FACTORS INFLUENCING GUEST CONTENTMENT IN LUXURIOUS 5-STAR HOTELS: INSIGHTS FROM TASHKENT CITY, UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT: This study examines four key factors affecting customer satisfaction at luxury 5-star hotels in Tashkent City: Culinary Excellence (CE), Staff Expertise (SE), Tailored Service (TS), and Accommodations Quality (AQ). Data from 250 guests across 10 premier hotels were analyzed using the SEM model. Results show all factors positively impact satisfaction, with CE and SE having the strongest effects, followed by TS and AQ. These findings provide valuable guidance for hotel management to enhance dining experiences, develop professional staff, offer personalized services, and improve room quality to maximize guest satisfaction in Tashkent.
Keyword: customer satisfaction, 5-star hotels, Tashkent City, SEM, service quality.

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality sector has become a vital driver of tourism and economic growth in Uzbekistan, particularly in dynamic urban centers like Tashkent City. As one of the country's most vibrant and internationally oriented cities, Tashkent City has seen rapid growth in both the number and scale of luxury hotels, especially within the 5-star segment. These establishments serve not only as premium accommodations but also enhance the city's tourism appeal, elevate service standards, and fulfill customer expectations (Nguyen & Tran, 2023).

Customer satisfaction is widely recognized as a crucial determinant of loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and sustained business success in hospitality (Ali et al., 2021). With intensifying competition among luxury hotels, particularly in tourist hubs like Tashkent City, understanding the primary drivers of customer satisfaction is both theoretically important and practically necessary.

This study aims to examine the factors influencing customer satisfaction in 5-star hotels in Tashkent City using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Drawing on a comprehensive review of hospitality research and evolving consumer expectations, the analysis focuses on four latent variables: Room Quality, Staff Professionalism, Personalized Service, and Food & Beverage (F&B) Excellence. By empirically investigating how these dimensions relate to overall customer satisfaction, the research seeks to provide actionable insights for hotel managers and policymakers to improve service quality and strengthen Uzbekistan's position as a leading tourism destination.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer satisfaction remains a cornerstone in hospitality and tourism research due to its direct influence on client loyalty, brand reputation, and overall profitability (Ali et al., 2021). In the luxury hotel sector, where service expectations are exceptionally high, identifying the key drivers of satisfaction is both a strategic imperative and a scholarly priority. This study focuses on four critical dimensions that shape customer satisfaction: Accommodation Excellence, Employee Expertise, Personalized Service, and Culinary & Beverage Quality.

➢ **Room Quality** The quality of accommodation is often regarded as the most tangible aspect of hotel hospitality. This includes impeccable cleanliness, modern design, effective noise

control, advanced technological features, and overall comfort (Phan & Lai, 2022). In a study of luxury hotels across East Asia, Zhang et al. (2023) found that room conditions—particularly cleanliness, state-of-the-art technology, and an appealing ambiance—were strongly associated with guest satisfaction. The perception of room quality can significantly enhance or diminish the overall value of the stay, making it a crucial element of the service experience.

➢ **Staff Professionalism** Exemplary professionalism in employee conduct—demonstrated by graciousness, efficiency, punctuality, and a polished appearance—is highly valued in the luxury hotel industry. Guests expect flawless service and proactive support. Nguyen and Dang (2021) found that polite and knowledgeable staff significantly enhance guest satisfaction and trust in five-star hotels across Uzbekistan. Similarly, Gao et al. (2022) identified staff empathy and strong communication skills as key factors driving guest satisfaction in leading hotel brands across Asia and Europe.

➢ **Personalized Service** As customer expectations rise, personalization has become a key indicator of exceptional service. Personalized service involves customizing a guest's experience based on their past behavior, preferences, or situation. Wang and Park (2020) demonstrated that tailored room layouts, greeting gestures, and service delivery enhance emotional connection and overall satisfaction. Additionally, Jiang et al. (2023) showed that personalized digital interfaces, such as in-room tablets and AI-powered concierge services, foster service innovation and boost customer loyalty.

