MARKETING MAGIC: UNCOVERING THE KEY DRIVERS OF LOYALTY AMONG LUXURY HOTEL GUESTS 🔓 ⬛ Crossref

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Over the past decade, the tourism industry in China has grown significantly, boosting both the size and revenue of the hotel sector across the nation. To stay competitive and relevant to the demand of the market, hospitality firms, particularly the hotels, must deliver excellent services and employ innovative and creative marketing strategies to attract new customers while retaining existing ones. As competition intensifies, research suggests that hotel brand image and customer awareness towards the brand have become crucial catalysts in driving customer loyalty and word-of-mouth, both of which are key to business success in the long term. Given the importance of a sustainable business model for hotels, this study explores and examines the interrelationships between marketing factors, hotel brand image and awareness, service quality, customer satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth. Using a survey questionnaire, we collected data from 396 luxury hotel guests in mainland China. The collected data were subsequently analysed using SPSS and SmartPLS statistical software. The results reveal that hotel brand image and awareness significantly impact guests' perceived service quality, and all hypotheses regarding the interrelationships between service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty were supported. Furthermore, the findings suggest that hotel managers should prioritise brand image and customer awareness towards the brand as part of their key strategies to improve perceived service quality and, ultimately, drive loyalty among hotel guests. Lastly, this study offers various strategic methods that hotels can consider to attract both domestic and international guests, providing valuable insights to advance the hospitality industry in mainland China.

INTRODUCTION

According to Global Hospitality Group (2020), the luxury hotel market was valued at USD 93 billion in 2019 and is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.3% from 2020 to 2027. It is anticipated that about 4,300 luxury hotels worldwide have demonstrated the sector's encouraging expansion since 2020 (Smith Travel Research, 2020). Despite its initial impact, this growth illustrates how the pandemic has driven the hotel industry towards greater resilience and innovation. The spread of COVID-19 a few years ago has led to greater resilience in the hotel industry, significantly impacting its dynamics and accelerating growth in certain regions. The pandemic forced hotels to adopt stringent health protocols and adapt to new customer preferences, such as increased demand for hygiene and contactless services (Lin & Chen, 2022). In China, the hotel industry recovered significantly post-COVID-19, with international luxury hotels surging to over 3,000 by 2020, driven by a robust domestic travel market and support from both the national and provincial governments. The luxury hotel segment in China generated approximately $16 billion in revenue in 2021, up from $5 billion in 2010, highlighting the sector's resilience (Mordor Intelligence, 2022). Occupancy rates in major cities like Beijing and Shanghai often exceeded 70%, underscoring the industry's adaptation to new market demands (EHL Insights, 2021).

In addition, China's rapid economic growth over the past few decades has led to a sizable and affluent middle and upper class with increasing disposable income and a growing appetite for luxury goods and services. This demographic shift has positioned China as a lucrative market for the luxury hotel industry, as more Chinese consumers are willing to pay a premium for high-quality hospitality experiences that signify status and prestige (Peng & Chen, 2019; Wu et al., 2023). Despite the rapid growth of the hotel industry in China, this high-credence industry still faces significant challenges. One major issue is increased competition, which pressures hotels to innovate and improve their services to remain competitive continuously (Hao et al., 2020). Additionally, engaging current customers is crucial for hotels, as acquiring new customers

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requires five times more time and money than retaining existing ones. That makes meeting the evolving expectations of post-pandemic travellers more challenging, including prioritising hygiene, safety, contactless services, etc. (Bonfanti et al., 2021).

However, prior research mainly focused on the individual effects of marketing factors in the business world. For instance, Abeza et al. (2020) focus on how social media marketing enhances brand visibility and engagement, fostering customer community and encouraging positive word-of-mouth. Rather et al. (2024) investigated how personalised services cater to individual customers' needs, increasing satisfaction and loyalty by making guests feel valued and understood. Natarajan and Veera Raghavan (2024) explored the idea that loyalty programmes reward repeat customers, incentivise ongoing patronage, foster a deeper connection with the brand, etc. Limited research focuses on the aligned effects of crucial marketing factors that can foster solid and enduring relationships with guests, ultimately driving long-term business success. Additionally, prior studies have proved that guanxi plays an important role in customer relationship management in the Chinese context (Liu et al., 2024). In the online marketplace, swift guanxi, grounded in the theoretical lens of guanxi, is vital in facilitating online transactions (Ou et al., 2014) since online shopping has become increasingly common. For example, the higher the level of swift guanxi perceived by customers, the stronger their intention to make a favourable decision in the online marketplace (Zhang et al., 2021). Therefore, luxury hotels' swift guanxi is essential to customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth communication. Thus, this study is focused on integrating crucial marketing factors that can improve customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth in the post-pandemic era in mainland China. This study aims to assist hotels in navigating the competitive landscape and building a loyal customer base that drives positive word-of-mouth and repeat business.

The remainder of this paper is arranged as follows: Section 2 provides a detailed review of previous literature and the development of research hypotheses. Section 3 discusses the research methodology. Sections 4 and 5 present the research findings, implications, and suggestions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Underpinning Theory: Relationship Marketing Theory

The evolution of relationship marketing theory has been marked by significant developments since its inception in the 1980s, when it initially recognised the critical importance of cultivating customer relationships. This theory has broadened from mere transactional exchanges to a focus on fostering long-term relationships and reciprocal benefits between businesses and their stakeholders (Palmatier & Steinhoff, 2019). The advent and proliferation of digital technology and social media have further revolutionised relationship marketing by facilitating more personalised and interactive engagements with customers (Rooney et al., 2021). Moreover, relationship marketing theory has significantly impacted the hotel sector by applying across various industries. This theory underlines the essence of nurturing enduring relationships with customers, an aspect that becomes indispensable in industries where the quality of customer experience is a primary concern (Rather et al., 2024). The competitive landscape of the hotel industry, coupled with the paramount importance of customer loyalty and retention, underscores the need for employing relationship marketing theory. By establishing robust relationships with guests, hotels can improve guest satisfaction, foster loyalty, and encourage positive word-of-mouth, which is critical for a hotel's success (Wu & Chang, 2024).

In addition, marketing factors like price, social media marketing, and service innovation emerge as essential elements of relationship marketing theory in luxury hotel research. Price fairness significantly influences guests' value perceptions, affecting their loyalty and satisfaction (Benetti Corrêa da Silva et al., 2021). Meanwhile, social media marketing is instrumental in engaging customers and bolstering brand awareness and loyalty (Nalluri et al., 2023). It was also reported that service innovation is crucial for setting luxury hotels apart by offering unique and memorable experiences, thereby driving customer satisfaction and loyalty (Liu et al., 2024). Moreover, relationship marketing theory within luxury hotel research encompasses several vital facets, including brand image, perceived service quality, customer satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth communication. Brand image and awareness lay the foundation for attracting guests and setting expectations. Perceived service quality influences guest satisfaction, affecting their loyalty and propensity to recommend the hotel to others. These interlinked components are instrumental in a hotel's success, facilitating the cultivation of solid and enduring relationships with guests (Rather et al., 2024). In Chinese luxury hotel research, guanxi is argued to be a pivotal aspect of relationship marketing theory. Guanxi, denoting the network of social and influential relationships that aid in business and other transactions, is relevant in China due to its cultural significance (Lee et al., 2018). It is anticipated that integrating guanxi into relationship marketing theory acknowledges the critical role of these social dynamics in augmenting customer loyalty and satisfaction, as well as the success of luxury hotels in China (Rather et al., 2024).

