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The Association Between The Trust, Brand Loyalty, And Customer Experience Of Smart Hotel Chain Consumers In China's First-Rate Cities

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ABSTRACT
This research explored the connection between the quality of service and the customers of hightech hotel chains located in China's top cities. The investigation focused primarily on the effects advanced technology integration—the kind involving artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and mobile apps—had had on customer confidence, contentment, and loyalty. Through a quantitative research approach, questionnaire data were collected from 1,200 participants located in principal cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. Descriptive statistics, correlational, and regression statistical methods were used for the analysis of the data by revealing substantial trends in the behaviour of consumers. The research shed light on the central role played by the quality of service in melding the perceptions and behavioural consequences of consumers. Those hotels that had successfully merged technology-based innovations with time-tested aspects of reliability, empathy, and responsiveness achieved higher customer satisfaction and confidence. The resultant psychological states were found to mediate the relationship between the service quality and loyalty towards the brands, as evidenced by the heightened intentions to come back, favourable word-of-mouth, and long-run loyalty towards hotel brands. Young consumers with a technological bent favoured advanced technological functions, whereas elderly consumers valued the aspect of reliability and customized human interaction. The research deduced the need for smart hotels to achieve a balance between technological effectiveness and customized provision of amenities. The research reinforced the importance of establishing the trust of consumers based on reliable mechanisms, data protection, and humanified provision of amenities. The findings had valuable implications for hotel administrators and planning policymakers for increasing the competitiveness of the fastchanging hospitality segment of China's leading cities. .

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

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Since the hotel business is constantly evolving, experts in the field are constantly looking for new strategies to keep clients coming back. Yet a lot of research points to the positive benefits of services on client impressions produced by allegiance as the reason why consumers stick around. Due to supply limits, customers may choose to stay dormant. For example, there may be a restricted supply of affordable lodgings in the region. Customers are more likely to remain committed if service strategies are developed with their preferences in mind. Psychosocial satisfaction and reminiscence journey are two examples of personal connections and fulfilling thoughts that could be conveyed in this manner (Ruan et al., 2020). The hotel industry in China is seeing extraordinary growth as more vacationers, both domestic and international, choose to stay in hotels. As a result of this growth, competition amongst hotel chains has intensified, making it more essential than previously for hoteliers to differentiate themselves to attract repeat customers. Home Inn is one of the most well-known hotel chains in China, known over its affordable prices and convenient placements. Hotel business is measured by the level of brand loyalty its customers have towards the establishment (Tussyadiah, 2020). Delighted customers are more likely to remain and may potentially recommend the hotel to their acquaintances. Smart hotel groups set the bar high, and by doing the right thing, franchises not only acquire consumers, but they also gain an advantage in the marketplace through good word of mouth. By capitalising on an intangible phenomenon known as branding resonance, hotels can enhance service components like service worth, excellence, and restoration. For service is the bedrock of trade, and the company generates revenues through a multifaceted procedure that taps into specific skills to meet the necessities of its consumers. Brand loyalty in the hospitality industry reflects personal

commitment and repeated cognitive goals, two aspects which are evolving in response to technology connections. Digital encounters that have been both continuous and customised, along with cost and proximity, are what drive client loyalty, according to astute hotel firms (Zeng et al., 2020). The unique governmental and commercial landscape of China's major cities influences customerbrand relationships, customer faith in robots, and brand loyalty. Many studies have looked at this connection at once, but most of the recent scholarly work on lodging has focused on understanding technology developments and service quality independently.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Two essential components of China's cultural heritage that are experiencing significant growth are the country's accommodation industries and its large tourism sector. As of January 1, 2020, there will likely be 608,000 hotels in China, offering a total of 18.9 million rooms. The problem is that 90% of the hotels in the country still do not stand out. During the next 10 to 20 years, the focus would be on restoring and growing the brand. Chinese tourists have also contributed more capital than any other demographic in the past decade. This is mainly caused by the increase in international travel. To better service their Chinese clients, global and regional full-service hospitality managers would be wise to research Chinese customer experiences and the ways in which enterprises are connected to technical advancements (Liu & Hung, 2021). As a result of the rapid development of smart technologies, brand loyalty for efficiency, customised service, and ease of use has skyrocketed in China's wealthiest zones, and the hotel industry is no different. Smart hoteliers in China's major cities—Beijing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Shanghai—boosted customer loyalty and operational effectiveness with the use of AI, digital apps, and robotics. Customers' trust in the service provider influences how satisfied they are and how highly they rate the service in this ever-changing environment. In today's technically developed environment, it is very important to establish loyalty with clients for extended collaborations. Customer trust in networks is crucial, and they expect assurances that their data will always be safe (Kim et al., 2021). A self-assured person is more likely to strike up conversations with strangers, and this boosts their confidence along with, in turn, their brand loyalty, which in response enhances the possibility of customers coming back and positive recommendations. Managers of smart hotels in China's major cities understand that satisfied visitors are more inclined to return and even spread the word.

