Research Article

Influencing Factors on Customer Loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Yu Bei, Chongqing, China

Received: May 1, 2025
Revised: April 23, 2025
Accepted: August 4, 2025

Jia Yue[*] *and*
Tanaset Morasilpin
Faculty of Business Administration (International Program)
Southeast Asia University

Abstract

Community elderly care has emerged as the most suitable and sustainable model for elderly care in China. This approach not only reduces the burden of family caregiving but also keeps the elderly connected to social networks and community support. This study aims to explore the key factors influencing customer loyalty toward elderly home care services, examine the mediating role of corporate image between level of consumer fulfillment and customer loyalty, and investigate how the level of consumer fulfillment mediates the relationship between value as assessed by customers, perceived quality, customer expectations, corporate image, and customer loyalty of elderly home care services in Chongqing, China. A mixed-methods approach was employed for this research. The quantitative phase targeted elderly individuals who had previously used the services, with a sample size of 400 respondents. The qualitative phase involved in-depth interviews with 10 key experts in elderly home care services, selected by convenience sampling. Data collection tools included a structured questionnaire and an interview schedule. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SMART PLS. The findings revealed that that customer loyalty toward elderly home care services in Chongqing was notably influenced by value as assessed by customers, perceived quality, and the ability of the services to exceed customer

expectations. When these elements were met, customers were more likely to be satisfied, develop a positive perception of the service's image, and return to use the services again. It was also found that corporate image played a mediating role between level of consumer fulfillment and customer loyalty. Furthermore, customer satisfaction mediated the relationship between value as assessed by customers, perceived quality, customer expectations, corporate image,

* Corresponding Author: napapornk@sau.ac.th

and customer loyalty. Moreover, the study highlighted several models and theories related to service quality that could help enhance level of consumer fulfillment and foster loyalty in the context of elderly home care services.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, Perceived Value, Perceive Quality, Corporate image, Customer loyalty, Elderly, Home Care Service

Cite this article as:

Yue, J & Morasilpin, T. (2026). Influencing Factors on Customer Loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Yu Bei, Chongqing, China. *Journal of Management Science Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University, 8*(1), 1-18.

Introduction

With the rapid aging of the population in China, the demand for diversified and multi-level elderly care services has intensified. According to the National Bureau of Statistics and Gerland, Hertog, Wheldon and and Kantorova (2022). World Population Prospects by the end of 2022, the number of elderly individuals aged 65 and above in China surpassed 200 million, representing more than 14% of the total population. This demographic shift is exerting substantial pressure on traditional family-based caregiving models, which historically relied on filial piety and intergenerational cohabitation (Peng & Wu, 2020). However, urbanization, declining fertility rates, and increasing life expectancy are weakening these traditional support systems (Zhan, 2013).

In Chongqing a major municipality in southwest China this trend is particularly pronounced. As of 2022, approximately 17.75% of Chongqing's population was aged 65 or older (Chongqing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2023). This demographic transformation has led to a growing urgency to develop sustainable and socially integrated elderly care models. In response, community-based elderly care, particularly the *community home-based care model*, has emerged as a strategic solution. This model combines professional services with localized community support, allowing elderly individuals to remain in their familiar residential settings while receiving health, nutritional, and companionship services. Mu (2000) emphasized that such a hybrid model not only reduces the caregiving burden on families but also promotes social interaction and mental well-being among older adults.

The Yubei District of Chongqing a region with a strong economic base and the highest-rated home care service infrastructure in the municipality, was selected as the focal point for this study. With an economic output exceeding 244.26 billion yuan and a nominal growth rate of 6.33%, Yubei provides a unique opportunity to study elderly care service delivery in an advanced urban context (Yubei District Government, 2023). However, despite progress, the region faces ongoing challenges such as ambiguous institutional roles, insufficient funding mechanisms, and disparities in service quality among care providers (Li & Zhang, 2021).

