

STRATEGIC INFLUENCE OF BRAND AND LOYALTY ON CONSUMER PURCHASES**Dr. Krishnabhaskar Mangalasserri**

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ABSTRACT

This research examines how brand image and customer loyalty affect hotel buying choices. It also examines how brand image and customer loyalty affect buying decisions in today's competitive market. Strong brand image is crucial in the hotel business, especially in the service sector, since it shapes consumer perception. Customer loyalty is crucial since keeping customers is far cheaper than obtaining new ones (Reichheld, 1996). Hotels benefit from loyal clients' word-of-mouth and lower price sensitivity. One of the most competitive worldwide sectors, hotels must meet changing consumer expectations, making it hard to distinguish offers. Here, consumer happiness alone cannot provide a competitive edge. To compete, hotel brands must create uniqueness and loyalty. This descriptive research uses primary data from a standardised hotel customer questionnaire. Secondary data came from several books and publications. Each sample had an equal probability of selection using basic random sampling. The data was analysed using IBM SPSS.

Keywords: *Brand Image, Customer Loyalty, Purchase Decisions, Hotel Industry, Competitive Advantage.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalisation has increased competition, forcing entrepreneurs to devise tactics to remain ahead. Hotel performance measurement and improvement from consumers' perspectives is extremely tough. One logo or brand mark no longer represents a company's products or services. Instead, brand image includes the connections people build from their contacts with the firm. Many company owners neglect brand image until a problem emerges. Any firm should prioritise a good brand image since buyers buy both the product and its values. Customer loyalty is another important but underappreciated marketing factor. Independent hotels struggled financially after the COVID-19 outbreak. Thus, more independent hotels are considering soft brand partnerships to ensure their financial future. Soft branding lets an independent hotel associate with a big brand while retaining its identity. Examples include IHG's Voco, Hilton's Curio, and Marriott's Autograph. This relationship gives the independent hotel access to the parent brand's marketing and loyalty programs, improving its exposure and client base. Global Data travel and tourism expert Ralph Hollister sees more soft brand collaborations as independent hotels struggle to survive post-COVID-19. In India, 60% of top-tier hotels are privately held, giving hotel companies soft branding opportunities to dominate the industry. There has been little study on how brand image and customer loyalty affect consumer buying choices, particularly post-pandemic. After the epidemic, many Indian independent hotels are struggling to stay competitive. They must grasp how brand image and customer loyalty affect consumer buying behaviour. This hotel consumer research examines how brand image and loyalty affect buying choices. Data was collected in Trivandrum using a Likert scale. This study attempts to assist hotels understand how soft branding initiatives, client loyalty, and brand image affect consumer buying choices. The results show that advertising, customer happiness, and innovation boost brand image and purchasing choices. The research also indicated that brand image aspects boost client loyalty. This information can help hotels create competitive and market-survival strategies.

1.1 General background

Globalisation has changed the hospitality and tourist industry, with customers and manufacturers worldwide. Previous study has shown that customer satisfaction directly and indirectly affects brand image and client loyalty in the hotel business (Kandampully & Hu, 2007). Tourism's image depends on hospitality firms that provide excellent service (Hu, Kandampully, & Juwaheer, 2009). Hospitality services have become requirements due to lifestyle changes such as changing work schedules, greater travel, different eating tastes, and cosmopolitan communities. Brands strongly influence customer buying attitudes, which influence purchases (Gordon et al., 1993). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) defined attitude as favorability or unfavorability towards activities. According to Patterson (1995), attitudes affect behavioural intentions, whereas Tellis (1988) claimed that recurring business with the same company shows loyalty. This research examines how brand image, customer purchase attitudes, behavioural intentions, and loyalty relate. The exponential rise of hospitality firms over the last decade has given customers several options, increasing market competitiveness. Hospitality firms need many strategies to be competitive. Pricing techniques may attract consumers, but they can hurt a company's medium- to long-term profitability and reputation (Ernst & Young, 1996). Building consumer loyalty is more sustainable and successful, say experts. Hospitality firms can use proactive client loyalty initiatives instead of price cuts. Heskett et al. (1994) discovered that loyal consumers produce revenues and balance losses from less loyal customers. Thus, hotel management are prioritising client loyalty efforts. Hotel management may use this study to create new strategies to retain current and future consumers and stay competitive in a fast-changing market.

1.2 Problem Statement

Hotel management frequently think they can increase revenue by giving guests what they want. However, studies demonstrate that consumer satisfaction does not ensure repeat purchases or loyalty. Hotel operators must satisfy current customers and anticipate future requirements to grow and fulfil changing visitor needs. Hospitality companies must innovate and be creative to be competitive (Lahap, O'Mahony & Dalrymple, 2014; Tigu, Iorgulescu, & Ravar, 2013). In today's competitive industry, hotels must understand customer loyalty elements to get an economic edge (Soriano, 2002; Polyorat & Sophonsiri, 2010). Hospitality companies must actively explore new and smart ways to compete. Hoteliers must always meet visitor expectations and improve the guest experience. Travellers are more picky than ever with so many options at their fingertips. This puts hotels under more strain but also gives them more chances to create memorable experiences that set them apart.

