

The Mediating Role of Perceived Value on the Effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in the Hospitality Sector in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

In today's rapid and competitive business landscape, delivering high-quality service has become crucial for achieving a competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the direct effect of hospitality service quality (HSQL) on perceived value (PESV) and tourist satisfaction (TS) in Malaysia's hospitality sector. A quantitative, survey was used to collect the data from 219 respondents. SEM, using SMART-PLS used for data analysis. The result revealed that, HSQL has a positive effect on PESV and TS, and PESV positively affects TS, in addition, PESV mediates the effect of HSQL on TS. This study provided insight into how service quality affects TS regarding food quality, facilities, and accommodation quality, in the hospitality sector in Malaysia. The study limitation was mentioned and provides direction for future researchers.

Keywords: Perceived value, Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Hospitality & Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapid and competitive business landscape, the importance of delivering high-quality service has become crucial for achieving a competitive advantage in the services field, particularly in the hospitality industry. Organizational services must promptly adapt to these swift changes to meet the increasing customer need for excellent service (Al-refaei et al., 2023; Ateeq et al., 2024a). In order to meet these requirements, organizations must consistently accelerate the enhancement of innovative services by adopting new technology and digitalization as enduring solutions to enhance service quality (SQ) (Ateeq et al., 2024b; Al-Muhrami et al., 2021; Ateeq et al., 2024). This necessitates the inclusion of employees possessing advanced skills, extensive knowledge, and unwavering commitment to their organization, which is crucial for achieving

The core concept of the hospitality industry revolves around delivering exceptional service, which plays a pivotal role in shaping guests' overall impressions and experiences. Key factors contributing to service excellence include the competence and professionalism of the staff (Al-refaei et al, 2024a), the maintenance and cleanliness of facilities, and the efficiency of processes such as check-in and check-out. Each of these elements significantly influences tourists' satisfaction (TS) with hotels and destinations. When guests receive superior service, they are more likely to enjoy their stay and recommend the establishment to others.

Customer satisfaction (CS) has emerged as a primary focus in several industries, as organizations acknowledge its crucial role in achieving long-term success. However, CS arises from the customers' evaluation of their expectations in relation to the actual service experience (Al-refaei et al, 2024b). A service meeting or exceeding these expectations leads to a feeling of satisfaction or pleasure (Firmansyah, 2018; Al-refaei et al, 2024c). From this viewpoint, it can be deduced that satisfaction is attained once a service is utilized, especially if it fulfills or beyond the customer's expectations. Researchers are specifically interested in investigating the impact of HSQL on TS. The emphasis on HSQL and customer-focused initiatives has been recognized as crucial for improving corporate outcomes. Companies consistently aim to enhance value by meticulously designing and promoting novel products for the benefit of customers.

Another critical factor influencing tourist satisfaction (TS) is perceived value (PESV). This concept refers to how visitors assess the value they receive relative to the costs they incur (Arismayanti, Andiani, & Kusyanda, 2024). Nevertheless, customers frequently assess the PESV of a company's products or services in relation to those of its competitors when making purchasing choices (Jamrozky&Lawonk, 2017). Perceived value (PESV), as seen from the customer's point of view, has become an important measure for attaining a competitive

advantage in this particular situation (Demirgüneş, 2015). Recent research emphasizes the importance of customer-PESV in many situations, emphasizing its increasing complexity and various interpretations (Vuong, Ghadiri, & Nguyen, 2022; Akhir et al, 2023). As a result, there is a growing emphasis on comprehending the value as perceived by the consumer, which has been more apparent over time (Zauner et al., 2015). However, When travelers perceive that the benefits and quality of services exceed the cost, they experience high PESV. This often leads to positive reviews, increased loyalty, and higher satisfaction. Conversely, when PESV is low, guests may feel dissatisfied, leading to negative feedback and a decrease in repeat business (Bhattacharya et al., 2023). Therefore, enhancing Customer-PESV through exceptional service offerings is crucial for maintaining CS and loyalty.

Despite numerous studies on TS, research often examines HSQL and PESV in isolation. This fragmented approach leaves a significant gap in understanding how these factors jointly impact overall visitor satisfaction (Abeba, 2024). To bridge this gap, a comprehensive approach that considers the combined effects of service quality and perceived value on customer satisfaction is essential. Khairy, Baquero, and Al-Romeedy (2023) suggest that such an approach can provide a more detailed understanding of the drivers of visitor satisfaction and how these factors can be leveraged together to enhance the overall visitor experience.

