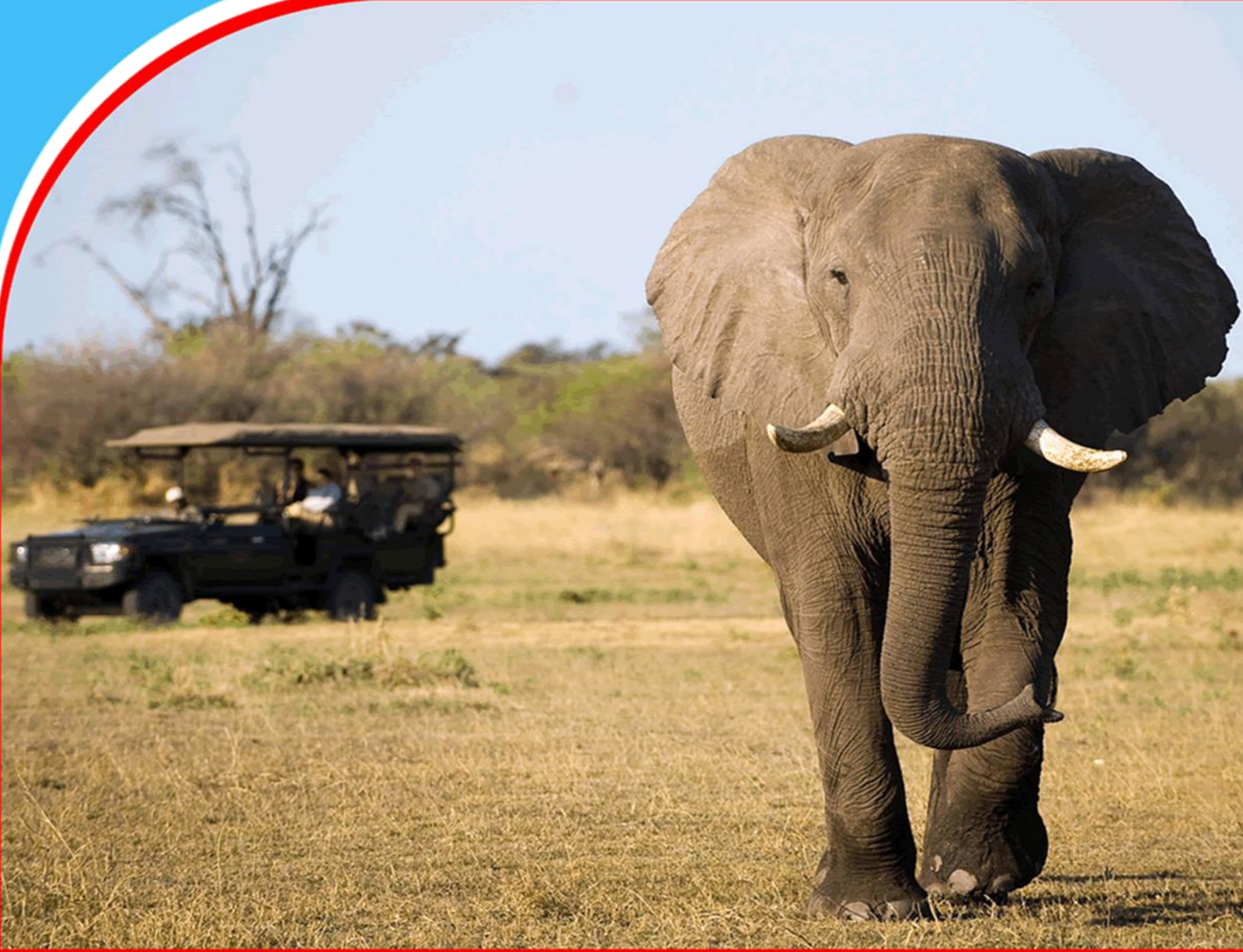


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**Influence of Social Media Marketing on Customer
Loyalty in Luxury Hotels in South Africa**

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Influence of Social Media Marketing on Customer Loyalty in Luxury Hotels in South Africa

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the influence of social media marketing on customer loyalty in luxury hotels in Kenya.

