An Investigation of How Hotel Image, Hotel Service Quality, Guest Loyalty, and Guest Experience Influence Luxury Hotel Guest Revisit intention in Thailand

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Abstract

This study examines the factors influencing the likelihood of luxury hotel guests returning for future visits. Drawing from existing literature, the author identified five underlying factors and 18 observable factors, leading to the formulation of nine conceptual hypotheses. The sample consisted of 317 guests from ten 5-star luxury hotels in Thailand. Utilizing structural equation modeling (SEM) with LISREL 9.10, it was determined that all variables in the model positively impacted the intention of luxury hotel guests to revisit, explaining 81% of the variance collectively (R2). Among these factors, hotel image emerged as the most significant predictor, followed by hotel service quality, guest loyalty, and guest experience. Notably, it was observed that there were strong connections between guest experience and service quality, as well as hotel image and service quality. Additionally, eight out of nine hypotheses received empirical support. This study underscores the importance of luxury hotels fostering a workforce aligned with the brand's values, as staff play a pivotal role in influencing guest revisit intentions. These findings hold particular relevance as the tourism and hospitality industry navigates the post-COVID-19 recovery phase.

Keywords: *5-star hotel; Guest experience; Hotel image; Memorable tourism experiences (MTEs); Revisit intention; Thailand.*

Introduction

The notion of a 'luxury' hotel resonates with travelers across the globe. However, what many may find surprising is the need for an internationally standardized rating system akin to the renowned Michelin guide for restaurants and culinary experiences (Bertan, 2020). This lack of uniformity becomes even more perplexing as the criteria used to bestow 'star' awards upon accommodations can exhibit substantial variations from one country to another (Narangajavana & Hu, 2008), leading to a confusing ratings landscape that can challenge even the most seasoned travelers (Bell, 2023).

However, a salient common thread emerges: Hotels and resorts that consistently deliver exceptional levels of service quality and prioritize guest satisfaction invariably find themselves ascending the ladder toward the coveted four- or five-star status (Kattiyapornpong et al., 2023; Wangchan & Worapishet, 2019). These establishments recognize that the pursuit of excellence requires attentive service, amenities, location, room dimensions, cleanliness, and pricing (Xiang & Krawczyk, 2016).

In today's evolving landscape, an additional dimension of significance is attributed to sustainable practices and responsible management. Factors such as food waste reduction (Kattiyapornpong et al., 2023), efficient water management, and implementing environmentally conscious initiatives and ISO 14001 certification carry increasing weight (Peiró-Signes et al., 2014). From jungle mountaintops to crystal clear seas, 'eco-friendly resorts' or 'green hotels' have become more than a buzzword (Hotelstars Union, 2023).

However, amid this intricate tapestry of expectations and criteria, the term 'luxury' remains inherently subjective, mirroring the nuanced interpretation of the 'five-star' rating (Chu et al., 2016; Wangchan & Worapishet, 2019).

A comprehensive analysis of two decades of research by Chu et al. (2016) on luxury hotels reveals a multifaceted landscape, with scholars primarily delving into hotel marketing paradigms, staff management strategies, and the transformative influence of technology. This diversity in scholarly focus mirrors the multifarious terminology used in the industry, with luxury hotels interchangeably labeled as upscale, deluxe, high-end, or ascribed four- or five-star distinctions.

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Moreover, the lexicon has evolved to accommodate novel concepts like 'Poshtel,' signifying a blend of luxury and hostel attributes. At the same time, even the term 'boutique hotel' can encompass the essence of luxury accommodations (Chernbumroong et al., 2021). However, the concept of a '5-star' hotel is universally recognized, yet the specific standards and expectations associated with this prestigious designation can vary significantly from one country to another. As such, each nation's hospitality industry crafts criteria to distinguish its elite accommodations, reflecting unique cultural sensibilities and traveler preferences.

In France, the 5-star rating hinges on meticulously evaluating various factors. Central to this assessment is the room's size, which must exceed 24 square meters (Fogarty, 2012). Additionally, every room must feature an en-suite bathroom and air-conditioning. For hotels boasting 30 rooms or more, a requirement is a 24-hour open reception desk staffed by bilingual personnel, with one language being English. Also, a 5-star French hotel's website must cater to an international audience with information in at least three languages.

Recent developments in the French classification system, introduced on April 1, 2022, have underscored the significance of service digitalization, societal considerations, and environmental responsibility ("The new hotel classification, 2022"). Notably, sustainable practices now undergo a more comprehensive evaluation, with 27 criteria, including 15 mandatory aspects. These include energy-saving management, staff training, water conservation measures, waste management protocols, guest waste sorting, and adopting environmentally friendly cleaning products. Guests are also informed about eco-friendly transportation options and encouraged to minimize laundry usage.

Across the English Channel in the United Kingdom (UK), 5-star hotels adhere to a distinct set of criteria. In addition to offering spacious and opulent accommodations, these establishments provide spa and fitness facilities, concierge services, 24/7 reception and room services, and valet and butler attendants. An iconic British tradition is preserved with the provision of full afternoon tea for hotel guests.

Unique to the UK, the rating process unfolds annually and typically involves an accreditor's clandestine overnight stay to assess the hotel's merits, conducted by the local tourism board (Bell, 2023). Since 2006, rating standardization efforts have been in place, requiring 5-star hotels to maintain specific benchmarks. These include spacious bedrooms, year-round operation, multilingual receptionists, open restaurants for all meals, bathrooms in at least 80% of the rooms, and impeccable presentation. Above all, staff are expected to embody professionalism, leaving each guest with a distinctive and indelible experience.