➢ **Food & Beverage Quality** The caliber of Food & Beverage (F&B)—encompassing flavor, diversity, visual appeal, and safety—holds a pivotal position in setting luxury hotels apart. Discerning travelers frequently gauge their entire hotel experience through the prism of their dining experiences. Recent research conducted by Tran and Nguyen (2021) identified a substantial correlation between the quality of F&B service and the overall contentment of guests in Uzbekistanese resorts. Similarly, Kim et al. (2022) underscored that weaving local culinary heritage into F&B selections significantly boosts satisfaction, particularly for international visitors yearning for cultural richness.

➢ **Customer Satisfaction in Luxury Hotels** Customer satisfaction is characterized as a psychological outcome that emerges from the realization of service anticipations (Oliver, 1997). Within the realm of luxury, satisfaction is swayed by a multifaceted interplay of service excellence, emotional investment, and perceived worth. Studies utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) have revealed that satisfaction is a concealed construct molded by both concrete and abstract dimensions of service (Ali et al., 2021; Zhao & Li, 2023). In burgeoning markets like Uzbekistan, the fusion of contemporary service benchmarks and local cultural intricacies further complicates the quest to comprehend the factors that foster satisfaction in opulent 5-star hotels.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to identify the variables influencing patron satisfaction with the services offered by the five-star hotels in Tashkent City, Uzbekistan. In particular, it looked for:

1) To determine which important aspects of these hotels' services—such as room quality, staff professionalism, personalized treatment, and food and beverage quality—have an impact on patron satisfaction.

2)   To create and evaluate a structural model that uses structural equation modeling (SEM) to measure the connections between aspects of service quality and total customer happiness.

3)   To determine which elements have the biggest influence on guest satisfaction by evaluating the relative effects of each service quality component on customer satisfaction.

4)   To showcase empirical data that is distinctive to the luxurious hotel landscape in Tashkent City, an evolving urban tourism hub in Uzbekistan, where service benchmarks are undergoing transformation.

5)   To furnish hotel administrators and policymakers with valuable recommendations aimed at enhancing customer satisfaction, refining service strategies, and strengthening Uzbekistan's competitive stance in the premium travel sector.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In alignment with the study's ambitious objectives, the research aims to explore the following intriguing inquiries:

1)   Which facets of service excellence profoundly affect customer satisfaction in luxury 5-star hotels located in Tashkent City?

2)   Of the factors that have been pinpointed, which one exerts the most substantial influence on overall customer satisfaction?

3)   How effectively does the suggested structural model correspond with the data gathered from patrons of 5-star hotels?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK Figure 1.
Research Model
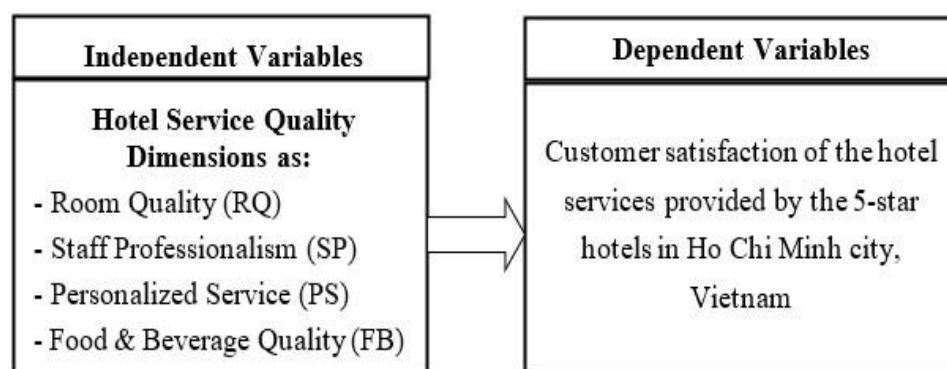
Research Hypothesis:

The ensuing theories are articulated in this research, rooted in the conceptual framework and an exploration of relevant literature:

H1: In Tashkent City's five-star hotels, room quality positively affects patron pleasure.

H2: In Tashkent City's five-star hotels, client happiness is significantly impacted by staff professionalism.

H3: Customized service raises client satisfaction at Tashkent City's five-star hotels.

H4: In Tashkent City's five-star hotels, the quality of the food and drinks has a beneficial impact on patron satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This research delves into the influence of various dimensions of hotel service excellence on guest satisfaction within luxurious five-star establishments in Tashkent City. Employing a quantitative research methodology alongside a meticulously crafted questionnaire, the study adopts an explanatory framework. It utilizes structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine the proposed relationships between intangible latent factors and measurable observable variables.

