

A conceptual integration of customer experience and loyalty in luxury hotels: Insights from the Malaysian context

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review is grounded in an integrated theoretical perspective, drawing primarily on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model, expectation-confirmation theory, and value-based frameworks to examine the relationships among customer experience quality, perceived value, price fairness, satisfaction, and relationship quality in hotel contexts. Synthesising empirical and conceptual studies published between 2019 and 2024, with particular relevance to luxury hospitality and implications for Malaysia, the review adopts a structured PRISMA-style screening process using Scopus as the primary database, resulting in a final sample of twenty studies. The findings reveal that customer experience quality functions as a key stimulus influencing perceived value and satisfaction, which subsequently shape relationship quality and loyalty outcomes. Price fairness is identified as a critical yet under-examined determinant, particularly within the Malaysian luxury hotel sector. Despite the application of multiple theoretical lenses across the literature, there remains a heavy reliance on cross-sectional survey designs and adapted measurement scales, limiting robust causal interpretation. Building on these insights, this review proposes an integrated conceptual model that consolidates existing theoretical perspectives and highlights main mediating and moderating mechanisms. It further outlines a future research agenda, advocating for longitudinal and mixed-method approaches, more rigorous operationalisation of price fairness, and deeper exploration of emotional dimensions of perceived value. The study contributes to the literature by strengthening theoretical integration, synthesising cross-study evidence, and offering practical implications for luxury hotel operators, including systematic experience management, transparent pricing strategies, and the development of targeted loyalty programmes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, luxury hospitality has been inherently shaped by customer experiences, where perceptions of service quality and experiential elements strongly influence overall satisfaction and long-term relational outcomes (Walls et al. 2011; Wu & Gao, 2019). The premium price points of luxury hotels elevate expectations, making it crucial to understand how customer experience quality translates into perceived value, satisfaction, and relationship quality (Paulose & Shakeel, 2022). Within the broader service experience, price fairness represents a critical but relatively underexplored dimension, capturing how guests evaluate the justifiability and reasonableness of hotel pricing practices (Meatchi et al. 2021). Previous studies suggest that perceptions of fairness can determine whether positive experiences ultimately lead to loyalty, underscoring the need for deeper exploration of this construct in luxury hotel contexts (Hossain et al 2019).

In the context of Malaysia, the luxury hospitality sector has experienced steady growth driven by increasing international tourist arrivals, government-led tourism development strategies, and the diversification of high-end tourism offerings. As a tourism destination in Southeast Asia, Malaysia presents a unique setting where cultural diversity, competitive pricing structures, and service differentiation intersect, making it relevant for examining perceptions of experience quality and price fairness. Despite this, empirical research focusing specifically on luxury hotel experiences within Malaysia remains limited, especially in integrating relational and pricing constructs within a unified framework.

Despite Malaysia's growing prominence in the luxury hospitality market, existing studies remain fragmented and largely generalised across broader tourism contexts, with limited attention to the integration of experiential, relational, and pricing constructs within a single framework. In particular, the role of price fairness in shaping post-experience relational outcomes has been insufficiently examined in the Malaysian luxury hotel context. Moreover, most prior studies are concentrated in Western or more mature tourism markets, raising concerns about contextual applicability. This creates a clear research gap, as Malaysia's unique cultural diversity, pricing sensitivity, and competitive positioning may influence how luxury hotel guests evaluate experience quality and form loyalty intentions.

This review seeks to address five main objectives. First, it examines how customer experience quality has been conceptualised and measured in luxury hotel research. Second, it synthesises empirical evidence linking experience quality with perceived value, satisfaction, price fairness, and relationship quality. Third, it evaluates the theoretical frameworks that underpin these relationships. Fourth, it considers the methodological strengths and weaknesses across the included studies. Finally, it identifies research gaps and provides recommendations for future studies with a specific focus on luxury hotels in Malaysia. Taken together, these objectives enable the review to extend theoretical debates and generate actionable implications for managers and policymakers seeking to strengthen Malaysia's luxury hospitality sector, including the rapidly developing market.

Drawing on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, this review conceptualises customer experience quality and price fairness as key stimuli, which influence internal evaluations such as perceived value and satisfaction (organism), ultimately shaping relationship quality and loyalty outcomes (response). To enhance clarity, the proposed relationships are synthesised and presented in a conceptual framework (see Figure 1).

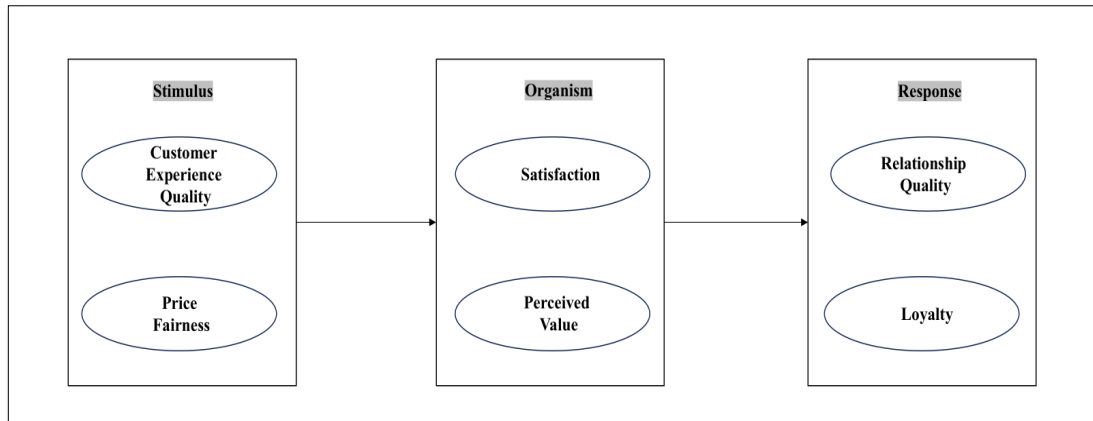


Fig. 1. Proposed conceptual framework grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model

Source: Adapted from Mehrabian and Russell (1974)

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1 Customer experience quality in luxury hotels

