

## **TECH-ENHANCED CRM AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY: INSIGHTS FROM TRICITY'S (CHANDIGARH, PANCHKULA AND MOHALI) STAR CATEGORY HOTELS**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines how customer loyalty is affected by technology-driven Customer Relationship Management (CRM) initiatives in star-rated hotels in the Tricity area, which includes Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali. Through the use of structured questionnaires and a quantitative research methodology, information was gathered from visitors staying at different star categories of hotels. Digital reservation experience, personalised guest experience, enhanced in-room technology and services, effective communication and multichannel interaction, intelligent automation with chatbots and messaging services, guest feedback integration and continuous improvement are the six key factors related to technology-driven CRM initiatives that were identified by the study. The constructs' internal consistency was validated by reliability analysis, and hypothesis testing showed that the majority of the constructs had a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction. The study's conclusions highlight the value of technology-driven CRM programmes in improving visitor experiences and loyalty. They also recommend that hotel management give priority to investing in digital platforms, individualised services, and integrated guest feedback. Future studies could look at new patterns in the hospitality industry's adoption of technology.

**Keywords:** Customer Loyalty, Technology-driven CRM initiatives, Star Category Hotels, Tricity Region, Hospitality Industry.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Thanks to technological advancements, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems have undergone significant evolution in the modern hospitality industry. These technologically advanced CRM systems aim to provide individualised experiences, optimise workflows, and cultivate a devoted clientele. Conventional CRM frameworks have been transformed by the incorporation of cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), big data analytics, and the Internet of Things (IoT), giving hotels the ability to better understand and interact with their guests (Kasemsap, 2019). Large-scale data collection and analysis are made possible by these technologies, which facilitate more informed decision-making and customised customer interactions.

The Tricity area, which includes Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali, is a well-known centre for five-star and upscale lodging. This area appeals to both business and leisure travellers because of its unique combination of urban sophistication and cultural heritage. The hospitality industry in Tricity faces intense competition, making the use of cutting-edge CRM technologies essential to retaining a competitive edge and guaranteeing high levels of client satisfaction and loyalty (Singh & Singh, 2020). Hotels in this area are realising more and more how important it is to use technology to set themselves apart from the competition and provide special offers to their visitors.

Star-category hotels in Tricity can collect and analyse enormous amounts of customer data thanks to technologically advanced CRM systems. This makes it easier to create customised marketing campaigns and raises the standard of service. Hotels can provide customised recommendations and individualised experiences by utilising AI and machine learning algorithms to anticipate customer preferences and behaviours (Choudhury, 2021). In order to predict future needs, AI, for example, can examine historical booking trends and customer feedback. This enables hotels to proactively provide services that improve the guest experience. This predictive ability boosts operational efficiency and enhances customer satisfaction.

IoT device use also improves guest comfort and operational efficiency, making for a smooth and enjoyable stay. IoT technologies ensure that guests are as comfortable as possible by monitoring and controlling a variety of hotel environment factors, including lighting, temperature, and security (Borgia, 2014). In addition, these gadgets facilitate instantaneous communication and issue resolution, empowering hotel personnel to promptly and efficiently handle problems. An instance of this would be a smart thermostat that modifies the temperature of a room according to its occupancy, and IoT-enabled door locks that offer guests safe and easy access.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of customer loyalty in the hospitality sector because it has a direct impact on a hotel's standing, occupancy rates, and sources of income. Loyal patrons are more likely to give insightful reviews, suggest the hotel to others, and make repeat visits. As a result, Tricity's star-rated hotels are spending more money on technologically advanced CRM systems in an effort to establish and maintain enduring connections with their clientele (Kumar & Nayak, 2018). Personalised loyalty programmes, automated follow-up communications, and data-driven marketing campaigns that appeal to individual preferences and past behaviours are examples of initiatives that show off these investments.

