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Master of Business Administration (MBA)

LCMB7035 – Dissertation

Dissertation Proposal

The Role of Personalised Marketing Strategies in Enhancing Customer Loyalty in the International Hotel Industry

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The international hotel industry has been undergoing a digital revolution, and organisations have sought to leverage innovative marketing strategies to improve customer relationships and maintain a competitive edge (Anwar, Deliana and Suyamto, 2024). The organisations that are behind the modernisation and development of hotels can tailor products, services and promotional activities to customers' preferences, behaviours and buying patterns thanks to the development of artificial intelligence (AI) and customer relationship management (CRM) systems and the use of big data analytics and digital communication technologies. In an increasingly competitive global hospitality market, such personalised marketing strategies are becoming a crucial tool to enhance customer experience, improve customer satisfaction and foster customer loyalty in the long term (Siddiqi et al., 2025; Stein et al., 2025). Customers' expectations are changing, and international hotels are shifting from mass marketing to personalised customer engagement to enhance customer retention rates and the organisation's long-term performance (Mann et al., 2024).

1.2 Research Problem and Research Gap

Although significant investments are being made in personalised marketing technologies, there is still a certain doubt about the effectiveness of these technologies in permanently increasing customer loyalty. The relationship between personalised marketing and customer loyalty has been investigated in several studies, but the results are inconsistent and sometimes contradictory, likely due to the various interpretations of personalised marketing and the different methods used to measure customer loyalty, which include both behavioural and attitudinal measures (Biswas, Rane and Rane, 2026; Sidra and Wagan, 2025). Moreover, many of the studies in the literature were conducted at the country level, or within a specific hotel brand or context, preventing understanding of the effect of personalised marketing strategies on customer loyalty in the international hotel industry (Alharbi et al., 2025; Youssofi et al., 2023).

So there is a need to critically synthesize the existing academic and industry evidence to be able to identify existing knowledge, inconsistencies and research gaps in this rapidly evolving field.

1.3 Research Aim, Objectives and Research Question

1.3.1 Research Aim

To critically analyse the role of personalised marketing strategies in enhancing customer loyalty within the international hotel industry through the synthesis of existing academic and industry literature.

1.3.2 Research Objectives

1. To examine the personalised marketing strategies adopted within the international hotel industry to enhance customer loyalty.
2. To evaluate the influence of personalised marketing strategies on customer loyalty while identifying the key implementation challenges and research gaps reported in the existing literature.

1.3.3 Research Question

RQ1: How do personalised marketing strategies influence customer loyalty within the international hotel industry?

1.4 Overview of the Research

This study will adopt a qualitative secondary research approach by critically reviewing and synthesising evidence from peer-reviewed journal articles and reputable industry reports to address the research question.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Personalised Marketing Strategies in the International Hotel Industry

Personalised marketing has become a strategic capability which allows international hotels to offer products, services and communication according with customers' preferences, actions and

experiences. With the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), customer relationship management (CRM) systems, customer analytics and big data, hotels are now interacting with their customers at every point of contact during their customer journey (Ozay, Jahanbakht, and Wang, 2025). Rahman (2024) states that digital transformation has evolved the hotel industry from mass marketing to engaging customers through data-driven strategies, thereby enabling hotels to streamline their operations and deliver a better experience to their guests at the same time. Similarly, Dwi and Aimin (2026) discovered that AI-driven custom-made suggestions and tailored visitor service boost guest satisfaction by delivering more appropriate and receptive experiences. However, Machucho and Ortiz (2025) argue that technological sophistication is not enough for personalisation to be successful; organisations need to incorporate AI capabilities, customer knowledge and organisational strategy. This means that the digital technologies facilitate personalised marketing; however, their effectiveness depends on strategic implementation.

2.2 Customer Loyalty in the Hotel Industry

Customer loyalty continues to be one of the most valuable organisational outcomes for hotel organisations as loyal customers are likely to generate repeat bookings, positive word of mouth and long-term profitability (Velaoras et al., 2025). However, there is some debate about the concept and measurement of loyalty. Tam, Wood and Ji (2009) differentiate behavioural and attitudinal loyalty where behavioural loyalty is measured as repeat purchasing behaviour while attitudinal loyalty is the emotional attachment to and preference for a brand. By contrast, Abdullah (2025) believes that customer loyalty is a multiple-dimensional phenomenon, so that it is not just dependent on repeat purchase but on customer satisfaction, trust, involvement and perceived value. In accord with this view, Singh et al. (2023) argue a memorable customer experience builds emotional attachment and advocacy, while Ladeira et al. (2026) contend that digital customer experiences are becoming an important factor in customer loyalty in technology-enabled service environments. These conflicting views suggest that customer behaviour is not only transitional and that hotels need to foster long-term customer relationships through positive experiences and engagement.