While these challenges largely concern the supply side of service provision, addressing the demand-side factors-particularly customer loyalty is equally critical. In the context of community-based elderly care, strong customer loyalty signals continued service utilization, improved user satisfaction, and community trust, all of which are crucial for sustaining service models and informing institutional improvement. By understanding what drives loyalty, especially through perceived value and service satisfaction, care providers can make evidence-based improvements that better align with elderly users' needs. This perspective complements the ongoing structural reforms by reinforcing a user-centered approach in developing more resilient and responsive care systems.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate the key factors influencing customer loyalty among elderly users of home care services in Yubei, Chongqing. Specifically, the study focuses on the role value as assessed by customers, service quality, and customer expectations, while also examining the mediating effects of level of consumer fulfillment and corporate image. Understanding these dynamics is essential for policymakers, service providers, and communities seeking to enhance the quality and sustainability of elderly care in rapidly aging urban settings.

Research Objectives

1. To study the factors effect Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China.

2. To determine corporate image play mediating role impact among customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

3. To determine customer satisfaction play the mediating role impact among Perceive Value, Perceive of Quality, Customer Expectations, Corporate image, Customer Satisfaction and Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China.

Scope of research

This study focuses on identifying and analyzing the key factors that influence customer loyalty among elderly individuals utilizing home care services in Yubei District, Chongqing, China. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to develop a comprehensive understanding of the service experience from the perspective of elderly users.

1. Population and Sample

The target population comprises elderly residents aged 60 years and above who have utilized community-based home care services in Yubei District. A total of 400 respondents were selected using Yamane's formula. To validate adequacy, the minimum sample size was also cross-checked against (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2022). is table for statistical power in PLS-SEM, confirming that the sample exceeded recommended thresholds. In addition, 10 key informants—including administrators, service providers, and experts in elderly care—were selected through convenience sampling for qualitative interviews.

2. Geographical Scope

The geographical scope of the study is limited to Yubei District, one of the most economically developed and administratively significant areas within Chongqing Municipality.

Yubei's advanced infrastructure in home care services makes it an ideal setting to evaluate the effectiveness and perceptions of community-based elderly care models.

3. Variables Studied

The research examines the following variables:

Independent Variables: Perceived value, perceived quality, and customer expectations.

Mediating Variables: Customer satisfaction and corporate image.

Dependent Variable: Customer loyalty.

These variables are derived from established customer satisfaction models such as the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) and European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI), and are tested through a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) framework.

4. Time Frame

The study was conducted over a period of seven months, from June 2024 to January 2025, encompassing instrument development, data collection, analysis, and validation.

Expected benefits from the research

This research is expected to offer several key benefits. Practically, it provides empirical insights for service providers in elderly home care to enhance customer loyalty through value-driven strategies. Policymakers may utilize the findings to improve service frameworks that cater to aging populations. Academically, the study broadens understanding of value perception and satisfaction models in the context of welfare pluralism, especially within community care environments in China.

Literature Review

1. Theoretical Background

The foundation of this study is based on established theories related to service quality, customer expectations, perceived value, satisfaction, corporate image, and loyalty. The key theories include the Service Quality Gap Model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), Customer Value Theory (Zeithaml, 1988), and satisfaction models such as the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) and the European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI). These models provide the framework to analyze how perceived service quality, perceived value, and expectations contribute to satisfaction and loyalty in the context of elderly home care services. The Welfare Pluralism Theory (Ding, 2011) and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs support the social and psychological rationale for community-based elderly care.

2. Service Quality, Perceived Value and Customer Satisfaction

Service quality is a critical predictor of customer satisfaction and loyalty. The SERVQUAL model proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) includes five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Recent studies have expanded

this foundation. Annamdevula and Bellamkonda (2016) demonstrated that high service quality leads to greater student satisfaction and loyalty in higher education. Similarly, Izogo (2017) confirmed that service excellence enhances customer loyalty in the telecommunications sector. Akroush, Abu-ElSamen, Samawi and Odetallah (2016) found a direct relationship between perceived quality and customer retention in mobile services.