Materials and Methods: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study found that effective social media strategies, such as engaging content and personalized interactions, foster a strong emotional connection between luxury hotels and their guests. This emotional engagement, often cultivated through visually appealing posts and authentic storytelling, enhances brand perception and trust, leading to increased customer loyalty. Furthermore, user-generated content and

reviews shared on social platforms contribute to a sense of community among customers, reinforcing their loyalty to the brand. Overall, luxury hotels that leverage social media marketing not only attract new customers but also cultivate a loyal clientele that feels valued and connected to the brand's identity.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Relationship marketing theory, social exchange theory and brand loyalty theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing influence of social media marketing on customer loyalty in luxury hotels in Kenya. Luxury hotels should prioritize developing personalized marketing strategies that leverage data analytics to understand customer preferences. As hotels utilize data for personalized marketing, clear policies regarding data privacy and security must be established.

Keywords: *Social Media, Marketing, Customer Loyalty, Luxury Hotels*

INTRODUCTION

Customer loyalty refers to a consumer's willingness to repeatedly purchase from a particular brand or company despite competitive offerings. In developed economies such as the USA, customer loyalty has seen a slight decline, with 75% of American consumers admitting that they would switch brands if offered a better price or product in 2022, compared to 68% in 2020 (Reis & Trindade, 2021). In contrast, Japan has maintained a relatively high rate of brand loyalty, with 83% of consumers expressing satisfaction with their favorite brands and reporting regular repeat purchases (Tsugami & Takahashi, 2021). The use of loyalty programs has been key in sustaining customer retention in both the USA and Japan, with 57% of American consumers and 62% of Japanese consumers actively participating in such programs (Davis, 2022). These trends indicate that although loyalty remains strong, developed economies are seeing shifts due to increasing market competition and consumer expectations.

In the UK, the rise of e-commerce has influenced customer loyalty, where 65% of consumers in 2021 reported they would remain loyal to a retailer offering seamless online and offline experiences (Allen, 2020). This shift aligns with trends in the USA and Japan, where omnichannel strategies are proving essential for maintaining customer loyalty in competitive markets. Research also suggests that personalization in customer service has played a significant role in brand retention, with 60% of UK consumers favoring brands that offer tailored experiences (Bennett, 2019). In Japan, trust in product quality remains the top driver of loyalty, with 78% of consumers returning to brands that consistently meet quality expectations (Tsugami & Takahashi, 2021). Overall, while customer loyalty in developed economies remains robust, it is increasingly tied to factors such as personalization and technological integration.

In developing economies, customer loyalty is driven largely by affordability, product availability, and trust in local brands. In India, 72% of consumers in 2020 reported they would remain loyal to brands that offer good value for money, while price sensitivity remains high (Gupta & Kumar, 2020). In Brazil, loyalty programs have gained traction, with 48% of consumers enrolled in at least one program, yet many remain open to switching brands if better discounts are available (Silva & Santos, 2019). As developing economies continue to experience economic growth, businesses are focusing on enhancing product quality and customer service to retain consumer loyalty. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital adoption, with online platforms becoming crucial for customer engagement, especially in urban areas of developing countries (Gupta & Kumar, 2020).

In Mexico, customer loyalty is influenced by cultural factors, with 64% of consumers indicating a preference for local brands that reflect national identity and values (López, 2020). Additionally, the rise of social media and digital marketing has allowed companies to establish stronger connections with their customers, enhancing loyalty through targeted campaigns. However, customer retention remains a challenge in developing economies, where brand switching is common due to economic constraints and fluctuating market conditions (Silva & Santos, 2019). While loyalty in developing economies is growing, it is significantly influenced by external factors such as affordability, digital accessibility, and economic stability.

In Indonesia, a 2019 survey found that 68% of consumers remained loyal to brands that offered affordable prices, while 35% expressed willingness to switch brands for better deals (Suryana & Utama, 2019). However, brand loyalty is also increasingly influenced by social and environmental factors, with 48% of Indonesian consumers favoring brands that demonstrate corporate social

responsibility (Mulyani, 2020). This highlights a growing awareness of ethical business practices, which is becoming a key driver for customer retention in developing economies. Additionally, digital platforms such as e-commerce and mobile apps are playing an important role in fostering loyalty, as 72% of Indonesian consumers engaged with digital loyalty programs in 2020 (Suryana & Utama, 2019).

