

Balancing Tradition and Innovation: A Case Study on How Brand Equity and Service Quality Shape Revisit Intention in Luxury Hospitality

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Abstract

The hospitality industry is rapidly evolving through digital transformation, giving rise to hybrid hospitality environments where digital tools complement, but do not replace, human-centered service. Despite these advances, traditional constructs such as perceived service quality and brand equity remain key to guest behavior. This study explores how these constructs influence revisit intention through a case study of the Grand Mosta Hotel & Casino in Bulgaria. Data were collected from 439 guests via structured surveys. Factor and regression analyses revealed that both service quality and brand equity positively affect revisit intention, with brand equity mediating this relationship. Findings confirm that guests still value emotional trust and relational quality even in digitally supported environments. The study contributes to the ongoing discussion on balancing technological efficiency with human-centered service, providing insights into how luxury hospitality can sustain loyalty through this balance.

Keywords

Revisit Intention, Perceived Service Quality, Brand Equity, Hybrid Hospitality, Digital Transformation, Luxury Hospitality

1. Introduction

The emergence of metaverse has triggered profound shifts within tourism and hospitality, redefining how hotels connect with their guests. By enforcing with immersive digital environments and advanced interactive technologies, the metaverse provides innovative opportunities for hotels to differentiate themselves and deliver exceptional pre-stay, in-stay, and post-stay experiences (Gleim et al., 2024;

Buhalis et al., 2025). Features such as virtual reality tours allow potential guests to explore rooms before booking and interactive digital services have transformed the metaverse into a game-changing tool for boosting both guest interaction and operational efficiency (Vlasceanu et al., 2023). In this context, hybrid hospitality can be understood as service environments where digital tools and traditional human interactions operate together, allowing technology to enhance efficiency while human contact preserves emotional value within the guest experience.

Despite the rapid adoption of advanced technologies, brand equity and perceived service quality keep being the main determinants of customer loyalty and revisit intention in the hospitality industry. Brand equity reflects the emotional bonds established with guests through trust, recognition, and associations, and is a perceptual output that also encourages long-term loyalty (Aaker, 1991: pp. 15-18; Kim & Kim, 2005; Rahman et al., 2022). Similarly, perceived service quality, defined as the level to which service delivery meets customer expectations, has a direct impact on satisfaction and revisit behavior (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Brady & Cronin, 2001; Wani et al., 2023). These enduring factors emphasize the continued relevance of a human-centered approach to hospitality beyond technological advances. Providing guests with personalized and meaningful experiences not only increases satisfaction but also increases the likelihood of return by reinforcing emotionally based loyalty (Tai et al., 2021; Hao & Chon, 2022; Das, 2023). Therefore, technology should be positioned as a tool that supports the human aspect of hospitality, rather than replacing (Bagadiya & Kathiriya, 2024).

The integration of technology into hotel operations has not only eased administrative workloads but has also reshaped staff-guest interactions, enhancing efficiency and service delivery. Research suggests that automation tools in hospitality improve operational workflows while allowing employees to focus on personalized guest experiences (Carver & Kun, 2022). By automating routine tasks, hotel staff can dedicate more time to optimizing services to individual guest needs, fostering deeper engagement and higher customer satisfaction (Abraham & Krishnan, 2021). This ensures that guests experience both convenience and meaningful interactions, both of which are critical for brand loyalty and long-term retention (Nuseir, 2022).

Nevertheless, while metaverse technologies have undeniably enhanced convenience and operational efficiency, they cannot replace the irreplaceable value of high-quality human-to-human interactions, which remain central to fulfilling guest experiences (Kotler et al., 2023: p. 79). The hospitality sector must balance technological advancement with the core human essence of service, ensuring that automation enhances personal connections instead of replacing them (Buhalis & Moldavska, 2022).

In this context, despite increasing digitalization, traditional service elements remain essential for sustaining customer loyalty and business success. By focusing on these factors, the study enriches our understanding of guest behavior in a

transforming hospitality landscape. Consequently, it sheds light on the continued relevance of brand equity and service quality within the sector's digital transformation, laying the groundwork for further exploration of how innovation and tradition can coexist to enhance guest experiences.

This study has thoroughly examined the relationship among brand equity, service quality and guests' revisit intention and their effects on each other in the context of tourism. Despite increasing digitalization, it is highlighted that traditional service elements are still indispensable for customer loyalty and business success. Consequently, by focusing on these elements, the study deepens our understanding of guest behavior in the changing accommodation environment and provides insight into how innovation and tradition can enrich the guest experience.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Perceived Service Quality and Its Role in Revisit Intention

Perceived service quality was defined as customers' overall evaluation of a service based on their past experiences and expectations by Parasuraman et al. (1988). This notion has long been considered one of the key drivers of guest satisfaction, loyalty, and revisit intention in tourism and hospitality. The SERVQUAL scale developed by the same authors, comprises five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. While this structure remains the most widely used framework to evaluate service experiences in every period studied, ongoing changes in service environments have reshaped how service quality is delivered and assessed.

