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Dynamics Of Customer Satisfaction, Retention, And Loyalty In Heritage Hotels Of Rajasthan

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of customer satisfaction on customer retention and loyalty in heritage hotels in Rajasthan. This study adopts an exploratory research design to delve into the intricate dynamics of customer satisfaction and its impact on retention and loyalty in heritage hotels. The exploratory nature of the study allows for a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between these variables in the unique context of heritage hospitality. Data for this study were collected between March 2021 and July 2021. The survey instrument comprised multiple items related to customer satisfaction, retention, and to analyze the intricate relationships between customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed. Through analysis, a positive but statistically insignificant relationship is identified, suggesting a subtle influence of customer satisfaction on retention and loyalty. The implications of this study extend valuable insights for heritage hotel management in Rajasthan. The need to go beyond conventional strategies and create experiences rooted in the historical and cultural fabric of the region is emphasized. Strategic marketing, integration of technology for enhanced customer loyalty, and cultural sensitivity are identified as key factors for success. The study underscores the importance of staff development and internal marketing strategies for a seamless blend of hospitality and heritage awareness. Future research opportunities include in-depth cultural analysis, comparative studies with contemporary hotels, longitudinal studies, segmentation studies, and investigations into heritage preservation and emerging technologies' impact on guest experiences in Rajasthan's heritage hotels.

Keywords - Customer Satisfaction, Retention, Loyalty Heritage Hotels, Rajasthan.

1 Introduction

The contemporary hotel industry has evolved into a global phenomenon, encompassing both producers and consumers worldwide. Utilizing hotel facilities, including rooms, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, or health clubs, is no longer viewed as a luxury; rather, these services have

become integral components of individuals' lifestyles. Over the past two decades, the demand for hospitality services beyond traditional offerings for travelers has surged, propelling global growth in the hospitality industry and fostering intense competition in the marketplace.

One of the prominent challenges confronting hotel organizations today is the ever-expanding volume and pace of competition. This heightened competition has profound implications for customers, offering increased choice, greater value for money, and elevated levels of service. Furthermore, distinguishing one hotel's products and services from another has become a formidable task, necessitating hotel organizations to seek a competitive advantage.

To gain a competitive edge, hotel managers commonly employ two strategies: low-cost leadership through price discounting and developing customer loyalty by offering unique benefits. However, hotels opting for price discounting to enhance market share risk negatively impacting medium- and long-term profitability. Consequently, the focus has shifted towards the quality of service as the key factor for differentiation and customer loyalty.

Numerous examples highlight the importance for the hotel industry to prioritize customer loyalty over relying solely on pricing strategies. Research indicates that a 5 percent increase in customer loyalty can result in a profit increase ranging from 25 percent to 85 percent (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). Therefore, a dedicated emphasis on cultivating customer loyalty is poised to become a necessary prerequisite for the continued survival of hotel organizations.

Hospitality managers assert that firms can enhance profits by satisfying customers. However, studies reveal that customer satisfaction alone may not guarantee repeat purchases. It is increasingly evident that customer loyalty holds significantly more weight than customer satisfaction in determining the success of a business organization. As a result, a dedicated focus on customer loyalty is emerging as a crucial factor for the sustained prosperity of hotel organizations in the future.

Rajasthan, with its rich cultural tapestry and historical treasures, has emerged as a beacon for heritage tourism, boasting a plethora of heritage hotels nestled within the walls of centuries-old palaces and havelis. As these establishments strive to provide a unique blend of history and luxury, understanding the intricate relationships between customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty becomes paramount for their sustained success.

Rajasthan's heritage hotels are not just accommodations; they are portals to the regal past, housed in architectural marvels that narrate tales of the state's glorious history. The integration of historical significance and cultural context distinguishes these establishments, attracting a discerning clientele seeking an authentic and immersive experience.

Customer satisfaction holds a special resonance in the realm of Rajasthan's heritage hotels. Guests, often seeking more than just comfortable lodging, are immersed in an experience that intertwines with the rich heritage and cultural ethos. Aspects such as the preservation of architectural marvels and the provision of culturally enriched services contribute to the overall guest satisfaction.

In this unique landscape, customer retention extends beyond traditional measures. It encompasses the ability of these heritage hotels to preserve the allure that brings guests back to the same historical abode. The challenge lies not only in meeting service expectations but in ensuring that the historical and cultural essence that captivated guests on their first visit remains intact.

Building upon retention, customer loyalty assumes a deeper significance in the context of Rajasthan's heritage hotels. Guests, enamored by the regal charm and historical grandeur, may develop a profound emotional attachment to a particular heritage hotel brand. Loyalty, in this scenario, manifests through repeated visits, glowing recommendations, and a steadfast preference for the same heritage hotel amid a plethora of alternatives.

This research embarks on an exploration of the intricate relationships within Rajasthan's heritage hotels. Firstly, it endeavors to unravel the impact of customer satisfaction on customer retention, scrutinizing how various facets of the guest experience contribute to their inclination to return to the same historical haven. Secondly, the study aims to delve into the nuanced dimensions of customer satisfaction, uncovering its role in fostering lasting customer loyalty within the regal landscape of Rajasthan.

While existing literature provides insights into general customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry, a notable gap exists in understanding these dynamics within the unique context of Rajasthan's heritage hotels. This study seeks to bridge this void, offering nuanced insights that cater specifically to the challenges and opportunities presented by the regal hospitality landscape of Rajasthan.

In conclusion, this research endeavors to contribute to the flourishing field of hospitality management in the royal state of Rajasthan. By delving into the relationships between customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty within heritage hotels, it aspires to offer actionable recommendations that will not only enhance guest experiences but also contribute to the preservation and perpetuation of the rich cultural and historical legacy of Rajasthan's heritage hotels.

