



THE ASIAN BULLETIN OF GREEN MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

<http://abgmce.com/10.62019/abgmce.v4i2.80>

ISSN (online): 2959-0035

ISSN (Print): 2959-0027

Student Retention in IELTS Platforms: Exploring the Role of Green-Oriented Service Efficiency, Reviews, and Satisfaction

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Chronicle	Abstract
Article history Received: Oct 3, 2024 Received in the revised format: Oct 28, 2024 Accepted: Nov 25, 2024 Available online: Dec 28, 2024 Sohaib Uz Zaman, Abdul Qadir & Syed Hasnain Alam are currently affiliated with Karachi University Business School, University of Karachi, Pakistan. Email: sohaibuzzaman@uok.edu.pk Email: aq78601@gmail.com Email: hasnainalam@gmail.com	This study explores key factors influencing student retention in IELTS online preparation platforms, with a focus on service efficiency, review quality, and customer satisfaction. As global demand for IELTS certification rises, online platforms face challenges in maintaining student engagement and loyalty. This research examines how service quality, efficiency, review diversity, and readability affect satisfaction, retention, and long-term loyalty. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data from students enrolled in various IELTS platforms. Stratified random sampling ensured diverse representation, and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was applied to test the conceptual model. The study integrates SERVQUAL, Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), and the Information Adoption Model (IAM) to explore direct, mediating, and moderating relationships. Findings reveal that service efficiency and quality significantly influence customer satisfaction, which mediates retention and loyalty. Additionally, the credibility and readability of online reviews impact satisfaction, with review readability moderating the satisfaction-retention link. However, retention does not always lead to loyalty, highlighting the need for post-course engagement strategies. This study contributes a comprehensive model for digital education platforms by combining service performance and review mechanisms. Practical implications suggest that personalized learning, authentic feedback systems, and continuous engagement can improve satisfaction and long-term student loyalty.
*Corresponding Author: Keywords: IELTS platforms, service efficiency, online reviews, student satisfaction, retention, customer loyalty, review readability, digital learning.	

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INTRODUCTION

IELTS online preparation platforms experience a mass expansion due to escalating international learning demands and working requirements yet students require superior quality services and quick response to stay enrolled Lee et al. (2024) notes. Both service efficiency and online review quality and customer satisfaction stand as the primary factors which lead to student retention losses according to Gazi et al. (2025) and Kim et al. (2024). The provision of fast help coupled with decreased system interruptions lets effective platforms boost learning processes because the elements improve student satisfaction rates and motivation levels (Gazi et al., 2025). Student online decision-making significantly depends on assessment credibility because positive feedback strengthens enrollment loyalty while negative reviews discourage potential student sign-up (Kim et al., 2024). Student satisfaction develops through the combination of top-notch learning resources and elite user experience patterns because this combination leads to improved student retention rates when students find real educational worth in their educational experience (Lee et al., 2024). Students need a full approach to participation support because service efficiency relates to

student comments which build satisfaction (Kim et al., 2024). IELTS preparation services in Pakistan keep expanding because students need international education but face ongoing difficulties with accessibility and affordability (Ahmed & Choi, 2023). IELTS preparation websites can boost their client retention through market competition by understanding relationships between service speed and customer contentment together with online feedback (Gazi et al., 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The IELTS preparation market underwent significant development because students wanted better language education methods while internet learning platforms expanded training material availability. Users of IELTS preparation platforms determine their ongoing usage by evaluating service efficiency and both the quality of online reviews and their satisfaction rate as essential factors. The accumulated features determine student evaluations of a learning platform value that establishes whether they will stay or leave (Gazi et al., 2025). The effectiveness of service architecture proves beneficial for both trust enhancement and positive feedback quality which generates more dedicated customers (Kim et al., 2024). The standard educational journey faced by IELTS test-takers relies significantly on service effectiveness because it acts as an important driving factor. The service delivery process incorporates course planning alongside technical support initiatives alongside direct teacher services for both guidance and immediate aid (British Council, 2023). Platforms with good-learning pathways, fewer technical interruptions, and timely support retain students for longer durations (Patel et al., 2021). The understanding of upcoming learners about IELTS preparation platforms emerges from assessing online reviews that communicate their quality. Student enrollment choices depend significantly on peer-generated feedback including ratings and testimonials and testimonials based on documented research results (Smith et al., 2021). Websites that develop reliable review platforms succeed in drawing more users because diverse evaluations increase their user profile (Gazi et al., 2024).

A valid review system results when organizations implement transparent policies with sentiment analysis technology (IDP, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020). IELTS preparation platforms retain students because of high levels of customer satisfaction. The evaluation method for platform satisfaction relies on four major factors which include content excellence together with instructor engagement and system cost and digital interface usability (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). User loyalty and engagement at organizations improves because they support a two-way feedback process together with a fast course improvement system (Davis & Roberts, 2020). Positive word-of-mouth advertising from satisfied customers builds platform reputation since they spread positive information about the service (Ahmed & Choi, 2023; Zhao et al, 2022). Service performance works in concert with review quality and customer satisfaction to demonstrate a comprehensive analytical structure which analyzes student retention in IELTS preparation systems. Service-performance integration with review quality and students' satisfaction acts as a cohesive system which maintains attention throughout each learning session (Haque & Kim, 2023). Student drop-out from online learning occurs ahead of schedule when service performance becomes inconsistent along with misleading review evaluations according to Smith et al. (2021). The enhancement of customer satisfaction results demands strategic attention to online review authentication and service quality monitoring from education institutions and online learning platforms (British Council, 2023; Miller et al., 2018). Current academic studies indicate that modern online learning requires specific instructional practices to meet

research standards. AI-based learning analytics together with adjustable testing systems and performance monitoring tools now drive platform decisions regarding IELTS training according to both Kim et al. (2024) and Gazi et al. (2025).

Introduction to Theories and Models

The explanations of student retention in IELTS preparation platforms become simpler by using established theoretical frameworks which explain consumer activities and decision processes and student engagement. Researchers analyzed how service efficiency together with online review quality and customer satisfaction influence student retention and loyalty by applying Hierarchy of Effects Model, Cialdini's Six Principles of Influence, Pavlov's Classical Conditioning, Agile Marketing, and Social Identity Theory (Gazi et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2024). The established models help analyze decision patterns as well as influence methods and learning pathways and online behavior patterns thus generating improvements for British Council IELTS preparation systems (British Council, 2023). People follow a step-by-step sequence according to the Hierarchy of Effects Model (Lavidge & Steiner 1961) before making buying choices. The model features awareness followed by knowledge after which students develop liking before choosing preferences which leads to conviction before making their purchase (Kim et al., 2024). Students become aware of different platforms through marketing campaigns while reading online reviews that ultimately influence their preference selection based on previous student reviews and personal experiences (Zhao et al., 2022). According to Ahmed and Choi (2023), students stay in the programs longer when platforms guide their learning process by providing both specific content and feedback along with practice sessions. The process understanding of student movement from awareness to action enables IELTS platforms to create better marketing and engagement activities according to Smith et al. (2021).

