

The Impact Of Brand Experience On The Diners' Brand Loyalty In China's Smart Hotels

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ABSTRACT

Hoteliers must contend with fierce competition in the volatile and globally interlinked market of today. To obtain a competitive advantage, many hotels are thinking about making a significant change to their branding. The idea of integrating brand experience into marketing campaigns has sparked a lot of interest in the hospitality industry. Understanding how brand experience influences customer satisfaction, retention and effective hotel performance is crucial as smart technology swiftly becomes a crucial component of the hospitality sector. The study employed quantitative methods and surveyed 649 people from different parts of China. Positive brand experiences boost hotel performance metrics like occupancy rate and revenue by increasing guest satisfaction and loyalty. Researchers discovered that for smart technologies to succeed, they must be easy to use, secure for users' data and flexible enough to accommodate their individual preferences. However, the findings highlighted underlying issues such as smart device malfunctions and an inability to meet the specific needs of some customers. How effectively smart hotels meet the needs of their customers will determine their future success. Responding to informed customer feedback by keeping an ear to the ground might be pivotal in accomplishing this objective which includes non-negotiables like worth, excellent service delivery and responsibility for the planet. The Chinese industry has conducted studies that add to the current body of smart hotel knowledge and demonstrate the brand experiences of Chinese operators. For better financial results and happier guests, hotel managers can use smart branding strategies and recommendations for new technology...

Keywords: *Brand Experience; Brand Loyalty; Smart Hotels; Internet of Things (IoT); Hospitality Industry..*

thrive in the future, they need to learn about their customers' preferences and routines to tailor their services to each individual. Everything from creating themed rooms and events to creating menus and more could fall under this category. One area where smart hotels could excel is in their attention to detail in creating a more welcoming environment for guests. In general, guests will have a better time and feel more at home if they are aware of this. Hotel guests can expect a more streamlined, personalised experience because of smart hotel technology that includes chatbots, facial recognition, delivery robots, voice-controlled instructions and data-driven robotics. Yet ethical problems and dissatisfied customers may result from technology overuse that fails to enhance service quality while simultaneously protecting privacy (Xu et al., 2022). Since smart hotel technologies can improve or worsen guests' experiences, it is important to assess them for more than just their presence. Hotel authorities also need to figure out if they are able to achieve the human-centred service goals. Hence, there has been a recent uptick in the use of technological appliances in hotel kitchens. These kinds of interactions are possible with automated food delivery systems, smart dining ordering systems and computers that suggest meals to customers. Consumers might visualise a

1. INTRODUCTION:

Hotels are responding to the explosive development of smart technology by incorporating different kinds into their operations. Smart hotels use the latest innovations to achieve much more than just improving the quality of their services. They plan to combine the hotel industry with the information technology sector in order to accomplish this goal. Smart hotels are employing more advanced and creative techniques to influence the feelings and ideas of their visitors. Customer preferences, which are impacted by the hotel's features, have an impact on the services that the hotel offers. Smart hotel concepts are predicated on the idea that people can more easily fulfil their desires when they exercise multitasking. When it comes to meeting the demands of clientele at specific times, smart hotels offer a more straightforward and profitable service. By minimising contact between humans, their highly automated service, non-contact locations, additional sanitation and personal hygiene controls lessen the probability of virus transmission (Pan & Ha, 2021). For smart hotels to

robot serving them, an AI system suggesting their meal or a dining area with smart lighting and digital decor.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Hotels are slowly upgrading their investments in modernday service models to stay ahead of the competition and delight guests in today's highly competitive hospitality industry. The perfect example of this type of innovation involves the use of AI, such as service robots, to support customer interactions. In intelligent hotels, one can never overemphasise how important experiences and emotions remain. These great drivers significantly affect customer satisfaction as well as brand commitment. Intelligent hotels can sense and respond to guests' emotional states with adaptable and versatile technology that is critical in converting an enjoyable stay into an experience one will never forget. Addressing these emotional needs in an accurate and precise manner, five-star hotels can create an environment where guests can feel attached and contented. This can bring about advertising through referrals and subsequent repeat visits (Zhou et al., 2023). An in-depth study of commonly featured terms in brand experience shows a brief summary of the customer experience paradigm in intelligent hotels. Although clients appreciate the importance of an environment that incorporates cutting-edge technologies, the human aspect and quality of services delivered remain the most important factors in ensuring their satisfaction. Secondly, while they play a crucial role in addressing the identified gap in intelligent devices and ensuring that these innovative products not only meet but also exceed consumer expectations, it remains essential to prioritise consumer satisfaction across the products and services offered by this sector (Purnami & Nurcaya, 2025). This study sets out to establish whether customer loyalty provides an interface between brand experience, intelligent hotel operations and overall impression holistically.