Hypotheses Development

The Significance of Branding: Brand Image and Brand Awareness

Brand image is the perception and beliefs held by customers and the public regarding a brand. It encompasses the values, characteristics, and attributes consumers associate with a brand based on their experiences, beliefs, feelings, and knowledge (El-Said, 2020; Ryu et al., 2019). Brand image is not solely dictated by what the brand professes to be; it is predominantly shaped by customers' experiences and the broader societal interpretation of the brand's actions and communications (Bashir et al., 2020). Brand image is pivotal in the hotel industry, where the quality of experiences and services significantly impacts customer perceptions. Within the relationship marketing theory framework, brand image's significance in fostering long-term customer relationships is paramount. It directly influences customer loyalty, trust, and satisfaction—elements at the heart of relationship marketing's aim to develop solid and lasting customer bonds (Nelson et al., 2024; Rather et al., 2024). A positive brand image increases consumers' likelihood of choosing a brand over its competitors and engaging in repeat

patronage. A robust brand image is instrumental in attracting new customers, retaining current ones, and cultivating loyalty and trust—critical factors in an industry marked by intense competition and the necessity for exceptional customer service and satisfaction (Foroudi, 2019; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2019).

Brand awareness, in contrast, is about more than just recognition; it is about how familiar consumers are with the unique qualities or images of a specific brand of goods or services (Foroudi, 2019). It is about a brand's recognisability to its target audience and ability to influence consumer decision-making (Matikiti-Manyevere et al., 2020). Beyond simply recognising the brand name, brand awareness entails understanding the qualities that make the brand unique and superior to competitors. This strategic understanding of brand awareness as the initial phase of the marketing funnel, leading to brand preference and, eventually, customer loyalty and advocacy, highlights its importance in customer decision-making (Foroudi, 2019; Matikiti-Manyevere et al., 2020; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2019). In the relationship marketing theoretical lens, brand awareness is critical because it establishes the foundation for nurturing long-term relationships between the brand and its customers. Brand awareness is paramount in the hotel industry, where the services offered are intangible, and experiential hotels with significant brand awareness remain at the top of potential guests' minds, considerably influencing their lodging decisions. Such visibility is beneficial for attracting first-time guests and vital for customer retention and loyalty cultivation (Şanlıöz-Özgen & Kozak, 2023; Wu et al., 2023). In an intense competition and elevated customer expectations landscape, brand awareness emerges as a crucial differentiator, empowering hotels to discover a unique identity, capture a larger market share, and forge enduring relationships with their guests (Polo-Peña et al., 2023; Shanti & Joshi, 2022).

Price Fairness (PF)
Price fairness refers to the customers' perception of whether the price is reasonable, considering the value received from the service (Lu et al., 2020). The relationship between price fairness and brand image is crucial, as price fairness can significantly influence a hotel's brand image (Alderighi et al., 2022; Gironda, 2016). If customers perceive the pricing as fair, this can enhance the hotel's reputation, suggesting a positive impact (Bashir et al., 2020; Jin et al., 2019). Due to the apparent importance of this relationship, more research needs to be done to focus on how price fairness affects brand image, specifically within the hotel industry (Sohaib et al., 2022). This scarcity of studies underlines the need to investigate how customers' perceptions of price fairness can shape a hotel's brand image.

In addition, price fairness has also been reported to impact brand awareness significantly. When customers perceive prices as fair, they are more likely to engage positively with the brand, enhancing recognition and recall (Jin et al., 2019). Therefore, fair pricing strategies can benefit customer satisfaction and loyalty and strengthen brand awareness in the competitive hotel industry (Liu et al., 2024; Polo-Peña et al., 2023). Despite the logical connection between these concepts, research exploring price fairness's direct impact on brand awareness is sparse in the hotel industry (Sohaib et al., 2022). Besides, the interplay between how consumers perceive price fairness and its subsequent effect on brand awareness still needs to be explored, highlighting a gap in the existing literature. Based on the evidence presented above, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H_{1a}: *Price fairness positively impacts the brand image.*
H_{2a}: *Price fairness positively impacts brand awareness.*

Social Media Marketing (SMM)
In the hotel industry, social media marketing encompasses strategies to promote hotels and their services across various social media platforms, aiming to engage potential and current customers through content that resonates with their interests and preferences. The impact of social media marketing on a hotel's brand image is significant, providing a direct channel for hotels to craft and disseminate their desired brand narratives, engage in real-time with customers, and manage their reputation online (Barreda et al., 2020). Hotels can enhance their brand image through strategic social media marketing, making it more appealing and relatable to their target audience (Barreda et al., 2020; Kim & Han, 2022). An effective social media strategy can significantly improve how customers perceive and emotionally connect with a hotel brand (Nusair et al., 2024). However, despite the intuitive link between social media marketing and brand image enhancement, most existing studies focus on broader aspects without delving into its specific effects on brand image within the hotel sector (Jiang & Wen, 2020; Liu et al., 2022).

Apart from the above, the influence of social media marketing on brand awareness within the hotel industry represents a significant area of interest, underlined by the pervasive adoption of social media platforms for hospitality marketing endeavours (Kim et al., 2020; Nalluri et al., 2023). Effective implementation of social media marketing gives hotels a dynamic medium to amplify their brand's visibility and recognition, engaging directly with potential and current customers, thus markedly elevating hotel brand awareness. This direct engagement facilitates a broader reach and more profound, personalised interaction with the target audience (Nalluri et al., 2023; Sürücü et al., 2019). Moreover, it is premised on the notion that strategically curated social media campaigns can effectively captivate a wider audience, thereby bolstering the visibility and recognition of hotel brands (González-Padilla & Lacárcel, 2023; Polo-Peña et al., 2023). Despite the evident relevance of social media marketing to enhancing brand awareness in hotels, there is a notable scarcity of focused research delving into the specifics of this impact within the hotel sector. Given the above, this study postulated that:

H_{1b}: *Social media marketing positively impacts the brand image.*
H_{2b}: *Social media marketing positively impacts brand awareness.*

Service Innovation (SI)

In the hotel industry, service innovation refers to introducing new or significantly improved services or processes to enhance customer experiences, operational efficiency, or competitive advantage (Ziyae et al., 2021). This can include anything from implementing cutting-edge technology for seamless check-ins to offering personalised guest experiences that cater to the unique preferences of each visitor (Ishizaka et al., 2019; Tomašević, 2018). The impact of such innovations on a hotel's brand image is profound; by delivering novel and improved services, hotels can significantly enhance their brand perception, setting themselves apart as leaders in customer satisfaction and technological advancement (Bashir et al., 2020; Ryu et al., 2019). Despite the intuitive connection between service innovation and enhanced brand image within the hospitality sector, there is a noticeable scarcity of focused research exploring this relationship in depth.

