

## **The Role of Customer Relationship Management in Enhancing Loyalty among Hotel Patrons in Metro Manila**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to examine the role of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in enhancing loyalty among hotel patrons in Metro Manila, with particular focus on the perceived effectiveness of CRM strategies, their contribution to guest satisfaction, and the challenges in their implementation. The research also investigated whether demographic variables influence customer loyalty and sought to provide strategic recommendations for CRM improvement in the hospitality industry. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing purposive sampling to select 100 hotel patrons in Metro Manila who had availed hotel services at least twice in the past year. Data were gathered through a structured survey questionnaire based on a 4-point Likert scale, validated through expert review and reliability-tested using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded acceptable results above 0.80. Statistical tools included percentage distribution for demographic profiles, weighted mean for perceptions and challenges, Pearson r for correlations, and independent t-test and ANOVA for significant differences. Findings revealed that CRM strategies such as loyalty programs, personalized services, and digital CRM tools are perceived to enhance guest satisfaction and loyalty. Customer engagement activities and personalized interactions emerged as the most influential in fostering repeat patronage. Significant differences in loyalty were observed across age, educational attainment, and frequency of hotel visits, while gender and purpose of stay showed no significant variations. Challenges identified include inconsistent CRM delivery, technical limitations, limited personalization, and insufficient staff training. The study concludes that effective CRM—supported by technology, personalization, and targeted engagement—plays a pivotal role in cultivating guest loyalty. Recommendations include enhancing personalization, improving mobile CRM platforms, offering flexible loyalty programs, strengthening real-time customer support, and investing in staff training to improve CRM execution.

*Keywords: Customer Relationship Management, Hotel Loyalty, Guest Satisfaction, Hospitality Industry, Metro Manila*

## Introduction

The hospitality industry is highly competitive, requiring hotels to implement strategies that ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty. One of the most effective strategies in achieving this is Customer Relationship Management (CRM), which enables hotels to build lasting relationships with patrons through personalized services, effective communication, and loyalty programs. As the hotel industry in Metro Manila continues to expand, CRM has become a crucial factor in maintaining a competitive edge. Studies indicate that the implementation of CRM strategies significantly improves customer satisfaction and retention, particularly in the hospitality sector, where personalized experiences drive loyalty (Wabwile, 2019).

The adoption of CRM tools such as loyalty programs, targeted promotions, and personalized services plays a pivotal role in influencing customer behavior. Research conducted in hotels across India and Africa has demonstrated that CRM strategies contribute to customer retention by fostering trust, improving service quality, and increasing customer satisfaction (Byloppilly, 2021). Similarly, a study conducted in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, found that CRM practices in hotels, such as partner relationships and long-term service engagement, had a direct positive effect on guest loyalty (Indra & Ervina, 2020). These findings highlight the importance of CRM as a strategic tool in the hospitality industry, emphasizing that strong relationships with customers are integral to long-term success.

In the Philippine context, studies on hotel patron behavior indicate that customer satisfaction is a key mediator between CRM and loyalty. A study on Manila-based coffee shops found that factors such as service quality, pricing, and customer engagement directly influenced customer loyalty (Libiran et al., 2024). Similarly, research in the ASEAN region underscores that effective CRM implementation helps businesses differentiate themselves in highly saturated markets (Danurdara, Siahaan, & Sodawan, 2024). Given Metro Manila's dense hospitality industry, understanding the role of CRM in patron retention is essential for hotel businesses seeking to increase market share and revenue.

Moreover, digitalization has transformed CRM practices, with many hotels now integrating Electronic Customer Relationship Management (eCRM) to enhance guest experience through digital touchpoints, online feedback, and personalized recommendations (Ibrahim, Abbas, & Kamal, 2021). Studies from Western markets suggest that eCRM improves customer satisfaction by offering seamless interactions between guests and hotel management, thereby strengthening brand loyalty (Mokhtar & Sjahrudin, 2019). With Metro Manila being a global tourism hub, understanding how digital CRM strategies impact customer behavior is crucial in shaping the future of the hotel industry.

