

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Introduction

In the primary research, a sample of 193 hotel guests was obtained. Primary data collected by questionnaire interviews were statistically analyzed in order to provide detailed description of the sample's characteristics data and to test the conceptual framework and research hypotheses described in Chapter 3.

4.2. Demographic Characteristics

Four demographic variables, gender, age, marital status, and educational background, were measured. Table 2 is a summary of participants' demographics using frequency and percentage. It shows that there are 73 male and 109 female hotel guests, making a total of 182 participants, in the sample. The sample size is 193. Hence, there are 11 missing values, suggesting 11 participants did not respond the question about their gender. Not including the missing values, 40.1% of the sample are male guests and 59.9% are female guests.

Table 2: Frequency and percent of demographic variables

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	73	37.8	40.1	40.1
Female	109	56.5	59.9	100.0
Total	182	94.3	100.0	
<u>Age</u>				
16 - 25	51	26.4	26.4	26.4
26 - 35	64	33.2	33.2	59.6
36 - 45	56	29.0	29.0	88.6
46 or above	22	11.4	11.4	100.0
Total	193	100.0		
<u>Marital Status</u>				
Single	107	55.4	56.3	56.3
Married	83	43.0	43.7	100.0
Total	190	98.4	100.0	
<u>Educational Background</u>				
High School	15	7.8	7.8	7.8
Diploma	50	25.9	25.9	33.7
Degree	88	45.6	45.6	79.3
Postgraduate	40	20.7	20.7	100.0
Total	193	100.0	100.0	

There are 51 participants who are of ages between 16 and 25; 64 who are of ages between 26 and 35; 56 who are of ages between 36 and 45; and 22 who are of ages 46 or above. The percentages of these four groups of participants with different ages are 26.4%, 33.2%, 29.0%, and 11.4%.

There are 107 participants who are single and 83 who are married. Three participants did not respond their marital status. This suggests 56.3% of the participants are single and 43.7% are married.

Fifteen participants are high school graduates; 50 are diploma holders; 88 are bachelor degree holders; and 40 are postgraduate degree holders. The percentages of these four groups of participants with different educational background are 7.8%, 25.9%, 45.6%, and 20.7% respectively.

4.3. Relationship Marketing Practices

Communication with and provision of extra benefits to guests are practices of relationship marketing for retaining customers. Participants could choose the communication methods that the hotel had used to communicate with them and the extra benefits that they had received from the hotel. Table 3 shows frequency and percent of communication methods which the hotels had used. Table 4 shows frequency and percent of extra benefits which the hotels had provided.

Noted in Table 3, social networking software (e.g. facebook) is the most frequently used communication method (n = 140, 29.6%). It is followed by e-mails (n = 132, 27.9%), instant message (e.g. WhatsApp and WeChat) (n = 108, 22.8%), SMS (n = 68, 14.4%), newsletters (n = 14, 3.0%), and personal calls (n = 11, 2.3%). It appears that, nowadays, hotels tend to utilize more information technology to communicate with their customers.

Table 3: Frequency and percent of hotel communication methods

	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Social networking software	140	29.6	72.9
e-mails	132	27.9	68.8
Instant message	108	22.8	56.2
SMS	68	14.4	35.4
Newsletters	14	3.0	7.3
Personal calls	11	2.3	5.7
Total	473	100.0	246.4

Table 4: Frequency and percent of extra benefits provided by hotel

	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Free breakfast	158	15.8	82.3
Room upgrade	153	15.3	79.7
Early checkin/ late checkout	143	14.3	74.5
Welcome drinks/fruits	125	12.5	65.1
Loyalty programme membership	117	11.7	60.9
Souvenir	116	11.6	60.4
Discount/ cash coupons	109	10.9	56.8
Free newspaper	80	8.0	41.7
Total	1001	100.0	521.4

Noted in Table 4, free breakfast is the extra benefit frequently provided to loyal customers (n = 158, 15.8%). It is followed by room upgrade (n = 153, 15.3%), early checkin/late checkout (n = 143, 14.3%), welcome drinks/fruits (n = 125, 12.5%), loyalty programme membership (n = 117, 11.7%), discount/cash

coupon (n = 109, 10.9%), and free newspaper (n = 80, 8.0%).

4.4. Measures of Image, Satisfaction, and Loyalty

Hotel image was measured by using an 8-item scale. Means and standard deviations of these items are shown in Table 5. “Comfortable” and “clean” are two important image-attributes. Both items have the highest mean of 4.32, with standard deviation of 0.652 and 0.604 respectively. They are followed by “kind staff members” ($\bar{x} = 4.28$, $\delta = 0.642$), “special feeling” ($\bar{x} = 3.54$, $\delta = 0.798$), “differential image” ($\bar{x} = 3.44$, $\delta = 0.777$), “long history” ($\bar{x} = 3.12$, $\delta = 1.010$), “high class” ($\bar{x} = 3.08$, $\delta = 0.889$), and “luxurious” ($\bar{x} = 3.07$, $\delta = 0.872$). In brief, the participants have good impressions of Hong Kong hotels’ comfortability, cleanliness and kind staff.

