



Module: LCMB7035 Dissertation

**Evaluating the Effectiveness of Mobile App–Based Digital
Promotions in Driving Customer Engagement and Digital Loyalty:
Evidence from Tesco PLC in the UK Grocery Retail Sector.**

Dissertation proposal

Student Name and ID: Md, Robiul Islam, 2437178

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
Background of the Research	3
Problem Statement	4
Research Aim and Objectives	4
Research Questions	5
Research Rationale.....	5
2. Literature Review.....	7
Digital Promotions and Mobile Marketing in Retail	7
Customer Engagement in Digital Retail Platforms.....	8
Digital Loyalty and Repeat Purchase Behaviour	9
Personalisation and Data-Driven Retail Marketing	9
Research Gap	10
3. Methodology	12
Research Philosophy	12
Research Approach	12
Research Strategy.....	12
Research Data Collection and Data Analysis	12
Ethical Considerations	13
Conceptual Framework.....	13
4. Expected Findings.....	14
5. Limitations	15
6. Timeframe.....	16
7. Conclusion	17

References	18
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1. Introduction

Background of the Research

The digital revolution has dramatically altered the landscape of the retail sector especially as enhanced mobile app usage and data-driven promotional approaches have been adopted in the retail sector (Bellucci et al., 2025). Mobile retail applications can help companies to provide personalised offers, make shopping more convenient, and engage their customers (Benedetto, 2025). The use of grocery shopping applications in the United Kingdom is increasing speedily, wherein about 72% of consumers say that they have utilised a grocery mobile application at least once in the last year, indicating the growing dependency on retail electronic store applications (BestechSols, 2025). The use of mobile technologies by supermarkets has been on the rise, as these companies aim at offering customised promotions, loyalty programs and enabling customers to communicate with them in real-time.

The biggest grocer in the UK, Tesco PLC, has led the way in online rewards, as well as customised offers, via its Clubcard programme, which reaches more than 23 million UK households and results in great information on consumer behaviour (Skeldon, 2025). The Tesco Grocery and Clubcard mobile application combines individualised offers, online vouchers and rewarding loyalty to induce participation and repetitive behaviour in purchase. The UK grocery market is among the most digital retail industries in Europe, and online groceries sales in the past few years resulted in about 12-14% of all the gross grocery retail sales (Statista, 2024). The consumption of mobile technology in the UK market has been growing at a high rate, as well. According to the recent industry data, over 60% of UK grocery shoppers have already used a supermarket mobile application, and over half of them use digital coupons on a regular basis, loyalty rewards or personalised offers via retailers' apps (Deloitte, 2023; Statista, 2024). Due to the increasing intensity of the retail competition and the growing importance of the mobile platforms as a key method of engaging consumers and promoting customer loyalty, the exploration of what role the app-based promotions play in the development of customer

interaction and digital loyalty has turned out to be a relevant field of both scholarly and managerial research.

Problem Statement

The mobile marketing technologies have empowered the retailers to achieve personalised promotions and digital coupons and loyalty incentives via mobile applications which are likely to improve customer engagement and loyalty customer relationship. According to the previous research, it can be permitted that the use of mobile promotions and loyalty programmes could positively contribute to consumer buying behaviour and brand engagement in online retailing settings (Shankar et al., 2016; Grewal, Roggeveen and Nordfalt, 2017). Equally, custom marketing plans enabled by customer data analytics enable retailers to market consumers more efficiently and enhance the relevance of promotions (Wedel and Kannan, 2016).

Nevertheless, even with the growing trends of using mobile retail apps, it is not understood whether digital promotional efforts would always result in the creation of long-term customer engagement and digital loyalty. A large part of the current literature addresses online retailing or mobile commerce in general as opposed to the particular situation of grocery retail application. Specifically, a lack of empirical research that would study the impact of mobile app-mediated promotions on engagement behaviour and digital loyalty among supermarket customers is present. The Tesco PLC offers a case in point to be examined since its mobile application and the Clubcard ecosystem are one of the largest data-driven incentives systems within the UK grocery store industry.

Research Aim and Objectives

This study seeks to investigate how digital promotions are affected through mobile apps on customer engagement and loyalty towards digital promotions in Tesco PLC among customers of the UK grocery retail industry. The objectives of this research are –

- To examine the relationship between mobile app-based digital promotions and customer engagement.
- To analyse the impact of customer engagement on digital loyalty among Tesco app users.

- To investigate the effect of personalised promotional offers on repeat purchase intention.
- To evaluate the strategic role of mobile loyalty programmes in UK grocery retail marketing.

Research Questions

The research questions are –

- What is the relationship between mobile app-based digital promotions and customer engagement among Tesco app users?
- How does customer engagement influence digital loyalty among Tesco mobile app users?
- What effect do personalised promotional offers have on customers' repeat purchase intention in the Tesco mobile app?
- What is the strategic role of mobile loyalty programmes in enhancing customer retention and marketing effectiveness in the UK grocery retail sector?