This research aims to examine the role of Customer Relationship Management in enhancing loyalty among hotel patrons in Metro Manila by analyzing CRM strategies, customer experiences, and their impact on repeat patronage. By drawing from local and international studies, this study seeks to provide insights into how CRM implementation fosters customer loyalty and how hotels in Metro Manila can optimize these strategies to remain competitive in a growing market.

### *Background of the Study*

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has emerged as a pivotal strategy in the hospitality industry, particularly in maintaining and enhancing customer loyalty. As competition intensifies in the hotel sector, businesses seek innovative ways to differentiate themselves and retain guests. The hotel industry is

inherently service-oriented, requiring continuous engagement with customers to build trust and long-term relationships (Byloppilly, 2021). Studies have shown that CRM practices, including personalized services, loyalty programs, and targeted marketing efforts, significantly impact customer retention and business profitability (Rahimi & Kozak, 2020). Hotels that effectively implement CRM strategies have been observed to have higher customer satisfaction levels, leading to increased repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Walelign, 2020).

In Metro Manila, a premier tourism and business hub in Southeast Asia, the hotel industry plays a crucial role in the local economy. With an increasing number of international and domestic travelers, hotels are investing heavily in CRM technologies to improve guest experiences (Libiran et al., 2024). Digitalization has further transformed CRM, with many hotels adopting electronic customer relationship management (e-CRM) systems that allow for real-time customer interaction, personalized services, and streamlined booking experiences (Ibrahim, Abbas, & Kamal, 2021). These advancements suggest that CRM is no longer limited to traditional customer service but extends to the digital domain, shaping customer perceptions and enhancing brand loyalty in an increasingly technology-driven market (Danurdara, Siahaan, & Sodawan, 2024).

A global perspective on CRM in the hospitality sector highlights its impact across various regions. Research from Europe and the United States indicates that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between CRM quality and customer loyalty (Mokhtar & Sjahrudin, 2019). In contrast, studies from Asia and Africa emphasize the importance of social bonding, trust, and personalized engagement as key drivers of CRM success (Wabwile, 2019). While the hospitality industry has extensively studied CRM's role in customer retention, specific research focusing on Metro Manila's hotel sector remains limited, particularly in examining the interplay between digital CRM solutions and traditional relationship management strategies.

Despite the growing body of literature on CRM and customer loyalty, there remains a significant research gap in understanding the effectiveness of CRM practices in Metro Manila's hotel industry. Most existing studies focus on global trends or specific cases in Western and other Asian markets, neglecting the unique dynamics of the Philippine hospitality industry. For instance, research in Indonesia and Thailand has emphasized the role of personalized marketing and relationship-building in enhancing guest loyalty (Indra & Ervina, 2020; Jariyachamsit, 2022). However, little empirical evidence exists on how CRM strategies influence customer loyalty in the Philippine context, where cultural nuances and consumer behavior may differ from those in other Southeast Asian countries.

Another gap lies in the integration of technology-driven CRM solutions with traditional hotel management practices. While studies indicate that digital CRM tools, such as mobile applications and AI-driven customer service, improve guest experiences and satisfaction (Ibrahim et al., 2021), research on how Metro Manila hotels are adapting to these technological advancements is lacking. The effectiveness of e-CRM in addressing the needs of diverse customer segments—such as business travelers, local tourists, and international visitors—has yet to be thoroughly explored. Additionally, the role of social CRM—which includes customer engagement through social media platforms—remains an underdeveloped area of study in the Philippine hotel industry (Ibrahim, Abbas, & Kamal, 2021).