2.3 Personalised Marketing and Customer Loyalty: Current Evidence

Previous studies have found that the relationship between personalised marketing and customer loyalty is positive in general; however, there is some debate regarding the level and consistency of this relationship. AI-driven suggestions, personalised interactions, and CRM-assisted customer engagement can lead to higher satisfaction, trust, and retention rates, fostering deeper customer loyalty (Hassan, Abdelraouf and El-Shihy, 2025; Ledro et al., 2025). On the other hand, Alharbi et al. (2025) conclude that technological implementation is not enough to foster loyalty if customers feel that the personalisation is intrusive or lacks authenticity. Likewise, Nira (2025) highlights that increasing reliance on customer data raises privacy concerns, potentially reducing customer trust despite improvements in service personalisation. Mhaskey (2024) also argues that personalisation efforts are only successful if organisations have the capability to support them, employees are willing to do their part, and technology is appropriately used. These conflicting perspectives highlight that in addition to the existence of personalised marketing, the key contextual factors that affect customer loyalty are customer trust, data governance, organisational readiness and the quality of technology implementation.

2.4 Research Gap

While current research highlights the relevance of personalised marketing for customer loyalty, there are still some interesting research gaps. From a theoretical perspective, there is no agreement about which aspects of personalised marketing will be most beneficial for customers' loyalty. Most studies provide single country empirical evidence and do not allow for cross context comparisons. On the international level of the hotel industry, few studies have integrated literature in a context-specific manner. The study thus fills these gaps in the existing literature by synthesising relevant academic and industry literature qualitatively to gain a more integrated understanding of personalised marketing strategies and customer loyalty (Abdullah, 2025; Ozay, Jahanbakht, and Wang, 2025).

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy adopted in this study is interpretivism as it aims to gain a holistic understanding of the impact of personalised marketing strategies on customer loyalty by interpreting the knowledge already acquired in academic research instead of statistically measuring the relationships. Interpretivism fits studies that seek to interpret meanings, patterns and contextual understanding based on the qualitative evidence (Abdulkareem, 2018). Because the research is synthesised from the published studies carried out in various international hotel contexts, the interpretivist philosophy allows to critically interpret various approaches and explanations of personalised marketing and customer loyalty.

3.2 Research Approach

The study adopts an inductive research approach as it seeks to generate insights from existing qualitative evidence to provide broad insights rather than test particular hypotheses. An inductive approach is appropriate for highlighting the main themes, patterns, and relationships that are found in the literature and conclusions can be drawn from the evidence analysed (Naeem et al., 2023). This is in line with the study aim of critical synthesis of existing knowledge and identification of gaps in the field of international hotel industry in the context of personalised marketing strategies.

3.3 Research Strategy

A qualitative secondary research strategy will be used to critically analyse and integrate the relevant existing academic and industry literature. When the purpose of the research is to synthesize the results of several studies to better understand a research question, secondary qualitative research is used instead of empirical data collection (Cheong et al., 2023). The strategy allows one to compare various views, identify common themes and appraise conflicting results reported in the existing literature on personalised marketing and customer loyalty in the international hotel industry.

3.4 Research Design

The research design used is documentary research, with sources of evidence coming from articles in peer-reviewed journals and credible industry reports. Documentary research provides access to a wide range of credible evidence and is the opportunity to critically assess the existing knowledge across organisational and geographical context (Dalglish, Khalid and McMahon, 2020). The design is especially appropriate to be able to synthesize in an extensive way the latest advancements in personalised marketing, artificial intelligence, customer relationship management and customer loyalty in an international environment of hospitality.

3.5 Data Collection

Secondary data will be gathered by systematically searching academic databases such as Scopus, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis Online and SpringerLink and Google Scholar. These databases offer access to high quality peer-reviewed research related to topics in marketing and hospitality and customer relationship management. The evidence will focus on studies from the last 6 years (2020-2026), to reflect current industry developments; seminal studies earlier than this timeframe may be included where conceptually relevant. The inclusion criteria will consist of English-language peer-reviewed journal articles and authoritative industry reports that focus on personalised marketing, customer loyalty or similar digital marketing in hospitality. To ensure the quality, credibility and relevance of the evidence, studies not related to the hospitality sector, studies that have not been published in scholarly journals, conference abstracts, or duplicated sources will be excluded.

3.6 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) will be used to analyse the collected literature. It is a well-known method for systematically identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns in qualitative data. Selected studies will be read multiple times to become familiar with the evidence before meaningful initial codes will be generated. The initial codes will then be grouped into broader themes that indicate important concepts in terms of personalised marketing strategies and customer loyalty. Lastly, the themes will be critically compared and

interpreted to identify areas of convergence, conflicting research and research gap in the literature to give a coherent synthesis of the state of knowledge.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This study will only involve secondary data, obtained from academic and professional sources publicly available on the internet and therefore no human subjects will be involved and no ethical approval, participant recruitment, informed consent, or confidentiality is required. However, the research will follow accepted guidelines of academic integrity, including a proper representation of the research's results and authorship, and the avoidance of plagiarism and the provision of proper acknowledgment in the form of UWTSD Harvard referencing. Only credible sources which are reliable will be included to ensure transparency, trustworthiness and academic quality in the research.