In the current era, when the hospitality industry rapidly adopts digital transformation, the perception and delivery of service are being redefined. Digital innovations such as automated check-in systems, AI-enabled customer service, and smart room systems have significantly transformed guests' perceptions of service quality, especially in the context of luxury hospitality (Tussyadiah, 2020). Recent perspectives also underline that AI-driven interfaces redefine service expectations and reshape the perceived quality of guest interactions (Ciftci, 2025). Despite these technological advances, traditional components of service quality, such as face-to-face interaction and personalized service, still maintain their importance (Choi et al., 2020). Maintaining high service standards remains a vital factor in gaining competitive advantage and sustaining loyalty (Ali et al., 2021).

Recent developments in digital service environments have led researchers to further study how traditional service quality frameworks keep up with technological change. Recent studies indicate that the framework requires adaptation due to increasing digitalization. Components such as digital convenience, AI-driven personalization, and data privacy have become increasingly relevant for evaluating modern service experiences (Ge et al., 2021).

Zaman et al. (2024) found that interactive digital interfaces and virtual hotel previews positively affect perceived service quality by increasing personalization and engagement. Similarly, Ayvaz-Çavdaroğlu et al. (2024) demonstrated that

simulated empathy and responsiveness via metaverse platforms positively influence customer experience. [Laachach et al. \(2024\)](#) stated that gamification and immersive experiences used in virtual environments create memorable guest journeys. However, these technologies are not positive. [Singh et al. \(2024\)](#) raised concerns about data security and user trust, while [Prados-Castillo et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasized technological inequalities and expressed that the digital divide can undermine perceived reliability and fairness in service delivery. As [Lee et al. \(2024\)](#) mentioned, digital tools should be enhanced by integrating the emotional and human dimensions of hospitality services but not replaced.

Within this context, many hospitality businesses still aim at enhancing the guest experience by combining technology with human interaction ([Laachach et al., 2024](#)). [Al-Gharaibah \(2020\)](#) found that hotels with high service standards are more successful in maintaining customer loyalty compared to hotels competing fundamentally on price. [Ajayi \(2024\)](#) reported that service gaps in luxury hotels often lead to brand switching and negative customer reviews, while [Choi et al. \(2020\)](#) noted the value of personalized, face-to-face service among luxury guests. With the increasing integration of AI technologies, researchers such as [Al-Hyari et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Mandić et al. \(2023\)](#) observed that hybrid service delivery and merging technology with authentic human engagement leads to higher guest satisfaction levels than fully automated solutions. Although service delivery continues to evolve, traditional quality frameworks such as SERVQUAL remain applicable ([Ayvaz-Çavdaroglu et al., 2024](#)), especially when adapted to include digital touchpoints, AI elements, and privacy concerns have been found effective in evaluating service quality in contemporary environments ([Wong et al., 2022](#)).

These technological and experiential shifts raise critical questions about how perceived service quality influences behavioral outcomes in contemporary hospitality settings, particularly revisit intention.

Perceived service quality is a foundational construct in hospitality marketing, widely recognized for shaping customer behavior and loyalty intentions. Rooted in the service quality models of [Parasuraman et al. \(1988\)](#) and customer loyalty frameworks by [Zeithaml et al. \(1996\)](#), service quality is theorized to influence guests' future behavioral responses such as satisfaction, recommendation, and repeat visiting.

Empirical findings support this relationship robustly. For instance, [Kazmi et al., \(2020\)](#) revealed that higher service quality at tourist destinations significantly increased visitors' intentions to return, underlining its role in long-term customer retention. Similarly, [Sirimongkol \(2022\)](#) showed that restaurant service quality remained a key predictor of repeat visits even during pandemic conditions. In support of this link, [Talukder et al. \(2023\)](#) highlighted the positive role of technology-enhanced service quality in encouraging repeat visits within food and hospitality settings. However, despite the extensive literature on service quality, few studies have recently tested its influence on revisit intention using updated hospitality contexts ([Buhalis et al., 2025](#); [Ciftci, 2025](#)).

Thus, based on insights from both theoretical frameworks and empirical studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Perceived service quality has a positive and significant impact on revisit intention.

2.2. Brand Equity and Its Role in Revisit Intention

Brand equity is a critical factor shaping consumer behavior and particularly leading to loyalty, satisfaction, and revisit intention in hospitality (Aaker, 1991). Brand equity reflects the value consumers give to a brand and comprises dimensions such as perceived quality, brand awareness, brand associations and brand loyalty (Moise et al., 2019; Górska-Warsewicz & Kulykovets, 2020; Vinh et al., 2020). Aaker's model also includes brand assets like patents, trademarks, and channel relationships (Aaker, 1992), highlighting the role of consumer perception and loyalty in building sustainable brand value.

While metaverse technologies offer new ways for hotels to engage with guests, brand equity remains central to how consumers utilize these innovations. Even in virtual spaces, guests lean on brand reputation, trust, and emotional ties to navigate new experiences. Brand equity acts as both a cognitive filter and emotional bridge in digitally enhanced hospitality. Recent studies emphasize that brand trust remains central even in virtual hospitality settings (Buhalis et al., 2025). A guest's willingness to use services like virtual tours or AI assistants often depends on the trust they place in the brand (Moise et al., 2019; Huang, 2024).