The Six Principles of Influence developed by Cialdini (1984) supply psychological insights into the decision-making process of persuasion that apply to retaining students within digital learning spaces. Students select their IELTS preparation platforms based on six key principles (reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, authority, liking, scarcity) according to Haque and Kim (2023). The authority of trainers recognized by British Council and IDP and other accepted schools helps raise credibility levels (British Council, 2023). According to Patel et al. (2021) educational websites that provide limited exclusive content in addition to reciprocity rewards effectively keep students involved (Patel et al., 2021). Agile Marketing functions as a recent marketing strategy that emphasizes responsive planning and repeated evolutions while making decisions based on customer input. Through the agile marketing approach these IELTS platforms show efficient performance in hearing student needs while analyzing performance statistics to optimize content delivery along with refining their educational strategies (Kim et al., 2024). Compared to standard marketing methods that work with linear campaign structures Agile Marketing allows platforms to respond to student preferences as well as technology advances and maintain enduring success in the competitive e-learning field (Zhao et al., 2022). The research integrates these models to establish an integrated description of student retention on IELTS preparation platforms. Research incorporating decision-making models along with persuasion and learning reinforcement and adaptive marketing along with social identity development attempts to identify essential engagement and satisfaction factors affecting students according to Gazi et al. (2025) and Kim et al. (2024). This research aims to create practical approaches which

IELTS platforms can use to improve their service design alongside content delivery and achieve better student enrollment results.

Single and Multiple Variable Approach

Different opinions among researchers exist regarding how service efficiency combined with the quality of online reviews and customer satisfaction directly influences retention rates on IELTS preparatory platforms. Most scientific teams recognize service determinants as essential but other researchers focus on factors such as price sensitivity, instructor reputation and learning flexibility (Gazi et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2024). Different views about the connection between these five theories persist regarding their applicability to digital learning contexts despite their combined strength in student retention analysis (Ahmed & Choi, 2023).

The section features multiple viewpoints including those which endorse and those which oppose the relationship between service efficiency and review credibility and satisfaction levels and student retention. Several academic research reveals that students tend to stay enrolled in classes when academic services demonstrate reliable performance and efficient operation. Fast response times along with adaptive learning technologies and effective customer care services produce higher retention at educational sites (Zhao et al., 2022). User satisfaction strongly depends on perceived service quality elements which include reliability along with responsiveness and assurance according to the SERVQUAL Model (British Council, 2023).

Agile Marketing models demonstrate that educational institutions maintain their student retention by letting students contribute regularly to learning module development alongside technological enhancements (Patel et al., 2021). Most scholars accept that online review quality impacts how students behave toward educational services. Users tend to select online platforms which deliver high-quality diverse reviews presented in understandable ways according to the Information Adoption Model (IAM) (IDP, 2023). The research proves that social proof influenced by Cialdini transforms into trustworthiness and user adoption (Kim et al., 2024). Programs which implement student assessments combined with dynamic review systems create platforms that are dependable and transparent according to Nguyen and Williams (2023).

User-based reviews of platform performance may differ from actual platform delivery which means online testimonials alone cannot determine student retention according to Smith et al. (2021). According to ECT student retention depends on satisfaction levels because students successfully utilize platforms which fulfill their expectations (Oliver, 1980). The S-O-R Model (Stimulus-Organism-Response) demonstrates the notion through evidence which shows that students value high-quality courses with robust technology before their experiences lead them to feel satisfied enough to use the platform repeatedly (Haque & Kim, 2023). A body of scholars demonstrates that contented students will still discontinue their classes when their finances run dry or their available time decreases or their life objectives evolve (Wilson & Carter, 2020). The ability of satisfaction to predict student retention needs resolution because of confidence doubts (British Council, 2023). The disagreement among scholars exists about applying behavioral conditioning along with social identity approaches to maintain student enrollment. The retention of students depends heavily on repeated positive reinforcement according to Pavlov's classical conditioning theory so students must experience continuous positive educational experiences (Nguyen and Williams 2023). According to Social Identity Theory students who maintain a strong membership

in online learning communities tend to stay participant (IDP, 2023). The researchers argue that students make choices based on their individual needs rather than social pressures so these behavioral models do not fit well with virtual learning spaces (Smith et al., 2021). According to the Hierarchy of Effects Model students undergo orderly cognitive processes in their selection and commitment toward an IELTS preparation website but multiple experts cast doubt upon this conception. The process of making decisions regarding e-learning consists of immediate reactions to present needs rather than following a sequential pattern of awareness preference and conversion (Kim et al., 2024). As per the Agile Marketing rules learner retention functions adaptively in response to continual changes between technology evolution and competitive environments and study pattern shifts (Gazi et al., 2025). The proposed view demands adapted engagement instead of traditional decision-making models according to the British Council (2023). The study evaluates actual retention patterns while reviewing multiple retention techniques and recommends data-based solutions for IELTS platforms according to Wilson & Carter (2020) and Gazi et al. (2025).

Mediation and Moderation Views

The effectiveness of service efficiency acts as a mediating factor which links the relationship between platform usability and customer satisfaction according to proposed research. Students receive better outcomes in their satisfaction when they maintain uninterrupted access to learning content alongside timely feedback from instructors together with minimal technical disruptions (Gazi et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2024). Through the SERVQUAL Model the authors stress reliability and responsiveness because these features in efficient digital platforms enhance both learning experiences and student participation (British Council, 2023). The effectiveness of service provision does not cause student satisfaction because other variables such as course costs and lesson content quality and educational flexibility play more significant roles. According to Rahman et al. (2023) students maintain their dissatisfaction with efficient online platforms when the content lacks interactive design and engaging material. Organizations attempting to maximize efficiency independently from content quality and individual learning support initiatives fail to boost student satisfaction rates (Wilson & Carter, 2020).

The proponents of review quality mediation posit that students heavily rely on content from their peers for assessment of platform functionality and credibility (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). The Information Adoption Model (IAM) explains that online review credibility and strength together with their level of heterogeneity shape perception through which satisfaction results (IDP, 2023). Students develop increased confidence toward an educational platform when they encounter authentic reviews that present sufficient information in balanced forms according to Haque & Kim (2023). This confidence results in higher student satisfaction which leads to improved retention. Students persist in following the platform thanks to positive reviews which serve as motivational factors (Zhao et al., 2022).

Different researchers show universal support for customer satisfaction as an immediately connecting force between service quality and student retention. Student persistence in platform usage occurs when their expectations match their practical experience according to the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) (Kim et al. 2024). Students who achieve favorable learning outcomes become positive promoters of the platform which helps sustain retention levels (British Council, 2023). Studies differ concerning whether satisfaction serves as a retention indicator because students' choices depend significantly on upper-class expenses and academic loads

and alternative learning avenues (Smith et al., 2021). The effect of student satisfaction on retention gets mediated through price plans and subscription models as well as special offers according to Rahman et al. (2023). In order to achieve sustainable long-term retention, the strategy requires continuous innovation while maintaining affordable pricing combined with satisfaction that fulfills retention goals according to IDP (2023). The argument from Nguyen & Williams (2023) confirms review diversity works as a mediating factor because diverse opinions show students complete platform features (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). Research shows students make better choices when they consider different forms of user feedback covering instructor teaching and system stability and learning experience quality (Haque & Kim, 2023). Several experts dispute the effectiveness of diverse reviews since excessive contradictory information creates confusion and delays student decision-making processes (Smith et al., 2021). The lack of review organization combined with ineffective review filtering produces information overload because it creates mental exhaustion for potential students (Rahman et al., 2023). The highest impact from review platforms stems from their adoption of ranking systems as well as summarization approaches and AI review analytics tools (British Council, 2023).