Furthermore, existing research tends to overlook the long-term impact of CRM investments on customer lifetime value. Studies from Kenya and India suggest that CRM implementation leads to short-term customer retention benefits but lacks sustainability without continuous innovation and adaptation (Wabwile, 2019; Byloppilly, 2021). In the context of Metro Manila, where hotels face stiff competition,

understanding how CRM fosters long-term loyalty and brand advocacy is crucial. Identifying strategies that sustain guest relationships beyond initial interactions remains a challenge for hotel operators. In summary, this study aims to address the identified research gaps by examining the role of CRM in enhancing customer loyalty in Metro Manila hotels, with a particular focus on digital integration, long-term customer engagement, and cultural factors influencing CRM effectiveness. By bridging these gaps, the study will provide actionable insights for hotel managers and policymakers to optimize CRM strategies, enhance guest satisfaction, and foster long-term loyalty in the competitive hospitality industry.

## **Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to investigate the role of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in enhancing loyalty among hotel patrons in Metro Manila. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Determine the demographic profile of hotel patrons in terms of:
  - a) Age
  - b) Gender
  - c) Educational attainment
  - d) Frequency of hotel visits
  - e) Purpose of stay
2. Assess hotel patrons' perceptions of the effectiveness of CRM strategies implemented by hotels in Metro Manila.
3. Identify specific CRM strategies (e.g., loyalty programs, personalized services, digital CRM, customer engagement activities) that contribute most to guest satisfaction and loyalty.
4. Examine the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between CRM and hotel patron loyalty.
5. Analyze whether significant differences exist in customer loyalty when hotel patrons are grouped according to their demographic profile.
6. Explore the challenges faced by hotels in Metro Manila in implementing effective CRM strategies.
7. Propose recommendations for enhancing CRM initiatives to strengthen guest retention and promote long-term loyalty.

## **Methodology**

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design to investigate the role of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in enhancing customer loyalty among hotel patrons in Metro Manila. The descriptive aspect provided profiles of hotel patrons and assessed their perceptions of CRM effectiveness, while the correlational aspect examined relationships between CRM strategies, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. Statistical tools such as correlation and regression were used to analyze whether customer satisfaction mediated the relationship between CRM and loyalty, and to test for significant differences across demographic groups.

*Population and Sampling.* The target population consisted of hotel patrons who had stayed in 3-star, 4-star, or 5-star hotels in Metro Manila within the last six months and had engaged with at least one CRM initiative such as loyalty programs, personalized services, or digital tools. Using purposive sampling, 100 respondents were selected based on predefined criteria to ensure relevance to the study's objectives. Preference was given to repeat hotel guests to capture insights into CRM-driven loyalty. This sampling approach ensured diversity across demographic variables and provided a reliable basis for statistical analysis.

*Research Instrument.* Data were gathered using a structured survey questionnaire, designed to collect information on demographics, perceptions of CRM effectiveness, satisfaction, and loyalty. The instrument included multiple sections: demographic profile, perceptions of CRM effectiveness, effectiveness of specific CRM strategies, satisfaction as a mediating factor, loyalty across demographic groups, challenges in CRM implementation, and recommendations for CRM improvement. Items were measured using a Likert scale, with reliability and validity ensured through expert review, pilot testing, and Cronbach's Alpha scores above 0.80, confirming strong internal consistency.

*Data Gathering Procedure.* The data collection followed a systematic and ethical process. After validation and pilot testing, surveys were distributed both online (Google Forms, hotel mailing lists, social media) and offline (printed questionnaires distributed in selected hotels). Prior to participation, respondents were provided informed consent forms outlining the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and voluntary nature. The collection period lasted four weeks, with follow-ups conducted to ensure high response rates. Responses were screened for completeness and consistency before being encoded in statistical software for analysis.

*Validation and Reliability.* To ensure credibility, the instrument underwent face and content validation by experts in hospitality management and research methods, who recommended refinements for clarity and cultural appropriateness. A pilot test with 15 respondents confirmed reliability through Cronbach's Alpha, with scores ranging from 0.79 to 0.85 across different sections, indicating very good reliability. These processes established that the instrument effectively measured perceptions of CRM effectiveness, challenges, and customer loyalty in the Metro Manila hotel context.

