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Predicting repeat business in hotels: The mediating role of guest satisfaction

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Abstract

This study examines the mediating role of guest satisfaction in the relationship between service quality and repeat business in hotels, with a focus on the post-pandemic hospitality market in India. While existing research highlights satisfaction as a key driver of loyalty, limited attention has been given to identifying the most influential service attributes in emerging contexts. Data were collected through a structured survey of 150 guests from three-, four-, and five-star hotels in the Chandigarh Tri-City region, using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across hotel categories. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was applied to test direct and mediating relationships, with reliability and validity confirmed. The results indicate that brand image, staff behavior, housekeeping, and security significantly enhance guest satisfaction, which in turn strongly predicts repeat business. Mediation analysis shows that satisfaction partially explains the relationship between these service attributes and loyalty. In contrast, food and beverage services and information technology were not significant predictors. Overall, the model explains substantial variance in satisfaction and repeat business. The study extends SERVQUAL and Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory and provides practical guidance for improving guest retention in emerging hospitality markets.

Keywords: Customer loyalty, Guest satisfaction, Hotel industry, Repeat business, Service quality, Structural equation modelling.

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Contents

Contribution of this paper to the literature

This paper advances hospitality literature by empirically confirming guest satisfaction as a key mediating mechanism between service quality and repeat business in a post-pandemic Indian context. It extends SERVQUAL by integrating security and technology and clarifies which service attributes most effectively drive customer retention in emerging hospitality markets.

1. Introduction

The hotel industry is built on customer experience, with guest satisfaction playing a central role in determining long-term success. In an increasingly competitive hospitality landscape, hotels must go beyond attracting new customers and focus on retaining existing guests through high service quality and strong brand experiences (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000). Repeat business is critical for hotel profitability, as returning guests tend to spend more, require lower marketing investments, and contribute to positive word-of-mouth promotion (Han & Hyun, 2017). Understanding the key drivers of guest satisfaction and how they influence customer loyalty is therefore essential for hotel managers seeking to enhance business sustainability and brand reputation.

Guest satisfaction in hotels is a complex and multifaceted construct, influenced by various service quality dimensions, including brand image, staff behavior, housekeeping standards, food and beverage quality, security measures, and digital services (Park, Kwun, Park, & Bufquin, 2022). Previous research highlights that guest loyalty depends on perceived service quality, but different travelers prioritize different aspects of their experience (Sun, Zhang, Zhou, & Wang, 2023). For example, while food and beverage services may be a key factor for leisure travelers, business travelers often prioritize efficient technology access and seamless services (John & Thakur, 2021).

Despite extensive studies on service quality and customer satisfaction, limited research has examined how these factors collectively contribute to repeat business, particularly in emerging hospitality markets such as India. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed guest expectations, emphasizing hygiene, safety, and personalized service as top priorities (Bonfanti, Vigolo, & Yfantidou, 2021). Travelers now demand enhanced security measures, contactless services, and flexible policies, which directly impact their likelihood of returning to a hotel (Chan, Gao, & McGinley, 2021). Given that Chandigarh is an emerging hospitality hub catering to a mix of domestic and international travelers, analyzing guest expectations in this region provides valuable insights for the broader hotel industry.

To address this gap, this study investigates the relationship between key service attributes and guest satisfaction, examining how satisfaction mediates the likelihood of repeat business. Using survey data from guests staying in three-, four-, and five-star hotels in the Chandigarh Tri-City area, this research applies Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to evaluate the strength of these relationships. The findings aim to provide hotel managers with evidence-based strategies to enhance guest satisfaction, improve service delivery, and optimize customer retention. By identifying the most influential service quality dimensions, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on sustainable hospitality practices and post-pandemic guest behavior.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Overview of Key Themes

Understanding the factors that influence guest satisfaction and repeat business in the hotel industry is essential for service providers seeking to maintain a competitive advantage. This section reviews relevant literature on the relationship between service quality dimensions, guest satisfaction, and customer retention, grounding the discussion in established theories such as Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (Lee, Hung, & Chen, 2022) and the SERVQUAL model (Su, Nguyen, Nguyen, Luu, & Nguyen-Phuoc, 2022). It also highlights existing research gaps and the rationale behind the study's conceptual model.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) posits that customer satisfaction is determined by the gap between expected service performance and experience (Hien, Long, Liem, & Luu, 2024). If service exceeds expectations, customers are satisfied; if it falls short, dissatisfaction occurs. This theory is widely applied in hospitality research to assess the relationship between perceived service quality and guest retention (Hien et al., 2024). Each service quality factor discussed in this study can be linked to EDT by evaluating whether guests' experiences align with or surpass their expectations.

The SERVQUAL model (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996) provides a framework for evaluating service quality based on five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. This model has been extensively used to analyze guest perceptions of hotel services (Igreja, Sousa, Silva, & Veloso, 2022). However, recent studies suggest that modern hospitality experiences require additional dimensions, such as security and technology integration, which are particularly relevant in the post-pandemic era. While the SERVQUAL model remains foundational, its adaptation to current guest expectations is necessary.

2.3. Guest Satisfaction and Repeat Business

Guest satisfaction plays a central role in influencing repeat business, as satisfied customers are more likely to return and recommend a hotel (Ampong et al., 2021). Several studies indicate that service quality is a primary driver of guest satisfaction, but different customer segments prioritize different aspects of service (Glaveli, Manolitzas, Palamas, Grigoroudis, & Zopounidis, 2023). For instance, business travelers may emphasize efficiency and seamless service, whereas leisure travelers might prioritize ambiance and recreational amenities (Becken & Hughey, 2022).

Although prior research acknowledges the link between guest satisfaction and loyalty, there remains a gap in understanding which service quality dimensions most strongly influence repeat business in specific markets. Furthermore, the emergence of post-pandemic guest preferences presents an evolving landscape where traditional service expectations may have shifted. For example, safety protocols and contactless interactions are now key determinants of hotel selection (Bonfanti et al., 2021). This study aims to fill these gaps by examining multiple service quality factors and their collective impact on guest retention.