1.3 Research Gap

Research has shown that customer satisfaction affects customer loyalty and brand image affects consumer buying attitudes. There is little study on how brand image and customer loyalty affect hotel consumers' buying choices. In the present market, many hotels are suffering, and customer contentment alone won't do. Independent hotels especially struggle to compete. Joining soft brands—partnerships that let small hotels preserve their identity while benefitting from bigger brand networks—may help. These soft brand associations assist hotels weather economic downturns by increasing client loyalty, brand image, and business. However, many small hotel owners are ignorant of how brand image and client loyalty affect buying choices. This study examines how these characteristics affect customer behaviour to assist independent hotels remain in a competitive market, particularly during crises.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- To assess the relationship between the factors of brand image and customer loyalty with purchase decisions in the hotel industry.
- To analyze the impact of brand image and customer loyalty on consumer purchase decisions within the context of hotel customers.

2. RESEARCH MODEL

The study model illustrates the structural connections between the dependent variable, purchase decisions, and the independent variables, which include elements influencing customer loyalty (relative advantage, perceived quality of service, and trust) and brand image (innovation, advertising, and customer satisfaction). This model emphasises how customers' purchasing choices are strongly influenced by brand image and customer loyalty, especially in the hotel sector.

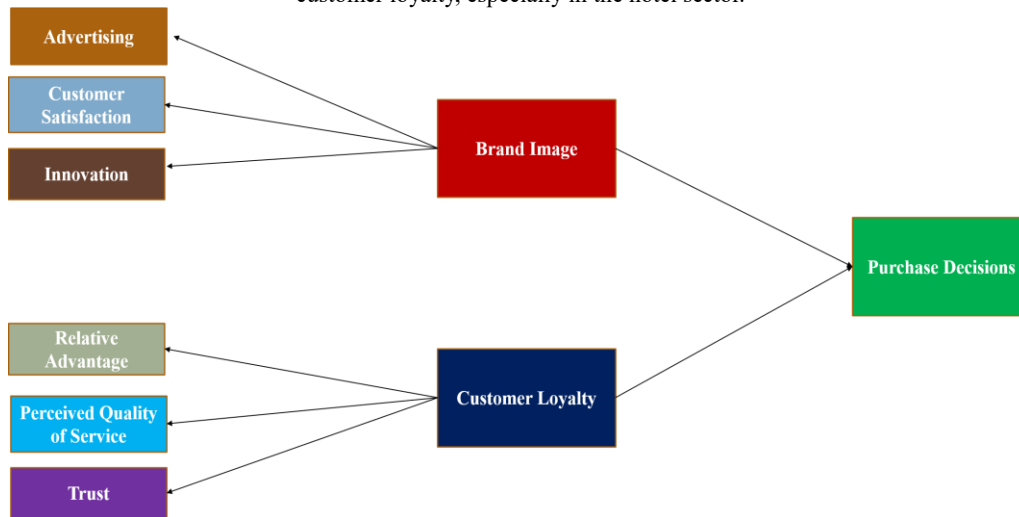


Figure 1: Research model for purchase decisions

A strong brand image is created by a combination of elements including advertising, customer satisfaction, and innovation, while customer loyalty is reinforced by elements like relative advantage, perceived quality of service, and trust. Customers' purchasing decisions are shaped and driven by both brand image and customer loyalty, which ultimately influences their selections for hotel services. These linkages are shown in Figure 1: Research Model for Purchase judgements, which serves as the basis for comprehending how these elements work together to affect consumer behaviour when making judgements about what to buy.

2.1 Scope of the Study

This study's main goal is to evaluate how customer loyalty and brand image affect customers' choices to buy. It draws attention to the several elements that go into creating a brand's image and encouraging patronage in the hotel sector. This research is to provide hotel managers useful insights to improve the perception of their brand and client loyalty by comprehending these dynamics. According to the survey, hotel managers may use a wider variety of tactics to draw in and keep guests by enhancing both brand image and loyalty, as opposed to concentrating just on customer happiness. In addition to enhancing commercial results, such a rise in demand for hotel services, this also advances social well-being by improving consumer satisfaction and service quality.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Based on the research study, Anabila, P. et al. (2021) examined the link between customer loyalty and service quality (SQ), as well as the mediating function that customer satisfaction and joy play in this relationship. The findings show that both customer satisfaction and customer delight were significantly improved by service quality. According to the research study, Akunja, L. A. (2020) examined how brand image affected patron loyalty in Kenyan hotels. The results indicated that customer loyalty was significantly affected by brand image. According to the study, increased loyalty is probably the result of improvements in the brand's image. Therefore, the research suggests that in order to remain competitive while retaining existing customers and attracting new ones, hospitality operations should focus on the physical aspects of their facilities, improve staff-guest interactions, and fortify activities to promote their corporate image. According to the research study, El-Said, O. A. (2020) examined the influence of internet evaluations on the intention to make a hotel reservation and came to a number of conclusions. The results of the research indicated that booking intentions were significantly impacted by reviews with a negative valence, but not by those with a good valence. Additionally, it was found that the degree of this impact varied depending on the moderator. According to the research study, Ampong, G. O. et al. (2020) examined the connection between service recovery and perceived fairness, satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. The study found that consumers' satisfaction with service recovery is not significantly impacted by perceived distributive justice. Customer satisfaction with service recovery was most strongly impacted by interactional fairness. The relationship between procedural fairness and trust was determined to be negligible. Additionally, trust has a big impact on loyalty after service recovery. According to the research study, Novan Andrianto & Achmad Yanu Alif Fianto (2020) examined how word-of-mouth, perceived cost, and service quality affected brand perception and consumer behaviour. The results of this research demonstrated that brand impression and purchase behaviour are strongly favourably influenced by word-of-mouth, perceived price, and service quality. Additionally, this research found that the link between word-of-mouth, perceived cost, service quality, and purchase decision is complicated by brand image. According to the research study, Wai Lai, I. K. (2019) evaluated the impact of hotel image and reputation on the processes that promote patron loyalty. The study's findings demonstrate that hotel reputation comes before hotel image and that each of the previously stated elements is essential to fostering customer loyalty. These results allow hotel marketers to build a positive reputation for increasing patronage. According to the research study, Alauddin, Md et al. (2019) examined the connection between service quality, customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction in Bangladesh's hotel sector. The results show a strong correlation between measures of service quality and customer satisfaction. The findings showed that consumer satisfaction and loyalty are directly correlated with service quality and satisfaction, respectively. To have a competitive advantage, hotel management must provide their patrons with outstanding services. This will enable them to successfully guide the market. According to the research study, El-Adly, M. I. (2019) examined the connection between loyalty qualities, perceived value, and customer happiness in the setting of hotels. It was shown that there were no observable direct advantages to either loyalty or consumer pleasure. Four components of hotel perceived value—price, quality, hedonic, and transaction—were also shown to directly and substantially increase customer loyalty, with customer satisfaction acting as a mediating factor. Lastly, it was shown that client loyalty is directly