*Statistical Treatment of Data.* Both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to analyze the data. Frequency counts and percentages summarized demographic profiles, while weighted means measured perceptions of CRM effectiveness, satisfaction, and loyalty. Pearson's correlation tested the relationship between CRM, satisfaction, and loyalty, while t-tests and one-way ANOVA analyzed significant differences in loyalty across demographic groups. Mean scores identified challenges in CRM implementation and potential areas for improvement. This analytical approach ensured that findings were objective, data-driven, and actionable, providing meaningful insights for hotel managers, policymakers, and researchers.

## Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in enhancing hotel patron loyalty in Metro Manila, with a focus on identifying the effectiveness of CRM strategies, their influence on customer satisfaction, and the challenges and opportunities in their implementation.

### 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The results revealed that the majority of hotel patrons were between 25–44 years old, with a nearly equal gender distribution. Most respondents were college undergraduates or graduates, visiting hotels occasionally (3–5 times annually), and primarily for leisure. This demographic pattern suggests that CRM initiatives in Metro Manila hotels must be flexible enough to appeal to a diverse market that balances leisure-driven visits with business-oriented stays. Previous studies also highlighted that age and education level often influence how guests perceive and engage with hotel loyalty programs (Alsheikh et al., 2018; Jariyachamsit, 2022). The relatively young and educated patron base indicates an increased receptivity to digital CRM innovations, such as mobile apps and personalized marketing campaigns, which resonate well with tech-savvy consumers (Legaspi et al., 2023).

### 2. Perceptions of CRM Effectiveness

Respondents strongly agreed that CRM strategies—loyalty programs, personalization, and engagement initiatives—enhanced their guest experience. Moreover, technology-based CRM tools such as e-CRM systems, mobile apps, and AI chatbots were perceived positively, though some respondents suggested they could be further optimized for usability and integration. This aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), which posits that perceived ease of use and usefulness determine acceptance of technological innovations. Similar studies confirm that well-implemented e-CRM enhances service quality and customer engagement in the hospitality sector (Chaudhry & Hassan, 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2021). Thus, Metro Manila hotels should ensure continuous system improvements, not only to attract new customers but also to sustain long-term relationships through technology-driven engagement.

### 3. CRM Strategies and Their Contribution to Satisfaction and Loyalty

Among the specific CRM practices assessed, customer engagement activities, personalized services, and loyalty programs were rated as the most effective in promoting satisfaction and loyalty. Personalized services, such as customized room preferences and tailored offers, were particularly valued, reflecting the growing demand for individualized experiences in hospitality (Kim & Lee, 2019; Indra & Ervina, 2020). Respondents also emphasized that CRM efforts influenced their decision to revisit the same hotel, which is consistent with findings that high-quality CRM is strongly associated with repeat patronage and word-of-mouth referrals (Alipour et al., 2021; Patel & Singh, 2021). This demonstrates that CRM strategies, when executed consistently, are not just operational tools but strategic assets for competitive advantage (Grönroos, 1994).

#### **4. Customer Satisfaction as a Mediating Factor**

The findings further revealed that customer satisfaction plays a mediating role in the CRM–loyalty relationship. Positive experiences with CRM strategies increased both emotional loyalty (e.g., attachment to the brand) and transactional loyalty (e.g., repeat bookings), supporting the theoretical premise that satisfaction serves as a bridge between service delivery and loyalty (Oliver, 1999). Studies in both luxury and budget hotel contexts similarly confirmed that satisfaction enhances trust and relationship quality, thereby strengthening loyalty outcomes (Das & Mukherjee, 2020; Karim et al., 2024; Mokwuah et al., 2024). In Metro Manila, this implies that hotels should view satisfaction not merely as an outcome but as a strategic process for sustaining long-term loyalty. Investments in staff responsiveness, proactive communication, and guest feedback mechanisms are essential in this regard.

