

THE EFFECT OF SERVICE QUALITY, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND ONLINE TRAVEL AGENTS ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH CUSTOMER TRUST AS A MEDIATING VARIABLE AT GRAND ELITE HOTEL PEKANBARU

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Abstract: The low psychological capital of administrative employees at PT Yakult Indonesia Persada Pekanbaru Branch is closely related to leadership practices and the work environment. This study examines the effect of Authentic Leadership on psychological capital, with Psychological Empowerment as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach with a causal research design was employed, involving administrative employees as the study population. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS 3.2.9. The results indicate that Authentic Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Psychological Empowerment. However, Authentic Leadership does not significantly influence psychological capital, either directly or indirectly through Psychological Empowerment. Furthermore, Psychological Empowerment does not significantly affect psychological capital. These findings suggest that although authentic leadership can enhance employees' sense of empowerment, it is insufficient to strengthen their psychological capital within the organizational context studied.

Keywords: *Service Quality, Social Media, Online Travel Agent, Customer Trust, Customer Satisfaction*

The hospitality industry has experienced significant changes due to increasing competition, rapid technological advancement, and shifts in customer behavior. Hotels are no longer competing solely based on physical facilities, but also on service quality and digital presence. Customers increasingly rely on *social media* and *online travel agents* to obtain information, evaluate hotel offerings, and make booking decisions. As a result, hotels are required to manage both service delivery and digital communication effectively to maintain competitiveness and attract customers.

Customer satisfaction has become a critical indicator of hotel performance, as satisfied customers are more likely to revisit and recommend the hotel to others. However, customer satisfaction cannot be achieved without *customer trust*. Trust reflects customers' confidence in the hotel's ability to deliver promised services consistently and honestly. In the hospitality context, trust is shaped not only by direct service experiences

but also by information and interactions obtained through digital platforms.

Service quality remains a fundamental determinant of customer satisfaction in the hotel industry. High-quality service enhances customers' positive evaluations of their stay and strengthens their trust in the hotel. In addition to traditional service factors, *social media* has emerged as an important communication channel that allows hotels to share information, engage with customers, and build long-term relationships. Similarly, *online travel agents* play a crucial role in hotel distribution by providing price transparency, customer reviews, and secure transaction systems that influence customers' trust and satisfaction.

Previous studies in the hospitality industry have extensively examined the effects of *service quality*, *social media*, and *online travel agents* on *customer satisfaction*. While many studies confirm positive direct relationships among these variables, most of them focus primarily on direct effects and provide limited

explanation of the psychological mechanisms through which service and digital factors influence customer satisfaction. In particular, *customer trust* is often treated as an independent variable or as an outcome variable, rather than as an intervening mechanism that explains how customers translate service experiences and digital interactions into satisfaction.

Moreover, empirical studies that integrate *customer trust* as a mediating variable in the relationship between *service quality*, *social media*, *online travel agents*, and *customer satisfaction* remain limited, especially in the hotel industry. Existing research is also predominantly conducted in large metropolitan areas or international hotel chains, with relatively little attention given to hotels operating in developing regional contexts such as Pekanbaru. Differences in customer characteristics, digital adoption, and service expectations suggest that findings from other regions may not be fully generalizable to this context, indicating a clear contextual research gap.

Based on these gaps, this study offers several novelties. First, it integrates *service quality*, *social media*, and *online travel agents* into a single research model with *customer trust* as a mediating variable, providing a more comprehensive explanation of how service and digital factors jointly influence *customer satisfaction*. Second, this study empirically positions *customer trust* as a key psychological mechanism that links both traditional service quality and digital interaction channels to customer satisfaction, thereby extending prior hospitality and digital marketing research that largely emphasizes direct relationships. Third, this study contributes contextual novelty by focusing on Grand Elite Hotel Pekanbaru, a setting that has received limited scholarly attention, thus enriching hospitality literature with evidence from a developing regional market.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of *service quality*, *social media*, and *online travel agents* on *customer satisfaction*

with *customer trust* as a mediating variable at Grand Elite Hotel Pekanbaru.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design using *Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)* to examine the relationships among the proposed variables. A quantitative approach was selected because it allows for objective measurement of latent constructs and hypothesis testing based on empirical data. The use of *PLS-SEM* is particularly appropriate for this study, as it enables the analysis of complex models involving multiple constructs and mediation relationships without requiring strict data normality assumptions.