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The researchers in the present research set out to find out how customers in the best cities in China felt about smart hotel brands in terms of trust, loyalty, and overall satisfaction. Hotel brands are incorporating online services, robots, and AI to improve service delivery and customer pleasure, thanks to the fast expansion of smart technology in the tourism business. An essential question that needed answering, nevertheless, was whether those advances were successful in building trust and loyalty among customers. The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between the trust that consumers had in smart hoteliers and their experiences with these brands, as formed by high-tech amenities and service excellence. An additional goal was to ascertain the relationship between trust and brand loyalty, an attribute critical to maintaining a competitiveness edge in today's technically sophisticated and urbanised marketplaces. Markets with significant consumer expectations and fierce concurrence, where customer loyalties are crucial to company achievement, were the subject of the investigation, which centred on first-rate cities in China. Hotel directors, entrepreneurs, and legislators can use the investigation's findings to improve loyalty approaches and boost the smart hotel industry's development by understanding how digitally driven interactions interact with interpersonal elements like reliability.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

A comprehensive analysis of the relationships amongst client loyalty and the four pillars of business advancement: involvement, effects, dependability, and determination. The advertising backdrop also offers a fresh perspective on the multi-faceted experience that hotel customers have while on vacations. They brought a three-factor model including pragmatics, emotions, and linkages to categorise the interactions of full-service hotel customers. Belief in the corporation, followed by brand impact, and finally, steadfast loyalty, all commence with the consumer-company connection. Even while brand loyalty is unchanged by the amount of branded engagement, customer engagement, assurance, and the company's competence are all impacted (Shin & Jeong, 2020). Additional research indicated that "savant accommodations," an innovative sort of technologically advanced accommodation, emerged because of the pandemic. Numerous young Chinese people, especially those in their younger years, would rather remain at home with friends or relatives than venture out. Housing construction continues to be steadily rising over the past couple of decades, according to data collected by China's government economy departments (Seetanah et al., 2020). In terms of responding to feedback evaluations their study shows that smart motels are more preferred with clients, all because of intelligence. Notwithstanding the increasing popularity of these kinds of industries, there is still a lot of room for improvement in smart homestay technologies and supervision. The relationship between customer-oriented advertisements and consumer commitment was previously demonstrated using the foundational knowledge for leisure establishments in numerous towns, and this was based on analyses of public and private industry initiatives, such as city ads and government initiatives (McCartney & McCartney, 2020). An article claims that restoring service after a downtime improves trust and loyalty by enabling network providers to step in and resolve issues. Indicative of the trustworthiness, reliability, and competence that customers have in the service providers. Finding proof that brand engagement

influences the relationships amongst quality features and consumer perseverance is the next investigational objective that the research lays out.

5. RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the impact of service quality on consumers of smart hotel chains in first -rated cities in China?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Design

The study used SPSS version 25 for data analysis as part of its mixed-method strategy. The researcher employed descriptive statistics to compile the findings. After that, they found correlations in the descriptive analysis by using odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals. A p-value of less than 0.05 was used to determine statistical significance. Analysis of variance demonstrated group differences, and factor analysis confirmed the study's validity. All the analyses were conducted using SPSS and Excel.

6.2 Sampling

When selecting the sample, Rao-soft took 1,122 individuals into account. There were 1,280 responses from 1,350 questionnaires; however, 80 of those had to be rejected due to missing or inaccurate information. A total of 1,200 Chinese citizens were surveyed for the study. There were 624 female respondents and 576 male ones out of a total of 1200.

6.3 Data and Measurement

After collecting basic demographic information, Section B of the survey used a 5-point Likert scale to assess respondents' opinions on critical criteria. Credible offline and online sources were combed for quantitative secondary data to supplement the primary data.