Therefore, this study aims to address this knowledge gap by exploring the interplay between perceived value and service quality. By analyzing how these factors influence visitor satisfaction in the hospitality sector in Malaysia, the research offers valuable insights that can enrich both academic knowledge and practical applications in the hospitality and tourism industries (Ghasemi et al., 2024). Moreover, this holistic perspective equips policymakers and industry professionals with the information needed to improve tourism services and elevate the overall quality of offerings (Mandal, 2005).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hospitality Service Quality (HSQ) and Tourist Satisfaction

The literature presents a strong body of evidence linking tourist satisfaction with the quality of hospitality services. Miguel (2024) explores the effect of intercultural communication and cultural diversity on influence overall customer experience of service quality and customer satisfaction within Brazil's tourism and hospitality sectors. Munawaroh et al. (2024) focus on the critical role of consumer behavior, particularly customer satisfaction, in driving the performance of these industries, and found that, experience and service quality are critical subjects relating to consumer satisfaction. Nazarian et al. (2024) delve into the interplay between service quality, return intentions, satisfaction, electronic word-of-mouth, and customer loyalty in the hotel sector in different countries, and found that service quality positively affects customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth, and found small differences due to cultural variations among nations. Abdullah et al. (2023) examine how food and beverage quality, alongside overall service quality, impacts customer satisfaction and retention in Five-Star hotels, the result revealed that, the quality of food, beverages, and overall service quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction and the probability of customers return (customer retention). Noor and Sharma (2023) found that a correlation between expected and perceived service quality and customer satisfaction in the context of sustainable tourism in Bangladesh. Fejza and Fejza (2023) assess the relationship between customer happiness, service quality, and the growth of sustainable tourism, and the result revealed that, food and drink quality, friendly and clean quality have a positive effect on customer satisfaction. Finally, Gu (2023) looks into and confirms how the travel experience affects the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality. Therefore,

H1. HSQL positively affects TS in the hospitality sector in Malaysia

Hospitality Service Quality (HSQL) and Perceived Value (PESV)

Customer-PESV is a crucial factor in the hotel sectors that impacts the overall service experience. The concept of customer-PESV is the balance that customers perceive between the advantages they gain and the expenses they bear when using a service. This notion was first introduced by Zeithaml (1988). Multiple studies continuously demonstrate a strong connection between HSQL and the PESV. Mai et al. (2019) discovered that characteristics such as the hotel's location, HSQL, and PESV play a crucial role in promoting client loyalty. Oriade and Schofield (2019) emphasized that HSQL substantially impacts TS and their likelihood to come back, thereby improving their perception of value. Moreover, Tuncer et al. (2021) provided evidence that aspects such as the HSQL and adherence to schedules significantly enhance the PESV, resulting in increased customer satisfaction. Ge et al. (2021) demonstrated that HSQL significantly influences PESV, even in a particular context such as the Starbucks Reserve flagship in China. While Saut & Bie (2024) found an insignificant effect of HSQL on PESV in the hotel industry in Cambodia. Gurler (2024) found through a serial mediation effect, that HSQL positively affects customers' PESV in the airline company. Therefore, the current study assumed that:

H2. HSQL positively affects PESV in the hospitality sector in Malaysia

The mediating role of PESV in the link between HSQL and TS

Consumer behavior and loyalty toward an organization and its brands are largely influenced by main factors, such as how customers view the service. Customers can gauge the value of companies' services by comparing their expectations with their actual experiences (Vuong, Ghadiri, & Nguyen, 2022). The value consumers perceive of a product or service compared to the cost they pay and the level of satisfaction they feel about the service (Tuncer, Unusan, & Cobanoglu, (2021). Based on social exchange theory, consumers compare the benefits they get versus the costs they pay during their interactions with a company. Their decision to continue and maintain a relationship with a company depends on the amount of value they feel they receive from consuming its products and services and the level of satisfaction they derive from these exchanges. There is a positive relationship between the PESV of a service and TS with the service (Carvache-Franco et al., 2022). When customers feel they are getting great value for their money, they are more likely to be satisfied and remain loyal to the company.