Rather than being replaced by technology, brand equity evolves in parallel as it humanizes digital touchpoints and reinforces trust in hybrid or fully virtual interactions. For example, Sharipudin et al. (2021) found that strong brand equity fosters favorable post-stay evaluations and electronic customer advocacy, each of which positively influences revisit behavior, especially among digitally active generations. Within the scope of health tourism, Rahman et al. (2022) emphasized that destination brand equity is a key driver of repeat visits, while Shanti and Joshi (2022) demonstrated that sustainable brand identity enhances both brand perception and return intentions among eco-conscious travelers.

As in the past, in recent years, empirical research has further validated the strong correlation between brand equity and revisit intention in hospitality contexts. Abbasi et al. (2022) found that brand equity notably contributes to customer satisfaction and loyalty, especially when reinforced by social media-driven brand engagement. Kumail et al. (2021) demonstrated that destination brand equity, which comprises awareness, authenticity, and emotional appeal, significantly enhances revisit intentions among international tourists. Likewise, Jiang et al. (2023) showed that food brand equity positively influences satisfaction and the likelihood of return visits in gastronomic tourism settings. Similarly, Bordian et al. (2024) confirmed that hotel brand equity, strengthened through value co-creation and relational innovation, plays an essential role in shaping revisit intention by enhancing emotional value and trust.

Therefore, combining theoretical models and empirical findings, it becomes evident that brand equity not only enhances perceived value but also fosters loyalty behaviors such as revisit intention.

Based on this strong conceptual and practical foundation, the subsequent hypothesis is presented:

H2: Brand equity has a positive and significant impact on revisit intention.

Furthermore, brand equity is often considered a result of the service quality perceived by consumers (Jahanzeb et al., 2013). A quality service strengthens the perceptions of brand equity, reinforcing trust, satisfaction and brand associations and it is supported long term loyalty (Hanaysha, 2016; Soni & Govender, 2018). Previous studies also show that service quality, especially consistently delivered across integrated touchpoints, can significantly enhance brand equity (Sreejesh, 2024). Similarly, both Dahmiri (2020) and He & Li (2010) empirically confirmed that service quality has a significant and positive effect on brand equity. In contrast, Vatjanasaregagul & Wang (2007) did not find a direct relationship between these two variables in the hotel industry and suggested that this link may vary depending on the context or mediating factors.

Taken together, these perspectives highlight the relevance of re-examining the service quality and brand equity link within digitally transformed hospitality environments. Therefore, based on the existing literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Perceived service quality has a positive and significant impact on brand equity.

Perceived service quality and brand equity independently influence revisit intention. However, studies addressing how these two variables interact in a causal framework are limited. In the literature, brand equity has been conceptualized as a potential mediating variable that carries the effect of perceived service quality on revisit intention (Liu et al., 2024). This study revealed that service quality indirectly affects revisit intention through brand equity and safety management system.

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Brand equity mediates the relationship between perceived service quality and revisit intention.

3. Methodology

Previous studies have characterized luxury hospitality and casino guests as high-income and experience-oriented individuals who value personalized service (Han & Hyun, 2018; Prentice et al., 2022). In line with this information, the sample of this present study consists of guests from Grand Mosta Hotel & Casino in Bulgaria. These guests are high-income individuals with diverse profiles, strong spending potential and generally prefer exclusive and customized service experiences. This population was strategically selected as a relevant group for the analysis of revisit intention within technology-enabled luxury accommodation settings,

due to their high sensitivity to both service quality and brand-related perceptions.

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

To ensure statistical reliability and generalizability, the required minimum sample size was calculated based on the formula suggested by [Krejcie and Morgan \(1970\)](#), with a 95% confidence interval, 5% margin of error, and a presumed population proportion of 0.5. Based on this calculation, the recommended minimum sample size was determined as 384 respondents. In total, 439 valid questionnaires were obtained by exceeding the required sample size.

The data were collected from guests of the Grand Mosta Hotel & Casino in Bulgaria between October 2024 and February 2025. The hotel, which is known for servicing to high-income and experience-oriented travelers, was purposefully selected to reflect the dynamics of luxury hospitality in a digitally enhanced service environment.

The data collection process employed a convenience sampling technique. Surveys were administered to guests who were available and willing to participate at the time of contact. The hotel's Guest Relations Department approached guests during their stay, primarily in common areas (the lobby, spa, and restaurant) and invited them to complete the questionnaire by way of face-to-face interview if they had available time and expressed interest. The purpose of the study, anonymity, and data confidentiality were clearly communicated to all participants and informed consent was obtained prior to questionnaire administration.

No personally identifiable information was collected, and no incentives were offered to avoid bias. The study was formally approved by hotel management, though no institutional ethical board review was required due to the non-sensitive nature of the research and the independent status of one of the researchers. The anonymized dataset used in this study has been made openly available via Zenodo ([Sağındık, 2025](#)).