Additionally, social media analytics integration with CRM systems enables hotels to track and interact with guests on multiple channels. According to Leeung et al. (2013), social media offers a plethora of data regarding consumer attitudes and preferences that can be utilised to improve service delivery and marketing tactics. To make sure that their offerings are still relevant and appealing to their target audience, hotels can, for example, identify trends and areas for improvement by analysing social media interactions.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how customer loyalty is affected by technologically advanced CRM systems in star-rated hotels in the Tricity area. This study aims to offer insights into how these technologies are being used to improve customer experiences and promote loyalty. For hotel managers and other industry stakeholders looking to upgrade or implement their CRM strategies in the cutthroat hospitality market, the findings should have a significant impact. The broader understanding of how technology shapes customer relationships and propels business success in the hospitality sector will be aided by this research.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH GAP

Within the framework of star-rated hotels, the literature review examines the complex relationship between technology-driven Customer Relationship Management (CRM) initiatives and customer satisfaction. The hospitality sector is adopting digital innovations to improve guest experiences, so it's critical to comprehend how CRM strategies affect customer satisfaction. This review summarises research results from a wide range of studies conducted in various industries and contexts to clarify the main variables affecting guest satisfaction in five-star hotels and the part that technology-driven CRM initiatives play in determining these experiences. According to Malki et al. (2023), social CRM dimensions have a positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Traditional CRM has a direct impact on loyalty, while social media use has an indirect impact on satisfaction. In order to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, Garcia et al. (2022) identified a number of recommendations for implementing technology-driven CRM initiatives in low-cost hotels. Nguyen and Patel (2021) discovered that technology-driven CRM initiatives had a major impact on mid-scale hotels' customers' satisfaction and loyalty, especially when it came to personalised services and effective communication. Park and Kim (2021) emphasised customised menus and quick ordering procedures in order to highlight the beneficial effects of technology-driven CRM initiatives on customer satisfaction and loyalty in hotel food and beverage services. According to Brown et al. (2020), boutique hotels that implemented successful technology-driven CRM initiatives saw an increase in customer loyalty, which they attributed to the smooth and personalised interactions they provided. Chen et al. (2020) showed that technology-driven CRM initiatives within hotel loyalty programmes have a significant impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. The relationship between the two is mediated by perceived value.

In online hotel booking platforms, Lee and Wang (2017) discovered that technology-driven CRM initiatives had a major impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty, especially when it came to personalised recommendations and quick booking procedures. In the Taiwanese banking industry, Liu et al. (2012) emphasised the positive correlation between E-CRM, customer satisfaction, and loyalty, stressing the role that customer satisfaction plays in fostering loyalty. The impact of online reviews on booking intentions and trust perceptions in the hospitality industry was illustrated by Sparks and Browning (2011), highlighting the importance of online reputation management. The dynamics of customer engagement and how they affect business performance were examined by Verhoef et al. (2010), who emphasised the significance of developing engaged customers for long-term success. In their 2010 study, Hennig et al. examined how new media affected customer relationships, emphasising how digital communication channels revolutionised customer engagement. The CRM process and its effect on performance were assessed by Reinartz et al. (2004), who also offered insights into

the measurement and effects of CRM initiatives on organisational success. Lawson et al. (2004) investigated the connection between CRM components, online attributes, and customer loyalty, emphasising the role of online attributes in bolstering CRM strategies. In their 2004 study, Gupta et al. examined customer valuation in marketing research, highlighting how crucial it is to comprehend consumer preferences and perceptions in order to increase customer value and satisfaction.