Literature review showed several studies have shown a positive correlation between HSQL, PESV, and TS, most of the studies investigate the relationship between these variables separately. For instance, Miguel (2024), Munawaroh et al. (2024), Nazarian et al. (2024), all these studies found positive and significant effects of HSQL on TS. In addition, studies such as Oriade and Schofield (2019), Tuncer et al. (2021), Ge et al. (2021), Saut & Bie (2024), and Gurler (2024) found positive and significant effects of HSQL on PESV. While studies such as Rasoolimanesh, Dahalan, & Jaafar (2016), conducted study to explore the effect of PESV on TS of their homestay in Kampung Bengin Malaysia, the results demonstrate an important and positive effect of PESV on the TS of homestay guests. On the contrary, Akhir et al. (2023) found an insignificant effect of PESV on TS in hotels in Kedah (Alor Setar) in Malaysia during the pandemic. Therefore, more studies are needed to investigate the effect of PESV on TS in the hospitality industry in Malaysia. However, based on the confirmed effect of HSQL on TS (Miguel, 2024; Munawaroh et al., 2024; Nazarian et al., 2024), and the effect of HSQL on PESV (Oriade & Schofield, 2019; Tuncer et al., 2021; Ge et al., 2021; Saut & Bie, 2024; Gurler, 2024), and effect of PESV on TS (Rasoolimanesh, Dahalan, & Jaafar, 2016), this study assumed that, PESV may affect TS, and mediates the effect of HSQL on TS in the hospitality sector in Malaysia.

H3. PESV positively affects TS in the hospitality sector in Malaysia.

H4. PESV mediates the effect of HSQL on TS in the hospitality sector in Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY

The present study utilizes a quantitative methodology to investigate the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in Malaysia's hospitality industry, focusing on the mediating role of perceived value. This approach places a strong emphasis on the use of quantitative methods for gathering and analyzing data. Collecting and analyzing data in quantitative research is comparatively efficient and requires less time (Saunders et al., 2019). Survey methods and cross-sectional were used as a strategy for collecting quantitative data. According to Saunders et al. (2019), the survey strategy aligns with the quantitative approach and is widely used in management and business research to address specific objectives. The questionnaire and a recommendation letter from LUC were dispatched to three, four, and five-star hotels in Malaysia. The study focused on a specific group of people who were guests at Malaysian hotels throughout the study period. These persons were defined as those who had been at the hotel for at least one night. The questionnaire was sent by postal mail to the HR department in each hotel, requesting their assistance in gathering the necessary information and distributing the questionnaire to the hotel customers, and then HR returned the completed surveys to the researchers.

Study Population and Sample Size

The sample size for this investigation was obtained using Krejcie and Morgan's 1970 technique. Their method organizes sample size calculation. The study population was 506 Malaysian hotels. The Krejcie & Morgan table recommends 219 hotels. However, according to the nature of the study's research objectives, this study employed the stratified sampling technique to choose a representative sample from each stratum (al-refaei et al, 2024a) the stratum in this study or the entire population (three, four, and five-star hotels in Malaysia). The stratified sampling technique selects subgroups or strata to be included in a sample in a way that reflects their representation in the population based on proportions (Saunders et al., 2019; Almnizel & Alatom, 2019).

Measurement

The research instrument used in this study consists of two parts. The first part includes questions on the respondents' demographic information, such as gender, age, and country. The second part contains questions about respondents' opinions related to the main variables under investigation, HSQL, PESV, and TS. Participants are required to respond to questions in each section using a five-point Likert scale, where they indicate their level of agreement or disagreement (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

Service quality (HSQ): The SQ model known as SERVQUAL was developed by Parasuraman et al., (1985, 1988). has been a focal point in research within hospitality and tourism marketing. It has been effectively applied in numerous studies to assess HSQ, particularly in proprietary research. Based on the previous discussion, the measurement of HSQ contains 22 items according to the SERVQUAL model, these items are divided into 5 dimensions, tangibles include 5 items, reliability 4 items, responsiveness 4 items, assurance 4 items, and empathy 5 items. *Perceived value (PESV)*: was measured by 12 items developed by Dedeoglu et al., (2016), these items were divided into three dimensions: functional, emotional, and social. *Tourist satisfaction (TS)*: TS was measured by 10 items developed by Darini, and Khozaei (2016), these items are divided into three dimensions, they are accommodation 3 items, facilities 4 items, and food 3 items.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data collected from the questionnaire survey were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) with the path modelling technique. The decision to use PLS route modelling was made due to its widespread application in the field of management science (Abdulsamad et al., 2020; Alghamdi et al., 2021a; Hair et al., 2013). Moreover, PLS-SEM is regarded as the most inclusive and universally applicable method in the domain of structural equation modelling (SEM) for forecasting the endogenous variable (Al-Refaei et al., 2024; Hair et al., 2011; Jandab et al., 2020; Jandab et al., 2019). The PLS-SEM analysis was performed using a two-stage methodology, adhering to the instructions provided by Hair et al. (2017). The measuring model's validity and reliability were examined initially based on predefined criteria. After confirming the validity and reliability of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated.

Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was rigorously evaluated to ensure its reliability and validity, focusing on the relationships between constructs and their indicators. The reliability of the model was confirmed through individual indicator reliability, with all factor loadings exceeding the threshold of 0.70 (Table 1), indicating strong correlations with their respective constructs (Al-Zubaidi et al., 2022; Hair et al., 2013). Additionally, the composite reliability (CR) values and Cronbach's alpha scores for all constructs were above 0.70, signifying robust internal consistency (Abdulsamad et al., 2021; Alghamdi et al., 2021b; Ghumiem & Alawi, 2022). Convergent validity was established through the average variance extracted (AVE), where all constructs had AVE scores above 0.50, demonstrating that the indicators were effectively capturing the underlying constructs (A. M. Al-Sharif et al., 2023; Ariffin et al., 2022; Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, collinearity was not an issue, as all variance inflation factor (VIF) values were below 10, ensuring the indicators were distinct yet related. Overall, the measurement model was proven to be both reliable and valid, effectively supporting the constructs it aimed to measure.

Table 1: Factor Loadings, Reliability, and Validity

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	VIF	α	CR	AVE
TS	ACCO	0.844	1.563	0.727	0.846	0.647
	FAC	0.782	1.352			
	FOD	0.784	1.446			
ASSU	ASSU1	0.846	2.061	0.848	0.898	0.687
	ASSU2	0.854	2.343			
	ASSU3	0.823	1.872			
	ASSU4	0.792	1.686			
EMT	EMT1	0.756	1.583	0.826	0.878	0.590
	EMT2	0.758	1.609			
	EMT3	0.771	1.989			
	EMT4	0.767	1.630			
	EMT5	0.787	1.714			
PESV	EMO	0.856	1.670	0.750	0.857	0.667

	FUC	0.781	1.482			
	SOC	0.811	1.442			
REL	REL1	0.846	2.540	0.878	0.911	0.672
	REL2	0.789	2.057			
	REL3	0.841	2.628			
	REL4	0.832	2.130			
	REL5	0.790	1.826			
RESP	RESP1	0.835	1.993	0.886	0.921	0.745
	RESP2	0.879	2.739			
	RESP3	0.871	2.613			
	RESP4	0.866	2.349			
TAN	TAN1	0.856	2.153	0.858	0.904	0.701
	TAN2	0.821	1.892			
	TAN3	0.853	2.376			
	TAN4	0.818	1.825			

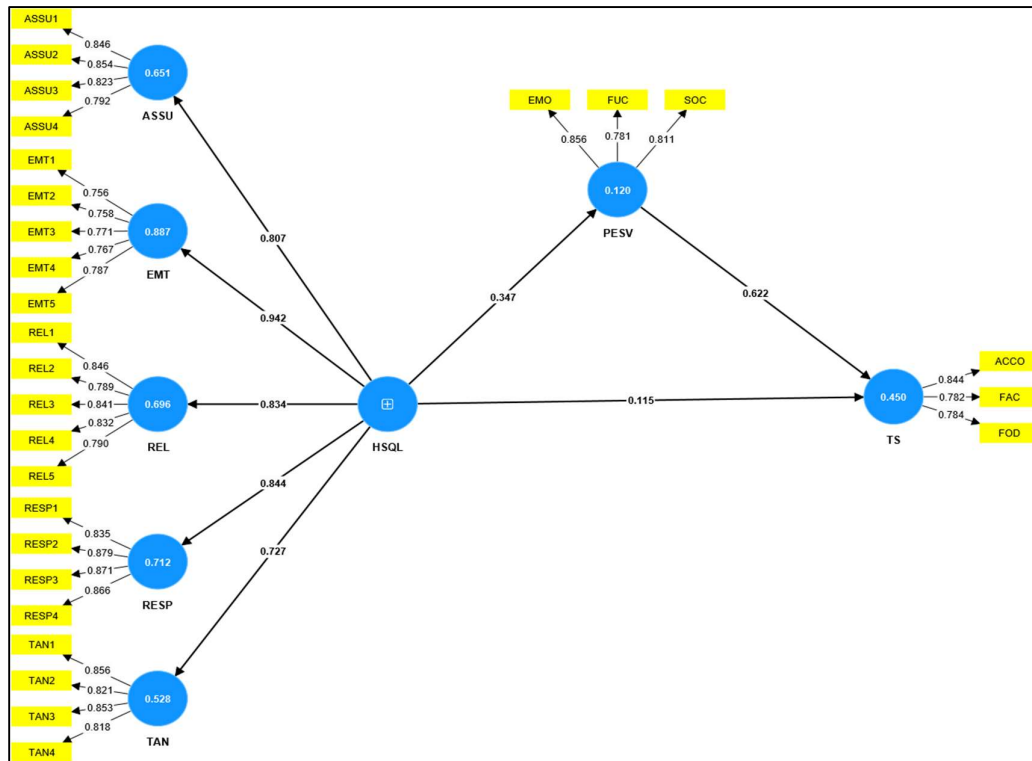


Figure 1: The Results of Path Coefficients, and Factors Loading (The Measurement Model)

