



Research Article

Service Quality and Customer Responses in Hotels: A Stimulus–Organism–Response Perspective

Kiranraj Pande^{1,*} , Kripal Raj Subedi¹, Md Jamirul Haque²

¹School of Business Administration, Dongbei University of Finance and Economics, Dalian, China

²Num International College, National University of Management, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Abstract

This study aims to explore hotel service quality and its emotional and behavioral impacts within the context of the hotel industry in Nepal. Specifically, it examines the relationships between service quality, perceived value, positive emotions, memorable experiences, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty by employing the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) framework. A quantitative approach was utilized for the study. Data were collected from hotel customers in Nepal. The hypothesized relationships were tested with structural equation modeling using SPSS and AMOS. The study found that service quality significantly influences the internal psychological and emotional states of customers. Specifically, service quality positively affects perceived value, positive emotions, and memorable experiences, suggesting that high-quality hotel services enhance customer's cognitive evaluation and emotional reactions during their stay. Consistent with the organism component of the SOR theory, perceived value and positive emotions play important mediating roles in translating service quality into memorable experiences. Similarly, memorable experiences serve as a key organism state that links internal reactions to behavioral outcomes. Memorable experiences mediate the relationships between service quality and both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, which represent response stage in the SOR framework. Overall, the findings strongly support the applicability of the SOR theory in explaining customer behavior in the hotel industry. Service quality acts as environmental stimulus that shapes customer's cognitive and emotional states, which in turn drive favorable behavioral responses such as satisfaction and loyalty. By highlighting the sequential process through which service quality influences internal psychological mechanisms and subsequent behavioral outcomes, this study provides a deeper theoretical understanding of customer experience formation in hospitality settings. Moreover, findings of this study offer valuable insights for enhancing service strategies and improving customer experiences.

Keywords

Service Quality, Perceived Value, Positive Emotion, Memorable Experience, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty

1. Introduction

The hotel industry has experienced steady growth in both establishments and bed capacity over the past decade [16]. As a service-driven sector, its success hinges on delivering exceptional

service that meet rising customer expectations [20]. Service quality is vital to customer satisfaction and loyalty [1, 59, 62]. Maintaining high standards of services not only fosters repeat business

*Correspondence: Kiranraj Pande (pandekiranraj@gmail.com)

Received: 8 March 2026; Accepted: 18 March 2026; Published: 7 April 2026



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but also ensures a competitive edge [43].

Memorable experience reflects a customer's perception of a product's excellence, closely tied to their expectations and satisfaction [28]. When such experiences align with customer needs, they enhance satisfaction and support long-term profitability. Industries that understand and anticipate customer expectations are better positioned to deliver these impacts, fostering loyalty and positive word-of-mouth [27]. In hotels, memorable experiences such as unique amenities and tailored services significantly shape guest perceptions and loyalty [29]. Moreover, perceived value, or the balance between service quality and cost, further enhances these experiences [74].

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model is crucial for understanding how hotel service quality impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty by mediating the effects of positive emotions and perceived value through memorable experiences [41]. In the context of hotels, service quality serves as the primary stimulus that influences guests' internal states, such as emotions and cognitive evaluations. These internal states, in turn, shape the perceived value of the stay and the overall memorable experience. These memorable experiences and positive emotions are integral to achieving higher customer satisfaction and fostering loyalty. Consequently, the SOR model has potential to provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating how internal psychological processes mediate the relationship between service quality and long-term organizational outcomes, offering valuable guidance for improving hotel management strategies and enhancing guest experiences.

The hotel and tourism industries are vital drivers of Nepal's service sector, contributing approximately 25% of the country's total foreign exchange earnings. Since the introduction of the Nepal Tourism Master Plan in 1972 and subsequent marketing strategies, the government has prioritized the development and promotion of hotels [23]. With the growing influx of international visitors, there is a rising demand for quality accommodation and memorable guest experiences. However, existing literature offers limited insights into how Nepalese hotels create such experiences. Few studies have specifically examined tourists' perceptions of hotels' services in Nepal.

This study aims to fill above gap by exploring the relationship between service quality, positive emotion, perceived value, memorable experience, and organizational outcomes from the visitors' perspective. It also investigates the mediating role of positive emotions and perceived value in enhancing customer loyalty. Applying the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, the research will examine how service quality and memorable experiences influence satisfaction and loyalty in the hotel industry. By assessing key service quality dimensions and their impact on tourist experiences, the study seeks to offer both theoretical contributions and practical insights. The findings are expected to help hotel managers in Nepal, and potentially beyond, design more effective, value-driven services that foster lasting customer loyalty and enhance overall business performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Service Quality

Service quality is shaped by the unique characteristics of services such as intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability [53]. Perceived service quality, as defined by Zeithaml et al. [76], is a customer's judgment about a service's overall excellence or superiority. From the consumer's perspective, it is closely tied to customer satisfaction, emphasizing subjective perceptions over technical standards [65], which can be described as a global attitude reflecting the perceived degree of excellence in service delivery. Service quality is a key driver of competitive advantage, directly contributing to a firm's profitability and productivity [70]. It is widely recognized as a precursor to customer satisfaction, which in turn fosters loyalty [13, 56]. High service quality encourages favorable behavioral intentions such as repurchase, positive word-of-mouth, brand endorsement, and reduced price sensitivity. Conversely, poor service quality can lead to customer dissatisfaction and switching behavior [8]. Studies have also linked high service quality to increased profitability, cost efficiency, and market share.