Perceived value, as defined by Zeithaml (1988), is the customer's overall evaluation of the utility of a service based on the trade-off between what is received and what is given. Eggert and Ulaga (2002) established that perceived value is an antecedent to satisfaction and loyalty. Chen (2016) supported this by showing that perceived value mediates the impact of service quality on satisfaction in public transportation.

3. Corporate Image and Loyalty

Corporate image is an intangible asset that shapes customer perceptions and trust. Kotler and Fox (1995) described corporate image as a multidimensional impression formed by service performance, employee behavior, and branding. More recent studies highlight its strategic role. Rather (2018) demonstrated that corporate image mediates satisfaction and loyalty in the hospitality industry. Martínez and del Bosque (2013) emphasized that a strong corporate image fosters customer trust and loyalty, especially when linked to CSR and quality service delivery.

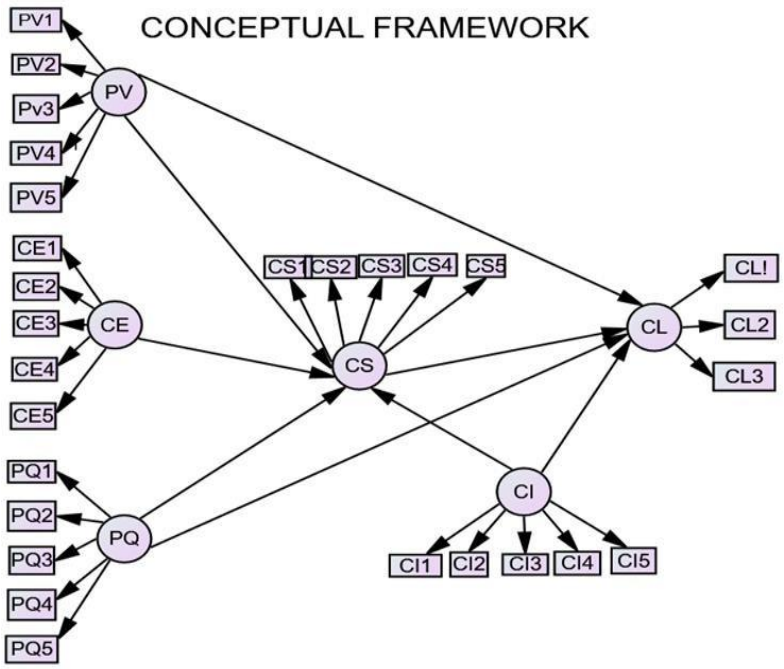
4.Customer Expectations and Perceived Value

Customer expectations are pre-consumption beliefs about service performance (Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, & Bryant, 1996). These expectations influence perceived value more than they do satisfaction directly (Zeithaml, 1988). Studies by Hong (2019) and Zhang (2020) confirmed that expectations shape how customers assess value. Therefore, this study adopts a revised model structure where customer expectations influence perceived value, which in turn affects satisfaction and loyalty.

5. Formation of Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty consists of behavioral intentions and attitudinal commitment (Oliver, 1993). Akroush et al. (2016); Chen (2016) showed that loyalty is driven by satisfaction, value perception, and brand trust. The pathway to loyalty involves multiple mediators, including corporate image and perceived value, indicating a need for integrated service strategies.

Research framework



CL = Customer Loyalty, CI = Corporate Image, CS = Customer Satisfaction, PV = Perceived Value, PQ = Perceive of Quality, CE = Customer Expectations

Hypothesis

H1: Perceived value positively affects Customer Satisfaction of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China.

H2: Perceived quality positively affects Customer satisfaction of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China

H3: Customers Expectation positively affects Customer satisfaction of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China

H4: Customer satisfaction affects Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China

H5: Perceived quality positively affects Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China

H6: Perceived value positively affects Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China

H7: Customer satisfaction positively affects corporate image of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China.

