DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN 5-STAR HOTELS: EVIDENCE FROM HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes four factors affecting customer satisfaction at 5-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh City, including: Food & Beverage Quality (FB), Staff Professionalism (SP), Personalized Service (PS) and Room Quality (RQ). Data was collected from 250 customers at 10 5-star hotels and analyzed using SEM model. The results show that all four factors have positive impacts, in which FB and SP have the strongest influence, followed by PS and RQ. The study provides implications for 5-star hotel managers in prioritizing enhancing culinary experiences, training professional staff, personalizing services and upgrading room quality to maximize customer satisfaction in Ho Chi Minh City.

Keyword: customer satisfaction, 5-star hotels, Ho Chi Minh City, SEM, service quality.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the hospitality industry has played a pivotal role in promoting tourism and economic development in Vietnam, especially in major urban centers such as Ho Chi Minh City. As one of the country's most dynamic and internationalized cities, Ho Chi Minh City has witnessed a rapid expansion in the number and scale of luxury hotels, particularly in the 5-star segment. These establishments not only serve as accommodation providers but also contribute significantly to the city's tourism image, service standards, and customer expectations (Nguyen & Tran, 2023).

However, despite their prestigious classification, many 5-star hotels in Vietnam have faced criticism regarding inconsistent service quality. Online reviews and customer feedback frequently mention issues such as slow check-in processes, lack of personalized service, inattentive staff, and inconsistent room standards (Pham, 2022). These complaints suggest that the "5-star" label may not always translate into superior guest satisfaction, thereby raising questions about what truly drives customer satisfaction in the luxury hotel segment.

Customer satisfaction has long been recognized as a critical determinant of customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and long-term business success in the hotel industry (Ali et al., 2021). Given the increasing competition among luxury hotels, especially in tourist hubs like Ho Chi Minh City, understanding the key factors that influence customer satisfaction is both a theoretical and managerial imperative.

This study aims to examine the determinants of customer satisfaction in 5-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh City using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Based on an extensive review of hospitality literature and emerging consumer expectations, the research focuses on four latent constructs: Room Quality, Staff Professionalism, Personalized Service, and Food & Beverage (F&B) Quality. By empirically testing the relationships among these variables and overall customer satisfaction, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for hotel managers and policymakers to improve service delivery and enhance Vietnam's position as a high-quality tourism destination.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer satisfaction remains a core construct in hospitality and tourism research due to its direct link to customer retention, reputation, and profitability (Ali et al., 2021). In the luxury hotel segment, where service expectations are significantly higher, identifying the key drivers of satisfaction is both a strategic and empirical imperative. This study focuses on four primary dimensions influencing customer satisfaction: Room Quality, Staff Professionalism, Personalized Service, and Food & Beverage Quality.

- Room Quality

Room quality is often regarded as the most tangible aspect of hotel service. It includes

cleanliness, modern design, noise control, technological amenities, and general comfort (Phan & Lai, 2022). In a study of high-end hotels in East Asia, Zhang et al. (2023) found that room conditions - particularly cleanliness, smart technology, and ambiance - were significantly associated with overall guest satisfaction. The perception of room quality can either enhance or diminish the perceived value of the entire stay, making it a foundational service factor.

- Staff Professionalism

Professionalism in staff behavior - expressed through courtesy, competence, responsiveness, and appearance - is especially critical in the luxury hotel segment. Guests expect seamless service delivery and proactive assistance. Nguyen and Dang (2021) revealed that courteous and knowledgeable hotel staff strongly influenced guest satisfaction and perceived trustworthiness in Vietnamese 5-star hotels. Likewise, a cross-cultural study by Gao et al. (2022) highlighted that staff empathy and communication skills were consistently ranked as top predictors of satisfaction across luxury hotel chains in Asia and Europe.