DATA COLLECTION

Self-completed questionnaires were utilized to collect essential information from patrons who had enjoyed their stay at specific luxurious five-star hotels in Tashkent City. With the invaluable support of hotel management and adept research aides, the data collection took place directly at each hotel during the vibrant months of June and July in 2025.

Immediately following their checkout, guests were invited to participate to ensure that their service experiences remained vivid and readily recalled. For analytical purposes, only those fully completed surveys that met established screening criteria were retained.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND SAMPLE SIZE

Due to practical limitations in obtaining a comprehensive sampling framework of all hotel patrons, a non-probability convenience sampling strategy was employed. The study surveyed ten luxurious five-star hotels, collecting 25 valid questionnaires from each establishment, culminating in a total sample size of 250 participants. The implementation of quota control by the hotels ensured a balanced representation of the diverse brands and locations within the city.

Hair et al. (2019) assert that a sample size exceeding 200 is generally sufficient for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), especially when the model remains uncomplicated and the data exhibits acceptable levels of normality and reliability. Consequently, the chosen sample size for this study met the analytical requirements.

SCALE MEASUREMENT

Multi-faceted Likert-type questionnaires adapted from esteemed studies in the hospitality sector were employed to assess each construct. A five-point Likert scale was utilized for scoring each item, where 1 represented strong disagreement and 5 denoted strong agreement.

The primary reflective constructs concerning the refinement of room quality, staff professionalism, tailored service, and culinary excellence were evaluated through items adapted from previously validated tools (e.g., Kim et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Three metrics, which encapsulated guests' holistic evaluation of their experience and willingness to recommend, were employed to measure customer satisfaction. To uphold content validity, all items were rigorously reviewed by academic experts and thoughtfully rephrased to embody the distinctive essence of Uzbekistan's luxurious five-star hotels.

Source: Survey conducted in July 2025

The demographic characteristics of the study's respondents are illustrated in **Table 1.** A total of 250 discerning guests from the selected ten luxurious 5-star hotels completed the standardized surveys.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

Employing SPSS, the collected data was first scrutinized for anomalies and absent values. The internal coherence was assessed through descriptive statistics and reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha). Subsequently, the foundational structure of the measurement items was investigated using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

Subsequently, the measurement model underwent rigorous validation, and the construct validity—both convergent and discriminant validity—was meticulously assessed utilizing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) via AMOS 26.0. Ultimately, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to scrutinize the structural model, aiming to explore the proposed relationships between customer satisfaction and the attributes of service quality.

In compliance with the standards suggested by Hair et al. (2019), the model fit was evaluated using commonly accepted indices such as Chi-square/df, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of the Respondents:

Table 01: Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Characteristics

		Frequency (persons)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	149	59,6
	Female	101	40,4
Marital status	Single	68	27,2
	Married	182	72,8
Nationality	Uzbekistanese	82	32,8
	Foreigner	168	67,2
Age	Up to 35 years	43	17,2
	From 36 to 50	112	44,8
	51 and above	95	38
Reason for stay	Business traveler	86	34,4
	Leisure traveler	99	39,6
	Other	65	26

The demographic profile of the study's participants is illustrated in Table 1. The meticulously designed surveys were filled out by 250 individuals residing in the ten selected luxurious five-star hotels. Regarding gender, 149 participants, constituting over 60% of the total, are male, while a modest percentage are female. A mere 27.2% of respondents were single, contrasted with 72.8% who were married.

International visitors encompassed 67.2% of those surveyed, suggesting that upscale hotels are perceived as more accessible to travelers from abroad.

In terms of age distribution, the predominant cohort consists of individuals aged between 36 and 50, accounting for 44.8%, followed by those aged 51 and above at 38%. Only 17.2% of the sample included respondents aged 35 years or younger, implying that the demographic under scrutiny is predominantly older.

Regarding the demographic breakdown, individuals aged 36 to 50 constituted the predominant segment (44.8%), closely followed by those aged 51 and above (38%). Respondents who were 35 years of age or younger represented a modest 17.2% of the total sample, implying that a substantial portion of the individuals surveyed were either middle-aged or senior. Approximately half of the respondents indicated they were traveling for leisure purposes, a

figure that slightly surpassed that of business travelers (34.4%). Additionally, 26% provided alternative reasons for their stay, such as visits from friends or family members. This portrays a remarkably balanced distribution between business-related travel and tourism, with a notable fraction of respondents remaining for other motivations, including family visits or pursuing medical care.