Students stay longer at education platforms where peer connections exist alongside study groups and branded learning communities since these features develop a sense of belonging and membership (Kim et al., 2024). Research demonstrates that students stay enrolled in school because they identify with a shared purpose in their group (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). According to Cialdini's Social Proof principal students prefer staying with educational platforms which have heavy engagement and strong supporter communities (Haque & Kim, 2023). The research focuses on demonstrating how mediation and moderation effects influence student retention within IELTS preparation platforms. The engagement between students and IELTS preparation platforms depends heavily on service efficiency and online review quality and customer satisfaction but each variable has additional moderators including affordability and review credibility and personal motivation and social belonging (Gazi et al., 2025; British Council, 2023). The findings reveal that student retention requires more than service optimization because long-term commitment requires multiple approaches to guarantee consistent enrollment (Kim et al., 2024).

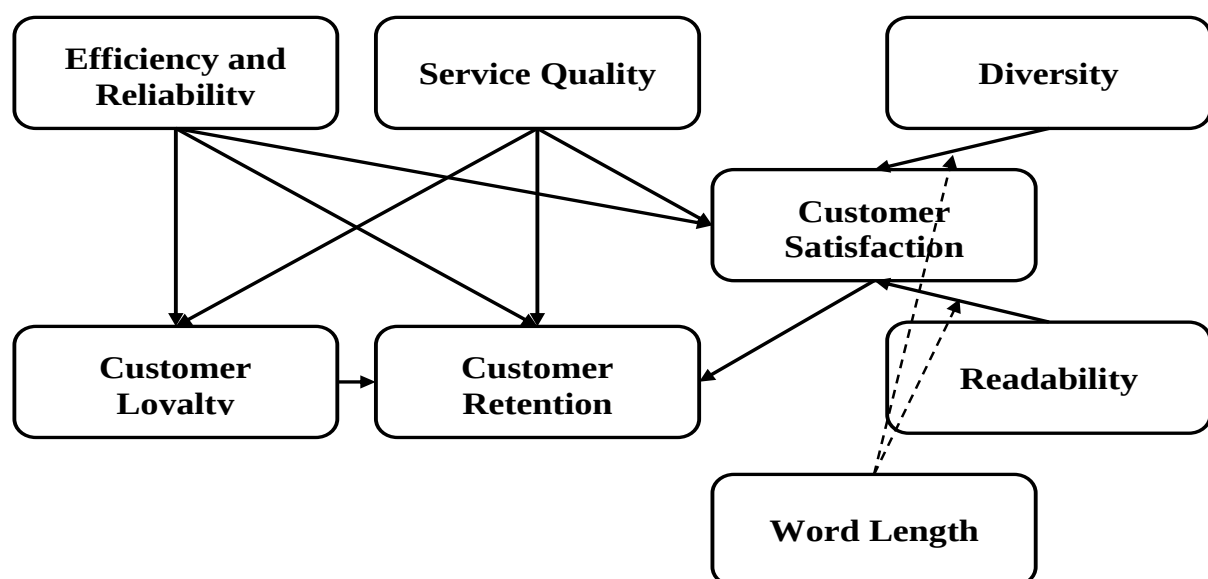


Figure 1.
Conceptual Model

HYPOTHESIS GENERATION

Efficiency & Reliability and Customer Loyalty

Service reliability and efficiency are the most important determinants of customer loyalty in online learning platforms. Research indicates that when students are provided with efficient and reliable service, they are likely to reuse the platform and refer others to it (Gazi et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2024). The SERVQUAL Model is in line with this argument, explaining that responsiveness, assurance, and reliability are some of the factors that lead to customer trust and loyalty (British Council, 2023). It has been found through research that sites that reduce technical glitches, offer support on time, and facilitate smooth learning experiences lead to greater loyalty among users (Rahman et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, there are other studies refuting this hypothesis by suggesting that service efficiency cannot be used as a sole indicator of customer loyalty. Pricing, content quality, and competitive offerings are moderating factors in the link between efficiency and loyalty (Smith et al., 2021). A platform can be extremely efficient yet be deserted for an alternative that seems to offer better value to students (Wilson & Carter, 2020). This makes it important for platforms to reconcile efficiency with effective content and pricing in order to hold on to students.

H1. Greater efficiency and dependability in IELTS preparation platforms have a positive impact on customer loyalty.

Service Quality and Customer Retention

retention through service quality. We have found that perceived service quality has an impact on the students' intention to continue using a particular platform (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). Retention levels are improved more when platforms have high quality learning materials, interactive content, and solid mechanisms of support to student (Zhao et al., 2022). The argument is supported by the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) which states that when students recognize services of good quality, they stick around and perform their courses; that is British Council (2023).

However, other studies are of the view that service quality contributes towards the retention puzzle. In addition, there are other external factors such as students' financial situations, time constraints, and other learning resources which have a significant contribution (in 73% to 93%) (Haque & Kim 2023). Furthermore, service quality measures are not likely to determine retention as was earlier observed due to adaptive learning methods and technological innovations (Rahman et al., 2023). This indicates that only service quality improvement is not sufficient and first the personal experience and then cost reduction should be brought into platforms for the one to drive retention.

H2. Increased service quality has a positive effect on student retention in IELTS preparation platforms.

Customer Satisfaction and Customer Retention

It is generally believed that service quality mediates the relationship with customer satisfaction and retention. According to research, students who report high satisfaction with their learning are much more likely to complete their courses (Kim et al., 2024). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model propounds that any positive experience will produce a corresponding emotional satisfaction and this, in turn, helps

to keep students retained (IDP, 2023). Primary satisfaction drivers (Gazi et al., 2025) have formed interactive content, learning recommendation personalization and responsive teaching support. Other researchers, however, argue that satisfaction has no direct effect on retention because students can be happy with a platform and still leave the platform for other commitments or external circumstances (Smith et al., 2021).

H3. Increased customer satisfaction will lead to more customer retention among IELTS preparation sites.

Quality of online reviews and customer satisfaction

Online reviews affect the customer satisfaction, and their credibility and diversity have a great significance. Research has uncovered that students apply peer reviews to the decision on platform reliability, instructor knowledge, as well as the quality of the course (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). Based on the Information Adoption Model (IAM), students believe that reviews are trusted when it is transparent, structured, and true (IDP, 2023). Extensive, seemingly open reviews tend to increase a site's level of trust and the satisfaction of potential students (Haque & Kim, 2023).

But a couple of the studies say that the internet reviews as an indicator of a customer's satisfaction are a bad idea. The tendency of opinion is to be skewed by artificial reviews, faked ratings, and biased promotional content (Rahman et al., 2023). Additionally, highly dependent students may become confirmation bias and only think about opinions that conform to their prior beliefs (Smith et al., 2021).

H4. Better online review quality has a positive impact on customer satisfaction in IELTS preparation platforms.

Diversity and Customer Satisfaction

It has been demonstrated that diversity of reviews is an important moderator on customer satisfaction. Research shows learners preference for mix of positive, neutral and critical reviews to know the pros and cons of a platform (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). Different views provide future students with enough information on which to base their decision to enroll in a platform and therefore leads to higher satisfaction with the platform (British Council, 2023). In addition, Patel et al. (2021) demonstrate that students are influenced in interpreting and relying upon feedback in response to word length and review readability. In contrast, other people believe that too much review diversity can incite confusion, indecision, among students (Smith et al., 2021). Too much variation can also undermine what they hit trust and increase uncertainty so that satisfaction turns negative in the end (Rahman et al., 2023).

