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the national strategy into reality, relying on the principles and concepts of the sufficiency economy, the resilience, sustainable development goals of the United Nations, and the development of the bio economy, circular economy, and green economy, reflecting crucial development issues for transforming Thailand into a progressive society and an economically sustainable country capable of generating lasting value. For these reasons, the National Tourism Development Plan Version 3 (2023-2027) was formulated facilitating its execution to enhance the competitive capabilities of Thailand's tourism industry. Despite the projections for the year 2022, indicating a significant increase in both Thai and international tourists visiting various tourist cities in Thailand, there is an anticipated trend over the next five years for Thai tourism to adapt towards sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism. Therefore, the tourism industry, particularly the five-star resorts business, should undergo substantial adjustments to accommodate the future growth of the tourism market, emphasizing the creation of added value for products and services tailored to the market. It is imperative to give priority to high-quality customers, particularly those planning extended stays in Thailand and placing importance on environmentally conscious quality tourism. This approach is vital to enhance competitiveness and achieve sustainable growth. However, challenges arise from the increasing prevalence of information, communication, and the acceptance of new technologies among contemporary customers. Five-star resorts must grapple with changes in purchasing behaviors and decision-making patterns that are rapidly evolving. Decision-making processes that cannot be solely explained by rational reasoning may be influenced by emotional factors, experiential preferences for diverse products and services, and a continuous desire to experiment with new offerings. The inability to control or predict customer purchasing decisions has implications on long-term loyalty. Scholars argue that sustained loyalty arises when customers maintain positive attitudes toward products and services, consistently experiencing high-quality services, having positive impressions, and expressing maximum satisfaction. Behavioral aspects, such as recommendations, word of mouth, return patronage, and attitudinal factors like support, protection, enduring loyalty, and genuine fandom, highlight the importance of developing standards across all dimensions to create competitive advantages, ensuring the sustainable loyalty of customer towards five-star resorts. (Eiamkanchanalai S., 2022; Aaker, 1991; Kotler, et al., 2010; Kotler, et al., 2017; Gronroos, 2000; Eisenberger, et al., 1990; Oliver, 1999; Allen & Meyer, 1990).



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Therefore, this academic article aims to present content focusing on the development of sustainable standards for five-star resorts, with a direct impact on customer loyalty. It draws upon theoretical frameworks, academic literature, research findings, and the researchers' perspectives for analysis and synthesis, aware of the importance of the development of standards enhancing competitive advantages for five-star resorts.

The creation of competitive advantages

According to the principles and theories of competitiveness, as discussed by Porter (1985), Koseoglu, et al. (2020) and Fitzsimmons, et al. (2014), creating competitive advantages involves innovating and adding value to products and services to make them distinct and superior to competitors. This aims to make it difficult for competitors to imitate. It also includes activities and business management within the value chain designed to deliver quality services with lower costs or higher pricing, or both. These efforts directly impact the satisfaction of customer. While Kim and Mauborgne (2005) further emphasize the exploration of new, less competitive channels or the creation of differentiated and outstanding value in products and services. It involves minimizing unnecessary costs and increasing the value of products and services, focusing on reducing or saving costs while delivering value and therefore enhancing competitiveness. Additionally, based on the research conducted by voradit Thanapatra (2019), it was found that the competitive advantage model for small-scale resort groups, known as the CASH Model, illustrates a competitive advantage in terms of innovation, customer relationship management, and market focus affecting the operations of resort businesses. The emphasis on innovative approaches and market-focused strategies in both resort operations and customer relationship management contributes to a sustained competitive advantage. In summary, achieving a competitive advantage that impacts the long-term operations of businesses is feasible, encompassing both financial performance in terms of profit and non-financial performance in terms of satisfaction. This analysis underscores the importance of critical components in developing standards for five-star resorts to ensure sustainability.

1. Service Landscape

In the context of service landscape components, as discussed in this academic article, it refers to the architectural and interior design, both aesthetically pleasing and distinctive. This



