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UNLOCKING SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN MID-SCALE HOTELS: A SEQUENTIAL MEDIATION MODEL OF MULTI-DIMENSIONAL QUALITY PERCEPTIONS, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION, REPATRONAGE INTENTIONS, AND POSITIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

MEMBUKA KEUNGGULAN KOMPETITIF BERKELANJUTAN PADA HOTEL KELAS MENENGAH: MODEL MEDIASI SEKUENSIAL PERSEPSI KUALITAS MULTIDIMENSI, KEPUASAN PELANGGAN, NIAT UNTUK KEMBALI MENGINAP, DAN REKOMENDASI POSITIF

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ABSTRACT
This study examines the mechanism through which multidimensional hotel quality perceptions translate into customer-level perceptions of sustained competitive advantage in the mid-scale hotel segment. The model integrates Bitner's servicescape framework, service quality theory, Expectation-Confirmation Theory, and the resource-based/dynamic-capabilities perspectives. Physical environment quality, service personnel quality, and experience quality are specified as exogenous constructs; customer satisfaction and repatronage intention are modeled as sequential mediators; positive recommendations are included as a parallel behavioral outcome; and perceived sustained competitive advantage is positioned as the distal outcome. A quantitative cross-sectional design is specified for guests of urban three-star hotels, with a five-point Likert questionnaire and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). For manuscript-development purposes, a simulated dataset of 384 usable responses is analyzed. The simulated results indicate that all three quality dimensions positively predict customer satisfaction, with experience quality showing the largest coefficient. Customer satisfaction significantly predicts both repatronage intention and positive recommendations. Repatronage intention and positive recommendations subsequently predict perceived sustained competitive advantage. The serial indirect effects from each quality dimension through satisfaction and repatronage intention are statistically significant in the simulated model. The findings illustrate how operational quality can be translated into relational and strategic value when customer evaluations accumulate into repeat patronage and advocacy. Because the numerical results are simulated, they should not be presented as evidence from actual respondents or submitted as empirical findings without replacing them with genuine data.
Keywords: servicescape; service personnel quality; experience quality; customer satisfaction; repatronage intention; positive recommendations; sustained competitive advantage; mid-scale hotels.

ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini menganalisis mekanisme bagaimana persepsi kualitas hotel yang multidimensional diterjemahkan menjadi persepsi pelanggan mengenai keunggulan kompetitif berkelanjutan pada segmen hotel kelas menengah. Model mengintegrasikan kerangka servicescape Bitner, teori kualitas layanan, Expectation-Confirmation Theory, serta perspektif resource-based view dan dynamic capabilities. Physical environment quality, service personnel quality, dan experience quality ditempatkan sebagai konstruk eksogen; customer satisfaction dan repatronage intention sebagai mediator berurutan; positive recommendations sebagai keluaran perilaku paralel; dan perceived sustained competitive advantage sebagai keluaran distal. Penelitian dirancang menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif cross-sectional terhadap tamu hotel bintang tiga di kawasan perkotaan, instrumen kuesioner skala Likert lima poin, dan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Untuk keperluan pengembangan manuskrip, digunakan dataset simulasi sebanyak 384 respons yang dapat diolah. Hasil simulasi menunjukkan bahwa ketiga dimensi kualitas berpengaruh positif terhadap kepuasan pelanggan, dengan experience quality memiliki koefisien terbesar. Kepuasan pelanggan berpengaruh signifikan terhadap repatronage intention dan positive recommendations. Selanjutnya, repatronage intention dan positive recommendations berpengaruh terhadap perceived sustained competitive advantage. Efek tidak

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langsung berurutan dari masing-masing dimensi kualitas melalui kepuasan dan repatronage intention juga signifikan dalam model simulasi. Temuan tersebut menggambarkan bagaimana kualitas operasional dapat dikonversi menjadi nilai relasional dan strategis ketika evaluasi pelanggan terakumulasi dalam perilaku kunjungan ulang dan advokasi. Karena angka empiris dalam manuskrip ini merupakan data simulasi, hasil tersebut tidak boleh direpresentasikan sebagai bukti dari responden nyata atau diajukan sebagai temuan empiris sebelum diganti dengan data penelitian aktual.
Kata Kunci: servicescape; kualitas personel layanan; kualitas pengalaman; kepuasan pelanggan; niat berkunjung kembali; rekomendasi positif; keunggulan kompetitif berkelanjutan; hotel kelas menengah.

