

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: “creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications”. As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the “principal researcher”.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Md Kawser Uzzaman
2	Student Number:	2431870
3	Email address:	2431870@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
4	Programme of Study:	MBA International Business
5	Supervisor:	Amir Homayounfard

SECTION B: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.		
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice		☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy		☒
3	UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018		☒
4	<i>British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018)</i>		☒

SECTION C: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	The Role of Personalised Marketing Strategies in Enhancing Customer Loyalty in the International Hotel Industry		
2	Proposed start date:	June	Proposed end date:	September
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words in each section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the three points below: • Purpose of Research Activity • Proposed Research Question			

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	• <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> • <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how Existing Research has informed the proposed activity and explain • <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> • <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>
3	Purpose of Research Activity The purpose of this research is to critically examine how personalised marketing strategies contribute to enhancing customer loyalty within the international hotel industry. Rapid developments in artificial intelligence (AI), customer relationship management (CRM) systems, customer analytics and big data have transformed how hotels engage with customers throughout the customer journey. As competition within the global hospitality sector continues to intensify, hotels increasingly rely on personalised marketing to improve customer experiences, encourage repeat patronage and strengthen long-term customer relationships. Despite the growing adoption of personalised marketing technologies, existing research reports inconsistent findings regarding their effectiveness in improving customer loyalty. Much of the current evidence focuses on individual countries, specific hotel brands or particular technologies, limiting a broader understanding of personalised marketing within the international hotel context. Furthermore, studies differ in how they define both personalised marketing and customer loyalty, creating inconsistencies in the existing body of knowledge. This study will address these issues through a qualitative secondary research approach. Rather than collecting primary data from participants, the research will systematically review and synthesise evidence from peer-reviewed academic literature and reputable industry reports published between 2020 and 2026, together with relevant seminal studies where appropriate. Documentary analysis and thematic analysis will be used to identify recurring themes, compare differing viewpoints and highlight current research gaps. The findings are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing successful personalised marketing implementation while offering recommendations for both researchers and hospitality practitioners seeking to strengthen customer loyalty through effective marketing strategies.
4	Research Question How do personalised marketing strategies influence customer loyalty within the international hotel industry?
5	Aims of Research Activity 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. This aim will be achieved through the following research objectives.
6	Objectives of Research Activity 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.
	Proposed data collection methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity to collect data, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	This research will adopt a qualitative secondary research methodology and will not involve the recruitment of human participants. Consequently, no interviews, surveys, focus groups, observations or experimental methods will be undertaken. The study will collect secondary data through a systematic search of established academic databases, including Scopus, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online and Google Scholar. Additional evidence will be obtained from reputable industry reports published by recognised organisations where these provide relevant information relating to personalised marketing, customer relationship management, artificial intelligence and customer loyalty within the international hotel industry. The literature search will primarily focus on publications produced between 2020 and 2026 to ensure that the review reflects current developments in digital marketing technologies and hospitality management. Earlier seminal publications may also be included where they provide important theoretical foundations relevant to the research topic. The inclusion criteria will consist of English-language peer-reviewed journal articles and credible industry reports directly related to personalised marketing, customer loyalty, hospitality marketing, AI-enabled customer engagement and CRM within the hotel industry. Sources that are unrelated to

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	hospitality, conference abstracts, duplicated publications, opinion pieces and non-scholarly materials will be excluded to ensure the quality and credibility of the evidence. Relevant literature will be identified using predefined search terms and combinations of keywords relating to personalised marketing, customer loyalty, hotel marketing, artificial intelligence, customer relationship management and hospitality. Retrieved studies will be screened according to predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria before being selected for analysis. No personal data will be collected, generated or processed during this study. The research will rely entirely on publicly available published materials. Since there will be no direct interaction with individuals, no audio recordings, video recordings or identifiable personal information will be obtained. All sources will be appropriately acknowledged using the UWTSD Harvard Referencing style to maintain academic integrity and avoid plagiarism. The collected literature will subsequently be analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, similarities, contradictions and research gaps relevant to the research question. This process will provide a comprehensive synthesis of the existing evidence concerning the role of personalised marketing strategies in enhancing customer loyalty within the international hotel industry.
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SECTION D: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☐	☒
2	Use of interviews?	☐	☒
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☒
	Details of any other primary data collection method: Not applicable. This research does not involve any primary data collection methods. The study will use qualitative secondary research based solely on published peer-reviewed journal articles and reputable industry reports. No human participants, personal data, interviews, questionnaires, observations or recordings will be involved.		