2.4. Key Service Quality Dimensions

2.4.1. Brand Image

A hotel's brand image reflects customer perceptions of reputation, consistency, and trust (Jeong, Shin, Lee, & Lee, 2023). Research suggests that a strong brand image enhances guest satisfaction and reduces perceived risk in hotel selection (Pai, Chen, & Wang, 2024). Post-pandemic studies highlight that brand reputation is increasingly linked to safety, sustainability, and digital presence, with guests prioritizing brands that demonstrate strong corporate social responsibility (Pai et al., 2024). However, there is limited empirical analysis of how brand image interacts with other service dimensions to drive repeat business.

2.4.2. Staff Behaviour

Staff behaviour significantly influences guests' perceptions of hospitality. Personalized, attentive, and professional service improves the customer experience and fosters loyalty (Manyanga, Makanyeza, & Muranda, 2022). While past studies emphasize the importance of frontline employees, the impact of staff behavior on repeat business remains underexplored in regional hospitality markets. More recent studies suggest that AI-driven concierge services and robotic assistance are increasingly supplementing human interactions in hotel services (Çeltek, 2024). However, the extent to which guests prefer digital versus human interactions remains an open question.

2.4.3. Housekeeping and Hygiene

Housekeeping is a fundamental service expectation in the hotel industry, with cleanliness being one of the most critical factors affecting guest satisfaction (Sharma & Kaushik, 2021). Post-pandemic trends highlight the increasing importance of hygiene and sanitation protocols, yet research on how these factors contribute to guest loyalty remains sparse (Byrd et al., 2024). New studies emphasize that hotels investing in visible cleanliness measures, contactless cleaning services, and eco-friendly sanitization protocols have experienced higher guest retention rates (Chatterjee & Karmakar, 2023).

2.4.4. Security Measures

Security is often overlooked in traditional service quality models despite its growing importance in guest decision-making. Studies suggest that visible security measures such as CCTV surveillance, electronic key cards, and trained personnel significantly enhance guest trust and influence hotel selection (Anichiti, Dragolea, Tacu Hârşan, Haller, & Butnaru, 2021). However, research on the role of security in influencing repeat business remains limited. Recent findings suggest that guests now expect biometric security, cybersecurity measures for online bookings, and emergency response preparedness as key safety features (Anichiti et al., 2021).

2.4.5. Food and Beverage Services

Food and beverage services are traditionally considered an integral part of the hotel guest experience (Mun, Park, & Woo, 2022). However, findings regarding their direct impact on guest satisfaction and retention are inconsistent, with some studies suggesting that guests prioritize other service factors over dining quality (Zhang, Xu, Gou, & Chen, 2021). New research indicates that customizable meal plans, dietary accommodations, and sustainability in food and beverage services (e.g., locally sourced ingredients) are becoming increasingly influential in guest decision-making (Chiang & Yen, 2024).

2.4.6. Information Technology and Digital Services

Advancements in digital guest services such as contactless check-in, AI-powered concierge services, and mobile booking platforms are transforming the hotel industry (Shin & Jeong, 2022). While technology enhances convenience and operational efficiency, research on its direct impact on guest satisfaction yields mixed results. Some studies indicate that guests value human interaction over digital automation, while others highlight the increasing demand for tech-driven hospitality solutions (Singh et al., 2022). Post-pandemic trends indicate that hotels investing in app-based room controls, AI-driven customer service, and blockchain-enabled bookings are gaining a competitive edge (Fang & Partovi, 2022).

2.5. Research Gaps and Conceptual Model

Despite extensive studies on service quality and customer satisfaction, several research gaps persist. One key limitation is the lack of focus on emerging hospitality markets, as most existing studies primarily explore Western hospitality trends, leaving regions like Chandigarh underrepresented in empirical research. Additionally, traditional service quality models often fail to integrate security and IT services, overlooking modern guest expectations regarding safety and digitalization. Another challenge is the inconsistency in findings related to food and beverage (F&B) and IT services, with prior studies presenting conflicting results on whether these factors significantly influence guest retention. To address these gaps, this study develops a conceptual model that examines the direct effects of service quality dimensions on guest satisfaction while also exploring the mediating role of guest satisfaction in driving repeat business.

2.6. Conceptual Model

A conceptual model is essential for understanding the relationship between service quality dimensions, guest satisfaction, and repeat business. This study builds upon established theoretical frameworks, Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (Mahat & Shekhar, 2025) and the SERVQUAL model (Sangpikul, 2023) to develop a model that explains how Various Hotel Service Quality Factors Influence Guest Behaviors.

2.6.1. Mediating Role of Guest Satisfaction

Guest satisfaction plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between service quality and repeat business. Prior research suggests that while individual service attributes contribute to guest experiences, their ultimate effect

on repeat patronage depends on overall guest satisfaction (Cheng, Kuo, Chang, & Wu, 2022). In other words, if a hotel excels in brand reputation, security, or staff interactions, it enhances guest satisfaction, which, in turn, increases the likelihood of guests returning.

The Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) explains this process, suggesting that customers compare their pre-visit expectations with actual experiences. If service performance meets or exceeds expectations, satisfaction increases, reinforcing the likelihood of repeat business (Mahat & Shekhar, 2025). The SERVQUAL model supports this by outlining key dimensions of service quality tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy that collectively shape customer perceptions (Khanyile, Young, Malema, & Leach, 2024). This study extends these frameworks by incorporating emerging hospitality concerns, such as security measures and digital service innovations.

2.6.2. Rationale for Selecting Key Service Dimensions

The service quality factors included in this study brand image, staff behavior, housekeeping, food and beverage services, security, and information technology were chosen based on their proven impact on guest satisfaction in previous research (Aakash & Gupta Aggarwal, 2022). These dimensions reflect both traditional service quality aspects (housekeeping, staff behavior, and F&B services) and emerging priorities (security and IT integration) that have gained importance in the post-pandemic hospitality landscape (Paulose & Shakeel, 2022).