2 Review of literature

Jobber (2001) underscores the enduring quest in the hospitality sector to optimize organizational marketing endeavors, aiming to attract a substantial influx of new customers. Given the mature and intense competition prevalent in the hotel industry, many

establishments grapple with the challenge of excelling in their marketing pursuits. Consequently, there is a discernible shift towards comprehensive marketing strategies among hotels, not only focusing on acquiring new customers but also prioritizing customer retention and loyalty.

Sinha & Ghoshal (1999) posit in their study that with escalating competition in the marketplace, the line between manufacturing and service industries has blurred. Services have become integral to products, necessitating businesses to adopt a service-oriented approach to meet evolving customer needs. The key to gaining a competitive edge lies in delivering superior value through excellent customer service at an economical delivery cost. The study underscores the significance of customer service in both retaining and acquiring customers, particularly in highly competitive markets.

Philip Kotler (2006) contrasts physical products with services, highlighting the challenges of evaluating services before purchase due to the absence of pre-testing opportunities. Tangible evidence becomes crucial for services, such as the appearance of a restaurant or hotel, providing vital clues about the service. Kotler emphasizes quality as the totality of features impacting the ability of a service or product to satisfy customer needs. High-quality services foster customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and satisfaction, thereby influencing repeat business. Studies indicate that acquiring a new customer is significantly more costly than retaining an existing one, and hotels with satisfied guests tend to experience higher guest loyalty and financial performance.

Reichheld and Kenny (1990) propose imperatives for retaining customers, emphasizing strategic vision and staff development. They stress the importance of clear direction, interlinked marketing operations, and human resource management. Internal marketing is considered crucial for creating a positive climate of cooperation and working towards customer retention.

Bolton (2000) underscores the importance of customer satisfaction and retention, asserting that while acquiring customers is vital, retaining and satisfying existing customers hold even greater significance. Consistently delivering high-quality services is identified as the key to achieving and sustaining customer loyalty.

Gronroos (1994) suggests that effective complaint handling is crucial for retaining customers, emphasizing the need to address customer concerns and leverage testimonials. Event marketing is also recommended as an opportunity to engage customers and build trust. Customer service, delivered with a smile, is recognized as a valuable tool in creating a positive reputation. Managing a business image becomes imperative for hoteliers in retaining loyal customers. The expansion of the customer base necessitates continuous efforts to secure and update the business image, catering to both existing loyal customers and potential

future clients. Customer retention thus becomes a crucial aspect for the success and profitability of the hospitality industry.

Ivyanno U. Canny (2013) focuses on the dining experience in Indonesia's urban areas, exploring the effects of physical environment, food quality, and service quality on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The study underscores the importance of the physical environment as a marketing tool to attract and retain customers, creating a warm ambiance and a sense of home.

The relation maintenance costs decrease when the supplier and customer become more acquainted with each other. Retained customers are willing to pay more than newly acquired ones, and although they may not receive discounts, their net present value increases. Managers assert that winning a new customer is ten times more expensive than retaining one, and bringing a new customer to the same profitable level as a retained customer requires considerable effort (Ang, L. & Buttle, F. A., 2006).

Creating free discounts and coupons may lower retention rates, as noteworthy customers often seek new and enticing offers. Despite providing an equal level of service or product to new customers, this mindset can make retained customers feel uneasy. Service recovery, the action taken by a service provider in response to a customer complaint, is crucial. These actions are designed to resolve problems, change negative attitudes, and retain dissatisfied customers (Larivière, B., Vaerenbergh, Y. V., and Vermeir, I., 2013).

Jana & Chandra (2016) assert that customer satisfaction is crucial in the hotel industry, and it is through customer satisfaction that hotels can retain their customers. Customers' loyalty is dependent on the quality of services received, and in a market where many investors strive to meet customer needs, dissatisfaction may lead customers to seek better services elsewhere.

Richards (1996) notes the shift in the highly competitive hotel industry from prioritizing customer acquisition to a dual strategy emphasizing customer retention. Information technology plays a crucial role in facilitating increased customer retention and loyalty. Industry-standard loyalty programs become key tactics for hotels to both win and maintain customer loyalty, as noted by Kotler and Armstrong (2006).

Reichheld (1996) highlights the financial benefits of customer loyalty, indicating that a 5% increase in customer loyalty can result in a substantial rise in profits. Loyal customers are willing to pay premium prices, contributing to long-term profitability. Prabhu (2003) adds that customer satisfaction and the provision of quality services are prerequisites for customer retention, influencing purchase intentions significantly.

To enhance customer loyalty, Bolton (2000) recommends implementing loyalty programs, offering rewards such as points, discounts, and subscriptions. Technology is harnessed to

support loyalty initiatives, with hotels utilizing WAP-enabled devices for convenient access to information and personalized services. Online platforms, including personal websites, email coupons, and email marketing, are leveraged to strengthen customer loyalty.

Gronroos (1994) reiterates that customer loyalty is a critical factor in the success of a business organization. Positive customer satisfaction, influenced by various factors such as corporate image, service quality, and price performance, correlates with customer loyalty. The interconnectedness of customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty underscores the complexity of maintaining success in the hospitality industry.

Determinants of customer retention in the hotel industry involve providing flexible products and services, making customers feel recognized and respected. Trained personnel, equipped with loyalty programs that include personalized touches like remembering guests' names, discounts, and customer membership cards, contribute significantly to maintaining a positive business image, ultimately leading to increased customer retention.

Winer (2001) emphasizes the implication of client-based image management, highlighting the importance of customer-focused management in fostering market awareness. Understanding consumer behavior and providing superior benefits, such as high-quality goods and services, are crucial for creating a favorable brand image. Loyal customers, in this context, not only contribute to the hotel's current success but also serve as potential customers in the future.

