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# THE EFFECTS OF SERVICE QUALITY, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, AND HOTEL IMAGE ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND REPURCHASE INTENTION IN THE THAI HOTEL INDUSTRY

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## ABSTRACT

*The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted the global hospitality industry, particularly the hotel sector, resulting in substantial declines in tourist demand and business performance. As tourism gradually recovers, understanding the factors that influence customers' repurchase intention has become increasingly important for hotel operators seeking sustainable competitiveness. This study aims to investigate the effects of service quality, customer experience, and hotel image on customer satisfaction and to examine the role of customer satisfaction in shaping repurchase intention in the post-COVID-19 hotel industry in Thailand. A mixed-methods research approach was employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of customer behavior. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with hotel customers and analyzed using content analysis to identify key themes related to service perceptions and behavioral intentions. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to hotel customers and analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). Reliability and validity of the measurement model were assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted, and confirmatory factor analysis. The results reveal that service quality, customer experience, and hotel image have significant positive effects on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, customer satisfaction was found to have a strong and significant influence on customers' repurchase intention, confirming its mediating role between hotel service attributes and behavioral intentions. The qualitative findings support the quantitative results by highlighting the importance of cleanliness, staff responsiveness, personalized service, and positive hotel reputation in shaping customer satisfaction and confidence in revisiting hotels. Overall, the study provides empirical evidence that enhancing customer satisfaction through improved service quality, memorable customer experiences, and a strong hotel image is essential for encouraging repeat patronage in the post-COVID-19 hotel industry. The findings contribute to the literature on hospitality management and offer practical insights for hotel managers aiming to strengthen customer retention strategies in a competitive tourism environment.*

**KEYWORDS:** Service Quality, Customer Experience, Hotel Image, Customer Satisfaction, Repurchase Intention.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem

The global hospitality industry has undergone unprecedented disruption following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization in early 2020. Government responses such as international travel restrictions, border closures, quarantine measures, and social distancing regulations caused a dramatic decline in tourism demand worldwide (Bonfanti et al., 2021). Among service industries, hotels were particularly affected, experiencing sharp decreases in occupancy rates, revenues, and employment levels. Many hotels were forced to suspend operations temporarily or permanently, highlighting the vulnerability of the sector to external shocks and global crises (Hardinie et al., 2023). The hotel industry is inherently dependent on human mobility, discretionary spending, and consumer confidence. When travel was restricted, hotels faced not only financial losses but also operational challenges, including workforce reductions, increased sanitation costs, and uncertainty regarding future demand. Small-scale hotels were especially vulnerable due to limited financial reserves, weaker brand recognition, and lower bargaining power compared to large international hotel chains. These challenges underscored the importance of resilience, adaptability, and customer-focused strategies in sustaining hotel businesses during and after periods of crisis.

As the pandemic situation gradually improved, the tourism and hospitality industry entered a recovery phase. From 2022 onward, international and domestic travel began to rebound, supported by widespread vaccination programs, eased travel restrictions, and government-led tourism stimulus measures. In Thailand, tourism plays a crucial role in national economic development, contributing significantly to gross domestic product (GDP), employment, and income distribution across regions. The resurgence of tourism demand has led to a steady increase in hotel occupancy rates and revenues, signaling a positive recovery trend for the hospitality sector. However, this recovery has also intensified competition within the hotel industry. The return of international tourists, coupled with the growth of domestic travel, has resulted in increased supply of accommodation, including newly established hotels and alternative lodging options such as boutique hotels and short-term rental platforms. Small and medium-sized hotels face

significant challenges in competing with large hotel chains that benefit from strong brand equity, standardized service systems, advanced technology, and extensive marketing resources (Cheawcharnchaiya, 2025). As a result, smaller hotels must rely heavily on service quality, customer experience, and relationship-building strategies to differentiate themselves in the marketplace.

In a highly competitive post-pandemic environment, attracting new customers alone is no longer sufficient for sustainable business success. Retaining existing customers and encouraging repeat visits have become critical strategic priorities for hotel operators. Repurchase intention, defined as a customer's willingness to revisit and reuse a hotel's services in the future, is widely recognized as a key indicator of long-term business performance and customer loyalty (Omar, 2003). Previous studies suggest that acquiring new customers requires significantly higher marketing costs than retaining existing ones, making repeat customers a valuable and cost-effective source of revenue for hospitality businesses (Adzoyi et al., 2021). Customer behavior in the hotel industry is strongly influenced by perceptions and experiences formed during previous stays. According to consumer behavior and expectancy-disconfirmation theory, customers evaluate service performance by comparing their expectations with actual experiences, leading to satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Anderson, 1973; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). When hotel services meet or exceed customer expectations, satisfaction is enhanced, increasing the likelihood of positive behavioral outcomes such as repeat visits, positive word-of-mouth, and favorable online reviews. Conversely, unmet expectations or service failures may result in dissatisfaction, complaints, and customer switching behavior, particularly in destinations with abundant accommodation choices (Kotler et al., 2022).

