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How the company interrelated factors increase business with existing customers with customer hotel experience as a moderator variable: Empirical study in the hotels

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ABSTRACT

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The study aimed to clarify the most important interconnected factors in the tourism sector “especially in hotels” that contribute to enhancing the interaction of current customers of hotels operating in tourism sector in light of the presence of the customer’s hotel experience as a moderator variable, through an empirical study on hotels, based on an analysis of the opinions of a sample of hotels customers in this sector. The study has been done depending on a questionnaire designed for this purpose and the study employs SmartPLS to analyze the data collected. The study found that the variables: employee efficiency, improving service quality, re-engineering business processes, and enhancing customer relationship management affect the business output generated by current customers of hotels, but the impact of these factors varies on the customers repurchase intention. The factor (Employee’s competencies- EC) has the greatest degree of correlation with an impact coefficient of (-0.227), while the lowest degree of correlation is for the factor (Reengineering business process- RBP) with an impact coefficient of (-0.034). By adopting the variable (CSE) as a moderator variable, the relationships between the independent factors and the dependent factor showed a significant change from the inverse relationship to the direct relationship. The study also showed, through the coefficient of determination (16.1%), that the selected independent factors can be developed either by expanding the sample or by selecting other simple factors or a composite of more than one factor. The moderator variable showed a negative effect on the relationship between the dependent factor (CR) and both factors (ERM and ISQ), while its effect was positive on the relationship between the dependent factor and the other independent factors (RBP and EC).

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1. Introduction

Tourism plays a prominent and increasing role in the gross domestic product, in addition to the fact that this sector contributes to the employment of a large number of workers around the world (Herath et al., 2016). There are many factors that affect customers’ choice of the hotels they want to deal with according to many studies such as Mitsis (2024), Qing et al. (2024) and

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Van Huy and Thai Thinh, (2024). The most important of which are location, brand name and reputation, physical property, guest- room design, marketing and quality standards (Oktadiana & Kurnia, 2011). Marketing mix is the basic determinant of hotel customer satisfaction. Both tangible and intangible elements of service quality are considered to be the most important determinants of hotel customer satisfaction along with other determinants, most notably perceived value, brand image and customer relationship management (Kara et al., 2005; Papaioannou et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). The tourism sector, especially hotels, was greatly affected by the Corona pandemic, which caused huge losses in this sector due to the decline in occupancy resulting from the ban on international travel and the restriction of movement in most countries of the world. However, this occupancy has returned to activity and recovered after the COVID-19 pandemic ends (Hoang et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2024).

The current study seeks to explain the most important interconnected factors in the tourism sectors that enhance the interaction of current customers of hotels in light of the presence of the customer hotel experience as moderator variable by reviewing previous literature that dealt with this topic. The study also aims to achieve its objectives depending on an analysis of the opinions of a sample of hotel customers as an empirical case to represent the tourism sector through a questionnaire that was designed and phrased to achieve this goal.

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2. Study background

Rane et al. (2023) believed that the company's business results are linked to customer loyalty, which is affected by several factors, the most important of which are satisfaction, trust, quality of service, brand loyalty, company reputation and other factors, as these factors achieve a steady flow of revenues, thus maintaining the company's financial position, which ensures its growth. Also, Rane et al. (2023), Wetzels and Wetzels (2023) and Guerola-Navarro et al. (2024) considered that measuring customer experience and feedback, along with enhancing the use of technology, contributes to improving customer relations with the company. This leads to increased levels of satisfaction and, thus, loyalty, which reflects positively on business results. Moreover, companies must place both customer loyalty and customer satisfaction among their long-term goals. To add more, training employees and conducting extensive advertising campaigns are some of the most important determinants that the company must pay attention to in order to achieve a good level of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Khadka et al. (2017) indicated that the variables influencing customer satisfaction, especially trust and quality, should not be studied in isolation from other external variables. The study recommended expanding the database when studying these factors. It was considered that generalizing the results of studies that dealt with the factors influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty is not accurate, because Insufficient sample size was adopted in most of these studies. Based on the above, companies that care more about how to manage existing customers usually have more chances to do more business with them and keep them for a long time (Bratianu et al., 2023; Ferrer-Estévez & Chalmeta, 2023).

Customer participation plays an important role in developing new products to develop performance levels in the company on the one hand, and improving relations between the company and customers by improving customers' perception of the quality of service provided on the other hand, so that this reflects positively on sustainability in the offered service (Al-Refaei et al., 2024; Sreejesh, 2024). In a study to identify the factors affecting customer satisfaction in the hotel services sector. Sadik (2020) studied the effect of employees' personal adaptation to customer expectations, physical environment, emotional stability and friendliness on customer satisfaction, based on a cross-sectional survey of five hotels classified between one and three stars. This study concluded that hotel customer satisfaction is significantly affected by customer adaptation, friendliness, hotel atmosphere and employee emotional stability.