impacted by customer satisfaction. Customer loyalty acts as a mediator between the direct good impact of market orientation on business performance and this effect, according to Fernandes Sampaio, C. A., et al. (2019). It draws attention to the substantial, favourable indirect effects that a company's market orientation has on its success. Market orientation has a favourable effect on customer loyalty, which enhances business success. According to a study by Sangwan, A. D., & Bhakar, S. (2018), brand image has an effect on consumer happiness, loyalty, and contentment. The survey focused on customers who stayed at hotels. The results demonstrated the strong influence of service quality on customer satisfaction, brand image, and customer loyalty, as well as the influence of brand image on customer contentment. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that neither consumer loyalty nor brand loyalty was significantly impacted by brand image or customer satisfaction. Based on a study, Majid, M. A., et al. (2018) examined how customer loyalty is affected by a hotel restaurant's image, cuisine, and service quality in Terengganu, Malaysia. The research found that the quality of the meal, the image, and the service all had a major impact. Improving the quality of the food, service, and establishment's appearance not only boosts patronage but also improves the restaurant's standing and promotes sustainability. According to a study by Kharouf, H., et al. (2018), honesty and effective communication have an impact on how devoted customers become in the hotel sector. The results demonstrate that using effective communication strategies cultivates a trustworthy reputation, which positively impacts behavioural and attitudinal loyalty. This research provides tactical suggestions for hotel management to increase customer loyalty. Based on the research study, Han, H., & Hyun, S. S. (2017) developed a theoretical framework that takes into account how image congruence, overall image, service, physical environment quality, and food quality affect guests' satisfaction and intentions to return to and visit other restaurants within the same opulent hotel. The structural analysis's findings showed that the research variables were mostly closely related, that the dimensions of quality and satisfaction acted as mediators, and that overall image and satisfaction had a bigger influence on decision-making than other factors. Based on their research, Maureen Kangu et al. (2017) examined the relationship between client orientation and customer loyalty in Kenya's hotel industry. According to the study, staff members were friendly, had a great understanding of hotel etiquette, and were free to operate independently. The hospitality industry's stakeholders should also understand that repeat customers spread positive word of mouth and encourage repeat business, which boosts hotel earnings. According to Hassan Abbas Dost Mohamad et al. (2017), the hotel industry in the United Arab Emirates may increase customer loyalty and satisfaction by providing high-quality services. This will be essential in helping the country attract and motivate more investors to finance the hotel industry, which would benefit the economy as a whole by producing revenue and employment. Based on their research, Jana, A., & Chandra, B. (2016) examined the relationship between growing customer satisfaction and loyalty in the mid-market hotel sector. Its objective was to assess the moderating effects of switching costs and brand image on the satisfaction-loyalty dyadic as well as the direct impacts of these factors on various loyalty stages. According to the research, midmarket hotel segments' customer satisfaction dramatically raised cognitive loyalty—but, interestingly, not conative, action, or emotional loyalty. According to the research study, Al-Msallam et al. (2016) examined the relationship between relationship marketing, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty (trust and commitment). The study found a high correlation between client loyalty and emotional commitment, hotel trust, and customer satisfaction. According to the research study, Cigdem Altin Gumussoy & Berkehan Koseoglu (2016) examined the elements that affect the loyalty and satisfaction of hotel visitors. The findings showed that perceived value, perceived fairness of price, and service quality (reliability, assurance, and empathy) all predict consumer happiness. It was also discovered that customer satisfaction is positively impacted by the service atmospheric element, which includes hotel decor, room ambiance, and a comfortable atmosphere. Based on the research study, Al-Msallam, Samaan (2015) examined the impact of three consumer perceptions: price fairness, brand loyalty, and customer happiness. The two factors that have the most effects on consumer happiness are pricing fairness and brand perception. To improve customer happiness, brand loyalty, and brand image as a benefit for consumers, managers should think about price fairness, according to the research. According to the research study, Lahap, J., et al. (2015) examined how brand image affects customer satisfaction and if it has an impact on it. Consumer satisfaction in the Malaysian hotel industry was shown to be influenced by brand image. This research may thus provide hotel owners a plan to develop, plan, and decide how much to improve their brand image in order to compete over the long term. According to a research study by Raouf Ahmad Rather and Jyoti Sharma (2015), client happiness and devotion have a big impact on customer loyalty. The findings demonstrated a substantial correlation between commitment and customer happiness, both of which positively impact customer loyalty. In the hotel sector, hospitality managers prioritise customer happiness and a dedication to keeping current customers in order to create competitive advantages and increase customer loyalty. According to Tanford, S., & Malek, K. (2015), hotels may increase the effectiveness of the incentive program by using a sophisticated segmentation strategy that allows them to add the benefits to the characteristics of each sector. Businesses may encourage consumers to engage in sustainable practices by praising and rewarding them. The influence of customer relationship management practices on client satisfaction in the hotel business was examined by Dr. B. Angamuthu (2015). This research looks at the relationship between customer happiness and client loyalty and retention tactics. This study found that the use of CRM practices, including customer value, customer orientation strategies, customer interaction management practices, relationship upgrading capabilities, customer contact programs, and CRM technology, is associated with higher levels of customer satisfaction in the hotel industry. The results of the research indicate a substantial and positive correlation between customer satisfaction and client loyalty and retention methods in the hotel business. According to the research study, a successful innovation should have a complete character and include a variety of experience value components (Tsai, S., 2015). The importance of comprehensive innovation in increasing customer loyalty is supported by empirical data. The results of the research indicate that an innovation orientation and value cocreation abilities are the primary drivers of holistic innovation.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Type of Research