3.2. Measurement Instruments

The questionnaire consisted of three main scales. Perceived Service Quality was measured using the SERVPERF scale ([Parasuraman et al., 1988](#); [Lai et al., 2020](#)), including 22 items across five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Brand Equity was assessed using a 10-item scale developed by [Yoo and Donthu \(2001\)](#), which captures consumer-based brand equity dimensions such as brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand associations. Revisit intention was measured using a 3-item instrument modified from existing research ([Zeithaml et al., 1996](#); [Bülbül et al., 2012](#)), assessing behavioral intention to return, recommend, and prioritize the hotel in future stays.

All scale items were evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree") ([Hutchinson & Chyung, 2023](#)). The

scale items used in this study adapted from established instruments measuring perceived service quality, brand equity and revisit intention are grouped according to constructs and presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Questionnaire scale items.

	Indicators	Source(s)
	Perceived Service Quality	
	Tangibility	
T1	The furniture and equipment in the hotel are modern and up to date.	
T2	The rooms, reception, restaurant, spa, casino and fitness areas in the hotel are spacious and visually appealing.	
T3	The hotel staff are well-groomed and stylish in appearance.	
T4	The materials accompanying the service (e.g., room cards, brochures, signs) are visually attractive.	
	Reliability	
R1	The hotel management consistently delivers services within the promised timeframe.	
R2	When guests encounter a problem, the hotel staff respond sincerely to resolve the issue.	
R3	The hotel staff perform the service correctly the first time.	
R4	The hotel staff provide the service at the promised time.	
R5	The hotel staff maintain records without error.	
	Responsiveness	
RS1	Hotel staff inform guests precisely when the service will be delivered.	Parasuraman et al., 1988; Lai et al., 2020
RS2	Hotel staff provide prompt service to guests.	
RS3	Hotel staff are always willing to assist guests.	
RS4	Hotel staff respond to guests' inquiries immediately.	
	Assurance	
A1	The behavior of hotel staff instills a sense of trust in guests.	
A2	The services provided by the hotel make guests feel safe.	
A3	Hotel staff are always respectful toward guests.	
A4	Hotel staff possess the knowledge necessary to answer guests' questions.	
	Empathy	
E1	It is a hotel that pays individual attention to each guest.	
E2	The hotel's operating hours are convenient for guests.	
E3	The hotel has staff who attentively care for guests.	
E4	Hotel staff show genuine concern for the needs of their guests.	
E5	Hotel staff understand the specific needs of their guests.	
	Brand Equity	
	Brand Loyalty	Yoo & Donthu, 2001
BL1	I consider myself a loyal customer of Grand Mosta.	

Continued

BL2	Grand Mosta is always my first choice.	
BL3	If the hotel is available next time, I will stay here again.	
Perceived Quality		
PQ1	Grand Mosta demonstrates a high standard of overall quality.	
PQ2	Grand Mosta delivers a superior level of service.	
Brand Awareness/Brand Associations		
AW1	I can recognize Grand Mosta among other competing hotels.	
AW2	I am familiar with Grand Mosta.	
AS1	Certain characteristics of Grand Mosta easily come to mind.	
AS2	I can easily recall Grand Mosta's logo.	
AS3	I have difficulty visualizing Grand Mosta in my mind. (R)*	
Revisit Intention		
RV1	I intend to use the services of this hotel.	Zeithaml et al., 1996;
RV2	I will recommend this hotel to others.	Bülbül et al., 2012
RV3	I intend to revisit this hotel in the future.	

*R: Reverse Code.

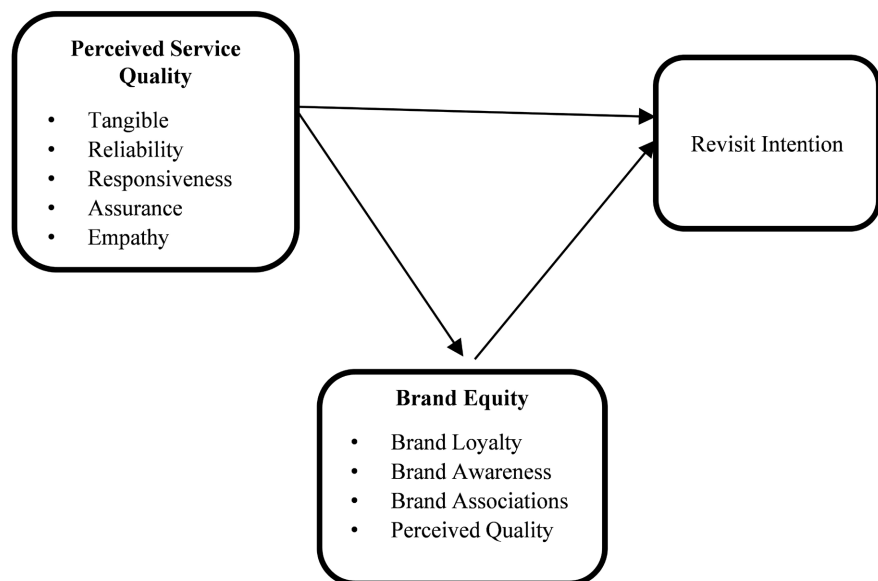


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the relationships among perceived service quality, brand equity and revisit intention.