In the hotel industry, service innovation significantly influences brand awareness by introducing novel or greatly improved services tailored to guests' evolving preferences (Ziyae et al., 2021). These innovations, which range from digital check-ins to personalised guest experiences, not only fulfil but exceed customer expectations, acting as critical differentiators in a fiercely competitive market and markedly boosting a hotel's visibility and brand awareness (Ishizaka et al., 2019; Tomašević, 2018). Studies on service innovation typically span across various industries, with less emphasis on its direct effects on brand awareness in the hotel industry (Foroudi, 2019; Sürücü et al., 2019). Addressing this gap, this study asserts that service innovation positively influences brand awareness in the hotel sector. It suggests that hotels leveraging innovative services can significantly enhance their brand's visibility, attract more guests and establish a more pronounced market presence. Therefore, this study proposes:

H_{1c}: *Service innovation positively impacts the brand image.*
H_{2c}: *Service innovation positively impacts brand awareness.*

Perceived Service Quality (PSQ)

Perceived service quality in the hotel industry is defined as guests' evaluation of the overall excellence and value of the service provided, incorporating dimensions such as responsiveness, reliability, and personalisation (Palazzo et al., 2021; Polyakova & Ramchandani, 2023). This subjective assessment is crucial in shaping guests' experiences and satisfaction. Brand image, representing consumers' overall impressions of a hotel's brand, significantly impacts perceived service quality (Wai Lai, 2019). A strong and positive brand image can elevate guests' service quality perceptions by communicating a promise of consistency and excellence (Bashir et al., 2020; Ryu et al., 2019). Moreover, a hotel with a solid and favourable brand image will likely be perceived as providing higher-quality services, enhancing guest satisfaction and loyalty. However, studies often discuss brand image's broader impacts without focussing on its specific implications for perceived service quality in hospitality (Foroudi, 2019; Sürücü et al., 2019).

In addition to the aforementioned, brand awareness, which reflects how customers recognise and are familiar with a hotel brand, can shape and often heighten their expectations regarding service quality in the hotel industry (Foroudi, 2019; Sürücü et al., 2019). When a well-known hotel brand is present, customers will likely have heightened perceptions of service quality, associating the brand's visibility with reliability and excellence (Wai Lai, 2019). This connection suggests that brand awareness can be a precursor to perceived service quality, reinforcing that a prominent brand is synonymous with superior service. Therefore, this study hypothesises that:

H_{3a}: *Brand image positively impacts perceived service quality.*
H_{3b}: *Brand awareness positively impacts perceived service quality.*

Customer Satisfaction (CS)

Customer satisfaction in the hotel industry is understood as guests' perceptions of how a hotel's services align with or surpass their expectations. It is a critical performance metric for hospitality businesses (Malik et al., 2020). Perceived service quality, or guests' assessment of the service's excellence and value, significantly influences this satisfaction by setting the standard against which services are judged (Palazzo et al., 2021; Polyakova & Ramchandani, 2023). While the link between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction is widely acknowledged (Nowlin, 2024), focused investigations within the hotel sector could be more comprehensive. Therefore, this study asserts that:

H_4: *Perceived service quality positively impacts customer satisfaction.*

Customer Loyalty (CL)

Customer loyalty in the hotel industry is characterised by a guest's continued preference for a particular hotel brand, evidenced by repeat bookings, reluctance to switch to competitors, and positive referrals (Närvänen et al., 2020). This loyalty indicates a pattern of repeat patronage and a deep-seated trust and emotional bond with the brand (El-Adly, 2019; Närvänen et al., 2020). Moreover, the link between customer satisfaction and loyalty is evident, with satisfied customers more inclined to remain loyal due to positive experiences that meet or surpass expectations, fostering trust and attachment to the hotel (Khan et al., 2022; Molinillo et al., 2022). By considering narrowing down the broad overview of customer satisfaction across various sectors (Alam et al., 2021; Hohenberg & Taylor, 2022) to the hotel industry, this study posits that:

H_{5a}: *Customer satisfaction positively impacts customer loyalty.*

Word-of-Mouth Communication (WOM)

Word-of-mouth communication in the hotel industry refers to the informal exchange of information and opinions about a hotel's services or experiences between potential and past guests (Donthu et al., 2021). This form of communication is highly valued for its authenticity and significant influence on consumer behaviour, acting as a powerful tool for attracting new customers and building a hotel's reputation (El-Adly, 2019; Khan et al., 2022). Customer satisfaction plays a pivotal role in fuelling word-of-mouth communication, as satisfied guests are likelier to share positive experiences and recommendations with others, enhancing the hotel's image and attracting future business (Gajewska et al., 2019; Otto et al., 2020). However, most studies generally focus on the dynamics of customer satisfaction and its results without specifically examining its direct influence on word-of-mouth communication within the hospitality industry. Therefore, this study proposed the following hypothesis:

H5b: *Customer satisfaction positively impacts word-of-mouth communication.*

The Moderating role of Swift Guanxi (SGX)

Swift guanxi is a concept that adapts the traditional Chinese notion of guanxi, emphasising interpersonal relationships and networks, to the fast-paced and transient interactions typical of modern business and social exchanges. Different from conventional guanxi, built over long periods through personal interactions and mutual obligations, swift guanxi refers to the rapid development of trust and cooperative relationships between parties who may not have a long history of personal connections (Ou et al., 2014). This concept is particularly relevant when quick decision-making and immediate trust are essential, leveraging modern communication technologies to establish connections swiftly (Liu et al., 2024). Besides, swift guanxi is important because it highlights businesses' ability to quickly forge meaningful relationships with customers, partners, and other stakeholders. This rapid relationship-building is crucial for attracting and retaining customers, navigating business negotiations, and entering new markets (Nelson et al., 2024). Specifically, in the hotel industry, swift guanxi can be a pivotal factor in customer satisfaction and loyalty. Given the industry's emphasis on service excellence and guest experiences, the ability of hotel staff to quickly establish a rapport with guests—making them feel valued and understood from the moment of their first interaction—can enhance guest satisfaction and encourage repeat business (Davari et al., 2022; Kim & Han, 2022).

In a highly competitive market, hotels implementing swift guanxi strategies can differentiate themselves by creating a more personalised and memorable experience for their guests, fostering positive word-of-mouth, and building a loyal customer base. For instance, swift guanxi can soften potential adverse reactions to price decisions by reinforcing the hotel's commitment to personalised care and value, positively affecting the brand's perception among guests (Lu et al., 2020). Moreover, in the hotel industry, swift guanxi suggests that when hotels effectively use social media marketing to connect with and engage their audience, the presence of swift guanxi can amplify the positive impact on the hotel's brand image (Kim & Han, 2022; Liao et al., 2020). Swift guanxi can enhance guests' trust and connection towards the hotel, making social media marketing efforts more effective and directly influencing guests' perceptions and loyalty (Barreda et al., 2020; Nalluri et al., 2023). Besides, swift guanxi could also amplify the positive impact of service innovations on the brand image by strengthening the bond between the hotel and its guests, reinforcing the hotel's reputation for innovation, and valuing guest relationships (Bashir et al., 2020; Ryu et al., 2019).