Keller (2006) notes the transformation of the global hospitality industry from a traditional and local sector to one where technology plays a pivotal role. Internet usage, leveraging hotel reservations through WAP-enabled devices, allows hotels to cater to the evolving needs of tech-savvy consumers. Patterson (1999) emphasizes the role of organizational identity and a sense of belonging in customer relationships, which, when nurtured, leads to improved customer loyalty and a positive business image.

Gronroos (1991 and 1994) underscores the intangible nature of services in the hotel industry, characterizing them as interactions between customers and service providers. Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) delve deeper into the physical resources and environment, identifying them as factors influencing service activities. The critical role of quality services, flexibility, and customer-friendly practices, as articulated by Gronroos (1991 and 1994), is emphasized in fostering customer loyalty within the dynamic realm of the hospitality industry.

The study emphasizes the emergence of a robust brand as a pivotal element in creating emotionally bonded guests. Chernatony (1997) asserts that a strong brand ensures consistent service quality and serves as a risk reducer, endowing travelers with a unique identity that sets the hotel apart from its competitors. Kapferer (2004) adds that the foundation of a brand lies in the relationship between the hotel and the guest.

The understanding of quality in the context of service becomes intricate, with various definitions emphasizing superiority, fitness for purpose, and conformance to requirements. The perceived value of a product or service, as defined by customers, significantly influences their satisfaction and loyalty. The delicate interplay between price and perceived value becomes a critical factor, with consumers seeking better quality at lower prices (Boubakri et al., 2013).

Trott (2001) underscores the imperative for brand-oriented hotels to prioritize customization, experiences provision, and emotional bonds with guests. A strong brand not only guarantees consistent service quality but also acts as a risk reducer and a unique identity that differentiates the hotel from others, according to Chernatony (1997) and Kapferer (2004). Building a positive image through brand development becomes a strategic defense against the intense competition posed by well-known hotel brands.

Fathiya Abdirazak Mohamed and Dr. Murat Unanoglu (2022) place emphasis on the exploration of the impact of service innovation on consumer happiness to enhance client loyalty in hotels. Their study, involving 326 randomly chosen hotel guests in Istanbul, utilizes an online survey for data collection. Descriptive statistics evaluate responses, and SPSS is employed to examine relationships between combined data from various questions. The investigation reveals positive influences of customer satisfaction on service innovation, service quality, and customer loyalty, underscoring the compatibility of different service quality dimensions.

Jessadaporn Kanvama and Supaprawat Siripipatthanakul (2022) investigate hotel guests' commitment during the Covid-19 outbreak in Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand. Their quantitative analysis involves 400 conveniently sampled hotel guests, utilizing Pearson Correlation and multiple regression. Findings indicate that consumer loyalty is significantly affected by the quality of hotel services, with empathy showing the strongest connection after assurance, responsiveness, tangibles, and reliability.

Yu Wang (2022) conducts a comprehensive examination of hotel service quality, focusing on customer service and satisfaction. Employing an innovative two-channel RNN triplet block model with a detailed word vector, the study delves into the intricacies of Guido Hotel's service quality. By conducting a meticulous customer survey and analyzing satisfaction metrics, the research not only identifies key issues but also offers targeted recommendations for enhancing the overall service quality of Guido Hotel.

Bandara WMAH and Dahanayake SNS (2020) contribute to the literature by investigating the impact of food and beverage service quality on customer satisfaction, particularly emphasizing tangible aspects such as employee appearance. Through an in-depth study involving 150 foreign tourists, the research sheds light on the nuanced factors influencing

service quality in the culinary domain, providing valuable insights for practitioners and policymakers.

Ibrahim Ofosu-Boateng and Philip Acquaye (2020) delve into the dynamics of service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty within the restaurant business in Cape Coast, Ghana. Drawing from a dataset of 320 customer questionnaires, the study underscores the importance of maintaining consistent high-quality service to foster customer loyalty. The findings serve as a practical guide for restaurant owners and managers seeking to build enduring relationships with their patrons.

Dr. V. Vijay Anand, Dr. C. Vijayabanu, Dr. V. Rengarajan, M. Mohamed Riyaaz, S. Nandhu, G. Icewarya, S. Monisa Kamatchi (2018) explore the inseparable bond between service quality and customer satisfaction. The aim is to investigate the interplay between demographic variables and dependent factors, assessing the impact of service quality on customer loyalty. Primary data from 180 respondents through questionnaires is analyzed using chi-square, correlation, and multiple regression. The study reveals a high-level relationship between service quality and demographic variables, highlighting the absence of significant differences between independent factors and demographic variables.

Dr. R.R. Bhardwaj and Ved Prakash (2017) explore the contemporary reality of the business landscape, where customers have numerous choices, necessitating investments in loyalty programs and service quality enhancement. The research aims to uncover the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction, comparing the services adopted by various hotels and forecasting opportunities in the hotel industry's future. Primary data collection involves 194 questionnaires based on the SERVQUAL strategy through convenient sampling. The study reveals distinctive data capture mechanisms at ITC, Oberoi, and Taj Group, emphasizing the significance of customer relationship management (CRM) to maintain customer databases and satisfaction.

Hassan Abbas Dost Mohamad, Mohd Shukri Ab Yazid, Ali Khatibi, S.M. Ferdous Azam (2017) aim to explore the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in UAE hotels. Through primary data collection from 300 respondents who stayed a minimum of one night, the research highlights a high positive impact of service quality on customer loyalty, mediated through customer satisfaction in UAE hotels.

Edmundas Jasinskas, Dalia Streimikiene, Biruta Svagzdiene, Arturas Simanavicius (2016), in response to the rapid growth of the hotel industry driven by increasing demand and opportunities for travelers, conduct a study to explore the impact of hotel service quality on customer loyalty. The research emphasizes the perpetual involvement of loyalty and the application of the SERVQUAL model. Primary sources are utilized, employing a questionnaire distributed to 250 customers, with 224 responses received. Nine quality criteria based on the SERVQUAL model are considered, suggesting that high-quality services lead to increased

customer loyalty. Enhanced loyalty enables organizations to make strategic investments, reduce costs, and capitalize on customer expenditure, fostering sustainable growth.