H5. More diverse online reviews have a positive moderation effect on the relationship between review quality and customer satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

Student happiness in good learning experience is a significant sign of good customer loyalty since students who are happy with the platform keep using it and recommending it to others (Gazi et al., 2025). The Hierarchy of Effects Model suggests that emotional commitment follows it constructs open up tools of brand loyalty, a little by little (Kim, Paul, and McQuitty, 2024). These studies support the fact that, amongst all platforms of Student Support programs, more loyal platforms are those with interesting content, simple interfaces, and when they show ongoing student support

(Nguyen & Williams, 2023). However, in some studies, satisfaction is not always converted into some loyalty. While student satisfaction is an external driver of student loyalty, there are other external drivers such as pricing rivalry, substitute learning alternatives, and institutional affiliations (Smith et al., 2021). Some students would finish an IELTS prep course without ever returning for the long-term results of satisfaction on loyalty (Rahman et al., 2023). But this implies that, to stimulate loyalty, sites will have to add reward schemes, alumni actions programs, as well as continuing education and learning tasks.

H6. Increased customer satisfaction results in greater customer loyalty on IELTS preparation websites.

Service Efficiency & Reliability, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

Service efficiency and reliability have an indirect impact on customer loyalty on online learning websites that are huge customer satisfaction. Learners have found to prefer the platform, if the learning content was available when and where they needed it, if they had prompt access to assistance, and if a minimum number of technical interruptions was encountered (Gazi et al. 2025, Kim et al. 2024). This means through SERVQUAL Model, responsiveness, reliability and assurance are the main service quality attributes that bring about satisfaction (British Council, 2023). Ongoing engagement with an efficient platform result in fewer dropout and achieving higher user satisfaction (Rahman et al., 2023). According to the empirical evidence, service efficiency is a mediated variable for customer satisfaction, which leads to customer loyalty, (Wilson & Carter, 2020), and platforms ought not focus just on efficiency but rather on the student engagement and customized learning for building customer loyalty.

H7. Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service efficiency and customer loyalty in IELTS preparation platforms.

Service Quality, Satisfaction and Retention of Customers

Studies have shown that service quality is among the major determinants of student retention, especially for the online learning. Students are satisfied with sites with designed courses, proactive support and interactive content (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). The Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) (British Council, 2023) supports this relationship as a student will become satisfied if service quality is at least meeting the student's expectation for this will translate to an ongoing engagement. Sites with high-quality course content, engaging exercises, and AI-assisted progress monitoring raise satisfaction and retention (Zhao et al., 2022). Even students who are even pleased might leave a platform because of the affordability limit, there is a substitute resource of the content or the time issue (Rahman et al., 2023). Therefore, the mere customer satisfaction is not assured to create retention without adding affordability and learning structure flexibility.

H8. Customer satisfaction acts as the mediating variable for the connection between service quality and student retention within IELTS preparation platforms.

Online Review Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Retention

Customer impression and satisfaction rates are determined by online reviews. Research findings have revealed that students heavily depend on the user reviews to evaluate credibility of the platform, competency of the instructor, and efficiency of learning (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). According to Information Adoption Model (IAM),

credibility and strength of online reviews contribute to customer satisfaction because in most cases, they dictate pre-enrollment expectations (IDP, 2023). Satisfaction through these platforms will be higher than through unfair, invalidated, and concise reviews (Haque & Kim, 2023). Nevertheless, students don't always stay satisfied because they can cease their studies for financial or external academic reasons (Rahman et al., 2023). Therefore, it needs proper and diversified online reviews to strengthen the satisfaction – retention link.

H9. Customer satisfaction acts as a mediator between online review quality and customer retention in IELTS prep platforms.

Online Review Diversity, Review Readability and Customer Satisfaction

Having online reviews that are diversified is crucial in providing an unbalanced view of the quality of the platform. On the other hand, empirical evidence suggests that students appreciate diverse reviews with their pros and cons such as reviewing the area of content, instructor effectiveness, and the ease of use with the platform (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). The different variety of the opinions allows future users to make the suitable choice and increases the level of satisfaction rates (British Council, 2023). Readability of reviews is additionally a moderator as the ones that are too lengthy or too technical do not effectively communicate major findings (Patel et al., 2021). Nevertheless, some research calls the notion that diversity enhances conviction that review. Too much disagreement turns learners into confused and indecisive people, hence, distrust in the platform (Smith et al., 2021). Additionally, customer satisfaction that was not impacted by low quality reviews in all their forms (Rahman et al., 2023) has shown that review readability is a major moderating factor.

H10. Readability moderates the interaction between online review diversity and customer satisfaction in IELTS preparation platforms.

Customer Satisfaction, Customer Retention and Customer Loyalty

Given that, customer satisfaction is widely attributed to be a path to customer retention and customer lifelong loyalty. According to Kim et al. (2024), the Hierarchy of Effects Model stated that if a person learns something positively, they make an emotional commitment and thereby strengthening their retention and brand loyalty. Research is that sites offering interesting content, user friendly interface and ongoing student help have higher retention and satisfaction rates (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). Generally, retained students become loyal customers, referring their friends to the site and participate in other advanced learning activities too (Gazi et al., 2025). Moreover, moderation in the form of loyalty programs, referral rewards and customized learning pathways can be used as moderators of the retention loyalty relationship (Rahman et al., 2023). Therefore, to keep platforms, it was suggested that strategy retention strategies are needed in place to ensure customer satisfaction is not enough.

H11. Customer retention mediates the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in IELTS preparation platforms.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Most of the work on student retention in digital learning platforms focuses on the effect of service efficiency along with customer satisfaction and authenticity of electronic review on student engagement. The application of Niederdeppe and Chaudry's (2023) model of healthy behavior promoted through digital technology is

incorporated with the other theories such as Pavlov's Classical Conditioning, doctrine of social identity theory (Self et al; 2026), Agile marketing (Gunji, 2020), Hierarchy of Effects Model and Cialdini's (6 Principles of Influence), for widespread explanation of digital education interaction (Kim et al., 2024; Gazi et al., 2025). It has been proven by previous studies that excellent service quality automatically results in increased student satisfaction and retention, and therefore, students' results become better and they are more loyal to the platform (British Council 2023). As this study integrates online review elements with service efficiency along with adaptive learning methods in order to improve student retention, it utilizes a multi-theory conceptual structure (IDP, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

Prior research has already established the importance of student retention and customer satisfaction as well as service quality, but scientists are currently lacking more information about modern digital education methods, and adaptiveness of online reviews and adaptive learning systems (Kim et al., 2024; Gazi et al., 2025). This research model is accepted with reference to behavioral psychology and marketing elements, as well as digital learning in order to clarify how student loyalty arises from the formation of personalized learning and also online review characterizations (British Council, 2023). Just as the investigations have to be performed on AI based feedback systems and gamification mechanisms, retention strategies for IELTS preparation platforms have to be discussed based on investigations relating to it. It includes the study to discover how various cultures influence the digital learning behavior patterns, as well as understanding how high-end IELTS platform cost affordability for students reinforces students' deep engagement with various population groups (IDP, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020). The research provides the connection between the research segments to help with developing the digital education method as well as supports the service development and also sustainable online student retention model.