If you have ticked NO to every question then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and you may skip section E and continue to section F.

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION E: Intended Participants

	Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☐	☒
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.		
	Details of any other participant groups: Not applicable. This research does not involve human participants or any participant groups. The study is based entirely on secondary data obtained from published peer-reviewed journal articles and reputable industry reports.	☐	☒

Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?		
10	How many participants are expected?	Not applicable. No participants will be recruited because this research is based exclusively on secondary documentary sources. Data will be collected from published peer-reviewed journal articles and reputable industry reports retrieved through academic databases including Scopus, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online and Google Scholar.
11	Who will the participants be?	Not applicable. No human participants will be involved in this research.
12	How will you identify the participants?	Not applicable. No participants will be identified or recruited. Relevant literature will instead be identified through systematic database searches using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Information for participants:		YES	NO	N/A
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☐	☐	☒
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☐	☐	☒
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☐	☐	☒
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☐	☐	☒

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17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☐	☐	☒
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☐	☐	☒
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☐	☐	☒
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☐	☐	☒
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	Not applicable. The study does not involve human participants, participant recruitment, questionnaires, interviews, observations or any form of primary data collection. Consequently, participant information sheets, informed consent, withdrawal procedures, confidentiality agreements and debriefing are not required. The research will use only publicly available published literature and will comply with UWTSD research ethics requirements and academic integrity standards.			

Information for participants:		YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☐	☒
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☐	☒
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☐	☒
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	Not applicable. The research does not involve human participants, participant payments, specialist equipment, deception, audio or video recording, or any other primary data collection activities. No conflicts of interest or financial incentives are associated with the study.			

SECTION F: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.	
1	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information. If you have identified in section D that there are no participants, then enter N/A and go skip to question 3.	
	Risk to participants: Not applicable. This research does not involve human participants, participant recruitment or primary data collection. The study is based solely on published peer-reviewed journal articles and reputable industry reports that are publicly available. Consequently, no physical, psychological, emotional, social or privacy-related risks are anticipated for participants.	How you will mitigate the risk to participants: As no participants are involved, there is no direct participant risk. The research will rely exclusively on publicly available secondary sources and will be conducted in accordance with the UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice. Proper citation and acknowledgement of all published sources will be maintained throughout the study.
2	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities	

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	The proposed research will not involve discussions of sensitive or distressing topics with participants because no human participants will be recruited. The study will analyse published academic literature and industry reports only. Consequently, no safeguarding procedures, participant support services or referral mechanisms are required. If any reviewed literature discusses sensitive issues such as customer privacy or ethical concerns relating to artificial intelligence, these topics will be critically analysed in an objective academic context without involving identifiable individuals.	
3	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator: The principal risks to the researcher relate to prolonged computer use during literature searching and analysis, potential fatigue resulting from extended screen time, accidental loss of research data, and the possibility of unintentionally misinterpreting published findings or committing referencing errors.	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:</i> The researcher will follow good working practices by taking regular breaks, maintaining an ergonomic working environment and securely backing up research files using password-protected university-approved storage. Careful note-taking, critical reading, accurate referencing using the UWTSD Harvard Referencing style and regular consultation with the dissertation supervisor will minimise the risk of misinterpretation and academic errors.
4	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: Potential institutional risks include inaccurate representation of published evidence, breaches of academic integrity through poor referencing or plagiarism, and potential reputational damage if research is not conducted according to university policies and ethical standards.	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the University:</i> The research will comply fully with the UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice and the Research Data Management Policy. Only credible peer-reviewed academic literature and reputable industry reports will be used. All sources will be accurately acknowledged using UWTSD Harvard Referencing, and the dissertation will maintain the principles of honesty, transparency, academic integrity and responsible research practice.
5	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: The proposed study presents minimal environmental risk because it involves documentary analysis of published literature and does not require travel, laboratory work, fieldwork, or the use of hazardous materials.	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to environment:</i> The research will be conducted primarily using electronic resources and digital documents to minimise paper consumption and unnecessary printing. Where possible, all literature searching, reading, note-taking and data storage will be undertaken electronically, reducing the environmental impact of the project.