In the digital era, customer experiences extend beyond physical service encounters to include online interactions before, during, and after the hotel stay. Booking platforms, social media channels, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) play a significant role in shaping customer perceptions and decision-making processes. Online reviews and ratings have become influential information sources, often perceived as more credible than traditional advertising. A positive hotel image, formed through consistent service quality and memorable customer experiences, can enhance customer trust and satisfaction, which in turn strengthens repurchase intention (Hardinie et al., 2023; Islam et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally altered customer expectations regarding hotel services. Health and safety concerns, cleanliness standards, contactless service delivery, and value for money have become central criteria in hotel selection. Customers are now more cautious and demand higher levels of hygiene assurance, transparency, and personalized service experiences than before the pandemic (Al-Kumaim et al., 2025). Hotels that fail to adapt to these evolving expectations risk losing customer trust and competitive advantage.

Despite the growing body of literature on service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in the hospitality industry, gaps remain in understanding customer repurchase intention in the post-COVID-19 context, particularly for small-scale hotels in emerging tourism markets such as Thailand. Many existing studies focus on large hotels or pre-pandemic conditions, limiting their applicability to the current recovery phase. Moreover, the interrelationships among service quality, customer experience, hotel image, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention require further empirical investigation to provide comprehensive insights for hotel managers. Therefore, examining the factors that influence customers' intention to repurchase hotel services is of critical importance. Understanding how service quality, customer experience, satisfaction, and hotel image interact to shape repurchase intention can provide valuable insights for hotel operators seeking to enhance competitiveness, improve customer retention, and achieve sustainable growth in the post-pandemic tourism environment.

### 1.2. Research Question

Based on the background and significance of the problem discussed above, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What factors influence customers' repurchase intention toward hotel services in the post-COVID-19 tourism context?
2. How do service quality, customer experience, and hotel image affect customer satisfaction in the hotel industry?
3. How does customer satisfaction influence customers' repurchase intention toward hotel services?

These research questions are formulated to systematically examine customer perceptions, satisfaction formation, and behavioral intentions, with the aim of identifying the key determinants that encourage repeat hotel stays and long-term customer relationships in the post-pandemic hospitality

industry.

### 1.3. Research Objective

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the factors influencing customers' repurchase intention in the hotel industry within the context of post-pandemic tourism recovery. To achieve this overall aim, the study sets out the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the influence of service quality, customer experience, and hotel image on customer satisfaction in the hotel industry.
2. To analyze the effect of customer satisfaction on customers' repurchase intention toward hotel services.
3. To provide practical recommendations for hotel managers, particularly small and medium-sized hotel operators, to enhance customer satisfaction and encourage repeat patronage.

By addressing these objectives, the study aims to contribute to the academic literature on consumer behavior and hospitality management, while also offering managerial insights that support strategic decision-making and sustainable competitiveness in the hotel industry.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Related Concepts and Theories

This chapter reviews relevant concepts, theories, and empirical studies related to customer repurchase intention in the hotel industry. The purpose of the literature review is to establish a theoretical foundation for the study, identify research gaps, and develop the conceptual framework and hypotheses that guide the empirical analysis.

#### 2.1.1. Service Quality

Service quality is one of the most widely studied constructs in service marketing and hospitality management. It refers to customers' overall evaluation of a service based on the comparison between their expectations and the actual service performance received (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In the hotel industry, service quality encompasses both tangible and intangible elements, including physical facilities, staff behavior, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance. The SERVQUAL model proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) identifies five dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. This model has been extensively applied in hospitality research to measure hotel service quality and examine its impact on customer satisfaction and behavioral

intentions. Previous studies indicate that high service quality enhances customers' perceptions of value and trust, leading to increased satisfaction and loyalty (Kotler et al., 2022). In the post-COVID-19 context, service quality has taken on additional significance, particularly in relation to cleanliness, hygiene standards, and safety measures. Customers are more sensitive to health-related service attributes, and hotels that demonstrate high standards of cleanliness and professionalism are more likely to gain customer confidence and satisfaction (Al-Kumaim et al., 2025).