In the Netherlands, a consortium under the European Union umbrella, known as the Hotelstars Union, has established a comprehensive star ranking system. Building upon criteria set for stars 1-4, a 5-star Dutch hotel is distinguished by the presence of a staffed reception desk for 16 hours a day (with 24-hour digital accessibility), valet parking, concierge services, limousine or shuttle options, baggage services, room minibars, round-the-clock room, meal, and beverage service, ironing and shoe polishing amenities, reliable Internet connectivity, and room safes. These stringent benchmarks epitomize the embodiment of luxury and guest-centricity (Hotelstars Union, 2023).

Spanish hotels are ranked based on various factors such as reputation, social media usage, environmental certifications, and brand equity. Hotel rankings significantly influence tourists' choices (Ximénez de Sandoval et al., 2019), while reputation levels vary among hotels in different Spanish regions, influenced by factors like star ratings and hotel type (Rodríguez, 2005). Efficient social media use correlates with higher hotel scores, as observed through customer reviews on platforms like TripAdvisor and Booking (Mellinas et al., 2016). Additionally, the Spanish hospitality industry has excelled in environmental certifications, with many hotels certified under the EMAS standard (Bonilla Priego & Avilés Palacios, 2008). Moreover, a customer-based brand equity model using TripAdvisor data has been developed, indicating the control users have over aspects of brand equity in Spanish hotels (Soler & Gémar, 2017).

In Thailand's vibrant hospitality industry, the coveted star rankings for hotels and resorts are determined through an Executive Board of Directors of the Thai Hotels Association (THA) election process (THA, 2023). Founded in 1963, the THA continues to play a pivotal role in the country's tourism landscape, boasting a membership of 1,120 hotels categorized into 12 groups based on their region and room capacity. However, in the same report the THA director further voiced concerns about the looming

specters of a potential global recession, mounting inflation, increasing domestic debt in Thailand, and the erosion of personal purchasing power, all of which impede domestic and international tourism in Thailand's foreseeable future.

These apprehensions are rooted in the profound economic upheaval wrought by the pandemic since early 2020. Before this crisis, Thailand stood as an international beacon for travelers, with visitors consistently outspending their counterparts in other Asian destinations. Thailand was the fourth most profitable travel destination (Ekstein, 2018) and consistently featured on global travelers' lists of must-visit places. In 2019, the Kingdom welcomed 39 million international visitors who collectively injected $56 billion into the Thai economy (Setthachotsombut & Sua-iam, 2020). This vibrant sector represented a formidable 21.2% of Thailand's GDP and provided gainful employment to 15.5% of the nation's workforce, translating to 5.8 million jobs (Hutton, 2018).

Fortunately, in an amazing post pandemic turnaround, Thailand's tourism numbers are expected in 2024 to meet or exceed the 40 million a year prior to COVID-19 which is indicated by a 49% jump year of year reaching over 5 million overseas visitors in the first seven weeks of 2024 ("More than 5 million visitors," 2024; Tourist arrivals hit 15m, 2023"). This influx of international travelers is contributing significantly to the economy, projected to infuse $95.45 billion during their 2024 stay in the Kingdom. Consequently, an imperative need arises for a deeper understanding of the dynamics in the luxury hotel sector, as all stakeholders strive to make informed decisions regarding guest revisit intentions in a rapidly evolving tourism landscape.

Literature Review

Hotel Service Quality (HSQ)

In the realm of HSQ, studies have delved into its far-reaching influence on guest satisfaction (GS) and guest revisit intentions (GRI). In China, Wang and Kim (2019) used the SERVPERF Model to show how HSQ within the economy accommodations sector yielded a profoundly positive effect on GS and, subsequently, on GRI.

In another study on HSQ in Thailand's picturesque eastern seaboard resort city of Pattaya, 400 foreign visitors were surveyed. OF these, 77% expressed satisfaction with their hotel experiences. However, the remaining 23% who did not find contentment comprised a notable majority of Europeans (91.4%). It was postulated that disparities in perceptions regarding HSQ between Europeans and others underpinned this divergence in satisfaction levels (Supitchayangkool, 2012).

In rural Thailand, Kanyama et al. (2022) investigated HSQ's dynamics amidst the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on its profound impact on guest loyalty. The study uncovered the importance of staff interactions, with staff initiative emerging as a pivotal determinant of hotel guest loyalty.

From the theory and literature about HSQ, the study's author formulated these three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *Hotel service quality (HSQ) influences hotel guest experience (HGX) directly and positively.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *Hotel service quality (HSQ) influences luxury hotel guest loyalty (LHGL) directly and positively.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *Hotel service quality (HSQ) influences hotel image (HI) directly and positively.*

Hotel Guest Experience (HGX)

The tourism sector is a bastion of experiences, with travellers actively seeking and investing in enriching encounters that transcend mere accommodation (Barnes et al., 2016). Notably, the impact of memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) on various facets of guest behavior, loyalty, and revisit intention has been a subject of thorough investigation in diverse contexts (Kim, 2018). For instance, research by Tsai (2016) conducted in Taiwan illuminated that MTEs encompassed experiences like savoring local cuisines, culminating in creating cherished and indelible memories. These memories, in turn, fostered a profound attachment to local attractions and instilled a strong behavioral intention to return.

This perspective aligns seamlessly with the evaluation criteria set forth by the EU-based Hotelstars Union (2023) for 5-star hotels, which prescribe personalized guest greetings, often involving flowers or small

tokens, in every room. Similarly, the UK's 5-star excellence standards mandate impeccable and pristine presentations that leave guests with a unique and unforgettable impression (Bell, 2023).

Further underscoring the impact of MTEs, Semrad, and Rivera (2018) discerned a significant and positive correlation between festival-based MTEs and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Likewise, Manthiou et al. (2016) explored the influence of MTEs on theme park visitors' loyalty in Santiago, Chile, with results indicating that experiences indirectly shaped loyalty through the conduit of satisfaction and recollection. Luturlean et al. (2018) postulated that guest experience management wielded substantial influence over RI through customer value.