H8: Corporate image positively affects Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China

H9: Corporate image play mediating role impact among customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

H10: Customer satisfaction play the mediating role impact between Perceived Value, and Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China.

H11: Customer satisfaction play the mediating role impact between Customer Expectations, and Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China.

H12: Customer satisfaction play the mediating role impact between Perceive Quality, and Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China

Research method

1. Research Design This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component utilized a structured questionnaire to assess perceived service quality, perceived value, customer expectations, satisfaction, corporate image, and customer loyalty. The qualitative component involved in-depth interviews to capture deeper insights into the experiences and perceptions of elderly care service users.

2. Sample Size and Sampling Technique The sample size was calculated using Taro Yamane's formula (1967) for a known population with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The total population (N) of elderly individuals receiving community-based services in Yubei District is approximately **5,000**. Applying the formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$= \frac{5000}{1 + 5000(0.05)^2}$$

=370.37⇒400 (rounded up)

A **simple random sampling** technique was applied, using a stratified frame to ensure inclusion from both urban and rural communities. Lists of service recipients were obtained from local community centers, and participants were randomly selected from this list using a computer-generated sequence.

3. Research Instrument The quantitative research instrument was a structured questionnaire composed of:

Section 1: Demographic data (6 items)

Section 2: Perceived service quality, perceived value, and customer expectations (20 items)

Section 3: Customer satisfaction, corporate image, and loyalty (15 items)

Each item used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The items were adapted from previously validated scales such as SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, 1988) and customer satisfaction literature (Fornell et al., 1996; Zeithaml, 1988).

4. Instrument Development The questionnaire items were adapted from existing literature to match the context of elderly care services. Items were translated into Chinese and reviewed for content validity by three domain experts, including university professors and health service practitioners. Feedback was used to improve clarity and cultural relevance.

5. Instrument Testing To ensure the reliability and validity of the research instrument, the following procedures were conducted:

Content Validity: The questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of three experts in the fields of marketing, elderly care services, and research methodology. Their feedback was used to refine item clarity, relevance, and language. This process established **content validity** through expert judgment.

Construct Validity: A pilot study was conducted with 30 elderly participants who were not part of the final sample. Data from the pilot were analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to verify factor loading and construct structure. Items that did not meet acceptable loading thresholds were revised or removed.

Reliability Testing: Internal consistency reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. All latent constructs (e.g., perceived service quality, perceived value, satisfaction, loyalty) achieved alpha values above 0.70, which indicates acceptable to good reliability (Hair et al., 2022).

These procedures demonstrate that the instrument was both valid and reliable for data collection in the context of elderly care services.

6. Data Collection Procedure. The quantitative survey was conducted between July and September 2024. A total of 420 questionnaires were distributed by trained field researchers at elderly service centers and residential homes. Of these, 400 valid responseswere collected, resulting in a 95.2% response rate. Non-responses were managed by replacing individuals with alternates from the randomized list.

The qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with 10 participants, including both elderly service users and care staff. An interview guide was developed to explore themes such as satisfaction, expectations, and value perception. Each interview lasted 30–45 minutes and was recorded with consent. Two coders independently analyzed the transcripts, achieving over 80% inter-coder agreement, and thematic saturation was reached.

Research Results

Structural Model

The bootstrapping technique is used with a re-sampling of 5000 for the hypothesis testing, set at 0.05 confidence level. Whether a hypothesis is supported is determined when the n β -value is positive, the t-value is greater than 1.96, and the p- value is less than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 1 Conclusion from Structural Path Analysis for direct effect