Customer experience quality has been conceptualised in hospitality research as both a broad and multidimensional construct and as a collection of specific service features. Some scholars argue that it encompasses sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions, reflecting the holistic nature of guest interactions (Agapito et al. 2013; Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). Others narrow the focus to functional service attributes such as dining, ambience, or technology-enabled elements that directly shape guest perceptions (Bartoli et al., 2025; Shin & Jeong, 2022). Serra-Cantalops et al. (2020) highlighted that satisfaction and service quality jointly contribute to favourable electronic word-of-mouth by enhancing positive emotional experiences. In a related cross-cultural study, Tsiotsou (2022) proved that value-creating elements in luxury hotels are often rooted in emotional encounters that resonate strongly with guests. Empirical work on luxury hotel restaurants further illustrates this point: Ismail et al. (2022) demonstrated that brand personality and dining experiences are strong predictors of satisfaction, positioning food-related encounters as critical in shaping perceptions of quality. The infusion of technology has also been identified as an emerging dimension of experience. Al-Issa and Thanasi (2024) mapped the future of technology-infused luxury, proposing that digital enhancements, ranging from personalised applications to immersive digital services, are increasingly integral to perceptions of service quality. Collectively, these studies reinforce the notion that luxury hotel performance depends not only on traditional service delivery but also on carefully managed emotional and experiential elements, which have been consistently linked to guest satisfaction, loyalty, and relationship outcomes (El-Adly, 2019; Paulose & Shakeel, 2022).

2.2 Perceived value as a main mechanism in luxury hospitality

Perceived value has been widely recognised as a mediator between experience quality and guest outcomes such as satisfaction and loyalty. Research highlights that value is not singular but consists of functional, social, and emotional dimensions. Emotional value has gained prominence in recent years. El-Adly et al. (2024) demonstrated that emotional perceived value strongly predicts affective commitment and loyalty, positioning it as a central construct in luxury hospitality. This aligns with earlier findings by Itani et al. (2019), who showed that perceived value drives relationship quality and customer engagement. Beyond individual experiences, organisational strategies also play a role. Mohammed and Al-Swidi (2019) revealed that corporate social responsibility initiatives enhance perceived value, which in turn strengthens loyalty. In Malaysia, the link between value and satisfaction has been substantiated in the context of luxury hotel dining, where brand personality and experiential features create perceived value that significantly shapes guest satisfaction (Ismail et al., 2022). Similarly, Paulose and Shakeel (2022) confirmed that perceived experience and perceived value are precursors to satisfaction and loyalty. Taken together, these studies affirm that perceived value operates as a pivotal mechanism translating quality experiences into lasting customer relationships.

2.3 Price fairness and its role in loyalty formation

While less extensively studied, price fairness has emerged as a vital antecedent of satisfaction and loyalty in hospitality. Defined in terms of distributive and procedural justice, fairness perceptions shape whether guests translate positive experiences into repeated patronage. In the Malaysian context, Hossain et al. (2019) investigated five-star resorts and found that value-based fairness significantly influenced behavioural loyalty, demonstrating how equitable pricing enhances perceptions of service attributes and builds trust. This insight carries particular importance for Malaysia luxury sector, where pricing strategies can affect competitiveness in both domestic and international markets. Broader evidence supports this emphasis on fairness: Chi et al. (2020) confirmed that perceived justice contributes to relationship quality in economy hotels, illustrating that fairness-related constructs transcend market segments. These findings suggest that, alongside experience quality and perceived value, fair pricing practices are essential for sustaining loyalty in luxury hospitality.

2.4 Satisfaction, relationship quality, and loyalty outcomes

Customer satisfaction continues to be a well-established predictor of relationship quality and loyalty within the luxury hotel context. Research consistently demonstrates that high-quality experiences and perceived value lead to satisfaction, which then underpins trust, commitment, and repeat patronage. El-Adly (2019) and Saut and Bie (2024) both validated the role of satisfaction as an immediate outcome of perceived value and experiential quality. Itani et al. (2019) extended this by showing how satisfaction translates directly into relationship quality, encompassing trust and affective commitment. Beyond everyday experiences, recovery processes also matter. Shams et al. (2021) found that favourable service recovery outcomes restore satisfaction and rebuild loyalty, highlighting the dynamic nature of relationship management. In addition, service innovation has been shown to enhance satisfaction and behavioural intentions. Truong et al. (2020) proposed that innovation in service processes contributes positively to customer evaluations, demonstrating how hotels can strategically influence satisfaction. Collectively, these findings reinforce the central role of satisfaction as the bridge between perceived experience and long-term relational outcomes.

2.5 Theoretical and methodological developments

The literature draws upon several theoretical frameworks to explain the interplay among experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty. The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework is frequently applied, framing experiences as stimuli that trigger internal evaluations and emotional states, which then result in behavioural responses (Saut & Bie, 2024). Expectation-confirmation theory has been used to explain post-consumption evaluations of satisfaction, while relationship and value-based theories emphasise trust, fairness, and exchange processes. Al-Issa and Thanasi (2024) applied these perspectives to digitalised luxury experiences, showing how technology alters experiential evaluations. At the same time, Hati et al. (2024) examined how the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped luxury consumption, indicating that macro-level disruptions redefine customer expectations of value. In Southeast Asia, empirical work by Hong et al. (2023) and Khalifa et al. (2022) on customer engagement and functional quality demonstrates the applicability of these frameworks beyond Western contexts. Methodologically, however, most studies rely on cross-sectional survey data, often with convenience samples, limiting causal inference. As noted by Spr et al. (2023), these designs restrict the ability to capture long-term behavioural dynamics. This methodological concentration underscores the need for more diverse approaches, such as longitudinal designs and mixed-methods, to provide richer insights into the luxury hospitality sector.

3. METHOD

This systematic literature review adopted an adapted PRISMA approach to ensure transparency and replicability in identifying, screening, and including relevant studies (Page et al., 2021). The eligibility criteria were guided by the PICOS framework, with the population defined as guests, customers, or consumers of luxury hotels (Methley et al., 2014). Studies were included if they examined constructs such as customer experience quality, service quality, perceived value, price fairness, satisfaction, relationship quality, loyalty, or behavioural intentions. Both empirical and conceptual contributions were considered, provided they were published in English between 2019 and 2024. Studies focused solely on non-luxury segments without comparative analysis, conference abstracts with insufficient detail, and unpublished theses were excluded.