Furthermore, it was reported that establishing robust and swift guanxi may improve guests' perceptions of price fairness, increasing brand awareness, as guests are likelier to share their positive experiences and perceptions (Jin et al., 2019; Konuk, 2018). Specifically, swift guanxi can intensify the positive effects of social media marketing on brand awareness by fostering a sense of familiarity and trust among guests, making them more likely to engage with and spread word-of-mouth recommendations about the hotel (Barreda et al., 2020; Nalluri et al., 2023). Moreover, the strength of swift guanxi can amplify the positive effects of service innovations on brand awareness, as guests are more likely to perceive the hotel as attentive and committed to providing exceptional experiences (Zhang et al., 2021). Therefore, this study proposes that:

H6a: *Swift Guanxi moderates the relationship between price fairness and brand image.*
H6b: *Swift Guanxi moderates the relationship between social media marketing and brand image.*
H6c: *Swift Guanxi moderates the relationship between service innovation and brand image.*
H7a: *Swift Guanxi moderates the relationship between price fairness and brand awareness.*
H7b: *Swift Guanxi moderates the relationship between social media marketing and brand awareness.*
H7c: *Swift Guanxi moderates the relationship between service innovation and brand awareness.*
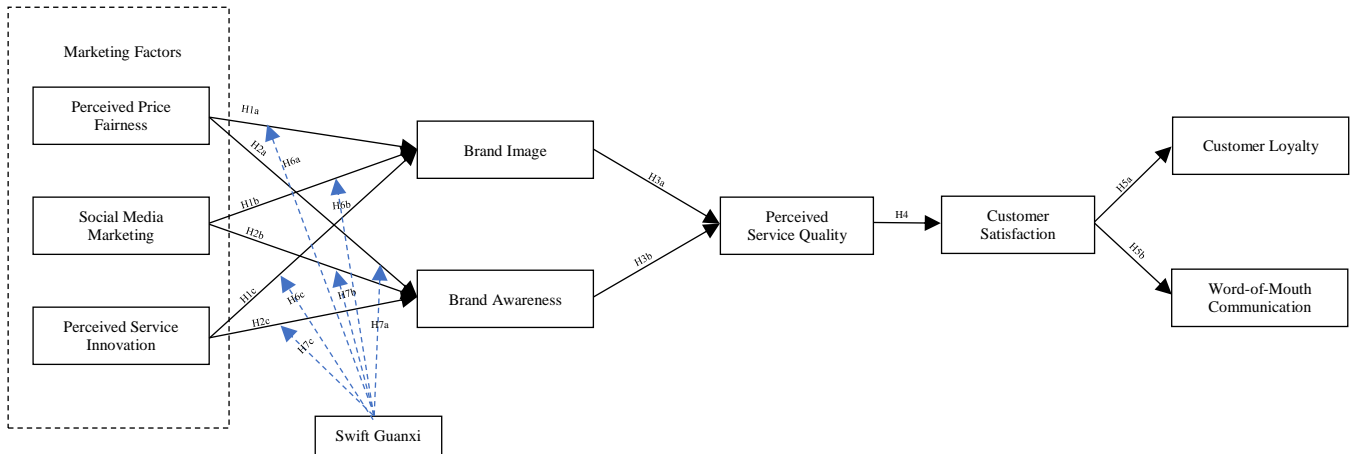
Figure 1. Research framework

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The target sample of this study is consumers who have stayed at least one night in a luxury hotel in mainland China for the last six months. A purposive combined with a snowball sampling method was used to collect data to ensure the responses were reliable and justifiable. The data collection process involved using two screening questions: those at least 18 years of age and those who have stayed at least one night in a luxury hotel for the past six months. The survey was conducted online using a digital questionnaire created on the *SoJump* platform, which is well-known and widely used in China for surveys. The questionnaire was then shared across social media channels like *WeChat* and *Xiaohongshu*. Qualified participants in this study were urged to share the survey questionnaire with their peers and family. Only 396 eligible responses were received for this investigation, which is more than the minimal sample size of 153 needed according to the G*Power software. There are 44.2% male and 55.8% female participants in the sample. Of these respondents, 56.8% are in the 18–25 age group, and 18.7% fall into the 36–45 age bracket.

As for the measurement instruments, with a few modest modifications to suit the context of the hotel sector in mainland China, the survey questions were adapted from previously published literature. Appendix A presents a detailed list of measurement items and their sources. Using a 6-point Likert scale with one denoting "strongly disagree" and six denoting "strongly agree," respondents were asked to rate their opinion for all the questions asked in the questionnaire. Moreover, qualified translators carried out a comprehensive back-to-back translation procedure to ensure accurate translation of the content from English to Chinese, as the Chinese people are the study's primary target audience. Moreover, a panel of seven native speakers with expertise in tourism-related studies validated the face validity of these items during the pre-testing stage. Furthermore, a pilot test with eighty respondents demonstrated good internal reliability and convergent validity.

RESULTS

This work uses PLS-SEM (partial least squares structural equation modelling) and SmartPLS 4 software for data analysis. According to Hair et al. (2019), PLS-SEM is particularly well-suited for predictive research using intricate models with several components, indicators, and pathways. PLS-SEM was chosen over covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) for this investigation due to its suitability for extending the theory. This study uses statistical and procedural techniques to avoid conventional method bias because exogenous and endogenous variables data were collected from the same respondents (Podsakoff et al., 2003). It protected respondent confidentiality and avoided using technical terms and complicated jargon in the survey design to allay procedural worries. Two widely accepted approaches were used to reduce common method variance (CMV). First, Hair et al.'s (2019) full collinearity approach was adopted. As shown in Table 3, all constructs' variance inflation factor (VIF) values were between 3.718 and 4.913, indicating that CMV had a negligible effect on the dataset. Second, we applied the Liang et al. (2007) described unmeasured common latent component technique. Appendix B shows that the substantial substantive-to-method variance ratio was 14.275:1, with all substantive factor loadings (R1) significantly more significant than the method factor loadings (R2). This suggests that the typical procedure variance in this study will likely be delicate.

Assessment of Measurement Model

Table 1 shows that all constructs readily exceeded the minimum standards for convergent validity and composite reliability, with all average variance extracted (AVE) values greater than 0.50 and all factor loadings above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). As a result, convergent validity and internal consistency are proven. Next, as shown in Table 2, the study validates discriminant validity following the Fornell-Larcker criterion. All indicator intercorrelations are less than the square roots of the AVE values (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 1. Assessment of loading, reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Items	Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
BA	BA1	0.964	0.955	0.955	0.971	0.917
	BA2	0.958				
	BA3	0.950				
BI	BI1	0.914	0.920	0.921	0.949	0.862
	BI2	0.948				
	BI3	0.923				
CL	CL1	0.921	0.910	0.910	0.944	0.848
	CL2	0.928				
	CL3	0.913				
CS	CS1	0.922	0.921	0.921	0.950	0.863
	CS2	0.932				
	CS3	0.933				
PF	PF1	0.889	0.918	0.919	0.942	0.802
	PF2	0.880				
	PF3	0.894				
	PF4	0.919				
PSQ	PSQ1	0.879	0.961	0.963	0.968	0.812
	PSQ2	0.886				
	PSQ3	0.911				
	PSQ4	0.916				
	PSQ5	0.907				
	PSQ6	0.919				
	PSQ7	0.887				
SGX	SGX1	0.925	0.979	0.979	0.982	0.855
	SGX2	0.943				
	SGX3	0.937				
	SGX4	0.932				
	SGX5	0.907				
	SGX6	0.911				
	SGX7	0.937				
	SGX8	0.921				
	SGX9	0.910				
SI	SI1	0.914	0.932	0.936	0.952	0.833
	SI2	0.950				
	SI3	0.938				
	SI4	0.845				
SMM	SMM1	0.873	0.947	0.949	0.959	0.825
	SMM2	0.922				
	SMM3	0.916				
	SMM4	0.921				
	SMM5	0.909				
WOM	WOM1	0.857	0.941	0.945	0.955	0.811
	WOM2	0.919				
	WOM3	0.917				
	WOM4	0.935				
	WOM5	0.871				

Notes: BA= Brand Awareness; BI = Brand Image; CL = Customer Loyalty; CS = Customer Satisfaction; PF = Price Fairness; PSQ = Perceived Service Quality; SGX = Swift Guanxi; SI = Service Innovation; SMM = Social Media Marketing; WOM= Word-of-Mouth Communication.