2.2. Positive Emotion and Perceived Value

As stated by Bagozzi et al. [6], emotions represent a cognitive assessment of events or thoughts, coupled with physiological reactions, often manifested through facial expressions, gestures, and postures. Emotions stem from biological responses and serve as a primary motivator for human actions. He further delineates emotions into three dimensions: subjective experiences, expressive behaviors, and physiological alterations triggered by external stimuli. Oliveira et al. [47] contend that consumers' emotional reactions to perceived quality during consumption encounters can vary between positive and negative. Meanwhile, Oh and Kim [46] conducted a study examining the impact of emotions on online reviews of fine-dining restaurants. Drawing on Herzberg's two-factor theory, certain aspects of consumer experiences were found to elicit exclusively positive emotions. Existing research in the domains of tourism, hospitality, and restaurant consumer behavior has predominantly emphasized positive emotional responses.

Customer perceived value serves as a crucial determinant of various behavioral outcomes in the hotel industry, encompassing patronage, intention to revisit, satisfaction, and loyalty [11]. In defining perceived value, Sweeney and Soutar [64] emphasize its comprehensive nature, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative aspects, subjective and objective factors, which collectively contribute to the overall consumption experience. This definition underscores the multifaceted and subjective character of perceived value beyond mere considerations of price and quality. It encompasses affective dimensions such as self-gratification, aesthetic pleasure, prestige,

transactional aspects, and hedonism, reflecting the diverse elements that contribute to customers' holistic evaluation of their experiences. Understanding the multidimensional nature of perceived value provides a more nuanced understanding of the entire hospitality experience, thereby serving as a robust predictor of behavioral outcomes such as satisfaction and loyalty among guests during their hotel stays [10].

Prior research underscores that a guest's assessment of the value obtained from their hotel experience profoundly influences their allegiance to a specific brand or property [42]. Perceived value encompasses not only tangible elements like pricing and amenities but also intangible facets, including the quality of service and the overall experiential aspect. When customers perceive that the benefits and caliber of services provided by a hotel surpass the associated costs, they are more inclined to cultivate a sense of loyalty. This fidelity is then reflected in recurrent visits and positive recommendations through word-of-mouth [10].

2.3. Memorable Experience

A memorable experience is characterized by its ability to create a lasting impact on an individual's memory and emotions, often distinguished by uniqueness, emotional resonance, and the generation of positive and meaningful moments [67]. Within the hotel industry, memorable experiences encompass outstanding customer service, personalized attention, or distinctive features setting them apart from normal encounters. These memorable experiences have the potential to evoke positive emotions, heighten customer satisfaction, and foster long-term brand loyalty [42]. Experiential marketing theory, as proposed by Schmitt [57], suggests that memorable experiences have more profound effects on customer attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, a memorable experience, as outlined by Vada et al. [69], is one that customers recall after the event, necessitating novelty and the ability to elicit affective feelings through cognitive processing. Service quality, evaluated subjectively by customers through cognitive processes, particularly in encounters with emotional content and extraordinary events, is crucial for memorability and subsequently influences attitudes and purchasing behaviors [69].

2.4. Organizational Outcomes

In the context of the hotel industry, customer satisfaction and loyalty are significant components of organizational outcomes [72]. The assessment of customer satisfaction and loyalty provides valuable insights into the overall success and effectiveness of an organization, helping stakeholders make informed decisions and adjustments to enhance performance and achieve long-term viability [17]. In the hotel industry, customer loyalty serves as key indicator of success and sustainability. A delicate balance between pricing strategies, operational efficiency, and adapting to external market influences plays a crucial role determining financial success. Moreover,

customer satisfaction, another pivotal organizational outcome, is intrinsically linked to guest experiences and service quality [45]. Satisfied customers not only contribute to repeat business but also contribute to positive word-of-mouth, fostering brand loyalty [65].

2.5. Hypothesis Development

Service quality encompasses consumers' perceptions of product or service performance in meeting their needs and expectations [4]. Hotels rely on maintaining high service quality to stay competitive [66]. Beyond tangible attributes like infrastructure or accessibility, perceived quality includes intangible elements such as hotel atmosphere, social endorsement, and consumer orientation [63]. According to Pine and Gilmore [50], organizations are encouraged to create memorable events intentionally to engage customers, fostering satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, Ha and Jang [18] noted that attributes of the servicescape play a crucial role in creating unique atmospheres for gastronomic experiences, enhancing consumer satisfaction and loyalty. This atmosphere can create and enhance customers' sensory stimulus. Sensory stimuli are essential marketing tools, generating memorable consumption experiences by engaging the five human senses and eliciting emotions, thoughts, learning, and memories. Through the senses, the human being captures the stimuli from the environment, generating emotions, thoughts, comprehension, learning and memories of their experiences [2].