- Personalized Service

With rising customer expectations, personalization has become a defining feature of luxury service. Personalized service entails customizing the guest experience based on prior behavior, preferences, or contextual needs. Wang and Park (2020) demonstrated that personalization in room setup, greetings, and service delivery increased emotional engagement and satisfaction. Moreover, Jiang et al. (2023) found that personalized digital touchpoints (e.g., in-room tablets, AI-enabled concierge services) enhanced the perception of service innovation and positively influenced customer loyalty.

- Food & Beverage Quality

Food & Beverage quality (FB) - encompassing taste, variety, presentation, and safety - plays a strategic role in differentiating luxury hotels. High-end travelers often judge the entire hotel experience based on their dining encounters. Recent research by Tran and Nguyen (2021) confirmed a significant relationship between the quality of F&B services and overall guest satisfaction in Vietnamese resorts. Similarly, Kim et al. (2022) indicated that the integration of local culinary identity in F&B offerings contributes to enhanced satisfaction, particularly among international guests seeking cultural immersion.

- Customer Satisfaction in Luxury Hotels

Customer satisfaction is defined as a psychological outcome arising from the fulfillment of service expectations (Oliver, 1997). In the luxury segment, satisfaction is influenced by a complex interplay of service quality, emotional engagement, and perceived value. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) studies have demonstrated that satisfaction is a latent construct shaped by both tangible and intangible service dimensions (Ali et al., 2021; Zhao & Li, 2023). In emerging markets such as Vietnam, the combination of modern service standards and local cultural nuances adds complexity to understanding what drives satisfaction in 5-star hotels.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted to determine the factors affecting customers satisfaction on the service provided by the 5-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. Specifically, it sought:

1) To identify key service quality factors (Room Quality, Staff Professionalism, Personalized Service, and Food & Beverage Quality) that influence customer satisfaction in these hotels.

2) To develop and validate a structural model measuring the relationships between service quality dimensions and overall customer satisfaction using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

3) To assess the relative impact of each service quality factor on customer satisfaction, thereby identifying which aspects contribute most significantly to guest satisfaction.

4) To provide empirical evidence specific to the context of luxury hotels in Ho Chi Minh City—an emerging urban tourism hub in Vietnam—where service expectations are evolving.

5) To offer practical recommendations for hotel managers and policymakers to improve service strategies, enhance customer satisfaction, and strengthen Vietnam's competitive positioning in the high-end tourism market.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the objectives, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1) Which dimensions of service quality significantly influence customer satisfaction in 5-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh City?

2) Among the identified factors, which has the greatest impact on overall customer satisfaction?

3) How well does the proposed structural model fit the data collected from 5-star hotel customers?

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1. Research Model
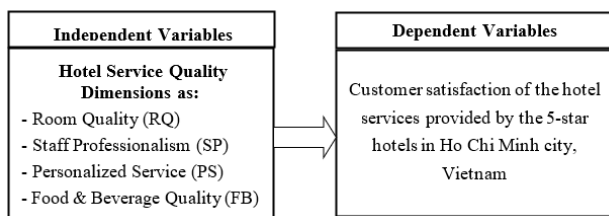
Research Hypothesis:

Based on the conceptual framework and review of relevant literature, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Room quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction in 5-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh City.

H2: Staff professionalism has a positive effect on customer satisfaction in 5-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh City.

H3: Personalized service has a positive effect on customer satisfaction in 5-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh City.

H4: Food & beverage quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction in 5-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh City.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design using a structured questionnaire to examine the impact of hotel service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction in 5-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh City. The research is explanatory in nature, aiming to test hypothesized relationships between observed and latent variables through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

6.2. Data Collection

Primary data were collected through self-administered questionnaires distributed to hotel guests who had used services at selected 5-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh City. Data collection was conducted onsite at each hotel between during June and July 2025 with the support of hotel management and trained research assistants.

Guests were invited to participate shortly after checkout to ensure that their service experiences were recent and clearly recalled. Only completed questionnaires that met predefined screening criteria were retained for the analysis.