There is a noticeable research gap concerning the specific implications of technology-driven CRM initiatives in the context of star category hotels, despite the wealth of research on these initiatives' effects on customer loyalty across a variety of industries. Few studies specifically address the hospitality industry, especially star-rated hotels, despite the fact that those that have been conducted offer insightful analysis of CRM strategies and their impact on customer experiences. Furthermore, little thorough research has been done on how various CRM initiatives—like social CRM or personalised services—affect customer loyalty, particularly in five-star hotels. Moreover, scant research has been conducted on the complex interactions between CRM initiatives and customer loyalty in the hospitality sector. In order to create customised CRM strategies that successfully satisfy the particular requirements and expectations of guests in star-rated hotels and eventually increase their satisfaction and loyalty, these gaps must be filled.

### **3. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

Technology-driven Customer Relationship Management (CRM) initiatives have become essential tools for improving long-term relationships and guest experiences in the ever-changing hospitality industry. Nevertheless, in spite of their increasing importance, there is still a substantial research vacuum regarding their effect on patron loyalty, especially when it comes to star hotels in the Tricity area that includes Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali. By thoroughly assessing how well technology-driven CRM initiatives elevate customer loyalty within these hotels, this study seeks to close this gap. The study aims to offer significant insights to hotel management regarding the optimisation of CRM practices to fulfil the changing demands of guests in the Tricity area. This is achieved by evaluating the implementation, usage, and particular consequences of CRM strategies on guest loyalty. This study aims to improve guest experiences and the overall competitiveness of star category hotels in the Tricity area by thoroughly analysing CRM effectiveness and its relationship with customer loyalty.

### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research study uses a quantitative approach to investigate how technology-enhanced CRM initiatives affect customer loyalty in five-star hotels in the Tricity area (Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali). The research has attempted to efficiently collect data from a heterogeneous group of 400 participants, ensuring representation from a range of demographic backgrounds, by using a convenience sample approach. Participants were selected from a range of hotels with different star ratings, and information on customer loyalty, demographics, and perceptions of technology-driven CRM programmes were gathered using structured questionnaires. The Technology Driven CRM Initiatives measure how much technology-driven CRM (customer relationship management) is implemented and used in star-rated hotels. This variable's measurement items were adapted from Hinkins (1998) and DeVellis (2003). The Customer Loyalty Scale was developed based on the foundational works of Zeithaml, Berry, and

Parasuraman (1996), Evanschitzky and Wunderlich (2006), and Oliver (1997). The effectiveness of these well-established scales in capturing the nuanced aspects of customer loyalty across a range of industries has been widely acknowledged. These scales were adopted as a strong basis, and any adjustments made for this study were done so that the measurements would correspond with the particular traits and standards that are common in the hotel sector in Tricity. Throughout the whole research process, two ethical principles that have been strictly adhered to are confidentiality and informed consent. It is anticipated that the study's findings will give Tricity hotel managers helpful information, making it simpler to customise offerings to raise overall guest satisfaction in this dynamic hospitality environment.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 displays a comprehensive frequency distribution of the demographic profile of the study participants. 42% of participants are women and 58% of participants are men, based on the gender distribution. When it comes to age, the largest age group is between 41 and 50 (46.75%), followed by the 26 to 40 age group (33%). 90.75% of the participants, according to their marital status, are married. There is diversity in terms of educational background; 53.5% of people have a degree beyond graduation. When it comes to monthly income, nearly half of the subjects (47.75%) make between Rs. 60,000 and Rs. 90,000. The table provides a thorough breakdown of the demographic characteristics, which facilitates understanding the composition of the sample and opens the door to further investigation into the ways in which these attributes impact guest satisfaction in star-rated hotels.

**Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Profile of Consumers**

		Count	Column N %
Gender	Male	232	58%
	Female	168	42%
Age	18 - 25 years	25	6.25%
	26 - 40 years	132	33%
	41 - 50 years	187	46.75%
	51 years + Above	56	14%
Marital Status	Single	37	9.25%
	Married	363	90.75%
Qualification	10+2	24	6%
	Graduation	139	34.75%
	Post-Graduation	214	53.5%
	Doctorate	23	5.75%
Monthly Income	Below 40,000	31	7.75%
	40,000-60,000	96	24%
	60,000-90,000	191	47.75%
	Above 90,000	82	20.5%

The impact of technology-driven CRM initiatives on guest experiences in star-rated hotels was thoroughly assessed by measuring them across six key constructs. The first factor, referred to as the "Digital Reservation Experience," emphasises how important it is to have easy-to-use online and mobile check-in and reservation processes. "Personalised Guest Experience," the second factor, highlights the significance of customised suggestions and real-time service updates. "Enhanced In-Room Technology and Services," the third factor, highlights how technology can improve in-room amenities and services. "Effective Communication and Multichannel Interaction," the fourth factor, examines how well the hotel uses a variety of communication channels to engage guests in a timely and educational manner. "Guest Feedback Integration and Continuous Improvement," the fifth factor, evaluates how committed the hotel is to using guest feedback for ongoing improvements. Last but not least, the sixth factor, "Intelligent Automation with Chatbots and Messaging Services," sums up how chatbots and messaging platforms affect information accessibility and immediate support. When considered collectively, these components highlight the various aspects of technology-driven CRM programmes in the hotel industry and offer valuable data regarding guest opinions and preferences.

**Table 2: Reliability Statistics of Constructs**

	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Customer Loyalty	0.852
Digital Reservation Experience (DRE)	0.806
Personalized Guest Experience ( PGE)	0.838
Effective Communication and Multichannel Interaction ( ECMI)	0.82
Enhanced In-Room Technology and Services (ERTS)	0.798
Intelligent Automation with Chatbots and Messaging Services ( IAMS)	0.788
Guest Feedback Integration and Continuous Improvement (GFCI)	0.727

The reliability statistics show the internal consistency and dependability of the study's measured constructs, as indicated by the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The constructs demonstrate robust reliability overall, as indicated by their Cronbach's Alpha values, which range from 0.727 to 0.852. With Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.852, 0.838, and 0.82, respectively, the constructs of customer loyalty, personalised guest experience, and effective communication and multichannel interaction show especially high levels of reliability. With Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.788 to 0.806, the constructs of Digital Reservation Experience, Enhanced In-Room Technology and Services, and Intelligent Automation with Chatbots and Messaging Services also demonstrate strong reliability. The items within each construct consistently measure the intended aspects of technology-driven CRM initiatives, as indicated by the high reliability coefficients. This lends confidence to the validity of the constructs for further analysis and interpretation in the study.



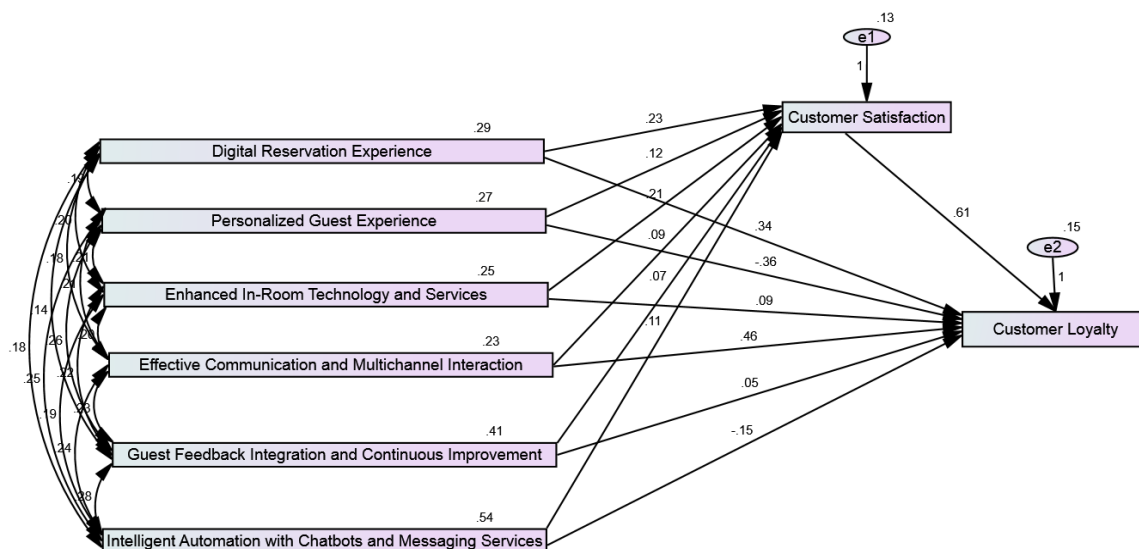
**Table 3: Hypothesis Testing of Model**