From the theory and literature about HGX, the study's author formulated these three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): *Hotel guest experience (HGX) influences hotel image (HI) directly and positively.*

Hypothesis 5 (H5): *Hotel guest experience (HGX) influences luxury hotel guest loyalty (LHGL) directly and positively.*

Hypothesis 6 (H6): *Hotel guest experience (HGX) influences luxury hotel guest revisit intention (LHGRI) directly and positively.*

Hotel Image (HI)

The concept of hotel image (HI) holds a pivotal role in shaping guest perceptions and has been subject to comprehensive exploration in diverse settings. In Macau, Lai (2018) investigated factors influencing HI using a survey of 442 guests. The study revealed that HI was a precursor to a hotel's reputation, emphasizing its influence in shaping the overall narrative.

This aligns with prior research findings demonstrating that an organization's image can significantly influence customer satisfaction and perceived value (Ryu et al., 2008). Moreover, the notion of destination image, widely employed in marketing and behavioral sciences research, underscores its relevance in elucidating individuals' perceived beliefs, feelings, and impressions regarding a product, object, behavior, or event (Stylos et al., 2016).

In Vietnam, Nguyen Viet et al. (2020) comprehensively analyzed the factors influencing the RI of 405 travelers to Binh Thuan Province. Their findings showed a direct influence of RI on guest satisfaction, the hotel's attractiveness, service level, cultural interactions, and perceived risks. Another study conducted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, by Li (2020), echoed the significance of guest satisfaction, underlining its strong impact on guest RI. From the theory and literature about H1, the study's author formulated these two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 7 (H7): *Hotel image (HI) influences luxury hotel guest loyalty (LHGL) directly and positively.*

Hypothesis 8 (H8): *Hotel image (HI) influences luxury hotel guest revisit intention (LHGRI) directly and positively.*

Luxury Hotel Guest Loyalty (LHGL)

In an increasingly competitive tourism landscape, the significance of LHGL and retention cannot be overstated (Toyama & Yamada, 2012). They emphasize that retaining loyal guests is paramount as a tourism market intensifies in its competitiveness. The authors state that the marketing costs of retaining existing guests are substantially lower than the expenses incurred in acquiring new ones. Moreover, guest loyalty (GL) has evolved into a pivotal metric, influencing how RI and guest retention are gauged and the likelihood of guests recommending a hotel destination to others. Koo et al. (2020) also posited that the perceived value of loyalty programs plays an essential role in fostering consumer brand loyalty.

In Bangkok, Wangchan and Worapishet (2019) delved into the multifaceted factors influencing loyalty among 5-star hotel guests. Their investigation illuminated location, service quality, guest satisfaction, and perceived consumption value (desires and needs) in shaping guest loyalty.

Turning to Konya, Turkey, Garda (2022) ventured into luxury hotel emoji use and its impact on customer satisfaction, and reported that the strategic incorporation of emojis as a marketing tool enhanced guest satisfaction and strengthened brand image.

Embracing technology to fortify GL, Otieno (2019) Kenya's study evaluated the utilization of social media by 362 guests and management in the post-purchase evaluation and loyalty-building process. The results underscored the significance of management's proactive engagement with guest social media comments across various platforms.

From the theory and literature about LHGL, the study's author formulated an additional hypothesis, with the corresponding observed variables detailed in Table 1:

Hypothesis 9 (H9): Luxury hotel guest loyalty (LHGL) influences luxury hotel guest revisit intention (LHGRI) directly and positively.

Luxury Hotel Guest Revisit Intention (LHGRI)

Revisit intention (RI) in the context of luxury hotel guests is influenced by a constellation of factors, as evident in various studies across different locales. In Finland, Sthapit and Björk (2019) reported that destinations needed to be unique and authentic if they expected guest RI. Similarly, Sudarmiatin (2019) identified the essential role of a destination's image in shaping RI among tourists visiting East Java, Indonesia villages. In Malaysia, Goh (2015) explored the determinants of RI in boutique hotels located in UNESCO World Heritage sites, highlighting the pivotal influence of guest attitudes, the subjective norm, and guest satisfaction.

Echoing these findings, Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016) investigated the RI of international tourists to Bangkok. They uncovered that perceived satisfaction emanated from the guest's accommodations, shopping experiences, and the attitudes of the Thai people. These findings are consistent with Peng et al. (2023), who postulate that RI hinges on guest happiness, encompassing positive emotions, engagement, and meaning.

Research Methodology

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this research was to investigate the key determinants and interrelationships that influence a Thai luxury hotel's guest revisit intention (LHGRI). To accomplish this goal, a questionnaire was employed, encompassing five latent variables and 18 observed variables, and serves as the basis for developing and empirically testing the nine hypotheses SEM (Figure 1). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was also used to assess the model's goodness-of-fit (GoF).

Table 1. The study's questionnaire items.

Latent Variables	Observed Variables (18 items)
Hotel Service Quality (HSQ)	This hotel has an excellent overall atmosphere. Examples include the physical and environmental decorations, hotel grounds, and facilities (HSQ1). My hotel's staff is highly professional, caring, and attentive, providing a safe and comfortable guest environment (HSQ2). My hotel has exceptional service quality, using digital technologies to enhance and facilitate each guest's experience (HSQ3). My hotel has impeccable services (HSQ4).
Hotel Guest Experience (HGX)	I enjoy my visit each time I stay at this hotel (HGX1). My hotel delivers consistent and excellent service every time I stay (HGX2). My hotel always creates an enjoyable and memorable experience (HGX3). My hotel staff provided individualized activities that made me feel special (HGX4).
Hotel Image (HI)	My hotel has an excellent reputation for service quality (HI1). My hotel provided me with exceptional, up-to-date facilities that performed excellently (HI2). My hotel's commitment to service is exceptional (HI3).
Luxury Hotel Guest Loyalty (LHGL)	No other hotel offers better services (HGL1). When given the opportunity, I tell others about this hotel's excellent quality (HGL2). I will stay longer in this hotel if given the opportunity to stay (HGL3).
Luxury Hotel Guest Revisit	I intend to revisit this hotel again soon (HRI1). I intend to revisit this hotel within the next five years (HRI2). I intend to revisit because of exceptional staff and services (HRI3).