6.3. Sampling technique and sample size

A non-probability convenience sampling method was employed due to practical limitations in obtaining a full sampling frame of all hotel guests. The study surveyed 10 five-star hotels, and in each hotel, 25 valid questionnaires were collected, leading to a total sample size of 250 respondents. The use of quota control by hotel ensured balanced representation across different hotel brands and locations within the city.

According to Hair et al. (2019), a sample size of over 200 is generally sufficient for SEM, especially when the model is not overly complex and the data exhibit acceptable normality and reliability. Thus, the sample size of the study met the requirement for the analysis.

6.4. Scale measurement

All constructs were measured using multi-item Likert-type scales adapted from established studies in the hospitality literature. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Room quality, staff professionalism, personalized service, and food & beverage quality were measured as first-order reflective constructs based on items adapted from prior validated instruments (e.g., Kim et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023).

Customer satisfaction was measured using three items capturing guests' overall evaluation of their experience and intention to recommend.

All items were slightly reworded to fit the specific context of 5-star hotels in Vietnam and were reviewed by academic experts to ensure content validity.

6.5. Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were first screened and cleaned using SPSS for missing values and outliers. Descriptive statistics and reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) were conducted to assess internal consistency. Then, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed to assess the underlying structure of the measurement items.

Next, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS 26.0 to validate the measurement model and assess construct validity (convergent and discriminant validity). Finally, the structural model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the hypothesized relationships between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction.

Model fit was evaluated based on commonly accepted indices such as Chi-square/df, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR, following the thresholds suggested by Hair et al. (2019).

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

7.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 01: Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Characteristics

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

Source: Survey, July 2025

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents of the study. There were 250 customers staying in the 10 selected 5-star hotels filling the structured questionnaires.

With regard to gender, male customers dominates with 149 persons accounting for nearly 60 percent, while females accounted for some percent. In terms of marital status, 72.8% of participants were married, and only 27.2% were single.

The majority of respondents was foreigners accounting for 67.2%, which showed the fact that luxurious hotels are more affordable for international guests.

In terms of age distribution, the largest group was from 36 to 50 years old (44.8%), followed by those aged 51 and above (38%). Respondents aged 35 or younger represented only 17.2% of the sample, indicating that the surveyed population was mainly middle-aged or older.

Regarding the purpose of stay, about fouty percent of respondents were holiday travelers, which was slightly higher than business travelers (34.4%). Meanwhile, 26% reported other reasons for staying such as friend or relative visits. This suggests a relatively balanced distribution between tourism and business purposes, with a notable proportion of respondents staying for miscellaneous purposes such as visiting family, medical reasons or else.

These demographic results shows a comprehensive overview of the survey participants and highlight the diversity in terms of nationality, age, and travel purposes, which is

critical for interpreting further analyses related to customer satisfaction and service evaluation.

7.2. Means of the items and factors rated by the respondents

Table 02: Levels of customer satisfaction rated by the respondents

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

Table 01 shows the level of customer satisfaction with different aspects of hotel services, with an average scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Room Quality (RQ) scored an average of 3.63 – the highest among the groups, indicating that customers were generally satisfied. "Clean, tidy and airy room space" (3.92) and "Comfortable room design" (3.79) were two outstanding strengths. However, "Room amenities" (3.35) and "Bed" (3.47) scored lower, suggesting the need to upgrade equipment and bedding quality.

Staff professionalism (SP) scored 3.54. The item "Handling situations quickly and effectively" scored 4.12 – the highest in the table, demonstrating good professional capacity. On the contrary, "Appearance and uniform" (3.26) and "Foreign language ability" (3.37) are limited,

needing improvement to enhance the image and ability to serve international guests.

Personalized service (PS) reached 3.35 - the lowest level, reflecting the lack of attention to remembering preferences (3.35), customer loyalty privileges (3.34) and service flexibility (3.28), reducing the ability to create a personalized experience.

Food and beverage quality (FB) also reached 3.35. The menu was rated as diverse (3.41) and the dishes had their own flavors (3.35), but "Service staff attitude" (3.28) and "Dining space" (3.34) needed to be improved to enhance the experience.