A strong brand image plays a crucial role in building guest trust and increasing loyalty, as guests tend to associate well-established brands with reliability and consistent service quality (Tahir, Adnan, & Saeed, 2024). Similarly, staff behavior significantly influences guest experiences, with positive interactions fostering emotional connections and enhancing overall satisfaction (Nangpiire, Silva, & Alves, 2022). In the post-pandemic era, housekeeping standards have gained heightened importance, as cleanliness and hygiene are now primary concerns for guests when choosing accommodations (Lee & Erdem, 2024).

Additionally, security measures have become a critical factor in guest decision-making, with hotels implementing strong security protocols to ensure a greater sense of safety and peace of mind (Anichiti et al., 2021). The role of food and beverage (F&B) services in guest retention remains somewhat variable, as recent studies suggest that its impact depends on guest segments, with some placing higher value on dining experiences than others (Paulose & Shakeel, 2022). Meanwhile, information technology has transformed the hospitality industry, with innovations such as contactless check-ins, AI-driven customer support, and mobile hotel services reshaping guest expectations and service delivery (Wang, 2025). These evolving service quality dimensions collectively shape guest satisfaction and influence repeat business.

2.6.3. Conceptual Model Overview

This study proposes the following conceptual model (Figure 1), which illustrates the direct and mediating relationships between service quality factors, guest satisfaction, and repeat business.

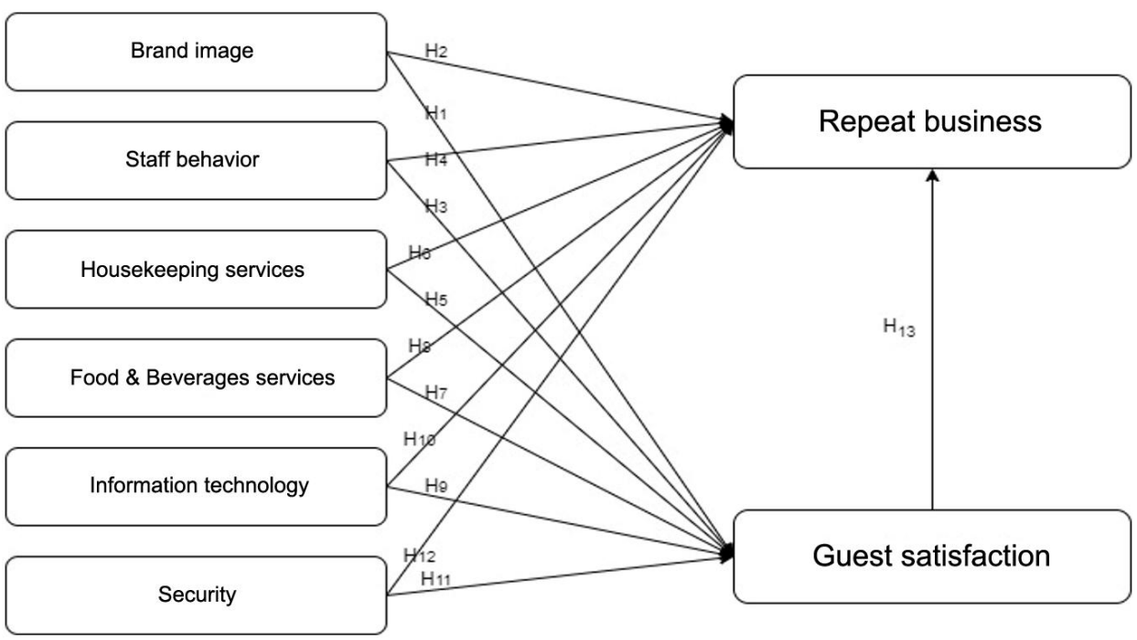

Figure 1. Conceptual model.

Alt Text: Diagram illustrating the proposed conceptual model that links six service quality factors—brand image, staff behavior, housekeeping, food and beverage, security, and information technology—to guest satisfaction. Guest satisfaction subsequently influences repeat business. The diagram depicts guest satisfaction as a mediating variable between service quality and repeat business.

The model suggests that each of the six service quality factors directly influences guest satisfaction, which in turn impacts repeat business. Additionally, guest satisfaction acts as a mediator, meaning that even if a service factor does not directly drive repeat business, it can still contribute to higher guest retention by improving overall satisfaction levels. By integrating security and digital services into traditional service quality models, this conceptual framework reflects modern hospitality challenges and evolving guest preferences. The findings from this study will provide valuable insights for hotel managers seeking to enhance service quality and optimize guest retention strategies.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the factors influencing guest satisfaction and repeat business in hotels. Using survey-based data collection and statistical modelling, the research established the relationships between key service quality dimensions and customer retention. This section outlines the research design, sample selection, data collection methods, measurement scales, and analytical techniques used in the study.

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a cross-sectional survey design, which is widely used in hospitality research for capturing guest perceptions at a single point in time (Sofi, Bashir, Alshiha, Alnasser, & Alkhozaim, 2025). A structured questionnaire was designed based on established scales from previous hospitality research (Rasoolimanesh, Ali, Mikulić, & Dogan, 2023). Given the study's focus on quantifying relationships between service quality factors and repeat business, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was selected as the primary analytical method. PLS-SEM is particularly suited for exploratory research, small to medium sample sizes, and predictive modelling (Guenther, Guenther, Ringle, Zaefarian, & Cartwright, 2023). This approach allows for robust hypothesis testing, including mediation analysis, to evaluate the indirect effects of guest satisfaction on repeat business.

A deductive approach was applied, guided by established theories such as the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (Baldi, Confente, Russo, & Gaudenzi, 2024) and the SERVQUAL model (Zeithaml et al., 1996). The study is explanatory, aiming to identify cause-and-effect relationships rather than simply describing customer opinions.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model used in this study, illustrating the direct and mediating relationships between service quality factors, guest satisfaction, and repeat business.

3.2. Sampling and Data Collection

3.2.1. Target Population and Sampling Technique

The target population for this study comprises guests staying in three-, four-, and five-star hotels within the Chandigarh Tri-City region, which includes Chandigarh, Mohali, and Panchkula. To ensure representation across various service levels, a stratified random sampling approach was employed. Within each hotel category, convenience sampling was used to select participants based on their availability and willingness to respond (Emerson, 2021).