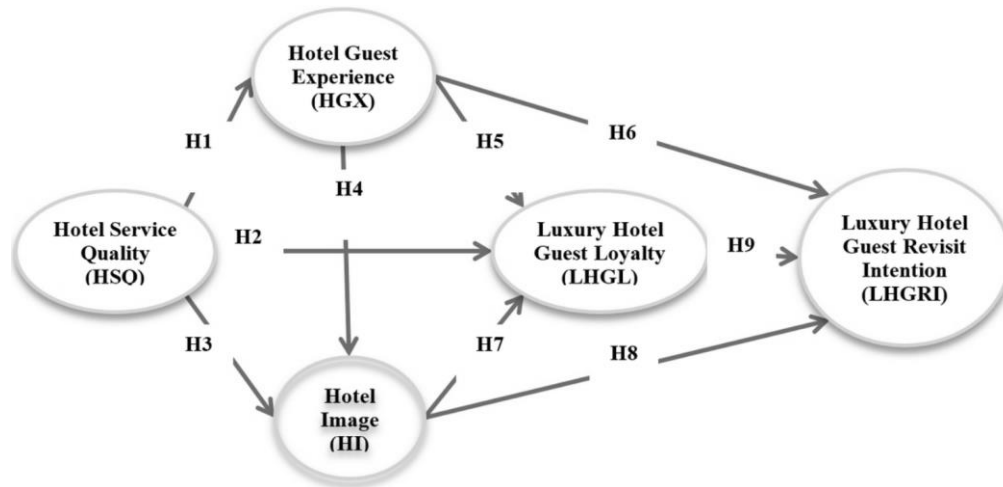| Intention (LHGRI)	My hotel provided me with special offers and discount coupons for my next visit (e.g., festivals, concerts, tour activities, etc.) (HRI4).

Figure 1. Nine hypotheses conceptual model for LHGRI

Research Instrument

The questionnaire comprised two sections to capture the essential data required for the study's objectives.

Part 1: Hotel guest information section

This initial section of the questionnaire was designed to gather pertinent demographic and background information about the hotel guests participating in the study.

Part 2 to Part 6: Assessment of opinions on guest revisit intention

These five sections constituted the core of the questionnaire and employed a seven-level scale to gauge participants' opinions (Table 2). The scale was anchored with '1' representing 'strongly disagree' (1.00 to 1.49) and '7' signifying 'strongly agree' (6.50 to 7.00).

Questionnaire Quality Assessment

After designing the questionnaire, its content validity (CV) was evaluated, as construct validity and measurement significantly influence a study's design strength. To ensure the questionnaire's robustness, a panel of five tourism, hospitality experts, and statistics experts provided valuable input. The draft questionnaire underwent scrutiny during an initial focus group session on Friday afternoon.

Following this session, experts were tasked with individually assessing each questionnaire item, which used the index of item-objective congruence (IOC) rating scale, with IOC values below 0.67 subjected to revision or removal based on the experts' feedback (Pimdee, 2020). Initially drafted in Thai, the questionnaire was translated into English to cater to foreign hotel guests.

Subsequently, a reliability assessment of the questionnaire was conducted through a pilot test involving 35 luxury hotel guests in downtown Bangkok, Thailand. The reliability assessment employed Cronbach's alpha (α) values, with a threshold of $\geq$ .80 considered acceptable for the guest RI survey items. As shown in Table 2, all questionnaire sections exhibited high reliability, with α values for the latent variables ranging from 0.89 to 0.95. These values underscore the questionnaire's excellent reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). None of the 35 pilot-test questionnaires were incorporated into the final survey.

Table 2. Questionnaire quality assessment.

Variables	Items	Tool quality	
		Discrimination	Reliability (α)
Part 2: Hotel service quality (HSQ)	4	0.81-0.94	0.95
Part 3: Hotel guest experience (HGX)	4	0.75-0.87	0.93
Part 4: Hotel image (HI)	3	0.71-0.86	0.89
Part 5: Luxury hotel guest loyalty (LHGL)	3	0.81-0.87	0.93

| Part 6: Luxury hotel guest revisit intention (LHGRI) | 4 | 0.64-0.82 | 0.89 |

Population and Sample

The study encompassed Thai and foreign guests from ten 5-star luxury hotels in various regions and urban centers across Thailand in 2023. During the initial seven months of the same year, Thailand recorded 15.32 million international visitors ("Tourist arrivals hit 15m, 2023").

Sample size determination in SEM studies varies based on factors like the number of variables and study complexity. Kline (2006) has often cited standard sample sizes for SEM studies as around 200 individuals, while Schumacker and Lomax (2016) have proposed a range of 10-20 questionnaires per observed variable as well. Therefore, the 417 questionnaires collected ensured the study's statistical power and precision in exploring the research objectives (Table 3).

Table 3. Sample collection process (*n*=317).