1. INTRODUCTION

The urban mid-scale hotel segment operates in a particularly difficult competitive environment because the core accommodation product is relatively standardized while customers can compare prices, facilities, ratings, and reviews with minimal search costs. Under such conditions, competitive advantage cannot be understood only as the possession of physical facilities. It is also shaped by how customers experience the service system and whether those experiences generate satisfaction, behavioral continuity, and favorable market advocacy.

The uploaded manuscript identifies an important theoretical problem: hospitality research has often concentrated on luxury properties, whereas three-star urban hotels must create differentiated value under tighter resource constraints. The source manuscript therefore proposes an integrated model linking physical environment quality, service personnel quality, experience quality, customer satisfaction, repatronage intentions, recommendations, and sustained competitive advantage.

The physical environment is strategically relevant because service consumption takes place in an environment that customers can directly observe and interpret. Bitner's servicescape framework explains how ambient conditions, spatial layout, functionality, signs, symbols, and artifacts can affect customer and employee responses. The original framework explicitly connects physical surroundings with organizational and marketing objectives, making servicescape a theoretically appropriate antecedent of customer evaluations in hospitality settings (Bitner, 1992).

Human delivery represents a second source of differentiation. In hotel services, employees simultaneously perform operational, relational, and recovery functions. Responsiveness, courtesy, reliability, and problem-solving behavior influence whether the service promise is experienced as credible. This logic is consistent with the broader service-quality tradition developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), while hotel research has also linked service quality and satisfaction to loyalty outcomes (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000; Kuo et al., 2013).

Experience quality constitutes a third dimension. Contemporary hotel consumption is not limited to functional service delivery; guests evaluate the overall experiential episode, including emotional, hedonic, aesthetic, and memorable elements. This distinction is important because two hotels can provide similar rooms and basic services while generating substantially different overall experiences.

Expectation-Confirmation Theory provides the explanatory mechanism for translating quality perceptions into satisfaction. Oliver (1980) conceptualized satisfaction as a function of expectations and disconfirmation and showed that satisfaction can influence subsequent behavioral intentions. In a hotel setting, customers who perceive performance as meeting or exceeding expectations are expected to develop stronger satisfaction and stronger intentions to continue the relationship.

At the organizational level, resource-based reasoning suggests that valuable and difficult-to-imitate resources can underpin sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Dynamic capabilities extend this logic by emphasizing the firm's capacity to integrate,

reconfigure, and renew resources in changing environments (Teece et al., 1997). In hospitality, accumulated customer relationships, repeat patronage, reputation, and service-learning routines can therefore be interpreted as relational resources rather than merely short-term marketing outcomes.

The present study contributes by connecting these theoretical levels in one sequential model. Instead of treating satisfaction, repatronage, advocacy, and competitive advantage as independent endpoints, the model proposes a causal chain in which multidimensional quality perceptions shape satisfaction, satisfaction shapes repatronage, and repatronage contributes to customer-perceived sustained competitive advantage. Positive recommendations are modeled as a complementary behavioral pathway.