The study has a descriptive focus. In descriptive analysis, data are systematically explained, summarised, and illustrated. In statistical analysis, it is an essential technique that offers a thorough comprehension of the data. A key step in this study's investigation of brand image, customer loyalty, and their impact on purchase choices is descriptive research, which is crucial for finding patterns, behaviours, and correlations within the dataset.

4.2 Source of Data

For the research project, both primary and secondary data were used.

1. **Primary data:** Using a structured questionnaire intended to evaluate the impact of customer loyalty and brand image on purchase choices, this data was obtained directly from consumers.
2. **Secondary data:** This included material gleaned from a variety of published sources, including books, journals, and study-related publications.

Population: Customers of five-star hotels in the Trivandrum area made up the study's population. 212 regular guests of these hotels were the focus because they offered a representative sample for analysing the effects of brand image on customer loyalty.

Sample Size Calculation: A 95% confidence level sample size was determined using an online sample size calculator. This led to the conclusion that 137 responses would be the ideal sample size for the research.

4.3 Sampling Technique

This research used a basic random selection method to choose participants from the group of hotel guests in Thiruvananthapuram. This made sure that everyone had an equal chance of being chosen, which made the results more accurate. We used a structured questionnaire to get data from as many people in this sample as feasible. There were two parts to the questionnaire. The first part asked for demographic information, and the second part looked at how different aspects of Brand Image (like advertising, customer satisfaction, and innovation) and Customer Loyalty (like relative advantage, perceived quality, and trust) affected people's decisions to buy. People answered using a Likert scale.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Reliability Analysis

The dependability of the variables can be checked by the researcher using a reliability analysis.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Advertising	0.824	4
Customer Satisfaction	0.799	4
Innovation	0.783	4
Relative Advantage	0.740	4
Perceived Quality of Service	0.793	4
Trust	0.848	4
Brand Image	0.874	2
Customer Loyalty	0.859	2
Purchase Decisions	0.878	2
Cronbach's Alpha (Overall)	No. of Items	
0.822	30	

Taking into account all 30 items, the test showed a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.822. This score shows that the measured variables are very reliable. Here are the dependability scores for each person: Advertising got a score of 0.824, Customer Satisfaction got a score of 0.799, Innovation got a score of 0.783, Relative Advantage got a score of 0.740, Perceived Quality of Service got a score of 0.793, Trust got a score of 0.848, Brand Image got a score of 0.874, Customer Loyalty got a score of 0.859, and Purchase Decisions got a score of 0.878. The data was found to be very credible for further investigation since it has a total Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.822. We asked experts for their comments and did a thorough assessment of the literature to make sure the questionnaire was legitimate. Table 1 shows the reliability data for each factor, including the Cronbach's Alpha score and the number of items for each variable. Cronbach's Alpha scores show how important different elements are in making a buying choice, as seen in Figure 2.