Data analysis was conducted using *SmartPLS* software, which is widely used for analyzing complex research models involving latent variables. The use of *Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)* is appropriate for this study due to its ability to handle non-normal data distributions and its suitability for predictive and exploratory research models. The analysis followed a two-stage procedure. First, the measurement model was evaluated to assess validity and reliability. This stage included the examination of indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, and convergent validity to ensure that the measurement items adequately represented their respective constructs.

RESULT

This section presents the empirical findings obtained from *Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*. The results are organized into measurement model evaluation, structural model evaluation, and mediation analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the proposed research model.

The measurement model was evaluated to assess the reliability and convergent validity of the constructs

included in the study. Reliability was examined using *Composite Reliability*, while convergent validity was assessed through *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*.

As presented in Table 1, all constructs demonstrate *Composite Reliability* values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the measurement items. In addition, all *AVE* values exceed 0.50, suggesting that the constructs adequately capture the variance of their respective indicators.

These results confirm that the measurement model meets the established criteria for reliability and convergent validity. Therefore, the indicators used in this study are considered appropriate and capable of representing the latent constructs effectively.

Table 1. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Composite Reliability	AVE
Service Quality	0.95	0.69
Social Media	0.94	0.66
Online Travel Agent	0.93	0.64
Customer Trust	0.96	0.72
Customer Satisfaction	0.95	0.70

Structural Model

Following the establishment of an adequate measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to assess the explanatory power of the proposed relationships. The evaluation was conducted using the *coefficient of determination (R-square)*.

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that the independent variables explain 39% of the variance in *customer trust* and 48% of the variance in *customer satisfaction*. These values suggest a moderate level of explanatory power, which is acceptable in behavioral and hospitality research.

The findings indicate that *service quality*, *social media*, and *online travel agents* jointly contribute to explaining variations in both customer trust and customer satisfaction. This suggests that customers' evaluations of

hotel services are influenced by a combination of service performance and digital interaction factors.

Table 2. Coefficient of Determination

Endogenous Variable	R ²
Customer Trust	0.39
Customer Satisfaction	0.48

To further examine the hypothesized relationships, path coefficient analysis was conducted. The results, as shown in Table 3, indicate that all proposed paths are positive and statistically significant. This confirms that the independent variables have meaningful effects on the dependent variables.

Specifically, *service quality* exhibits the strongest influence on both *customer trust* and *customer satisfaction*, followed by *social media* and *online travel agents*. In addition, *customer trust* has a significant positive effect on *customer satisfaction*, highlighting its importance in the proposed model.

Table 3. Path Coefficients

Relationship	β	p-value
Service Quality → Customer Trust	0.42	0.000
Social Media → Customer Trust	0.31	0.000
Online Travel Agent → Customer Trust	0.29	0.000
Service Quality → Customer Satisfaction	0.36	0.000
Social Media → Customer Satisfaction	0.27	0.000
Online Travel Agent → Customer Satisfaction	0.25	0.000
Customer Trust → Customer Satisfaction	0.34	0.000

Mediation Effect

The mediating role of *customer trust* was examined using bootstrapping analysis to test the significance of indirect effects. The results of the mediation analysis are presented in Table 4.

The findings indicate that *customer trust* partially mediates the relationship between *service quality*, *social media*, and

online travel agents on customer satisfaction. The indirect effects are positive and statistically significant, while the direct effects remain significant.

This result suggests that although service quality and digital factors directly influence customer satisfaction, they also operate indirectly by strengthening customer trust. Thus, customer trust functions as an important psychological mechanism in explaining how customers translate service experiences and digital interactions into satisfaction.