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between diners' positive brand experience and brand loyalty at smart hotels in China. Considering how quickly these technologies are advancing throughout the hospitality industry, it is imperative to comprehend how AI, the Internet of Things (IoT), and automated service technologies affect human behaviour and intelligence. The motivation behind this research was to examine how consumers' brand experiences and, consequently, their degree of brand loyalty are impacted by technological advancements, personalised services, and simplified interactions. It also looks into the likelihood that customer loyalty could lead to a favourable brand experience that could result in financial benefits such as retaining customers or providing hotels with an edge over competitors among other things. This study stands in contrast to earlier studies conducted in the hospitality sector which mostly concentrated on customer satisfaction, service quality and

technology adoption. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research on the social and psychological consequences of dining at smart hotels. Through the lens of brand experience, this study aims to demonstrate how contemporary hospitality services create memorable experiences that support the growth of long-lasting connections. The information will be used by Chinese hotel authorities to design a sophisticated, guestfocused environment. Smart hotels will be able to maintain a consistent growth rate and increase repeat business with the help of this.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have examined the concept of smart hotels and their ability to enhance the experience of the visitors, but the majority have focused on two main areas: how smart services can boost hotels' functional productivity and how satisfied guests will be with the upgrades. Researchers have already discovered the basic elements of smart hotel characteristics. These factors were measured using data from smart hotel rooms and the behaviours and expectations of study participants. However, over this period, these consumers' standards and expectations for smart hotels have changed significantly (Sun & Moon, 2023). Hotel responsiveness depends on the importance of the psychological effects of interactions with visitors. Smart hotels must tailor their offerings to each client's specific requirements. Every successful brand goes through several stages of development, improvement, and expansion. The fact that a brand will eventually die of old age without proper management cannot be overstated. Because of the course of time, advancements in technology and economic growth, there will always be a gap between traditional brands and the distinct range of demands of customers. If consumers are dissatisfied with established brands, they will experiment with new ones (Wang et al., 2024). In the long term, a restaurant's bottom line benefits from having loyal customers because they increase business, reduce expenses for new customers and contribute to making the establishment more competitive in the marketplace. Loyal customers not only frequent the restaurant but also promote it to others which helps it get the word out among people. The results of devoted customer loyalty include steady profits, an exceptional reputation, and continuous business growth. Customers' positive experiences and recommendations are impacted by a number of factors, according to studies on restaurant loyalty. Service quality, which encompasses aspects like food quality, service speed, and staff behaviour, is one important factor. Customers are more likely to be loyal to a brand that consistently provides high-quality service, according to research (Dirsehan & Cankat, 2021). In addition, the atmosphere and appearance of a restaurant are major factors in determining the quality of service and the loyalty of its customers. Additionally, one study examined the development of smart hotels in detail, highlighting issues like the lack of intelligent execution and the inadequate use of smart facilities. Additionally, he highlights the fact that smart hotels and innovative tourism have yet to make a major impact and offers a number of insights into the next generation of smart hotels (Zhong & Moon, 2020).

5. RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the influence of brand experience on the brand loyalty of diners?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY Research Design

This study aims to examine how brand experience influences diners' brand loyalty by using a quantitative research technique. Once the researcher had finished collecting data, they utilised SPSS 25 to do the analysis. Using descriptive statistics, this research was able to combine demographic data with project-related information. Researchers had a better grasp of the associations and their severity thanks to inferential statistics, which include probability ratios with 95% confidence intervals. Declaring statistical significance occurs when the p-value is less than 0.05. Scientists validated the data and classified it into useful statistical buckets using many ANOVA and component analyses.

Sampling

The researcher used a method of random sampling. The Rao-soft tool was used to establish that the sample in issue consisted of 587 persons. 780 questionnaires were sent out to participants in the study. Out of 673 questionnaire sets, 24 were deemed incomplete and therefore eliminated. The result was a final sample size of 649.