This study adopts a conceptual model that examines the effects among perceived service quality, brand equity and revisit intention. Perceived service quality is conceptualized through five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Brand equity includes four key components: brand loyalty, awareness, associations, and perceived quality. The relationships among these constructs are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

3.3. Data Analysis

The collected data was entered into IBM SPSS Statistics software for analysis by being coded. Descriptive statistics, reliability tests, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and linear and mutual regression analyses were employed to assess the relationships between brand equity, perceived service quality, and revisit intention.

3.3.1. Profile Respondents

A total of 439 guests participated in the survey. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 53.5% male and 46.2% female respondents. The sample was predominantly middle-aged and older, with the largest age groups being 39 - 48 (28.2%) and 49 - 58 (25.3%). Educationally, most respondents were well-educated, with 38.5% held a bachelor's degree and 16.2% having postgraduate degrees. Most participants were either business owners (35.8%) or managers (32.1%). Notably, 62.9% of participants visited the hotel six times or more, reflecting a high level of customer loyalty, as shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of respondents (n = 439).

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	203	46.2
	Male	235	53.5
Age	Prefer not to say	1	0.2
	18 - 28	32	7.3
	29 - 38	71	16.2
	39 - 48	124	28.2
	49 - 58	111	25.3
	59+	101	23.0
Education Level	Primary	6	1.4
	High School	127	28.9
	Associate degree	66	15.0
	Bachelor's degree	169	38.5
	Postgraduate	71	16.2
Occupational Status	Business Owner	157	35.8
	Manager	141	32.1
	Employee	110	25.1
	Retired	25	5.7
	Housewife	6	1.4
Visit Frequency	First Time	38	8.7
	Second Time	46	10.5
	3 - 5 Times	79	18.0
	6 or More	276	62.9

3.3.2. EFA Results of Perceived Service Quality Scale

Given ongoing debates about the SERVQUAL model's conceptual and sectoral limitations (Mahmoud & Khalifa, 2015; Bayraktaroğlu & Atrek, 2010), EFA was performed to validate the five-dimensional SERVPERF structure. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value (0.970) and Bartlett's test ($\chi^2 = 10129.913$, $p < 0.01$) confirmed the sample adequacy and data suitability for factor analysis.

Although SERVPERF was originally developed as a five-dimensional scale comprising tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, the exploratory factor analysis conducted in this study revealed a two-factor structure. This structure explained 72.129% of the total variance and reflected the specific perceptions of guests in the context of luxury hospitality.

The first factor was labeled "Perceived Reliability of the Hotel and its Staff," including items from reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy dimensions. The second factor retained "Tangibility" dimension as a separate construct, consistent with its distinct physical attributes (Table 3).

Table 3. Factor loadings of perceived service quality.

Item	Component 1	Component 2
T1		0.860
T2		0.847
T3		0.541*
T4		0.721
R1	0.700	
R2	0.782	
R3	0.750	
R4	0.752	
R5	0.680	
RS1	0.759	
RS2	0.792	
RS3	0.808	
RS4	0.858	
A1	0.838	
A2	0.789	
A3	0.777	
A4	0.781	
E1	0.788	
E2	0.575*	
E3	0.840	
E4	0.841	
E5	0.734	

T: Tangibility, R: Reliability, RS: Responsiveness, A: Assurance, E: Empathy. *T3 and E2 < 0.70.

Upon reviewing the factor loadings, two items (T3 and E2) had loadings below 0.70 (Karaman, 2023) and were excluded from further analysis. This decision is consistent with standard practices in EFA, where items with insufficient loadings are typically removed to strengthen construct validity and improve model interpretability (Gebremedhin et al., 2022).

3.3.3. EFA results of brand equity scale

EFA was conducted to assess the construct validity of the brand equity scale, which included 10 items across four theoretical subdimensions: brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand associations (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.932 and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2 = 3081.10$, $p < 0.01$) confirmed the adequacy of the sample and the data suitability for factor analysis.

Although the rotated solution initially suggested a four-factor structure, item loadings were inconsistent with the expected theoretical dimensions due to substantial cross-loadings. In contrast, the unrotated component matrix revealed a coherent unidimensional structure, with many items showing strong loadings above 0.70 on a single factor.

This empirical outcome indicates that respondents may perceive brand equity more holistically, rather than distinguishing between its conceptual dimensions. The decision to operationalize brand equity as a unidimensional construct is supported by research showing that consumers in high-involvement and symbolic service contexts often rely on a holistic brand evaluation rather than assessing individual dimensions separately (Christodoulides et al., 2015). This perspective is particularly relevant in luxury hospitality settings, where experiential, emotional, and symbolic cues converge into a unified brand judgment, thereby justifying the adoption of a single-factor structure in the present study.

Table 4. Component matrix for brand equity.