Presented in Table 01, which operates on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), is the extent of guest satisfaction regarding various facets of hotel services. Patrons generally expressed contentment, as demonstrated by the noteworthy highest average score of 3.63 for Room Quality (RQ) across the different categories. Two significant strengths included the clean, tidy, and spacious room environment (3.92) and comfortable and inviting room design (3.79). Conversely, aspects such as Bed (3.47) and Room amenities (3.35) garnered lower ratings, highlighting an opportunity for enhancement in bedding and facility offerings. The rating for staff professionalism (SP) stood at 3.54. The aspect of Handling situations swiftly and effectively achieved the highest score in the table (4.12), showcasing admirable professional competence.

CODE	Variables and Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
RQ1	The room is fully equipped with fine amenities.	3.35	0.86
RQ2	The room is designed in a pleasing manner.	3.79	0.85
RQ3	The room space is clean, tidy, and well-ventilated.	3.92	0.91
RQ4	The bed is comfortable, with high-quality bedding.	3.47	0.89
RQ	**Room Quality (RQ)**	**3.63**	**0.73**
CB1	Staff are well-groomed and wear fine uniforms.	3.26	0.96
CB2	Staff show a friendly and positive attitude.	3.39	0.88
CB3	Staff handle situations promptly and effectively.	4.12	1.02
CB4	Staff are proficient in foreign languages.	3.37	0.96
SP	**Staff Professionalism (SP)**	**3.54**	**0.81**
SP1	Hotel services are tailored to suit my needs.	3.41	0.94
SP2	Staff remember my preferences and habits.	3.35	0.90
SP3	I am offered flexibility in services.	3.28	0.92
SP4	There are special privileges for loyal guests.	3.34	0.93
PS	**Personalized Service (PS)**	**3.35**	**0.79**
FB1	The menu is diverse, rich, and appealing.	3.41	0.94
FB2	Dishes are well-presented with distinctive flavors.	3.35	0.90
FB3	Restaurant staff are friendly and professional.	3.28	0.92
FB4	The dining space offers a pleasant visual experience.	3.34	0.93
FB	**Food & Beverage Quality**	**3.35**	**0.79**
CS1	I am satisfied with the overall experience at this hotel.	3.52	0.58
CS2	I am willing to return to this hotel for future stays.	3.51	0.59
CS3	I will recommend this hotel to others.	3.50	0.59
CS	**Customer Satisfaction (CS)**	**3.51**	**0.57**

Means of the items and factors rated by the respondents
Table 02: Levels of customer satisfaction rated by the respondents

The quality of food and beverages (FB) received a rating of 3.35. The menu was evaluated as diverse with a score of 3.41, and the individual dishes were noted for their unique flavors, also scoring 3.35. However, both the attitude of service staff (3.28) and the dining environment (3.34) showed a need for enhancement to elevate the overall dining experience. Customer satisfaction (CS) was rated at 3.51, which suggests that while customers express a willingness to return and recommend the establishment, they have not yet attained a level of very satisfied.

Results of Reliability Analysis

Coded factors	Names of factors	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
RQ	Room Quality	0.852	4
SP	Staff Professionalism	0.866	4
PS	Personized Service	0.876	4
FB	Food and Beverage Quality	0.831	4
CS	Customers Satisfaction	0.973	3

Table 03: Summary of Cronbach's Alpha of Factors

Table 03 demonstrates the strong reliability of the scale, with all Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceeding 0.8. Customer Satisfaction (CS) shows the highest reliability at 0.973, indicating excellent internal consistency. Personalized Service (PS) and Staff Professionalism (SP) also exhibit strong reliability, with scores of 0.876 and 0.866, respectively. Room Quality (RQ) and Food & Beverage Quality (FB) have commendable coefficients of 0.852 and 0.831. These results confirm the suitability of the scales for further analyses, including Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

The Bed indicator received a score of 3.47, indicating a need to improve bedding and equipment quality. Staff professionalism (SP) scored slightly higher at 3.54. The highest rating was for Handling situations quickly and effectively, with a score of 4.12, reflecting strong professional competence. However, Appearance and uniform (3.26) and Foreign language ability (3.37) were identified as areas requiring improvement to enhance the organization's image and service to international guests. Personalized service (PS) received the lowest score at 3.35, revealing deficiencies in remembering customer preferences (3.35), offering loyalty benefits (3.34), and demonstrating service flexibility (3.28).