Research Rationale

The growing digitalisation of the retail business has altered the manner in which businesses relate with customers, thus making mobile applications an impossible element in contemporary marketing plans. Mobile apps are becoming an important part of the strategy of retailers to provide individualised promotions, loyalty programs, and targeted marketing messages. The strategies are specifically applicable to the grocery retail industry, where the fierce competition and low profit margins demand that retailers ensure a good customer relationship and frequent buying by the consumer. The Clubcard programme and mobile application have also allowed Tesco to create one of the largest data-driven loyalty ecosystems in the UK to enable the company to gauge customer buying patterns and provide customers with offers tailored to them (MyHubble, 2026).

Tesco has a distinctive platform for carrying out personalised marketing strategies using mobile technology, in consideration of the fact that the company runs a loyalty programme that represents more than 80% of the households across Britain (Skeldon, 2025). Nevertheless, the concept of such systems has been widespread, whereas very few scholarly studies investigate

how they may affect customer engagement and online loyalty. The efficacy of mobile promotion campaigns is of significance as far as implementing managerial decisions and academic research is concerned. In its scholarly aspect, the study adds to the existing body of knowledge on digital marketing, mobile commerce, and customer loyalty in retail. The results can assist retailers to optimise the use of mobile promotions, enhance consumer relationships, and increase digital customer loyalty within a highly competitive retail setting.

2. Literature Review

Digital Promotions and Mobile Marketing in Retail

The fast development of mobile commerce has changed the mode of promotion in the retailing sector. Retailers can use mobile applications to send targeted marketing messages, personalised offers, and live-time promotions, which enhances the retailer-consumer interaction (Chakraborty, Manna and Appio, 2025). As Shankar et al. (2016) express, mobile marketing is a transition to the past mass marketing practices and a shift to much more context-sensitive and personalised communication that can shape consumer decision-making in the shopping process. Mobile technologies enable retailers to receive behavioural data, including the history of purchases and the patterns of browsing, which could be further worked out to create customised promotional campaigns (Good Growth, 2023).

Digital promotions with the use of mobile applications have become an essential marketing solution for the grocery retail business in terms of stimulating buying frequency and retention of customers (Driessen et al., 2025). According to Grewal et al. (2017), mobile-based promotions can be used effectively in retail settings since promoting these programmes can be combined with loyalty programmes and online payment systems. Such promotions enable the retailers to send personalised coupons, discounts, and reward points to the smartphones of the consumers, which have higher chances of making an impulse purchase, as well as receiving repeat transactions (Good Growth, 2023). Also, print promotions can serve as a strategy to save money spent on marketing, as opposed to the old advertising methods and also enhance the quality of targeting. According to Verhoff et al. (2021), digital promotions can also boost short-term sales, but overly heavy changing promotions can depreciate brand loyalty and promote price elastic behaviour among consumers. Retailers should, therefore, be keen on promoting balanced promotional tactics with value creation and customer relationship management programs (Fan, Li and Jiang, 2025).

Customer Engagement in Digital Retail Platforms

The growth of customer engagement is the new idea of modern marketing literature, especially online, where the interactions with consumers develop beyond the traditional purchase behaviour (Fayyaz, 2025). According to Brodie et al. (2013), customer engagement is a multidimensional concept that gives consideration to cognitive, emotional, and behavioural interaction between consumers and brands. In online shopping platforms, customers can get engaged in various ways, including interpersonal communication with mobile applications, product-suggestion browsing, loyalty programs, or personalised offers (Grewal, Roggeveen and Nordfält, 2017).

The literature indicates that mobile technologies have a critical role to play in enhancing interaction with customers (Gedi, Abbas and Ahmad, 2025). As Hollebeek et al. (2019) point out, the digital platforms enable retailers to develop interactive and personalised experiences that can lead to fostering deeper consumer engagement. Mobile applications offer an opportunity to interact between brands and consumers continuously through push notifications, personalised recommendations, and digital coupons (He and Zhang, 2022). Such interactions can help retailers to improve the emotional bond between customers and themselves and hence increase the level of engagement (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

In spite of these benefits, the success of engagement strategies relies on the value that is perceived to be given to the consumers (Hoang and Tan, 2023). According to Pansari and Kumar (2017), the engagement activities should bring beneficial outcomes to customers, including convenience, savings, or personalised experiences. When the digital interactions are seen as intrusive or irrelevant by the consumers, the level of engagement might go down (Ismail, 2025). This means that retailers should come up with online advertisement plans that would present true value without breaking customer trust and satisfaction. The effects of mobile promotions on engagement behaviours are thus a significant focus in digital retail marketing research (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

Digital Loyalty and Repeat Purchase Behaviour

Customer loyalty has always been identified as one of the most important determinants of business performance, especially in very competitive retail markets (Liu and Liu, 2025). A customer can be considered to be loyal when they are willing to make recurring purchases of the same products or services of a specific brand, even when substitutes are provided (Oliver, 1999). The long-lasting relationship with the brands through online platforms, mobile applications and loyalty programmes has become digital loyalty in the digital era; customers have been able to be loyal to brands in the digital times (Shankar et al., 2016).