Scopus was selected as the primary database for article retrieval due to its extensive coverage of high-impact, peer-reviewed journals in hospitality and tourism, as well as its rigorous indexing standards. Compared to other databases, Scopus offers broader journal inclusion and citation tracking capabilities, making it particularly suitable for systematic reviews in tourism research. While relying on a single database may introduce potential limitations, prior studies have demonstrated that Scopus provides sufficient coverage of core literature in the field, especially when combined with a well-defined search strategy and strict inclusion criteria. To enhance robustness, the search process was carefully designed using comprehensive Boolean strings and manual screening to minimise the risk of omitting relevant studies. A structured Boolean search was employed using combinations of terms such as “customer experience,” “luxury hotel,” “perceived value,” “price fairness,” “satisfaction,” “relationship quality,” and “loyalty.” This search produced an initial set of 120 records.

The screening process proceeded in three stages. First, duplicate records ($n = 30$), automation-based ineligible entries ($n = 10$), and unrelated items ($n = 5$) were removed, leaving 75 articles for title and abstract screening. Second, 35 records were excluded at this stage because they did not align with the eligibility

criteria, resulting in 40 reports sought for full-text retrieval. Third, of these, five could not be retrieved, and 35 full texts were assessed for eligibility. At this stage, 15 articles were excluded for specific reasons: five studies did not focus on luxury hotel contexts, concentrating instead on economy or peer-to-peer accommodation; five were not empirical or theoretical contributions, consisting mainly of commentaries or conference abstracts without methodological rigour; and five lacked sufficient detail in their reporting of constructs, measures, or analytical outcomes, which prevented meaningful synthesis.

The final review included 20 journal articles published between 2019 and 2024. Although the sample size may appear modest, it reflects the relatively niche and emerging nature of research integrating customer experience quality, price fairness, and relational outcomes specifically within luxury hotel contexts. Systematic reviews focusing on narrowly defined constructs and contexts often yield smaller but more conceptually focused samples, allowing for deeper analytical synthesis rather than broad descriptive coverage. In this study, emphasis was placed on the quality, relevance, and theoretical contribution of the selected articles rather than the quantity alone. The process is summarised in Figure 1, which presents a PRISMA flow diagram tracing the stepwise reduction from the initial set of records to the final included studies.

Data from the included studies were extracted systematically. For each paper, details were recorded regarding author(s), year, country, study design, theoretical framework, constructs measured, sample characteristics, and key findings. The quality of the included studies was appraised using criteria adapted from the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) (Hong et al., 2018), which assessed sampling adequacy, measurement validity, methodological rigour, and clarity of reporting. The synthesis of findings was guided by a thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which allowed for the identification of recurring conceptual and empirical patterns across studies.

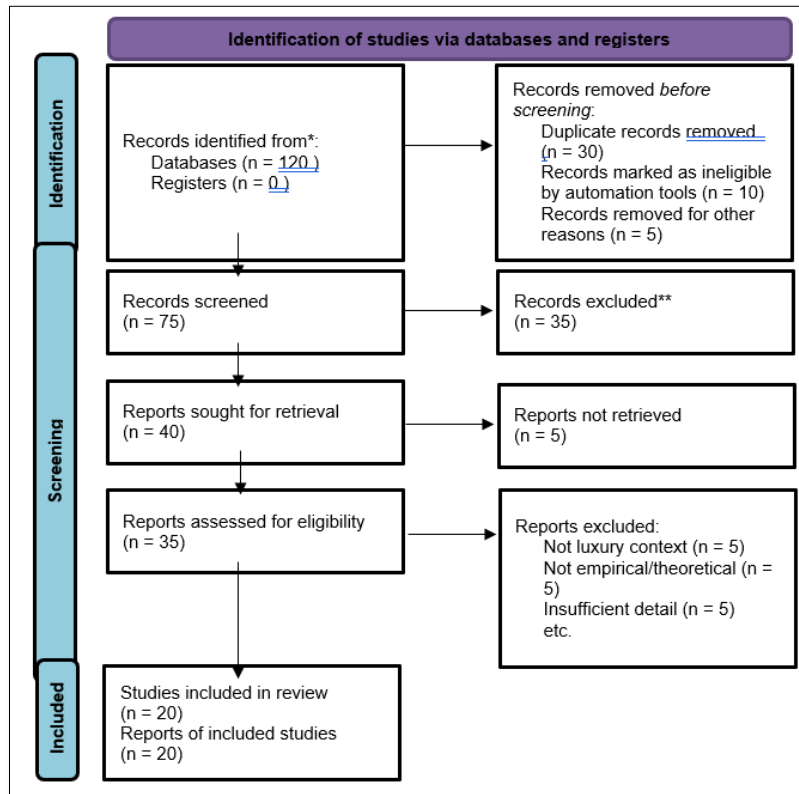


Fig. 2. PRISMA Flow

Source: Adapted from Page et al. (2021)

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Publication Outlets

The reviewed articles were distributed across a range of hospitality, marketing, and consumer-focused journals. Three studies were published in the Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism, while two appeared in the International Journal of Consumer Studies, and one in the Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management. Other contributions were found in outlets such as the International Journal of Hospitality Management, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, and the Spanish Journal of Marketing-ESIC. This spread demonstrates that research on luxury hospitality is not confined to tourism-specific outlets but is increasingly situated within broader consumer behaviour and interdisciplinary platforms, indicating the sector's expanding scholarly relevance. Yet, this dispersion across journals also reflects a lack of theoretical consolidation within the field. The absence of a dominant outlet suggests that research on luxury hospitality experience remains conceptually fragmented, with limited increasing theory building. This fragmentation may hinder the development of a unified framework, mainly in integrating pricing constructs such as price fairness with relational outcomes.