The results presented in Table 04 demonstrate that the dataset is suitable for conducting factor analysis, as evidenced by a KMO coefficient of 0.890, which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.5. Additionally, Bartlett's Test yields a Chi-Square statistic of 3202.468 with a significance level of 0.000, which is below the critical value of 0.05. These findings confirm that there is a significant linear relationship among the observed variables, thus affirming the statistical relevance of the factor extraction outcomes and supporting the appropriateness of the dataset for subsequent phases of exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (CFA)

This section examines the structure of five factors affecting customer satisfaction in ten selected five-star hotels in Tashkent City using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model utilized to evaluate the framework of five factors that impact customer satisfaction is illustrated in Figure 2. This model aligns well with the observed data, as evidenced by the favorable outcomes of the model fit assessment indices:

CMIN/DF = 1.094 (<2), p = 0.210 (>0.05), CFI = 0.996 (>0.9), and RMSEA = 0.019 (<0.05). Furthermore, all standardized loadings of the observed variables exceed 0.64, signifying a strong convergence. In particular, Customer Satisfaction (CS) demonstrates notable measurement reliability with coefficients ranging from 0.94 to 0.98. The coefficients for Personalized Service (PS), Staff Professionalism (SP), Room Quality (RQ), and Food & Beverage Quality (FB) fall within the ranges of 0.70 to 0.84, 0.75 to 0.85, and 0.64 to 0.81, respectively.

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model, illustrated five factors that affect customer satisfaction. This model demonstrates a good fit with the empirical data, as evidenced by favorable model fit indices: CMIN/DF = 1.094 (<2), p = 0.210 (>0.05), CFI = 0.996 (>0.9), and RMSEA = 0.019 (<0.05). The standardized loadings of the observed variables exceed 0.64, indicating adequate convergence. Notably, the construct of Customer Satisfaction (CS) exhibits exceptional measurement reliability, with coefficients ranging from 0.94 to 0.98. The reliability coefficients for other factors are as follows: Room Quality (RQ) is between 0.71 and 0.81, Food and Beverage Quality (FB) ranges from 0.64 to 0.81, Staff Professionalism (SP) varies from 0.75 to 0.85, and Personalized Service (PS) falls within the range of 0.70 to 0.84.

STRUCTURAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES TESTING

The correlation coefficients of the components, ranging from 0.24 to 0.59, indicate a notable positive relationship that is substantial yet not entirely redundant, thereby affirming discriminant validity. Notably, the relationship between Room Quality (RQ) and Customer Satisfaction (CS) exhibits the most robust correlation at 0.59, which implies that the overall satisfaction of customers is significantly influenced by the quality of the accommodations. This finding underscores the commendable validity and reliability of the developed five-factor scale, along with the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model, which meets the necessary statistical criteria and is appropriate for structural equation modeling (SEM) to explore the causal interactions among variables.
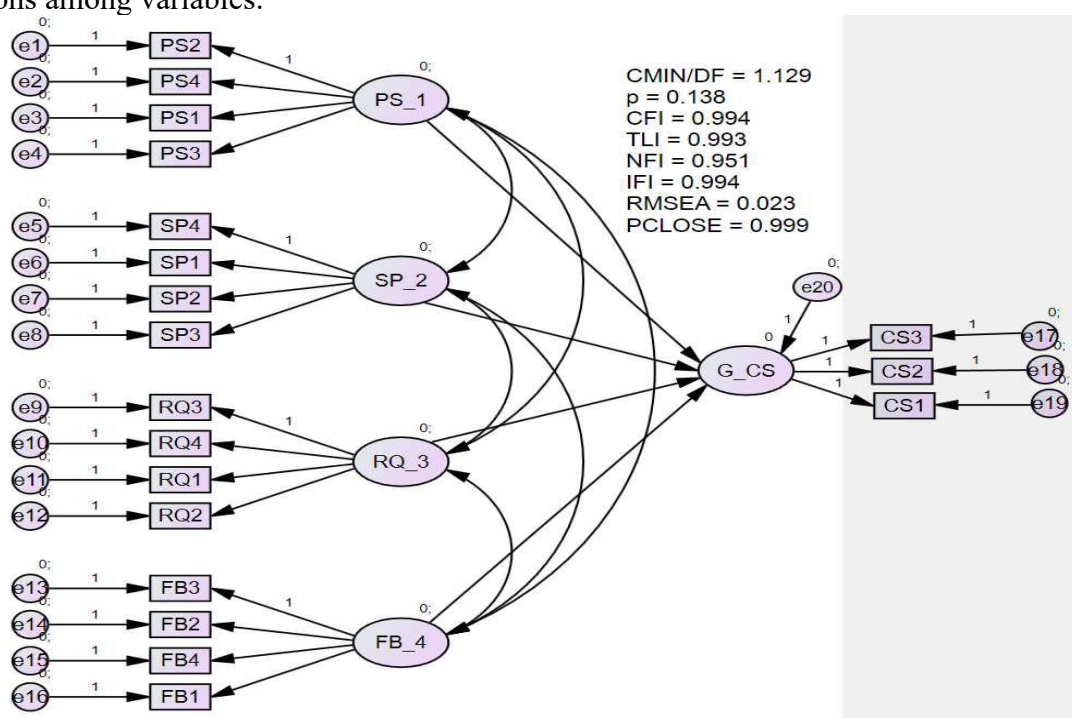
Figure 2 Structural Equation Model for Job Satisfaction