Luxury Hotel (Five-Star Rating)	Location	Sample Groups		
		Thai Guest	Foreign Guest	Total
1. Luxury Hotel 1	Bangkok	9	22	31
2. Luxury Hotel 2	Bangkok	9	21	30
3. Luxury Hotel 3	Bangkok	10	23	33
4. Luxury Hotel 4	Rayong	9	21	30
5. Luxury Hotel 5	Surat Thani	9	22	31
6. Luxury Hotel 6	Phetchaburi	10	22	32
7. Luxury Hotel 7	Phetchaburi	10	24	34
8. Luxury Hotel 8	Chiang Mai	10	23	33
9. Luxury Hotel 9	***Khon Kaen***	9	22	31
10. Luxury Hotel 10	Phuket	10	22	32
Total		95	222	317

Source: Thai Hotel Association (2023)

Data Collection

Both Thai and English language questionnaires were prepared for the survey. These were then used in a systematic sampling process which identified every 10th guest registered for survey selection in one of ten 5-star hotels in Thailand from November 2022 to February 2023. Each research team was assigned a daily collection quota and given free beverage coupons to give to each guest after the questionnaire's completion. The teams eventually acquired 317 complete questionnaires (Narangajavana & Hu, 2008).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was undertaken using LISREL 9.1 for the CFA and SEM **and SPSS**® for Windows Version 21 for the descriptive statistics analysis. A seven-level opinion scale was also in which 7 was 'strongly agree' (6.50-7.00), 6 was 'mostly agree' (5.50-6.49), 5 was 'moderate agreement' (4.50-5.49), 4 was 'some agreement' (3.50-4.49), 3 was 'small amount of agreement' (2.50-3.49), 2 was 'minimal agreement' (1.50-2.49), and 1 was 'strongly disagree' (1.00 – 1.49). A CFA and GoF index criteria were then used to judge model fit and value validity of guests' opinions on RI.

Results

Thai Luxury Hotel Guest Characteristics

Table 4 details the responses from each guest concerning their personal, travel, and accommodation characteristics. Concerning guest gender, 61.83% were men, with age not concentrated in any particular group. However, 34.7% indicated they were 51 or older, followed by 29.02% who were 41 or older. Also, the guests were well educated, with 63.72% achieving an undergraduate degree or higher. Interestingly, 58.99% of these mostly older men indicated they were single and were employed by their businesses (33.75%). Also, 61.51% indicated staying in Thailand for two or more nights, with 35.33% indicating their

daily hotel expenses were between \$140 - \$194. Finally, 47.63% had travelled to Thailand 2-4 times, while 46.69% indicated they had been to Thailand 5-7 times.

Table 4. Thai luxury hotel guest general information (*n*=317).

	Guests	%
Gender		
Men	196	61.83
Women	121	38.17
Age		
30 years old or less.	70	22.08
31-40	45	14.20
41-50	92	29.02
51 years old or more.	110	34.70
Educational Level		
Less than Undergraduate degree	71	22.40
Undergraduate degree	136	42.90
Graduate degree	110	34.70
Relationship Status		
Single	187	58.99
Married	92	29.02
Divorced / Widowed	7	2.21
Other	31	9.78
Occupation / Profession		
Government agency	7	2.21
Service sector	59	18.61
Entrepreneur	107	33.75
Professional	60	18.93
Dependent	84	26.50
Length of stay		
1 night	37	11.67
2 nights	85	26.81
More than 2 nights	195	61.51
Expenses per trip		
Not more than \$140	52	16.40
\$140 - \$194	112	35.33
\$140 - \$250	92	29.02
\$250 and up	61	19.24
I have traveled to Thailand…		
2-4 times	151	47.63
5-7 times	148	46.69
More than eight times	18	5.68

CFA Analysis

Before conducting SEM testing, Jöreskog et al. (2016) recommend using a CFA to assess construct reliability (CR). Composite/construct reliability (CR) relies on discriminant validity (DV) and convergent validity (CV) as measurement tools. CR relies on the average variance extracted (AVE), main loadings (correlations), and CR (Table 5).

CR reflects guest responses, while CV measures the means. AVE values should be ≥ 0.5, and CR should be ≥ 0.6. Results indicate AVEs ranging from 0.65 to 0.80 and CR values from 0.85 to 0.94, signifying robust CV (Table 5). Additionally, studies suggest standardized factor loadings (λ), should be statistically significant and appropriately high (acceptable ≥ .50 and good ≥ .707), with each latent variable having at least three indicators. These findings affirm strong CV and construct reliability, validating the model's suitability for SEM analysis.

Table 5. Component weights and reliability of observed variables for each latent variable.

Latent variables	Observed Variables	λ	R²	AVE	CR
Hotel service quality (HSQ)	HSQ1	0.85	.72	0.73	0.91
	HSQ2	0.85	.73		
	HSQ3	0.87	.75		
	HSQ4	0.84	.70		
Hotel Guest Experience (HGX)	HGX1	0.91	.83	0.80	0.94
	HGX2	0.89	.78		
	HGX3	0.87	.76		
	HGX4	0.90	.81		
Hotel Image (HI)	HI1	0.80	.64	0.65	0.85
	HI2	0.79	.62		
	HI3	0.83	.69		
Luxury Hotel Guest Loyalty (LHGL)	HGL1	0.84	.71	0.78	0.91
	HGL2	0.90	.81		
	HGL3	0.91	.83		
Luxury Hotel Guest Revisit Intention (LHGRI)	HRI1	0.88	.78	0.65	0.88
	HRI2	0.77	.59		
	HRI3	0.77	.60		
	HRI4	0.80	.64		

Data Analysis Results

Table 6 shows the results of the correlation coefficients between latent variables (Tang et al., 2020), with the strongest interrelationship pair being HSQ to HGX (0.89, $p \leq .01$). An interpretation of this data suggests that hotel service quality (HSQ) plays a very significant role in a luxury hotel's guest experience (HGX).