### **2.1.2. Customer Experience**

Customer experience refers to the totality of cognitive, emotional, sensory, and behavioral responses that customers have during all stages of their interaction with a service provider (Schmitt, 1999). In the hotel industry, customer experience is formed through multiple touchpoints, including online booking, check-in and check-out processes, interactions with staff, room comfort, and post-stay communication. Pine and Gilmore (1999) emphasized that experiences are distinct from services and represent a critical source of competitive advantage. A positive customer experience can create emotional connections between customers and hotels, which are difficult for competitors to imitate. Empirical studies suggest that memorable and personalized experiences significantly influence customer satisfaction and revisit intentions in hospitality settings (Islam et al., 2024). With the increasing role of digital platforms, customer experience now extends beyond physical encounters to include online reviews, mobile applications, and social media engagement. These digital experiences contribute to customers' overall perceptions and influence future behavioral intentions, including repurchase intention and word-of-mouth communication.

### **2.1.3. Customer Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is a central concept in marketing and consumer behavior research. It is commonly defined as a customer's overall evaluation of a product or service based on the discrepancy between expectations and perceived performance (Anderson, 1973). Satisfaction reflects customers' emotional and cognitive responses to service experiences and serves as a key determinant of post-purchase behavior. In the hospitality industry, customer satisfaction has been found to directly influence repurchase intention, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth. Satisfied customers are more likely

to return to the same hotel and recommend it to others, while dissatisfied customers may engage in negative reviews or switch to competitors (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). In the post-pandemic environment, customer satisfaction is closely linked to perceptions of safety, service consistency, and value for money. Hotels that successfully manage customer expectations and deliver reliable service quality are better positioned to enhance satisfaction and encourage repeat visits.

### **2.1.4. Hotel Image**

Hotel image refers to the overall impression and set of beliefs that customers hold about a hotel (Kotler et al., 2022). It is shaped by both direct experiences and indirect information sources, such as advertising, online reviews, and word-of-mouth. A strong and positive hotel image can reduce perceived risk, increase customer trust, and influence purchase decisions. In hospitality research, hotel image has been identified as an important antecedent of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customers who perceive a hotel as reputable, reliable, and customer-oriented are more likely to develop favorable attitudes and repurchase intentions (Hardinie et al., 2023).

### **2.1.5. Repurchase Intention**

Repurchase intention refers to a customer's willingness or intention to reuse a service or repurchase a product in the future (Omar, 2003). In the hotel industry, repurchase intention is often used as a proxy for customer loyalty and long-term relationship strength. High repurchase intention indicates that customers are satisfied with their previous experiences and perceive value in maintaining a relationship with the hotel. Repurchase intention is influenced by multiple factors, including service quality, customer experience, satisfaction, and hotel image. Understanding these relationships is essential for hotel managers seeking to improve customer retention and business sustainability.

## **2.2. Literature Surveys**

Numerous empirical studies have examined the determinants of customer satisfaction and repurchase intention in the hospitality industry. Previous research consistently indicates that service quality has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Adzoyi et al., 2021). Similarly, customer experience has been shown to influence both satisfaction and repurchase intention by creating emotional engagement and

perceived value (Islam et al., 2024). Studies conducted in the post-COVID-19 context highlight the increasing importance of hygiene, safety, and service reliability in shaping customer perceptions. Al-Kumaim et al. (2025) found that customers' satisfaction and revisit intentions were strongly influenced by hotels' health and safety practices. Moreover, hotel image has been identified as a mediating and direct factor influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty, particularly in highly competitive markets (Hardin et al., 2023). Despite these findings, limited research has simultaneously examined service quality, customer experience, hotel image, and customer satisfaction as integrated predictors of repurchase intention, especially in emerging tourism markets such as Thailand. This study addresses this gap by proposing a comprehensive model that incorporates these key constructs.

### 2.3. Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual model integrates variables derived from service marketing theory, consumer behavior theory, and empirical hospitality studies. The framework is structured according to systems theory, which explains relationships among variables through input-process-output dynamics.

#### 1. Input Variables

- Service Quality (SQ): Customers' perceptions of hotel service performance, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility.
- Customer Experience (CE): Customers' overall cognitive and emotional responses resulting from interactions with hotel services throughout the service process.
- Hotel Image (HI): Customers' overall impressions and beliefs about the hotel formed through direct experience and external information sources.

#### 2. Mediating Construct

- Customer Satisfaction (CS): Customers' overall evaluation of hotel services based on the comparison between expectations and perceived performance.

#### 3. Output Variable

- Repurchase Intention (RI): Customers' intention to revisit and reuse hotel services in the future.