The HeterotraitMonotrait (HTMT) ratio is employed to evaluate the discriminant validity of the measurement model, which ensures that constructs are distinct from one another, after establishing its internal consistency reliability. This method is considered more precise than traditional techniques like cross-loadings or the Fornell-Larcker criterion (A. Al-Sharif et al., 2023; Rönkkö& Cho, 2020; Zumrah et al., 2021). In this study, the HTMT values were all below the threshold of 0.90, confirming that the constructs are distinct from each other, thus establishing discriminant validity (see Table 2).

Table 2: Results of HTMT

Construct	ASSU	EMT	PESV	REL	RESP	TAN	TS
ASSU							
EMT	0.866						
PESV	0.340	0.383					
REL	0.681	0.888	0.322				
RESP	0.743	0.878	0.399	0.654			
TAN	0.490	0.787	0.339	0.560	0.607		
TS	0.252	0.383	0.891	0.380	0.341	0.384	

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model assesses the relationships (paths) between constructs, as illustrated in Figure 3. The β -value in the structural model indicates the direction of the relationship between dependent and independent variables, while the R² value estimates the model's predictive power, and f² indicates the effect size of each independent variable on dependent variable.

Coefficient of determination (R²), Effect Size (f²), and Construct Cross- Validated Redundancy

In this study, key factors considered include the coefficient of determination (R²) and the effect size f² (Abdulahdi et al., 2023; Al-Zubaidi et al., 2022; Alkandi, 2023; Hair et al., 2017). Table 3 provides a concise summary of the structural model assessment. The R² value of PESV, and TS were 12.0%, and 45.0% respectively, suggesting that the independent variable in this study which is HSQL weakly explained the variation in PESV as the dependent variable. At the same time, the independent variables, which are HSQL and PESV substantially, explained the variation in TS as the dependent variable Cohen (1988).

Table 3: Coefficient of determination (R²), Effect Size (f²), and Construct Cross- Validated Redundancy

Coefficient of Determination (R ²)				
Endogenous	R2 Value		Rating	
PESV	0.120		Weak*	
TS	0.450		Substantial*	
Effect Size (f ²)/ Rating				
	PESV		TS	
HSQL	0.137 (Small)		0.021 (Small)*	
PESV	-		0.618 (Large)*	
Construct Cross- Validated Redundancy				
Variable	Type of Variable	SSO	SSE	Q2(=1-SSE/SSO)
PESV	Endogenous	1224	1130.079	0.077
TS	Endogenous	1224	874.183	0.286

* Chen & Myagmarsuren (2013)

In addition to the R² value, the effect size (f²) plays a crucial role in understanding the impact of specific independent variables on the dependent variable. The f² value measures how much the R² value-which indicates the explained variance in the dependent variable-changes when a particular predictor is added or removed from the model. This measure is significant as it helps to gauge the strength of each independent variable's influence on the outcome (Hair et al., 2021). According to the findings presented in Table 3, the effect sizes (f²) for HSQL on PESV and ST were small with values of 0.137 and 0.120. While PESV on ST was large with a value of 0.618. This conclusion is consistent with the insights provided by (Al-Zubaidi et al., 2024; Chen & Myagmarsuren, 2013; Nasser et al., 2024).

Also in this study, the blindfolding test was applied. This test is a statistical technique commonly employed in structural equation modeling (SEM) or partial least squares (PLS) analysis to evaluate the predictive relevance of a model. A key indicator derived from this test is the Q² value. When the Q² value is greater than zero, it suggests that the model possesses predictive relevance, meaning it can accurately predict outcomes for new data. This assertion aligns with the findings of Abdulhadi et al. (2022); Abdulsamad et al. (2020); Al-Zubaidi et al. (2023) all of which emphasize that a Q² value exceeding zero is necessary for a research model to be deemed predictive. Given that the Q² value in this study is above zero, it confirms that model of study has what is referred to as "predictive pertinence," indicating its capability to predict future outcomes effectively.