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta (β)	Std.	T-value	P-value	f2
H1	Perceived value > Customer Satisfaction	0.097	0.044	2.231	0.026*	0.009
H2	Perceived quality > Customer satisfaction	0.093	0.042	2.186	0.029*	0.008
H3	Customers Expectation > Customer satisfaction	0.130	0.043	3.050	0.002*	0.017
H4	Customer satisfaction > Customer loyalty	0.101	0.039	2.586	0.010*	0.011
H5	Perceived quality > Customer loyalty	0.213	0.036	3.850	0.004*	0.021
H6	Perceived value > Customer loyalty	0.215	0.092	3.623	0.003*	0.018
H7	Customer satisfaction > Corporate image	0.112	0.102	4.314	0.000*	0.016
H8	Corporate image > Customer loyalty	0.154	0.0215	4.327	0.000*	0.013

*P<0.05

Conclusion from Structural Path Analysis found that:

H1: Perceived value positively affects Customer Satisfaction of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China. (β=0.097, t=2.231, P<0.05), **H2:** Perceived quality positively affects Customer satisfaction of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China (β=0.093, t=2.186, P<0.05), **H3:** Customers Expectation positively affects Customer satisfaction of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China (β=0.130, t=3.050, P<0.05), **H4:** Customer satisfaction affects Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China (β =0.101, t=2.586, P<0.05), **H5:** Perceived quality positively affects Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China (β=0.215, t=3.850, P<0.05), **H6:** Perceived value positively affects Customer loyalty of Elderly Home

Care Services at Chongqing in China (β=0.213, t=3.623, P<0.05), **H7:** Customer satisfaction positively affects corporate image of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China (β=0.112, t=4.314, P<0.05) and **H8:** Corporate image positively affects Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China (ß=0.154, t=4.327, P<0.05).

The larger beta coefficient and significant t-value (p-value<0.01) indicates a stronger relationship between economic aspects and QoL compared to social aspect and environmental aspect. The f2 effect size is slightly larger (f2=0.021), suggesting a more substantial effect compared to the other two aspects. The findings evident that the hypotheses 1,2,3,4 and 5 of this study have been substantiate.

Mediation Analysis: Corporate image, and Customer satisfaction plays mediating role.

Table 2 Part analysis Indirect Effects

Path	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P-Value
H9: Customer satisfaction -> Corporate image -> Customer loyalty	0.343	0.068	5.053	0.000*
H10: Perceived Value -> Customer satisfaction -> Customer loyalty	0.282	0.090	3.122	0.02*
H11: Customer Expectations, -> Customer Satisfaction -> Customer loyalty	0.162	0.085	5.134	0.000*
H12: Perceive Quality -> Customer satisfaction -> Customer loyalty	0.129	0.064	4.315	0.000*

The research, which involved 5000 iterations of bootstrap sampling, has produced significant findings. The table provides a summary of the specific indirect effects of each pathway.

According to Table 2 Part analysis Indirect Effects found that: **H9:** Corporate image play mediating role impact among customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. (O=0.343, t=5.053, P<0.05), **H10** Customer satisfaction play the mediating role impact between Perceived Value, and Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China (O=0.282, t=3.122, P<0.05), **H11:** Customer satisfaction play the mediating role impact between Customer Expectations, and Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China (O=0.282, t=5.134, P<0.05), and **H12:** Customer satisfaction play the mediating role impact

between Perceive Quality, and Customer loyalty of Elderly Home Care Services at Chongqing in China (O=0.162, t=5.134, P<0.05).

Notably, Corporate image play mediating role impact among customer satisfaction and customer loyalty as evidenced by highly reliable p-values of less than 0.001 and 0.01, respectively. Furthermore, Customer satisfaction, plays the mediating role impact among Perceived Value, Customer Expectations, and Perceive Quality on Customer loyalty

Quantitative Research Conclusions

The quantitative analysis addressed the three main research objectives:

Objective 1: Customer loyalty toward elderly home care services in Chongqing is significantly influenced by perceived value, perceived quality, and customer expectations. When services exceed expectations, satisfaction rises, enhancing the corporate image and reinforcing loyalty through repeat usage.

Objective 2: Corporate image acts as a mediating variable between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, indicating that satisfied customers are more likely to stay loyal if they also hold a positive perception of the organization's image.