Cemal Zehir, Elif Narcikara (2016), delve into the significance of quality in enterprise strategies, specifically focusing on the mediating role of Perceived Value in the relationship between E-Service Quality, Recovery Services, and Loyalty Intentions in online retailers. The study, involving 750 customers and using a questionnaire with 42 items, reveals that delivering superior service quality, understanding customer perceptions, and emphasizing customer e-satisfaction and e-loyalty were crucial for online retailers. It emphasizes the need for e-stores to consider the principles valued by customers during evaluations.

Mohammad Zaim Mohd Salleh, Aini Mat Said, EListina Abu Bakar, Ainunnazlee Mohd Ali, Ibrahim Zakaria (2015), emphasize the paramount goal of delivering quality service to enhance customer loyalty in organizations. The study, adopting a cross-sectional design, investigates gender differences in dissatisfaction with services provided by hotels in Kuala Lumpur. Using systematic sampling, data are gathered from 400 respondents, revealing that females reported higher dissatisfaction than males, possibly due to their focus on interpersonal factors in service interactions. T-tests confirmed that males were less dissatisfied than females in the specified context.

Robabeh Sadat Hosseini, Artinah Zainal, Norzuwana Sumarjan (2015), investigate the influence of services on hotel customer performance based on quality experience and brand loyalty in Iran. Utilizing primary sources, the study distributes 368 questionnaires, with 302 used for analysis. The study identifies three primary components directly involved in performance: service environment, service outcomes, and customer-employee interactions. These experiences, both direct and indirect, contribute to the development of brand loyalty and image.

Eunjin Choi (2015), focuses on the impact of loyalty programs and tier levels on guest perceptions and service quality tolerance in hotels. Using the SERVQUAL model, the study gathers information from 315 members and non-members of loyalty programs. The survey incorporates elements of tolerance and perceived service quality, highlighting the significance of loyalty programs with tier systems in hotels. Based upon above literature we suggest following hypotheses -

(H1): There is a significant positive impact of customer satisfaction on customer retention in heritage hotels of Rajasthan.

(H2): There is a significant positive impact of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty in heritage hotels of Rajasthan.

3 Research objective

I To determine the impact of customer satisfaction on customer retention in heritage hotels

II To determine the impact of customer satisfaction on customer Loyalty in heritage hotels

4 Methodology

This study adopts an exploratory research design to delve into the intricate dynamics of customer satisfaction and its impact on retention and loyalty in heritage hotels. The exploratory nature of the study allows for a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between these variables in the unique context of heritage hospitality.

Data for this study were collected between March 2021 and July 2021. The research employed a structured survey approach to gather information from guests staying in heritage hotels in the state of Rajasthan. The survey instrument comprised multiple items related to customer satisfaction, retention, and to analyze the intricate relationships between customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed. The estimation method used was Maximum Likelihood (ML), with optimization performed using the NLMINB method. The model specified three latent variables: Satisfaction, Retention, and Loyalty, each indicated by multiple observed variables. The structural paths in the model represent the hypothesized relationships between these latent variables.

5 Result analysis

Table 1 - Structural Equation Models	
Estimation Method	ML
Optimization Method	NLMINB
Number of observations	400
Model	Satisfaction =~SAT1+SAT2+SAT3+SAT4+SAT5+SAT6
	Retention =~RET1+RET2+RET3+RET4+RET5
	Loyalty=~LOYALTY1+LOYALTY2+LOYALTY3+LOYALTY4+LOYALTY5
	Retention ~Satisfaction
	Loyalty ~ Satisfaction

the presented table encapsulates key information pertaining to the estimation of a Structural Equation Model (SEM). Employing the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method and a Nonlinear Optimization Method (NLMINB), the model seeks to elucidate the intricate relationships

among latent constructs and their corresponding observed indicators. The optimization process, characterized by 41 iterations, successfully converged, as denoted by the "Converged" entry, signifying the attainment of a solution.

With a dataset comprising 400 observations, the model encompasses 51 free parameters, encompassing factor loadings, variances, covariances, and regression coefficients. The ML estimation method is a widely utilized approach in SEM, aiming to maximize the likelihood function to derive optimal parameter estimates. The Nonlinear Optimization Method, NLMINB, further refines this process, emphasizing the non-linear nature of the model.

Standard errors, a crucial metric for gauging the precision of parameter estimates, are calculated and presented in the analysis, as indicated by the "Standard" entry. The absence of a scaled test adjustment implies that no specific scaling or modifications have been applied to the goodness-of-fit test.

The model specification outlines the relationships between latent constructs, namely Satisfaction, Retention, and Loyalty, and their respective observed indicators (SAT1-SAT6, RET1-RET5, LOYALTY1-LOYALTY5). Notably, regression paths are delineated between Retention and Satisfaction, as well as Loyalty and Satisfaction, underscoring the interdependence among these constructs.

However, it's imperative to address a potential typographical error in the final line of the model specification, which currently reads "Loyalty - Satisfaction." This might be unintentional, and it is advisable to verify whether the intended specification is "Loyalty ~ Satisfaction," signifying a regression path from Satisfaction to Loyalty. Attention to such details ensures the accurate representation of the underlying relationships in the SEM.

Table 2 - Model tests			
Label	X^2	df	p
User Model	712	101	< .001
Baseline Model	2344	120	< .001

Table 2 unfolds a critical narrative in the evaluation of structural equation models, particularly focusing on the User Model and a Baseline Model. The table's entries include key statistical measures – the chi-square statistic, degrees of freedom (df), and associated p-values – providing a comprehensive assessment of the models' adequacy in capturing the complexities of the observed data.