6.3 Data and Measurement:

The primary means of gathering information was the distribution of printed survey forms. At the outset of the survey, the researcher asked for the participants' names, addresses, and occupations. Researchers asked participants to score their opinions on several researchrelated topics using a five-point Likert scale in the second part of the survey. The inclusion of a diverse range of projects and activities was made possible by the random sampling approach. Secondary data for the research was mostly obtained from academic journals, business records and internet sources.

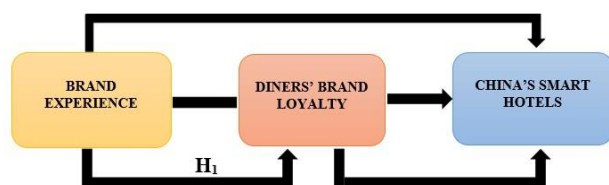
6.4 Statistical Software:

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

6.5 Statistical Tools:

Several demographic and level-specific aspects of multiple programs have been illuminated by a descriptive study. Use of analysis of variance (ANOVA), 95% confidence intervals for odds ratios, factor analysis for testing validity and theoretical reliability and other statistical methods are used in inductive statistical investigations.

7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



8. RESULT Factor Analysis

Factor Analysis (FA) may be applied using publicly accessible data to reveal hidden variables. Regression findings are often used in evaluations when no clear psychological or visual markers exist. Potential weak spots, evident linkages, and gaps may be uncovered through simulations. Results from multiple regression analyses are evaluated using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) tests. The statistical model and its dependent variables provide estimates of the dependent variable with a high degree of accuracy. Observable instances of duplicate data may occur. Reducing proportions makes data easier to interpret. KMO can provide investigators with any integer between zero and one. With a KMO score between 0.8 and 1, the sample population is deemed sufficiently large. According to Kaiser's statement, certification is contingent upon meeting the following criteria: values of 0.050 to 0.059 are very low compared to the typical range of 0.60 to 0.69. Scores between 0.70 and 0.79 are considered typical. On a scale from 0 to 1, quality is very high when values range from 0.90 to 1.00.

Table1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Testing for KMO and Bartlett's

Sampling Adequacy Measured by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin .897

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.		.897
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

This enables assertions about sampling to be made. To check for statistical significance, the researcher used Bartlett's Test of Sphericity on the correlation matrices. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic indicates that the sample size is suitable with a value of 0.897. According to Bartlett's Sphericity test, the p-value is 0.00. If Bartlett's Sphericity test returns a positive result, it means the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Brand Experience:

A consumer's "brand experience" is a collection of their enduring opinions about a brand after their first encounter with it. The brand experience is made up of everything mentioned above. All of a person's encounters with a brand are included in their brand experience. The brand experience in China's smart hotels extends beyond just providing meals. It also includes technology, personalisation and

psychological interactions that influence patrons' perceptions and memories of the brand. To stand out in the competitive smart hotel market, hotels need to provide visitors with a memorable brand experience (Dai et al., 2025). The rapid advancement of AI and IoT technology has resulted in an unexpected increase in the number of hotels providing these services. There is a distinction between brands that is determined by the manner in which these technological aspects are developed and used in order to give customers an experience that is both enjoyable and fulfilling. Even if every hotel could employ AI waiters, the distinction would be in the additional services that go beyond mere efficiency such as customised greetings, personalised menu recommendations and immersive dining entertainment. This leads to an increase in the desire to eat. People become happier as a result of this. In the thoughts and actions of the customers that it aims to serve, a smart hotel is more likely to bring to mind notions of modern-day luxury and uniqueness (Londoño-Giraldo et al., 2024).

MEDIATING VARIABLE Diners'

Brand Loyalty

The sum of a customer's numerous interactions with a specific hotel chain and their subjective, cognitive and psychological attachment to that chain is known as brand loyalty among diners. An understanding of the internal workings of connections may be gained by observing how people interact with one another. One technique for gathering information that might clarify this connection is behaviour analysis. Beyond simply being pleased with the service they receive in China's smart hotels, consumers are growing more brand loyal because of technologically advanced services like AI-powered service robotics, robotic booking platforms and IoT restaurant systems. There are several other factors to take into account in addition to satisfaction with the service. These new technologies are causing people's eating habits to change more quickly (Kim et al., 2025). Staying at a particular hotel is not sufficient to show loyalty. Loyalty is essential because of this connection. Guests tend to believe that smart hotels' technology improves their stay in a variety of ways. Making them faster, more valued, more satisfied and more individualised increases the possibility that they remain engaged with the brand. When customers can use their phones to make reservations, get AI-generated menu recommendations based on their preferences and then have a robotic server serve them, they are more likely to have a positive experience. However, when these events are viewed as consistent, reliable and engaging throughout, true devotion is nurtured (Othman et al., 2025).

Relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty of diners:

One must take into account the cognitive aspect of brand experience to understand brand loyalty. The primary variables that consumers take into account when selecting a restaurant are the standard of the food, neatness, customer service and brand distinctiveness. Following a cognitive assessment, perceptions of brand competence and credibility change. Customers may believe that a smart hotel restaurant is

dependable and of excellent quality if it is upfront about the sustainable ingredients it sources or displays its inventiveness through tech-driven dining services. Because of these evaluations, consumers are more inclined to select the company over its rivals, which in turn increases brand loyalty due to psychological confirmation. To sum up, consumer loyalty increases when brands are perceived as credible, honest, and futureoriented. The relationship between consumer loyalty and brand experience is vital because of its dynamic and diverse nature (Saber et al., 2025). Brand experiences are not spontaneous. Customer interactions take place at different stages of the customer journey such as when the customer schedules a reservation online, communicates with the brand via the internet or in person and afterwards. When it comes to smart hotels, they use comprehensive approaches that let customers interact with them via a variety of platforms including apps, AI-powered customer support, self-serve dining tools and creative dining spaces. Some people prefer to dine at restaurants and hotels that embody values like sustainability, technological innovation or luxury. These people may choose to dine at eateries that embody these values when they are staying at a hotel or going out to eat. When people have a brand experience that is consistent with their identity or the identity of the group to which they belong, they are more likely to establish a sense of loyalty to the brand and tell others about it (Guan et al., 2021).

Based on the preceding discussion, the researcher developed the following hypothesis to examine the impact of brand experience on the brand loyalty of diners. "*H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty of diners.*" "*H₁: There is a significant relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty of diners.*"

Table 2: H₁ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	43561.257	231	2351.377	885.974	.000
Within Groups	984.328	417	2.654		
Total	44545.585	648			

Several important findings have been derived from the study. If the 885.974 F-value is less than the .05 alpha level, then a p-value of 0.000 is considered statistically significant. This demonstrates that the "*H₁: There is a significant relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty of diners*" is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

9. DISCUSSION

This study underscores the importance of brand experience in cultivating customer loyalty in smart hotels across China. According to the study's findings, having pleasant experiences in all areas boosts customer loyalty. This is in line with earlier research that shows how important it is to build

emotional connections and trust through fun and memorable experiences to get people to come back. When guests use the smart features, they usually experience a feeling of modernity, convenience, and individualised service. This strengthens their connection to the brand on an emotional level that is in line with recent research suggesting that technology is key to making hospitality experiences people will never forget. Unfortunately, there are some restrictions on the study's usefulness. The results may not be generalisable to locations outside of China's major cities due to the study's concentration on urban zones. The data cannot trace the evolution of loyalty over time because the data was only collected at a single moment. In the future, researchers may delve deeper into these topics and examine how particular technological and cultural elements affect customer loyalty. However, hotel chains can stay ahead of developments and adapt to shifting consumer tastes by regularly enhancing smart technology and incorporating client feedback. Continual improvement like this ensures that visitors

always get outstanding service and enhances their overall experience.

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10. CONCLUSION

The establishment of smart hotels has completely changed the hospitality landscape in China. These hotels are dedicated to giving visitors experiences that surpass the typical bounds of hospitality. They plan to accomplish this goal by utilising the latest technological advances and innovative customer service techniques. Because of their involvement in this shift, smart hotels have grown in size. Since smart hotels have been introduced, this process has become much simpler. It is somewhat significant to observe that brand experience is evolving in response to the current change. The four ways that guests interact with a hotel's identity are through their actions, thoughts, emotions, and impressions. According to this perspective, the broad range of media that modern consumers can access is all part of the concept of brand experience. Automated check-ins, digital personal assistants, robotic food delivery and AI-powered food options are all theoretical possibilities. Customers benefit from this degree of integration since it simplifies procedures and gives the brand personality, interaction, and a human touch, all of which alter

consumers' perceptions. Furthermore, it simplifies things for customers..

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