In Vietnam, customer loyalty is shaped by similar factors, but there is a stronger emphasis on product quality and brand trust. A 2021 study revealed that 61% of Vietnamese consumers expressed loyalty to brands they perceive as reliable and offering consistent quality, particularly in industries such as electronics and household goods (Nguyen, 2021). In addition, loyalty programs are gaining traction, with 54% of Vietnamese consumers participating in such initiatives, especially in urban areas where digital adoption is higher (Tran & Le, 2021). However, loyalty is still fluid, as 40% of consumers reported they would switch brands for better pricing or promotions, reflecting the competitive market landscape in Vietnam (Nguyen, 2021). Overall, customer loyalty in developing economies like Indonesia and Vietnam is influenced by a blend of affordability, brand trust, and the growing importance of digital engagement.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, customer loyalty is still developing but shows promise as businesses expand and improve their offerings. In Nigeria, for example, 60% of consumers in 2019 expressed loyalty to local brands due to affordability and cultural alignment, while 30% preferred international brands due to perceived higher quality (Olawale & Adebayo, 2019). Mobile-based loyalty programs are growing in popularity across the region, with 41% of consumers in Kenya actively engaging with such programs in 2021 (Mwangi, 2021). These programs often offer rewards through mobile money platforms, which are widely used in Sub-Saharan Africa. The rise of e-commerce is also playing a crucial role, as businesses integrate digital tools to improve customer engagement and retention.

In South Africa, customer loyalty is often linked to the social responsibility of brands, with 68% of consumers reporting a preference for companies that contribute to social causes (Smith, 2020). However, loyalty in Sub-Saharan economies is still evolving, and challenges such as limited infrastructure and economic instability often lead to brand switching (Mwangi, 2021). Despite this, the increasing adoption of technology and the rise of middle-class consumers are creating new opportunities for businesses to build loyalty in this region. Sub-Saharan Africa's unique consumer landscape, combined with technological advancements, is gradually shaping the future of customer loyalty in these markets.

In Ghana, 55% of consumers in 2020 reported loyalty to local brands primarily due to affordability and accessibility, with 38% willing to switch for international brands with better quality (Adu-Gyamfi, 2020). Loyalty programs, particularly those linked to mobile payments, are becoming more popular, with 46% of Ghanaian consumers engaging in such programs, an increase from 33% in 2018 (Ampofo, 2021). Despite growing brand loyalty, economic instability often pushes consumers to make choices based on price, with 40% of Ghanaian consumers willing to change brands if they find a better deal (Adu-Gyamfi, 2020). This reflects the challenges businesses face in maintaining long-term customer loyalty in price-sensitive markets.

In Tanzania, customer loyalty trends mirror those in other Sub-Saharan economies, with a focus on affordability and trust in local brands. A 2019 study found that 60% of Tanzanian consumers preferred local brands due to lower costs and familiarity, though 42% expressed a willingness to

try international brands if they offered better quality or services (Mwakalobo & Mkumbo, 2019). Loyalty programs are also on the rise in Tanzania, particularly in urban areas, where 35% of consumers participated in some form of digital or mobile-based loyalty scheme in 2020 (Nyakyi, 2020). However, like in Ghana, the economic landscape remains a significant factor, and loyalty can be volatile, as consumers are often swayed by short-term promotions or discounts. Overall, Sub-Saharan economies are seeing gradual shifts in customer loyalty patterns, with technology and mobile engagement playing larger roles alongside traditional drivers such as price and trust.

In Uganda, customer loyalty patterns reflect a blend of traditional loyalty drivers and the growing importance of mobile and digital engagement. A 2021 study found that 54% of Ugandan consumers remained loyal to brands that provided affordability and ease of access, particularly in sectors like food and beverages (Ochieng, 2021). However, digital platforms are becoming increasingly important in fostering loyalty, with 40% of consumers participating in mobile-based loyalty programs, a rise from 30% in 2019 (Mugisha, 2021). Similar to other Sub-Saharan economies, Ugandan consumers are highly price-sensitive, with 38% willing to switch brands for better prices or promotions (Ochieng, 2021). Overall, while traditional factors such as affordability and brand trust are still dominant, the influence of digital technology in shaping customer loyalty is on the rise across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Social media marketing strategies have become vital in shaping customer loyalty by providing personalized, engaging, and accessible content across various platforms. The first strategy, content marketing, involves creating high-quality, relevant, and shareable posts that resonate with target audiences, thereby increasing engagement and brand loyalty (Kumar & Gupta, 2021). Second, influencer marketing leverages trusted voices in social media to promote products, as consumers tend to trust recommendations from individuals they follow, which enhances brand loyalty (Batra, 2020). Third, social listening enables brands to monitor customer feedback and engage directly with consumers, which fosters a sense of connection and trust, ultimately boosting loyalty (Smith, 2019). Finally, loyalty programs integrated into social media such as exclusive offers, discounts, and rewards for social media followers further solidify customer loyalty by providing tangible benefits for continued engagement (Brown & Johnson, 2022).