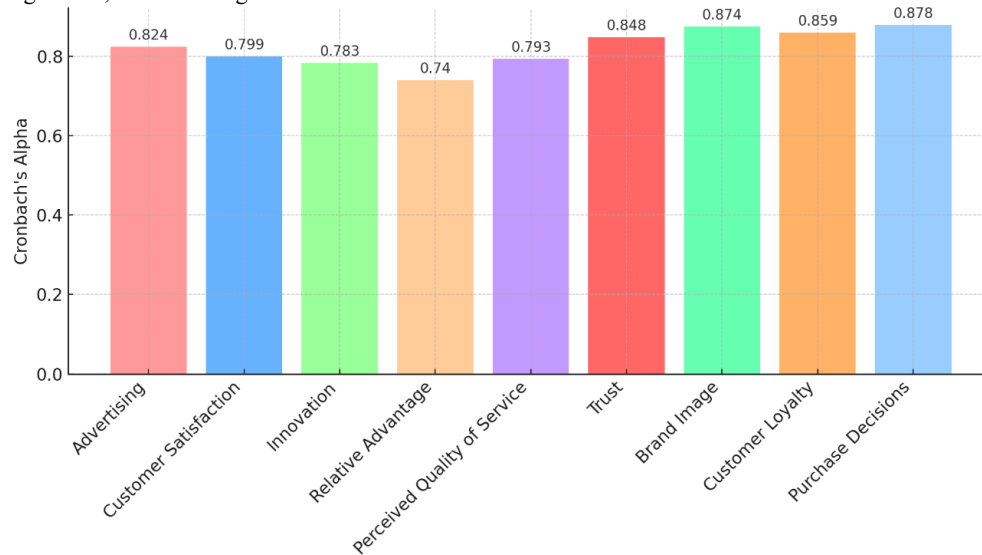


Figure 2: Importance of Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions (Cronbach's Alpha)

5.2 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis:

Hypothesis I: There is no relationship between Brand Image with purchase decisions.

Hypothesis II: There is no relationship between customer loyalty with purchase decisions.

Hypothesis III: There is no impact of brand image & customer loyalty on purchase decisions.

Tools Used for Data Analysis: For data analysis, both descriptive statistics and inferential analysis were employed. Specifically, Correlation and Regression analyses were used to examine the relationships between Brand Image, customer loyalty, and purchase decisions.

5.3 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics provide an overview of the data set, which might be a sample of the whole population or the whole population. There are two primary kinds of descriptive statistics: measurements of central tendency (like the mean, median, and mode) and measures of variability (like the range and standard deviation). We employed descriptive statistics to summarise the dataset in this research. We got the main data from a Likert Scale questionnaire and used SPSS to look at the data and come up with several meanings and conclusions.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Measure	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	110	80.3
	Female	27	19.7
Age	18-25	3	2.2
	26-35	48	35.0
	36-50	48	35.0
	51-65	38	27.7
Occupation	Self-Employed	13	9.5
	Entrepreneur	9	6.6
	Government Job	41	29.9
	Government Official	10	7.3
	Private Service	64	46.7
Number of stays	1 to 3	13	9.5
	4 to 6	47	34.3
	7 to 9	60	43.8
	10+	17	12.4

Table 2 illustrates how the people who answered were divided by gender, age, job, and number of hotel stays. There are 137 people who answered, and 80.3% of them are men and 19.7% are women. There are several age groupings for the people who answered: 2.2% are 18 to 25, 35% are 26 to 35, 36% are 36 to 50, and 27.7% are 51 to 65. In terms of employment, 9.5% are self-employed, 6.6% are entrepreneurs, 29.9% work for the government, 7.3% are government officials, and 46.7% work for the private sector. The data also shows that 43.8% of those who answered stayed in a 5-star hotel 7 to 9 times a year, 34.3% stayed 4 to 6 times, 12.4% stayed more than 10 times, and 9.5% stayed 1 to 3 times a year.

Figure 3 shows the frequency of respondents' demographic traits, such as gender, age, job, and how many times they stayed at 5-star hotels. The bar graph reveals that most of the people who answered are men (110), and the most common age categories are 26–35 and 36–50 years. Also, private service workers make up the biggest group of workers, and most people who answered stayed at the hotels 7 to 9 times a year.