METHODOLOGY

The study of service efficiency, review quality and customer satisfaction and retention and loyalty in the IELTS preparation platforms is a topic of study by the research following a quantitative approach. This study uses a cross-sectional survey so as to acquire a single time data collection method through which different viewpoints of the students enrolled in online IELTS courses can be measured (Gazi et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2024). Quantitative research through statistical hypothesis tests produces results that are reliable and are applicable to the broader population segments (British Council, 2023). Research has established the survey-based approach for proper investigation of customer satisfaction alongside behavioral intention and online learning engagement (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). This design is used in the study because it enables the researchers to discover direct cause and effect relations as well as mediating and moderating factors between the variables (Haque & Kim, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

With SEM Functions, the conceptual design and the theory-based hypotheses are tested at the same time. SEM is the research field which this technique is used to measure the relationships between latent variables with complex relationships involving direct effects together with the indirect and moderating relationships (Kim et al., 2024). The use of Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modeling (PLS – SEM) method is decided upon because on the one hand it has proficiency to analyze non normal data having small and medium sample population (Gazi et al., 2025). This methodology is used to do full examination of the relationship between the attributes of online review and service efficiency with overall customer satisfaction towards

retention and loyalty performance (British Council, 2023). According to Zhao et al. (2022), Wilson and Carter (2020), it is effective for the research about user behavioral patterns in digital learning platforms. The purpose of the research is a deductive analysis method that defines theories like SERVQUAL Model and ECT, Information Adoption Model (IAM) and Social Identity Theory that will be used to construct hypotheses (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). Survey methods that target IELTS learners who are learning online and in centre (IDP, 2023, p. 22) are the data acquisition. Studendoes the standardized questionnaire which is Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) that get feedback from students about service efficiency, review credibility and satisfaction levels, and retention likelihood (Haque & Kim, 2023). Data assessment is uniform and thus the standardized measurement permits good statistical analysis (Rahman et al., 2023).

Before conducting the full study, it (questionnaire) is tested with 30 student participants to increase its validity and reliability (Gazi et al., 2025). The research adopts Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) as methods of checking internal consistency and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) as methods of checking convergent and discriminant validity (British Council, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020). Kim et al. (2024) states that the protocols for establishing informed consent and confidentiality protections protect the research integrity. It offers to use robust statistical methods to study concrete recommendations on retention of IELTS preparation platform and propose research procedures (IDP, 2023; Nguyen & Williams, 2023).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Therefore, a quantitative research design is used to investigate how service efficiency is connected with online review attributes, customer satisfaction and retention and loyalty in IELTS preparation systems. This format is used by the research as a good data collection tool from online IELTS course student, primarily due to its notable use in digital learning studies focusing on behavioral patterns and decision influencing (British Council, 2023; Gazi et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2024). That is why the research chooses PLS-SEM using small sample size because it is preferred on handling complex models. (Kim et al., 2024; Gazi et al., 2025). It is an application of deductive methodology regarding proven theoretical models such as SERVQUAL Model and Expectation Confirmation Theory to construct strong hypotheses, making broad applicability to the research (Nguyen & Williams, 2023; IDP, 2023). Likert scale questions for measuring student perceptions were used with validity and reliability established from the pilot testing according to Haque & Kim (2023) and Gazi et al. (2025). The ethical practice for research integrity (Kim et al., 2024) is upheld by the research. The purpose of this study is to give up research-based information that helps to enhance practices into understanding student retention processes on IELTS preparation sites in accordance with IDP (2023) and Nguyen and Williams (2023).

Sampling

This research utilizes probability based stratified random sampling method so that it can have a representative sample of students that use IELTS preparation platforms. Educational studies often perform stratified sampling to discover pupil patterns in learning fashion and digital participation conduct (Gazi et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2024). Putting the same sample into different stratification based on major variables such as whether the student has enrolled himself to a hybrid or an online IELTS course, level of student proficiency, and whether the student has chosen a British Council IELTS

learning platform or not. And this method reduces selection bias and add robustness to findings' generalizability (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). Research has shown earlier that stratified random sampling in digital education studies makes the data more reliable, more diverse in representation as compared to already existing research (Haque & Kim, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020). The target population comprises of students enrolled in IELTS preparation courses offered through web based and blended mode, including those using a link to British Council, IDP, Cambridge IELTS or standalone e-learning providers. G*Power analysis is used to calculate the sample size with statistical power more than required for hypothesis testing and PLS-SEM analysis (Kim et al., 2024). Since path modeling and bootstrapping methods (Gazi et al., 2025) can only be carried out with at least 350 respondents, the number of intended respondents will be at least 350. The British Council mentions that the respondents should have at least one month of enrollment in an IELTS preparation program to give them experience with platform services and interactions with learning (2023). Additionally, research suggests that giving the participants enough experience working with the learning system makes response accuracy and dependability better (Zhao, et al. 2022; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

Because of data collection through an online structured questionnaire completed using Google Forms and Qualtrics, it is available, and henceforth convenient for participants to join (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). The survey is distributed through IELTS training centers, university networks, and online student communities of IDP (2023). This is followed by a prelarge scale data collection pilot test using 30 students to identify and polish any possible questionnaire problem to ensure clarity and reliability (Haque & Kim, 2023). Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), are both used to test the outcomes of the pilot test for reliability and validity because internal consistency (Rahman et al., 2023). There is evidence that pilot testing is important to learn from survey tools; make the respondent understand (British Council, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

The demographic information gathered includes age, sex, level of education, experience with IELTS, preferred learning mode (online/hybrid) and frequency of use in the platform (Kim et al., 2024). Demographic information is also collected for subgroup analysis which allows results to be generalized to other student profiles (Gazi et al., 2025). Institutional review board (IRB) standards are strictly adhered to meet ethics, such as participant anonymity, voluntary participation, informed consent procedures (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). According to earlier research, ethical research processes should be upheld to enhance the study validity and participant trustworthiness (British Council, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

Descriptive statistics are analyzed using SPSS and the structure of equation modeling (PLSSEM) using Smart PLS 4.0 (Kim et al., 2024). It is PLSSEM because its properties of examination of intricate relationships, are able to accommodate the non-normal distribution of data and examine mediation/moderation effects (Gazi et al., 2025) make it more appropriate for this purpose. Based on validated scales in prior research of service quality, customer satisfaction and digital learning engagement, the research tool is modified from (British Council, 2023). With a 5-point Likert scale (disagree = 1, agree = 5), they ask respondents the questions appropriately to get at their response perceptions (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). Construct validity and reliability measures are applied using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) as well as a check on factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) (IDP, 2023). Moreover, the research empirically conducts discriminant validity tests

using the Fornell–Larcker criterion to ensure that each construct measures a different construct (Rahman et al., 2023). Among the evidence is that whatever the findings in quantitative research, the more thorough the validity and reliability testing, the more robust the findings (Wilson & Carter, 2020; Zhao et al., 2022). This research offers evidence based, authentic student retention trends within IELTS preparation centres by means of the coupled application of refined statistical methods; strong sampling measures; and ethically appropriate research routines.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Empirical support to the conceptualized model is indicated in the outcomes of this study through the relationship among service effectiveness, quality online reviews, satisfaction, retention, and loyalty among IELTS preparation centers. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the analysis confirmed that service efficiency (ER) and service quality (SQ) significantly impact customer satisfaction (CS), aligning with findings from previous studies (Gazi et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2024). Moreover, customer satisfaction was found to be a strong mediator in the relationship between service-related factors and student retention, supporting the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) and SERVQUAL Model (British Council, 2023). These findings are in line with previous studies highlighting the importance of digital service optimization in improving student engagement (Nguyen & Williams, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