This structure aligns with the input-process-output framework of systems theory, which explains how service-related inputs influence customer behavioral outcomes through satisfaction as a mediating process (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972; Adams

et al., 2014).

### 2.4. Research Hypothesis

Based on the conceptual framework and the review of relevant theories and empirical studies, this research proposes the following hypotheses to examine the relationships among the study variables:

- H1: Service quality has a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction in the hotel industry.
- H2: Customer experience has a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction in the hotel industry.
- H3: Hotel image has a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction in the hotel industry.
- H4: Customer satisfaction has a significant positive influence on customers' repurchase intention toward hotel services.

These hypotheses are formulated in accordance with the research questions and objectives presented in Chapter 1 and are empirically tested to explain customers' repurchase intention in the post-COVID-19 hotel context.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the mixed-methods research methodology employed to examine the factors influencing customers' repurchase intention in the hotel industry. The study integrates qualitative and quantitative phases to enhance the depth, validity, and contextual interpretation of the findings. The quantitative survey provides statistical evidence of relationships among key constructs, while the qualitative inquiry complements this by generating insights that inform instrument design and support interpretation of the structural model results. This chapter outlines the research design, population and sampling strategy, research instruments, data collection procedures, and statistical techniques used for data analysis.

### 3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. The quantitative phase employs a structured survey to investigate the relationships among service quality, customer experience, hotel image, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention using inferential statistics and structural equation modeling (SEM). The qualitative phase precedes and complements this analysis through semi-structured interviews, which were used to explore customer perceptions, refine the

measurement instrument, and provide interpretive support for the quantitative findings. The mixed-methods approach enables both breadth and depth of understanding. The qualitative insights help contextualize customer behaviors, identify themes relevant to service expectations in the post-COVID-19 period, and ensure content validity of the survey items. The quantitative results then test these relationships empirically using a cross-sectional design, in which data are collected at a single point in time from hotel customers. The integration of both phases strengthens methodological rigor and ensures a coherent examination of customer satisfaction and repurchase intention in Thailand's hotel industry.

### **3.2. Population and Sample**

#### **3.2.1. Population**

The population of this study consists of customers who have stayed at hotels in Thailand during the post-COVID-19 tourism recovery period. These customers are considered appropriate respondents because they possess direct experience with hotel services and are capable of evaluating key constructs examined in this study, including service quality, customer experience, hotel image, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention.

#### **3.2.2. Quantitative Sample**

For the quantitative phase, the study employs a probability sampling method to ensure representativeness of the target population. Specifically, stratified random sampling is used, whereby hotel customers are grouped into strata based on relevant characteristics such as hotel category or travel purpose. Respondents are then randomly selected from each stratum to reduce sampling bias and enhance the generalizability of the findings. The sample size for the quantitative analysis is determined based on recommendations for structural equation modeling (SEM). Previous methodological guidelines suggest that a minimum sample size of 200 respondents is required to achieve stable parameter estimates and adequate statistical power when using SEM techniques. Therefore, this study targets a minimum of 200 hotel customers for the quantitative survey.

#### **3.2.3. Qualitative Sample**

For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling is employed to select participants who can provide in-depth insights into customer experiences and satisfaction in the hotel industry. The qualitative sample consists of hotel customers who have recently stayed at hotels in Thailand and are willing to share

detailed perspectives on service quality, hotel image, and factors influencing their intention to revisit. The number of qualitative participants is determined based on the principle of data saturation, whereby data collection continues until no new themes or insights emerge. Typically, this involves approximately 10–15 participants, which is considered sufficient for qualitative thematic analysis in hospitality research.

#### **3.2.4. Sampling Rationale**

The use of both quantitative and qualitative sampling approaches allows this study to adopt a mixed-methods perspective, enhancing the depth and validity of the research findings. The quantitative sample supports hypothesis testing and generalization of results, while the qualitative sample provides contextual understanding and rich explanations of customer perceptions and behaviors. This combined approach strengthens the overall rigor of the study and supports a comprehensive examination of customers' repurchase intention in the post-COVID-19 hotel context.

### **3.3. Research Instruments**

The primary research instrument used in this study is a structured questionnaire developed based on a review of relevant literature and established measurement scales. The questionnaire is divided into two main sections.

The first section collects demographic information from respondents, including gender, age, education level, income, and travel frequency. These variables provide contextual information about the respondents and support descriptive analysis.

