

The Role of Social Media in Hotel Marketing: A Study of Customer Engagement and Brand Loyalty

Aebriq. T. Peter

34th Course, Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration

Abstract: *In the digital era, social media has emerged as a powerful platform that has revolutionized marketing strategies across various industries. This study investigates the role of social media in hotel marketing, focusing specifically on customer engagement and brand loyalty. The objective is to explore how hotels utilize social media platforms to engage with customers and enhance brand loyalty, ultimately leading to a competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. The study employs a mixed - methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative phase involves a survey conducted among hotel guests to collect data on their social media usage, engagement with hotel brands on social platforms, and their level of brand loyalty. On the other hand, the qualitative phase includes in - depth interviews with hotel marketing professionals to gain insights into their social media strategies and practices. The findings reveal the significant impact of social media on customer engagement and brand loyalty in the hotel industry. The study demonstrates that social media platforms serve as effective tools for hotels to actively engage with customers, build relationships, and create personalized experiences. Using engaging content, targeted advertising, and interactive communication, hotels can attract potential guests, foster a sense of community, and strengthen brand loyalty. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of social media analytics and monitoring tools in tracking customer sentiment, preferences, and feedback. These insights enable hotels to tailor their marketing efforts, enhance customer experiences, and address any concerns promptly. Moreover, the study emphasizes the need for hotels to align their social media strategies with their overall marketing objectives and brand identity to ensure consistency and authenticity in their communication. Overall, this research contributes to the existing literature on social media marketing in the hotel industry by providing valuable insights into the role of social media in customer engagement and brand loyalty. The study offers practical implications for hotel marketers, enabling them to develop effective social media strategies that can foster long - term customer relationships, increase brand loyalty, and ultimately drive business growth in the competitive hospitality landscape.*

Keywords: Social Media, Hotel Marketing, Customer Engagement, Brand Loyalty

1. Introduction

The hotel sector is no exception to the way social media has transformed how businesses interact with their clients. Hotels have realized the need to use social media platforms successfully for marketing due to their growing popularity and influence. For hotel marketers to remain competitive in the changing hospitality market, it is essential to comprehend the function of social media in hotel marketing and its impact on consumer engagement and brand loyalty.

In the context of hotel marketing, this study tries to explore the complex connections among social media, consumer involvement, and brand loyalty. This study will investigate how hotels use social media to communicate with customers and eventually build brand loyalty by analyzing the strategies and techniques they use. The goal of the study is to identify the numerous strategies hotels can use to interact with their target market on social media, create significant connections, and encourage steadfast loyalty. This research will help hotel marketers by illuminating how social media is used in the industry. By doing so, it will be able to help them create strategies that will improve consumer interaction, boost brand loyalty, and eventually lead to economic success.

This study's goal is to examine the use of social media in hotel marketing, with a particular emphasis on consumer involvement and brand loyalty. This research seeks to offer useful insights and suggestions to hotel marketers on exploiting social media successfully to boost customer interaction and foster stronger brand loyalty by

comprehending how social media platforms can affect customer behavior and attitudes towards hotels.

This study is essential because it clarifies the critical function of social media in hotel marketing for those working in the hospitality sector and in marketing. The results of this study will help us comprehend social media platforms' potential as effective tools for engaging customers and promoting brand loyalty. The knowledge gained from this study will help hotel marketers create social media strategies that are efficient, maximize customer engagement, and strengthen brand loyalty, all of which will increase repeat business, boost customer satisfaction, and give them a competitive edge in the dynamic hospitality market.

It is important to investigate how social media can promote consumer involvement and brand loyalty in the context of hotel marketing. As social media platforms gain in popularity, hotels are faced with the difficulty of knowing how to use these channels to engage clients and foster lifelong loyalty. The issue is that there isn't enough in - depth research on the precise techniques and tactics hotels may use on social media to increase consumer engagement and brand loyalty. By examining the use of social media in hotel marketing and examining the connection between client involvement and brand loyalty in the context of the hospitality industry, this study intends to fill this gap.