Table 2. Discriminant validity analysis (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

	BA	BI	CL	CS	PF	PSQ	SGX	SI	SMM	WOM
BA	0.957									
BI	0.865	0.928								
CL	0.721	0.696	0.921							
CS	0.718	0.705	0.818	0.929						
PF	0.768	0.757	0.579	0.619	0.896					
PSQ	0.823	0.803	0.758	0.74	0.682	0.901				
SGX	0.873	0.852	0.717	0.735	0.787	0.817	0.925			
SI	0.786	0.806	0.677	0.693	0.704	0.777	0.808	0.912		
SMM	0.864	0.887	0.678	0.664	0.752	0.797	0.846	0.806	0.908	
WOM	0.886	0.848	0.725	0.743	0.766	0.826	0.885	0.848	0.872	0.9

Notes: BA= Brand Awareness; BI = Brand Image; CL = Customer Loyalty; CS = Customer Satisfaction; PF = Price Fairness; PSQ = Perceived Service Quality; SGX = Swift Guanxi; SI = Service Innovation; SMM = Social Media Marketing; WOM= Word-of-Mouth Communication.

Assessment of Structural Model

According to Hair et al. (2019), multicollinearity was determined by analysing the VIF (variance inflation factor) (Table 3) at a threshold of 5. This confirms that multicollinearity is not a cause for concern. The structural model was then investigated using 5,000 subsamples with a bootstrapping technique.

Table 3. Collinearity statistics (VIF)

	BA	BI	CL	CS	PF	PSQ	SGX	SI	SMM	WOM
BA						3.976				
BI						3.976				
CS			1							1
PF	4.083	4.083								
PSQ				1						
SGX	4.913	4.913								
SI	3.718	3.718								
SMM	4.504	4.504								

Notes: BA= Brand Awareness; BI = Brand Image; CS = Customer Satisfaction; PF = Price Fairness; PSQ = Perceived Service Quality; SGX = Swift Guanxi; SI = Service Innovation; SMM = Social Media Marketing.

The supported hypotheses are listed in Table 4, and all the critical pathways are depicted in Figure 1. P-values less than 0.05 indicate empirical solid support for each of the hypothesised relationships. PF (H1a: β = 0.103, $p < 0.05$; H2a: β = 0.108 $p < 0.01$), SMM (H1b:β = 0.487, $p < 0.001$; H2b:β = 0.381, $p < 0.001$)) and SI (H1c:β = 0.19, $p < 0.001$; H2c:β = 0.097, $p < 0.05$)) reported a positive impact on both BI and BA. Moreover, PSQ is positively affected by BI (H3a:β = 0.36, $p < 0.001$) and BA (H3b:β = 0.512, $p < 0.001$) and positively impacted on CS (H4: β = 0.74, $p < 0.001$). Finally, CS reported a positive impact on CL (H5a:β = 0.818, $p < 0.001$) and WOM (H5b: β = 0.743, $p < 0.001$).

Table 4. Hypothesis testing (direct effect)

	Relationship	Path Coefficients	T statistics	P values	Results
H1a	PF -> BI	0.103*	2.328	0.02	Supported
H2a	PF -> BA	0.108*	2.552	0.011	Supported
H1b	SMM -> BI	0.487***	11.358	0	Supported
H2b	SMM -> BA	0.381***	7.444	0	Supported
H1c	SI -> BI	0.19***	4.464	0	Supported
H2c	SI -> BA	0.097*	2	0.046	Supported
H3a	BI -> PSQ	0.36***	6.213	0	Supported
H3b	BA -> PSQ	0.512***	8.602	0	Supported
H4	PSQ -> CS	0.74***	26.003	0	Supported
H5a	CS -> CL	0.818***	30.555	0	Supported
H5b	CS -> WOM	0.743***	26.695	0	Supported

Notes: 1.*$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.001$; 2. BA= Brand Awareness; BI = Brand Image; CL = Customer Loyalty; CS = Customer Satisfaction; PF = Price Fairness; PSQ = Perceived Service Quality; SI = Service Innovation; SMM = Social Media Marketing; WOM= Word-of-Mouth Communication.

Table 5 displays the values for the Q^2 (cross-validated redundancy) and R^2 (coefficient of determination) to help assess the structural model's validity further (Hair et al., 2019). Hair et al. (2019) state that R^2 values of 0.75, 0.5, and 0.25 for endogenous latent variables in marketing research suggest strong, moderate, or weak explanatory power. Apart from providing a very slight explanation for WOM (R^2 = 0.552), CL (R^2 = 0.668), CS (R^2 = 0.548), and PSQ (R^2 = 0.711), the structural model demonstrates significant explanatory power in forecasting BA (R^2 = 0.828) and BI (R^2 = 0.847) results. Additionally, Q^2 values significantly greater than zero imply that the structural model displays appropriate predictive accuracy for all internal constructs (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 5. Model evaluation

Construct	R^2	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
BA	0.828	0.751
BI	0.847	0.722
CL	0.668	0.563
CS	0.548	0.47
PSQ	0.711	0.573
WOM	0.552	0.445

Notes: BA= Brand Awareness; BI = Brand Image; CL = Customer Loyalty; CS = Customer Satisfaction; PSQ = Perceived Service Quality; WOM= Word-of-Mouth Communication.

In terms of relative influence (f^2), Table 6 shows that there are significant effects of CS on CL (f^2 = 2.016), WOM (f^2 = 1.23), and PSQ on CS (f^2 = 1.211), all of which surpass the 0.35 threshold (Cohen, 2016). Furthermore, there are notable moderating effect sizes for both BA (f^2 = 0.188) and BI (f^2 = 0.345) and SMM (f^2 = 0.228) on PSQ, each of which

exceeds the 0.15 threshold (Cohen, 2016). Lastly, BI on PSQ (f^2=0.113), PF on BA (f^2=0.009) and BI (f^2=0.013), SI on BA (f^2=0.016), and BI (f^2=0.063) all reported small effect size (Cohen, 2016).

Table 6. Effect size analysis (f^2)

Construct	BA	BI	CL	CS	PSQ	WOM
BA					0.228	
BI					0.113	
CS			2.016			1.23
PF	0.017	0.017				
PSQ				1.211		
SI	0.015	0.063				
SMM	0.188	0.345				

Notes: BA= Brand Awareness; BI = Brand Image; CS = Customer Satisfaction; PF = Price Fairness; PSQ = Perceived Service Quality; SI = Service Innovation; SMM = Social Media Marketing.