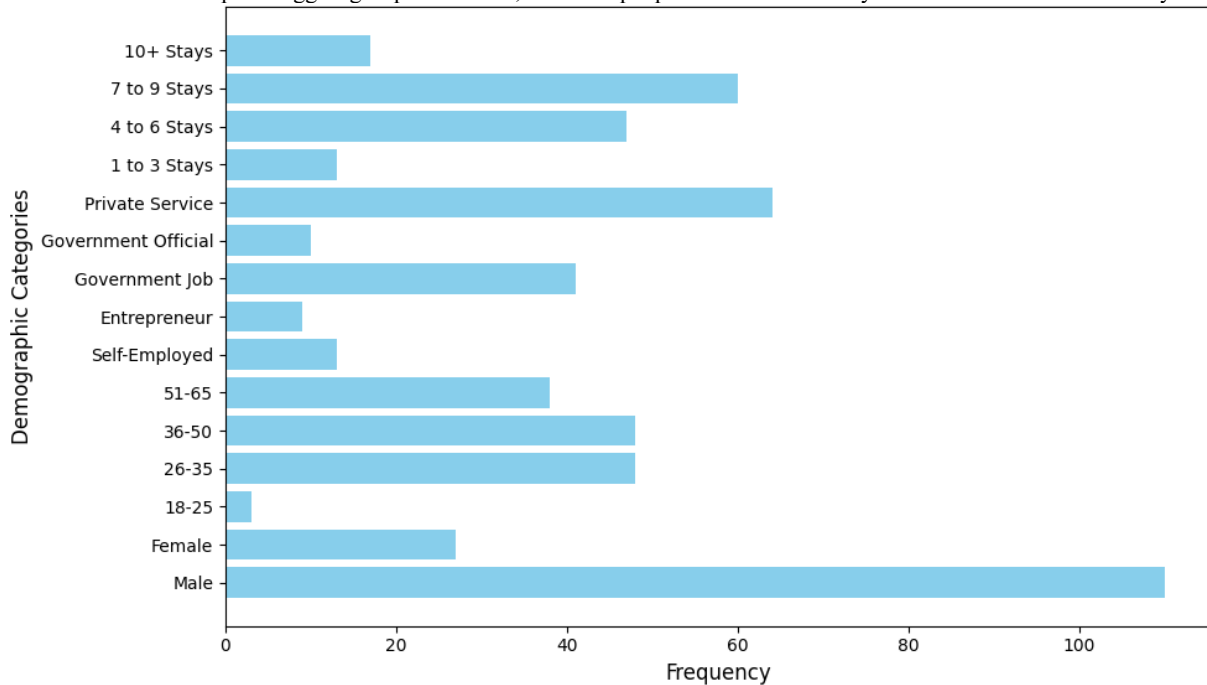


Figure 3: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Hypothesis I:

H₀: There is no relationship between Brand Image with purchase decisions.

H₁: There is a relationship between Brand Image with purchase decisions.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation coefficient between Brand Image with purchase decisions

Factors	Brand Image	Purchase decisions
Brand Image	1	0.364
Purchase decisions	-	1

The correlation coefficient between brand image and purchase choices is 0.364, which means that there is a 13.24% positive association between the two and it is significant at the 1% level. The null hypothesis is not true since the brand image will help the hotels get people to buy anything from that brand because of things like advertising, customer happiness, and new ideas. In the end, advertising will convince a client to buy a certain product or service since the customer will know what they are getting and what they need. If the client gets what they want, they will be happy, and innovation will offer a brand an edge over another brand since they are the market leader with the newest technology. Figure 4 shows how brand image ratings and purchase decision scores are related to each other. It shows that better brand image ratings are linked to higher purchase decision scores. This association backs up the study analysis's finding of a positive correlation, which means that a better brand image has a big effect on whether or not buyers buy anything.

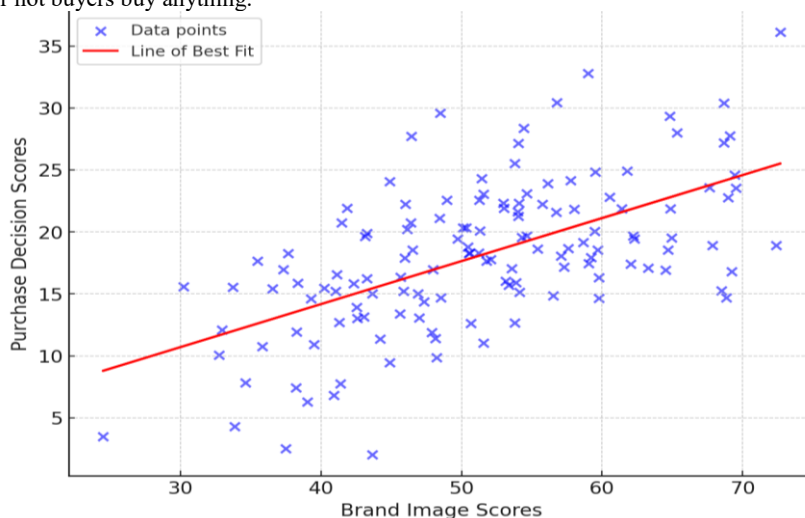


Figure 4: Correlation Between Brand Image and Purchase decisions

Hypothesis II:

H₀: There is no relationship between customer loyalty with purchase decisions.
 H₁: There is a relationship between customer loyalty with purchase decisions.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation coefficient between customer loyalty with purchase decisions

Factors	Customer Loyalty	Purchase decisions
Customer Loyalty	1	0.883
Purchase decisions	-	1

The correlation table above shows that the correlation coefficient between customer loyalty and purchase choices is 0.883. This means that there is a 77.9% positive association between customer loyalty and purchase decisions, and it is significant at the 1% level. We reject the null hypothesis because when customers are more loyal, they are more likely to buy the same product or service again. This can happen for many reasons, such as when customers choose to stay at a hotel based on reviews, or when companies offer rewards programs to encourage customer loyalty. The scatter plot in Figure 5 shows how customer loyalty and purchasing choices are related. It shows the relationship in a way that makes it clear that greater customer loyalty is linked to better purchase decision scores. This supports the study results that there is a positive link between customer loyalty and buying behaviour.