#### **5. Demographic Differences in Loyalty**

Interestingly, statistical analysis revealed significant differences in loyalty when respondents were grouped according to age, educational attainment, and frequency of hotel visits, but not by gender or purpose of stay. This suggests that younger, educated, and frequent guests are more sensitive to CRM initiatives, requiring tailored strategies that emphasize personalization and consistent engagement. These findings echo those of Kantha and Mishra (2020), who noted that loyalty patterns vary by guest demographics, and Walelign (2020), who emphasized segment-specific CRM approaches. For Metro Manila hotels, this underscores the need to go beyond “one-size-fits-all” loyalty programs and instead craft differentiated CRM strategies targeting high-frequency and education-driven segments, who are often the most brand-conscious and retention-prone.

#### **6. Challenges in CRM Implementation**

Despite positive perceptions, respondents highlighted several challenges, including inconsistent interactions across service channels, technical or usability issues in digital tools, inadequate staff training, and limited personalization in some programs. Budgetary constraints were also identified as barriers to effective CRM. These challenges resonate with previous research noting that CRM success depends heavily on organizational readiness, system integration, and staff capability (Rahimi & Kozak, 2020; Hansen & Solvoll, 2022). For hotels in Metro Manila, overcoming these barriers requires not only technological investment but also organizational alignment—particularly in training front-line staff to deliver consistent, guest-centered CRM experiences.

#### **7. Recommendations for CRM Improvement**

Finally, respondents recommended strengthening personalization, enhancing mobile app functionality, offering more flexible loyalty programs, and providing real-time customer support. They also emphasized the importance of comprehensive staff training to ensure consistent CRM delivery. These findings are aligned with global hospitality trends where data-driven CRM, AI integration, and enhanced personalization are increasingly seen as key to competitive differentiation (Bhatia, 2023; Li & Zhang, 2023; Wang &

Huang, 2024; Xu, 2023). For Metro Manila hotels, such improvements are particularly critical in a post-pandemic hospitality market where guest expectations are rapidly evolving and competition is intensifying.

## 8. Proposed Program: L.O.Y.A.L.T.Y.

### *Leveraging Opportunities for Yielding Affinity and Long-Term Yearning*

*Program Goal.* To strengthen guest loyalty in Metro Manila hotels through strategic, personalized, and technology-driven CRM initiatives addressing identified challenges and enhancing customer satisfaction.

#### Program Objectives

1. Improve personalization and engagement in CRM strategies to address diverse guest demographics.
2. Enhance mobile and digital CRM platforms for better accessibility, functionality, and user experience.
3. Offer flexible and value-driven loyalty programs tailored to different customer segments.
4. Strengthen real-time customer support through integrated communication channels.
5. Develop hotel staff competency in CRM service delivery through targeted training.

#### Monitoring & Evaluation

- Quarterly guest satisfaction surveys to track improvement.
- CRM performance metrics (loyalty program participation, repeat bookings, NPS score).
- Annual review to adjust program based on guest feedback and emerging trends.

#### Expected Long-Term Impact

- Stronger guest retention rates across Metro Manila hotels.
- Increased positive word-of-mouth and online ratings.
- Enhanced competitive positioning of participating hotels in both domestic and international markets.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding the role of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in enhancing loyalty among hotel patrons in Metro Manila.

First, the demographic profile of respondents indicates that Metro Manila hotels cater to a diverse clientele, predominantly in the 25–44 age range, with varied educational backgrounds and hotel visit frequencies. This diversity underscores the necessity for adaptable and segmented CRM strategies that can address the unique preferences of different customer groups.

Second, CRM strategies are perceived as effective in enhancing guest experiences, particularly those involving loyalty programs, personalized services, and post-stay engagement. The integration of technology

through e-CRM, mobile apps, and AI-powered support is generally well-received, although there remains potential for optimization to improve convenience and user satisfaction.