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encompasses the selection of furniture, botanical elements such as trees and flowers, and various artifacts that align with the service standards. Incorporating with green economy principles is essential to create a sustainable image. Nanita Sombut, Narissara Sujchapong and Areerat Pansuppawatt (2022) found that crafting a positive customer experience in terms of design elements, signage, symbols, art objects, ambiance, and spatial arrangement fosters customer satisfaction, encouraging them to recommend and return for future services, contributing positively to long-term operational success. Furthermore, the study conducted by Natchanan Nunmeesee and Therdchai Choibamroong (2022) revealed that a service landscape emphasizing cleanliness, quality room amenities, convenient and secure locations, family-friendly facilities, and activities attracts Chinese family-oriented customers for repeated visits. Additionally, service landscape also indicates quality and service which can be observed from a well-designed and distinctive interior decor signaling product and service quality. The physical environment, its layout, and the service delivery format constitute another aspect of the service landscape that influences customer behavior, emotions, and perceptions, creating a differentiation from competitors. Resorts with features like cleanliness, relaxing atmospheres, or unique and appropriate interior decorations compliant with five-star standards communicate a clear and appealing image. Therefore, developing, and enhancing service landscape standards would continuously attract customers, providing a consistently positive experience that impacts emotional and cognitive aspects and ultimately contributes to customer satisfaction and loyalty. (Kotler, 1973; Bitner, 1992; Ahmad, et al., 2017; Agmapisarn, C., 2022)

2. Innovation of products and services

Apart from the components related to service landscape, which refer to aesthetically pleasing and uniquely designed elements that create a clear and appealing image for the customer, continuous efforts are required in terms of product and service innovation. This innovation is essential for elevating standards, particularly in the context of value and significance. In this academic article, the term "innovation" pertains to the creation and application of novel ideas for products and services, emphasizing their distinctive and outstanding qualities compared to competitors. This involves sustainable integration of green economics model to establish a unique identity that is challenging for competitors to imitate, all while maintaining cost-effectiveness. This perspective is supported by the research of Soraya Supaphol, Thanapat Khaowisade, Laddawan Someran, Chutima Klanpaitoon and Wanwadee



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Duangsup (2021), who found that service innovation factors and service quality factors encompass various aspects such as process, service delivery, product development, responsiveness to customers, fairness in service delivery, understanding and empathy, trustworthiness, and confidence, all influencing the decision-making process for utilizing services. Consequently, innovative services impact the decision-making behavior of individuals in choosing to use resort services. In the context of highly competitive five-star resort businesses, where imitation is relatively prevalent, the creation of value and significance through innovation is crucial. This pertains to both cost reduction initiatives and the introduction of novel products and services ahead of competitors. Innovation in product and service design involves factors such as usability, convenience, trustworthiness, personalized service, price, quality, reputation, safety, and speed. However, for five-star resorts, the impact of pricing components on competitive advantage is somewhat limited. Nevertheless, product and service innovation also encompass the development of entirely new offerings, stemming from creative thinking, knowledge application, and technological expertise. These innovations should result in tangible benefits for customers, allowing the distinctive characteristics of product and service innovations to stand out. This will also cultivate a long-term positive perception among customers toward customer loyalty. (Wong & Chin, 2007; Fitzsimmons, J.A., et al., 2014; O’Sullivan & Doole, 2013)

3. Service Quality

In the context of service quality, it constitutes a fundamental element utilized in five-star resorts to cultivate customer satisfaction. Within the service chain, it influences customer’s perceptions concerning the expected service quality in comparison to the actual service received. As articulated by Porter (2004), the value chain pertains to a group of various activities aimed at endowing products and services with genuine value in the eyes of the customers. Managing the value chain involves coordinating diverse activities with the objective of creating value for products and services that truly align with the authentic customer desires, thereby enhancing perceived value. Effective management of these activities is critical for resource reduction, process optimization, and value addition to products and services beyond the highest production costs. Activities in the value chain encompass both core and support activities, where core activities generate revenue directly impacting competitive capability, and support activities facilitate the efficient execution of core activities. Furthermore, a comprehensive examination of each step in the value chain offers opportunities for innovation and competitive



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advantage in three dimensions: differentiation, lower costs, and targeted market selection. Based on the research by Benjamaporn Chumnanchar (2022), it is found that the service processes of front-line staff, particularly those occurring before, during, and after a guest's stay, significantly impact their likelihood to revisit. This is associated with various factors such as the guest's occupation, the duration of their stay, the purpose of their visit, and their perceptions of the receptionist's service processes. The decision-making process to revisit is an outcome of the evaluation of the service quality that the customer perceives, termed as perceived service quality, which is the post-service experience. Therefore, enhancing the standards of service quality in both core and supplementary services to create positive experiences will lead to customer satisfaction, positive impressions, trust, confidence, and a favorable attitude towards products and services.

Conclusion

Customer loyalty is the important of sustainable development in five-star resorts necessitates a focus on the development of product and service standards, service quality, service landscape, and increased value for maximize satisfaction among customers including the encouragement and collaborative development of government sector and private sector entities in the tourism industry. It will yield benefits for service business operators, particularly the hotels and resorts sector for leveraging such collective knowledge to enable sustainable competitive advantage to be established effectively. Simultaneously, it seeks to transform the tourism industry into a destination that emphasizes quality and sustainability, which aligns with the 20-year national strategic plan.

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