H1: Service quality has significant positive impact on memorable experience.

Bastiaansen et al. [7] suggest that emotions are biologically rooted responses, serving as a primary driver of human behavior. According to Jang and Namkung [25], consumers' emotional reactions to perceived quality during consumption can vary between positive and negative. In this regard, Oh and Kim [46] explored the role of emotions in online restaurant reviews, finding that certain aspects of consumer experiences evoke exclusively positive emotions. Han and Back [19] and Souki et al. [63] also investigated consumer emotions in dining experiences, measuring positive feelings using various indicators related to service quality. Additionally, Ribeiro and Prayag [54], and Marinkovic et al. [38] assert that perceived quality in restaurant experiences significantly influences customer emotions.

H2: Service quality has significant positive impact on positive emotions.

Service quality directly influences customers' assessments of the benefits relative to the costs [24]. When customers perceive high service quality, they are more likely to believe that they are receiving value commensurate with what they are paying for or investing in [55]. Prompt and attentive service, consistent delivery of promised benefits, and personalized interactions can enhance customers' perceptions of value [48]. Conversely, poor service quality may lead to perceptions of

low value, regardless of the actual price or features of the service.

H3: Service quality has significant positive impact on perceived value.

When consumers encounter experiences that align with their expectations, they tend to express positive emotions [75]. Bastiaansen et al. [7] argue that emotions play a central role in shaping experiences, as they contribute to the creation of memorable moments [44, 58]. Consequently, positive emotion is regarded as a significant experiential factor to assess. Investigating emotions and their connection to human senses is crucial for crafting unforgettable experiences. Horng and Hsu [21] and Liu et al. [36] contend that emotions influence consumers' recollection of memorable dining experiences.

H4: Positive emotion has significant positive impact on memorable experience.

When customers perceive a high level of value in a particular experience, they are more likely to remember it positively and cherish it as a memorable event [22]. If a customer feels that they received exceptional service or gained significant benefits from a product that exceeded their expectations, they are likely to associate that experience with feelings of delight and satisfaction [9]. Experiences that fail to deliver perceived value may be forgettable or even negatively remembered. By providing better value in the experience, industries can enhance the likelihood of creating lasting, memorable impressions that contribute positively to customer loyalty and advocacy.

H5: Perceived value has significant positive impact on

memorable experience.

When customers encounter experiences that leave a lasting impression, whether through exceptional service, unique features, or personalized interactions, they are more likely to feel satisfied with their overall interaction with a product or service provider [77]. Memorable experiences evoke positive emotions and foster a sense of connection and loyalty between customers and brands [5]. Moreover, memorable experiences contribute to building strong relationships between customers and brands, as they create a sense of trust and affinity that extends beyond the transactional aspect of the interaction.

H6: Memorable experience has significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

Souki et al. [63] noted that loyalty is manifested in consumers' behavioral intention to maintain relationships with specific companies or brands, persistently choosing their offerings. Likewise, Brochado et al. [9] assert that consumers rely on both internal, for instance memory, and external, such as media and influence groups, sources of information during the buying decision process, with memory being the initial source typically utilized. Sipe and Testa [61] highlighted the critical role of memory in consumers' revisit decisions and word-of-mouth communications. They further emphasized the value creation potential of unique and memorable experiences, which significantly influence consumers' decision-making processes, behavioral intentions, and word-of-mouth communications.

H7: Memorable experience has significant positive impact on customer loyalty.