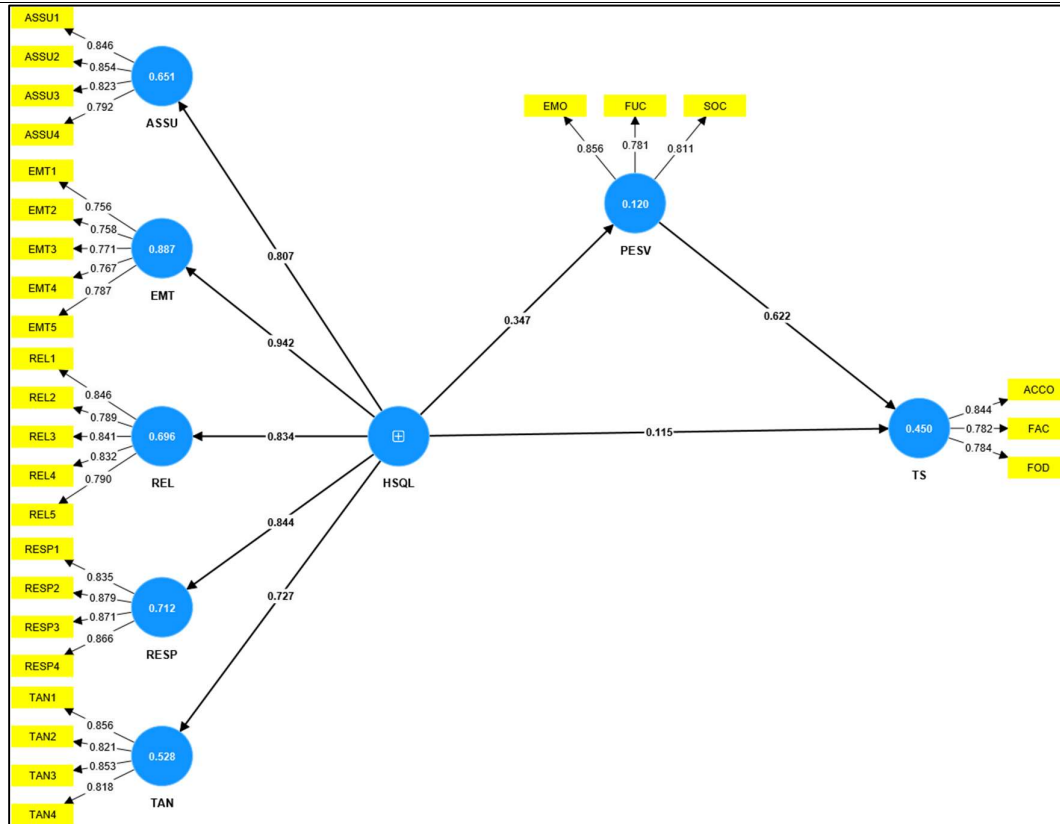


Figure 2: The Results of F^2 , R^2 , and Factors Loading (The Measurement Model)

Direct and Indirect Relationship

This study investigates factors influencing tourists' satisfaction (TS) with Malaysian hotels, by evaluating four hypotheses (H1-H4). The first hypothesis (H1) assesses whether hotel service quality (HSQ) positively influences tourists' satisfaction (TS). The results demonstrate that HSQ significantly impacts TS, with a beta coefficient (β) of 0.115, a t-value of 2.676, and a p-value of less than 0.005. This indicates a strong positive relationship between HSQ and TS, thus supporting H1. The second hypothesis (H2) explores the relationship between hotel service quality (HSQ) and perceived values (PESV). The findings reveal a significant positive relationship, with a beta coefficient of 0.347, a t-value of 6.536, and a p-value below 0.001. These results suggest that HSQ positively influences PESV, thereby supporting H2.

Table 4: Results of Direct and Indirect Relationship (Hypothesis Test)

Direct Relationship							
H	Relationships	Path Coefficient		STDE V	T statistics	P values	
H1	HSQL -> TS	0.115		0.043	2.676	0.007	
H2	HSQL -> PESV	0.347		0.053	6.536	0.000	
H3	PESV -> TS	0.622		0.033	18.567	0.000	
Indirect Relationship							
Total effect (HSQL--> TS)				Direct effect (HSQL--> TS)			
Coefficient		T value	P-value	Coefficien t	T value	P-value	
0.332		6.641	0.000	0.115	2.676	0.007	
Indirect Effect of HSQL on TS							
H	Relationships	Coeffici ent	S. E	T value	P-value	Percentile bootstrap 95% confidence interval	
						Lower	Upper
H4	HSQL -> PESV - > TS	0.217	0.035	6.228	0.000	0.148	0.284

Hypothesis three (H3) examines the positive relationship between perceived values (PESV) and tourists' satisfaction (TS). The analysis shows a significant positive relationship, with a beta coefficient of 0.622, a t-value of 18.567, and a p-value of less than 0.001. This indicates that the perceived values significantly impact the tourists' satisfaction, leading to the acceptance of H3. The fourth hypothesis (H4) assesses the mediating role of perceived values (PESV) in the relationship between HSQL and TS. The bootstrapping technique was employed in this study to determine the significance of mediation effects, as suggested by previous research (Abdulsamad et al., 2021; A. M. Al-Sharif et al., 2023; Al-Zubaidi et al., 2022). The results, as presented in Table 4, reveal that PESV plays a complementary partial mediation role in the relationship between HSQL and TS, with a beta coefficient (β) of 0.217, a t-value of 6.228, and a p-value of less than 0.001. This significant finding supports hypothesis H4, confirming the partial mediation role of PESV in the model.