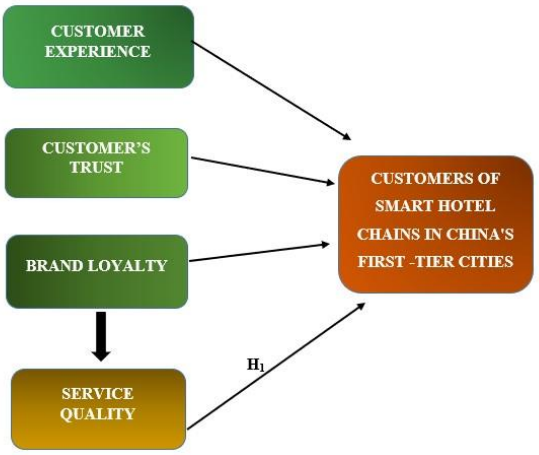
6.4 Statistical Software

The statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS 25 and Microsoft Excel by the researchers.

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**

Factor Analysis (FA) on open-source data sets aims to discover new components. When there are no obvious symptoms, doctors often utilise regression coefficients to help narrow down the possible diagnoses. The primary goal of employing mathematical models is to identify discernible patterns, inconsistencies, and vulnerabilities.

Some researchers employ Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) tests to assess regression results. This study finds support for the inductive definition as well as the dependent variables in the model. The numbers show that there is some overlap. Scientists may want to reduce the image's size to make it easier to understand. Using MO, they could get a value between zero and one. If the KMO score falls somewhere between 0.8 and 1, then there are enough samples. If want to move forward, says Kaiser, 'll need: Kaiser confirmed that each of these requirements had been satisfied: With a narrower range of 0.050 to 0.059, the average falls somewhere between 60 and 69. The range of commonly used ground grades for intermediate purposes is typically between 0.70 and 0.79. By employing an HPS with a range of 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

To access the claims in their samples, many people use this strategy. After the correlation matrices are found to be statistically significant, the researchers will apply Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. With a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin score of 0.850, the sample size is deemed enough for the inquiry. A p-value of 0.00 indicates that the Bartlett sphericity test returned negative results. Researchers may conclude that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix if it passes Bartlett's Sphericity test.

✞ INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

- **Brand Loyalty:**

One of the critical subjective elements involved in generating a relationship between consumers and brands consists of the loyalty of the consumers towards the brands. The value of loyalty towards brands has been solidified in the hotel industry for generations. Owing to the constructive relationship between the customer emotions and the brand, customers have the tendency of investing more than once in the hotel chain. The repeat purchase tendency by the customer is one of the many constructive consequences highly linked with loyalty towards brands. A strong loyalty towards a brand significantly influences the purchase decision (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023). The loyalty towards a brand encompasses many features, and the thoughts and behaviour of a person are the most critical. Hotel segment entrepreneurs focus extremely hard on the cultivation of this type of loyalty by delivering the ultimate level of service, forming strong bonds, and creating an emotional attachment. The value of the cognitive factor increases extremely when evaluating loyalty towards brands for this segment. The behavioural components of the involvement of a customer with a brand determine primarily what loyalty towards a brand constitutes (Chen et al., 2021). Most individuals believe loyalty towards brands constitutes the magic bullet which would eradicate all their issues and compel individuals to purchase their products for additional times.

✞ FACTOR

- **Service Quality:**

To distinguish themselves from others and boost customer confidence, modern hotels are adopting cutting-edge service concepts. One significant implication of this development involves the upgrading of customer engagements with the help of AI technologies, such as the deployment of help robotics. In the big cities of China, smart home subscribers generally include tech enthusiasts who value personalization, speed, and user-friendliness. Additionally, entrepreneurs all over the world have been growing their online purchases, especially the young ones who inhabit the cities (Yoon & Cha, 2020). A model hotel ought to deploy a smart app for the facilitation of the simpler registration and more straightforward management of rooms, provide excellent AI-driven service, and offer customized facilities for each client. Consumers seek a balance between rudimentary capability and sophisticated features since the current technology focus has not yet met their insatiable desire for increased efficiency. Additionally, clients tend to prefer eco-friendly hotels which adopt state-of-the-art green technologies for the promotion of cleanliness, protection, and environmental consciousness (Pan & Chen, 2025). Due to their busy lifestyles and the unrelenting pace of innovation in everyday lives, the citizens of prime cities like Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Beijing, as well as Shanghai, tend more towards other forms of hotel accommodation. In this context, smart hotels exist as the future of cities and technological development in China.