Customer satisfaction (CS) reached 3.51, showing that customers are willing to return and recommend, but have not reached the level of "very satisfied". Therefore, consistent

improvement in the above factors will contribute to improving the overall satisfaction level.

7.3 Results of Reliability Analysis

Table 03: Summary of Cronbach's Alpha of Factors

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

Table 03 shows that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of all factors exceed the threshold of 0.8, proving that the scale has high reliability. In particular, Customer Satisfaction (CS) has the highest value (0.973), demonstrating a very good level of internal consistency between observed variables. Personalized Service (PS) and Staff Professionalism (SP) reached 0.876 and 0.866

respectively, also reflecting strong reliability. Room Quality (RQ) and Food & Beverage Quality (FB) have Cronbach's Alpha of 0.852 and 0.831 respectively, still at a very good level. This result allows the use of the scales in subsequent analyses such as EFA, CFA and SEM.

7.4. Results of Factor Analysis

Table 04: KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.890
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3202.468
	Df	171
	Sig.	0.000

Table 04 shows that the KMO coefficient is 0.890 (>0.5), meaning that the data is suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test has a Chi-Square value = 3202.468 with Sig. = 0.000 (<0.05), showing that the observed variables have significant linear

correlation with one another. This confirms that the data set is suitable for the next steps of exploratory factor analysis (EFA), ensuring that the factor extraction results are statistically significant.

Table 0.5: Total Variance Explained

Total Variance Explained						
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.356	38.715	38.715	7.356	38.715	38.715
2	2.216	11.661	50.375	2.216	11.661	50.375
3	1.948	10.254	60.629	1.948	10.254	60.629
4	1.541	8.109	68.738	1.541	8.109	68.738
5	1.137	5.985	74.723	1.137	5.985	74.723
6	0.617	3.246	77.969			
…	0.524	2.758	80.727			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

Table 0.5 shows that the results of the exploratory factor analysis extracted 5 factors with Eigenvalue > 1, in accordance with the Kaiser criterion. The total variance extracted reached 74.723%, exceeding the level of 50%, meaning that these 5 factors explained most of the variation in the data. Factor 1 contributed the most with 38.715% of the variance, followed by factor 2 (11.661%) and factor 3 (10.254%). The remaining two factors contributed 8.109% and 5.985%, respectively. This result confirms that the model has a suitable factor structure and the observed variables are clearly grouped into 5 groups.

Table 06: The Rotated Component Matrix

Coded Factors	Items	Components				
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
SP	Staff remember my preferences and habits.	0.828				
	There are special privileges for loyal guests.	0.825				
	Hotel services are tailored to suit my needs.	0.816				
	I am offered flexibility in services.	0.759				
SP	Staff are proficient in foreign languages.		0.810			
	Staff are well-groomed and wear fine uniforms.		0.800			
	Staff show a friendly and positive attitude.		0.781			
	Staff handle situations promptly and effectively.		0.774			
RQ	The room space is clean, tidy, and well-ventilated.			0.817		
	The bed is comfortable, with high-quality bedding.			0.810		
	The room is fully equipped with fine amenities.			0.806		
	The room is designed in a pleasing manner.			0.790		
FB	Restaurant staff are friendly and professional.				0.806	
	Dishes are well-presented with distinctive flavors.				0.797	
	The dining space offers a pleasant visual experience.				0.795	
	The menu is diverse, rich, and appealing.				0.750	
CS	I will recommend this hotel to others.					0.854
	I am willing to return to this hotel for future stays.					0.841
	I am satisfied with the overall experience at this hotel.					0.834

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 06 shows that the results of the component matrix rotation have grouped the observed variables into 5 distinct factors with factor loading coefficients all greater than 0.75, ensuring good convergence value. Factor 1 includes variables related to personalized service (0.759–0.828). Factor 2 gathers variables about staff professionalism (0.774–0.810). Factor 3 includes variables about room quality (0.790–0.817). Factor 4 groups variables about food and beverage quality (0.750–0.806). Finally, factor 5 includes variables measuring customer satisfaction (0.834–0.854). This result confirms that the scale structure is suitable for the research model, the observed variables are clearly classified and have a high contribution to each factor

7.5. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

In this section, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model was used to test the structure of 5 factors affecting customer satisfaction in the 10 selected 5-star hotels in Ho Chi Minh city.