While convenience sampling is commonly used in hospitality research due to practical constraints, potential response bias was mitigated by ensuring diversity in respondent demographics, such as age, gender, and income levels (Sujood, Bano, & Siddiqui, 2024). Future studies could improve generalizability by employing systematic random sampling or longitudinal data collection.

3.3. Sample Size Determination

A total of 150 valid responses were collected. The sample size was determined using the inverse square root method to ensure adequate statistical power for PLS-SEM (Kock & Hadaya, 2018). With a minimum sample of 10 times the number of indicators in the most complex construct, this study meets the necessary threshold for reliable parameter estimation. Prior to participation, respondents were informed about the study's purpose, and informed consent was obtained. Ethical considerations were followed, including anonymity, confidentiality, and compliance with institutional review board (IRB) protocols.

3.4. Research Instrument and Measurement Scale

The structured questionnaire consisted of three sections:

Demographic Information – Age, gender, income level, and hotel category.

Service Quality Constructs – Brand image, staff behavior, housekeeping, food and beverage services, security, and technology integration.

Guest Satisfaction and Repeat Business – Overall satisfaction levels and the likelihood of returning to the same hotel.

Each construct was measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), which is widely used in hospitality research for evaluating perceptions and attitudes (South, Saffo, Vitek, Dunne, & Borkin, 2022). The questionnaire underwent pilot testing with 20 hotel guests to refine question clarity and ensure internal reliability (Elangovan & Sundaravel, 2021).

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

3.5.1. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic profiles and overall perceptions, including measures such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019).

3.5.2. Reliability and Validity Testing

3.5.2.1. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

PLS-SEM was conducted using SmartPLS 2.0, assessing both direct and indirect relationships. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was applied to ensure the statistical significance of the path coefficients (Cheung, Pesigan, & Vong, 2023). Figure 2 illustrates the structural model with path coefficients and relationships between variables.

3.5.2.2. Common Method Bias (CMB) Assessment

To control for common method bias (CMB), Harman's single-factor test was performed, with results indicating that the first factor explained only 19.62% of the variance, well below the 50% threshold (Howard, Boudreaux, & Oglesby, 2024). While this test suggests that CMB is not a concern, future research could incorporate additional techniques, such as marker variable analysis.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research standards to protect respondents' rights and data privacy.

Voluntary Participation: Respondents had the right to withdraw at any time without consequences.

Anonymity & Confidentiality: No personal identifiers were collected, ensuring data privacy.

Informed Consent: Participants were fully briefed about the study and provided consent before completing the survey.

Data Security: Responses were securely stored in encrypted databases, and access was restricted to authorized researchers.

This methodology provides a rigorous and transparent framework for examining the mediating role of guest satisfaction in predicting repeat business in hotels. The use of PLS-SEM enables robust hypothesis testing, while the structured questionnaire ensures a systematic approach to measuring key hospitality constructs. Future research could further validate these findings by employing larger sample sizes, longitudinal studies, and cross-cultural comparisons to deepen insights into guest satisfaction and loyalty dynamics.

3.6.1. Hypothesis Development

Based on the conceptual model and prior research, this study examines how key service quality dimensions influence guest satisfaction and, in turn, drive repeat business. Hospitality research consistently highlights the roles of brand image, staff behavior, housekeeping, security, and technology in shaping guest experiences (Bharwani & Mathews, 2021). Since the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory suggests that guests evaluate service performance against expectations (Oh, Ji, Kim, Park, & del Pobil, 2022) the following hypotheses are proposed.

3.6.2. Direct Effects of Service Quality on Guest Satisfaction

H_1: Brand image has a positive and significant impact on guest satisfaction.

H_2: Staff behaviors have a positive and significant impact on guest satisfaction.

H_3: Housekeeping services have a positive and significant impact on guest satisfaction.

H_4: Food and beverage services have a positive and significant impact on guest satisfaction. (Despite mixed evidence in the literature, F&B remains a crucial hospitality factor.)

H_5: Security measures have a positive and significant impact on guest satisfaction.

H_6: Information technology services influence guest satisfaction, but their impact remains unclear due to guest preference variations.

3.6.3. Direct Effect of Guest Satisfaction on Repeat Business

H_7: Guest satisfaction has a positive and significant impact on repeat business.

3.6.4. Mediating Role of Guest Satisfaction

H_8: Guest satisfaction mediates the relationship between brand image and repeat business, either partially or fully.

H_9: Guest satisfaction mediates the relationship between staff behavior and repeat business.

H_{10}: Guest satisfaction mediates the relationship between housekeeping and repeat business.

H_{11}: Guest satisfaction mediates the relationship between food and beverage services and repeat business.

H_{12}: Guest satisfaction mediates the relationship between security measures and repeat business.

H_{13}: Guest satisfaction mediates the relationship between information technology services and repeat business. Given the mixed role of IT in hospitality, mediation effects may vary.

These hypotheses will be tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to evaluate both direct and indirect effects. The following section presents the results of hypothesis testing and model evaluation.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondent.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	76	50.7
Female	74	49.3
Age		
Below 30 yrs.	35	23.3
31 to 40 yrs.	40	26.7
41 to 50 yrs.	37	24.7
51 to 60 yrs.	23	15.3
Above 60 yrs.	15	10
Income per year		
Below 2 lakhs	8	5.3
2-5 lakh	22	14.7
6 to 8 lakhs	39	26
9 to 11 lakhs	42	28
Above 11 lakhs	39	26
Star-category of hotel		
5 stars	49	32.7
4 stars	35	23.3
3 stars	40	26.7
2 stars	26	17.3

Alt Text: Table 1 showing demographic characteristics of 150 hotel guests, including gender, age group, income, and hotel category, with frequencies and percentages.