Further examination of the skewness (-0.81 to -1.05) and kurtosis (0.03 to 1.29) values shows that all values are within acceptable parameters. Bam and Kunwar (2020) are one study of many that state skewness should be $\leq$ **|2| and kurtosis** $\leq$ **|7|. Finally,** all relationships were determined to be significant ($p \leq .01$).

Table 6. Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients between latent variables.

Latent Variables	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	HSQ	HGX	HI	LHGL	LHGRI
HSQ	5.72	1.01	-.81	.03	1	.89**	.82**	.79**	.78**
HGX	5.75	1.00	-1.05	.90		1	.86**	.82**	.81**
HI	5.68	.97	-.82	.39			1	.85**	.82**
LHGL	5.69	.96	-.94	1.03				1	.86**
LHGRI	5.68	.93	-1.00	1.29					1

Note: **Sig. < .01

Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) Investigation

From the investigation of the model's GoF, it was determined that all the criteria were met or exceeded (Figure 2).
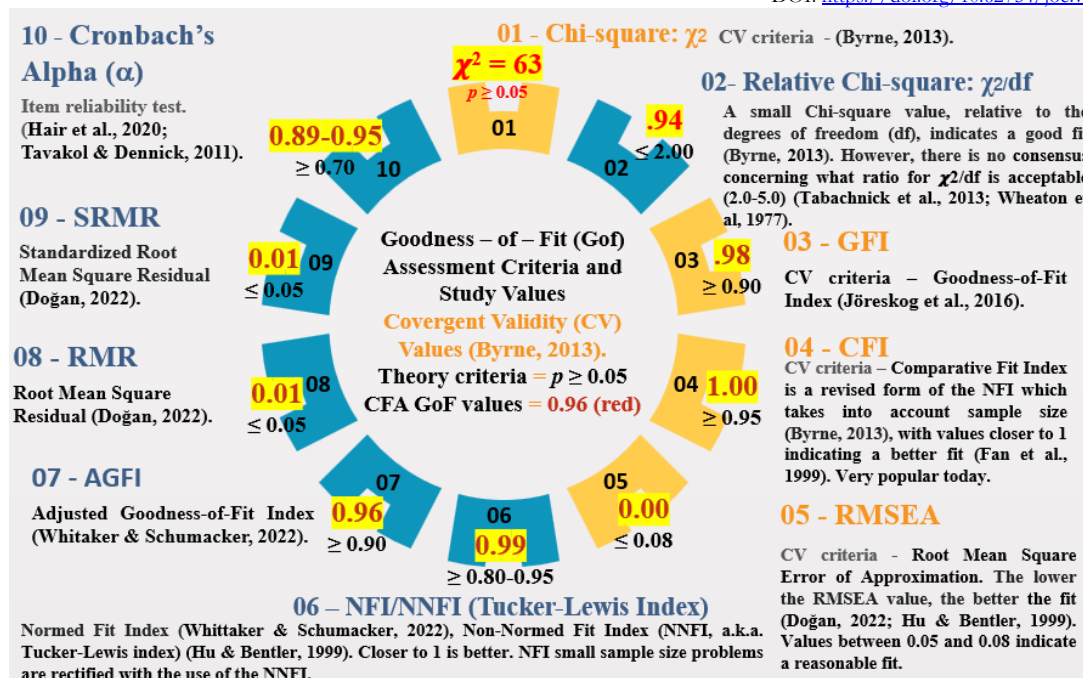
Figure 2. GoF assessment wheel.

(Byrne, 2013; Doğan, 2022; Fan et al., 1999; Hair et al., 2020; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Jöreskog et al., 2016; Tabachnick et al., 2013; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011; Wheaton et al, 1977; Whittaker & Schumacker, 2022).

Wheel Assessment Source: The author.

SEM Analysis

From the LISREL 91. SEM analysis (Table 7), a determination was made that all the causal factors affected LHGRI positively. When combined, they explained the shared variance of the factors affecting RI (R^2) by 81%. Additionally, the total effect (TE), values from the R^2 testing found that the TE values when ranked in significance were HI, HSQ, LHGL, and HGX, with TE values of 0.96, 0.90, 0.60, and 0.46, respectively. It was also observed there was significant strength between guest experience and service quality (TE=0.95) and hotel image and service quality (TE=0.94).

Table 7. Standardized coefficients of effect in the LHGRI SEM.

Dependent variables	R^2	Effects	Independent variables			
			HSQ	HGX	HI	LHGL
Hotel Guest Experience (HGX)	.90	DE	0.95**			
		IE	-			
		TE	0.95**			
Hotel Image (HI)	.89	DE	0.51**	0.45**		
		IE	0.43**	-		
		TE	0.94**	0.45**		
Luxury Hotel Guest Loyalty (LHGL)	.78	DE	0.14*	0.13*	0.98**	
		IE	0.74**	0.31**	-	
		TE	0.88**	0.44**	0.98**	
Luxury Hotel Guest Revisit Intention (LHGRI)	.81	DE	-	0.10	0.37**	0.60**
		IE	0.90**	0.35**	0.59**	-
		TE	0.90**	0.45**	0.96**	0.60**

Note: *Sig. ≤ .05, **Sig. ≤.01, DE=direct effect, IE=indirect effect

Results for the SEM's nine hypotheses testing indicated that eight were consistent with the data and supported (Table 8 & Figure 3). However, H6 was unsupported.

Table 8. Results of research hypothesis testing.