Figure 2

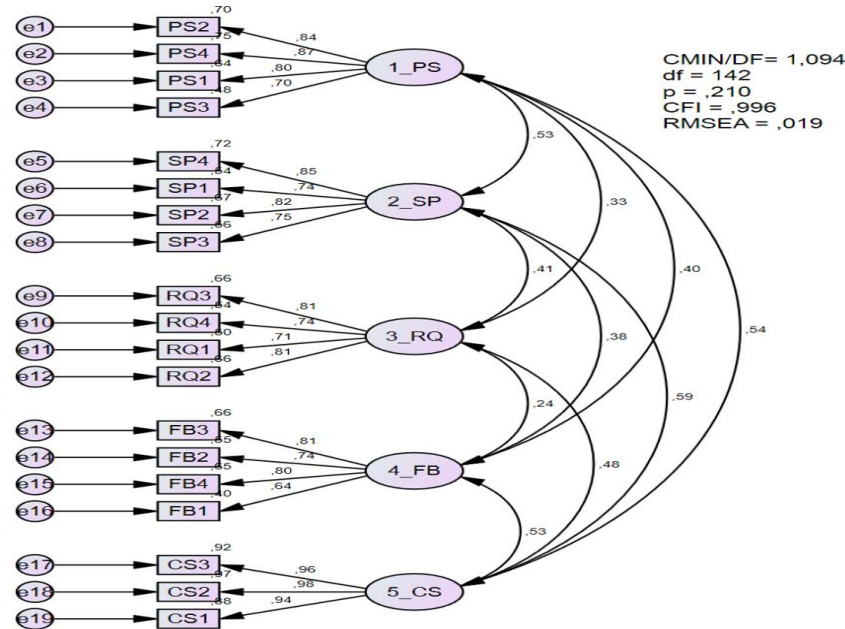*Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Model for Customer Satisfaction*

Figure 2 shows the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model to test the structure of 5 factors affecting customer satisfaction. The model fit evaluation indexes show very good results: CMIN/DF = 1.094 (<2), p = 0.210 (>0.05), CFI = 0.996 (>0.9) and RMSEA = 0.019 (<0.05), proving that the model fits the actual data.

The standardized loadings of the observed variables are all greater than 0.64, ensuring convergence value. In particular, Customer Satisfaction (CS) has very high coefficients, from 0.94 to 0.98, demonstrating strong measurement reliability. Personalized Service (PS) has coefficients ranging from 0.70 to 0.84, Staff Professionalism (SP) from 0.75 to 0.85, Room Quality (RQ) from 0.71 to 0.81, and Food & Beverage Quality (FB) from 0.64 to 0.81.

The correlation coefficients between the factors range from 0.24 to 0.59, all of which are positive and significant, indicating that the factors are closely related but not completely overlapping,

ensuring discriminant validity. Notably, the highest correlation is between RQ and CS (0.59), indicating that room quality has a strong influence on overall satisfaction.

This result confirms that the 5-factor scale constructed has high validity and reliability, and the CFA model meets the statistical criteria well, and is eligible to be included in SEM analysis to test the causal relationship between variables.

7.6. Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

Figure 3 shows the structural equation model (SEM) estimated by AMOS software to test the relationship between four independent factors (PS, SP, RQ, FB) and customer satisfaction (CS). The model fit indices (CMIN/DF, CFI, TLI, NFI, IFI, RMSEA, PCLOSE) all met statistical standards, showing that the model has a high level of fit with the survey data. The analysis results help identify the level of influence of each factor on overall satisfaction.