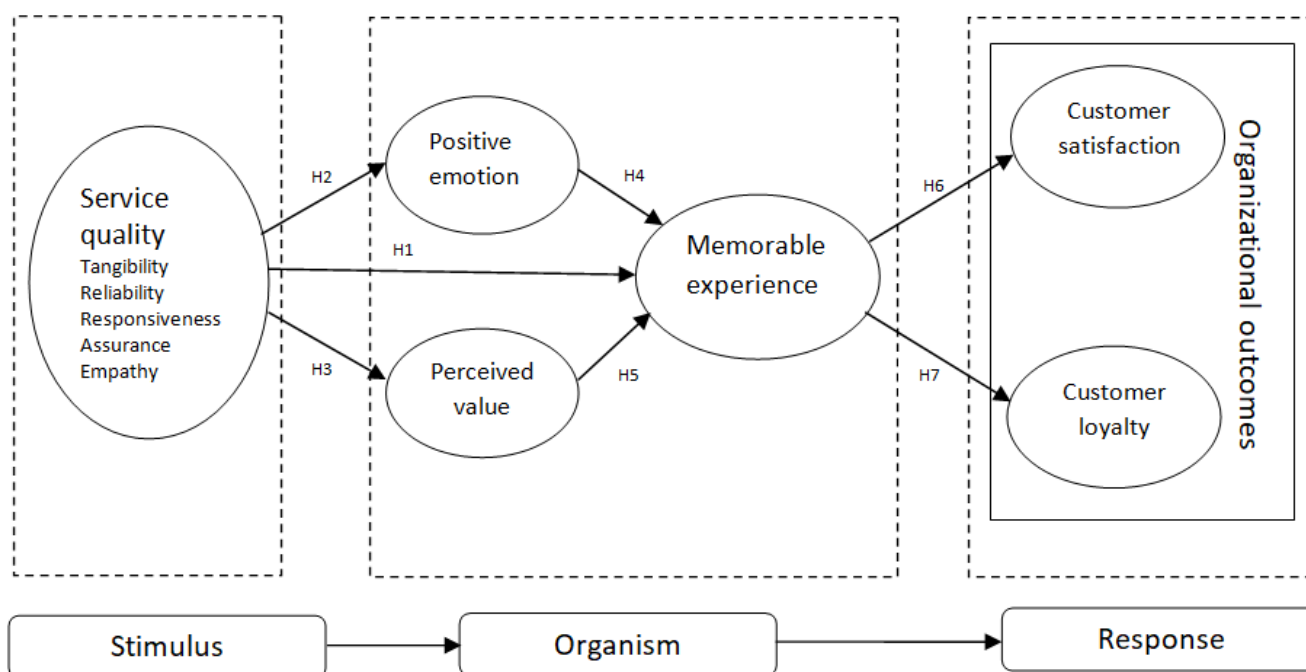


Figure 1. Research model.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Given that the study aimed to explore and measure the relationships between different variables, this study employed a quantitative methodology, which is typically used to confirm a specific pattern or theory by examining the relationship between variables [34], and involves gathering numerical data and analyzing it with statistical methods. A conceptual model (Figure 1) was designed to examine the relationship between service quality, positive emotion, perceived value, memorable experience, and customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The questionnaire survey was conducted among the consumers of hotels in Nepal, via both online and off line surveys. Collected data were analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS and AMOS.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

This study employed Mehrabian and Russell's Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, an early framework for exploring the impact of atmosphere on customer behavior. As studies on customer engagement have shown its positive effects, identifying the stimulus (S) variables affecting the organism (O) and subsequently influencing responses (R) in service settings becomes imperative. A stimulus denotes any environmental factor evoking internal reactions from individuals. Within service environments like hotels, elements of service quality serve as stimuli for customer responses [35]. Regarding the organism, the original model delineated three emotional states experienced by customers: pleasure, arousal, and dominance. However, this study delves into positive emotion, perceived value, and memorable experience. There exists evidence indicating that the organism can impact behavioral outcomes—the response [14]. Specifically, this study focuses on

customer satisfaction and loyalty as the behavioral outcomes.

S-O-R theory is effective to demonstrate sequential causal relationships between the constructs of the hypothetical model. The service quality factor (stimulus) was explored from the Factor Analysis of relevant items in service quality derived from literature. Also, this study tests whether these service quality factors impact consumers' positive emotions, perceived value and memorable experiences (organism). The model also verifies if customers' memorable experiences are an antecedent of their satisfaction and loyalty (response).

3.3. Questionnaire Design

A questionnaire was designed for the survey aiming to check the hypothesized relationships. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. In first section, respondents were allowed to evaluate their hotel stay on 5 point like scale, where 1=completely dissatisfied and 5=completely satisfied. This section included six variables namely service quality, perceived value, positive emotion, memorable experience, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The hotel service quality was measured using five dimensions of SERV-QUAL scale namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy [53]. These dimensions included a total of 26 items. Similarly, the perceived value and positive emotion were measured with six items each adopted from Jones et al. [26] and Prayag et al. [51] respectively. Likewise, 28 items used to measure memorable experience were adopted from Oh et al. [44], Kim et al. [29] and Prentice et al. [52]. Finally, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty items were adopted from Al-Khattab and Aldehayyat [3] and Lai et al. [30] respectively. The wordings in items were adjusted to match them to the research context. The second section of the questionnaire included demographic information of the respondents. A filter question was posed at the beginning of the questionnaire to ensure the respondent has consumed hotel services.

3.4. Data Collection

Table 1. Variables measurement items.

Variable	Measurement items	Codes	Source
Service Quality (SQ)	Tangibility		
	The furniture and room in the hotel are modern and comfortable.	TG1	Ho et al. (2013) and Parasuraman et al. (1985 & 1988).
	The interior and exterior decoration in this hotel is appealing.	TG2	
	The employees have a neat appearance and are well-groomed.	TG3	
	The hotel facilities are up to date.	TG4	
	The hotel has a great view.	TG5	
	The hotel room is clean.	TG6	
	Reliability		