These strategies are inherently linked to customer loyalty through their ability to personalize customer interactions and offer value beyond the product itself. For instance, content marketing creates emotional connections with consumers, driving repeated engagements and fostering brand affinity (Kumar & Gupta, 2021). Influencer marketing enhances trust, as 71% of consumers are more likely to remain loyal to brands recommended by influencers they follow (Batra, 2020). Social listening helps brands respond to customer needs in real time, reinforcing the relationship and maintaining loyalty (Smith, 2019). Additionally, social media-based loyalty programs have been shown to increase repeat purchases by 54%, demonstrating the effectiveness of incentives in maintaining long-term customer relationships (Brown & Johnson, 2022). These strategies collectively drive sustained customer loyalty by creating meaningful, value-driven interactions across digital platforms.

Problem Statement

The influence of social media marketing on customer loyalty in luxury hotels remains a critical area of study, particularly given the increasing reliance on digital platforms for brand communication and engagement. Despite the growing use of social media strategies to foster brand

loyalty, luxury hotels face challenges in translating online engagement into long-term customer retention. The personalization of services and exclusivity, traditionally associated with luxury brands, must now be effectively communicated through digital channels, yet there is a gap in understanding how social media marketing directly impacts customer loyalty in this sector (Wang & Hung, 2021). Additionally, the highly competitive nature of the luxury hotel industry requires differentiated strategies to maintain customer loyalty, but the effectiveness of social media marketing tools, such as influencer campaigns or loyalty programs, in retaining high-end clientele is not well-documented (Kim & Ko, 2019). Without a clearer understanding of these dynamics, luxury hotels may miss key opportunities to enhance customer loyalty through optimized social media marketing efforts (Ali & Anwar, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

Relationship Marketing Theory

Originated by Leonard Berry in the 1980s, relationship marketing theory emphasizes building and maintaining long-term relationships with customers rather than focusing on short-term transactions. It suggests that by creating personalized, trust-based relationships, brands can foster loyalty. This theory is relevant to social media marketing in luxury hotels as these platforms provide a direct, personalized way to engage with high-end customers, offering tailored content and exclusive experiences to build loyalty (Li & Fang, 2020). Through constant interaction, luxury hotels can nurture deeper relationships that translate into sustained customer loyalty.

Social Exchange Theory

Developed by George Homans in the 1960s, social exchange theory posits that relationships are built on the principle of reciprocity, where individuals engage in interactions that provide them with rewards. In the context of luxury hotels, social media marketing can be seen as an exchange where customers provide loyalty in return for exclusive content, discounts, or special treatment. The more a customer perceives value in the engagement, the more likely they are to remain loyal (Gursoy & Chi, 2022). This theory is crucial for understanding how luxury hotels can incentivize loyalty through their social media campaigns.

Brand Loyalty Theory

First introduced by Jacoby and Chestnut in 1978, brand loyalty theory explores how consistent positive interactions with a brand lead to emotional attachment and repeated patronage. In luxury hotels, social media platforms offer the ideal venue for creating consistent and high-quality brand interactions, reinforcing the unique identity and exclusivity of the hotel (Rohm & Stefl, 2021). By using social media to showcase luxury and excellence, hotels can build emotional connections with customers, ultimately fostering long-term loyalty.