Table 4. Mediation Analysis

Indirect Path	Indirect Effect	p-value
Service Quality → Customer Trust → Customer Satisfaction	0.14	0.000
Social Media → Customer Trust → Customer Satisfaction	0.11	0.000
Online Travel Agent → Customer Trust → Customer Satisfaction	0.10	0.000

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that *service quality* plays a dominant role in shaping both *customer trust* and *customer satisfaction*. High-quality service enhances customers' confidence in the hotel's ability to meet their expectations, which leads to more favorable evaluations of their overall experience. This finding suggests that customers form trust and satisfaction primarily through direct interactions with hotel services.

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The significant influence of *service quality* on *customer satisfaction* supports the notion that traditional service elements remain essential in the hospitality industry, even in an increasingly digital environment. Despite the growing importance of digital platforms, customers continue to value reliable, responsive, and empathetic service when assessing their satisfaction with hotel services. This emphasizes that digital strategies should complement, rather than replace, core service quality.

Furthermore, the strong relationship between *service quality* and *customer trust* indicates that consistent service performance is a key foundation for building trust. When hotels are able to deliver services as promised, customers are more likely to perceive the hotel as credible and dependable. This trust subsequently strengthens customers' overall satisfaction with their stay.

In addition, the positive effect of *social media* on *customer satisfaction* suggests that customers value not only the information provided but also the quality of interaction offered through digital channels. Social media serves as a platform for relationship building, enabling hotels to engage with customers beyond face-to-face service encounters and enhance their overall experience.

Similarly, *online travel agents* play a significant role in influencing *customer trust* and *customer satisfaction*. OTA platforms provide customers with access to price comparisons, customer reviews, and secure transaction systems, which help reduce perceived risk during the booking process. Positive experiences with OTA platforms increase customers' confidence in both the booking channel and the hotel itself.

The significant effect of *online travel agents* on *customer satisfaction* indicates that customers' evaluations of hotel services are influenced not only by their stay experience but also by their booking experience. A seamless and trustworthy booking process contributes to a more

positive overall assessment of the hotel.

The mediating role of *customer trust* confirms its function as a key psychological mechanism linking *service quality* and digital interaction factors to *customer satisfaction*. This finding suggests that customer satisfaction is not formed solely through direct service encounters but is also shaped by the level of trust developed through consistent service delivery and effective digital engagement. By strengthening customer trust, hotels can enhance the impact of both service quality and digital platforms on customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *service quality*, *social media*, and *online travel agents* significantly influence *customer satisfaction*, both directly and indirectly through *customer trust*. These findings demonstrate that customer satisfaction in the hotel industry is shaped by a combination of traditional service performance and digital interaction factors. Among the examined variables, *service quality* exerts the strongest influence on both *customer trust* and *customer satisfaction*. This highlights the continued importance of delivering high-quality service as a core strategy for hotels seeking to enhance customer evaluations and long-term relationships.

The results also emphasize that strengthening *customer trust* is essential for improving *customer satisfaction*. Hotels that consistently deliver reliable services and manage digital platforms effectively are more likely to build trust and achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to hospitality management literature by integrating service quality and digital marketing variables within a trust-based framework. By positioning *customer trust* as a mediating variable, this research extends previous studies that primarily focus on direct relationships between service quality and customer

satisfaction. The findings provide empirical evidence that customer trust serves as an important mechanism linking service and digital factors to satisfaction.

Practical Implications

From a managerial perspective, hotel management should prioritize improving service quality by ensuring reliability, responsiveness, and empathy in service delivery. In addition, hotels should optimize their *social media* strategies to enhance transparency, communication, and customer engagement. Furthermore, establishing and maintaining reliable partnerships with *online travel agents* is essential to ensure secure transactions and positive booking experiences. Together, these strategies can strengthen customer trust and enhance customer satisfaction.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited to a single hotel and employs a cross-sectional research design, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are encouraged to include additional variables such as customer loyalty, perceived value, or brand image. Moreover, examining different hotel categories and applying longitudinal or mixed-method approaches could provide deeper insights into customer behavior and the long-term effects of trust and satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

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