The second section measures the main study variables: service quality, customer experience, hotel image, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention. Measurement items are adapted from previous studies to ensure content validity. All items are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Service quality is measured using items reflecting reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility. Customer experience is measured through items capturing emotional, cognitive, and overall experiential evaluations. Hotel image is assessed using items related to reputation, trustworthiness, and overall impression. Customer satisfaction is measured by items reflecting overall satisfaction and fulfillment of expectations. Repurchase intention is measured using items related to revisit intention, recommendation, and willingness to reuse hotel services.

Prior to data collection, the questionnaire is reviewed by experts in hospitality management and research methodology to assess clarity and content validity. A pilot test is conducted with a small group of respondents to ensure reliability and to refine the wording of the items.

### 3.4. Data Collection

Data collection for this study is conducted using a self-administered questionnaire as the primary research instrument. The questionnaire is designed to collect data on customers' perceptions of service quality, customer experience, hotel image, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention. A structured survey approach is considered appropriate because it enables the collection of standardized data from a large number of respondents and supports quantitative analysis using structural equation modeling.

To enhance response rates and ensure broad accessibility, the questionnaire is distributed through both online and offline channels. For online data collection, the questionnaire is administered using an online survey platform and disseminated through social media networks, travel-related online communities, and hotel-related platforms. This approach allows the researcher to reach hotel customers who frequently use digital media and online booking systems. For offline data collection, printed questionnaires are distributed to customers at selected hotels during or after their stay, with the cooperation of hotel management. This method ensures participation from respondents who may be less active online and helps increase sample diversity. Prior to participation, respondents are clearly informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Ethical considerations are strictly observed throughout the data collection process. Respondents are assured that all information provided will remain confidential and will be used solely for academic research purposes. No personally identifiable information is collected, ensuring respondent anonymity. Informed consent is obtained before respondents proceed with the questionnaire.

Data collection is carried out over a specified period to ensure that responses accurately reflect recent hotel stay experiences, particularly within the post-COVID-19 tourism recovery context. This timing helps improve the reliability of respondents' evaluations and minimizes recall bias. During the data collection period, responses are regularly

monitored to ensure adequate sample size and balanced representation across respondent groups. After data collection is completed, all returned questionnaires are carefully screened for completeness, accuracy, and consistency. Incomplete responses, duplicate entries, and questionnaires with missing or invalid data are excluded from the analysis. The final dataset is then coded and prepared for statistical analysis using SPSS and SEM software. This systematic data collection process ensures the quality, reliability, and validity of the data used in subsequent analyses.

### 3.5. Statistics Used for Data Analysis

Data analysis is conducted using statistical software, including SPSS for preliminary analysis and AMOS or SmartPLS for structural equation modeling (SEM). The analysis is performed in several systematic stages to ensure the reliability, validity, and robustness of the research findings.

First, descriptive statistics are employed to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and general perceptions of the study variables. Frequency and percentage are used to describe demographic data, while mean and standard deviation are used to present respondents' evaluations of service quality, customer experience, hotel image, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention.

Second, measurement model evaluation is conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the research constructs. Internal consistency reliability is examined using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), with values of 0.70 or higher indicating acceptable reliability. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is performed to evaluate the factor structure of the measurement model and to confirm that the observed variables adequately represent their respective latent constructs. Convergent validity is assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with values of 0.50 or higher indicating sufficient convergence among measurement items. Discriminant validity is evaluated by comparing the square root of AVE for each construct with the correlations between constructs, ensuring that each construct is distinct from the others.

Third, after establishing an acceptable measurement model, the structural model is analyzed using SEM to test the hypothesized relationships among the latent variables. Path coefficients, t-values (or critical ratios), and significance levels are examined to determine the strength and direction of the relationships proposed

in the research hypotheses. Model fit indices are used to assess the overall goodness-of-fit of the structural model. Commonly reported indices include the chi-square statistic, comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), with values meeting recommended thresholds indicating an acceptable model fit.

Finally, the results of the SEM analysis are interpreted to determine whether the proposed hypotheses are supported. The findings provide empirical evidence regarding the effects of service quality, customer experience, and hotel images on customer satisfaction, as well as the influence of customer satisfaction on repurchase intention. These results form the basis for discussion, conclusions, and managerial implications presented in subsequent chapters.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis conducted to examine the factors influencing customers' repurchase intention in the hotel industry within the post-COVID-19 tourism recovery context. The purpose of this chapter is to report the empirical findings derived from both qualitative and quantitative data and to evaluate the proposed conceptual framework and research hypotheses developed in previous chapters. The data analysis is divided into two main components: qualitative data analysis and quantitative data analysis. The qualitative analysis aims to provide in-depth insights into customers' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward hotel services. Through thematic analysis, this part of the study explores how customers perceive service quality, customer experience, hotel image, and satisfaction, and how these perceptions influence their intention to revisit and repurchase hotel services. The qualitative findings serve to enrich the quantitative results by offering contextual understanding and supporting explanations of customer behavior.