Objective 3: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived value, perceived quality, customer expectations, and customer loyalty, confirming its pivotal role in driving long-term service engagement.

Hypothesis Testing Summary

H1–H3: Perceived value, perceived quality, and customer expectations positively affect satisfaction.

H4–H6: Satisfaction, perceived quality, and perceived value directly affect loyalty.

H7–H8: Satisfaction affects corporate image, which in turn affects loyalty.

H9–H12: Corporate image and customer satisfaction serve as mediators in the relationship between other variables and loyalty.

Qualitative Research Summary

Population & Sample: 10 participants (5 elderly service experts and 5 elderly service users) were selected via purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and analyzed using thematic content analysis.

Instrument Validity & Reliability: **Validity** was confirmed by expert review. **Reliability** was ensured through parallel coding, showing over 80% consistency between two independent coders.

Interview Findings Summary

1. Perceived Quality and Perceived Value Interviewees emphasized that perceived quality strongly influences perceived value. Key contributing factors include functional,

emotional, and economic value. High-quality services enhance the brand perception and increase customer willingness to reuse services.

2. Perceived Quality and Customer Satisfaction Participants noted that satisfaction results from the gap between expected and actual service experiences. The five SERVQUAL dimensions-reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility-were all positively correlated with satisfaction. Particularly, emotional and functional values mediated the link between service delivery and satisfaction.

3. Customer Expectations and Perceived Value Expectations significantly affect how customers perceive the value of services. Expectations related to customization, reliability, and overall quality shaped their judgments, which then influenced satisfaction and loyalty.

4. Customer Expectations and Satisfaction When expectations are met or exceeded, satisfaction rises; unmet expectations reduce satisfaction. Staff service quality was found to have a stronger impact than physical facilities.

5. Perceived Value and Satisfaction Most participants agreed that perceived value drives satisfaction. Customers who receive value exceeding their cost investment feel more satisfied. This relationship is often considered causal, with perceived value being a key predictor of satisfaction.

6. Satisfaction and Loyalty Customer satisfaction leads to loyalty behaviors, including repeat service usage and advocacy. Loyalty was described in terms of consistent behavior over time and resilience to competitive offers, especially when trust and satisfaction are well established.

Conclusion

This study concludes that enhancing perceived value, service quality, and consistently meeting or exceeding customer expectations are critical drivers of customer satisfaction and loyalty in the context of elderly home care services in Chongqing, China. Elderly individuals, as a service-sensitive population, evaluate their experiences not just on the technical aspects of care, but also on emotional, social, and relational dimensions. Therefore, providers must ensure that the services offered are reliable, responsive, and empathetic, aligning closely with users' physical and psychological needs.

A key finding of the study is the mediating role of customer satisfaction. When elderly users perceive high value and quality in the services they receive-and when those services meet their personal expectations, they are more likely to feel satisfied. In turn, this satisfaction serves as a catalyst for loyalty, encouraging repeated use of services and fostering positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Additionally, the research highlights the significant role of corporate image as a second mediating variable. A positive corporate image not only strengthens the emotional bond between the service provider and the customer but also acts as a buffer in situations where

minor service failures may occur. A trusted and reputable brand can maintain customer loyalty even when expectations are not fully met, underscoring the importance of long-term branding strategies, consistent service identity, and public communication.

The findings underscore the need for strategic service personalization—tailoring care programs to individual needs and preferences, thereby reinforcing both emotional engagement and practical utility. In a rapidly aging society like China, where traditional family-based care systems are under pressure, community home-based services must evolve with both technical excellence and emotional intelligence to ensure continuity, satisfaction, and loyalty among elderly clients.

In conclusion, by simultaneously focusing on perceived value, service quality, expectation management, and brand development, elderly care providers can build sustainable loyalty and create a high-impact, person-centered care model that meets the evolving demands of an aging population.