Item	Component 1
BL1	0.804
BL2	0.846
BL3	0.876
PQ1	0.877
PQ2	0.838
AW1	0.730
AW2	0.837
AS1	0.810
AS2	0.734
AS3	0.304*

BL: Brand Loyalty, PQ: Perceived Quality, AW: Brand Awareness, AS: Brand Association.
*AS3 < 0.70.

Following established EFA guidelines, items with insufficient loadings or interpretive inconsistency are commonly excluded to enhance structural validity (Lloret-Segura et al., 2014). Only AS3, a reverse-coded item, showed a weak loading (0.304) and was removed from subsequent analyses due to its low contribution and the impact of respondent fatigue (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Shrestha, 2021). The final unidimensional factor structure demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.936$ seen in Table 5), supporting the scale's reliability in the context of luxury hospitality settings. The complete factor structure is presented in Table 4.

3.3.4. Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to assess the internal consistency of the scales. According to the reliability threshold of 0.70 recommended by Cronbach (Malhotra et al., 2012: p. 435), all constructs were considered statistically acceptable. The overall Perceived Service Quality scale showed very high reliability ($\alpha = 0.974$), followed by Brand Equity ($\alpha = 0.936$) and Revisit Intention ($\alpha = 0.904$). These results confirm the statistical consistency of the measurement instruments used in this study (see Table 5).

Table 5. Reliability analysis results (cronbach's alpha).

Item	N of items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Perceive Service Quality	20	0.974
Brand Equity	9	0.936
Revisit Intention	3	0.904
Total Items	32	0.971

T3, E2, AS3 excluded due to low factor loadings.

3.3.5. Relationships among Perceived Service Quality, Brand Equity and Revisit Intention

Perceived service quality was strongly correlated with brand equity ($r = 0.722$, $p < 0.01$) and moderately correlated with revisit intention ($r = 0.492$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, brand equity exhibited a strong positive correlation with revisit intention ($r = 0.721$, $p < 0.01$) shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Pearson correlation matrix.

	Perceived Service Quality	Brand Equity	Revisit Intention
Perceived Service Quality	1	0.722	0.492
Brand Equity	0.722	1	0.721
Revisit Intention	0.492	0.721	1

All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N = 439.

3.3.6. Hypotheses Testing

Linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of perceived ser-

vice quality on revisit intention. The model was found to be statistically significant ($F = 139.346$, $p < 0.001$) and explained approximately 24.2% of the variance in revisit intention. Service quality significantly predicted revisit intention ($\beta = 0.492$, $p < 0.001$) (Table 7). Therefore, H1 hypothesis, which proposed a positive and significant effect of perceived service quality on revisit intention, was supported.

Table 7. Results of the effect of perceived service quality on revisit intention.

Predictor	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
						B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.492	0.242	0.240	139.346	<0.001	2.422	0.182		13.281	<0.001
PSQ						0.470	0.040	0.492	11.805	<0.001

Dependent Variable: Revisit Intention, PSQ: Perceived Service Quality.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the individual effects of the perceived service quality dimensions “perceived reliability of the hotel and its staff” and “tangibility” separately on revisit intention. The model was statistically significant ($F = 80.244$, $p < 0.001$) and explained 26.6% of the variance in revisit intention. Both dimensions had positive and significant effects: reliability ($\beta = 0.281$, $p < 0.001$) and tangibility ($\beta = 0.289$, $p < 0.001$). No multicollinearity issues were detected ($VIF = 1.769$). These findings confirm that both reliability of the hotel and its staff and tangibility are important predictors of guests’ intention to revisit the hotel (see Table 8).

Table 8. Results of combined effects of PSQ dimensions on revisit intention.

Predictor	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	Collinearity Statistics	
						B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.519	0.269	0.266	80.244	0.000	2.078	0.199		10.466	0.000		
Reliability						0.253	0.049	0.281	5.157	0.000	0.565	1.769
Tangibility						0.290	0.055	0.289	5.298	0.000	0.565	1.769

Dependent Variable: Revisit Intention.

Table 9. Results of the effect of brand equity on revisit intention.

Predictor	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
						B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.721	0.520	0.519	473.234	<0.001	1.194	0.156		7.663	<0.001
BE						0.734	0.034	0.721	21.754	<0.001

Dependent Variable: Revisit Intention, BE: Brand Equity.

A linear regression analysis was performed to assess the effect of brand equity on revisit intention. The model was highly significant ($F = 473.234$, $p < 0.001$) and explained 52% of the variance, indicating strong explanatory power. The analysis confirmed that brand equity positively and significantly predicts revisit intention ($\beta = 0.721$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, Hypothesis H2 was supported (see **Table 9**).

A linear regression analysis was performed to examine the effect of perceived service quality on brand equity. The model was statistically significant ($F = 477.142$, $p < 0.001$) and explained 52.2% of the variance in brand equity. Perceived service quality was found to be a strong and significant predictor ($\beta = 0.722$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher service quality is associated with greater brand equity (see **Table 10**). So, Hypothesis H3, suggesting that perceived service quality positively and significantly affects brand equity, was supported.