Hypotheses Statements	Coef.	t-test	Summary
H1: Hotel service quality (HSQ) influences hotel guest experience (HGX) directly and positively.	0.95	19.24**	Consistent
H2: Hotel service quality (HSQ) influences luxury hotel guest loyalty (LHGL) directly and positively.	0.14	2.08*	Consistent
H3: Hotel service quality (HSQ) influences hotel image (HI) directly and positively.	0.51	3.08**	Consistent
H4: Hotel guest experience (HGX) influences hotel image (HI) directly and positively.	0.45	2.78**	Consistent
H5: Hotel guest experience (HGX) influences luxury hotel guest loyalty (LHGL) directly and positively.	0.13	2.02*	Consistent
H6: Hotel guest experience (HGX) influences luxury hotel guest revisit intention (LHGRI) directly and positively.	0.10	1.14	Inconsistent
H7: Hotel image (HI) influences luxury hotel guest loyalty (LHGL) directly and positively.	0.98	20.28**	Consistent
H8: Hotel image (HI) influences luxury hotel guest revisit intention (LHGRI) directly and positively.	0.37	2.47*	Consistent
H9: Luxury hotel guest loyalty (LHGL) influences luxury hotel guest revisit intention (LHGRI) directly and positively.	0.60	2.69**	Consistent

Note: *Sig. ≤ .05, **Sig. ≤ .01, coef = coefficient of determination
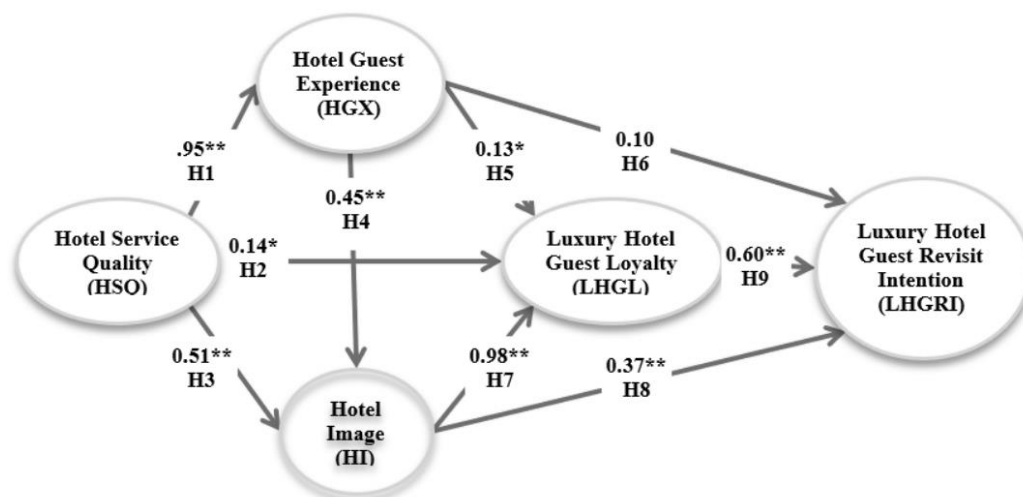

Figure 3. Nine hypotheses final model for luxury hotel guest revisit intention.

Note: H1 – H9 are detailed in Table 8, *Sig. ≤ .05, **Sig. ≤ .01.

Discussion

From the research to develop a structural equation model of variables that influence the revisit intention (RI) of five-star LHGRI in Thailand, it was determined that all the causal variables in the model positively affected guest RI. These variables can explain 81% of the variance in factors influencing LHGRI (R^2). When the order of latent variable importance was reviewed, *hotel image* (HI) (TE=0.96) was judged most important. This was followed by *hotel service quality* (HSQ), *luxury hotel guest loyalty (LHGL),* and *hotel guest experience* (HGX), with TE values of 0.90, 0.60, and 0.45, respectively.

Furthermore, the results from the five latent variables descriptive statistics testing showed that the questionnaire items for HGX (mean = 5.75, SD = 1.01) and HSQ (mean = 5.72, SD = 1.00) found significant support from the hotel guest respondents. This is supported by Zhang et al., who reported that RI depends on country and destination memorable tourism experiences (MTEs). With increasing visitor

competition, Thailand's luxury hotels must create and deliver MTEs to their guests to sustain their growth and competitiveness (Barnes et al., 2016).

HSQ Testing Results

HSQ hypotheses testing found that all three hypotheses were supported, with H1's relationship between HSQ and HGX being the second strongest of the nine conceptualized relationships ($r = 0.95$, t-test = 19.24, $p \leq 0.01$). Following in strength was H3's moderate relationship between HSQ and HI ($r = 0.51$, t-test = 3.08, $p \leq 0.01$). Somewhat weaker was H2's relationship between HSQ and LHGL ($r = 0.14$, t-test = 2.08, $p \leq 0.05$).

Furthermore, from the analysis of HSQ's four factors (Table 10), it was shown that the questionnaire items for HSQ4 were judged the strongest (*the hotel has impeccable services*) (mean = 5.80, SD = 1.15). This was followed by HSQ1's *excellent overall atmosphere* (mean = 5.74, SD = 1.02) and HSQ3's *exceptional service quality using digital technologies* (mean = 5.73, SD = 1.07).

Table 10. Observed variables descriptive statistics.

Observed Variables	Mean	SD	Level	Skewness	Kurtosis
HSQ1	5.74	1.12	6	-.75	.10
HSQ2	5.61	1.15	6	-.60	-.34
HSQ3	5.73	1.07	6	-.71	-.06
HSQ4	5.80	1.15	6	-.71	-.28
Average	5.72	1.01	6	-.81	.03
HGX1	5.76	1.11	6	-.88	.41
HGX2	5.73	1.12	6	-.72	-.07
HGX3	5.77	1.10	6	-.92	.64
HGX4	5.75	1.08	6	-.86	.41
Average	5.75	1.00	6	-1.05	.90
HI1	5.64	1.07	6	-.69	-.07
HI2	5.65	1.09	6	-.82	.48
HI3	5.74	1.11	6	-.77	.25
Average	5.68	.97	6	-.82	.39
HGL1	5.66	1.03	6	-.70	.34
HGL2	5.71	1.06	6	-.77	.64
HGL3	5.70	1.04	6	-.87	.77
Average	5.69	.96	6	-.94	1.03
HRI1	5.66	1.07	6	-.80	.58
HRI2	5.63	1.04	6	-.82	.86
HRI3	5.71	1.08	6	-.76	.37
HRI4	5.73	1.05	6	-.88	1.01
Average	5.68	.93	6	-1.00	1.29