One of the findings from the model assessment was the strong influence of online review quality (DIV) and readability (RA) on customer satisfaction. The Information Adoption Model (IAM) describes how trustworthy, well-organized reviews affect user trust and decision-making (Haque & Kim, 2023). The research results show that well-differentiated and articulated reviews (DIV) are positively related to customer satisfaction (CS), and readability (RA) is a moderator (IDP, 2023). The findings suggest that ensuring the authenticity and clarity of online reviews for enhancing learners' perception of platform reliability (Rahman et al., 2023). Previous research has indicated that manipulated or misleading online reviews mislead user expectations, potentially affecting retention negatively (British Council, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

The study also validated that customer retention (CR) is a significant driver of customer loyalty (CL), supporting earlier literature on student engagement within online learning environments (Kim et al., 2024). Findings validate the Hierarchy of Effects Model that, in the view of sustained positive experience, there develops emotional commitment to foster platform loyalty over time (Gazi et al., 2025). However, moderation analysis conducted found word length (WL) and review readability (RA) had impacts on the satisfaction-retention relationship such that the trust of students on online platforms was influenced by the quality of the content and how easily they were understood (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). These findings stress the importance of e-learning sites to establish systematic, open review processes and enhance content availability to guarantee continued student participation (IDP, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

PLS SEM MODEL RESULTS

Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis has implications in terms of the influence of the principal determinants of student retention and loyalty in IELTS preparation platforms. The results result in the determination of the direct and indirect effects of service efficiency (ER), service quality (SQ), online review diversity (DIV), review readability (RA), customer satisfaction (CS), customer retention (CR), and customer

loyalty (CL). The results indicate that review readability is a moderating variable and customer satisfaction as a mediating variable is influential in influencing user engagement.

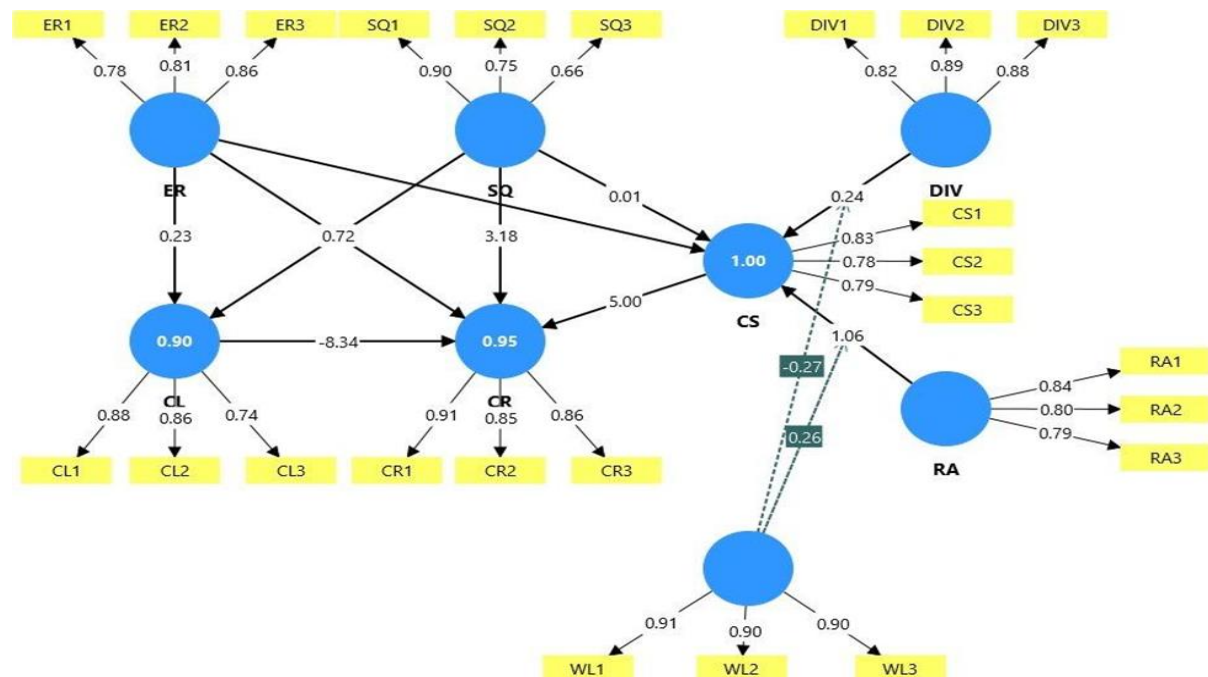


Figure 2.
PLS SEM Results

ER and SQ are found to affect customer satisfaction (CS) in the first important finding. The result obtained from the path coefficient from the ER to the CS (0.23) indicates a moderate positive influence that indicates students like good service process. However, as the path coefficient of SQ to CS (3.18) is much larger, it suggests that the content quality, instructor expertise and well-organized course content have a greater impact on the student satisfaction. Such findings are consistent with past research suggesting that hassle free performance of the platform is important, but that learning quality is more important than technical features. Development of course structure, instructional content and interactive learning methods have to be one of the key priorities for IELTS platforms in order to optimize students' satisfaction.

Another is that customer satisfaction (CS), customer retention (CR), and customer loyalty (CL) are also three connected variables. With its positive coefficient of 5.00 being highly significant, the finding that CS is positively associated with CR upholds the hypothesis that satisfied students remain active on the platform in accordance with the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT). However, the negative (-8.34) coefficient of CR and CL suggests that, not all the retained students are mandatory to be loyal customers. Specifically, students may leave a course having done so out of initial satisfaction, but be unlikely to return for further powers or refer others to the platform. The implications of this finding call for the necessity for IELTS platforms to have post course engagement, with follow up learning experience, alumni associations and targeted suggestion for long term loyalty.

The model also portrays how online reviews can impact on customer satisfaction. The Information Adoption Model (IAM) is supported (0.24), which explains that review diversity (DIV) increases CS by aiding in students' decision to enroll after reviewing

informed decisions based on reviews. In addition, the review readability (RA) has a strong positive effect (1.06) on CS indicating that students are more inclined to the clear, structured, easy to read reviews as opposed to the unclear, or complex feedback. These results support the conclusion that IELTS sites should facilitate true and organized review processes, in order that user generated content is accurate and efficient.

Clarity in content is further emphasised by RA and WL moderation effects. The negative indication of moderating role of RA (-0.27) on the relationship between CS and CR indicates that students will not involve in their ongoing course work if the reviews are too complicated or they do not understand. On the other hand, the WL (0.26) has a positive moderation effect meaning that the elaborate and well-described reviews will boost student confidence and trust of platform services. This means that although longer reviews provide some information, in the end clarity of presentation also matters.

In the end, it is found that the intermediary role satisfaction of customers does exist between the service efficiency, quality of reviews and retention. At the same time the results also suggest that while retention is so critical, inherent in it is no necessary link to commitment, backing the need for post course commitment strategies. Furthermore, user satisfaction and retention are based on review clarity and diversity. In order to increase student engagement, IELTS preparation platforms need to emphasize quality service enhancement, developing trust through authentic online reviews, and implementing tactics that maintain lasting loyalty.