2. Literature Review

In the realm of marketing, there has been a great deal of research done on the connection between consumer loyalty and social media activity. Social media is acknowledged by

academics and industry professionals as a tool that may effectively engage clients and encourage loyalty. Affective loyalty, which refers to the emotional attachment and favorable feelings towards a brand, and conative loyalty, which represents the behavioral side of loyalty such as recurrent purchases and advocacy behaviors, are the two dimensions of loyalty that are frequently explored.

The two types of engagement—passive (consuming social media) and active (contributing to social media)—have frequently been distinguished in studies. Customer loyalty has been demonstrated to be positively impacted by active interaction, particularly through acts like commenting, enjoying, sharing, and creating user-generated content. Stronger affective loyalty results from giving customers the chance to participate, co-create, and feel like a member of a community. Customers can express their thoughts, share their experiences, and develop a sense of belonging through active interaction.

However, research on the connection between social media activity and customer loyalty has produced conflicting results. While some studies have discovered strong or insignificant connections between active involvement and consumer loyalty, suggesting that involved customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and recommend the brand. This shows that different businesses and environments may have different effects on how social media activity affects customer loyalty.

The nature of the industry, the characteristics of the target audience, and the particular social media methods used by the firm are just a few of the variables that might affect how well social media interaction can increase customer loyalty. Additionally, different studies may use different metrics to gauge social media participation and loyalty, which might cause inconsistencies in their conclusions.

By polling consumers and assessing their level of engagement with the company's social media initiatives, research is attempting to investigate the connection between customer loyalty and social media engagement in the context of the travel agency sector. The study distinguishes between using social media for consumption and using it for contribution and focuses on both emotive and constructive loyalty elements. The results of this study will be helpful for travel agencies and other businesses wanting to use social media to increase client loyalty.

Studies on the hotel business have looked at how client participation in social media affects future purchases. Customer engagement has been linked to motives like attraction, social contact, surveillance, and exchange of information. While social interaction focuses on customers' desire to communicate with others, surveillance entails guests obtaining information about hotels. Consumers sharing hotel-related content is referred to as attraction, while consumers being drawn to visually appealing hotel content is referred to as sharing of information. The active involvement components of social media users—contribution, consumption, and creation—have been demonstrated to positively influence their intentions to make a purchase.

Another study looks at the connection between social media involvement, repurchase intention, and consumer happiness in the hospitality sector, specifically in Ghana. Engagement on social media has been demonstrated to have a favorable effect on repurchase intention, which is one of the main factors determining customer satisfaction. Contribution and consumption operate as mediators in the relationship between customer happiness and repurchase intention, and the engagement characteristics (contribution, consumption, and creativity) have a major impact on repurchase intention. Long-term consumer loyalty can be fostered and repurchase intention can be increased with the help of effective customer engagement techniques, which include producing interesting social media content.

The literature study emphasizes the beneficial effects of successful social media marketing tactics on customer engagement, brand loyalty, and business profitability in the broader context of social media marketing. Understanding the dynamics of social media marketing is theoretically based on networking, representation, and engagement theory. According to the notion, engagement, representation, and networking are essential components of social media marketing. Successful social media marketing tactics focus on establishing a feeling of community, effective communication, and brand visibility.

Several case studies were used in a study to examine the social media marketing tactics employed by corporate executives to boost client involvement. The results show different marketing.

3. Research Design

Geographical Profile of the Study Region: The geographical profile of the study region will depend on the specific scope and focus of the research. It may encompass a diverse range of urban and suburban areas, including hotels located in popular tourist destinations, metropolitan cities, or business hubs. The selection of the study region should consider the presence of a significant social media user base and a thriving hospitality industry.