The study addresses three questions: (1) Do physical environment quality, service personnel quality, and experience quality predict customer satisfaction? (2) Does customer satisfaction predict repatronage intention and positive recommendations? and (3) Do repatronage intention and positive recommendations connect customer evaluations with perceived sustained competitive advantage? The proposed model is tested using PLS-SEM, which is suitable for complex predictive path models containing multiple latent constructs and mediation relationships (Hair et al., 2019).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Servicescape and Physical Environment Quality

Servicescape refers to the physical setting in which a service is produced and consumed. Bitner (1992) argues that physical surroundings can influence customer and employee behavior and can support organizational and marketing objectives. In hotels, relevant cues include cleanliness, temperature, lighting, spatial arrangement, accessibility, signage, room condition, lobby atmosphere, and perceived maintenance.

Physical cues can reduce uncertainty because customers cannot fully evaluate an intangible service before consumption. A coherent and well-maintained environment can therefore function as a tangible signal of expected service performance. Hotel research also indicates that travelers use physical environment cues alongside service-related attributes when forming evaluations (LeBlanc & Nguyen, 1996).

H1: Physical environment quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction in mid-scale hotels.

2.2 Service Personnel Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Service personnel quality captures the customer's evaluation of frontline employee behavior and competence. In hospitality, the employee is part of the service itself because interaction is often inseparable from the consumption experience. Reliability, responsiveness, assurance, courtesy, empathy, and problem resolution are therefore expected to influence satisfaction.

The logic is consistent with service-quality theory, in which customers compare service performance with expectations and use observable delivery characteristics to form quality judgments (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Hotel studies have also found a positive association between service quality and satisfaction and subsequent loyalty outcomes (Kuo et al., 2013).

H2: Service personnel quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction in mid-scale hotels.

2.3 Experience Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Experience quality refers to the customer's holistic assessment of the consumption episode, including emotional, hedonic, aesthetic, and memorable aspects. It differs from functional service quality because the construct emphasizes what the customer experiences across the entire journey rather than the performance of isolated service attributes.

A multidimensional view of hotel value similarly recognizes that customer evaluations can contain both cognitive and affective components. El-Adly (2019), for example, found that several dimensions of hotel perceived value were associated with satisfaction and loyalty, while some dimensions were not. This suggests that customer responses depend on which experiential value dimensions are activated.

H3: Experience quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction in mid-scale hotels.

2.4 Customer Satisfaction and Repatronage Intention

Repatronage intention represents the customer's stated likelihood of returning to the same hotel or brand. From an ECT perspective, satisfaction is a post-consumption evaluation generated by comparison between expected and perceived performance. A favorable evaluation should reduce the motivation to switch and increase the perceived value of maintaining the relationship.

Hotel research has repeatedly connected satisfaction with loyalty-related outcomes. Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) identified satisfaction and image as important components of hotel customer loyalty, while El-Adly (2019) found a positive role for customer satisfaction in the hotel value-loyalty relationship.

H4: Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on repatronage intention.

2.5 Customer Satisfaction and Positive Recommendations

Positive recommendations, or positive word-of-mouth intention, represent a behavioral expression that extends beyond the customer's own future purchase. A satisfied customer may recommend a hotel because the recommendation transfers a favorable consumption judgment to another person and reinforces the customer's own positive evaluation.

Because recommendation behavior is more socially visible than private repatronage, it provides an additional pathway through which customer satisfaction can contribute to a hotel's market reputation.

H5: Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on positive recommendations.

2.6 Repatronage, Recommendations, and Sustained Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage is traditionally a firm-level construct. Barney (1991) explains sustained competitive advantage in terms of resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and difficult to substitute. In the present customer-level study, the distal construct is therefore operationalized as perceived sustained competitive advantage: the customer's perception that the hotel offers a differentiated, attractive, and defensible value proposition relative to comparable mid-scale alternatives.

This operational distinction is important. The study does not claim that individual guests can directly measure accounting performance or firm-level economic rents. Instead, it examines whether accumulated relational outcomes—repeat patronage and favorable recommendations—are associated with a customer-perceived competitive position. Dynamic capabilities theory supports the broader organizational interpretation because repeated service interactions can generate learning, adaptation, and relationship resources that are difficult for competitors to reproduce exactly (Teece et al., 1997).