4 Expected Findings

The findings of this study are expected to highlight that personalised marketing strategies can positively influence customer loyalty in the international hotel sector through customer engagement, satisfaction and repeat patronage based on the literature. It is anticipated that artificial intelligence (AI), customer relationship management (CRM) systems and customer analytics will emerge as key enablers of effective personalisation. The review is also expected to indicate that trust is also a key element in enhancing the connection between personalised marketing and customer loyalty. Challenges in implementation, such as data privacy, technological integration and organisational capability are expected to affect the effectiveness of personalised marketing strategies in different types of hotels.

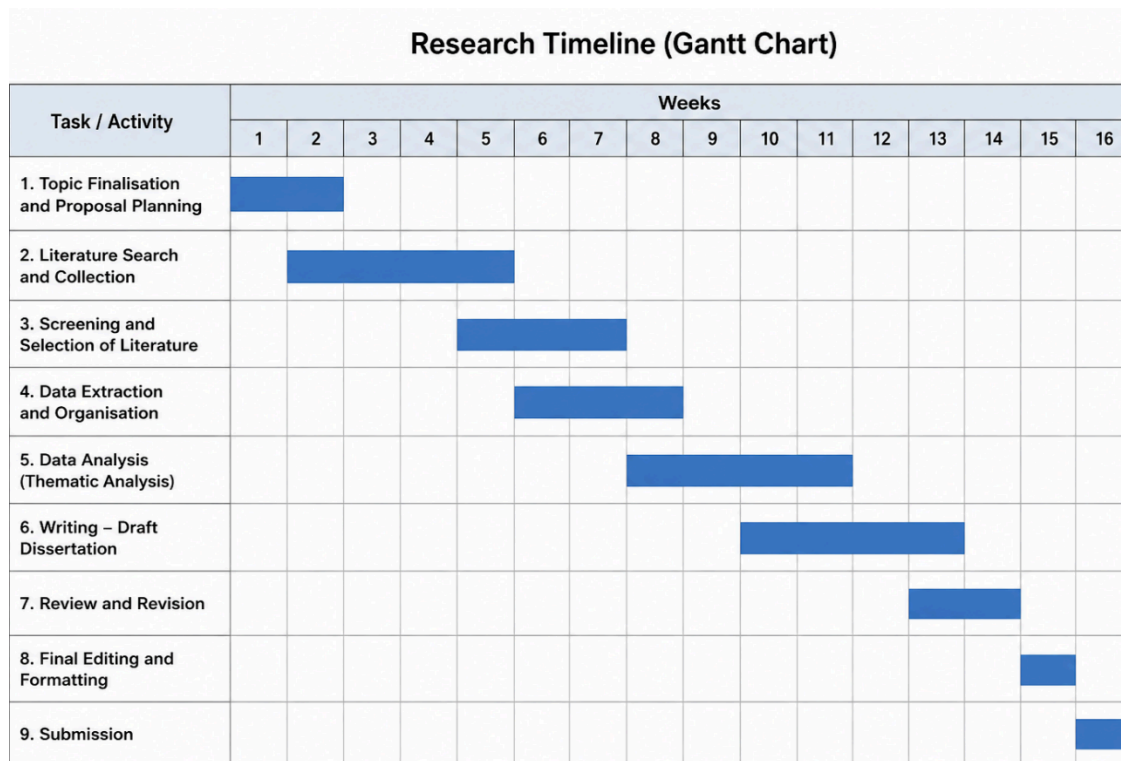
5 Limitations

The study has the disadvantage of using secondary data, which means it will not have primary data from the hotel managers or customers. Publication bias, in which positive results are published, may also affect the findings. In addition, all literature will be in English only, excluding any literature in other languages that may also be relevant. Lastly, AI-driven marketing

technologies are rapidly evolving, and some evidence might be outdated as industry practices continue to develop.

6 Timeframe

The proposed research will be completed according to the dissertation schedule set by the programme. The planned research activities and their estimated duration are presented in the Gantt chart below.



7 Conclusion

This proposal emphasizes the need for personalised marketing in the context of customer loyalty in the international hotel industry. It fills the research gap identified in this paper by critically analysing the academic and industry literature. The study will use a qualitative secondary research approach and thematic analysis to provide a comprehensive synthesis of current evidence. The results will provide academic knowledge and practical suggestions to enhance personalised marketing strategies in international hotels.

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