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the established theoretical understanding of customer loyalty in service industries, particularly within the context of elderly home care. The integration of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) and European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI) models into the analysis provided a robust framework for examining how perceived value, service quality, and customer expectations influence customer satisfaction and ultimately loyalty.

The significant direct effects of perceived value, quality, and expectations on satisfaction suggest that elderly customers place high importance on the holistic experience of service delivery-not only the functional utility but also emotional and relational benefits. These findings are aligned with prior studies (Zeithaml, 1988; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), and emphasize that quality care must go beyond clinical effectiveness to include respect, responsiveness, and empathy.

Furthermore, the mediating roles of customer satisfaction and corporate image offer practical insights. Customer satisfaction emerges as a bridge linking service perception to loyalty, while corporate image serves to amplify and sustain this relationship over time. In elderly care, where emotional trust and perceived credibility are crucial, a strong and consistent corporate image can differentiate service providers and retain clients-even in a competitive or uncertain environment.

The qualitative findings provided rich perspectives on how elderly clients interpret value and quality through their lived experiences. The alignment between the quantitative

and qualitative results enhances the validity of the model and supports the development of a person-centered approach to service improvement in elderly care institutions.

Limitations of the Study

While this study offers important insights into the determinants of customer loyalty in community-based elderly care services, certain limitations should be acknowledged.

First, the research was conducted solely in the Yubei District of Chongqing, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or demographic contexts within China. Future studies should consider multi-site designs to enhance external validity.

Second, the data were collected using a cross-sectional survey method, which captures responses at a single point in time. As a result, it is difficult to assess changes in customer perceptions or loyalty over time. Longitudinal studies would help capture evolving trends and behavioral shifts.

Third, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire responses. Although efforts were made to ensure clarity and anonymity, such data can be subject to social desirability and recall biases. Despite these limitations, the study provides a solid foundation for understanding demand-side dynamics in elderly care and offers valuable recommendations for both service providers and policymakers.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study is expected to contribute to both theoretical knowledge and practical applications in the field of service management for elderly care.

Theoretically, the study extends the application of the SERVQUAL framework and customer value theory to the context of community-based elderly care services in China. By integrating constructs such as corporate image, customer expectations, and loyalty, the research enriches the understanding of how intangible service dimensions affect satisfaction and behavioral outcomes in a vulnerable demographic group.

Practically, the findings can inform local government agencies, service providers, and policymakers in designing more customer-oriented and responsive elderly care programs. For example, identifying which dimensions of service quality most strongly influence satisfaction and loyalty can guide resource allocation and service improvement. Moreover, understanding the mediating role of perceived value helps prioritize initiatives that improve both service delivery and perceived outcomes. These insights can serve as an evidence-based foundation for improving public service efficiency, enhancing elderly well-being, and fostering sustainable community care models.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are proposed for elderly home care service providers, policymakers, and researchers:

1. Service Personalization and Innovation Elderly care services should move toward customized care plans that reflect individual health status, emotional needs, and social preferences. Technology, such as telecare and mobile service tracking, can be integrated to personalize experiences and monitor satisfaction in real time.

2. Focus on Emotional and Functional Value While operational efficiency is important, emotional value-such as respect, companionship, and dignity-must be embedded into daily care practices. Training programs for caregivers should emphasize empathy, communication, and trust-building skills.

3. Corporate Image Management Service providers should develop a coherent brand strategy that communicates reliability, professionalism, and community integration. This includes public relations, consistent visual identity, community involvement, and transparent communication with families and stakeholders.

4. Strengthen Feedback and Evaluation Systems A systematic customer feedback mechanism should be put in place to continuously assess satisfaction levels, identify service gaps, and implement real-time adjustments. These systems should include both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to capture the full spectrum of client experiences.

5. Policy Support and Cross-Sector Collaboration Government and local agencies should support the partnerships in elderly care. Policies that incentivize innovation, quality improvement, and development of public-private workforce development will be key to sustaining loyalty in long-term care services.