Figure 3

Structural Equation Model for Job Satisfaction
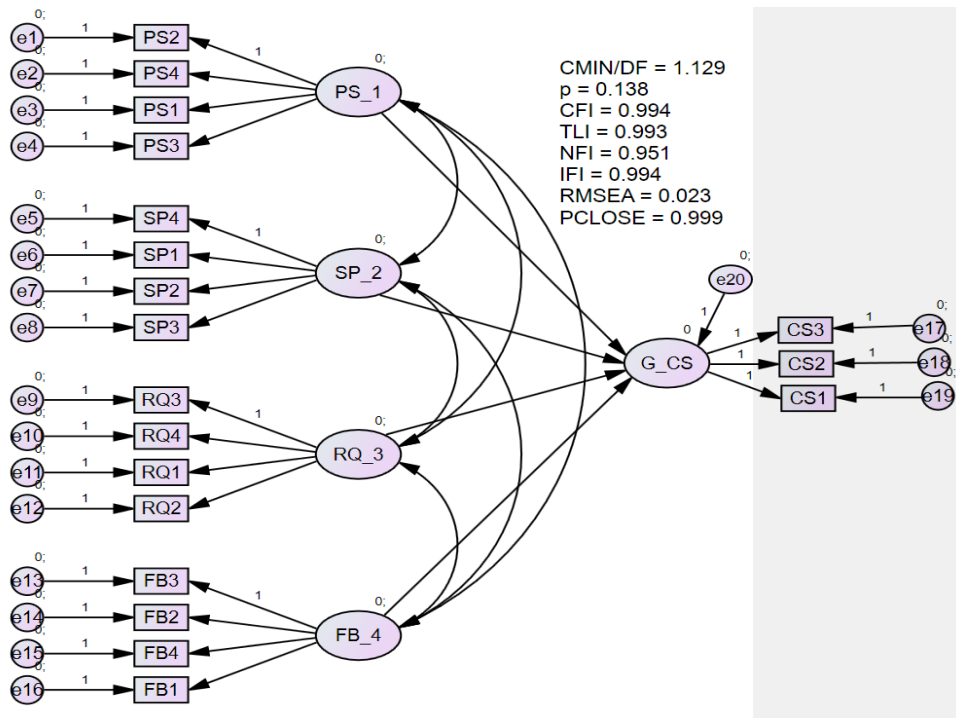
The SEM results show that all paths from the four independent factors to Customer Satisfaction (CS) have positive coefficients, demonstrating a positive impact. Of which, Room Quality (RQ) has the strongest influence (0.40), showing that the facilities and room space are the top priorities in enhancing the experience. Personalized service (PS) ranked second with a coefficient of 0.31, emphasizing the role of tailoring services to each customer's needs. Staff professionalism (SP) reached 0.26, reflecting the importance of service skills and professional attitudes. Food and beverage quality (FB) had the lowest coefficient (0.22), suggesting that this is a supplementary factor rather than a primary determinant. The standardized loading factors of the observed variables were all >0.64, ensuring convergent validity and reliability. The model fit indices met the standards: CMIN/DF = 1.129 (<2), p = 0.138 (>0.05), CFI = 0.994 (>0.9), RMSEA = 0.023 (<0.05) and PCLOSE = 0.999 (>0.05). This confirms that the constructed SEM model is reliable and can be used to propose solutions to improve satisfaction, with priority focus on Room Quality and Personalized Service.