Variable	Measurement items	Codes	Source
Perceived value (PV)	The hotel staff can provide the correct information of service.	REL1	Jones, Mak et al. (2007)
	Hotel staffs offer services following the customers' requests in advance.	REL2	
	The reservation systems are very comfortable to use and informative.	REL3	
	Checking-in and checking-out are not too long.	REL4	
	Hotel staffs comply with health safety procedures.	REL5	
	Responsiveness		
	The staffs are courteous.	RES1	
	The hotel staffs are determined and ready to provide the service.	RES2	
	The hotel staffs adapted service and flexibility.	RES3	
	The hotel staffs are willing to perform their duty.	RES4	
	The hotel staffs provide the service and can solve problems promptly.	RES5	
	Assurance		
	The hotel staffs are professional and knowledgeable in answering the customer question.	ASU1	
	The hotel staffs can communicate well.	ASU2	
	The hotel staffs are sufficient to support the hotel to perform their job.	ASU3	
	The hotel staffs have the skills and abilities to provide the service.	ASU4	
	The hotel has a security system to ensure customer safety	ASU5	
	The hotel is cleaned and disinfected regularly for health safety.	ASU6	
	Empathy		
	Hotel staffs pay great attention to the customers during the whole period of stay.	EMP1	
	Hotel staffs treat every customer equally.	EMP2	
	Hotel staffs can assist customers without any request.	EMP3	
	Hotel staffs can exceed customer expectations.	EMP4	
	The hotel staffs listen to customers' complaints and sincerely correct their service.	EMP5	
Positive Emotion (PE)	I have a huge saving from staying at this hotel.	PV1	Hosany et al. (2017)
	I really appreciate the free breakfast included in this hotel stay.	PV2	
	This hotel has the best value for great services.	PV3	
	I got the best room rate than any of the other hotels in the area.	PV4	
	This is a first-class hotel at the best rate possible.	PV5	
	I value the discount rate/room upgrades at this hotel.	PV6	
Memorable Experience (ME)	I get a sense of amazement in the hotel services.	PE1	Prentice, Ferreira et al. (2022), Oh
	I get a sense of caring in hotel services.	PE2	
	I get a sense of inspiration in hotel services.	PE3	
	I get a sense of joy in hotel services.	PE4	
	I get a sense of love in hotel services.	PE5	
	I get a sense of pleasure in hotel services.	PE6	
	The hotel service is outstanding.	ME1	
	I feel very stimulated during my stay.	ME2	

Variable	Measurement items	Codes	Source
	I feel very pleased during my stay.	ME3	et al., (2007) and Kim (2014)
	I have wonderful memories of my visit to this hotel.	ME4	
	I won't forget my experience visiting this hotel.	ME5	
	I will remember many positive things about this hotel.	ME6	
	This hotel stay provided me a variety of opportunities to experience local way of life	ME7	
	From this hotel stay, I learned a lot about the local history and culture.	ME8	
	I participated on a lot of recreational activities during the hotel stay.	ME9	
	Service staffs were friendly and willing to help me.	ME10	
	Service staffs provided me information about hotel and the destination.	ME11	
	The hotel had uniquely designed infrastructure.	ME12	
	The hotel had a high quality of infrastructure.	ME13	
	The hotel had good signage and directions.	ME14	
	The hotel had a good availability of tourism information.	ME15	
	The hotel was unclean.	ME16	
	The hotel had a bad smell.	ME17	
	The hotel was unsafe.	ME18	
	It was inconvenient to reach to the hotel.	ME19	
	It took me long hours to get to the hotel.	ME20	
	It was difficult to travel around the hotel.	ME21	
	The service staffs provided highly customized services.	ME22	
	The service staffs provided impressive services.	ME23	
	The hotel was located at beautiful geographical location.	ME24	
	There was a beautiful landscape around the hotel.	ME25	
	The hotel had a unique architecture.	ME26	
	The hotel provided special cuisines.	ME27	
	The hotel had interesting buildings.	M28	
	Overall, I am satisfied with the hotel service.	CS1	
Customer Satisfaction (CS)	I am satisfied with my decision to visit this hotel.	CS2	Khattab and Al-dehayyat (2011)
	My choice of this hotel was a wise idea.	CS3	
	I will say positive things about this hotel.	CS4	
	I would like to revisit the hotel.	CL1	
Customer Loyalty (CL)	I would like to stay at this hotel.	CL2	Lai (2019)
	I would like to prefer this hotel as the first choice when I revisit the place.	CL3	
	I will stay again at this hotel because of the service quality.	CL4	

A pilot study was conducted to check the questionnaire. A Google form link of preliminary questionnaire was sent to 30 selected participants via Facebook-messenger aiming to check the

clarity and readability of the questionnaire and also to ascertain the completion time of 5-10 minutes. The participants for pilot study were selected from the researchers' alumni network, family

and friends. Based on the feedbacks from participants of pilot study, some minor changes in wordings were performed to enhance clarity of the questionnaire. Then, the final questionnaire was prepared for the main survey.

Survey participants were recruited using a snowball and a purposive sampling strategy. The seed respondents were selected using the researchers' friends, family and alumni network and requested them to send the questionnaire to other eligible respondents. Following this process, the questionnaire was sent to 500 individuals; however, only 318 responded and filled the questionnaire. Each questionnaire samples were checked upon return to ensure they are properly filled. After removing invalid samples, a total of 311 samples were eligible to proceed for the analysis. The data collection period was one month starting from August, 2024.