Moderation Effect

A two-stage latent interaction strategy was used to investigate the moderating effect of rapid guanxi. It (Table 7) indicated that swift guanxi does not affect the link between PF and BA (β = −0.023; p-value = 0.613) and BI (β = −0.070; p-value = 0.173), SMM and BA (β = 0.107; p-value = 0.059); SI and BA (β = −0.051; p-value = 0.286), thus, H6a, H7a, H7b, H7c, are rejected. In contrast, swift guanxi significantly impacted the relationship between SI and BI (β = −0.152; p-value = 0.00), SMM and BI (β = 0.249; p-value = 0.00), supporting H6c and H6b.

Table 7. Hypothesis testing (Moderation effect)

Hypotheses	Path	Original sample (O)	P values	Decisions	f^2
H6a	SGX x PF -> BI	-0.07[NS]	0.173	Not supported	0.008
H6b	SGX x SMM -> BI	0.249***	0	Supported	0.087
H6c	SGX x SI -> BI	-0.152***	0	Supported	0.040
H7a	SGX x PF -> BA	-0.023[NS]	0.613	Not supported	0.001
H7b	SGX x SMM -> BA	0.107[NS]	0.059	Not supported	0.014
H7c	SGX x SI -> BA	-0.051[NS]	0.286	Not supported	0.004

Notes: 1.NSp>0.5; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001; 2.BA= Brand Awareness; PF = Price Fairness; SGX = Swift Guanxi; SI = Service Innovation; SMM = Social Media Marketing.

Before SGX was introduced as a moderator, the R^2 value for BI was 0.821. This indicated that SMM and SI explained 82.1% of BI's variance, underlining their significant effect on hotel brand images. Adding the SGX interaction term raised the R^2 to 0.847, a statistically significant increase of 2.6%, showing that SGX notably enhances the effectiveness of marketing strategies on BI. An interaction plot was used to illustrate SGX's moderating effects on SI's impact on BI (Dawson, 2014). Figure 1 shows a steeper line at lower SGX levels, indicating a more substantial impact of SI on BI, while at higher SGX levels, the line flattens, suggesting a reduced impact. This demonstrates that higher SGX levels weaken SI's influence on BI. The f^2 effect size of 0.040 indicates a sizeable negative moderation effect, confirming that SGX significantly diminishes the relationship between SI and BI (Hair et al., 2021). Moreover, Figure 2 demonstrates that at high SGX levels, the impact of SMM on BI is notably more substantial, as shown by a steeper line. In contrast, at lower SGX levels, the line flattens, indicating a weaker effect. Thus, higher SGX enhances the influence of SM on BI. The f^2 effect size of 0.087 indicates a significant positive moderation effect, confirming that SGX significantly strengthens the relationship between SMM and BI.
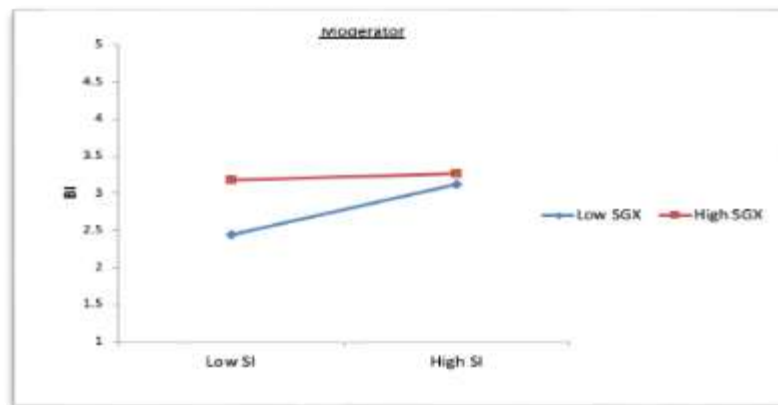

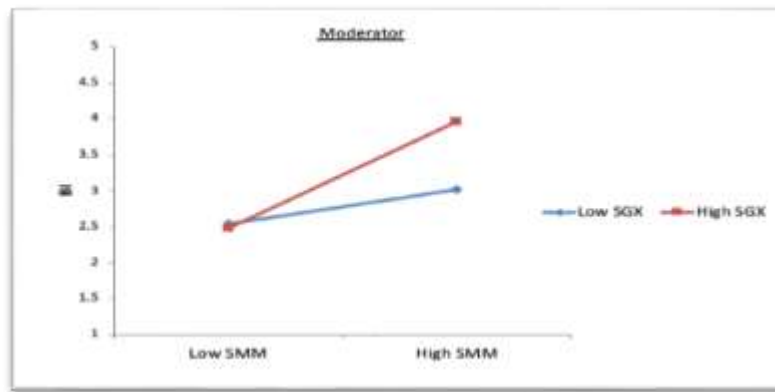Figure 2. SGX dampens the positive relationship between SI and BI

Figure 3. SGX strengthens the positive relationship between SMM and BI

DISCUSSIONS

The primary aim of this study was to use the relationship marketing model to examine how experiential marketing factors—such as price fairness, social media marketing, and service innovation—influence hotel brand image and awareness. The findings confirm that these factors significantly impact both aspects, supporting Hypotheses H1a-c and H2a-c. Price fairness ensures customers perceive value for their money, fostering a positive brand image (Jin et al., 2019). Effective social media marketing broadens brand reach and enhances customer engagement, boosting brand awareness (Dedeoğlu et al., 2020). Additionally, service innovations differentiate the hotel from competitors and improve customer perceptions of the brand (Foroudi, 2019). Collectively, these elements strengthen the hotel's market position by improving how customers perceive and recognise the brand, reinforcing insights (Nelson et al., 2024; Rather et al., 2024). The study's second objective conclusively demonstrates the impact of hotel brand influence (e.g., brand image and awareness) on customers' perceived service quality, thereby supporting Hypotheses H3a and H3b. These hypotheses explore the nuanced dynamics between hotel brand image, brand awareness, and customer perceptions of service quality. Hypothesis H3a posits that a favourable hotel brand image—characterised by the hotel's distinguished reputation, intrinsic values, and recognised attributes—significantly enhances perceived service quality (Bashir et al., 2020; Ryu et al., 2019). This suggests that positive perceptions of a hotel's brand image are closely linked to superior evaluations of its service quality, driven by anticipatory positive associations with the brand. Similarly, Hypothesis H3b asserts that increased brand awareness—evidenced by customer familiarity and recall of a hotel brand—positively impacts perceived service quality (Foroudi, 2019; Sürücü et al., 2019). A hotel brand that achieves high recognition and remains top-of-mind for customers creates a halo effect, enhancing perceptions of service quality before any actual service interaction. These findings underscore the significant role of brand image and awareness in shaping customer expectations and improving their perceptions of service quality within the hotel industry.