H6: Repatronage intention has a positive and significant effect on perceived sustained competitive advantage.

H7: Positive recommendations have a positive and significant effect on perceived sustained competitive advantage.

2.7 Sequential Mediation

The central contribution of the model is the sequential mediation mechanism. The logic is that quality perceptions are not expected to create strategic value instantaneously. Instead, customers first interpret service attributes and experiences, form an overall satisfaction judgment, and then convert that judgment into behavioral continuity. Repatronage intention represents a relational mechanism through which satisfaction becomes a repeated market relationship.

Accordingly, the model predicts that each quality dimension has an indirect effect on perceived sustained competitive advantage through a sequential process involving customer satisfaction and repatronage intention. This mechanism extends conventional service-quality models by connecting micro-level service stimuli with a strategic outcome.

H8a: Customer satisfaction and repatronage intention sequentially mediate the relationship between physical environment quality and perceived sustained competitive advantage.

H8b: Customer satisfaction and repatronage intention sequentially mediate the relationship between service personnel quality and perceived sustained competitive advantage.

H8c: Customer satisfaction and repatronage intention sequentially mediate the relationship between experience quality and perceived sustained competitive advantage.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design and Context

The study uses a quantitative, explanatory, cross-sectional design. The intended population consists of adult guests who have completed at least one overnight stay at an urban mid-scale (three-star) hotel. The unit of analysis is the individual hotel guest. Data collection is designed to occur immediately after checkout or within seven days after the stay to reduce recall error.

The original uploaded manuscript specifies structured self-administered questionnaires, accidental/non-probability sampling, five-point Likert scales, and SEM using SmartPLS or AMOS. In this expanded manuscript, PLS-SEM is selected because the model is prediction-oriented and contains multiple mediation paths.

3.2 Sample and Simulated Dataset

For manuscript-development purposes, 420 questionnaires were assumed to have been distributed and 384 usable responses were retained after screening, corresponding to an assumed usable-response rate of 91.4%. These numbers are entirely simulated and do not represent actual fieldwork.

Table 1. Correspondence Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	181	47.1
	Female	203	52.9
Age	18–25	82	21.4
	26–35	128	33.3
	36–45	96	25.0
	46–55	54	14.1
	≥56	24	6.3
Purpose	Leisure	241	62.8

Characteristic	Category	n	%
	Business	143	37.2
Previous stay	First stay	226	58.9
	Repeat guest	158	41.1

Source: Data Processed, 2026

3.3 Measurement Development

All constructs are modeled reflectively and measured with multiple indicators using a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Items are adapted conceptually from established service-quality, servicescape, satisfaction, loyalty, and strategic-resource literature and then contextualized for mid-scale hotels. Because the present dataset is simulated, the values in the measurement results below should be treated as an analytical demonstration rather than evidence that a validated instrument has been established.

Table 2. Measurement Development

Construct	Code	Indicative indicators	Source basis
Physical Environment Quality	PEQ	cleanliness; ambience; layout; room condition; signage	Bitner (1992); LeBlanc & Nguyen (1996)
Service Personnel Quality	SPQ	responsiveness; courtesy; reliability; competence; empathy	Parasuraman et al. (1988)
Experience Quality	EXQ	enjoyment; memorable experience; emotional value; aesthetics; overall experience	El-Adly (2019); hospitality experience literature
Customer Satisfaction	SAT	overall satisfaction; confirmation of expectations; right decision; satisfaction with experience	Oliver (1980)
Repatronage Intention	REP	intention to return; first choice; future stay; willingness to reuse	Kandampully & Suhartanto (2000); El-Adly (2019)
Positive Recommendations	WOM	recommend to others; say positive things; encourage others to stay	Kandampully & Suhartanto (2000)
Perceived Sustained Competitive Advantage	PSCA	distinctiveness; superior value; favorable comparison; difficult-to-replace experience	Barney (1991); Teece et al. (1997)

3.4 Data Analysis

PLS-SEM is conducted in two stages. First, the measurement model is assessed through indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha are expected to exceed 0.70, while average variance extracted (AVE) is expected to exceed 0.50. Discriminant validity is examined using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT).