Table 10. Results of the effect of perceived service quality on brand equity.

Predictor	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
						B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.722	0.522	0.521	477.142	<0.001	1.502	0.142		10.551	<0.001
PSQ						0.679	0.031	0.722	21.844	<0.001

Dependent Variable: Brand Equity, PSQ: Perceived Service Quality.

Given the significant contribution of both brand equity and perceived service quality to revisit intention, as well as the significant impact of perceived service quality on brand equity, brand equity may function as a mediator in this relationship. The mediating role of brand equity was tested using Hayes's PROCESS macro (Model 4). As demonstrated in **Table 11**, the indirect effect of brand equity was statistically significant, as the 95% bootstrap confidence interval didn't include zero. Therefore, it is concluded that brand equity has a full mediating role in the relationship between perceived service quality and revisit intention, and thus, Hypothesis H4 is supported.

Table 11. Hayes PROCESS model 4 results: the mediating effect of brand equity.

Model	Y	X	M	n
4	RI	PSQ	BE	439
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:				
Mediator	Indirect Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
BE	0.5708	0.0617	0.4519	0.6921

Y (Dependent Variable): Revisit Intention, X (Independent Variable): PSQ (Perceived Service Quality), M (Mediator): BE (Brand Equity).

4. Conclusion and Discussion

This study contributes to the hospitality literature by re-evaluating the impact of

traditional service quality elements during ongoing digital transformation. The findings provide important insights into the functioning of service quality and brand equity in the context of modern luxury hospitality.

EFA of the SERVPERF scale revealed a conceptual simplification by reducing the traditional five-dimensional structure to two dimensions: “Perceived Reliability of the Hotel and Staff” and “Tangibility”. This outcome reflects a notable shift in guest priorities in luxury hospitality environments, where human interaction, emotional trust, and physical ambiance continue to dominate perceptions of service quality, even despite rising digitalization and automation.

These findings indicate that guests in digitally supported luxury accommodations perceive service quality in a more holistic and integrated way, especially regarding staff reliability and interpersonal interaction. Dimensions such as empathy, assurance, and responsiveness are often experienced not as isolated traits, but as part of a single emotional construct shaped by trust and personalization. This supports recent research highlighting the enduring importance of human-centered service in technology-enhanced hospitality contexts (Al-Hyari et al., 2023; Mandić et al., 2023; Mourtzis, 2023; Gursoy, 2025).

Similarly, the brand equity scale exhibited a unidimensional structure, suggesting that guests in luxury hospitality contexts tend to perceive brand equity as a holistic and integrated construct, rather than distinguishing between its conceptual subdimensions such as brand loyalty, awareness, or perceived quality. This perception may reflect the emotional and symbolic nature of luxury brands, where experiential value and overall trust often outweigh analytical differentiation across brand components.

This finding is consistent with prior studies by Washburn and Plank (2002) and Cristea and Munteanu (2022), which also reported unidimensional brand equity structures in premium service environments. It supports the notion that brand value in high-end hospitality is built not through isolated associations, but through a unified consumer impression shaped by consistent, high-quality experiences.

The exclusion of the reverse-coded item (AS3) was both statistically and methodologically justified due to low factor loading and typical interpretive issues such as misinterpretation and inconsistent responses (Weijters et al., 2013; Kam, 2023). Reversed items, while often included to reduce response bias, can sometimes introduce confusion or cognitive fatigue, especially in international or hospitality-related survey contexts. Thus, their removal may enhance scale clarity and reliability.

Hypothesis testing confirmed the proposed relationships in line with previous literature:

- **H1** (service quality → revisit intention) is supported and consistent with studies such as Kazmi et al., (2020); Sirimongkol (2022) and Talukder et al. (2023).
- **H2** (brand equity → revisit intention) complies with findings from Abbasi et al. (2022) and Jiang et al. (2023), Bordian et al. (2024).
- **H3** (service quality → brand equity) was aligned with supporting previous re-

search by [Soni & Govender \(2018\)](#), [Dahmiri \(2020\)](#) and [Sreejesh \(2024\)](#).

When service quality dimensions were evaluated separately, the effect of reliability towards hotel and its staff on revisit intention was stronger than tangibility. This result is consistent with [Wahid et al. \(2017\)](#) and [Sapkota et al. \(2023\)](#), who emphasized the role of reliable service and physical conditions in guest satisfaction.

Notably, the results revealed a mediation by brand equity in the relationship between service quality and revisit intention, which contrasts with the findings of [Liu et al. \(2024\)](#), who reported a partial mediating role. This finding suggests that guests often evaluate service quality through the lens of their expectations and brand experiences. This perspective is further supported by recent text-mining studies analyzing customer reviews ([Piriyakul et al., 2024](#)). Accordingly, hypothesis H4 was supported.

The full mediation result indicates that, within luxury hospitality settings, guests tend to interpret service quality not merely as a functional performance indicator but as a signal of the brand's credibility, prestige, and emotional value. In such high-involvement environments, service encounters strongly shape guests' overall impression of the brand, leading service quality to influence revisit intention primarily through brand equity. This may explain why full mediation was observed in this study, whereas partial mediation is more common in broader or mid-scale hospitality contexts where brand cues carry less symbolic weight.