The third objective of this study concludes that customer satisfaction is the crucial intermediary linking perceived service quality with outcomes such as customer loyalty and word-of-mouth communication, affirming Hypotheses H4, H5a, and H5b. Anchored in relationship marketing principles, this sequence begins with the customer's perception of the hotel's service quality, significantly impacting their satisfaction level (El-Adly, 2019; Slack et al., 2020). Consequently, satisfied customers with service quality are more inclined to exhibit loyalty towards the hotel and recommend it to others (Khan et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2020). This underscores the critical need for hotels to consistently deliver high-quality service to foster customer loyalty and encourage positive recommendations by actively enhancing and sustaining service quality to align with customer expectations. In addressing the final objective of this study, it was found that swift guanxi dampens the positive relationship between service innovation and brand image and strengthens the positive relationship between social media marketing and brand image (H6c and H6b); others are not supported (H6a and H7a-c are rejected). This may be due to swift guanxi involving mutual understanding, reciprocal favours, and relationship harmony in the online marketplace (Ou et al., 2014). These elements can reinforce shaping and refining brand perceptions and sculpting a positive brand image through targeted content and interactive engagement strategies in social media marketing (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Furthermore, a brand image includes functional, symbolic, or experiential aspects (Iglesias et al., 2019). The concept of swift guanxi can influence these aspects of innovative services. In digital platforms, trust is fundamental; however, innovation introduces change and uncertainty. Thus, swift guanxi can moderate the impact of innovative services on brand image, highlighting the uncertainty associated with change.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examines the relationships between marketing factors, hotel brand image and awareness, service quality, customer satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth, with Swift Guanxi as a moderator. The results indicate that hotel brand image and awareness significantly positively affect guests' perceived service quality. All hypothesised relationships between service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty were confirmed. However, not all moderating effects of swift guanxi on the relationships between brand image, awareness, and marketing factors were supported. These findings provide practical guidance and valuable insights for advancing the hotel industry in mainland China. By understanding the complex interactions between these variables, hotel managers can tailor their strategies more effectively to enhance service quality, increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, and encourage positive word-of-mouth.

This study adds a few noteworthy new pieces to the body of literature. First, this study embarks on an in-depth exploration of the theoretical limits within relationship marketing theory, with a particular focus on understanding how various marketing factors—such as price fairness, service innovation, and social media marketing—shape the perception and effectiveness of hotel brands (e.g., brand image and awareness) in the hospitality sector. This research delves into the marketing and branding elements that significantly influence customers' perceived service quality. Prior research has only touched on the diverse marketing factors that impact hotel branding (Lee et al., 2018). This study seeks to bridge this gap by meticulously identifying and examining marketing-related elements that are pivotal in shaping perceived service quality. In doing so, the study addresses the shortcomings of previous investigations. It unfolds a detailed understanding of the crucial marketing factors that underpin the perception of quality in the hotel industry. This contribution enriches the discourse on relationship marketing and brand management within the hospitality context, offering valuable insights and guiding future research.

Second, this study investigates how hotels' brand image and awareness positively influence guests' perceptions of service quality, boosting their satisfaction, loyalty, and likelihood to recommend the hotel to others. Despite the significance of these relationships within the hotel industry, comprehensive explorations in this area still need to be made available (Rather et al., 2024; Wu & Chang, 2024). This research bridges the gap by demonstrating the direct pathway from brand perception to increased customer loyalty and word-of-mouth recommendations, offering valuable insights for hotel management on leveraging brand strategies to enhance guest satisfaction and loyalty. This study further emphasises the importance of brand management in improving guest experiences and behaviours, paving the way for future scholarly investigations in the field. Third, this study significantly enriches relationship marketing theory by spotlighting the moderating role of swift guanxi in the interaction between marketing strategies—like price fairness, social media marketing, and service innovation—and hotel brand attributes, such as brand image and awareness. Despite the acknowledged importance of swift guanxi, research on its specific moderating effects within these relationships has been scant (Chen et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2020). By addressing this gap, this study highlights the significance of incorporating swift guanxi into marketing strategies to enhance customer outcomes more effectively in the hospitality industry. It calls for deeper exploration into the nuanced interplay between marketing strategies and relational dynamics, proposing a path for more personalised and effective marketing tactics.

This study has significant management ramifications as well. Instead of thinking only from the business perspective, hoteliers should concentrate on creating marketing strategies that align with the tastes of their target market. Hoteliers can amplify their brand image and awareness by seamlessly blending price fairness, social media marketing, and service innovation into their marketing arsenal. Price fairness establishes a foundation of trust and loyalty through transparent pricing that reflects the actual value of the stay. Social media marketing extends the hotel's reach, engaging potential and current guests with compelling content that showcases the hotel's unique offerings and fosters a vibrant community. Service innovation keeps the hotel at the forefront of the industry by introducing novel or improved services that enhance guest experiences. This triad strategy attracts a diverse audience and cultivates a strong, positive brand perception. For practical application, hoteliers should conduct detailed market research to align their offerings with guest expectations, using this insight to inform pricing and service development. Clear communication about the value behind their pricing should be disseminated across all marketing channels, particularly on social media, where engaging content can highlight the hotel's distinct features and encourage community engagement. Additionally, leveraging guest feedback and social media analytics can guide service innovation and content strategy, ensuring the hotel's offerings resonate with current trends and guest preferences. By adopting this holistic approach, hoteliers can ensure their brand stands out in a competitive landscape and remains dynamically aligned with guest desires, driving satisfaction and loyalty.

Swift guanxi is another essential factor that may impact marketing factors (e.g., price fairness, social media marketing, and service innovation) and hotel brands (e.g., brand image and brand awareness). Hotels can use swift guanxi to ensure timely, personalised interactions with guests, use CRM systems to customise experiences, train staff in effective relationship-building techniques, and keep communication channels open. Prioritising swift guanxi can strengthen a hotel's competitive edge. For instance, sending personalised welcome messages via email or SMS immediately after booking can establish a direct line of communication, providing guests with valuable stay information and a personal touch. Using a CRM system to remember guest preferences for room types or dietary needs allows for customised experiences, such as greeting returning guests with their favourite wine or ensuring their preferred room is available, demonstrating meticulous attention to detail. Rapid response teams or social media platforms should be poised to address guest inquiries, complaints, or feedback promptly, underscoring the hotel's commitment to guest satisfaction. Designing loyalty programmes with clear, appealing rewards for repeat visits or referrals, like discounts or room upgrades, ensures guests feel appreciated and valued. Following up with a personalised thank-you message and feedback survey post-stay helps acknowledge guest contributions to service improvement and inform them about implemented changes based on their suggestions, reinforcing the relationship. Engaging with guests through social media marketing and creating a community around the hotel encourages sharing positive experiences, further enhancing the hotel's reputation and appeal.

This study primarily targets guests who have stayed in luxury hotels in mainland China, which presents a limitation regarding generalizability. While offering valuable insights, this particular demographic may only partially represent the broader spectrum of hotel guests. As a result, the findings may be skewed toward the preferences and behaviours of a more affluent, luxury-oriented clientele. Additionally, by focusing on guests who actively engage with hotel services, the research may overlook the perspectives of those with varying levels of engagement. This selective focus could lead to an incomplete understanding of the effectiveness of relationship marketing strategies, thus limiting the study's comprehensiveness across the entire range of guests. Moreover, mainland China's unique cultural, economic, and social context heavily influences the study's results. While this provides detailed insights into the Chinese market, it also restricts the applicability of these

findings to other cultural or regional contexts, where different dynamics may exist, thereby limiting the study's broader relevance.