3.5. Data Analysis

SPSS-Amos was employed to process and analyze the data. A Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was performed to

model and estimate the causal relationships between the variables. According to Westland [73], SEM is used when dealing with complex structural models that involve multiple constructs, indicators, and relationships. SEM includes a measurement model that defines the relationships between variables and their indicators, as well as a structural model that predicts causal connections based on theoretical principles.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of Respondents

A total of 311 questionnaire samples were subjected to the analysis. As shown in Table 2, majority of the respondents were males (61.7%) and females accounted for 38.3%. The largest proportion aged between 20 and 29 years (59.2%). The detailed information about the profile of respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic profile of respondents.

		N	%
Gender	Male	192	61.7%
	Female	119	38.3%
Age	Below 20 years	12	3.9%
	20-29 years	184	59.2%
	30-39 years	85	27.3%
	40-49 years	14	4.5%
	Above 50 years	16	6.1%
Education Level	Primary	8	2.6%
	Secondary or senior secondary	33	10.6%
	Bachelor's Degree	146	46.9%
	Master Degree and above	124	39.9%
Occupation	Student	102	32.8%
	Employed	170	54.7%
	Unemployed	29	9.3%
	Retired	10	3.2%
Monthly Income	Below Rs.20000	91	29.3%
	Rs.20000-30000	33	10.6%
	Rs.30000-40000	42	13.5%
	Rs.40000-50000	32	10.3%
	Rs.50000-100000	81	26.0%
	Above 1000000	32	10.3%

4.2. SEM Result

Based on the hypothesized relationship of the variables, a factor analysis was performed to test the measurement model using SPSS-Amos software. Table 3 presents the result of factor analysis.

Table 3. Result of Factor analysis.

	Service quality	Perceived value	Positive emotion	Memorable experience	Customer satisfaction	Customer loyalty
TG1	0.632					
TG2	0.642					
TG3	0.671					
TG4	0.656					
TG5	0.624					
TG6	0.674					
REL1	0.629					
REL2	0.655					
REL3	0.682					
RES1	0.580					
RES2	0.605					
RES3	0.713					
RES4	0.602					
RES5	0.589					
ASU1	0.733					
ASU2	0.662					
ASU3	0.551					
ASU5	0.702					
ASU6	0.745					
EMP1	0.748					
EMP2	0.676					
EMP3	0.749					
EMP4	0.760					
EMP5	0.729					
PV1		0.606				
PV2		0.706				
PV3		0.820				
PV4		0.770				
PV5		0.752				
PV6		0.811				
PE1			0.789			
PE2			0.808			
PE3			0.820			

	Service quality	Perceived value	Positive emotion	Memorable experience	Customer satisfaction	Customer loyalty
PE4			0.739			
PE5			0.838			
PE6			0.686			
ME1				0.807		
ME2				0.707		
ME3				0.778		
ME4				0.812		
ME5				0.747		
ME6				0.808		
ME7				0.669		
ME8				0.684		
ME9				0.787		
ME10				0.744		
ME11				0.745		
ME12				0.747		
ME13				0.657		
ME14				0.660		
ME15				0.672		
ME16				0.801		
ME17				0.807		
ME18				0.789		
ME19				0.794		
ME20				0.775		
ME21				0.727		
ME23				0.700		
ME24				0.510		
ME25				0.544		
ME26				0.665		
ME27				0.622		
ME28				0.655		
CS1					0.686	
CS2					0.741	
CS3					0.764	
CS4					0.762	
CL1						0.798
CL2						0.768
CL3						0.795
CL4						0.802

	Service quality	Perceived value	Positive emotion	Memorable experience	Customer satisfaction	Customer loyalty
Chronbach α	0.969	0.904	0.937	0.931	0.912	0.956
CR	0.997	0.969	0.983	0.979	0.942	0.964

Measurement model

The measurement model was evaluated based on several measurement criteria, such as convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability. To establish convergent validity of the measurement model, the factor analysis was run repeatedly and four items namely REL4 (Checking-in and checking-out are not too long), REL5 (Hotel staffs comply with health safety procedures), ASU4 (The hotel staffs have the skills and abilities to provide the service) and ME22 (The service staffs provided highly customized services) were removed because of their factor loadings below cut-off value

of 0.5 [60]. As shown in Table 3, all the factor loadings exceeded 0.5 indicating the adequate convergent validity of the measurement model. Similarly, discriminant validity was assessed to determine whether the indicators of a construct are highly correlated with those of other constructs. Fornell and Larcker [15] criteria was used to confirm the discriminant validity of each variables. As illustrated in Table 4, the square roots of the AVE values exceeded the inter-construct correlations for all variables, confirming the discriminant validity of the measurement model.

Table 4. The square root of AVE and inter-construct correlations.