✞ DEPENDENT VARIABLE

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

To differentiate themselves from rivals and boost customer trust, modern hotels are implementing innovative service strategies. Improving interactions with customers using AI technologies, such as help robotics, is one application of this development. Smart home service subscribers in China's major cities tend to be technologically inclined individuals who place a premium on personalisation, effectiveness and ease of use. There has been a rise in the prevalence of online purchase among entrepreneurs worldwide, including among urbanised adolescents (Górska-Warsewicz & Kulykovets, 2020). An ideal hotel should use a smart app to streamline the registrations and room administrative processes, offer exceptional service driven by AI, and suggest personalised conveniences to each guest. Consumers are seeking a compromise amongst basic competence and complex capabilities, as the current focus on technology has failed to fulfil their relentless desire for increased efficiency. In addition, guests prefer sustainable hotels that use state-of-the-art sustainable managing techniques to emphasise cleanliness, safety, and environmental consciousness (Lok et al., 2025). Due to their busy schedules and the constant presence of innovation in their everyday routines, individuals in top-tier cities such as Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Beijing, and Shanghai are looking for alternative lodging alternatives more. According to this point of view, smart hotels are the way of the future for both urban development and China's technology development.

- **Relationship between service quality and consumers of smart hotel chains in first-rated cities in China:**

According to customer feedback in China's top-rated cities, smart hotel chains' service quality determined their overall satisfaction. Hotels saw an uptick in customer contentment, loyalty, and value perceptions when they integrated conventional service aspects (availability, confidence, and empathy) with dependable, user-friendly smart technologies (room automation, mobile service requests, and check-in kiosks). Recurrence intentions, favourable word-of-mouth, and brand loyalty were the behavioural consequences that resulted from the translation of better service quality into those cognitive emotions, particularly contentment and trust (Hongjie & Suryani, 2025). Customers who were more comfortable

with technologies and youthful saw smart innovations as ways to save time and effort; on the other hand, customers who were less confident in their ability to use technologies occasionally saw automated encounters to be cold and uncaring, which reduced the influence of service quality on loyalty. Both internal and external variables, such as staff instruction and system performance, as well as urban professional and pleasure travel patterns in first-tier cities, influenced the results. Customers were most satisfied with hotels that managed to strike a good mix between humanisation and technological dependability, as seen by those networks' transparent service guarantee, easy-tounderstand customer interfaces, and speedy professional backup (Le et al., 2021).

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

- ***"H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between service quality and consumers of smart hotel chains in first-rated cities in China."***
- ***"H_1: There is a significant relationship between service quality and consumers of smart hotel chains in first-rated cities in China."***

Table 2: H_1 ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	39588.620	598	5862.347	1080.418	.000
Within Groups	492.770	601	5.426		
Total	40081.390	1199			

This investigation yielded important results. When the pvalue is less than .000 and the F-value is 1080.418, Researcher have reached the statistical significance threshold. Scientists reject the null hypothesis and accept ***"H_1: There is a significant relationship between service quality and consumers of smart hotel chains in firstrated cities in China"*** considering these findings.

9. DISCUSSION

This study uncovered that among the top-performing areas of China, the quality of service became the leading factor determining customer experience at smart hotel networks. Studies showed how hotels could substantially improve customer cheerfulness and confidence by integrating traditional elements of service like punctuality, empathy, and consistency with modern technology features like mobile apps, AI-based facilities, and robotic support. The enhanced quality of service reinforced customers' positive emotions towards hotel brands, increasing loyalty and prompting repeat visits. Customers were more likely to stick around when they felt their personal data and interactions as safe and continually reliable, highlighting the critical mediating function of confidence. Conversely, events of service failures, technological hitches, or annoying automated interactions had adverse impacts on consumer attitudes and reduced loyalty potential. The research discovered how younger, more technology-aware customers were more receptive to new servicing, while older consumers valued interpersonal connection and consistency more. To foster customer loyalty, one must find a delicate balance between technical effectiveness and the warmth of humanised service delivery, as discussed in the conversation. The accommodation industry is evolving rapidly; however, hotels that have successfully mastered the art of personalisation while ensuring operational stability have earned and maintained the trust of their customers.

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10. CONCLUSION

Researchers in China's top towns found that customers' opinions and actions towards smart hotel chains were heavily influenced by service quality. Consistently excellent services accompanied by smooth technical integrations and individualised attention resulted in higher customer loyalty. Customers were more satisfied, had increased intents to return, and were more likely to suggest the service when they trusted the technical infrastructure and human engagements. While younger, more technologically inclined customers place a premium on convenient features like smartphone check-in and services powered by AI, elderly customers place a premium on dependability and personal assistance. The results demonstrated the need of combining technological sophistication with personalised service presentation for optimal service quality. In the end, the relationship between service quality and long-term loyalty was moderated by factors such as consumer trust, contentment, and emotionally attachment. Smart hotels, according to the research, can stay competing in today's dynamic urban marketplaces by focussing on three primary areas: service quality, system reliability, and building significant interactions with customers..

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