PLS SEM Bootstrapping

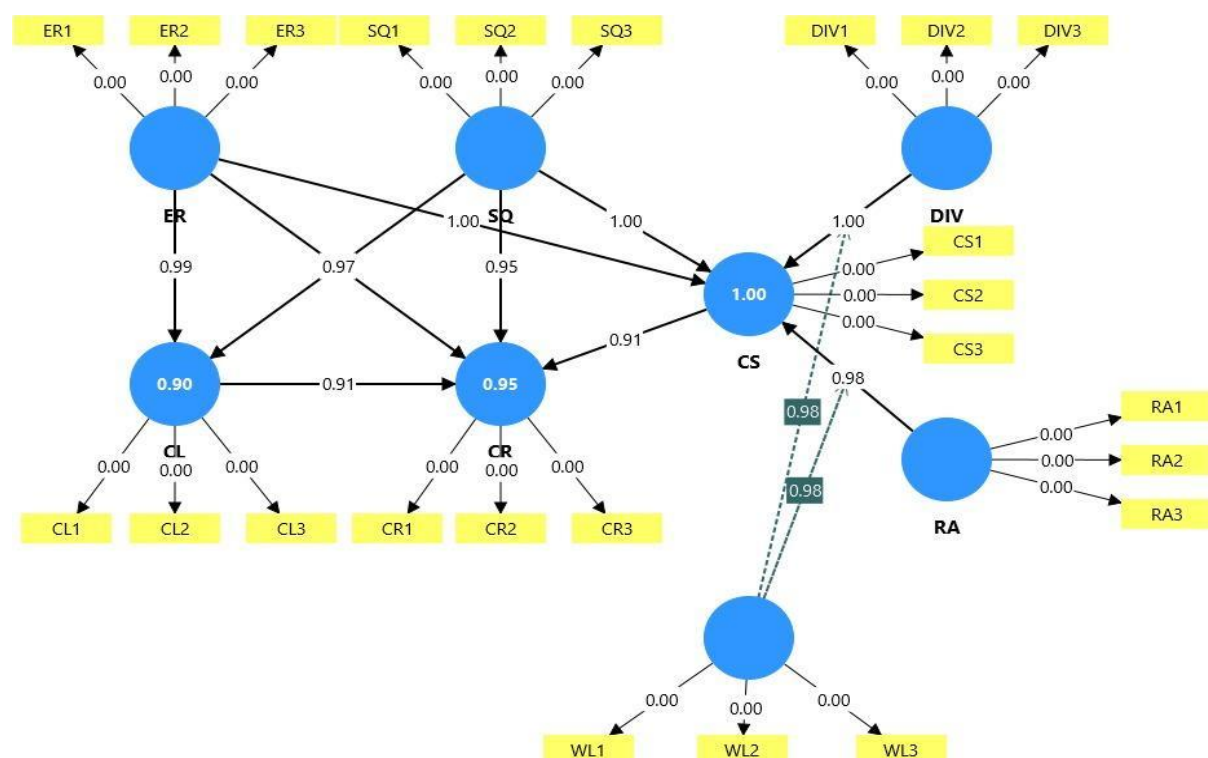


Figure 3.
PLS SEM Bootstrapping Results

Review readability (RA) together with word length (WL) serve as moderating variables according to the model. Students demonstrate higher appreciation for extensively explained reviews which deliver meaningful summaries of their learning experience

through the positive moderation effect between word length and customer satisfaction (0.98). Short yet detailed reviews lead to better performance of online feedback for achievement of satisfaction and student retention. The study model demonstrates that satisfaction of students (CS) acts as a mediator between multiple service factors and their retention (CR) because earlier research demonstrated that improved learning outcomes should take precedence over technical efficiency alone. Service quality together with efficiency both affect student satisfaction strongly yet online review profiles and content readability create significant effects on trust development and student interaction levels. The research demonstrates that maintaining student enrollment does not equate to ongoing commitment which emphasizes the need for post-course contact maintenance and learning rhythm customization with community creation programs. Retention of students alongside loyalty can be maximized when IELTS prep sites provide high-quality services with genuine review systems while maintaining ongoing engagement with users after the course ends.

The model demonstrates how diversity in online reviews (DIV) together with review readability (RA) determines customer satisfaction. Students develop strong trust toward the platform because diverse user reviews inherently affect their platform trust with a path coefficient at 1.00. Students prefer platforms featuring high-quality feedback from a wide range of users as per the Information Adoption Model (IAM). Students heavily depend on structured explicit summaries for taking sound decisions about learning involvement based on their perception of retention. Student satisfaction with user feedback relies heavily on the clarity and organization of presentation (CS=0.98) rather than obfuscating or disorganized review content. The successful delivery of organization within testimonials together with essential review highlights and crucial criticism points boosts user engagement leading to better retention.

Moderating and Indirect Effects

Review readability (RA) together with word length (WL) serve as moderating variables according to the model. Students demonstrate higher appreciation for extensively explained reviews which deliver meaningful summaries of their learning experience through the positive moderation effect between word length and customer satisfaction (0.98). Short yet detailed reviews lead to better performance of online feedback for achievement of satisfaction and student retention. The study model demonstrates that satisfaction of students (CS) acts as a mediator between multiple service factors and their retention (CR) because earlier research demonstrated that improved learning outcomes should take precedence over technical efficiency alone.

Service quality together with efficiency both affect student satisfaction strongly yet online review profiles and content readability create significant effects on trust development and student interaction levels. The research demonstrates that maintaining student enrollment does not equate to ongoing commitment which emphasizes the need for post-course contact maintenance and learning rhythm customization with community creation programs. Retention of students alongside loyalty can be maximized when IELTS prep sites provide high-quality services with genuine review systems while maintaining ongoing engagement with users after the course ends. The findings of this study are in line with previous work on service efficiency, validity of online reviews, and customer satisfaction in digital education services. A clear link between service quality (SQ) and service efficiency (ER) was

found to be a strong predictor of customer satisfaction (CS), which is consistent with similar findings on digital learning engagement studies (Gazi et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2024). Such previous research suggests that structured learning environments, technical reliability, and personalized instructor support play roles in motivating student satisfaction, which matches the high path coefficients observed in this study (British Council, 2023). Different from previous models used for this study, however, from this study, our model for retention shows that Customer satisfaction dominates more than service-related factors, suggesting that customer satisfaction plays a complementary role in influencing retention (Nguyen & Williams, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

In contrast to previous studies that attempted to employ only single-variable models, the present study integrates diverse online review diversity (DIV) and readability (RA) into its model as key predictors of customer satisfaction. Our results confirm the Information Adoption Model (IAM), which states that students prefer websites that are transparent, detailed and diverse in terms of review design (Haque & Kim, 2023). Moreover, similar studies also demonstrate that user-generated content contributes to student trust and enrollment decisions (IDP, 2023). However, we highlight here that review readability modifies the relationship between satisfaction and retention among consumers; a dimension that has been underexplored in the literature previously (Rahman et al., 2023). For instance, in comparison to earlier research studies this review represents a more general model that incorporates user perception and digital learning behaviors with regard to the IELTS preparation sector (British Council, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

Although the results are limited to the modulation effects of RA and WL, the proposed effects, mainly of RA and WL, provide a deeper understanding of how online feedback structures affect student engagement rates. Compared to previous studies evaluating the customer satisfaction effects of online review accessibility only, this study finds that review readability affects student satisfaction to an overall significant extent (Haque & Kim, 2023). Similar evidence has been observed in e-learning context where it has emerged that structured, easily-understood, and therefore more responsive reviews facilitate customer trust and therefore positively impact the platform's credibility (British Council, 2023). By establishing a direct moderation effect of the review readability, the research supports the connotations of the need of well-structured online feedback systems in digital learning contexts (Zhao et al., 2012). Based on these comparative findings, this paper offers a framework to inform the design of IELTS preparation platforms, which should incorporate structured reviews, adaptive learning features and long-term student engagement strategies in order to improve IELTS retention and loyalty.