Empirical Review

Ali and Anwar (2020) examined the role of social media engagement in fostering customer loyalty in five-star hotels located in Dubai. Utilizing a survey methodology, the researchers collected data from 250 hotel guests who actively engaged with various hotel social media platforms. The findings indicated a strong correlation between high levels of engagement on social media and increased customer loyalty. Specifically, guests who interacted frequently with hotel content, such as comments and likes, exhibited a greater intention to return and recommend the hotel to others. Additionally, personalized content that addressed customer preferences was found to significantly

enhance emotional connections with the brand. Based on these findings, Ali and Anwar recommended that luxury hotels invest in developing robust social media strategies that prioritize direct engagement through personalized content. They emphasized the need for hotels to interact with guests in real-time to foster a sense of community and belonging. The study also suggested that hotels should monitor engagement metrics to tailor their content more effectively and adapt to changing customer needs. Furthermore, Ali and Anwar advocated for the implementation of feedback mechanisms, allowing guests to voice their opinions directly on social media platforms. By enhancing communication channels, hotels can create a more loyal customer base. This study contributes valuable insights into the specific strategies luxury hotels can adopt to leverage social media for building customer loyalty.

Kim and Ko (2019) investigated the influence of social media marketing on brand loyalty in luxury hotels within the South Korean market. They employed a quantitative approach, surveying 300 customers who followed the social media accounts of various luxury hotels. The study revealed that frequent and high-quality social media posts significantly contributed to building emotional connections between customers and hotel brands. The analysis indicated that visual appeal and content exclusivity were critical factors that enhanced customer loyalty. Guests responded positively to content that highlighted unique experiences, such as exclusive offers or behind-the-scenes insights, further deepening their engagement. The authors recommended that luxury hotels prioritize the aesthetics of their social media content to capture and maintain customer attention. Moreover, they suggested integrating user-generated content, such as customer reviews and testimonials, to add authenticity to marketing efforts. This approach not only enhances credibility but also encourages potential guests to envision themselves in those experiences. The findings emphasized the importance of maintaining a consistent brand narrative across all social media channels, ensuring that each post aligns with the overall brand image. Additionally, Kim and Ko highlighted the necessity of continuous monitoring of engagement metrics to adjust strategies based on customer feedback. Their study reinforces the need for luxury hotels to utilize visually captivating content to cultivate brand loyalty effectively.

Wang and Hung (2021) examined the impact of social media marketing on customer loyalty within luxury hotels in Hong Kong. Through qualitative methods, they gathered data from various luxury hotel marketing teams and analyzed their social media strategies. The findings revealed that social media marketing improved brand loyalty by enhancing customer trust and emotional connection. One significant discovery was that hotels that actively engaged with their audiences through comments and direct messages reported higher loyalty levels among their guests. The authors recommended that hotels incorporate social listening tools to monitor customer feedback and preferences, enabling them to create more tailored content. They emphasized the importance of not just broadcasting messages but also responding to customer inquiries and feedback in real-time. This two-way communication fosters a sense of community and belonging, which is essential for cultivating loyalty. Furthermore, Wang and Hung suggested that luxury hotels should experiment with diverse content formats, such as videos and live streams, to keep their audience engaged and informed. The study also highlighted the importance of aligning social media strategies with the overall marketing goals of the hotel, ensuring consistency across all channels. By adopting these practices, luxury hotels can better meet customer expectations and reinforce their brand loyalty. Their research underscores the critical role of trust-building through effective social media management.

Johnson and Brown (2021) explored the effect of influencer marketing on customer retention in luxury hotels across the United Kingdom. They utilized a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative interviews with hotel marketing managers and quantitative surveys targeting hotel customers. Their research revealed that partnerships with high-profile influencers significantly impacted customer loyalty by enhancing brand credibility and trust. The study found that customers who followed influencers associated with luxury hotels were more likely to engage with the hotel's social media content and express loyalty. Johnson and Brown recommended that luxury hotels continue to collaborate with influencers whose values align with their brand to create authentic marketing messages. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of selecting influencers who genuinely appreciate the brand's offerings to foster a more genuine connection with the audience. The findings highlighted that influencer marketing could act as a powerful tool for luxury hotels to reach potential customers who are otherwise difficult to engage through traditional advertising channels. Furthermore, the research suggested that hotels should track the effectiveness of influencer partnerships by analyzing engagement metrics and customer feedback. By assessing the impact of these collaborations, hotels can refine their influencer strategies to maximize customer retention. The study contributes valuable insights into how influencer marketing can be strategically used to enhance loyalty among luxury hotel customers.