### 4.2. Data Analysis of the Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with hotel customers who had recent experience staying at hotels in Thailand during the post-COVID-19 tourism recovery period. The purpose of the qualitative analysis was to gain a deeper understanding of customers' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward hotel services, and to complement the quantitative findings of the study. The qualitative data were analyzed using content

analysis, following a systematic and structured approach. First, all interview responses were transcribed verbatim and carefully reviewed to ensure accuracy and completeness. Second, the transcripts were repeatedly read to gain an overall understanding of the data. Meaningful statements and phrases related to service quality, customer experience, hotel image, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention were then identified and coded. These codes were subsequently grouped into categories based on similarity of meaning, and broader themes were developed to represent the key concepts emerging from the data.

The content analysis revealed that service quality was a dominant theme in participants' responses. Respondents frequently emphasized staff responsiveness, reliability of service, and cleanliness as critical factors influencing their hotel experience. In particular, cleanliness and hygiene standards were repeatedly mentioned as essential elements affecting customer confidence and satisfaction in the post-COVID-19 context. Many participants stated that visible sanitation practices and adherence to safety protocols increased their trust in the hotel and their willingness to revisit.

Customer experience also emerged as a significant theme in the content analysis. Respondents highlighted the importance of smooth service processes, such as efficient check-in and check-out procedures, as well as personalized attention from hotel staff. Positive interpersonal interactions, friendly communication, and prompt problem resolution were identified as factors that enhanced emotional satisfaction and created memorable experiences. These experiential elements were perceived as adding value beyond basic service delivery.

Another key theme identified through content analysis was hotel image. Participants indicated that hotels with a positive reputation, consistent service standards, and favorable online reviews were more likely to be trusted and considered for future stays. Online ratings and electronic word-of-mouth were frequently referenced as influential information sources that shaped expectations and reinforced perceptions of hotel credibility and quality.

Overall, the qualitative findings derived from content analysis demonstrate that service quality, customer experience, and hotel image play crucial roles in shaping customer satisfaction, which subsequently influences repurchase intention. These findings are consistent with the proposed conceptual framework and provide contextual support for the quantitative results presented in the following

section. A summary of the main categories and themes identified from the content analysis is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of Key Qualitative Themes and Representative Statements.**

Theme	Category	Description	Representative Statements
Service Quality	Responsiveness and Reliability	Refers to prompt service, staff willingness to help, and consistency in service delivery	"The staff responded quickly whenever I needed help, which made my stay very comfortable."
	Cleanliness and Hygiene	Emphasizes sanitation standards, cleanliness of rooms, and safety measures	"Cleanliness is the most important thing for me now. Seeing clear hygiene measures made me feel safe staying here."
Customer Experience	Service Process	Includes check-in/check-out efficiency and smooth service procedures	"The check-in process was fast and smooth, which gave me a good first impression."
	Personal Interaction	Reflects friendliness, politeness, and personalized attention from staff	"The staff remembered my preferences, which made me feel valued as a guest."
Hotel Image	Reputation and Trust	Represents overall reputation, credibility, and trustworthiness of the hotel	"I chose this hotel because it has a good reputation and consistent service quality."
	Online Reviews	Influence of electronic word-of-mouth and online ratings	"I read many positive reviews online, which made me confident to book this hotel."
Customer Satisfaction	Overall Evaluation	Customers' overall satisfaction with hotel services	"Overall, I was very satisfied with my stay and felt that the hotel met my expectations."
Repurchase Intention	Revisit and Recommendation	Intention to revisit and recommend the hotel to others	"I would definitely stay here again and recommend it to my friends."

### 4.3. Data Analysis of the Quantitative Data

#### 4.3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and overall perceptions of the study variables. Frequency and percentage were employed to describe demographic data, while mean and standard deviation were used to analyze service quality, customer experience, hotel image, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention. The results indicate that respondents generally reported high levels of satisfaction and positive perceptions toward hotel services. The descriptive statistics of the main variables are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of the Main Variables.**

Variable	Number of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Service Quality (SQ)	5	4.18	0.56
Customer Experience (CE)	5	4.12	0.59
Hotel Image (HI)	4	4.05	0.61
Customer Satisfaction (CS)	4	4.22	0.53
Repurchase Intention (RI)	4	4.15	0.57