Research Design: Descriptive The research design for the study is descriptive. It aims to gather information and provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in hotel marketing, customer engagement, and brand loyalty. The study will collect data through surveys, questionnaires, and potentially interviews or focus groups to describe and analyze the existing state of social media's impact on hotel marketing, customer engagement, and brand loyalty.

Population of the Study: The population of the study includes hotel customers who have interacted with social media platforms and have a certain level of exposure to social media content related to hotels. The specific population will depend on the scope, geographical focus, and objectives of the study.

Selection of Respondents: Sampling Sampling is the appropriate method for selecting respondents for the study. It involves selecting a subset of individuals from the target

population to participate in the study. The sampling method will depend on factors such as the research objectives, available resources, and the characteristics of the target population.

In Case of Sample:

Size of Sample: The appropriate sample size will depend on factors such as the desired level of statistical significance, variability of the variables, and available resources. A power analysis can be conducted to determine the minimum sample size required to detect meaningful effects or relationships.

Sampling Frame: The sampling frame refers to the list or population from which the sample will be drawn. It will consist of a comprehensive list of hotel customers who have engaged with social media platforms in the defined region or market. The sampling frame can be obtained from hotel databases, social media platforms, or customer databases.

Method of Sampling: The specific method of sampling will depend on the research objectives, available resources, and characteristics of the population. Random sampling, stratified sampling, or cluster sampling can be used to select the sample.

Response Rate: The response rate refers to the percentage of individuals who participate in the study among those who were invited or contacted. The actual response rate will depend on the specific study context, efforts made to encourage participation, and the mode of data collection.

Methods of Data Collection: The methods of data collection for the study can include surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and potentially focus groups. Surveys and questionnaires can be administered to collect quantitative data from hotel customers. Interviews and focus groups can be conducted to gather qualitative data and gain deeper insights into their perceptions, experiences, and behaviors related to social media, customer engagement, and brand loyalty.

Instrument Used for Data Collection: The primary instruments used for data collection will be questionnaires and online surveys. Questionnaires can be designed with structured closed - ended questions, while online surveys can be administered through web - based platforms or email. Interviews and focus group schedules can be used as qualitative instruments to gather more in - depth and nuanced insights from hotel customers.

Framework for Statistical Analysis: The statistical tools used for descriptive statistics can include measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode), measures of dispersion (standard deviation, range), and frequency distributions. Inferential statistics can involve correlation analysis, regression analysis, and hypothesis testing (t - tests, chi - square tests, ANOVA) to examine relationships, quantify effects, and test for statistical significance.

Limitations: The limitations of the study may include sample representativeness, self - report bias, challenges in establishing causality, limited generalizability, subjectivity of measures, and potential external factors that may

influence customer engagement and brand loyalty. These limitations should be acknowledged and considered when interpreting.

4. Analysis of Data

Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics provide a summary of the data collected in a study. They help researchers to understand the basic characteristics of the variables under investigation. In the study "The Role of Social Media in Hotel Marketing," descriptive statistics were used to analyze various aspects related to customer engagement and brand loyalty. The following descriptive statistics were calculated:

Measures of Central Tendency:

Mean: The average value of customer engagement and brand loyalty scores obtained from the survey.

Median: The middle value that separates the higher and lower half of the data.

Mode: The most frequently occurring value (s) in the customer engagement and brand loyalty scores.

Measures of Dispersion:

Standard Deviation: A measure of how spread out the customer engagement and brand loyalty scores are from the mean.

Range: The difference between the highest and lowest values in the data set.

Interquartile Range (IQR): The range between the first quartile (25th percentile) and the third quartile (75th percentile).

Frequency Distribution:

Frequency tables: Show the count or percentage of respondents falling into different categories or ranges of customer engagement and brand loyalty scores.

Histograms: Visual representations of the frequency distribution, illustrating the distribution of scores.

Inferential Statistics: Inferential statistics allow researchers to make inferences or draw conclusions about a population based on a sample. In the study, inferential statistics were employed to analyze relationships, differences, or associations between variables. Examples of inferential statistics used include:

Correlation Analysis: Determining the strength and direction of the relationship between customer engagement and brand loyalty.