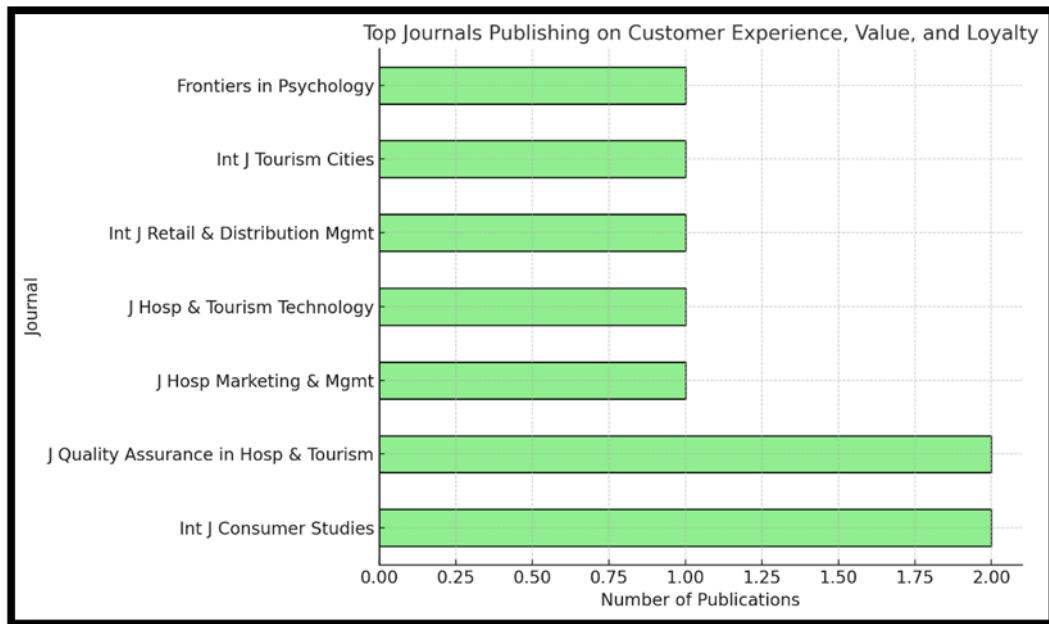


Fig. 3. Distribution of Reviewed Studies by Publication Outlet

Source: Authors owns illustration

4.2 Temporal Distributions

The twenty studies reviewed span a six-year period from 2019 to 2024. The earliest year in the dataset, 2019, produced four publications (El-Adly, 2019; Hossain et al., 2019; Itani et al., 2019; Mohammed & Al-Swidi, 2019), which laid much of the groundwork for subsequent empirical and conceptual development. Output slowed slightly in 2020, with three studies (Chi et al., 2020; Serra-Cantallops et al., 2020; Tiamiyu et al., 2020) that nevertheless expanded the scope of inquiry to include justice, eWOM, and peer-to-peer accommodation in Malaysia. Research momentum was sustained in 2021 with two publications (Shams et al., 2021; Truong et al., 2020), but a marked increase occurred from 2022 onwards. In 2022 alone, four studies were published (Ismail et al., 2022; Khalifa et al., 2022; Paulose & Shakeel, 2022; Tsiotsou, 2022), reflecting a renewed scholarly interest in dining experiences, engagement behaviour, and cross-cultural value creation. The upward trajectory continued in 2023 with another four contributions (Hong et al., 2023; Spr et al., 2023; Wong & Chan, 2023; others), many of which emphasised domestic tourism patterns and peer-to-peer accommodation. In 2024, three articles appeared (Al-Issa & Thanasi, 2024; El-Adly et al., 2024; Saut & Bie, 2024; Hati et al., 2024), consolidating themes of technology-infused luxury, emotional perceived value, and post-pandemic consumption. Overall, the distribution shows a relatively steady flow of publications from 2019 to 2021 (nine studies in total) and a sharper rise from 2022 to 2024 (eleven studies). This pattern highlights how the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath have reoriented research attention towards guest experience, perceived value, and fairness in luxury hospitality contexts. Despite the observed increase in publications, the growth appears to be largely incremental rather than transformative. Much of the post-pandemic research continues to rely on established constructs such as satisfaction and

perceived value, with limited theoretical innovation. This suggests that while research activity has intensified, conceptual advancement in explaining evolving luxury hospitality experiences remains relatively constrained.

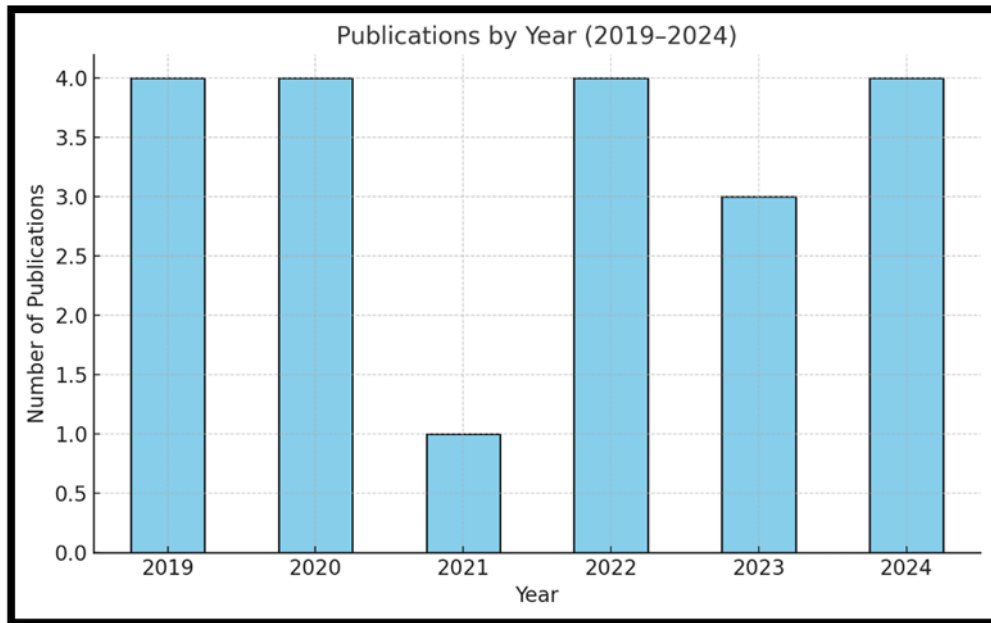


Fig. 4. Number of Reviewed Studies Published per Year (2019–2024)

Source: Authors owns illustration

4.3 Geographical and Contextual Focus

Refer to Table 1. The reviewed studies encompassed diverse international settings, including Vietnam (Hong et al., 2023; Khalifa et al., 2022), Spain (Serra-Cantallops et al., 2020), China (Chi et al., 2020), and cross-cultural investigations of luxury hotels (Tsiotsou, 2022). Malaysia emerged as a recurrent context, with research addressing five-star resorts (Hossain et al., 2019), luxury restaurants (Ismail et al., 2022), domestic tourist accommodation (Spr et al., 2023), and peer-to-peer platforms such as Airbnb (Tiamiyu et al., 2020; Wong & Chan, 2023). Despite this representation, none of the included works explicitly focused on Asian luxury hospitality segment. Given Malaysia established reputation for eco-luxury resorts and experiential tourism, this absence constitutes a critical contextual gap and presents an opportunity for Malaysia-centred scholarship to generate destination-specific theoretical and managerial contributions. Notwithstanding this representation, a critical gap remains in the lack of studies explicitly focusing on the Asian luxury hospitality segment as a distinct theoretical and empirical context. Much of the existing research either adopts general hospitality perspectives, focuses on non-luxury or mixed accommodation types, limiting contextual specificity. Given Malaysia's established reputation for eco-luxury resorts and experiential tourism, this absence highlights a significant geographical and conceptual gap. It also raises concerns regarding the transferability of findings derived from Western or non-luxury contexts to Malaysia's culturally and price-sensitive luxury market.