Variables	Service quality	Perceived value	Positive emotion	Memorable experience	Customer satisfaction	Customer loyalty
Service quality	0.991					
Perceived value	0.798	0.892				
Positive emotion	0.789	0.811	0.773			
Memorable experience	0.678	0.816	0.768	0.755		
Customer satisfaction	0.695	0.746	0.719	0.692	0.860	
Customer loyalty	0.712	0.820	0.751	0.744	0.846	0.707

Note: bold figures in the diagonal represents square roots of AVE

Composite reliability was assessed with two kinds of measurement namely composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. Both composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values were greater than recommended cut-off value of 0.7 [12]. The composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha are presented in Table 3.

Structural model

The R square values of all dependent variables were assessed to check the structural model. The R Square quantifies the proportion of variance in the endogenous variable that can be accounted for by the exogenous variables. According to Ozili [49] the R square value above 0.1 is acceptable in the case of all relationships are significant. Table 5 shows that all R square values are in acceptable range.

Table 5. R Square values.

Variables	R Square
Perceived value	0.637
Positive emotion	0.623
Memorable experience	0.460

Variables	R Square
Customer satisfaction	0.483
Customer loyalty	0.508

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

Direct effect

Direct effects analysis was performed to test direct effect between independent variables and dependent variables. The

standardized regression weight with positive estimates indicated positive impact and P-Value less than 0.05 indicated significances. As shown in Table 6, p-values of all hypothesized relationships were less than 0.05 indicating the acceptance of all seven hypotheses.

Table 6. Direct effects analysis.

		Estimates	P-Values	Results
H1 Service quality	Memorable experience	0.790	0.000	Significant
H2 Service quality	Positive emotion	0.806	0.000	Significant
H3 Service quality	Perceived value	0.795	0.000	Significant
H4 Positive emotion	Memorable experience	0.838	0.000	Significant
H5 Perceived value	Memorable experience	0.857	0.000	Significant
H6 Memorable experience	Customer satisfaction	0.718	0.007	Significant
H7 Memorable experience	Customer loyalty	0.737	0.009	Significant

Indirect effect

The analysis of indirect effects was conducted to explore how independent variables influence the dependent variable through an intervening variable. A P-value less than 0.05 suggests that the intervening variable plays a significant role. Table 7 shows that

the perceived value and positive emotion mediate the relationship between service quality and memorable experience. Similarly, memorable experience mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction as well as the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty.

Table 7. Indirect Effects Analysis.

			Estimates	P-Values	Results
Service quality	Perceived value	Memorable experience	0.532	0.000	Significant
Service quality	Positive emotion	Memorable experience	0.434	0.000	Significant
Service quality	Memorable experience	Customer satisfaction	0.333	0.000	Significant
Service quality	Memorable experience	Customer loyalty	0.472	0.000	Significant

5. Discussion and Implications

5.1. Theoretical Implications

This study investigated how hotel service quality affects customer satisfaction and loyalty, with a focus on the roles of perceived value, positive emotions, and memorable experiences. Data from hotel customers in Nepal revealed a useful framework for evaluating service quality and its impacts. The results align with previous research in hospitality services [33, 40, 61] and offer new insights into how service quality shapes customer experiences and organizational outcomes. The study conceptualizes hotel service quality as an external stimulus, customer's cognitive and affective evaluations as organismic states, and satisfaction and loyalty as behavioral responses. Consistent with the SOR framework, the findings demonstrate that hotel service quality acts as a powerful environmental stimulus that shapes customer's internal evaluations and subsequent behavioral outcomes.

The results confirm that 23 out of the 26 SERV-QUAL items are valid indicators of hotel service quality, supporting the applicability of the scale in the hotel context. High service quality was found to significantly enhance perceived value, evoke positive emotions, and facilitate the formation of memorable experiences. From the SOR perspective, hotel service cues stimulate favorable cognitive appraisals such as perceived value, and affective reactions such as positive emotions. Even when prices are high, customers perceive greater value when service performance exceeds expectations, reinforcing their sense of fairness and justification of expenditure. Such findings echo prior research emphasizing the role of service encounters in shaping emotional and evaluative responses [37].

Different aspects of hotel service quality contribute to the organismic responses. Tangibility, reflected in physical facilities, ambience, and cleanliness, serves as a salient stimulus that influences customer's value judgments and emotional comfort [71]; reliability fosters trust and predictability, reducing cognitive uncertainty and enhancing perceived value [32]; responsiveness signals attentiveness of service staffs and care, making guests feel prioritized and emotionally valued [68]; assurance, expressed through staff competence and professionalism, instills confidence and psychological safety [31]; empathy, related to personalized and caring service, deepens emotional bonds between customers and the hotel [68]. Collectively, these stimuli generate a positive internal state characterized by heightened perceived value and positive emotions, reinforcing the organism component.

The findings further reveal that perceived value and positive emotions significantly contribute to the creation of memorable experiences, highlighting their mediating role between service quality and experiential outcomes. In line with SOR theory, cognitive and affective organismic states translate service stimuli into experiential memories. When guests perceive that the benefits of their stay outweigh its costs and experience

emotions such as joy, relaxation, and comfort, these internal responses increase memorable experiences of the stay. Such memorable experiences extend beyond functional satisfaction, becoming emotionally encoded and easily recalled, shared and sought again in future travel decisions.