Second, the structural model is evaluated using standardized path coefficients, bootstrap confidence intervals, t-values, p-values, R^2, f^2, and predictive relevance. Bootstrapping is specified with 5,000 resamples. The reporting logic follows established PLS-SEM guidance (Hair et al., 2019) and subsequent work emphasizing robustness checks (Sarstedt et al., 2020).

Serial mediation is tested using the specific indirect effect of PEQ/SPQ/EXQ through SAT and REP to PSCA. An indirect effect is interpreted as statistically supported when its

bootstrap confidence interval does not include zero. The model is also assessed for multicollinearity and predictive performance.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Physical Environment Quality	4.03	0.56	1.80	5.00
Service Personnel Quality	4.11	0.52	2.00	5.00
Experience Quality	3.98	0.60	1.60	5.00
Customer Satisfaction	4.05	0.55	1.75	5.00
Repatronage Intention	3.91	0.68	1.50	5.00
Positive Recommendations	3.96	0.63	1.50	5.00
Perceived Sustained Competitive Advantage	3.88	0.64	1.50	5.00

4.2 Measurement Model

The simulated measurement model produced acceptable reliability and convergent validity. All retained indicators were assumed to have standardized loadings above 0.70. Composite reliability values ranged from 0.87 to 0.94, Cronbach's alpha from 0.82 to 0.92, and AVE from 0.58 to 0.79.

Table 4. Measurement Model

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite reliability	AVE	Decision
PEQ	0.88	0.91	0.67	Acceptable
SPQ	0.90	0.93	0.72	Acceptable
EXQ	0.87	0.91	0.67	Acceptable
SAT	0.91	0.94	0.79	Acceptable
REP	0.86	0.90	0.64	Acceptable
WOM	0.84	0.89	0.67	Acceptable
PSCA	0.82	0.87	0.58	Acceptable

4.3 Discriminant Validity

The simulated HTMT ratios ranged from 0.34 to 0.82, remaining below the conservative threshold of 0.85. This pattern indicates that the constructs were sufficiently distinct in the simulated measurement model.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity

Construct pair	HTMT	Assessment
PEQ–SPQ	0.71	Pass
PEQ–EXQ	0.78	Pass
SPQ–EXQ	0.82	Pass
PEQ–SAT	0.76	Pass
SPQ–SAT	0.74	Pass
EXQ–SAT	0.81	Pass
SAT–REP	0.79	Pass
SAT–WOM	0.72	Pass
REP–PSCA	0.80	Pass
WOM–PSCA	0.69	Pass

4.4 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The simulated structural model generated an R^2 of 0.71 for customer satisfaction, 0.62 for repatronage intention, 0.57 for positive recommendations, and 0.66 for perceived sustained competitive advantage. These values indicate substantial explained variance within the simulated dataset, although they should not be interpreted as evidence of predictive performance in the real hotel population.

Table 6. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	95% bootstrap CI	Decision (simulated)
H1	PEQ → SAT	0.27	5.41	<0.001	[0.17, 0.37]	Supported
H2	SPQ → SAT	0.31	6.18	<0.001	[0.21, 0.41]	Supported
H3	EXQ → SAT	0.39	8.07	<0.001	[0.29, 0.49]	Supported
H4	SAT → REP	0.79	24.63	<0.001	[0.72, 0.85]	Supported
H5	SAT → WOM	0.75	21.11	<0.001	[0.67, 0.82]	Supported
H6	REP → PSCA	0.54	10.72	<0.001	[0.44, 0.64]	Supported
H7	WOM → PSCA	0.31	6.17	<0.001	[0.21, 0.41]	Supported

4.5 Serial Mediation Analysis

The simulated indirect effects were statistically different from zero. The strongest serial indirect effect was observed for experience quality, followed by service personnel quality and physical environment quality. This pattern is consistent with the proposed mechanism in which customer experience first shapes satisfaction, satisfaction generates behavioral continuity, and repeated patronage contributes to a favorable competitive-position perception.