The hotel marketing industry is becoming increasingly dynamic and competitive. Many hotels use different marketing components to create plans that work, guaranteeing their future profitability and expansion. This study adds to the body of knowledge by developing and validating a model for customer loyalty and word-of-mouth recommendations amongst guests at luxury hotels, utilising relationship marketing theory. This study's findings acknowledge that combining marketing factors positively influences a hotel's brand image and awareness. This study further demonstrated that customer-perceived service quality is critical to improving customer satisfaction outcomes. At the same time, swift guanxi acts as the boundary condition that may enhance consumers' loyalty and recommendation. Because of the investigation of various crucial marketing elements, this research has broadened the use of the relationship marketing model in the setting of luxury hotels. However, this study has many limitations that must be examined further. Data gathering was initially limited to China. Subsequent research endeavours may delve into luxury hotels across multiple nations to scrutinise disparities among cultural and national contexts. This study also uses a quantitative methodology. Future research on this topic should involve a comprehensive qualitative analysis of the context of luxury hotels.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Measurement items and respective sources

NO.	Modified Scale Items Used in this Study	Source
Word-of-mouth Communication	My family/friends influenced my attitude towards this hotel. My family/friends mentioned things I had not considered about this hotel. My family/friends provided some different ideas about this hotel. My family/friends influenced my evaluation of this hotel. My family/friends helped me decide on selecting this hotel.	O'Cass and Grace (2004).
Perceived Price Fairness	I think the price I paid for this hotel is fair. I think the price I paid for this hotel is reasonable. I think the price I paid for this hotel is appropriate. I think the price I paid for this hotel is acceptable.	Darke and Dahl (2003).
Social Media Marketing	This hotel's social media site shares enjoyable content. This hotel's social media site is up to date. This hotel's social media site facilitates two-way interaction with others. This hotel's social media site allows users to search for customized information. This hotel's social media site makes me want to share my opinions on brands, items, or services I have acquired with others.	Kim and Ko (2010).
Service Innovation	I feel this hotel's products are innovative. I feel this hotel's staff is well-trained. I feel this hotel's operations are well-managed. I feel this hotel's strategic marketing activities are well-planned.	Cheng et al. (2014).
Swift Guanxi	This hotel's staff and I understand each other's point of view. This hotel's staff and I can follow the flow of the conversation. This hotel's staff and I show interest in each other's opinions. This hotel's staff and I help each other. This hotel's staff and I establish a lasting friendship. This hotel's staff and I offer positive ratings or comments to each other. This hotel's staff and I tend to avoid conflicts. This hotel's staff and I respect each other. This hotel's staff and I maintain harmony.	Ou et al. (2014)
Brand Image	This hotel's brand possesses complete practical functions (hotel services and adequate hotel facilities). This hotel's brand possesses a positive symbolic meaning (good reputation, credibility, and positive image). This hotel's brand provides me with a pleasant service experience.	Hsieh and Li (2008).
Brand Awareness	I easily recognize the brand of this hotel. I easily recall the logo of this hotel. I pay attention to what other members share about this hotel.	Chahal et al. (2020).
Perceived Service Quality	I feel this hotel's equipment is up to date. I feel this hotel's equipment is attractive. I feel this hotel's staff provides quality service. I feel this hotel's staff provide dependable service. I feel this hotel's staff is always willing to help.	Parasuraman et al. (1988)

	I feel this hotel's staff is trustworthy.	
	I feel this hotel's staff understands my specific requirements.	
Customer Satisfaction	Overall, I am satisfied with the services and amenities provided by this hotel.	Panjakakornsak (2008)
	Overall, this hotel meets my expectations.	
	Overall, my decision to book this hotel was a wise one.	
Customer Loyalty	In the future, I would like to revisit this hotel.	Ndubisi's (2014)
	I would like to recommend this hotel to my friends and family.	
	I would like to speak positively about this hotel.	

Appendix B: Common method factor analysis

Construct	Item	Substantive Factor Loading (R1)	$R1^2$	Method Factor Loading (R2)	$R2^2$
BA	BA1	1.077***	1.159929	-0.121**	0.014641
	BA2	1.087***	1.181569	-0.138*	0.019044
	BA3	0.71***	0.5041	0.257***	0.066049
BI	BI1	1.006***	1.012036	-0.099 NS	0.009801
	BI2	1.108***	1.227664	-0.173***	0.029929
	BI3	0.673***	0.452929	0.269***	0.072361
CL	CL1	0.88***	0.7744	0.05 NS	0.0025
	CL2	0.895***	0.801025	0.043 NS	0.001849
	CL3	0.988***	0.976144	-0.094*	0.008836
CS	CS1	0.859***	0.737881	0.078*	0.006084
	CS2	0.957***	0.915849	-0.03 NS	0.0009
	CS3	0.521***	0.271441	0.278***	0.077284
PF	PF1	0.778***	0.605284	0.131**	0.017161
	PF2	0.938***	0.879844	-0.069 NS	0.004761
	PF3	0.991***	0.982081	-0.114**	0.012996
	PF4	0.879***	0.772641	0.049 NS	0.002401
PSQ	PSQ1	1.024***	1.048576	-0.156*	0.024336
	PSQ2	1.009***	1.018081	-0.132*	0.017424
	PSQ3	1.17***	1.3689	-0.282***	0.079524
	PSQ4	0.729***	0.531441	0.204***	0.041616
	PSQ5	0.73***	0.5329	0.192**	0.036864
	PSQ6	1.025***	1.050625	-0.116*	0.013456
	PSQ7	0.629***	0.395641	0.279***	0.077841
SGX	SGX1	0.865***	0.748225	0.064 NS	0.004096
	SGX2	0.939***	0.881721	0.005 NS	0.000025
	SGX3	1.046***	1.094116	-0.114*	0.012996
	SGX4	0.961***	0.923521	-0.03 NS	0.0009
	SGX5	0.898***	0.806404	0.01 NS	0.0001
	SGX6	0.876***	0.767376	0.037 NS	0.001369
	SGX7	0.928***	0.861184	0.009 NS	0.000081
	SGX8	0.919***	0.844561	0.001 NS	0.000001
	SGX9	0.889***	0.790321	0.021 NS	0.000441
SI	SI1	0.823***	0.677329	0.103*	0.010609
	SI2	1.066***	1.136356	-0.131***	0.017161
	SI3	0.945***	0.893025	-0.009 NS	0.000081
	SI4	0.806***	0.649636	0.044 NS	0.001936
SMM	SMM1	1.221***	1.490841	-0.376***	0.141376
	SMM2	1.002***	1.004004	-0.086 NS	0.007396
	SMM3	0.836***	0.698896	0.088 NS	0.007744
	SMM4	0.748***	0.559504	0.187***	0.034969
	SMM5	0.756***	0.571536	0.164**	0.026896
WOM	WOM1	0.934***	0.872356	-0.079 NS	0.006241
	WOM2	0.929***	0.863041	-0.012 NS	0.000144
	WOM3	0.941***	0.885481	-0.027 NS	0.000729
	WOM4	0.85***	0.7225	0.089 NS	0.007921
	WOM5	0.853***	0.727609	0.023 NS	0.000529
Average		0.9063913		0.00623913	

Notes: NS $p > 0.05$; *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$

BA= Brand Awareness; BI = Brand Image; CL = Customer Loyalty; CS = Customer Satisfaction; PF = Price Fairness; PSQ = Perceived Service Quality; SGX = Swift Guanxi; SI = Service Innovation; SMM = Social Media Marketing; WOM= Word-of-Mouth Communication.

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