The User Model, characterized by a statistic of 712 and 101 degrees of freedom, presents a compelling case for its efficacy in representing the covariance matrix of the data. The associated p-value, impressively less than 0.001, signals a statistically significant departure from the null hypothesis, reinforcing the model's capability to elucidate the relationships

among variables. In the realm of structural equation modeling (SEM), a lower p-value typically signifies a superior fit, indicating that the User Model aptly encapsulates the nuanced interdependencies inherent in the dataset.

Conversely, the Baseline Model, serving as a foundational or null reference, yields a statistic of 2344 with 120 degrees of freedom. Its associated p-value, also less than 0.001, underscores a substantial deviation from the observed data. The marked discrepancy in chi-square values and consistently low p-values emphasizes the User Model's superiority in providing a more suitable representation of the observed patterns in comparison to the Baseline Model.

This comparative analysis brings to light the pivotal role of model testing in the SEM framework. The statistical significance of the p-values for both models signifies their departure from the null hypothesis, highlighting the existence of meaningful relationships within the data. However, the stark differences in chi-square values underscore the User Model's clear advantage in terms of fit.

In essence, Table 2 serves as a compass for researchers navigating the intricacies of structural equation modeling. The statistical metrics provided offer a quantitative lens through which the appropriateness of different models can be gauged. The emphasis on the User Model's superior fit, as indicated by its lower chi-square statistic and highly significant p-value, directs researchers toward a more accurate representation of the underlying structures in the data. These findings underscore the significance of rigorous model testing in ensuring the fidelity of structural equation models and, by extension, the robustness of the insights drawn from such analyses.

Table 3 -Fit indices

		95% Confidence Intervals		
SRMR	RMSEA	Lower	Upper	RMSEA p
0.172	0.123	0.115	0.132	< .001

Table 3 unfolds a comprehensive evaluation of the structural equation model (SEM) through pivotal fit indices, shedding light on the model's capacity to accurately represent the intricate relationships within the observed data. The table showcases two key metrics—Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)—along with their respective 95% Confidence Intervals (CIs) and an associated p-value for RMSEA. The nuanced interpretation of these indices offers valuable insights into the overall model fit.

The SRMR, registering at 0.172, provides a glimpse into the average absolute standardized difference between the observed and predicted covariance matrices. This moderate value

signals areas where the model may benefit from refinement, pointing to aspects where the model might not fully capture the intricacies present in the dataset.

Moving to the RMSEA, a pivotal fit index, its value of 0.123 falls within an acceptable range. While SEM literature often considers values below 0.05 as indicative of good fit and those up to 0.08 as acceptable, the interpretation here hinges on the specific context and complexity of the model. The RMSEA value suggests a reasonable fit, indicating that, on average, the model's predictions align well with the observed data.

The 95% Confidence Intervals for RMSEA, spanning from 0.115 to 0.132, contribute crucial insights into the precision of this fit index. The relatively narrow interval around the point estimate enhances confidence in the accuracy of the RMSEA, providing researchers with a more nuanced understanding of the range within which the true model fit might lie.

The p-value associated with RMSEA is notably less than 0.001, denoting statistical significance. This suggests that the observed RMSEA value is not a result of random chance; rather, it reflects systematic discrepancies between the model and the data. This emphasizes the need for a discerning examination of potential model refinements or adjustments to enhance its explanatory power.

Table 4 -User model versus baseline model	
	Model
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.725
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.674
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.674
Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.696
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.586
Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI)	0.639
Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.728
Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI)	0.725

Table 4 presents a comprehensive array of comparative fit indices that serve as a critical lens for evaluating the performance of the User Model in contrast to the Baseline Model. These indices provide nuanced insights into various dimensions of model fit, offering a holistic assessment of the User Model's capability to capture the underlying structures within the observed data.

- The Comparative Fit Index (CFI), a fundamental metric in model evaluation, registers at 0.725. This value signifies a moderate level of fit improvement in the User Model

compared to the Baseline Model, indicating that the User Model outperforms the null model in explaining the covariance patterns in the data.

- The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI) echo the sentiment of the CFI, both yielding values of 0.674. These indices contribute to the narrative of a moderate fit improvement, reinforcing the notion that the User Model presents a more suitable representation of the observed data than the Baseline Model.
- Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI) further supports this perspective with a value of 0.696, indicating a moderate improvement in fit. The evaluation extends to the trade-off between fit and simplicity with the Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI), which, at 0.586, reflects a moderate level of fit improvement considering the complexity of the User Model.
- Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI) aligns with the trend of moderate fit improvement, yielding a value of 0.639. This index contributes additional insights into the relative fit of the User Model compared to the null model.
- Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI), standing at 0.728, presents a slightly more optimistic perspective, suggesting a moderate to good fit improvement in the User Model. This is echoed by the Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI) with a value of 0.725, aligning closely with the CFI and IFI results.

Table 5 -Parameters estimates

				95% Confidence Intervals				
Dep	Pred	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	β	z	p
Retention	Satisfaction	0.0312	0.0329	-0.0333	0.0957	0.059	0.948	0.343
Loyalty	Satisfaction	0.0427	0.0404	-0.0364	0.1218	0.0664	1.058	0.29

Table 5 furnishes a detailed examination of parameter estimates within the structural equation model, focusing on the relationships between two latent constructs: Retention and Satisfaction, as well as Loyalty and Satisfaction. This comprehensive table includes crucial metrics such as point estimates, standard errors, 95% confidence intervals, beta coefficients, z-values, and p-values, offering a nuanced understanding of the statistical significance and precision of these relationships.

Starting with the relationship between Retention and Satisfaction, the estimate of 0.0312 serves as the point estimate for the regression coefficient. This value signifies the anticipated change in Retention for a one-unit change in Satisfaction. The standard error (SE) of 0.0329 provides an indication of the precision associated with this estimate. The 95% confidence

interval (-0.0333 to 0.0957) establishes a range within which we can be 95% confident the true population parameter lies. The beta coefficient (β) of 0.059, the z-value of 0.948, and the p-value of 0.343 collectively suggest that the relationship between Retention and Satisfaction is not statistically significant at conventional significance levels.