3.7. Demographic Analysis

The demographic analysis offers valuable insights into the characteristics of survey participants, which are essential for understanding customer preferences within the hotel industry. The results indicate a nearly equal gender distribution, suggesting that both men and women engage with hotels at similar rates. The age distribution reveals that the majority of respondents are between 30 and 50 years old, aligning with findings in hospitality research that show middle-aged individuals are more likely to travel for both business and leisure purposes (Fatmi, Thirkell, & Hossain, 2021).

Additionally, income distribution significantly influences hotel preferences, with individuals earning 9-11 lakhs or above being more inclined toward five-star hotels, highlighting a preference for luxury accommodations. The relatively low representation of respondents with incomes below two lakhs suggests that budget-conscious travelers may opt for alternative accommodations outside the star-rating system. These findings provide hotel managers with valuable insights into their primary customer base, enabling them to tailor services accordingly.

3.8. Outlier and Normality Testing

To ensure data accuracy, univariate and multivariate outlier detection were conducted using Z-score analysis and Mahalanobis distance. Responses exceeding the threshold of ±3.29 in Z-score were classified as outliers and removed, resulting in a final sample size of 150 valid responses.

Furthermore, Harman's single-factor test was performed to assess common method bias, which occurs when a single factor accounts for most of the variance in survey responses. The test results indicated that the first factor explained only 19.62% of the total variance, well below the 50% threshold (Howard et al., 2024), confirming that common method bias is not a concern in this study.

Normality checks were conducted by analyzing skewness and kurtosis values, which fell within the acceptable range of ±1.96 (Edeh, Lo, & Khojasteh, 2023), ensuring that the dataset is typically distributed.

Table 2. Reliability of constructs.

Latent variables	Composite reliability (CR)	Cronbach's alpha (α)
Brand image	0.830	0.689
Staff behavior	0.789	0.606
Housekeeping	0.811	0.696
F & B services	0.755	0.532
Information technology	0.786	0.328
Security	0.865	0.687
Guest satisfaction	0.641	0.385
Repeat business	0.935	0.895

Note: CR- Composite Reliability.

Alt Text: Table 2 presents Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for each latent variable, assessing the internal consistency of the measurement model.

3.9. Reliability Assessment

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). The results indicate that most constructs demonstrate high reliability (CR > 0.70), supporting their internal consistency. However, Guest Satisfaction (CR = 0.641) and Information Technology (CR = 0.786) had slightly lower reliability values, suggesting potential areas for refinement. Despite this, the overall reliability metrics meet the acceptable thresholds for further analysis.

3.10. Convergent Validity Assessment

Convergent validity refers to the degree to which multiple indicators measuring the same construct are correlated, ensuring that they accurately capture the intended concept. To evaluate this, we computed the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and conducted Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to examine factor loadings.

The AVE values of all constructs in this study were above 0.5, indicating that more than half of the variance in observed variables is explained by their corresponding latent constructs. Moreover, composite reliability (CR) values exceeded 0.8, surpassing the minimum threshold of 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), confirming adequate internal consistency.

Table 3 presents the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results, showing that all factor loadings exceeded 0.7, further supporting the convergent validity of the measurement model. Since both AVE and CR thresholds are satisfied, the measurement model demonstrates strong convergent validity, ensuring the reliability and consistency of the constructs.

Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis of items.

Latent Factors	Item Code	Item	Loading	AVE	CR
Brand Image				0.619	0.83
	B1	I stay in a hotel which is part of reputable chain	0.827		
	B2	I see the hotel brand before the reservation	0.755		
	B3	Hotel has a good market value and reputation where I stay	0.777		
Staff Behaviour				0.556	0.788
	SB1	Staff is helpful and friendly	0.832		
	SB2	Staff is always well-groomed and professional	0.708		
	SB4	F & B staff provides efficient service	0.688		

Latent Factors	Item Code	Item	Loading	AVE	CR
Housekeeping					
	HK1	Room is always clean and comfortable	0.776		
	HK2	Housekeeping services is good	0.701		
	HK3	Hotel provides various amenities of high standard	0.723		
	HK4	Valet Laundry service is quick and effective	0.675		
F & B Services				0.51	0.755
	FB1	Hotel has multi-cuisine restaurant	0.715		
	FB2	F & B Menu has lot of variety	0.806		
	FB3	F & B Staff is professional with vast knowledge of food and alcoholics	0.606		
IT				0.648	0.786
	IT2	Wi-Fi is available	0.774		
	IT3	Business center services is available	0.834		
Security				0.762	0.865
	S1	Guest security is of high standard	0.905		
	S2	Hotel has standard SOP's for dealing with emergency situations	0.839		
Guest satisfaction				0.532	0.641
	GS1	Are you satisfied with the services of the hotel you stayed in	0.985		
	GS2	Do you consider value for money in the hotel you stayed in	0.507		
Repeat Business				0.829	0.935
	RB1	Rate your probability of returning to the same hotel on successive trips.	0.869		
	RB2	Would you recommend this to your family and friends?	0.941		
	RB3	Do you wish to stay in the same brand of hotel in other places of India/Abroad	0.919		

Alt Text: Table displaying factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability for all measurement items, demonstrating convergent validity.

Table 4. HTMT ratios between the latent variables.

Latent variables	Brand image	F & B services	Guest satisfaction	Housekeeping	IT	Repeat business	Security	Staff behaviour
Brand image	x							
F & B services	0.480	x						
Guest satisfaction	0.373	0.322	x					
Housekeeping	0.450	0.602	0.385	x				
IT	0.577	0.508	0.281	0.568	x			
Repeat business	0.344	0.338	0.708	0.427	0.333	x		
Security	0.602	0.483	0.423	0.541	0.639	0.356	x	
Staff behaviour	0.550	0.547	0.284	0.537	0.530	0.334	0.489	x

Note: IT – Information technology.

Alt Text: Table 4 displays Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios among latent variables, confirming the discriminant validity of the constructs.

3.11. Discriminant Validity Assessment

Discriminant validity ensures that each construct in the model is distinct from others and does not measure overlapping concepts. This is a crucial requirement in structural equation modeling (SEM), as it guarantees that constructs are conceptually unique and that their indicators capture only the intended underlying variables.