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation of hotel image items

Item	Mean	SD
This hotel is comfortable.	4.32	0.652
This hotel has a clean image.	4.32	0.604
The staff members are very kind.	4.28	0.642
I feel special by visiting this hotel.	3.54	0.798
This hotel has a differential image from other hotel brands.	3.44	0.777
This hotel has long history.	3.12	1.010
This hotel is a suitable place for high class.	3.08	0.889
This hotel is luxurious.	3.07	0.872

Guest satisfaction was measured by using a four-item scale. Means and standard deviations of these items are shown in Table 6. “Overall experience satisfactory” has obtained the highest mean of 4.28, with standard deviation of 0.641 ($\bar{x} = 4.28, \delta = 0.641$). The other three items have means of 4.09, 4.02, and 4.00 respectively. In brief, the participants are satisfied with the overall experiences at Hong Kong’s hotels.

Table 6: Mean and standard deviation of guest satisfaction items

Item	Mean	SD
My overall experiences at this hotel are satisfactory.	4.28	0.641
I am satisfied with the stay at this hotel.	4.09	0.701
Overall, I am highly satisfied with this hotel.	4.02	0.669
Overall, compared to other hotels, I am satisfied with this hotel.	4.00	0.669

Guest loyalty was measured by using a 3-item scale. Means and standard deviations of these items are shown in Table 7. “Recommend to others” has the highest mean of 4.04, with standard deviation of 0.782 ($\bar{x} = 4.04, \delta = 0.782$). It is followed by “first choice” ($\bar{x} = 3.69, \delta = 0.845$) and “not switch to another hotel” ($\bar{x} = 3.55, \delta = 0.968$). In brief, the participants have great intention to recommend Hong Kong’s hotels to others, but the intentions to use the hotels as their first choice and to stay at the same hotel next time are not very high.

Table 7: Mean and standard deviation of guest loyalty items

Item	Mean	SD
I would recommend this hotel to others.	4.04	0.782
I usually use this hotel as my first choice compared to other hotel brands.	3.69	0.845
I would not switch to another hotel the next time.	3.55	0.968

4.5. Reliability of Measurements

Three multiple-item scales were designed for measuring hotel image, guest satisfaction, and guest loyalty. Reliability of these multiple-item scales can be indicated by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Shown in Table 8, alpha coefficients are 0.848, 0.902, and 0.877 for the scales of hotel image, guest satisfaction, and guest loyalty respectively. All of them are larger than 0.70, indicating the scales have satisfactory reliability (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2008).

Table 8: Cronbach's alpha coefficients, mean and standard deviation of scales

	N of item	Alpha	Mean	SD
Hotel Image	8	0.848	3.645	0.549
Guest Satisfaction	4	0.902	4.098	0.589
Guest Loyalty	3	0.877	3.759	0.777

By the way, means and standard deviations of these scales were computed.

Scale mean was computed by adding up means of all the items in the scale

and then divided the sum by the number of item. They are 3.645, 4.098 and 3.759 for hotel image, guest satisfaction, and guest loyalty respectively. They could be used as indicators of the variables of hotel image, guest satisfaction, and guest loyalty. These reflect that, in general, the participants are quite satisfied with the hotels, as guest satisfaction is 4.098; but their perceptions of hotel image are not good enough, as hotel image is 3.645. In a five-point scale, “3” is the middle point and “4” is above average. Therefore, it is said that guest satisfaction is good ($4.098 > 4$) and hotel image is moderate ($3.645 > 3$). With reference to Table 5, they have good impressions of hotel’s comfortability, cleanliness and service staff, but the impressions of hotel’s history, high-class and luxury are not outstanding. In addition, the extent to which the participants are loyal to the hotels is moderately high, as guest loyalty is 3.759. With reference to Table 7, they have greater intention to recommend the hotels, but the intention to choose the hotel again is not high enough.

In summary, this research involves investigating into the relationships among three variables, including hotel image, guest satisfaction, and guest loyalty. Results of reliability test prove that the measures of these variables are reliable. The guests’ views of hotel image, satisfaction and loyalty are satisfactory, but there are still rooms for improvements in hotel image and guest loyalty.

4.6. Effects of Gender, Age, Marital Status, and Education

Guest loyalty may be influenced by demographic variables, such as gender,