Moving to the relationship between Loyalty and Satisfaction, a similar pattern emerges. The estimate of 0.0427 denotes the expected change in Loyalty for a one-unit change in Satisfaction. The standard error (SE) of 0.0404 gauges the precision of this estimate, while the 95% confidence interval (-0.0364 to 0.1218) encapsulates the plausible range for the true population parameter. The beta coefficient (β) of 0.0664, the z-value of 1.058, and the p-value of 0.29 collectively indicate that, akin to the Retention and Satisfaction relationship, the link between Loyalty and Satisfaction lacks statistical significance at conventional levels.

In summary, Table 5's parameter estimates illuminate the intricate relationships between Satisfaction, Retention, and Loyalty within the structural equation model. The detailed information provided, encompassing point estimates, confidence intervals, and significance measures, empowers researchers to assess the strength and statistical significance of these relationships. While the point estimates offer insights into the expected changes, the confidence intervals and p-values guide researchers in discerning the precision and significance of these relationships within the broader structural equation modeling framework.

Figure 1 - Estimated framework

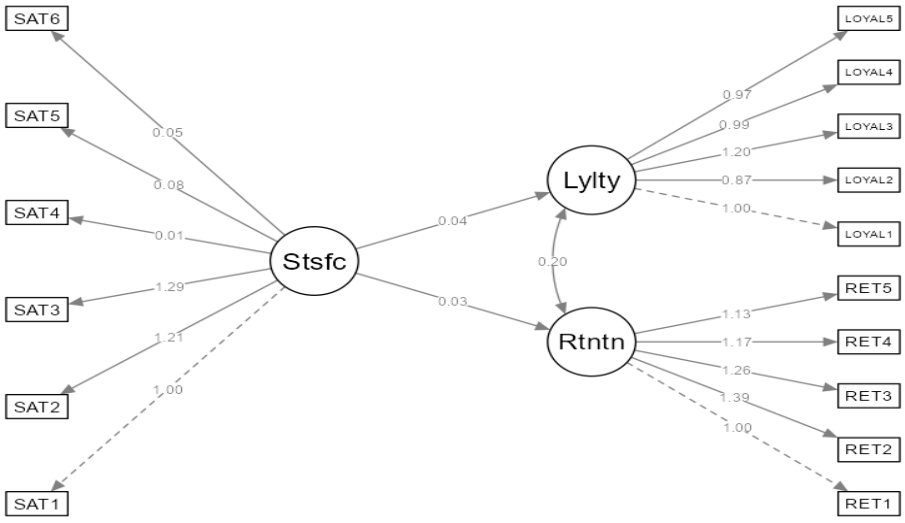

Table 6 -Measurement model								
				95% Confidence Intervals				
Latent	Observed	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	β	z	p
Satisfaction	SAT1	1	0	1	1	0.687		
	SAT2	1.21094	0.0986	1.0177	1.404	0.80665	12.279	< .001
	SAT3	1.28743	0.1047	1.0822	1.493	0.78857	12.294	< .001
	SAT4	0.00789	0.058	-0.1058	0.122	0.00753	0.136	0.892
	SAT5	0.0762	0.052	-0.0256	0.178	0.08129	1.466	0.143
	SAT6	0.04959	0.0525	-0.0534	0.153	0.05228	0.944	0.345
Retention	RET1	1	0	1	1	0.54097		
	RET2	1.39459	0.1394	1.1214	1.668	0.74557	10.006	< .001
	RET3	1.26063	0.1373	0.9915	1.53	0.63789	9.181	< .001
	RET4	1.17128	0.122	0.9321	1.41	0.68875	9.599	< .001
	RET5	1.13206	0.124	0.889	1.375	0.63178	9.128	< .001
Loyalty	LOYALTY1	1	0	1	1	0.61986		
	LOYALTY2	0.87434	0.0854	0.7069	1.042	0.63928	10.232	< .001
	LOYALTY3	1.19726	0.1146	0.9727	1.422	0.65761	10.448	< .001
	LOYALTY4	0.99342	0.0926	0.8119	1.175	0.68204	10.727	< .001

	LOYALTY5	0.97494	0.096	0.7868	1.163	0.63278	10.154	< .001

Table 6 offers a detailed exploration of the measurement model, unveiling the intricate relationships between latent constructs and their corresponding observed variables. This comprehensive table provides estimates, standard errors, 95% confidence intervals, beta coefficients, z-values, and p-values, offering a multifaceted perspective on the reliability and validity of the measurement model.

Beginning with the latent construct of Satisfaction, the observed variables (SAT1 to SAT6) each contribute uniquely to the measurement. SAT1, with a fixed loading of 1, serves as a perfect indicator of the latent variable. Meanwhile, SAT2 to SAT6 exhibit varying degrees of association. SAT2 and SAT3 show highly significant positive loadings, indicating robust connections with Satisfaction. However, SAT4, SAT5, and SAT6 demonstrate non-significant or weaker loadings, suggesting a less substantial contribution to the measurement of Satisfaction.

Moving on to the latent construct of Retention, observed variables (RET1 to RET5) contribute significantly to its measurement. RET1, akin to SAT1, acts as a perfect indicator with a fixed loading of 1. RET2 to RET5 display highly significant positive loadings, ranging from 1.132 to 1.394, emphasizing strong associations with the latent variable Retention. This suggests that these observed variables are reliable indicators, contributing meaningfully to the measurement of Retention.

The third latent construct, Loyalty, is similarly assessed through observed variables (LOYALTY1 to LOYALTY5). LOYALTY1, with a fixed loading of 1, serves as a perfect indicator. LOYALTY2 to LOYALTY5 exhibit highly significant positive loadings, ranging from 0.874 to 1.197, indicating robust connections with the latent variable Loyalty. These observed variables contribute significantly to the accurate measurement of Loyalty.