Other studies have investigated the place of loyalty programmes as a way of enhancing the retention of customers (Manyanga and Pillay, 2025). Dorotic et al. (2012) maintain that loyalty programmes result in repetitive purchasing since they provide both a financial incentive and a reward system that increases the switching costs to the consumer. Loyalty-based programmes in grocery retail can also be linked with a mobile application that offers customised promotions and discounts (Nam and Cho, 2025). Through these systems, retailers are able to monitor customer buying behaviour and then develop reward designs that are unique (Wedel and Kannan, 2016).

Nevertheless, loyalty programmes can fail to maintain the commitment of customers in the long term (Odoom, 2025). Lemon and Verhoeff (2016) underline that the key determining factor for customer loyalty is the customer experience provided to the customer during all of the various touchpoints, such as mobile application, store, and online shop. The use of digital technologies has increased the number of customer-facing interactions between consumers and retailers, and it can be considered imperative that companies produce customer channel-friendly and entertaining experiences (Shankar et al., 2016). Hence, to analyse how retailers can foster sustainable customer relationships in the digital marketplace, the link between the mobile promotional strategies, engagement behaviour and digital loyalty is critical (Park, 2025).

Personalisation and Data-Driven Retail Marketing

Individualisation is now the most vital part of online marketing negotiations, especially in mobile commerce applications (Paulino, Aterrado and Letrero, 2025). Data analytics can help retailers to

gather and process vast amounts of consumer data and enable them to provide targeted promotional offers and product suggestions (Shieh, Chiu and Chen, 2025). Bleier and Eisenbeiss (2015) observe that online marketing tailored to the consumer would greatly improve consumer purchase intentions since the relevance of promotional messages is promoted and value perceived. Data-driven marketing systems have been the investment of retailers like Tesco, who analyse customer purchase patterns and behaviour (Singh, Singh and Parmar, 2024). Through these systems, firms are enabled to offer marketing promotions that are personalised using loyalty programmes and applications on mobile phones (Tunca and Balcioglu, 2025). According to Wedel and Kannan (2016), data-driven marketing can help companies to shift to the highly targeted, rather than generalised mass marketing type of marketing, which enhances the effectiveness and customer satisfaction towards marketing (Wedel and Kannan, 2016).

Still, the use of consumer data is increasing, and the concern of privacy and trust is also raised (Tang, Tsai and Hsieh, 2025). According to Martin and Murphy (2017), consumers might develop reluctance to use the digital marketing systems when they think that they are overpowered by data or that their personal information is not used properly. This means that, to ensure that customers remain faithful to their businesses, retailers will have to maintain transparency and ethical data management (Tsai, Chen and Lu, 2026). A successful implementation of personalised promotions is therefore not merely a skill that should be influenced by the ability of technology but also by perceptions of privacy, fairness, and value by the consumer (Wedel and Kannan, 2016).

Research Gap

In general, the literature suggests that mobile promotions, customer engagement, digital loyalty, and personalised marketing are linked to each other in contemporary retail settings (Shankar et al., 2016). Nevertheless, few empirical studies have clearly investigated the extent to which promotional strategies through mobile applications impact engagement and online loyalty in the UK grocery retail market (Martin and Murphy, 2017). This gap shows that it is important to conduct research on the importance of mobile promotion systems in enhancing long-term customer relationships.

3. Methodology

Research Philosophy

The philosophy followed in this study is positivism, which supposes the objectivity of social phenomena based on observable and quantifiable data. Positivism suits well since the research involves the measurement of relationships that can be pursued in terms of mobile app-based promotions, customer engagement, and digital loyalty. The method allows statistical methods to be used in testing the hypotheses and determining the cause-and-effect relationships between the variables.

Research Approach

Deductive research will be used since the existing theories of digital marketing, customer engagement, and customer loyalty are used to start the study, and finally, the theory is tested using empirical evidence. Deductive reasoning enables the researcher to make hypotheses based on the available literature and test whether these links are truthful in the environment of the mobile application at Tesco. The method will guarantee organised research in which theoretical ideas will be used in the data gathering and processing.

Research Strategy

The study employs a quantitative approach to test the relation between exposure to promotions, involvement and online loyalty. The quantitative approaches facilitate the gathering of organised numerical data in a survey questionnaire sent to the Tesco mobile application users in the UK. With this approach, the researcher will be able to examine patterns and relationships through statistical methods, hence giving generalisable findings.