Table 7. Mediation Analysis

Indirect path	Indirect β	t-value	p-value	95% bootstrap CI	Result
PEQ → SAT → REP → PSCA	0.115	4.91	<0.001	[0.073, 0.164]	Supported
SPQ → SAT → REP → PSCA	0.132	5.36	<0.001	[0.087, 0.183]	Supported
EXQ → SAT → REP → PSCA	0.166	6.34	<0.001	[0.115, 0.219]	Supported

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Quality Perceptions as Upstream Drivers of Satisfaction

The simulated findings support the proposition that customer satisfaction in mid-scale hotels is multidimensional. Physical environment quality, service personnel quality, and experience quality each exhibit positive relationships with satisfaction. This result is theoretically consistent with the servicescape perspective because customers encounter the service through a physical environment, human interaction, and a broader consumption experience.

The relative coefficients also provide a useful conceptual insight. Experience quality has the largest simulated coefficient, suggesting that functional execution alone may be insufficient when customers evaluate the total hotel episode. A hotel can maintain clean rooms and responsive employees while still producing an ordinary experience. Conversely, experiential distinctiveness can strengthen the customer's holistic evaluation when it is supported by competent service delivery and a coherent physical environment.

The finding does not imply that experience quality is universally more important than physical or personnel quality. The coefficients are generated from simulated data and therefore cannot establish an empirical ranking. In an actual study, the relative effects should be interpreted only after testing measurement invariance, sampling adequacy, model specification, and contextual heterogeneity.

5.2 Satisfaction as the Central Evaluative Mechanism

The simulated SAT - REP coefficient is strong and positive, which is consistent with Expectation-Confirmation Theory. Satisfaction represents the point at which multiple service cues are consolidated into an overall post-consumption evaluation. Once the customer perceives the hotel experience as satisfactory, returning to the same provider becomes a lower-risk behavioral option.

This result also aligns with hotel research showing that satisfaction is connected to loyalty-related outcomes. El-Adly (2019) reported a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and hotel customer loyalty, while Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) emphasized the role of satisfaction and image in hotel loyalty. The present model extends that logic by placing repatronage between satisfaction and perceived competitive advantage.

5.3 Satisfaction and Positive Recommendations

The simulated SAT - WOM coefficient is also strong. The interpretation is straightforward: satisfied customers are more likely to communicate positive evaluations to others. In a hotel context, recommendations can have strategic importance because prospective guests often rely on peer information, online reviews, and informal recommendations to reduce uncertainty before booking.

The model nevertheless treats positive recommendations as a behavioral consequence rather than an automatic source of competitive advantage. The downstream effect is tested separately through the WOM–PSCA relationship, allowing the model to distinguish personal behavioral continuity from reputation-related effects.

5.4 From Customer Loyalty to Perceived Competitive Advantage

The positive simulated effects of repatronage intention and recommendations on perceived sustained competitive advantage support the strategic interpretation of relational outcomes. Repeat customers can reduce dependence on continuous acquisition, while positive recommendations can increase the hotel's perceived attractiveness to new customers. These outcomes can accumulate into relational assets.

This argument is compatible with Barney's (1991) resource-based view to the extent that relational resources can become valuable and difficult to imitate. It also fits the dynamic-capabilities perspective when hotel operators use customer feedback, repeated interactions, and service learning to adapt routines. However, the empirical model should not be interpreted as directly proving firm-level sustained competitive advantage because the dependent construct is measured from customer perceptions rather than objective firm performance.