Each estimated parameter, standard error, confidence interval, beta coefficient, z-value, and p-value in Table 6 adds depth to our understanding of the measurement model. These metrics collectively allow researchers to assess the strength, precision, and statistical significance of each observed variable in capturing the latent constructs of Satisfaction, Retention, and Loyalty.

Table 7 -Variances and Covariances

				95% Confidence Intervals				
Variable 1	Variable 2	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	β	z	p

SAT1	SAT1	0.734	0.0664	0.604	0.864	0.528	11.05	< .001
SAT2	SAT2	0.516	0.0708	0.378	0.655	0.349	7.3	< .001
SAT3	SAT3	0.661	0.083	0.499	0.824	0.378	7.97	< .001
SAT4	SAT4	0.72	0.0509	0.62	0.82	1	14.14	< .001
SAT5	SAT5	0.573	0.0405	0.493	0.652	0.993	14.12	< .001
SAT6	SAT6	0.589	0.0416	0.507	0.67	0.997	14.13	< .001
RET1	RET1	0.444	0.0339	0.377	0.51	0.707	13.07	< .001
RET2	RET2	0.285	0.0264	0.234	0.337	0.444	10.82	< .001
RET3	RET3	0.425	0.0344	0.358	0.493	0.593	12.34	< .001
RET4	RET4	0.279	0.0237	0.232	0.325	0.526	11.76	< .001
RET5	RET5	0.354	0.0285	0.298	0.41	0.601	12.4	< .001
LOYALTY1	LOYALTY1	0.435	0.035	0.366	0.504	0.616	12.44	< .001
LOYALTY2	LOYALTY2	0.3	0.0245	0.252	0.348	0.591	12.25	< .001
LOYALTY3	LOYALTY3	0.511	0.0424	0.428	0.594	0.568	12.05	< .001
LOYALTY4	LOYALTY4	0.308	0.0262	0.257	0.359	0.535	11.75	< .001
LOYALTY5	LOYALTY5	0.386	0.0314	0.325	0.448	0.6	12.31	< .001
Satisfaction	Satisfaction	0.656	0.0932	0.473	0.839	1	7.04	< .001
Retention	Retention	0.183	0.0338	0.117	0.249	0.997	5.41	< .001
Loyalty	Loyalty	0.27	0.0426	0.187	0.354	0.996	6.35	< .001
Retention	Loyalty	0.196	0.0266	0.144	0.249	0.884	7.37	< .001

Table 7 unfolds a comprehensive examination of variances and covariances among latent variables within the structural equation model, providing a detailed insight into the intricate relationships inherent in the observed data. This rich dataset includes estimates, standard errors, and 95% confidence intervals, offering a nuanced understanding of the variability and associations among the variables. Let's delve into the detailed interpretation of this information:

Satisfaction:

- Variances (SAT1 to SAT6): Variances indicate the degree of variability within each observed variable. The variances range from 0.516 to 0.734, with SAT1 exhibiting the highest variability.
- Covariances (Between SAT1 to SAT6): Covariances shed light on the associations between pairs of observed variables. For instance, the covariance of 0.516 between SAT1 and SAT2 suggests a positive association between these two variables.

Retention:

- Variances (RET1 to RET5): Variances portray the extent of variability within each observed variable. Variances range from 0.279 to 0.444, with RET1 displaying the highest variability.
- Covariances (Between RET1 to RET5): Covariances elucidate relationships between pairs of observed variables within the Retention construct.

Loyalty:

- Variances (LOYALTY1 to LOYALTY5): Variances signify the variability within each observed variable. Variances range from 0.3 to 0.511, with LOYALTY3 displaying the highest variability.
- Covariances (Between LOYALTY1 to LOYALTY5): Covariances unveil associations between pairs of observed variables within the Loyalty construct.

Covariances between Latent Variables:

- Covariances between latent variables, namely Satisfaction, Retention, and Loyalty, are crucial for understanding the broader structural relationships. Covariances of 0.656, 0.183, and 0.27, respectively, highlight the interdependencies among these latent constructs.
- The inclusion of standard errors and confidence intervals contributes to the evaluation of the precision and reliability of these estimates. Additionally, beta (β) coefficients, z-values, and p-values provide further insights into the statistical significance of the variances and covariances, aiding researchers in assessing the strength and validity of the structural relationships.

Table 8 -Intercepts

			95% Confidence Intervals			
Variable	Intercept	SE	Lower	Upper	z	p
SAT1	3.005	0.059	2.889	3.121	50.977	< .001
SAT2	3.04	0.061	2.921	3.159	50.004	< .001
SAT3	3.462	0.066	3.333	3.592	52.369	< .001
SAT4	1.913	0.042	1.829	1.996	45.083	< .001
SAT5	1.94	0.038	1.866	2.014	51.106	< .001
SAT6	1.673	0.038	1.597	1.748	43.539	< .001
RET1	1.73	0.04	1.652	1.808	43.693	< .001
RET2	1.73	0.04	1.651	1.809	43.179	< .001
RET3	1.972	0.042	1.89	2.055	46.598	< .001
RET4	1.853	0.036	1.781	1.924	50.856	< .001
RET5	1.847	0.038	1.772	1.923	48.136	< .001

LOYALTY1	1.923	0.042	1.84	2.005	45.745	< .001
LOYALTY2	1.585	0.036	1.515	1.655	44.486	< .001
LOYALTY3	1.985	0.047	1.892	2.078	41.853	< .001
LOYALTY4	1.71	0.038	1.636	1.784	45.066	< .001
LOYALTY5	1.775	0.04	1.696	1.854	44.224	< .001
Satisfaction	0	0	0	0		
Retention	0	0	0	0		
Loyalty	0	0	0	0		

Table 8 provides a detailed exploration of intercepts for various variables, shedding light on the expected values of dependent variables when all predictor variables are set to zero. These intercepts play a crucial role in understanding the baseline levels of Satisfaction, Retention, and Loyalty within the structural equation model. Let's delve into a comprehensive interpretation of the information presented in the table:

Satisfaction (SAT1 to SAT6):

- The intercepts for SAT1 to SAT6, ranging from 1.673 to 3.462, signify the expected level of Satisfaction when all other predictor variables are held at zero.
- The remarkably high z-values (ranging from 43.539 to 52.369) and exceedingly low p-values (< .001) accentuate the statistical significance of these intercepts. This statistical significance underscores the reliability of the intercepts, emphasizing their robust contribution to the model.