Table 1. Geographical Coverage

Region / Country	Studies Included	Focus Area
Malaysia	Hati et al. (2024); Hossain et al. (2019); Ismail et al. (2022); Spr et al. (2023); Tiamiyu et al. (2020); Wong & Chan (2023)	Five-star resorts, luxury dining, domestic accommodation, peer-to-peer (Airbnb), marketing (post-pandemic), service quality and experience in peer-to-peer accommodation
Vietnam	Hong et al. (2023); Khalifa et al. (2022)	Customer engagement, hotel functional quality
Spain	Serra-Cantallops et al. (2020)	Positive eWOM, emotional experiences
China	Chi et al. (2020)	Relationship quality in economy hotels
Middle East	El-Adly (2019); El-Adly et al. (2024); Mohammed & Al-Swidi (2019)	Perceived value, CSR, loyalty
Lebanon / Portugal	Itani et al. (2019)	Perceived value, relationship quality
Pakistan	Shams et al. (2021)	Service recovery, satisfaction, loyalty
India	Paulose & Shakeel (2022)	Perceived value, satisfaction, loyalty
Indonesia	Saut & Bie (2024)	Experiential quality, satisfaction
UAE / Egypt	Al-Issa & Thanasi (2024); El-Adly (2019)	Tech-infused luxury, perceived value
Cross-cultural	Tsiotsou (2022)	Value-creating aspects via online reviews

Source: Authors owns compilation

4.4 Methodological Trends

Most studies adopted quantitative survey designs, often with sample sizes ranging from several hundred to over a thousand respondents. A smaller set of studies employed conceptual approaches (Al-Issa & Thanasi, 2024; Truong et al., 2020), while thematic and sectoral analyses appeared in limited form (Hati et al., 2024). Content analysis of online reviews was observed in a single study (Tsiotsou, 2022). This heavy reliance on survey methodologies underscores a methodological imbalance, constraining causal inference and limiting deeper exploration of experiential constructs. Greater methodological diversity, including longitudinal designs, qualitative insights, and mixed-method approaches, would enable richer understanding of luxury hospitality experiences. This methodological dominance also raises concerns regarding common method bias and over-reliance on self-reported data, which may inflate relationships among constructs such as satisfaction, perceived value, and loyalty. Furthermore, the limited use of longitudinal and experimental designs restricts the ability to capture dynamic changes in customer perceptions, mostly in response to pricing strategies and evolving service experiences in luxury hospitality.

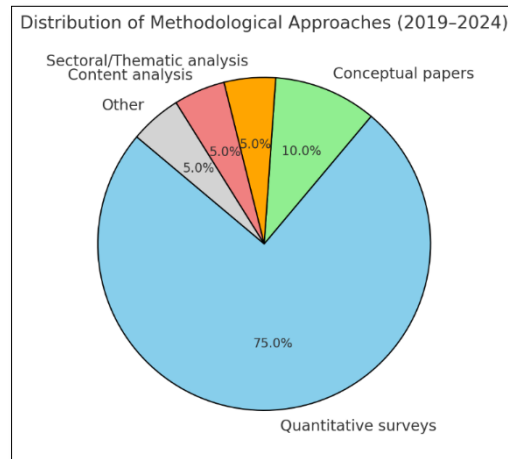


Fig. 5. Distribution of Methodological Trends (2019–2024)

Source: Authors owns illustration

4.5 VOSviewer Drifts

The network visualisation of the reviewed studies provides a clear picture of how research on customer relationship experience, perceived value, price fairness, satisfaction, and relationship quality in hotels has evolved between 2019 and 2024. Three dominant clusters are visible. The red cluster captures the strong interconnection between customer satisfaction, loyalty, quality, perceived value, and price fairness, which are well established drivers of customer retention in the hospitality context. The green cluster links hospitality and tourism to customer experience and the broader hospitality industry, highlighting the application of these constructs within practical service settings. The blue cluster is associated with systematic reviews, service quality, and research agendas, which suggests a growing scholarly effort to consolidate fragmented findings and establish theoretical directions for the field. Together, the clusters show that loyalty, satisfaction, and value are bridging concepts that integrate theoretical constructs with industry practice. Despite these developments, the map also exposes potential gaps and new avenues for research. While constructs such as satisfaction, value, and loyalty are well explored, their interaction with contemporary challenges in hospitality such as digitalisation of services, sustainability, ethical pricing strategies, and post pandemic shifts in customer expectations remains less developed. The limited presence of nodes related to technology driven service such as artificial intelligence, service automation, or digital platforms indicates opportunities for future studies to integrate emerging service models with traditional relationship quality frameworks. Price fairness appears connected primarily to satisfaction and loyalty but is less examined in relation to customer experience or perceived value in dynamic pricing environments. This suggests that future work could examine fairness perceptions under real time pricing or revenue management strategies. Another promising avenue lies in extending the customer experience discussion beyond transactional encounters. The map shows that constructs are tightly clustered around satisfaction and loyalty, but there is limited conceptual expansion toward experiential consumption, emotional value, or co creation within hotel services. This signals an opportunity for scholars to move beyond traditional

service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty chains and to explore more holistic frameworks incorporating customer empowerment, cultural differences, and relational authenticity. The strong presence of systematic reviews in the blue cluster highlights that although knowledge consolidation is underway, empirical testing across diverse hospitality contexts such as boutique hotels, eco resorts, and budget or luxury hotels remains underdeveloped. This opens a space for comparative and cross-cultural research. Collectively, these gaps suggest that future studies should expand the scope of customer relationship research by integrating contemporary service challenges, exploring fairness and value in dynamic contexts, and adopting broader experiential and relational perspectives. Overall, the visualisation reveals that the field remains heavily anchored in traditional service constructs, with insufficient theoretical integration of emerging dimensions such as digital transformation, ethical pricing, and experiential co-creation. This specifies that future research should move beyond linear satisfaction–loyalty paradigms and adopt more dynamic and integrative frameworks to better capture the complexity of contemporary luxury hospitality experiences.