*Note: Mean values are based on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).*

#### 4.3.2. Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. Internal consistency reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR), with all values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Convergent validity was assessed using average variance extracted (AVE), and all constructs demonstrated AVE values above 0.50, indicating adequate convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was evaluated by comparing the square root of AVE for each construct with the inter-construct correlations. The results confirmed that each construct was distinct from the others. A summary of the reliability and validity assessment is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3 Reliability and Validity Assessment of the Measurement Model.**

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	SQ	CE	HI	CS	RI
Service Quality (SQ)	0.89	0.91	0.67	0.82				
Customer Experience (CE)	0.88	0.90	0.65	0.58	0.81			
Hotel Image (HI)	0.87	0.89	0.63	0.55	0.60	0.79		
Customer Satisfaction (CS)	0.91	0.93	0.72	0.62	0.65	0.61	0.85	
Repurchase Intention (RI)	0.90	0.92	0.70	0.57	0.59	0.56	0.68	0.84

**4.3.3. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing**

After confirming an acceptable measurement model, the structural model was analyzed using SEM to test the proposed hypotheses. Model fit indices indicated that the structural model demonstrated a good fit with the empirical data. The standardized path coefficients, t-values, and significance levels were examined to evaluate the hypothesized relationships. The results show that service quality has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, supporting H1. Customer experience also has a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction, supporting H2. Hotel image was found to significantly affect customer satisfaction, supporting H3. Furthermore, customer satisfaction has a significant positive influence on repurchase intention, supporting H4. The results of the hypothesis testing and standardized path coefficients are summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4: Results of Hypothesis Testing and Structural Model Analysis.**

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	t-value / CR	p-value	Result
H1	Service Quality → Customer Satisfaction	0.32	4.85	< 0.001	Accepted
H2	Customer Experience → Customer Satisfaction	0.41	6.12	< 0.001	Accepted
H3	Hotel Image → Customer Satisfaction	0.27	3.98	< 0.001	Accepted
H4	Customer Satisfaction → Repurchase Intention	0.56	8.24	< 0.001	Accepted

Note:  $\beta$  represents standardized path coefficients. Statistical significance is assessed at the 0.05 level.

**4.4. Summary of the Results**

This chapter presented the results of both qualitative and quantitative data analyses conducted to examine the factors influencing customers' repurchase intention in the hotel industry. The qualitative findings, derived from content analysis, indicated that service quality, customer experience, and hotel image are key factors shaping customers' overall satisfaction with hotel services. Participants emphasized the importance of staff responsiveness, cleanliness, personalized service, and positive hotel reputation in influencing their satisfaction and willingness to revisit hotels. The quantitative analysis, conducted using structural equation modeling (SEM), provided empirical support for the proposed conceptual framework. The results confirmed that service quality, customer experience, and hotel image have significant positive effects on customer satisfaction. In addition, customer satisfaction was found to have a strong and significant influence on customers' repurchase

intention. All research hypotheses were supported, demonstrating consistency between the qualitative insights and quantitative results. Overall, the findings highlight the central role of customer satisfaction as a mediating factor linking hotel service attributes to customers' behavioral intentions. The integrated results offer a comprehensive understanding of customer behavior in the post-COVID-19 hotel industry and provide a solid empirical foundation for interpreting the relationships among service quality, customer experience, hotel image, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention.

**5. CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATION**

**5.1 Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors influencing customers' repurchase intention in the hotel industry within the context of post-COVID-19 tourism recovery in Thailand.

Specifically, the study investigated the effects of service quality, customer experience, and hotel image on customer satisfaction, as well as the influence of customer satisfaction on repurchases intention. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative content analysis and quantitative structural equation modeling (SEM), to provide a comprehensive understanding of customer behavior. The findings of the study indicate that service quality, customer experience, and hotel image all have significant positive effects on customer satisfaction. Among these factors, customer experience and service quality were found to play particularly important roles in shaping customers' overall evaluations of hotel services. Furthermore, customer satisfaction was identified as a key determinant of repurchase intention, confirming its central role as a mediating variable between hotel service attributes and customers' behavioral intentions. The integration of qualitative and quantitative findings strengthens the robustness of the research conclusions. Qualitative insights revealed that customers place high importance on staff responsiveness, cleanliness, personalized service, and positive hotel reputation, especially in the post-pandemic context. These insights are consistent with the quantitative results, which empirically confirmed the proposed relationships among the study variables. Overall, the study provides empirical evidence that enhancing customer satisfaction through improved service quality, positive experiences, and strong hotel image is essential for encouraging repeat patronage in the hotel industry.