Research Data Collection and Data Analysis

The online questionnaire will integrate the primary data, which will be based on a structured Likert-scale survey conducted on Tesco mobile applications users in the UK. About 150-250 respondents will be obtained through convenience sampling, as it will provide enough data to be used in statistical analysis. Constructs that will be measured by the questionnaire include

promotional exposure, perceived personalisation, customer engagement, digital loyalty and repeat purchase intention. Analysis of data will be carried out using SPSS and descriptive statistics, reliability testing (Cronbach alpha), correlation analysis and multiple regression will be done to test the relationship among the variables in the study.

Ethical Considerations

The research will use ethical principles that will be highly observed. Clear information on the purpose of the study and voluntary participation of the participants will be given to them. The consent will be informed and will be made to respond and withdraw can be made at any point. No personal details of the respondents (notably their names) will be gathered, hence anonymity and confidentiality. All the data collected will be kept in a secure location used only for academic purposes and in respect of data protection laws and the ethical codes in the institution.

Conceptual Framework

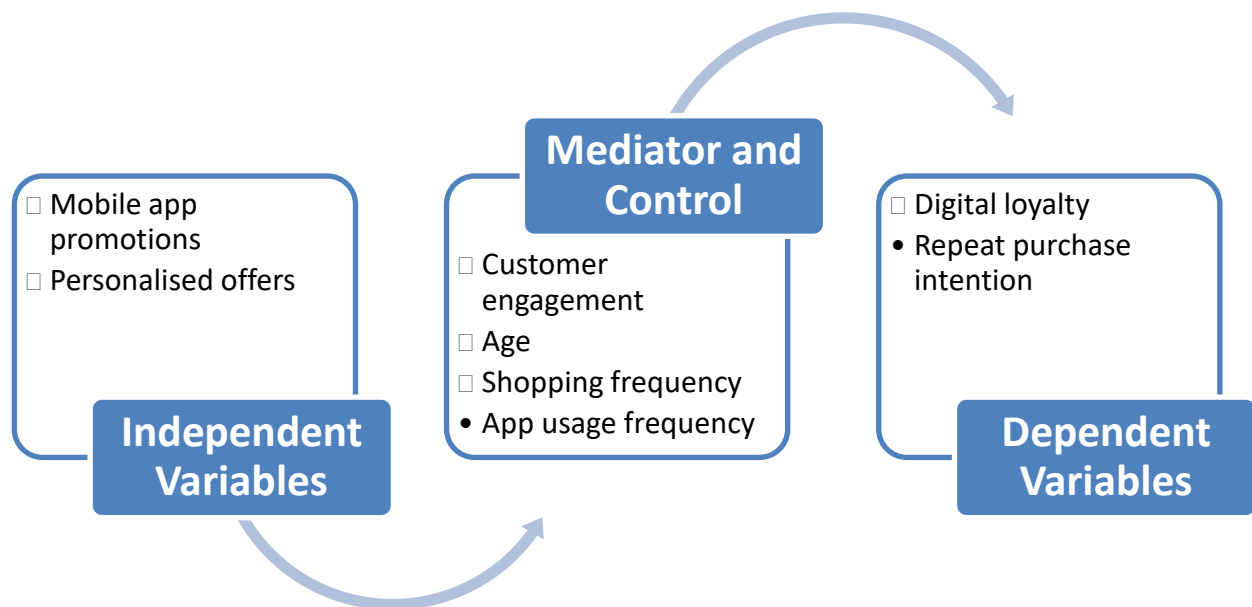


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework (Source- Author)

4. Expected Findings

It is anticipated that the study will prove that digital promotions using mobile apps will greatly increase the customer interest and digital loyalty of Tesco app users. Individualised promotional messages will have a beneficial impact on the repeat purchase intention. The results can have real-life implications for retailers to maximise mobile marketing efforts and customer relationship management.

5. Limitations

The limitations of this study are –

- Convenience sampling may limit representativeness of all Tesco app users.
- Self-reported survey responses may include bias or inaccurate recall.
- Study focuses only on Tesco, limiting generalisation to other retailers.
- Cross-sectional data (single time point) cannot show long-term behavioural changes.

6. Timeframe

Phase	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7
Proposal approval							
Literature review							
Questionnaire design							
Data collection							
Data analysis							
Writing & revision							
Submission							

Figure 2: Gantt Chart (Source- Author)

7. Conclusion

The study focuses on the impact of digital promotions via mobile apps on customer interaction and online loyalty among Tesco users of the mobile app in the UK. The study will be conducted through an online survey to gain information about digital retail marketing approaches. It will lead to the knowledge of how customised promotions can make customer relationships stronger and promote a repeat purchasing behaviour.

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