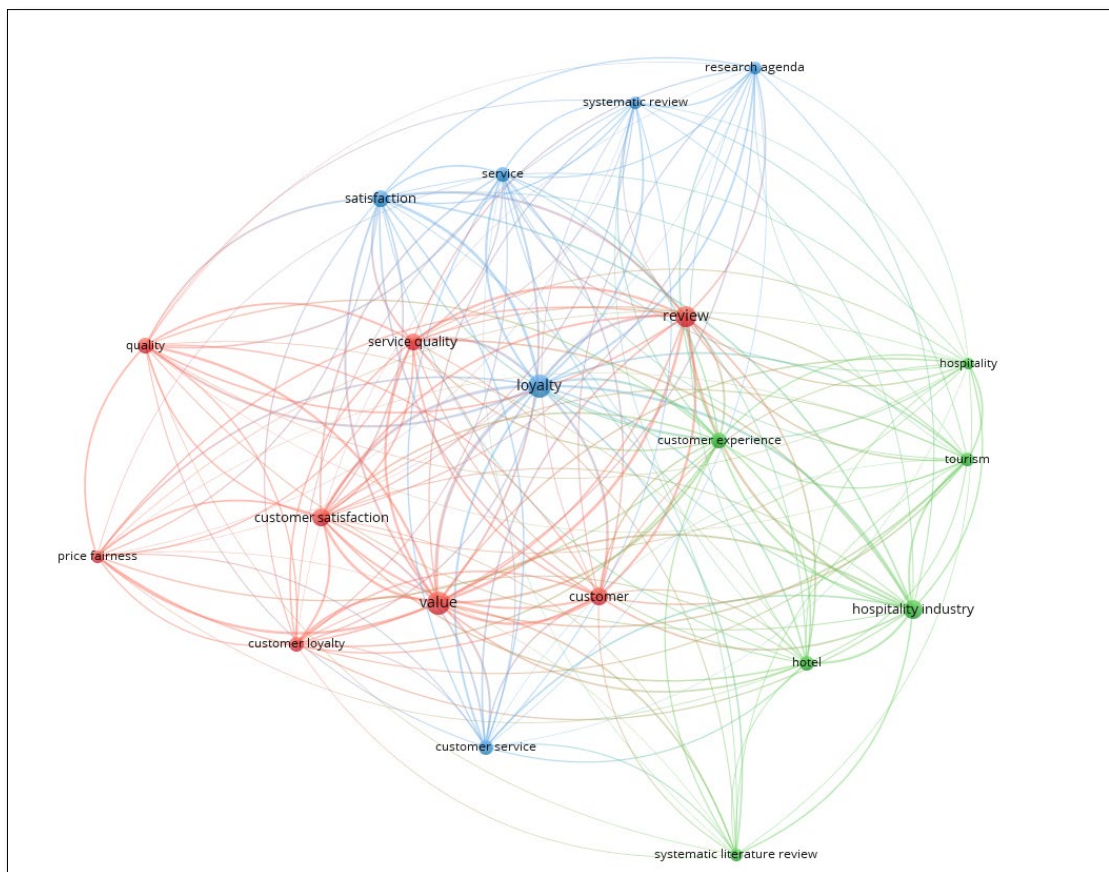


Fig. 6. Co-occurrences of keywords ‘customer relationship’, ‘experience’, ‘quality’, ‘perceived value’, ‘price fairness’, ‘satisfaction’, and ‘relationship quality’ refined by ‘hotel’; 2019–2024 publications in Scopus; see Appendix A for details.

Source: Authors owns illustration

5. DISCUSSION

Despite progress in the field, several gaps remain in the literature. Price fairness, although shown to be significant in Malaysian resorts (Hossain et al., 2019), has not been systematically integrated into models of experience quality and relationship outcomes, especially in luxury settings. Emotional perceived value has been identified as highly influential (El-Adly et al., 2024), yet it is often treated as a peripheral element rather than as a central construct. Furthermore, while studies in Malaysia have examined dining (Ismail et al., 2022), peer-to-peer accommodation (Wong & Chan, 2023), domestic travel patterns (Spr et al., 2023), and switching behaviour in Airbnb contexts (Tiamiyu et al., 2020), research specific to Malaysia luxury hospitality sector remains limited. Given Malaysia prominence as a destination for high-end resort and experiential tourism, this absence constitutes a critical gap. Addressing these areas through rigorous empirical work would advance both theory and practice, providing actionable insights to strengthen Malaysia's luxury hotel competitiveness.

Overall, bibliometric mapping confirms that research on luxury hospitality has expanded across journals and international contexts, particularly in recent years. Nonetheless, it remains dominated by survey-based methodologies and lacks sufficient attention to certain destinations. Malaysia features prominently but is often studied in fragmented ways, typically outside the luxury segment, while Malaysia, a leading hub for eco-luxury and resort-based tourism, has yet to be systematically examined. Filling this void would not only strengthen the empirical base for Malaysian scholarship but also enrich global theory-building on destination-specific luxury hospitality.

Based on the synthesis of the reviewed studies, several avenues for future research have been identified. These directions encompass methodological innovation, theoretical refinement, measurement development, and contextual application to the Malaysian luxury hotel sector. As summarised in Table 2, future studies should move beyond the predominant use of cross-sectional surveys by adopting qualitative, longitudinal, and experimental designs to provide richer insights and stronger causal explanations. Greater attention is also required to advance theory by positioning emotional perceived value as a central construct and by developing more precise measures of fairness perceptions in luxury hospitality contexts. Also, future research should be attached more firmly in Malaysia, addressing domestic travellers' expectations and the role of eco-luxury and experiential attributes. Collectively, these directions offer both theoretical advancement and practical guidance for enhancing satisfaction, relationship quality, and guest loyalty in luxury hotels.

