

## **Customer Experience and Guest Loyalty in a Regional Hospitality Market: A Segment-Based Approach with an International Client Dimension**

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In the context of increasing competition in service industries, customer experience (CX) has become a central determinant of competitive advantage and long-term business sustainability. Contemporary research conceptualizes CX as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses arising from interactions across the entire customer journey [4]. In hospitality, customer experience integrates both digital and physical touchpoints, including online booking, on-site service encounters, and post-stay evaluation [6].

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate a positive relationship between customer experience quality and behavioral loyalty, including repurchase intentions and word-of-mouth recommendations [2]. At the same time, the perceived importance of specific service attributes may vary across customer segments and contextual consumption scenarios [3; 7]. Furthermore, the increasing international mobility of consumers reinforces the need to adapt service standards to culturally diverse expectations and communication requirements [5].

Despite the growing body of research on CX, segment-based analysis within regional hospitality markets operating under emerging international demand remains underexplored. Regional markets with tourism-oriented specialization increasingly interact with cross-border customer flows, even when the overall share of international guests remains moderate.

The purpose of this study is to identify customer experience factors influencing guest satisfaction and revisit intention, as well as to examine differences in their significance across behavioral segments, including the presence of international clients.

The empirical setting of the research is a regional hospitality market located in the North Caucasus Federal District of the Russian Federation. The focal case is Hotel “B-34,” operating in a tourism-oriented destination characterized by domestic transit flows and occasional international arrivals.

The study employs a mixed-method design combining:

- a quantitative survey of hotel guests;
- a broader regional survey of hospitality consumers;
- internal customer database analysis;
- a semi-structured expert interview with hotel management;
- content analysis of online reviews.

Customer database analysis and survey results enabled the identification of four behavioral segments: transit/business travelers (70–75% of total flow), short-term leisure tourists (15–20%), families with children (8–10%), and long-stay guests (below 2%). The findings indicate statistically significant differences in how service attributes affect loyalty across segments.

For transit guests, price sensitivity, location, and service efficiency are the dominant drivers of satisfaction. Leisure tourists prioritize staff performance and cleanliness. Families demonstrate heightened sensitivity to noise levels and physical comfort. Long-stay guests emphasize service consistency and reliability. International guests, although limited in number, display stronger sensitivity to communication clarity and perceived service standards.

The results confirm a positive association between overall customer experience evaluation and revisit intention, consistent with prior research [2; 4]. Notably, interpersonal service quality has a stronger influence on recommendation behavior than tangible room characteristics.

The academic contribution of the study lies in integrating segment-based customer experience analysis with an international client dimension in a regional hospitality market. The findings

highlight the managerial implications of adapting customer experience strategies to heterogeneous and partially international demand structures.

### **Источники и литература**

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