Moreover, this study demonstrates that memorable experiences significantly influence organizational outcome delineated through customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, representing the response stage of the SOR framework. A memorable hotel stay elevates satisfaction by surpassing expectations and generating a sense of fulfillment. The memorable moments in hotel stay strengthen emotional attachment to the hotel, increasing revisit intentions and positive word-of-mouth [39]. Thus, memorable experiences function as a critical mechanism through which internal states are translated into favorable behavioral responses. While service quality directly enhances satisfaction, memorable experiences increase and sustain this effect by embedding emotional resonance into the service encounter. From an SOR perspective, memorable experiences act as a key transformational link that converts service stimuli into long-term organizational outcomes. By fostering emotionally rich and distinctive experiences, hotels can transform high quality service into long-term customer satisfaction and loyalty, thereby strengthening competitive advantage and long-term performance.

This study contributes to the SOR theory by empirically applying the model to hotel service quality, demonstrating its relevance in the hospitality context. The findings confirm that service-related stimuli shape guests' cognitive and affective states, including perceived value, positive emotions, and memorable experiences. These internal responses, in turn, drive key organizational outcomes, namely customer satisfaction and loyalty. By adopting the SOR framework, this study offers deeper insight into the psychological mechanisms underlying service quality evaluations and provides a robust theoretical basis for designing services that foster positive guest experiences and long-term customer relationships.

5.2. Practical Implications

This study has important managerial implications. It provides insights into how service quality as a stimulus creates customer satisfaction and loyalty as response via perceived value, positive emotion and memorable experience as organism. By understanding the critical role that service quality plays in shaping guests' experiences, hotel managers can strategically focus on improving tangible elements like cleanliness, ambience, and amenities, as well as intangible aspects such as staff responsiveness, empathy, and reliability. Investing in service training, upgrading facilities, and consistently delivering on guest expectations can create memorable experiences that not only satisfy customers but also foster long-term loyalty. Overall, a focus on service quality provides hotel managers with a competitive edge, helping them differentiate

their brand in a highly competitive market and ensuring sustainable success.

This study of hotel service quality is particularly significant for managerial implications in Nepal, given the country's growing tourism sector and diverse hospitality landscape. Understanding and improving service quality allows hotel managers in Nepal to better meet the expectations of both international and domestic travelers, who often seek unique and memorable experiences. As Nepal continues to develop as a prominent travel destination, the ability to deliver exceptional service can differentiate hotels in a competitive market, enhance guest satisfaction, and foster positive reviews and repeat business. Additionally, insights gained from this study can guide managers globally in tailoring their offerings to meet specific needs, aiming to enhance customer experience, satisfaction and loyalty behaviors. By focusing on high service standards, hotels can improve their overall reputation, attract a wider range of guests, and contribute to the sustainable growth of the hotel industry.

6. Conclusion, Limitation and Future Research

This study aimed to establish a foundation for comprehending hotel service quality and its emotional and behavioral impacts. It explores the relationships between service quality, perceived value, positive emotions, memorable experiences, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. The study presents that hotel service quality is fundamental to create memorable experience during the stay in hotel. This memorable experience is gained through the perceived value and positive emotions. The study further revealed that better service quality results into better customer satisfaction and loyalty through the memorable experience.

This study has some limitations. Firstly, this study has employed solely quantitative approach. The pre-existing scales may not fully capture the variables used in the study. Incorporating a mixed-methods approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative data can provide a more comprehensive understanding of service quality and its impacts. Secondly, the study was conducted among the customers of hotels in Nepal, and all the respondents are Nepali nationals. Expanding the study to include a more diverse respondents, including international tourists and hotel customers from different demographic backgrounds, would enhance the generalizability of the findings. One significant challenge is the diversity in service standards across the country's wide range of hotels, from luxury establishments in major tourist areas to smaller, budget accommodations in remote locations. This variability can complicate the assessment of service quality and its impacts, and results may not be uniformly applicable across different types of hotels. Addressing geographic and cultural diversity by including a broader range of locations could improve data reliability and consistency.

Abbreviations

SOR	Stimulus-Organism-Response
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structure
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
CR	Composite Reliability
AVE	Average Variance Extracted

Author Contributions

Kiranraj Pande: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

Kripal Raj Subedi: Data curation, Methodology, Writing – original draft

Md Jamirul Haque: Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Biography



Kiranraj Pande holds a PhD from Dongbei University of Finance and Economics, China. His research interests include customer experience, hospitality services, and sustainable tourism.



Kripal Raj Subedi is a master graduate from School of Business Administration, Donbei University of Finance and Economics. His research interests include hospitality services, restaurant experiences, and culinary tourism.



Md Jamirul Haque is a dedicated researcher and passionate educator with over 15 years of academic experience. He holds a PhD from Dongbei University of Finance and Economics, China, and an MBA from International American University, USA. Currently affiliated with NUM International College, National University of Management, Cambodia, he teaches business and Management, supervise graduate research, and actively conducts studies on hospitality management and green campus initiatives.