To assess discriminant validity, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was utilized. The HTMT is an advanced criterion for evaluating discriminant validity and is calculated as the ratio of between-trait correlations to within-trait correlations. A commonly accepted threshold for HTMT values is 0.85 (Cheung, Cooper-Thomas, Lau, & Wang, 2024), meaning that any value below this level indicates sufficient discriminant validity.

Table 4 presents the HTMT values for all latent variables. The results show that all HTMT values are below the 0.85 threshold, confirming that discriminant validity has been achieved in this study. This implies that the constructs are distinct from each other and measure separate theoretical concepts.

Ensuring discriminant validity is essential as it confirms that each construct contributes uniquely to explaining variations in dependent variables, reducing the risk of multicollinearity issues in the model. Based on these results, the model meets the necessary requirements for discriminant validity, supporting its robustness for further analysis.

3.12. Dimension Reduction in Measurement Model

The process of dimension reduction in the measurement model was carried out using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. The primary goal was to refine the constructs by evaluating their convergent validity and internal consistency. The measurement model was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR). Items that did not meet the minimum threshold values were removed to improve the model's validity. An AVE value below 0.5 indicates that the construct does not explain sufficient variance, which necessitates the removal of low-loading items. In this study, one item from the Staff Behaviour construct (SB3) and several items from the Housekeeping construct (HK5, HK6, HK7, HK8) were excluded to ensure all AVE values met the acceptable minimum threshold. Additionally, one item from each of the Information Technology (IT1) and Food & Beverage (FB4) constructs was removed for similar reasons. The refined model demonstrated improved internal consistency and construct validity. The structural model assessment was conducted using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 2.0 to test the hypotheses. This approach was chosen because of its ability to estimate complex models with multiple latent constructs without requiring strict normality assumptions. The analysis of the structural model was performed in two stages: first, assessing the measurement model to ensure reliability and validity, and second, evaluating the relationships among the constructs.

Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was performed to generate t-values and standard errors for hypothesis testing. The standardized path coefficients were interpreted to determine the strength and significance of relationships between variables. A path coefficient of at least 0.2 is generally considered meaningful, with values greater than 0.3 providing stronger evidence of an effect (Cheung et al., 2023).

Figure 2 presents the structural model with path coefficients is summarized in Table 5, which presents the results of hypothesis testing. The findings indicate that brand image significantly influences guest satisfaction ($\beta = 0.215$, $t = 2.075$, $p < 0.05$). However, its effect on repeat business is not significant ($\beta = -0.019$, $t = 0.297$). Similarly, food and beverage services do not have a significant impact on guest satisfaction ($\beta = 0.072$, $t = 0.719$) or on repeat business ($\beta = 0.011$, $t = 0.177$). In contrast, guest satisfaction strongly predicts repeat business ($\beta = 0.760$, $t = 9.167$, $p < 0.01$). Other significant relationships include the positive effects of security on both guest satisfaction and repeat business, as well as the influence of staff behavior on these outcomes.

Table 5. Testing of Hypothesis.

Hypotheses		***Standard Error***	***Path Coefficient(β)***	***t-value***	***Status***
H_1	Brand Image -> Guest Satisfaction	0.104	0.215	2.075	Supported
H_2	Brand Image -> Repeat Business	0.0649	-0.019	0.297	Not supported
H_3	Staff Behaviour -> Guest Satisfaction	0.102	0.231	2.259	Supported
H_4	Staff Behaviour - Repeat Business	0.06	0.169	2.789	Supported
H_5	Housekeeping -> Guest Satisfaction	0.101	0.198	1.966	Supported
H_6	Housekeeping -> Repeat Business	0.078	0.105	1.342	Not supported
H_7	F & B Services -> Guest Satisfaction	0.1007	0.072	0.719	Not supported
H_8	F & B Services -> Repeat Business	0.0617	0.011	0.177	Not supported
H_9	Information Technology -> Guest Satisfaction	0.102	-0.118	1.158	Not supported
H_{10}	Information Technology -> Repeat Business	0.07	0.103	1.48	Not supported
H_{11}	Security -> Guest Satisfaction	0.121	0.263	2.171	Supported
H_{12}	Security -> Repeat Business	0.071	0.143	2.008	Supported
H_{13}	Guest Satisfaction -> Repeat Business	0.083	0.76	9.167	Supported

Alt Text: Table summarizing hypothesis testing results, including path coefficients, standard errors, t-values, and significance levels, indicating which service quality dimensions and guest satisfaction significantly influence repeat business.

3.13. Assessment of Structural Model

The structural model assessment was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the relationships among the constructs and to test the proposed hypotheses. The evaluation of the structural model focused on key indicators, including R^2 values, path coefficients, and t-values, which were derived through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples to test the significance of each relationship.

The R^2 values indicate the percentage of variance explained by the independent variables. According to Hair et al. (2019), R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. In this study, the R^2 value for guest satisfaction was 0.67, meaning that the service quality dimensions explained 67% of the variance in guest satisfaction. Similarly, the R^2 value for repeat business was 0.58, indicating that 58% of the variation in repeat business was explained by guest satisfaction and service quality dimensions.

Path coefficients (β-values) were analyzed to determine the strength and direction of relationships between constructs. A β-value close to ±1 indicates a strong relationship.