Ābeltiņa and Rizhamadze (2021), Fang et al. (2024) and Wang, (2024) considered that there is an ideal combination that affects customer satisfaction and thus achieves their loyalty to the company, and the most important components of this combination are interaction with sales representatives, the store customers' experience, hotel interaction experience, in addition to the emotional state. Mohd-Ramly & Omar (2017) also considered that interest in enhancing the value proposition for customers with a focus on the store customers' experience is one of the important factors for the continuation of work in the company in the long term. Gafar et al. (2017) considered that the effect of store customers' experience on customer loyalty is related to the customer's gender and marital status (married or single), in addition to their monthly income and age group. Hotel preference and experience effects are also confirmed by many studies such as Park et al. (2024), Whalen et al. (2024), Yu et al. (2024) and Zhang et al., (2024).

Purkayastha & Sen Mazumdar (2024) touched on the concept of value creation and its relationship to the dynamics of social resources and the role of each in reaching customer satisfaction. From their point of view, the customer participates in building value through the antecedents and potential consequences of integrating the customer's social resources in addition to self-efficacy. And trust, which reflects positively on customer loyalty. Additionally, interest in achieving customer loyalty from a company's point of view is nothing more than working to meet customer preferences to enhance the stable relationship between the customer and the brand, which ensures continuous repurchases (Urdea & Constantin, 2021).

Kandampully et al. (2018) and Klink et al. (2021) believed that a positive customer experience is positively reflected in the collaboration between marketing and operations on the one hand, and design, human resources management and strategy on the other hand, with the important role of technology and social media intertwined.

Finally, with all of the above, hostility services, like other services, are greatly affected by vary events, economic, social circumstances and disasters, and the most prominent example is what happened as a result of Covid 19, which affected all economic aspects, which led to a change in the marketing structure for all industries as a result of customers' behaviors, needs, preferences, and expectations changing significantly. This has prompted all sectors to search for good marketing channels that are compatible with the new situation in order to achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty, which has strengthened electronic and digital marketing methods to reach this goal (Seyam, 2021; Deb et al., 2024).

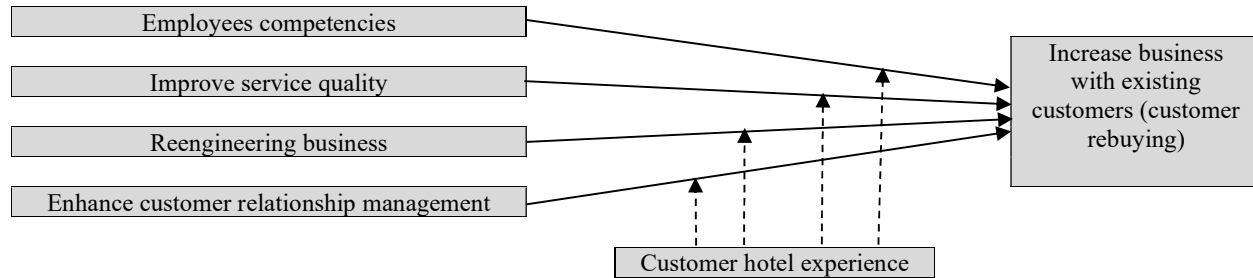


Fig. 1. The hypothesized model

H₁: Enhance employee competencies positively influences customer rebuying.

H₂: Improve service quality influences positively customer rebuying.

H₃: Reengineering business processes influences positively customer rebuying.

H₄: Enhance customer relationship management influences positively customer rebuying.

H₅: Customer hotel experience moderates relationships between company interrelated factors and increases business.

3. Materials and method

In order to achieve the objectives of the study and test its hypotheses, a questionnaire was designed, divided into six dimensions, one of which refers to the dependent factor (Increase business with existing customers (customer rebuying), and four dimensions measure the independent factor (Employees competencies, Improve service quality, Reengineering business process, Enhance customer relationship management) and the sixth dimension measures the moderator variable (customer hotel experience). The questionnaire also included a question regarding the number of years of experience (the number of years of dealing with the hotels). The questionnaires were distributed to a sample of 300 hotel customers, and they were all analyzable as they were collected through personal interviews during the month of May. The structural equation model based on the partial least squares (PLS) method was relied upon, and I will use the Smart Pls 4 program to analyze the data and test the hypotheses after tests related to the reliability of the data collection tool (the questionnaire) were conducted.

3.1 Empirical analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis was adopted, which is based on analyzing the factor structure of the five factors (the variable factor and the independent factors) in the presence of the mediating variable, by discovering the associative structure using correlation coefficients and then moving to path analysis that shows the size of the effect that each independent factor has on the dependent factor, as was done. Studying the impact caused by the variable (Customer hotel experience) as a moderator variable in the relationship between the main factors. Before all that, the study sample was described based on the number of years of experience in dealing with hotels, and the following Table 1 shows this distribution. Table 1 shows that the largest percentage of the research sample were customers who had experience with the hotels for less than three years (133 of them, most of whom were male, with a percentage of 4.59%).