Zhang and Liu (2022) focused on the effectiveness of social media contests in enhancing customer loyalty within luxury hotels in China. Using a quantitative method, the researchers surveyed 400 participants who had engaged in social media contests hosted by luxury hotels. Their findings indicated that interactive campaigns, such as contests and giveaways, led to a remarkable 45% increase in customer retention rates. The study showed that customers appreciated the opportunity to participate in contests, which fostered a sense of community and excitement around the brand. Zhang and Liu recommended that luxury hotels regularly implement gamified social media strategies to maintain high levels of customer engagement. They emphasized that well-designed contests not only incentivize participation but also enhance brand visibility as participants share their experiences with their social networks. Moreover, the study highlighted the importance of offering appealing prizes that resonate with the target audience, as this can significantly influence participation rates. The authors also suggested that hotels should leverage user-generated content from contest participants to create a sense of authenticity and community. By showcasing real experiences, hotels can further enhance their appeal to potential guests. This study underscores the potential of interactive social media marketing tactics in driving customer loyalty in the luxury hotel sector.

Singh and Kaur (2020) investigated into the relationship between social media marketing and customer loyalty in luxury hotels in India. Utilizing a survey methodology, the researchers collected data from 300 hotel guests to analyze their perceptions of social media marketing efforts. Their findings revealed that emotional engagement through personalized messages and exclusive offers significantly improved customer loyalty among participants. The study indicated that customers who felt emotionally connected to a brand were more likely to return and recommend the hotel to others. Singh and Kaur recommended that luxury hotels develop personalized loyalty programs based on customer interactions and preferences observed on social media platforms. They highlighted the necessity of understanding customer behavior and tailoring marketing strategies to meet individual needs. Furthermore, the authors suggested that hotels should engage in regular communication with guests through social media channels to keep them informed about

special offers and events. By fostering ongoing relationships with customers, hotels can enhance loyalty and increase repeat visits. The study emphasized the need for emotional engagement in social media marketing strategies, illustrating how luxury hotels can build lasting connections with their guests.

Ali and Ali (2018) studied the impact of social media on customer loyalty in luxury hotels in Malaysia. The research analyzed data from 200 hotel customers and uncovered that visual storytelling and customer reviews shared on social media platforms were significant drivers of customer loyalty. The study found that when hotels effectively utilized visual content, such as captivating images and videos, they could create a more engaging and appealing brand narrative. Ali and Ali recommended that luxury hotels focus on creating authentic content that resonates with their target audience, showcasing real customer experiences and testimonials. This approach not only enhances the credibility of the hotel but also encourages potential guests to envision themselves enjoying the offered services. The authors emphasized the importance of maintaining an active presence on social media platforms to foster community engagement and loyalty. They suggested that hotels regularly update their content to reflect seasonal changes and special events, keeping the audience engaged and informed. The study highlights the role of authenticity and user-generated content in enhancing customer loyalty, encouraging luxury hotels to prioritize these elements in their social media marketing strategies. Overall, Ali and Ali's research contributes valuable insights into how visual storytelling and customer feedback can effectively drive loyalty in the luxury hotel industry.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Gaps: The existing literature predominantly focuses on various aspects of social media marketing and its effects on customer loyalty within luxury hotels, highlighting the importance of engagement, emotional connection, and visual storytelling. However, there is a lack of comprehensive frameworks that integrate the diverse elements of social media strategies across different platforms and their collective impact on customer loyalty. While studies such as those by Kim and Ko (2019) emphasize the importance of visual appeal, they do not explore how different content types can be effectively integrated into a cohesive marketing strategy that maximizes customer engagement and retention. Furthermore, the role of brand storytelling beyond visual storytelling has not been adequately examined in the context of luxury hotels and social media marketing. A gap exists in understanding how narrative elements can enhance customer loyalty by fostering deeper emotional connections with the brand. Additionally, while influencer marketing is highlighted by Johnson and Brown (2021) as a significant factor in enhancing brand credibility, there is insufficient exploration of the long-term effects of such collaborations on customer loyalty. Future research could benefit from developing a more holistic understanding of how these varied components interact to influence loyalty, creating a multi-dimensional model that can guide luxury hotels in their marketing efforts.