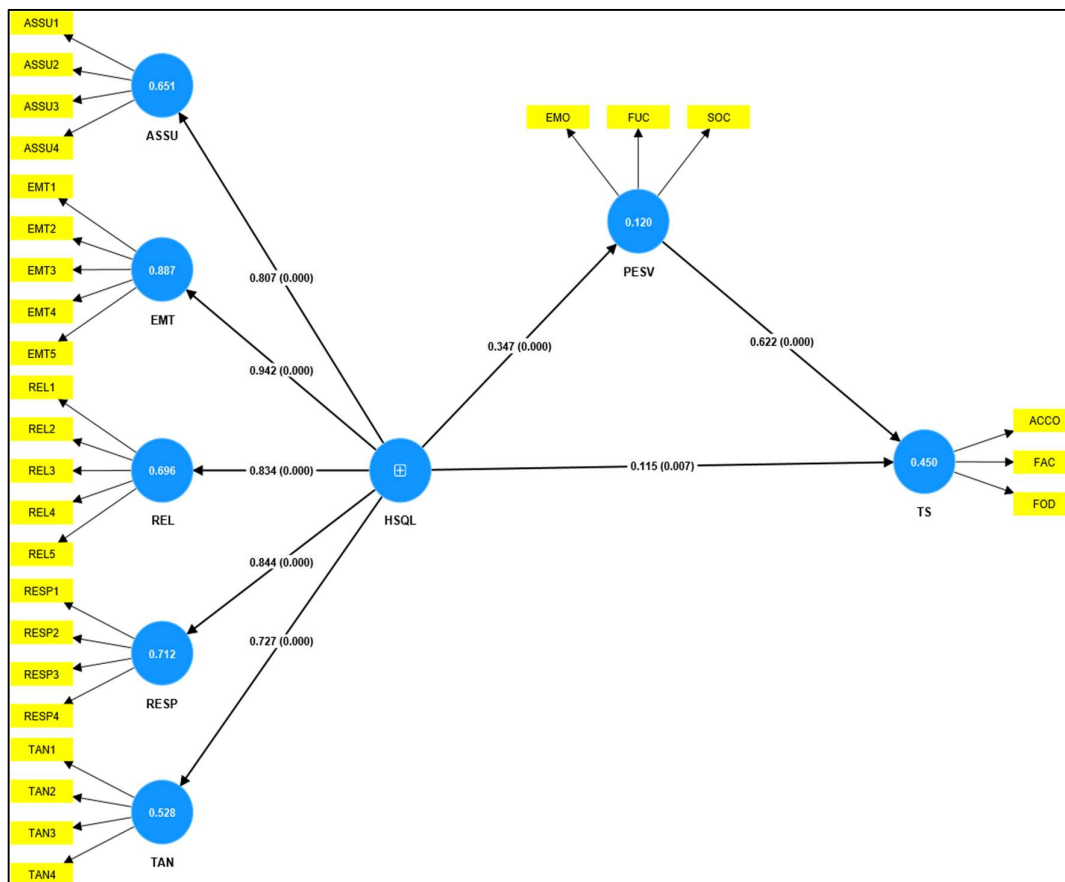


Figure 3: Results of Structural Model

DISCUSSION

The initial hypothesis posited in this study suggests a direct relationship between Hotel Service Quality (HSQL) and Tourist Satisfaction (TS) within the hospitality industry in Malaysia. The result showed that there is a positive and insignificant impact of HSQL on TS in the Malaysian hotel industry. These results can be attributed to the correlation between the provision of high-SQ by hotels in Malaysia and the resulting satisfaction of tourists towards these hotels. When hotels provide tourists with high standards of HSQL as an initiative according to hotels' mission, vision, and values, and the prices of the service are reasonable then the tourists reciprocate that to the hotels by a high level of satisfaction regarding the HSQL in the hotels in Malaysia.