Table 2. Agenda for future research in luxury hotel experience studies

Focus	Research Questions / Directions	Rationale
Methodological innovations	How can qualitative and mixed-method approaches deepen understanding of customer experience quality, perceived value, and price fairness? What role can longitudinal and experimental designs play in clarifying causal pathways among satisfaction, relationship quality, and loyalty?	Existing studies rely heavily on cross-sectional survey data, limiting causal inference and rich contextual insights.
Theoretical refinements	How can emotional perceived value be positioned as a central construct rather than a peripheral	Current models often treat emotional value as secondary and rarely integrate fairness

	dimension? Does price fairness moderate the experience–value–satisfaction pathway in luxury hotel contexts?	explicitly within S–O–R or value-based frameworks.
Measurement development	What new measurement scales can better capture emotional perceived value in luxury hospitality? How can fairness perceptions (distributive and procedural) be operationalised more precisely in luxury hotel research?	Scales vary widely across studies and lack consistency, hindering cross-study comparability.
Contextual applications (Malaysia)	How do domestic travellers in Malaysia evaluate fairness and value in luxury hotels? What role do eco-luxury and experiential tourism attributes play in shaping perceived value and loyalty in Malaysia?	Most studies are global or regional, with limited focus on Malaysia.
Practical implications	How can transparent pricing strategies and personalised experience design enhance satisfaction and loyalty in Malaysian luxury hotels? What frameworks can hotels adopt to systematically monitor experience quality, perceived value, and fairness perceptions?	

Source: Authors owns compilation

6. CONCLUSIONS

This literature synthesis critically examined the evolving body of research on luxury hospitality, with a particular emphasis on the Malaysian context. While the global discourse on luxury tourism has grown substantially, the integration of key constructs such as price fairness and emotional perceived value remains inconsistent. Although price fairness has been shown to significantly influence guest perceptions in Malaysian resort settings, it is rarely embedded systematically into broader models of experience quality, relationship outcomes, or loyalty formation in the luxury segment. Similarly, emotional perceived value, despite its demonstrated impact on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions, continues to be treated as a supplementary factor rather than a core theoretical element.

In Malaysia, hospitality research has developed across several sub-sectors including dining, domestic tourism, and peer-to-peer accommodation. However, studies specifically grounded in the luxury hotel segment remain limited. This gap is notable given Malaysia's positioning as a growing destination for high-end, experience-driven tourism. Without targeted research in this area, both theoretical and practical advancements risk being based on incomplete or fragmented understandings of the luxury hospitality experience within the Malaysian market.

Based on the review, several promising directions for future research emerge. Methodologically, there is a clear need to diversify beyond the prevalent use of cross-sectional surveys. The adoption of qualitative, longitudinal, and experimental designs would provide richer insights and allow for more meaningful causal interpretations. Theoretically, emotional perceived value and price fairness should be repositioned as central constructs, with more precise and contextually grounded measurement approaches. Further, research should more directly engage with the expectations and behaviors of luxury hotel guests in Malaysia, exploring how experiential and emotional elements shape perceptions of service quality and long-term relationship outcomes.

Overall, this review highlights the need to bridge existing conceptual and empirical gaps to better reflect the realities of luxury hospitality in Malaysia. Future research can meaningfully contribute to both global theory-building and local industry practice. This also aligns with the principles of Malaysia MADANI, especially its focus on a high-value economy, ethical governance, and sustainable growth. Moreover, the proposed research directions provide practical insights that can support key Sustainable Development Goals, including inclusive economic growth (SDG 8), responsible production and consumption (SDG 12), and innovation and infrastructure in tourism (SDG 9). Strengthening the academic foundation in this space will not only advance competitive, guest-centric strategies but also position Malaysia as a leading model for sustainable and emotionally engaging luxury hospitality in the region.

7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

8. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Mohd Rizwan Abd Majid: Conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation and writing-original draft; **Tressy Belly:** Conceptualisation, methodology, supervision, project administration, validation, visualization, funding acquisition, and writing – review & editing; **Mohd Hafiz bin Mohd Hanafiah:** Conceptualisation, resources, software, and validation.

9. DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) to improve the readability and language quality of the manuscript. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited all content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

10. DATA AVAILABILITY/SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new datasets were generated or analysed during the current study. All data used for this review were extracted from previously published studies, which are fully cited in the manuscript and included in the tables, figures, and Appendix A.

11. ETHICS STATEMENT

The authors declare that this research did not involve human or animal subjects. All procedures performed in this study were based on the analysis of previously published literature, and no new data collection from living subjects was conducted.

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14. APPENDIX

A. Systematic Literature Review Matrix

Authors & Year	Title	Journal	Research Objectives	Theory/Model	Methodology	Findings	Limitations & Recommendations	Academic & Practical Contributions
Al-Issa and Thanasi (2024)	Mapping the future of tech-infused luxury: A roadmap and research directions	<i>International Journal of Consumer Studies</i>	To explore how digital technologies reshape luxury hotel experiences and provide a research roadmap.	Conceptual (luxury consumption & tech adoption)	Conceptual analysis	Digital enhancements (apps, immersive services) increasingly define perceived service quality.	Lack of empirical testing; future research should validate in luxury hotel contexts.	Academic: Provides roadmap on tech–luxury integration. Practical: Guides managers in adopting technology-enabled luxury services.
Chi et al. (2020)	Developing relationship quality in economy hotels: The role of perceived justice, service quality, and commercial friendship	<i>Journal of Hospitality & Marketing Management</i>	To analyse justice, service quality, and relational elements in building relationship quality.	Justice theory / relationship marketing	Survey, SEM	Perceived justice and service quality build trust and commitment.	Focused on economy hotels; limited applicability to luxury.	Academic: Strengthens justice–relationship quality theory. Practical: Highlights fairness as foundation for loyalty.
El-Adly et al. (2024)	The impact of emotional perceived value on hotel guests' satisfaction,	<i>Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality</i>	To assess emotional value's role in driving	Value-based framework	Quantitative survey	Emotional value strongly predicts satisfaction,	Limited to one geographic context; calls for cross-cultural validation.	Academic: Elevates emotional value as central construct. Practical:

	<p>affective commitment and loyalty</p>		<p>satisfaction and loyalty.</p>				<p>commitment, and loyalty.</p>	<p>Suggests hotels design emotional guest experiences.</p>
El-Adly (2019)	<p>Modelling the relationship between hotel perceived value, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty</p>	<p><i>Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services</i></p>	<p>To test how perceived value influences satisfaction and loyalty.</p>	<p>Value-based perspective</p>	<p>Quantitative survey, SEM</p>	<p>Perceived value enhances satisfaction, which drives loyalty.</p>	<p>Cross-sectional; limited generalisability.</p>	<p>Academic: Confirms value-satisfaction-loyalty linkages. Practical: Encourages managers to enhance value perceptions.</p>
Hati et al. (2024)	<p>Has the pandemic altered luxury consumption and marketing? A sectoral and thematic analysis</p>	<p><i>International Journal of Consumer Studies</i></p>	<p>To examine how COVID-19 reshaped luxury consumption and marketing.</p>	<p>Thematic analysis (conceptual)</p>	<p>Conceptual review</p>	<p>Pandemic shifted consumer expectations, increasing focus on digital and ethical luxury.</p>	<p>Not empirical; future research should test shifts in luxury hospitality.</p>	<p>Academic: Provides post-pandemic conceptual insights. Practical: Guides hotels in aligning marketing to changed luxury expectations.</p>
Hong et al. (2023)	<p>Determinants of customer engagement behaviour in hospitality industry: Evidence from Vietnam</p>	<p><i>International Journal of Business Environment</i></p>	<p>To identify drivers of customer engagement in hospitality.</p>	<p>S-O-R</p>	<p>Survey of hotel guests, SEM</p>	<p>Service quality and experiential factors enhance engagement.</p>	<p>Focused on Vietnam; context-specific.</p>	<p>Academic: Extends engagement research in SE Asia. Practical: Encourages hotels to invest in quality to foster engagement.</p>

Hossain et al. (2019)	Value-based fairness in Malaysian five-star resorts: Measuring the roles of service-related attributes and guest behavioural loyalty	<i>Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism</i>	To analyse fairness perceptions in Malaysian resorts.	Justice theory / fairness perspective	Quantitative survey, SEM	Price and service fairness significantly predict loyalty.	Restricted to Malaysian resorts.	Academic: Adds fairness to value-loyalty research. Practical: Advises transparent and fair pricing strategies.
Ismail et al. (2022)	Customer brand personality, dining experience, and satisfaction at luxury hotel restaurants	<i>Journal of Tourism Services and</i>	To assess dining experiences and brand personality as satisfaction drivers.	Brand personality framework	Survey, quantitative	Dining and brand personality significantly shape satisfaction.	Limited to F&B; not full hotel experience.	Academic: Links brand personality to satisfaction. Practical: Recommends enhancing restaurant experiences in luxury hotels.
Itani et al. (2019)	Value get, value give: The relationships among perceived value, relationship quality, customer engagement, and value consciousness	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	To analyse how value perceptions shape relationship quality and engagement.	Value-based framework	Quantitative survey, SEM	Perceived value predicts engagement and relationship quality.	Focused on specific cultural sample.	Academic: Bridges perceived value to engagement. Practical: Suggests loyalty-building via value consciousness.
Khalifa et al. (2022)	Predicting customer engagement behaviour: The	<i>International Journal of Services and</i>	To test role of functional quality in shaping engagement.	S-O-R framework	Survey, SEM	Functional quality mediates between service and engagement.	Sample limited to Vietnam.	Academic: Confirms mediation role of functional quality.

	mediating role of hotel functional quality in the Vietnamese hotel industry	<i>Operations Management</i>						Practical: Recommends improving functional services for engagement.
Mohammed and Al-Swidi (2019)	The influence of CSR on perceived value, social media and loyalty in the hotel industry	<i>Spanish Journal of Marketing-ESIC</i>	To examine CSR's role in shaping perceived value and loyalty.	CSR and value theory	Survey, SEM	CSR enhances perceived value, driving loyalty through social media.	Narrow sample; cross-sectional.	Academic: Links CSR to value and loyalty. Practical: Encourages CSR for stronger guest relationships.
Paulose and Shakeel (2022)	Perceived experience, perceived value and customer satisfaction as antecedents to loyalty among hotel guests	<i>Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism</i>	To test experience, value, and satisfaction as loyalty drivers.	Expectation-confirmation theory	Quantitative survey, SEM	Experience → value → satisfaction → loyalty pathway confirmed.	Limited scope; recommends multi-country validation.	Academic: Confirms mediation of value and satisfaction. Practical: Recommends enhancing experiences to secure loyalty.
Saut and Bie (2024)	Impact of service expectation, experiential quality, and perceived value on hotel customer satisfaction	<i>Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism</i>	To analyse experiential quality and perceived value as predictors of satisfaction.	S-O-R	Survey, SEM	Experiential quality and perceived value significantly increase satisfaction.	Context-specific; limited to one dataset.	Academic: Reinforces experiential quality theory. Practical: Suggests designing services around customer expectations.

Serra-Cantalops et al. (2020)	Antecedents of positive eWOM in hotels: Exploring satisfaction, quality and emotional experiences	<i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	To explore factors driving positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).	S-O-R	Quantitative survey, SEM	Satisfaction and positive emotional experiences strongly drive eWOM.	Limited to online reviews; generalisability issue.	Academic: Expands eWOM antecedent research. Practical: Encourages hotels to design emotional guest experiences.
Shams et al. (2021)	Hospitality-based service recovery, outcome favourability, satisfaction with service recovery and consequent customer loyalty	<i>International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research</i>	To examine effects of service recovery on satisfaction and loyalty.	Service recovery & justice theory	Survey, SEM	Service recovery satisfaction leads to stronger loyalty.	Sample size constraints; single country.	Academic: Confirms recovery-loyalty links. Practical: Highlights importance of effective service recovery.
Spr et al. (2023)	Factors affecting domestic tourists' repeat purchase intention towards accommodation in Malaysia	<i>Frontiers in Psychology</i>	To identify drivers of repeat purchase among Malaysian domestic tourists.	Behavioural intention frameworks	Survey, SEM	Satisfaction and value perceptions influence repeat purchase.	Focused on domestic tourists; not exclusive to luxury.	Academic: Adds domestic tourism insights. Practical: Guides Malaysian hotels on repeat patronage factors.
Tiamiyu et al. (2020)	To switch or not to switch: The role of tourists' psychological engagement in Airbnb Malaysia	<i>International Journal of Tourism Cities</i>	To investigate switching behaviour and engagement in Airbnb.	Engagement theory	Survey, SEM	Engagement reduces switching intentions.	Focused on Airbnb hotels.	Academic: Contributes to engagement theory. Practical: Suggests strategies to reduce guest switching.