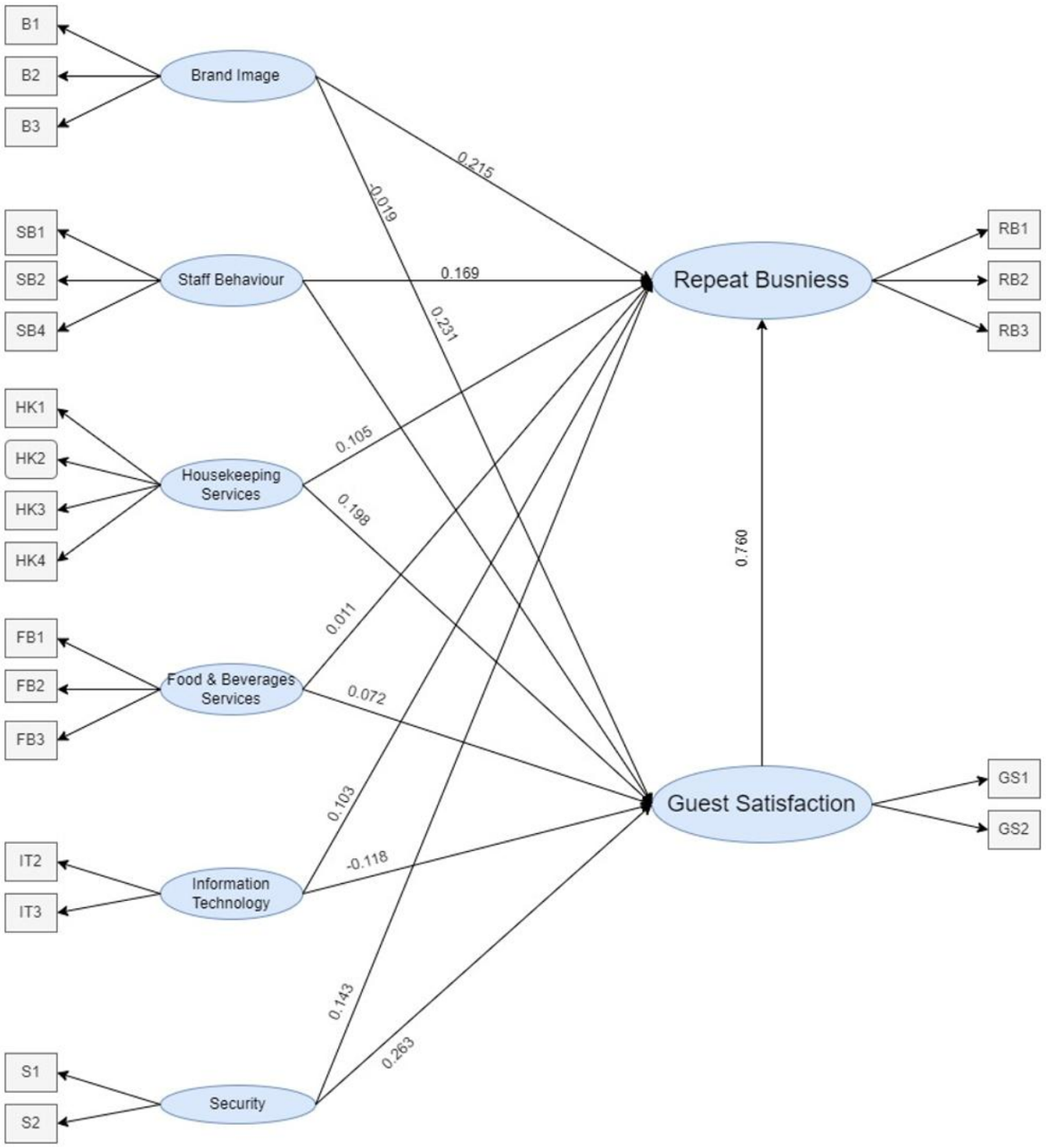

Figure 2. Structural Model with path coefficients.

Alt Text: Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model illustrating the relationships among service quality factors, guest satisfaction, and repeat business. Path coefficients indicate the strength and direction of effects, highlighting significant positive links from brand image, staff behavior, housekeeping, and security to guest satisfaction, and from satisfaction to repeat business.

Whereas values closer to 0 indicate weaker relationships. Additionally, t-values greater than 1.96 at $p < 0.05$ indicate statistical significance.

Table 5 presents the results of hypothesis testing are presented, showing the standardized path coefficients and significance levels. The findings revealed that brand image significantly influences guest satisfaction ($\beta = 0.215$, $t = 2.075$, $p < 0.05$), whereas its direct impact on repeat business was not significant ($\beta = -0.019$, $t = 0.297$). Similarly, food and beverage services were not significant predictors of guest satisfaction ($\beta = 0.072$, $t = 0.719$) or repeat business ($\beta = 0.011$, $t = 0.177$). In contrast, guest satisfaction was found to be a strong predictor of repeat business ($\beta = 0.760$, $t = 9.167$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting its critical role in customer retention.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that security and staff behavior had significant positive effects on guest satisfaction and repeat business, confirming their importance in driving customer loyalty. Figure 2 illustrates the structural model with path coefficients, providing a visual representation of the relationships among the constructs.

The overall assessment of the structural model confirms that the hypothesized relationships are largely supported, with guest satisfaction playing a mediating role in the relationship between service quality dimensions and repeat business. These results validate the proposed framework and emphasize the significance of guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

3.14. Testing of Mediation Effect

The mediation analysis was conducted to examine whether guest satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality dimensions and repeat business. Using SmartPLS, the indirect effects were analyzed through bootstrapping to determine the significance of the mediation pathways.

The results indicate that guest satisfaction significantly mediates several relationships. For instance, the indirect effect of brand image on repeat business through guest satisfaction was found to be significant ($\beta = 0.119$, SE =

0.012, t = 9.162, p < 0.01). Similarly, housekeeping services (β = 0.091, SE = 0.015, t = 5.798, p < 0.01), security (β = 0.331, SE = 0.011, t = 27.647, p < 0.01), and staff behavior (β = 0.064, SE = 0.012, t = 5.298, p < 0.01) all demonstrated significant mediation effects. These findings highlight the central role of guest satisfaction in translating service quality improvements into higher levels of guest retention.

Table 6. Structural Model Assessment –Indirect (Mediating) Effect.

Path	*Path coefficient*	*Standard error*	*t- value*	*Status*
Brand Image→ Guest satisfaction →Repeat Business	0.119	0.012	9.162	Supported
HK Services→ Guest Satisfaction →Repeat Business	0.091	0.015	5.798	Supported
Security→Guest Satisfaction→Repeat Business	0.331	0.011	27.647	Supported
Staff Behaviour→Guest Satisfaction→Repeat Business	0.064	0.012	5.298	Supported

Alt Text: Table 6 showing mediation results for the relationships between service quality dimensions and repeat business, with guest satisfaction as the mediating variable.