Significant association between HSQL and TS in Malaysia can be attributed and consistent with the argument of the Scholars who have indicated that customer satisfaction encompasses a customer's overall sentiments based on various interactions and experiences with a service provider (Sureshchandar, Rajendran, & Anantharaman, 2002). customers expect a higher level of service quality from the hotels, and hotels' success in meeting these expectations can lead to customer satisfaction (Phiri & Mcwabe, 2013). However, service quality is a more abstract concept that can be influenced by perceptions of value and experiences of others that may not always be positive. Variables such as advertising, different forms of communication, prices of the services, and the shared experiences of others are likely to impact perceptions of service quality (Sureshchandar, Rajendran, & Anantharaman, 2002; Bitner and Hubert, 1992).

However, the result of this study was consistent with previous studies that found a significant impact of HSQL on TS, such as Abdullah et al. (2023) who investigated the relationship between Five-Star TS and retention as influenced by Food and Beverage and Service Quality. Their found cuisine, beverage, and service quality positively impact TS and customer retention. Also, Noor and Sharma (2023) explore the positive association between anticipated and Per SQ and consumer satisfaction in Bangladesh's sustainable tourism development context. In addition, the current result is supported by Fejza&Fejza (2023) who examine customer happiness and service quality for sustainability and tourism growth. Further supported by Kosovo hotel statistics include local and foreign guests, and found Leisure guests loved high-quality food and drinks and friendly, timely, clean, and pleasant service. The importance of service quality and customer happiness in sustainable tourism is evident. Another study supporting our results by Ezech and Ezeuduji's (2023) study investigated the influence of SERVPERF attributes on guest satisfaction and loyalty in low-cost hotels, which revealed that dependability, responsiveness, and empathy positively impact guest satisfaction and influence guest loyalty.

Previous discussion of the result of the current study, it was found that while Hospitality HSQL) positively influences TS, this direct effect is significant. However, HSQL has a significant positive impact on PESV, which in turn significantly affects TS. These findings align with the criteria of mediation set by Baron and Kenny (1986); for establishing a partial mediation effect between HSQL, PERV, and TS in the hospitality sector in Malaysia. However, regarding the mediating role of PERV between HSQL and TS it has been confirmed that PERV partially mediates the effect of HSQL on TS in the context of the hospitality sector in Malaysia. This means that the PESV partially mediates the relationship between HSQL and TS. Essentially, the quality of hospitality services enhances the PESV for tourists, and when PESV increases that drives TS along with the HSQL. The study suggests that improving HSQL enhances tourists-PESV, which then leads to greater satisfaction, emphasizing the critical role of PESV as a mediator in the relationship between HSQL and TS.

The current result is supported by previous studies that found a mediating role of PERV between HSQL and TS. Such a study in Malaysia hospitality conducted by Keshavarz and Jamshidi (2018), found that, PERV mediates the effect of HSQL on TS in the hospitality sector in Malaysia. Also supported by An, Suh & Eck's (2019) study revealed that HSQL and PESV positively impacted TS. Perceived value (PESV) also partially mediated the relationship between HSQL and TS. In addition, this result is consistent with Gumussoy, and Koseoglu (2016) who found that, TS is influenced by PERV price fairness, and three of SQ factors (reliability-assurance- and empathy). Furthermore, our result was supported by Tuncer, Unusan, and Cobanoglu (2021) who found that HSQL positively affects PERV which in turn affects TS. Furthermore, this current finding is consistent with Samudro, Sumarwan, Simanjuntak, & Yusuf (2020) who found that TS was influenced by both HSQL and PESV. And Uzir et al (2021) found that, the effect of HSQL on CS was mediated by PERV and trust. Therefore, our results confirmed the mediating role of PESV in the effect of HSQL on TS on the hospitality sector in Malaysia.

LIMITATION

The present study investigated the mediating role of the PESV of the effect of HSQL on TS in the hospitality sector in Malaysia, this study cannot be free of limitations. The first limitation of the study is that, the study collected data from three of the hotel customers from each hotel, future studies may collect data from more customers from each hotel. Second, it didn't examine the causes of HSQL such as transformational leadership, LMS, POS, organizational practices, employees' attitudes, and behavior. Therefore, future studies may include some of these variables in the effect on HSQL. The third limitation is didn't examine the consequences of the model such as loyalty, this can be included in future studies to understand how HSQL can affect loyalty through PESV and TS.

CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the direct effect of HSQL on PESV and TS, and the mediating role of the PESV of the effect of HSQL on TS in the hospitality sector in Malaysia. Quantitative and questionnaire method was used to collect the data from hotel customers in Malaysia. The study revealed that HSQL positively affects PESV and TS, and PESV mediates the effect of HSQL and TS. This study provided insight into how service quality affects TS regarding food quality, facilities, and accommodation quality, in the hospitality sector in Malaysia. The study also provided directions for future research to include some variable that causes HSQL and the consequences of TS on customers' loyalty.

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