## 5.2. Discussion

The results of this study are discussed in relation to existing theories and empirical findings reviewed in Chapter 2. The significant positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is consistent with service marketing and hospitality literature, which suggests that customers evaluate hotel services based on reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Kotler et al., 2022). In the post-COVID-19 context, the importance of service quality has been further emphasized, particularly with respect to cleanliness, hygiene, and safety standards. This finding supports previous studies that identified health and safety-related service attributes as critical drivers of customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry (Al-Kumaim et al., 2025). The positive influence of customer experience on customer satisfaction aligns with experiential marketing theory

and prior research emphasizing the role of emotional and experiential factors in shaping customer evaluations (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Schmitt, 1999). The findings suggest that beyond functional service delivery, hotels must focus on creating memorable and personalized experiences to enhance customer satisfaction. This result is consistent with the literature indicating that positive customer experiences strengthen emotional connections and increase customers' willingness to maintain long-term relationships with service providers (Islam et al., 2024).

The study also found that hotel image has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. This result supports earlier research suggesting that a favorable hotel image reduces perceived risk, enhances trust, and positively influences customers' evaluations of service encounters (Hardinie et al., 2023). In the digital era, hotel image is increasingly shaped by online reviews, ratings, and electronic word-of-mouth, which play a crucial role in shaping customer expectations and satisfaction. The findings reinforce the importance of managing both offline and online aspects of hotel image to maintain positive customer perceptions. Furthermore, the significant effect of customer satisfaction on repurchase intention confirms the applicability of expectancy-disconfirmation theory and relationship marketing theory in the hotel context (Anderson, 1973; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). Satisfied customers are more likely to revisit the same hotel, recommend it to others, and develop long-term loyalty. This finding is consistent with previous empirical studies that identified customer satisfaction as a strong predictor of repurchase intention and loyalty in the hospitality industry (Omar, 2003; Adzoyi et al., 2021). Overall, the discussion highlights that customer satisfaction functions as a critical mediating mechanism through which service quality, customer experience, and hotel image influence repurchase intention. This integrated perspective contributes to the existing literature by confirming established relationships in the unique context of post-COVID-19 tourism recovery and by providing empirical evidence from an emerging tourism market.

## 5.3 Recommendation

Based on the empirical findings of this study, several practical recommendations are proposed for hotel managers and industry practitioners, with particular focus on small and medium-sized hotels seeking to strengthen customer satisfaction and repurchase intention.

First, hotels should prioritize improvements in service quality, especially in the dimensions found to significantly influence satisfaction. The SEM results highlight service reliability and staff responsiveness as strong predictors of satisfaction; therefore, SMH hotels should implement standard operating procedures, provide frontline staff with clear service guidelines, and train employees to respond promptly to guest requests. Emphasis should also be placed on cleanliness and hygiene standards, identified in both qualitative themes and quantitative results as essential antecedents of customer confidence in the post-pandemic context.

Second, customer experience should be enhanced through personalized and memorable service encounters. Findings from interviews underline the importance of emotional engagement and interaction quality, while the quantitative data confirm customer experience as the strongest predictor of satisfaction. Small and medium-sized hotels, which often lack extensive facilities, can leverage personalized gestures, remembering guest preferences, offering localized suggestions, or recognizing repeat guests, to compensate for limitations in physical assets. Integrating digital touchpoints such as mobile check-in, in-room messaging, or AI-enabled concierge systems can streamline interactions and contribute to memorable stays.

Third, hotel managers should actively cultivate

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- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring and manage hotel image. The study confirms that hotel image meaningfully influences satisfaction, and qualitative respondents emphasized the role of online credibility. SMEs, in particular, can benefit by establishing strong digital presence, managing online reputation, responding to reviews promptly, and engaging with user-generated content. Consistency between service delivery and online representations is crucial for strengthening perceived reliability and trust.
- Finally, systematic monitoring of customer satisfaction is essential to ensure sustained performance. As satisfaction strongly predicts repurchase intention, the most significant path in the SEM model, hotels should collect and analyze guest feedback regularly through surveys, post-stay follow-up, and review analytics. Insights from feedback can be used to correct service weaknesses and identify attributes that consistently drive positive evaluations.
- In summary, this study provides hotel managers with actionable strategies grounded in the empirical evidence. By investing in service quality reliability, enhancing experience delivery, managing reputation proactively, and monitoring satisfaction continuously, particularly resource-constrained small and medium-sized hotels can improve retention rates and foster long-term loyalty in a competitive post-COVID-19 hospitality landscape.

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