Retention (RET1 to RET5):

- The intercepts for RET1 to RET5, ranging from 1.73 to 1.972, convey the expected level of Retention when all other predictor variables are set to zero.
- Analogous to Satisfaction, the high z-values (ranging from 43.179 to 46.598) and very low p-values (< .001) reinforce the statistical significance of these intercepts. This robust statistical significance underscores their importance in capturing the baseline levels of Retention.

Loyalty (LOYALTY1 to LOYALTY5):

- The intercepts for LOYALTY1 to LOYALTY5, spanning from 1.585 to 1.985, articulate the anticipated level of Loyalty when all other predictor variables are set to zero.
- The high z-values (ranging from 41.853 to 45.745) and extremely low p-values (< .001) highlight the statistical significance of these intercepts. This significance emphasizes the reliability and importance of these intercepts in delineating the baseline levels of Loyalty.

Overall Intercept for Latent Variables (Satisfaction, Retention, Loyalty):

- The intercepts for Satisfaction, Retention, and Loyalty are consistently fixed at 0, with standard errors and confidence intervals also set to 0.
- These fixed intercepts serve as reference points, offering a baseline understanding of each latent variable when all other variables are at their baseline.

In summary, Table 8's intercepts provide a comprehensive view of the expected values for Satisfaction, Retention, and Loyalty under baseline conditions. The statistical significance of these intercepts, underscored by high z-values and extremely low p-values, affirms their reliability and crucial role in capturing the foundational levels of these constructs within the structural equation model. The fixed intercepts for latent variables establish reference points, enriching the interpretation of the baseline conditions for each construct.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

The primary objective of this research was to explore the impact of customer satisfaction on customer retention and loyalty within the context of heritage hotels in the state of Rajasthan. The study delved into the intricate relationships between these variables to unravel the dynamics influencing guests' decisions to revisit and develop lasting loyalty towards heritage establishments.

Upon analyzing the parameter estimates, it was found that the influence of customer satisfaction on both customer retention and loyalty was positive but not statistically significant. The estimates suggested a subtle positive relationship, albeit within confidence intervals that included zero. This implies that while customer satisfaction may play a role, its direct impact on retention and loyalty in heritage hotels in Rajasthan might be less pronounced than anticipated.

In the broader context, the findings align with existing literature on the hospitality industry. Jobber (2001) highlights the evolving marketing strategies in the sector, emphasizing the shift towards comprehensive approaches focusing not only on customer acquisition but also on retention and loyalty. Sinha & Ghoshal (1999) stress the integral role of services in today's competitive landscape, where delivering superior value through excellent customer service is paramount. The study's results resonate with the emphasis placed on customer service by Philip Kotler (2006), who underscores its significance in satisfying and retaining customers. Reichheld and Kenny (1990) provide context to the financial benefits of customer loyalty, supporting the argument that retaining customers can substantially increase profits.

However, the findings also echo the caution voiced by various scholars, such as Richards (1996) and Reichheld (1996), regarding the complexities of customer retention. The challenge lies not just in satisfying customers but in cultivating loyalty, with factors like clear strategic vision and internal marketing becoming imperative (Reichheld and Kenny, 1990;

Bolton, 2000). The interplay of customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty aligns with the multifaceted nature of customer relationships discussed by Gronroos (1994) and the strategic use of loyalty programs highlighted by Bolton (2000). Moreover, the relevance of technology and its role in customer loyalty, noted by Kotler and Armstrong (2006) and Winer (2001), reflects the contemporary dynamics shaping customer preferences.

In conclusion, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by shedding light on the nuanced interplay between customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty in heritage hotels within the vibrant state of Rajasthan. The findings underscore the need for these establishments to go beyond conventional strategies and tailor approaches that resonate with the cultural and historical richness they offer. Future research may delve deeper into the unique aspects of heritage hospitality to refine strategies for enhancing customer retention and loyalty in this distinctive sector.

7 Study Implication

The implications of this study extend crucial insights for the management of heritage hotels in Rajasthan. To thrive in a competitive market, these establishments must not only meet guest expectations but also create distinctive experiences rooted in the historical and cultural fabric of the region. Strategic marketing approaches, both traditional and innovative, should be embraced to engage guests effectively. The integration of technology plays a pivotal role in enhancing customer loyalty, urging heritage hotels to invest in digital solutions. Cultural sensitivity emerges as a key factor, advocating for an authentic incorporation of local traditions and customs. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the importance of staff development and internal marketing strategies to ensure a seamless blend of hospitality and heritage awareness.

8 Future Scope of the Study:

For future research, a more in-depth cultural analysis could unravel specific elements influencing guest satisfaction in heritage hotels. A comparative exploration between heritage and contemporary hotels within Rajasthan may offer valuable distinctions. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in customer dynamics over time and segmentation studies focusing on diverse guest demographics are recommended. Investigating the impact of heritage preservation efforts and exploring the role of emerging technologies in guest experiences represent promising avenues. These directions collectively contribute to a nuanced understanding of customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty in the distinctive landscape of heritage hotels in Rajasthan.

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