Third, among the CRM strategies evaluated, customer engagement activities and personalization emerge as the strongest contributors to guest satisfaction and loyalty. Hotels that actively interact with guests, respond to feedback, and remember customer preferences are more likely to foster both emotional and transactional loyalty.

Fourth, customer satisfaction plays a mediating role between CRM initiatives and loyalty. The findings confirm that when CRM strategies result in positive guest experiences, satisfaction is heightened, which in turn increases the likelihood of repeat patronage and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Fifth, significant differences in loyalty exist across certain demographic variables—specifically age, educational attainment, and frequency of hotel visits—while gender and purpose of stay do not significantly influence loyalty. This suggests that while some guest segments respond differently to CRM efforts, others demonstrate consistent loyalty patterns regardless of these demographic factors.

Sixth, challenges in CRM implementation include inconsistent service delivery across channels, technical issues with CRM platforms, limited personalization, insufficient staff training, and financial constraints. These barriers can undermine the potential benefits of CRM if not addressed strategically.

Lastly, recommendations for CRM improvement emphasize personalization, enhanced mobile and digital CRM capabilities, more flexible loyalty programs, real-time customer service responsiveness, and targeted staff training. These improvements align with global best practices and are essential for strengthening guest retention and long-term loyalty in a competitive hospitality market.

Overall, the study concludes that effective and well-targeted CRM strategies—supported by both technological tools and human engagement—are critical for cultivating strong guest loyalty in Metro Manila hotels. By addressing demographic-specific preferences, overcoming operational challenges, and implementing continuous service improvements, hotels can position themselves for sustainable growth and competitive advantage.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance Customer Relationship Management (CRM) strategies and strengthen guest loyalty among hotel patrons in Metro Manila:

1. Implement segmented and targeted CRM strategies based on demographic profiles. Since age, educational attainment, and frequency of hotel visits were found to significantly influence loyalty, hotels should develop tailored CRM initiatives for each segment. For example, younger guests may respond better to technology-driven engagement and gamified loyalty programs, while older guests may value personalized, high-touch services.

2. Enhance personalization in CRM initiatives. Hotels should leverage guest data to provide personalized recommendations, remember individual preferences, and offer custom promotions. A robust customer database integrated into CRM platforms can enable more relevant and memorable guest interactions, thereby increasing satisfaction and loyalty.
3. Strengthen digital CRM tools and mobile applications. Given the positive reception of technology-driven CRM but the noted need for improvement, hotels should optimize the functionality of mobile apps, AI chatbots, and e-CRM platforms to ensure they are user-friendly, responsive, and capable of handling guest requests in real time.
4. Develop more flexible and engaging loyalty programs. Loyalty schemes should go beyond traditional point-based systems to include tiered memberships, experiential rewards, and exclusive benefits. Flexible redemption options can also encourage more frequent participation and enhance perceived value.
5. Improve real-time customer support across CRM channels. Hotels should ensure that both digital and traditional CRM touchpoints provide quick and efficient responses to guest inquiries and concerns. Training staff to handle multi-channel communication effectively can improve service consistency and guest satisfaction.
6. Invest in comprehensive staff training for CRM excellence.  
Since insufficient staff training was identified as a challenge, hotel management should provide ongoing training in CRM systems, customer engagement techniques, and service recovery strategies. Empowered employees can deliver more consistent and impactful guest experiences.
7. Address operational and budgetary challenges in CRM implementation.  
Hotels should prioritize CRM investments that have the highest return on guest satisfaction and loyalty. Where budget constraints exist, cost-effective CRM strategies—such as social media engagement and email marketing—can still yield strong results.
8. Monitor and evaluate CRM performance continuously. Hotels should establish regular assessments of CRM strategies through guest feedback surveys, loyalty program analytics, and customer satisfaction tracking. This will enable timely adjustments and ensure that CRM efforts remain aligned with evolving guest expectations.

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