. Based on this information, hotels should prioritise both technical advancement and guest contact. Smart hotel owners in China's top locations might maintain customer loyalty and stay ahead of the competition in the dynamic lodging sector by performing this.

## 10. CONCLUSION

Patron behaviour at smart hotel networks throughout China's top-rated cities was shown to be heavily impacted by brand loyalty, according to the research. Consumers seemed far more inclined to stay loyal to certain hotel brands after having positive experiences with dependable assistance, smooth technology incorporation, and personalised connections. Consumer loyalty was shown to be increased when they had faith in technology platforms and experienced constant high-quality assistance. While the younger, technologically proficient customers favoured smart amenities, senior customers placed a higher importance on dependability and continuous attentiveness. The findings underscore the significance of both technology and interpersonal involvement in influencing enduring consumer involvement, since they demonstrated that emotionally connection and sense of quality moderated the link across smart technology and brand loyalty. All things considered, the results highlighted the importance of smart hotel networks' ability to keep up high performance expectations, increase

consumer confidence, and intelligently integrate smart technology to guarantee long-term loyalty in increasingly competing metropolitan regions..

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