Note: 6 = 'mostly agree' (5.50-6.49)

HGX Testing Results

HGX hypotheses testing found that all two of the three hypotheses were supported, with H4's relationship between HGX and HI being moderately strong ($r = 0.45$, t-test = 2.78, $p \leq 0.01$). However, weak in strength was H5's relationship between HGX and LHGL, having an $r = 0.13$, t-test = 2.02, $p \leq 0.05$. The H6 relationship between HGX and LHGRI was unsupported.

Furthermore, from the analysis of HGX's four factors (Table 10), it was shown that the questionnaire items for HGX3 were judged the strongest (*creation of an enjoyable and memorable experience*) (mean = 5.77, SD = 1.10). This was followed by HGX1's *enjoyment during each visit* (mean = 5.76, SD = 1.11) and HGX4's (*staff provided individualized activities that made the guest feel special*) (mean = 5.75, SD = 1.08).

HI Testing Results

HI hypotheses testing found that both hypotheses were supported, with H7's relationship between HI and LHGL being the strongest of the nine hypotheses conceptualized ($r = 0.98$, t-test = 20.28, $p \leq 0.01$). However weak in strength but positive was H8's relationship between HI and LHGRI, having an $r = 0.37$, t-test = 2.47, and $p \leq 0.05$.

Furthermore, the analysis of HI's three factors showed that the questionnaire items for HI3 were judged the strongest (*exceptional commitment to service*) (mean = 5.74, SD = 1.11). This was followed by HI2's *exceptional, up-to-date facilities that performed excellently* (mean = 5.65, SD = 1.09) and HI1's *exceptional service commitment* (mean = 5.64, SD = 1.07).

LHGL Testing Results

LHGL hypothesis testing found that H9's relationship between LHGL and LHGRI was moderately strong ($r = 0.60$, t-test = 2.69, $p \leq 0.01$). Furthermore, the analysis of LHGL's three factors showed that the questionnaire items for HGL2 were judged the strongest (*no other hotel that offers better services*) (mean = 5.71, SD = 1.06). This was followed by HGL3's *willingness to stay longer if given the opportunity to stay* (mean = 5.70, SD = 1.04) and HGL1's *no other hotel that offers better services* (mean = 5.66, SD = 1.03).

LHGRI Testing Results

From the analysis of LHGRI's four factors (Table 10), it was shown that the questionnaire items for HRI4 were judged the strongest (*provisioning with special offers and discount coupons for my next visit (e.g., festivals, concerts, tour activities, etc.*) (mean = 5.73, SD = 1.05). This was followed by HRI3's intent to *revisit due to exceptional staff and services* (mean = 5.71, SD = 1.09) and HRI1's intention to *revisit again soon* (mean = 5.66, SD = 1.07).

Conclusion

In summary, our research has provided valuable insights into what drives luxury 5-star guests to revisit Thailand. Over the past decade, Thailand has seen a remarkable rise in its international reputation, thanks to various contributing factors. Notably, the influence of blockbuster films such as *The Hangover Part II, The Beach*, scenes from *Good Morning, Vietnam,* and the 1974 James Bond classic *The Man with the Golden Gun* has been pivotal in shaping perceptions of Thailand as a desirable destination. Even in recent times, the sight of affluent Chinese tourists capturing moments at iconic movie locations along Beach Road in Pattaya in 2024 reaffirms Thailand's enduring charm.

Moreover, the evolution of backpacker tourists into discerning patrons of Poshtel Boutique Hotels across Thai tourist hotspots, from Chiang Mai to Phuket, highlights the significant role of Free Independent Travelers (FIT) in driving Thailand's economy. But what exactly draws these luxury travelers to Thailand's serene mountain retreats and pristine sandy shores? While some may attribute it to the allure of a rooftop pool and a well-crafted mojito, our findings confirm that a hotel or resort's image holds considerable sway. Following closely behind is the quality of service provided by the establishment's staff, which emerges as a crucial factor. An exceptional image and impeccable service lay the foundation for guest loyalty, a factor of paramount importance.

Lastly, but certainly not least, is the overarching factor of 'experience.' This encompasses the essence of *'selfie tourism,*' where cherished memories and immersive experiences are shared with the world. Our research underscores the profound interconnections between a hotel guest's experiential journey and the quality of service provided, as well as between the hotel's image and service quality. In conclusion, this study unravels the intricate tapestry of factors shaping luxury travelers' intent to revisit Thailand, highlighting the nation's rise as a premier global destination and emphasizing the pivotal role of image, service quality, and the transformative power of exceptional experiences in fostering guest loyalty.

Limitations

This study acknowledges several limitations that warrant consideration. Firstly, while our sampling strategy encompassed a large geographical expanse within Thailand, it is conceivable that the survey responses may exhibit a degree of influence from a specific demographic—namely, mature, solo male business travelers without familial commitments. Existing research has highlighted that in urban hotels, guest satisfaction may not directly correlate with revisit intent, given the reputation of business travelers for their relatively lower loyalty. It has been posited in various studies that loyalty in this segment is intricately tied to facets such as

hotel design, location, staff quality, and available amenities. Therefore, it becomes imperative for luxury brand hotels to cultivate a workforce that embodies the brand's essence and breathes life into it, effectively embodying the brand's ethos. Staff members are pivotal in corporate reputation management.

Acknowledgments

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