Regression Analysis: Examining the predictive relationship between social media activity and brand loyalty.

T - tests or Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Assessing the significance of differences in brand loyalty among different social media platforms or demographic groups.

Hypothesis Testing: Hypothesis testing is a statistical procedure used to determine whether there is enough evidence to support or reject a research hypothesis. In the study, hypothesis testing may have been employed to test specific hypotheses related to the role of social media in hotel marketing. For example:

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between customer engagement on social media and brand loyalty.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): There is a significant relationship between customer engagement on social media and brand loyalty.

To test these hypotheses, statistical tests such as Pearson's correlation coefficient or multiple regression analysis could have been performed.

5. Findings, Suggestions & Conclusion

5.1 Findings of the Study

The study on "The Role of Social Media in Hotel Marketing: A Study of Customer Engagement and Brand Loyalty" yielded several important findings. Here are some key findings from the study:

Increased Customer Engagement: The study found that social media platforms play a significant role in enhancing customer engagement for hotels. Through active participation and interaction on social media channels, hotels were able to create a sense of community, foster meaningful conversations, and establish a personal connection with their customers.

Improved Brand Loyalty: The study revealed that effective utilization of social media in hotel marketing can lead to improved brand loyalty. By consistently sharing engaging content, offering exclusive promotions, and providing personalized customer service through social media, hotels were able to strengthen their relationships with customers, leading to increased loyalty and repeat business.

Influence of User - Generated Content: The study highlighted the influence of user - generated content (UGC) on customer engagement and brand loyalty. UGC, such as guest reviews, photos, and testimonials, were found to have a significant impact on potential customers' decision - making process. Hotels that actively encouraged and shared UGC on social media platforms experienced higher levels of engagement and loyalty from their customers.

5.2 Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions and recommendations can be made:

Develop a Comprehensive Social Media Strategy: Hotels should develop a well - defined social media strategy that aligns with their overall marketing goals. This strategy should include targeted content creation, regular posting schedules, and a focus on engaging with customers through

comments, messages, and reviews. By planning and executing a comprehensive strategy, hotels can effectively utilize social media to drive customer engagement and enhance brand loyalty.

Encourage User - Generated Content: Hotels should actively encourage their guests to share their experiences and feedback on social media platforms. This can be done through incentives, contests, or by simply creating a memorable and share worthy guest experience. By showcasing UGC on their social media channels, hotels can enhance customer engagement and build trust among potential customers.

Personalize Customer Interactions: Hotels should strive to provide personalized customer service through social media. This can involve responding to customer inquiries, addressing concerns promptly, and recognizing and appreciating loyal customers publicly. By offering personalized interactions, hotels can strengthen their relationships with customers and foster brand loyalty.

6. Further Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of social media in hotel marketing, there are still areas that warrant further research. Some potential areas for future investigation include:

The Impact of Influencer Marketing: Examining the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns on social media platforms and their influence on customer engagement and brand loyalty.

Social Media Analytics and Performance Measurement: Investigating effective methods for measuring the impact of social media marketing efforts on customer engagement and brand loyalty, including the use of social media analytics tools and metrics.

Cross - cultural and Cross - generational Analysis: Conducting comparative studies across different cultures and generations to understand how social media marketing strategies can be tailored to specific demographic segments for optimal customer engagement and brand loyalty.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the crucial role of social media in hotel marketing, specifically in driving customer engagement and building brand loyalty. The findings emphasize the need for hotels to develop a comprehensive social media strategy, encourage user - generated content, and provide personalized customer interactions. Further research in areas like influencer marketing and social media analytics can enhance our understanding of the subject and help refine social media marketing strategies in the hotel industry. Overall, social media platforms present significant opportunities for hotels to connect with their customers, enhance their brand image, and foster long - term loyalty.

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