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) results show that all paths from the four independent variables to Customer Satisfaction (CS) have positive coefficients, indicating a favorable impact. Room Quality (RQ) has the strongest effect with a coefficient of 0.40, emphasizing the importance of facility quality and room size in enhancing guest experiences. Personalized Service (PS) follows with a coefficient of 0.31, underscoring the value of tailoring services to individual preferences. Staff Professionalism (SP) has a coefficient of 0.26, reflecting the significance of skillful and professional conduct. Food and Beverage Quality (FB) has the lowest coefficient at 0.22, suggesting it plays a supportive rather than a central role. Standardized loading factors for observed variables exceeded 0.64, confirming convergent validity and reliability. Model fit indices also met established thresholds: CMIN/DF = 1.129 (<2), p = 0.138 (>0.05), CFI = 0.994 (>0.9), RMSEA = 0.023 (<0.05), and PCLOSE = 0.999 (>0.05). These results confirm the robustness of the SEM model, which can guide strategies to improve customer satisfaction, particularly by focusing on Room Quality and Personalized Service.

The findings of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis's hypothesis testing are shown in Table 07, where all four hypotheses (H1 through H4) are strongly statistically significant

Table 07

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate (β)	p-value	Result
H4	FB_4 → G_CS	0.296	***	Supporte d
H2	SP_2 → G_CS	0.275	***	Supporte d
H3	PS_3 → G_CS	0.221	***	Supporte d
H1	RQ_1 → G_CS	0.206	**1	supporte d

Table 07 Standardized Regression Weights and Hypothesis Testing

DISCUSSION

The research confirms that all four variables—Room Quality (RQ), Personalized Service (PS), Staff Professionalism (SP), and Food and Beverage Quality (FB)—have a notable and positive effect on customer satisfaction (CS). Nilashi et al. (2021) highlight that cleanliness and design constitute the most critical aspects shaping customers' overall perceptions of service quality, with Room Quality (RQ) identified as the most impactful factor. Additionally, the significance of Personalized Service (PS) is underscored in a recent study by Casaca & Miguel (2024), which, through a systematic review, found that customization enhances customer experience, increases engagement, and builds trust between clients and businesses.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research shows that customer satisfaction (CS) in luxury hotels is strongly influenced by four key factors: room quality (RQ), personalized service (PS), staff professionalism (SP), and food

and beverage quality (FB). Among these, RQ and PS have the greatest impact, underscoring the importance of high-quality accommodations and tailored guest experiences. While SP and FB have a lesser effect, they remain essential contributors to overall visitor satisfaction.

Based on these findings, the study offers several recommendations:

In hospitality management, investments should focus on enhancing room quality (RQ) by upgrading equipment, ensuring regular maintenance, maintaining hygiene standards, and optimizing spatial design for both functionality and aesthetics.

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