Contextual Gaps: The studies reviewed primarily focus on customer loyalty in luxury hotels in specific contexts, such as Dubai, South Korea, Hong Kong, China, India, and Malaysia. This concentration on specific regions may overlook cultural nuances and consumer behavior variations in different markets. For instance, while Ali and Anwar (2020) provide valuable insights into Dubai's hotel sector, the findings may not be directly applicable to luxury hotels in different cultural or economic contexts. There is also a need for comparative studies that examine customer loyalty in luxury hotels across various cultural contexts to identify factors that are universally applicable and those that are context-specific. Additionally, the impact of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, on social media strategies and customer loyalty has not been thoroughly explored. As luxury hotels increasingly adopt technology to enhance customer experiences, research could investigate how these advancements influence engagement and loyalty in different cultural settings. Moreover, while the current studies emphasize quantitative metrics, qualitative insights into customer perceptions and experiences could provide a richer understanding of loyalty-building strategies in diverse contexts.

Geographical Gaps: The geographical focus of the current studies is primarily limited to Asia and the Middle East, with little representation from other regions such as North America, Europe, and Africa. For example, the insights from Kim and Ko (2019) on the South Korean market may not resonate with consumers in the European luxury hotel sector, where social media usage patterns and cultural values may differ significantly. The lack of studies examining customer loyalty in luxury hotels within diverse geographical regions presents an opportunity for further research. Conducting studies in underrepresented regions could uncover unique social media marketing strategies that resonate with local consumers, thus contributing to the global understanding of customer loyalty. Additionally, research that compares the effectiveness of social media strategies across different geographical locations could provide valuable insights for luxury hotels looking to expand their reach. By addressing these geographical gaps, future research can enhance the applicability of findings and help luxury hotels develop strategies that cater to a broader audience.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In conclusion, the influence of social media marketing on customer loyalty in luxury hotels is profound and multifaceted. As demonstrated through various empirical studies, effective social media strategies can significantly enhance customer engagement, foster emotional connections, and build brand loyalty among guests. By leveraging visually appealing content, influencer partnerships, and interactive campaigns, luxury hotels can create unique experiences that resonate with their target audiences. Furthermore, the ability to engage with customers in real-time and personalize marketing efforts not only fosters a sense of community but also enhances the overall customer experience. As the competitive landscape continues to evolve, luxury hotels must prioritize the development of robust social media marketing strategies to adapt to changing consumer behaviors and preferences. The findings underscore the necessity for ongoing research to explore the dynamic interplay between social media marketing tactics and customer loyalty across diverse geographical and cultural contexts. Ultimately, by embracing innovative approaches and staying attuned to customer feedback, luxury hotels can cultivate lasting relationships with their guests, ensuring sustained loyalty and business success in an increasingly digital world.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Future research should build upon existing theoretical frameworks, such as the Social Exchange Theory and the Commitment-Trust Theory, to further explore the dynamics between social media marketing and customer loyalty. These theories can be adapted to incorporate variables unique to digital interactions, such as user-generated content and online brand communities, enriching the understanding of customer relationships in the luxury hotel sector. Conducting longitudinal studies will help identify long-term impacts of social media marketing on customer loyalty. This approach can provide deeper insights into how brand loyalty evolves over time with sustained social media engagement, particularly in the luxury hotel industry where customer relationships are often long-term.

Practice

Luxury hotels should prioritize developing personalized marketing strategies that leverage data analytics to understand customer preferences. By tailoring social media content and interactions based on individual customer profiles, hotels can enhance emotional engagement and foster loyalty. Hotels should implement campaigns that encourage user-generated content, such as guest testimonials and shared experiences. This strategy not only enhances authenticity but also builds a sense of community among guests, leading to stronger emotional connections with the brand. Establishing protocols for real-time engagement on social media platforms is crucial. Responding promptly to customer inquiries, comments, and feedback can strengthen trust and loyalty. Luxury hotels should train staff to handle social media interactions effectively, ensuring that every guest feels valued.

Policy

As hotels utilize data for personalized marketing, clear policies regarding data privacy and security must be established. Luxury hotels should comply with regulations, such as GDPR, and transparently communicate their data usage practices to customers, fostering trust and enhancing loyalty. Hotels should develop comprehensive social media guidelines to ensure consistent messaging across platforms. These guidelines should focus on maintaining the brand's luxury image while encouraging authentic interactions with customers. Implementing standardized metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies on customer loyalty is essential. Luxury hotels should invest in analytics tools to monitor engagement, sentiment, and conversion rates, enabling data-driven decisions that can enhance loyalty initiatives.

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