SECTION G: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

If you have identified in section D that there are no participants, then enter skip this section and continue to section H.

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when? Skipped. This research does not involve human participants.
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.

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	Skipped. No participants will be recruited because the study uses only secondary data obtained from published academic literature and reputable industry reports.
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	Skipped. No personal data or identifiable participant information will be collected, processed or stored. The research uses only publicly available published sources, which will be appropriately referenced in accordance with UWTSD Harvard Referencing guidelines.

SECTION H: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 “GDPR” and the Data Protection Act 2018 “DPA”)?	YES	NO
1	<i>“Personal data” means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.</i>	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	Not applicable. No personal data will be collected, processed or stored. The research is based solely on publicly available peer-reviewed journal articles and reputable industry reports.		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	<i>“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes).</i>	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	Not applicable. No special category data will be collected or processed during this research.		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
6	University computers?	☒	☐
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
10	“Cloud” storage or websites?	☒	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒

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12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:
	Although the study does not involve personal data, all research materials, including downloaded journal articles, literature review notes, coding documents, thematic analysis files and dissertation drafts, will be stored securely on password-protected computers and password-protected University-approved cloud storage (e.g. Microsoft Office 365/OneDrive). Backup copies will be maintained to minimise the risk of accidental data loss. Any portable storage devices used during the research will also be password protected. Only the researcher and dissertation supervisor will have access to the research materials where necessary. All published sources will be appropriately referenced using the UWTSD Harvard Referencing style. Research files will be retained until the completion of the dissertation and any required assessment period, after which unnecessary working files will be securely deleted in accordance with University guidance.

Data Protection			
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and/or any international equivalent):		
	Electronic transfer will relate only to research materials such as dissertation drafts, thematic analysis documents and copies of published literature. No personal or confidential participant data will be transferred. All electronic files will be stored using password-protected devices and University-approved cloud storage with secure authentication. Access will be restricted to the researcher and, where necessary, the dissertation supervisor. Research materials will be retained until the completion of the dissertation and assessment process before unnecessary working files are securely deleted in accordance with the UWTSD Research Data Management Policy.		
20	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	- Principal Researcher (Student) - Dissertation Supervisor - Internal Examiner/Second Marker (if required for assessment) - External Examiner (if required under University assessment procedures)		
21	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The Principal Researcher (Student) will act as the custodian of all research data throughout the project.		
22	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form.		
	Research materials, including downloaded journal articles, coding documents, thematic analysis files and dissertation drafts, will be stored electronically on password-protected computers and University-approved cloud storage (Microsoft Office 365/OneDrive). Backup copies will be maintained to prevent accidental data loss. Any portable storage devices used will be password protected. No personal or confidential participant data will be collected or stored. Research files will be retained until the dissertation has been examined and all assessment requirements have been completed, after which unnecessary working files will be securely deleted in accordance with the UWTSD Research Data Management Policy.		

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22	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtss.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	☒
23	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	☒

SECTION I: Use of AI tools

Use of generative AI and other AI-based tools There are a number of ethical issues relating to the use of generative AI and other AI-based tools, including data security, output bias, and output errors. In general you should assume that any generative AI or other AI-based tool that you pay to use is more secure and accurate than one which is free to use.		YES	NO	N/A
Will the research use AI tools to do any of the following:				
1	Capture data?	☐	☒	☐
2	Generate and/or edit text?	☐	☒	☐
3	Generate graphics?	☐	☒	☐
4	Generate video?	☐	☒	☐
5	Generate sound/music?	☐	☒	☐
6	Generate code?	☐	☒	☐
7	Generate synthetic data?	☐	☒	☐
8	Analyse data?	☐	☒	☐
9	Analyse personal or sensitive data?	☐	☒	☐
10	Classify data?	☐	☒	☐
11	Do you intend to use the free version of any AI tools?	☐	☒	☐
If you have answered YES to any of questions O1-O11, please provide justification detailing why this is necessary for the research.				
12	Not applicable			

SECTION J: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtss.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	Signature of applicant:	Kawser	Date: 11-July-2026
2	Supervisor:	Amir Homayounfard	Date: 15-July-2026
3	Signature:	"This has been discussed with and approved by Amir"	