6. Future Research Directions Future studies should consider expanding the geographic scope beyond Chongqing to test the generalizability of the findings. In addition, longitudinal studies would be valuable in understanding how loyalty evolves over time and how it is affected by service innovation, policy changes, and demographic shifts.

Reference

Akroush, M. N., Abu-ElSamen, A. A., Samawi, G. A., & Odetallah, A. L. (2016). Service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty: Empirical evidence from Jordanian mobile telecommunication services. *International Journal of Marketing Studies, 8*(6), 66–95. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijms.v8n6p66

Annamdevula, S. & Bellamkonda, R. S. (2016). The effects of service quality on student loyalty: The mediating role of student satisfaction. *Journal of Modelling in Management, 11*(2), 446–462. https://doi.org/10.1108/JM2-04-2014-0031

Chen, C. F. (2016). The influence of service quality and value on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in public transportation. *Transport Policy, 18*(2), 318–325. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2010.09.003

Chongqing Municipal Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Statistical yearbook of Chongqing 2022*. China: Chongqing Publishing House.

Ding, Z. (2011). *Theory and practice of welfare pluralism*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.

Eggert, A. & Ulaga, W. (2002). Customer perceived value: A substitute for satisfaction in business markets? *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, 17*(2/3), 107–118. https://doi.org/10.1108/08858620210419754

Fornell, C., Johnson, M. D., Anderson, E. W., Cha, J., & Bryant, B. E. (1996). The American Customer Satisfaction Index: Nature, purpose, and findings. *Journal of Marketing, 60*(4), 7–18. https://doi.org/10.2307/1251898

Gerland, P., Hertog, S., Wheldon, M. C., & Kantorova, V. (2022). *World Population Prospects 2022: Summary of results*. New York: United Nations.

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Hong, X. (2019). *Customer expectations and perceived value in online services*. *Journal of E-Service Research, 17(*3), 55–71.

Izogo, E. E. (2017). Customer loyalty in telecom service sector: The role of service quality and customer satisfaction. *The TQM Journal, 29*(1), 19–36. https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-10-2014-0089

Kotler, P. & Fox, K. F. A. (1995). *Strategic marketing for educational institutions* (2nd ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Li, X. & Zhang, H. (2021). Barriers and innovation in elderly care services in urban China. *Journal of Social Welfare and Policy, 28*(3), 141–158.

Martínez, P. & del Bosque, I. R. (2013). CSR and customer loyalty: The roles of trust, customer identification with the company and satisfaction. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 35*, 89–99. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2013.05.009

Mu, G. (2000). Study on the integration of home-based and community-based elderly care models. *Journal of Gerontology Research, 15*(2), 45–52.

Oliver, R. L. (1993). Cognitive, affective, and attribute bases of the satisfaction response. *Journal of Consumer Research, 20*(3), 418–430. https://doi.org/10.1086/209358

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing, 64*(1), 12–40.

Peng, X. & Wu, Z. (2020). Aging in China: Trends, policies, and economic implications. *China Population and Development Research Review, 41*(1), 22–38.

Rather, R. A. (2018). Investigating the impact of customer brand identification on hospitality brand loyalty: A social identity perspective. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 27(*5), 487–513. https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2018.1429981

Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

Yubei District Government. (2023). *Yubei District Economic and Social Development Report 2022*. Retrieved February 20, 2024, from http://www.ybq.gov.cn/

Zeithaml, V. A. (1988). Consumer perceptions of price, quality, and value: A means–end model and synthesis of evidence. *Journal of Marketing, 52*(3), 2–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224298805200302

Zhan, H. J. (2013). Aging and elder care in China: The looming crisis. *Journal of Aging Studies, 27*(1), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2012.10.002

Zhang, C. (2020). The relationship between customer expectation and service value in community care. *Chinese Journal of Service Science, 9*(1), 34–47.