Table 1
Sample distribution by customer tour experience

		Experience					Total
		Less than 3	3-5 years	5-7 years	7-10 years	10 and above	
Gender	Male	79	27	26	15	26	173
	Female	54	21	24	15	13	127
Total		133	48	50	30	39	300

3.2 Data analysis

Convergent validity

Table 2 shows the results of testing the validity of the analysis by first testing the validity of the questionnaire based on the Cronbach's alpha test, whose value should preferably exceed 0.70, and the reliability coefficient (CR), which should preferably exceed 0.8, in addition to the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test, which must exceed 0.5. The table also included a variance inflation factor (VIF) that tests multilinearity, and its value should preferably be less than (10) (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 2
Reliability and validity

Construct	Indicators	VIF	Loadings	Cronbach's	CR	AVE
Employees competencies	EC1	4.254	0.902	0.862	0.839	0.565
	EC2	5.755	0.901			
	EC3	3.156	0.841			
	EC4	2.51	0.7			
	EC5	1.342	0.023			
Improve service quality	ISQ1	2.016	0.506	0.861	0.884	0.612
	ISQ2	2.855	0.766			
	ISQ3	2.485	0.853			
	ISQ4	2.298	0.842			
	ISQ5	2.376	0.883			
Reengineering business process	RBP1	2.699	0.898	0.886	0.913	0.681
	RBP2	2.941	0.892			
	RBP3	2.655	0.798			
	RBP4	3.703	0.883			
	RBP5	1.611	0.621			
Enhance customer relationship management	ERM2	1.721	0.688	0.783	0.836	0.505
	ERM3	1.651	0.751			
	ERM4	2.065	0.729			
	ERM5	2.202	0.676			
Customer rebuying	CR1	1.072	0.694	0.602	0.675	0.305
	CR2	3.101	0.436			
	CR3	3.785	0.63			
	CR4	1.713	0.574			
	CR5	1.292	0.356			

From Table 2, it is noted that the loading coefficients on each latent factor are considered to be in the acceptable range. Most of them exceeded the peak of 0.7 and reached 0.902 for some variables, with the exception of two values, one for the factor Employees Competencies with a value of (0.023) and the second for the factor Customer Rebuying with a value of 0.356. Regarding the values of the contrast inflation factor (VIF) index, its values were within the acceptable range, as it did not exceed the highest value of this index (755.5). Likewise, with regard to credibility indicators, the values of Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged between 0.602 and 0.886. Also, the AVE values did not exceed 0.5 except in two dimensions and by a small amount.

Discriminant validity

There are many ways to test discriminant validity, and one of these methods is to use correlation, but they differ in the correlation between the constructs to ensure that none of the factors are related to or affected by an unrelated construct (RÖNKKÖ & CHO, 2022). Table 3 shows the correlation matrix between the study factors.

Table 3
The summary of discriminant validity

	CR	CSE	EC	ERM	ISQ	RBP
CR	0.552					
CSE	0.179	0.712				
EC	-0.252	-0.056	0.752			
ERM	0.198	0.582	-0.077	0.71		
ISQ	0.234	0.255	-0.087	0.327	0.782	
RBP	0.102	0.437	0.026	0.542	0.382	0.825

From Table 3, it appears that the values of the correlation coefficients between the latent factors range between the highest and lowest values of the root value of AVE ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$). Therefore, the discriminant validity of the model is good in general, although it may be improved by deleting some saturated variables on the factors.

Testing Inner model

The internal model is tested based on the values of the correlations between each independent factor and the dependent factor, which was arrived at using a structural equation model based on the partial least squares (PLS) method, taking into account the presence of the moderator variable (CSE) in order to take into account the impact that this variable has on the relationships between the independent latent factors and the dependent latent factor. Fig. 2 shows the results of these tests:

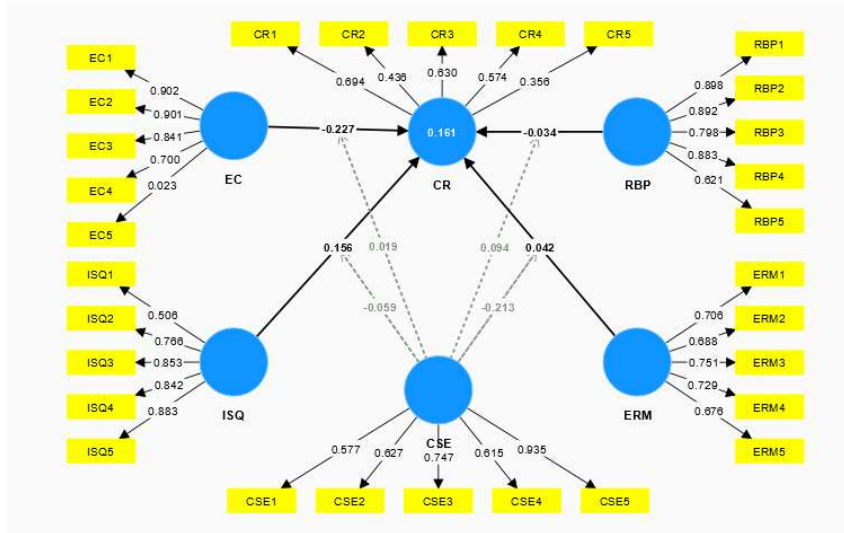


Fig. 2. Structured Model

Goodness of Fit

MHultt (2021) pointed out that analyzing the explanatory power of structural equation models depends on a number of indicators, the most important of which is the coefficient of determination (R-square), whose value ranges between 0 and 1, so that the explanatory power of the model increases the closer the value of the coefficient of determination is to (1), where the variance that can be explained in the dependent factor increases through the variance in the independent variables as the value of the coefficient of determination approaches one. Through the proposed model, it is noted that the value of the coefficient of determination reached (0.16), which means that 1.16% of the variance in the dependent factor (CR) can be explained by the independent factors. The regression model is an important explanatory tool in pass-through analysis, as MHultt (2021) also pointed out, as it contributes to clarifying the size of the relationship between the independent factors and the dependent factor, assuming the rest of the factors are ceteris paribus. The following table shows the results of the regression analysis between each of the independent latent factors. On the one hand, the dependent latent factor:

Table 4

The summary of the hypothesized model

Relationship	Beta	R ²	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value	Decision
RBP→CR	-0.034	0.161	0.217	0.678	0.049	Supported
ISQ→CR	0.156		0.208	1.094	0.027	Supported
ERM→CR	0.042		0.226	0.187	0.045	Supported
EC→CR	-0.227		0.193	0.808	0.041	Supported
CSE→RBP→CR	0.094		0.213	0.160	0.0387	Supported
CSE→ISQ→CR	-0.059		0.154	0.612	0.0451	Supported
CSE→ERM→CR	-0.213		0.163	1.307	0.019	Supported
CSE→EC→CR	0.019	0.152	0.391	0.009	Supported	

The previous Table 4 shows the P-value and the T-student test to demonstrate the significant effect of each of the independent factors on the dependent factor. Through the P-value, which was less than the theoretical significance level of 0.05, and with low standard deviation values, the effect of the independent factors is considered Essentially in the dependent factor, with the effect size varying from one factor to another, the largest effect of the factor (EC) was with a negative effect size of 0.227, and when introducing a variable effect (CSE) as a moderator variable, the effect size changed to a positive effect of 0.019.

4. Discussion of results

The empirical results of analysing the relationship between (customer rebuying) as a dependent factor and each of the variables of employees competencies, improve service quality, reengineering business process, and enhance customer relationship

management showed that the effect varied according to each of the independent factors. The factor (EC) was the most closely related. With an impact factor of (-0.227), while the lowest impact of the factor (RBP) was with an impact factor of (-0.034). By adopting the variable (CSE) as a modifying variable, the relationships between the independent factors and dependent factors showed a fundamental change from an inverse relationship to a direct relationship. Through the loading coefficients of each variable on its latent factor, most of the variables were significantly related to their latent factor, with a significant decline in the value of two variables, one of which saturated on the factor (EC) with a saturation value that did not exceed (0.023) and the other on the dependent factor (CR) with a value Saturation (0.356). What is taken into account in the proposed model is that the coefficient of determination showed a low value that did not exceed (16.1%), which means that the selected independent factors can be developed either by expanding the sample and the research community or by choosing other simple factors or a composite of more than one factor. In addition, the moderator variable showed a negative effect on the relationship between the dependent worker (CR) and both factors (ERM and ISQ), while its effect was positive on the relationship between the dependent worker and the other independent factors (RBP and EC).

5. Conclusion

Based on the previous results, the study can be developed to identify factors that have a greater impact on the variation occurring in the dependent factor (CR), so that the value of the coefficient of determination is developed. Work can also be done on customers with more periods of experience with the hotels as a more feasible alternative to focusing on customers. Those who have shorter interaction periods, as the customer hotel experience variable significantly affected the relationship between the independent factors and the dependent factor. It is possible to analyze the reasons for the impact of the hotel customer experience variable on the relationship between the study factors, so that the most important features in the customers' experience with the hotels are identified and thus developed and enhanced, which is reflected positively and significantly in the hotel's revenues from these customers.

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