5.5 Theoretical Contribution

The primary theoretical contribution is the integration of three levels of explanation. First, the servicescape and service-quality perspectives explain the antecedent quality perceptions. Second, ECT explains the evaluative conversion from perceived performance to satisfaction and subsequent intention. Third, the resource-based and dynamic-capabilities perspectives provide an organizational interpretation of accumulated relational outcomes. The resulting sequence connects service encounters with a strategic market-position construct.

A second contribution is the use of serial mediation rather than a single mediator. The model suggests that customer satisfaction alone is not the endpoint. Satisfaction becomes strategically consequential when it is converted into repeated patronage, and the relationship is further reinforced when customers communicate positive evaluations to other market participants.

5.6 Managerial Implications

For mid-scale hotel managers, the model implies that quality investment should be managed as an interconnected system. Physical improvements should focus on cues that guests directly encounter, including cleanliness, maintenance, spatial convenience, ambience, and functional accessibility. Personnel development should prioritize responsiveness, courtesy, reliability, and recovery capability. Experience design should identify moments that can make a stay distinctive without requiring luxury-level capital expenditure.

The sequential structure also suggests that customer satisfaction metrics should not be evaluated independently from repatronage behavior. A hotel may achieve high satisfaction scores but fail to translate them into repeat business if switching costs, price differences, location, or competitor promotions dominate the decision. Therefore, satisfaction tracking should be combined with actual repeat-stay data and customer-level retention metrics in future managerial applications.

Positive recommendations should similarly be monitored as a separate outcome. Recommendation intention, online review behavior, referral activity, and sentiment patterns can be used as complementary indicators of relationship strength. These measures can help managers identify whether a satisfactory service experience is being converted into market advocacy.

6. Robustness and Research Quality Considerations

A Scopus-oriented empirical submission should not rely solely on p-values. The final real-data analysis should report effect sizes, confidence intervals, explained variance, predictive assessment, discriminant validity, collinearity diagnostics, and robustness checks. PLS-SEM reporting should follow current methodological recommendations rather than treating a significant path coefficient as sufficient evidence of model quality (Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2020).

The real study should also address common method bias because the constructs are measured from the same respondents at approximately the same time. Procedural remedies should include clear item wording, psychological separation of constructs, anonymity, and

careful questionnaire design. Statistical checks can be reported as supplementary evidence, but they should not substitute for good research design.

The cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation. The proposed sequence is theoretically motivated, but longitudinal or multi-wave data would provide stronger evidence for the temporal ordering of satisfaction, repatronage, and competitive outcomes. In addition, customer-level perceptions should ideally be complemented with hotel-level indicators such as occupancy, repeat-guest share, average daily rate, RevPAR, review ratings, or customer-acquisition cost if the research objective is to establish firm-level competitive advantage.

7. CONCLUSION

This study develops an integrated model explaining how multidimensional hotel quality perceptions can be converted into customer-level perceptions of sustained competitive advantage through satisfaction and repatronage. The conceptual logic is grounded in servicescape theory, service-quality theory, Expectation-Confirmation Theory, resource-based reasoning, and dynamic capabilities. The simulated analysis indicates positive relationships across the proposed structural chain and significant serial mediation through satisfaction and repatronage.

The principal implication is that competitive advantage in mid-scale hotels should be understood as an accumulated process rather than a single service attribute. Physical environment, personnel performance, and experience quality constitute upstream customer-facing resources; satisfaction is the central evaluative mechanism; repatronage and recommendations represent relational and market-facing outcomes; and perceived competitive advantage is the distal customer-level consequence.

The principal limitation of this manuscript is decisive: all numerical results, respondent characteristics, descriptive statistics, measurement statistics, path coefficients, and mediation results are simulated. They are included solely to demonstrate a complete IMRAD manuscript structure and cannot be represented as evidence from actual hotel guests. Before journal submission, the simulated dataset and corresponding results must be replaced with genuine observations and rerun using reproducible analysis files.

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