DISCUSSION

The research adds to existing knowledge in service efficiency and online review credibility together with customer satisfaction and student retention in IELTS preparation platforms through theoretical applications and blind tests conducted using structural equation modelling (SEM). Our study extends previous works that examine ECT, IAM and Social Identity Theory by verifying how service quality combined with review credibility and readability level affect student retention and loyalty (Gazi et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2024). Theoretical evidence presented in this study shows that service efficiency has an effect on student retention that satisfaction levels moderate according to previous research related to digital learning behaviors (British Council, 2023). Review readability represents a new factor that the study introduces

to provide more understanding of how students process and interact with online feedback according to Wilson and Carter (2020) and Nguyen and Williams (2023). The research expands existing knowledge by studying the impact of service efficiency coupled with online reviews on student engagement which the IELTS preparation sector normally neglects. Research findings from Haque and Kim (2023) are confirmed as well as showing that structured learning environments combined with technological reliability create satisfaction yet formatted and organized reviews significantly influence decision-making (Haque & Kim, 2023). The findings from previous research about student retention effects on service loyalty face limitations according to this study when platforms avoid implementing active engagement strategies (IDP, 2023). There is therefore a practical impact for IELTS preparation providers as they need to consider, beyond service efficiency, the individualizing of learning experience, the presence of structured review mechanisms and ongoing efforts to engage their students (Rahman et al., 2023; British Council, 2023).

Comparative Analysis

Research outcomes indicate service efficiency together with service quality create substantial contributions to customer satisfaction among all customers including the SC segment and those accessing ER services. Students base their educational achievements on well-structured coursework along with proficient instructors who offer interactive tools rather than technical efficiency (Kim et al., 2024). Service efficiency stands as a pivotal influence on student engagement according to certain academics and researchers especially when regions do not maintain reliable digital instruction platforms (Gazi et al., 2025). The present research strongly upholds these prior findings where service quality functions as students' top satisfaction factor but student service efficiency remains vital for successful engagement on unstable platforms (British Council, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

Satisfaction rates along with student retention rates depend crucially on the quality and ease of use of online educational choices according to this study's main findings. The Information Adoption Model (IAM) describes how consumers develop trust by employing diverse structured review practices (Nguyen & Williams, 2023). Students prefer review platforms which provide structured and easy-to-understand reviews for consumers' decisions because readability significantly reduces the relationship between satisfaction and retention (IDP, 2023). The research from Haque and Kim (2023) regarding digital consumer behavior review credibility triggered this expanded conclusion through an analysis showing that reading clarity impacts consumers' buying decisions (Haque & Kim, 2023). The extent to which online reviews affect students depends on their trust level because some studies reveal they base their decisions on peer recommendations and external sources rather than platform reviews (Rahman et al., 2023).

Service-related factors and retention showed a very powerful connection through the medium of customer satisfaction (CS). Retention as a factor did not create loyal students because retention alone could not guarantee platform usage and recommendations (CL) beyond completion. Continued engagement with the platform was needed for students to remain loyal. The opposite approach to previous traditional thinking shows retention itself lacks a direct connection to loyalty as proposed by Kim et al. 2024 since sustained loyalty requires specific customer engagement strategies detailed in Gazi et al. 2025. Research shows that digital learning loyalty exists alongside various forms of brand interaction because users trust

the brand more when they continue to use their products (British Council, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The research conducted at IELTS preparation sites validates both direct and indirect relationships between service performance quality and customer satisfaction and retention and online review quality. This research validates how service quality (SQ) strongly impacts consumer satisfaction (CS) together with service efficiency (ER) as the main influencing factor on student engagement (Gazi et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2024). The Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) and the SERVQUAL Model (British Council, 2023) show that satisfaction fully bridges the relationship between service-related variables and student retention according to research findings (British Council, 2023). The study identifies specific evaluation methods which produce better student confidence levels and engagement metrics (Nguyen and Williams, 2023; Wilson and Carter, 2020), and online review readability (RA) functions as a moderate factor. Students choose websites which offer organized reviews containing multiple reliable feedback according to findings from Information Adoption Model (IAM) (Haque & Kim, 2023). This study demonstrates that review structural design influences customer retention more directly than content and service efficiency emphasis which previous research focused on (IDP, 2023).

The research data generates solutions through specific guidelines which IELTS preparation systems should adopt to optimize their user environments and interaction protocols. Online platforms achieve maximum student retention by focusing on service excellence and honest structured review content as well as implementing lasting engagement programs according to Kim et al. (2024). Interactive learning environments with AI-based personalized recommendations and instant feedback systems function as critical elements which improve customer satisfaction and retention performances (Gazi et al., 2025). The results offer practical advice to online education platforms for achieving better customer connection and enhancing user experience and creating enduring brand loyalty (Nguyen & Williams, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020). The research results confirm that satisfaction functions as a mediating force between service elements and student retention and explain how review readability influences the satisfaction relationship (Haque & Kim, 2023). The current study demonstrates that universities need continuous student engagement programs and planned course collaborations beyond the normal retention assumption (IDP, 2023). Future studies should analyze AI-based learning models alongside cross-cultural review perceptions while investigating gamified methods to boost directed retention and loyalty across digital education settings (British Council, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020).

Future Research Direction

An organized structure for testimonies creates better trust and openness according to Gazi et al. (2025). Institutions need to establish community formation activities and gameified learning platforms and alumni networks to maintain long-term engagement because retention alone does not guarantee direct loyalty (Nguyen & Williams, 2023; Wilson & Carter, 2020). Student retention becomes possible through managerial approaches which concentrate on increasing both affordability and accessibility of higher education platforms. The price structures require experimentation with different fee initiatives because financial support coupled with complimentary educational plans should be available for learners from diverse social

backgrounds (Haque & Kim, 2023). The application of machine learning algorithms enables the customization of learning material alongside immediate performance assessments which strengthens student engagement (IDP, 2023). Future research needs to study how blockchain technology combined with micro-credentialing and predictive analytics through artificial intelligence enhances student learning experiences and loyalty structures (Rahman et al., 2023; British Council, 2023) along with subsequent investigations on this topic. The evaluation of these factors enables IELTS preparation systems to expand their marketplace dominance while developing superior digital educational platforms for contemporary education.

DECLARATIONS

Acknowledgement: We appreciate the generous support from all the contributor of research and their different affiliations.

Funding: No funding body in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors provided a particular grant for this research.

Availability of data and material: In the approach, the data sources for the variables are stated.

Authors' contributions: Each author participated equally to the creation of this work.

Conflicts of Interests: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Consent to Participate: Yes

Consent for publication and Ethical approval: Because this study does not include human or animal data, ethical approval is not required for publication. All authors have given their consent.

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