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Customer Loyalty	<---	DRE	0.341	0.055	6.178	0.000
Customer Loyalty	<---	PGE	-0.36	0.08	-4.522	0.000
Customer Loyalty	<---	ERTS	0.089	0.075	1.177	0.239
Customer Loyalty	<---	ECMI	0.459	0.082	5.586	0.000
Customer Loyalty	<---	GFCI	0.05	0.051	0.977	0.328
Customer Loyalty	<---	IAMS	-0.148	0.034	-4.383	0.000
Customer Loyalty	<---	Customer Satisfaction	0.607	0.048	12.537	0.000

The study's hypothesis testing results shed light on the critical variables that affect patron loyalty in star-rated hotels in the Tricity area (Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali). With an estimate of 0.341 and a critical ratio of 6.178, Direct Relationship Experience (DRE) stands out as a significant positive contributor, highlighting the importance of face-to-face communication and direct engagement in building loyalty. With an estimate of 0.459 and a critical ratio of 5.586, Enhanced Customer Management Interactions (ECMI) also have a positive impact on customer loyalty, underscoring the importance of sophisticated, technologically advanced management systems in preserving and improving guest relationships. With an estimate of 0.607 and a critical ratio of 12.537, customer satisfaction stands out as having the greatest positive influence. This suggests that fostering general customer satisfaction is crucial to fostering a following of devoted patrons.

Conversely, an estimate of -0.36 and a critical ratio of -4.522 show that Perceived Guest Experience (PGE) has a negative relationship with customer loyalty. This implies that visitors' loyalty may be greatly impacted if they have a bad impression of their experiences. With an estimate of -0.148 and a critical ratio of -4.383, Integrated Automated Messaging Systems (IAMS) are also demonstrated to have a negative impact on loyalty, suggesting that an excessive dependence on automated systems for guest communication may result in impersonal experiences that lower loyalty.

**Figure 1: Measurement Model of the Study**



It is noteworthy that there is no significant effect on customer loyalty for both Effective Response to Service (ERTS) and Guest Feedback and Complaint Integration (GFCI), with estimates of 0.089 and 0.05 and p-values of 0.239 and 0.328, respectively. Although these elements are crucial for overall service quality, their lack of significant influence suggests that, in this particular situation, they may not be the main factors influencing customer loyalty.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study concludes by offering insightful information about the important part technology-driven CRM initiatives play in raising customer loyalty levels in star-rated hotels located in the Tricity area. According to the research, a number of crucial elements lead to increased customer loyalty. These elements include smooth digital reservation processes, tailored guest interactions, cutting-edge in-room technology and services, efficient communication channels, and a dedication to ongoing development based on feedback from customers. These results underscore how critical it is that hotel management prioritise investments in user-friendly digital platforms, leverage guest data for tailored services, incorporate cutting-edge technologies to improve guest experiences, keep lines of communication open to promptly attend to guest needs, and persistently solicit feedback to propel service enhancements. Furthermore, the study recommends that future research endeavours should examine the efficacy of diverse CRM tactics in diverse hotel industry segments and scrutinise nascent patterns in guest inclinations and technology integration in the hospitality domain. Such actions would advance knowledge of how hotels can use technology to forge more enduring bonds with their visitors and skillfully adjust to changing market conditions.

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