Table 07

Standardized Regression Weights and Hypothesis Testing

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

Table 07 presents the hypothesis testing results from the SEM model, in which all four hypotheses (H1–H4) were accepted with high statistical significance. Food and beverage quality (FB) had the strongest influence on customer satisfaction (β = 0.296, p < 0.001), indicating that this factor plays an important role in the overall experience. Staff professionalism (SP) ranked second (β = 0.275, p < 0.001), reflecting the importance of service skills and attitudes in enhancing customer perceptions. Personalized service (PS) also had a positive impact (β = 0.221, p < 0.001), emphasizing the value of meeting individual needs. Room quality (RQ) had the smallest but still significant impact (β = 0.206, p < 0.01), indicating that although facilities are important, they are not the only determining factor. All p-values were below the 0.01 threshold, ensuring statistical reliability. This result suggests that priority improvement strategies should focus on food and beverage and improving service skills, while maintaining and optimizing personalized service and room quality to maximize customer satisfaction.

8. DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm that all four factors — Room Quality (RQ), Personalized Service (PS), Staff Professionalism (SP), and Food and Beverage Quality (FB) — contribute positively and significantly to customer satisfaction (CS). Of these, Room Quality (RQ) is the most influential factor, consistent with the results of Nilashi etal. (2021), which found that experiences of cleanliness and design are the most important factors influencing customers' perceptions of the overall service.

The personalized service (PS) factor also plays a prominent role: a recent study by Casaca & Miguel (2024) analyzed through a systematic review that confirmed that personalization enhances the experience, increases engagement, and builds trust between customers and businesses.

In the same direction, the study of Makivić etal. (2024) found that the application of AI to personalize hotel services—such as recommending menus, activities, or room amenities based on guests' preferences—significantly increased satisfaction, especially when guests trusted the efficiency and security of the MDPI system.

The professionalism of staff (SP) is a factor that cannot be overlooked. A field study in hotels by

Anderson (2025) found that qualities such as reliability, willingness to assist, empathy, and responsiveness play a key role in creating customer loyalty.

Although the impact of food and beverage (FB) is lower, it cannot be ignored. Kim (2022) analyzed thousands of customer reviews through content analysis and found that service and F&B factors are two basic factors that directly affect satisfaction, especially when the need for comprehensive experiences is becoming increasingly essential.

In summary, our SEM model is not only consistent with survey practice but also has a clear theoretical basis and empirical evidence to prove it. Notably, the superiority of Room Quality (RQ) and Personalized Service (PS) emphasizes that these two factors are strategic priorities to enhance the experience. In parallel, Staff Professionalism (SP) and Food & Beverage Quality (FB) still play an important complementary role, helping to strengthen long-term satisfaction.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study confirmed that four key factors – Room Quality (RQ), Personalized Service (PS), Staff Professionalism (SP) and Food & Beverage Quality (FB) – all have a positive and statistically significant impact on Customer Satisfaction (CS) in upscale hotels. Of these, RQ and PS are the two factors with the strongest impact, indicating that facilities and the ability to meet customers' individual needs play a key role in the stay experience. SP and FB, although having a lower impact, are still important elements that complement the overall guest experience.

The results also show that the overall satisfaction level is quite high, but there is still room for further improvement. For example, room amenities and bed quality need to be improved; personalized service is not really outstanding in terms of remembering preferences and giving incentives to loyal customers; service attitude at restaurants and culinary space has not made a strong impression.

From these results, the study proposes a number of recommendations:

Regarding room quality (RQ): Invest in upgrading equipment, regular maintenance, ensuring

hygiene and optimizing space design to be both convenient and aesthetic.

Regarding personalized services (PS): Apply customer relationship management (CRM) and artificial intelligence (AI) systems to remember and meet individual needs; build flexible service packages and preferential policies for loyal customers.

Regarding staff professionalism (SP): Strengthen soft skills training, cross-cultural communication, improve foreign language skills and build a dedicated service culture.

Regarding food & beverage quality (FB): Diversify the menu, prioritize local ingredients, improve presentation quality and create an experiential dining space.

In addition, managers need to regularly survey satisfaction levels to adjust services promptly. In the long term, it is advisable to combine a strategy to improve service quality with a strategy to build a brand and communicate customer experience. This not only helps increase satisfaction but also contributes to maintaining and expanding a loyal customer base, creating a sustainable competitive advantage for hotels in an increasingly competitive tourism environment.

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