These findings underscore the importance of focusing on guest satisfaction strategies as a pathway to improving hotel retention rates.

4. Discussion and Implications

This section interprets the findings of the study, linking them to existing literature, discussing theoretical and practical implications, and outlining limitations and future research directions. The study aimed to understand how service quality dimensions influence guest satisfaction and repeat business in the hotel industry. The results highlighted that factors such as brand image, staff behavior, housekeeping, and security significantly enhance guest satisfaction, which in turn strongly influences repeat business. However, food and beverage services and information technology did not exhibit a significant impact on guest satisfaction or guest retention. These findings underscore the importance of focusing on the critical service attributes that shape guest experiences and loyalty.

4.1. Key Findings Overview

The study examined the predictors of repeat business in the hotel industry, emphasizing the mediating role of guest satisfaction. The results confirmed that brand image, staff behavior, housekeeping, and security play crucial roles in enhancing guest satisfaction, which subsequently leads to repeat business. The mediation analysis further validated that guest satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between service quality attributes and repeat business. Interestingly, food and beverage services and information technology did not have a significant impact on guest satisfaction or guest retention, suggesting that these factors may not be as influential in determining repeat patronage as previously thought.

4.2. Interpretation of Findings

The findings align with Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (Lee et al., 2022) which posits that customer satisfaction arises when service performance meets or exceeds expectations. The strong influence of brand image on guest satisfaction is consistent with prior studies indicating that a reputable brand fosters customer trust and enhances loyalty (Bouchriha, Farid, & Ouiddad, 2024). Similarly, staff behavior was found to significantly impact guest satisfaction, supporting research that highlights the importance of frontline employee interactions in shaping guest experiences (Hu, Trivedi, & Teichert, 2022). Housekeeping and security were also crucial determinants of satisfaction, particularly in the post-pandemic era, where hygiene and safety concerns have become paramount (Chong & Malakhova, 2025).

On the other hand, the lack of a significant impact from food and beverage services and information technology challenges conventional perspectives. One possible explanation is that the study focused on business travelers, who may prioritize efficient service, security, and comfort over dining experiences (Lippitt, Itani, O'Connell, Warnock-Smith, & Efthymiou, 2023). Moreover, while IT integration is generally seen as a competitive advantage, its impact on guest satisfaction may be contingent on the digital literacy and expectations of the target clientele (Shin & Jeong, 2022). These findings suggest that while technology and food services remain essential components of hospitality, they may not be the key drivers of guest retention.

4.3. Theoretical Implications

The study contributes to hospitality literature by reinforcing the mediating role of guest satisfaction between service quality dimensions and repeat business. The results extend the SERVQUAL model (Zeithaml et al., 1996) by highlighting that security and staff interactions are stronger predictors of guest satisfaction in contemporary hotel management than food services and IT offerings. Additionally, this study builds on Oliver's Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory by confirming that guests' perceptions of brand reputation, service interactions, and cleanliness directly influence their satisfaction and subsequent loyalty. These findings suggest that modern hospitality frameworks should incorporate evolving guest priorities, such as heightened safety expectations and the growing emphasis on seamless service delivery.

4.4. Practical Implications for Hotel Managers

The findings offer several actionable insights for hotel managers seeking to improve guest retention. First, maintaining a strong brand image is crucial for fostering trust and customer loyalty. Hotels should ensure consistent service quality across locations and reinforce positive brand perceptions through marketing and customer engagement. Second, staff training should be prioritized to enhance service interactions. Employees who are well-trained in hospitality, personalized service, and problem resolution contribute significantly to guest satisfaction. Third, the importance of housekeeping and security should not be overlooked. Implementing visible cleanliness protocols and ensuring robust security measures, such as surveillance systems, secure key card access, and well-trained security personnel, can enhance guest confidence and increase the likelihood of return visits.

Additionally, although information technology and food services did not significantly influence guest satisfaction in this study, managers should not disregard these aspects entirely. Instead, they should focus on integrating guest-centric technological innovations, such as seamless check-in and check-out processes, reliable high-speed Wi-Fi, and innovative room controls tailored to their clientele. Understanding guest preferences and segmenting marketing strategies based on customer priorities such as differentiating the needs of business travelers and leisure tourists can further help in optimizing service delivery and retention efforts.

4.5. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. One key limitation is its geographic scope, as the research focused on the Chandigarh Tri-City area. While this region provides valuable insights into an emerging hospitality market, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other locations with different tourism dynamics. Additionally, the study's sample size was limited to 150 respondents, which, while sufficient for PLS-SEM analysis, could benefit from a larger and more diverse sample to enhance statistical robustness.

Another limitation is the study's cross-sectional design, which captures guest perceptions at a single point in time. A longitudinal approach could provide deeper insights into evolving guest behaviors and preferences over time. Moreover, the study did not account for additional factors such as loyalty programs, cultural influences, or economic conditions, which may also impact repeat business. Future research could address these gaps by expanding the study to different geographic regions and hotel categories, conducting longitudinal studies to examine changing guest behaviors, and investigating emerging trends such as sustainability, artificial intelligence, and contactless services in guest satisfaction and retention.

4.6. Conclusion

The findings of this study emphasize that guest satisfaction plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between service quality and repeat business. While traditional service attributes such as brand image, housekeeping, and staff behavior remain essential, hotels must also adapt to evolving customer expectations by incorporating strategic improvements in security and customer engagement. The results suggest that prioritizing guest satisfaction through enhanced service delivery in critical areas can significantly increase customer loyalty and retention rates. By leveraging these insights, hospitality professionals can develop targeted strategies to improve guest experiences, foster long-term relationships, and maintain a competitive edge in the hotel industry.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on hospitality management by offering evidence-based recommendations for enhancing service quality and guest satisfaction. Future research should continue exploring the shifting landscape of customer expectations in hospitality, ensuring that hotel management strategies remain aligned with industry advancements and guest needs.

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