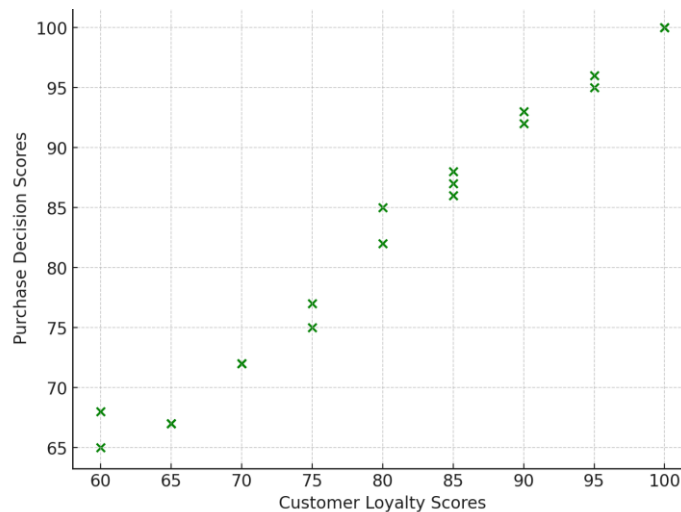


Figure 5: Correlation between Customer Loyalty and Purchase Decisions

Hypothesis III:

H₀: There is no impact of brand image & customer loyalty on purchase decisions.
 H₁: There is an impact of brand image & customer loyalty on purchase decisions.

Regression is a statistical method used in finance, investment, and other sectors to find out what kind of connection exists between a single dependent variable (typically represented by Y) and a number of other factors (known as independent variables). Variable that depends on Decisions on buying Variables that are not dependent: X₁ is the brand image, while X₂ is the customer loyalty. R Square: 0.802 F: 271.389 P: 0.000 . Brand Image and Customer Loyalty are two independent variables in this case, which is why multiple regression is utilised. Multiple regression is a statistical method used to look at the connection between one dependent variable and a number of independent variables.

Table 5: Variables in the Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Unstandardized coefficient (B)	SE of B	Standardized co-efficient (Beta)	t value	P value
Constant	0.004	0.187	-	0.021	.983
Brand Image	0.156	0.040	0.157	3.951	.000
Customer Loyalty	0.845	0.040	0.844	21.287	.000

The coefficient of determination R-square measures the estimated Sample Regression Plane's goodness-of-fit by measuring the proportion of variance in the dependent variables explained by the fitted sample regression equation. Thus, the R square value of 0.802 indicates that the estimated SRP that includes Brand Image & Customer Loyalty as independent variables explains 80.2% of purchase choices and is significant at the 1% level.

The regression equation is: $Y = 0.004 + 0.156 X_1 + 0.845 X_2$.

Keeping the other factors constant, Brand Image affects purchase choices with a coefficient of 0.156 and Customer Loyalty with 0.845. Brand Image has a statistically significant influence on purchasing choices since its P value is 0.00. Customer loyalty has a statistically significant effect on purchasing choices (P = 0.00). Brand Image has an unstandardised coefficient of 0.156 and Customer Loyalty 0.845. This reveals that every unit of change in Brand Image related to 0.156 change in purchase choices, indicating that brand image development will favourably impact consumer purchase decisions. Each unit of change in customer loyalty increased purchase choices by 0.845, indicating that customer loyalty positively affects purchase decisions. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected because brand image and customer loyalty affect purchasing choices, with customer loyalty having a significantly bigger influence since many enterprises have instituted loyalty programs.

The regression line chart in Figure 6 shows brand image, customer loyalty, and purchase choices. This visualisation shows how brand image and customer loyalty affect purchasing choices. Brand image and customer loyalty improve purchasing choices, as seen by the regression lines' positive slope. The graphic supports the statistical model's results that customer loyalty affects buying behaviour more than brand image. High R-squared values in regression analysis show that the model accounts for a considerable percentage of purchase decision variation, highlighting the importance of these factors in forecasting consumer behaviour.

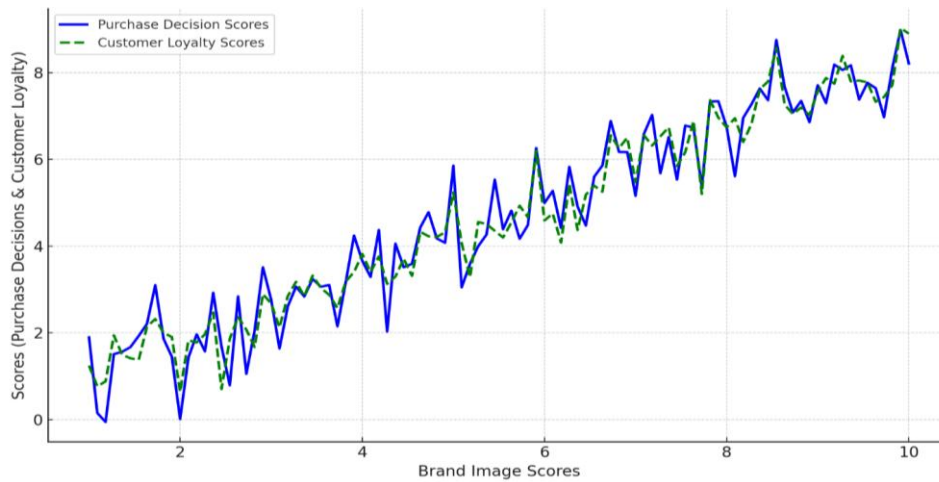


Figure 6: Regression Analysis: Impact of Purchase Decisions and Customer Loyalty on Brand Image

6. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Findings

A great brand image captures customers' thoughts of a business's personality, influencing their purchases. Customer loyalty boosts earnings, sales, and long-term growth. A successful loyalty program may retain customers, attract new ones, minimise attrition, and boost income. Brand image-customer loyalty relationship: According to the correlation research, advertising increases customer satisfaction since people want to know about the hotels they visit or book. Innovation helps delight customers because contemporary consumers value ease and comfort, which technology can improve. Innovation gives hotels an advantage over competitors. Satisfied consumers trust a brand, which leads to repeat visits and loyalty. Hotels that engage in innovation and provide high-quality service have a competitive edge over rivals. Brand image and client loyalty affect buying decisions: Regression study shows that brand image and customer loyalty boost purchasing choices. Increased brand image and customer loyalty strongly influence consumers' buying choices. Therefore, improving a hotel's brand image and customer loyalty may significantly impact consumer buying behaviour.

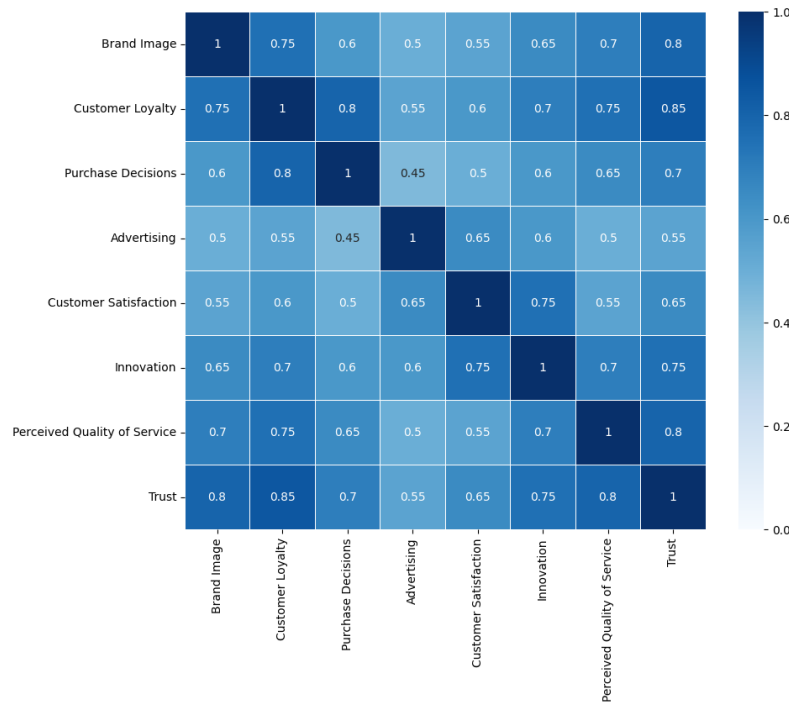


Figure 7: Heatmap of Correlations Between Key Variables

Figure 7 shows the association between Brand Image, Customer Loyalty, Purchase Decisions, Advertising, Customer Satisfaction, Innovation, Perceived Service Quality, Relative Advantage, and Trust. Brand image has a modest positive association with customer loyalty (0.75) and purchase choices (0.60), indicating that a stronger brand image increases customer loyalty and buy decisions. Customers' buying choices are strongly influenced by customer loyalty (0.80). Trust has significant connections with Customer Loyalty (0.75) and Purchase Decisions (0.70), demonstrating its relevance in customer loyalty and purchasing behaviour. Innovation and customer satisfaction also improve customer experience and decision-making.

6.2 Recommendation

While advertisements have limited influence on brand perception, hotels can differentiate themselves and build strong brands through personalized marketing. Key strategies include:

- **Prioritizing Guest Experience:** Ensuring guests have a positive and value-for-money stay leads to good reviews and stronger brand perception.

- **Embracing Innovation:** Incorporating new technologies and creative elements in rooms and hotel facilities enhances guest comfort and overall experience, contributing to brand building.
- **Building Trust through Image:** A strong brand image, built on honesty, reliability, and quality, helps hotels earn respect from both customers and competitors.
- **Leveraging Personalization:** Highly personalized customer experiences are difficult for competitors to replicate, offering hotels a long-term competitive advantage, increased sales, and enhanced customer loyalty.
- **Implementing Loyalty Programs:** These programs encourage repeat business, making it easier for hotels to introduce new offerings to existing, loyal customers.

7. CONCLUSION

The results of this research show that brand image is a very important factor in predicting customer happiness and loyalty in the hotel business. The results show how important it is for hotel owners to have a good brand image and reputation in order to keep customers happy and loyal. To reach this aim, it is important to always provide good service and value. From before you book to after your stay, a hotel's brand should provide you the same experience every time. This includes good marketing and follow-up. Hotels may enhance guest expectations by developing a strong brand. When hotels satisfy these requirements, consumers trust and stay loyal. To be ahead of the competition, you should also take advantage of important industry trends like sustainability, augmented reality (AR), robots, and the power of social media. Hotels should be praised for their great prices and value, which helps build the brand image and keep customers coming back. The report also gives hotel managers specific advice on how to create successful marketing plans that concentrate on improving brand image and customer loyalty. This will help them get more customers and set themselves apart from their competition.

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