Finally, this study reinforces the call for a hybrid service model where digital innovation coexists with human touch. Scholars such as [Buhalis & Moldavska \(2022\)](#) and [Hao & Chon \(2022\)](#) argue that emotional engagement, personalization, and human trust remain vital, even in digitally immersive environments. This study supports a hybrid approach wherein technology enhances rather than replaces brand-driven emotional experiences.

The demographic profile of the respondents is predominantly middle-aged, educated professionals with high visit frequency and this situation may have increased the importance of brand equity. These guests are more likely to form emotional connections with hotel brands, making consistent brand positioning a strategic priority for luxury hospitality operators.

4.1. Theoretical Implications

This study makes two important contributions to the theoretical literature. First, the factor analysis of brand equity and service quality scales revealed simplified, empirically validated structures that differ from their classical theoretical dimensions ([Parasuraman et al., 1988](#); [Lai et al., 2020](#)). Specifically, brand equity emerged as a unidimensional construct ([Yoo & Donthu, 2001](#)), while service quality condensed into two core factors: "Perceived Reliability of Hotel and its Staff" and "Tangibility." This situation points to simpler and more applicable scale structures, especially in the luxury hotel context.

Second, rather than questioning the broader applicability of brand equity as a

mediating variable, this study clarifies the specific nature of this mediation in luxury hospitality by demonstrating a full, rather than partial, mediating effect. Contrary to earlier models suggesting partial mediation (e.g., Liu et al., 2024), this research identifies a full mediation that perceived service quality impacts revisit intention only through brand equity. This highlights an underexplored mechanism in high-end service contexts and expands theoretical understanding of brand-driven loyalty formation.

Although there is extensive academic interest in service quality, brand equity, and behavioral outcomes, empirical studies that examine all three constructs simultaneously, especially those treating brand equity as a mediating variable remain limited. This study addresses that gap by presenting a tested mediation model within the context of digitally supported luxury hospitality.

The research demonstrates that while technological transformation continues to reshape service channels, fundamental psychological constructs such as trust, attentiveness, and brand attachment still play a decisive role in consumer decision-making within hybrid service environments. Accordingly, the study not only contributes to the development of empirical theory but also confirms the continued relevance of classical theoretical frameworks in contemporary service contexts.

4.2. Managerial Implications

This study provides important insights for managers into luxury hospitality. First, findings show that brand equity has a stronger impact on guest loyalty than service quality alone. Maintaining high service standards is necessary, but it is not sufficient. Managers should also invest in building emotional brand connections through consistent communication, symbolic brand identity, and personalized guest engagement.

Second, the results highlight two key service quality areas: staff reliability and physical environment. Training staff to be responsive, empathetic, and dependable should be a top priority. As well, maintaining clean, elegant, and functional spaces helps reinforce the guest's overall impression.

Third, the findings highlight that technology should support, but should not substitute, human interaction in service delivery. Tools like AI assistants, mobile check-ins, or digital concierge services can improve convenience. However, trust, warmth, and personalized service still shape how guests feel about their stay. Technology should enhance these human elements, not overshadow them.

Finally, since brand equity fully mediates the impact of service quality on revisit intention, improving service alone is not enough. Service efforts should be tied to brand strategy. Every positive service experience must also strengthen how guests see and feel about the brand. Coordination between marketing, operations, and guest relations is essential for long-term loyalty.

4.3. Limitations and Future Research

This study has some limitations. It is constrained by focusing on a single location

and having a relatively homogeneous sample. Because the data were collected from a single luxury hotel using convenience sampling, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings to other hospitality settings or guest segments. Furthermore, since subjective data is used, it is recommended that behavioral tracking methods should be preferred in future studies.

In particular, the existing literature is quite limited in studies examining perceived service quality, brand equity and revisit intention variables within unified model. This gap necessitates a more in-depth investigation of the combined and mediating relationships among these variables. Future studies could also compare traditional, automated, and hybrid service models across different cultural contexts and examine the effects of emotional branding and digital tools on loyalty without undermining human-centered service values.

Besides, future research can also build on these findings by examining novel notions “hybrid service quality” and “hybrid brand equity”, which reflect the integration of human and digital value creation in hospitality experiences. Such models could offer a more realistic understanding of how guests evaluate service and brand relationships in AI-augmented or metaverse-based environments.

Ethics Statement

This research involved voluntary participation of hotel guests through a structured survey. The study was conducted independently by the author with the assistance of hotel public relations staff and was formally authorized by the hotel management as documented in the attached permission letter. No personal or sensitive data was collected, and all participants gave their verbal informed consent. The study did not require institutional ethical approval as the author is not affiliated with an academic institution.

Author Contributions

The study was designed and conducted by Dr. Didem Sağındık. Prof. Dr. Cemal Yükselen provided the overall supervision from the outset and contributed critical revisions throughout the research process.

Informed Consent Statement

Verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their participation in the study.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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