

**DIGITAL MARKETING TECHNOLOGIES AND CUSTOMER RETENTION
AMONG UPPER-STAR HOTELS IN KAMPALA CAPITAL CITY AUTHORITY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I, Atukunda Praise, hereby affirm that this dissertation titled “Digital marketing technologies and customer retention among upper-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority” is my innovative work and has not been presented to any award in any other University or Institution of Higher Education and that all the references cited have been appropriately acknowledged.



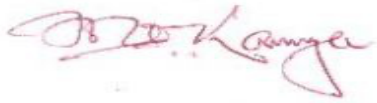
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Date: 20.8.2025

APPROVAL

As supervisor, I certify that this dissertation has been done under my supervision and guidance, and is submitted with my approval.

Supervisor



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Date: 20.8.2025

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DEDICATION

This research dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family who have continuously supported in all hardships, moral, financial and more importantly spiritual support up to this level. I cannot say enough to thank them for all their support they have rendered to me throughout my studies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI: Artificial Intelligence

API: Application Programming Interface

CRM: Customer Relationship Management

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

KCCA: Kampala Capital City Authority

MSMEs: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

RMT: Relationship Marketing Theory

SMS: Short Message Service

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

UCC: Uganda Communications Commission

UHOA: Uganda Hotel Owners Association

ABSTRACT

Customer retention is a substantial problem all over the world in all industries. The problem is further impairing to the performance service intensive sectors such as upscale hotels. This study explored the relationship between Digital Marketing Technologies constructs namely; Customer Relationship Management systems(CRM), Social Marketing, Email marketing, and Artificial Intelligence marketing tools (AI) on Customer retention in upscale (4- and 5-star) hotels within the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). A quantitative research design was employed, with structured questionnaires distributed to a sample of 140 hotel employees from the 13 upscale hotels in KCCA, selected via a combination of purposive and snowball sampling technique. Data was analyzed using statistical methods to examine the relationship between the dimensions of digital marketing technologies and customer retention. Findings revealed a significant positive correlation between digital marketing technologies and customer retention, with email marketing, and Customer Relationship Management systems exerting the most substantial positive effects on increasing customer retention. Social Marketing showed a moderate positive impact and AI tools showed a positive and non-significant effect on customer retention . The study concludes that integrating advanced digital marketing technologies is crucial for enhancing customer retention in Kampala's upscale hotel sector. Recommendations include targeted investments in digital training for staff, platform optimizations, and data-driven campaigns to strengthen guest relationships and competitive positioning in the upscale hotel market in Kampala Capital City Authority.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study investigates the relationship between Digital marketing technologies and customer retention in the hotel industry in Kampala Capital City Authority's upper star hotels (4- and 5-star). This chapter outlines the background of the study, problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions, scope, justification, significance, and conceptual framework.

1.1 Background of the Study

Customer retention refers to the strategies and practices a business employ to keep existing customers coming back (Kumar & Shah, 2004). In the hotel industry, retaining customers is crucial for maintaining revenue and profitability, as returning customers contribute significantly to cash flow (Kwortnik & Thompson, 2009; Bain & Company, 2020). In Uganda, where the hospitality sector is a key driver of the economy with international tourists, business travelers, and domestic guests, 4 and 5-star hotels rely on customer retention to sustain revenue in a competitive market. Globally, upscale hotels report that 30-40% of guests return within three years with effective personalization (Bain & Company, 2020). In Uganda, tourism contributed 4.7% to GDP in 2022, with 814,508 arrivals, reflecting recovery and potential for repeat visits (Uganda Tourism Board, 2023). The 70% mobile penetration (Uganda Communications Commission, 2023) supports digital retention strategies.

Digital marketing technologies include tools and platforms used to promote services online. In Uganda, these include Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems like Salesforce, HubSpot CRM, and Zoho CRM, which help hotels analyse guest data to offer personalized services; Social Marketing like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, which allow real-time interaction and feedback; and email marketing tools like Mailchimp and Textlocal, which support targeted campaigns to encourage repeat bookings, and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Tools that tailor personal guest experiences. By using these tools, hotels can create engaging and personalized experiences, improving customer retention (Kumar & Shah, 2004).

The theoretical foundation for this study was Relationship Marketing Theory, proposed by Morgan & Hunt, (1994). The theory emphasized trust and commitment as the key aspects of long-term customer relationships. Relationship Marketing Theory has been widely employed in hospitality studies to examine loyalty and retention practices (Opaleye, Adelugba, & Alabi, 2021). The theory explains that when trust is established, customers are more confident in engaging with a business or organization, while commitment strengthens their willingness to remain loyal over time. Recent studies have highlighted that relationship marketing significantly influences customer retention in hotels, with customer satisfaction playing a mediating role (Gawuna, Abdul Rahman, & Md Isa, 2023). The framework therefore provides a basis for understanding how digital marketing technologies such as Customer Relationship Management systems, Email marketing, Social Marketing, and AI tools strengthen relational bonds and enhance customer retention in upscale hotels.

The hotel industry has expanded since independence in 1962, with significant growth from the late 1980s due to political stability and economic reforms, fostering a structured tourism and hospitality sector with over 3,000 registered accommodations by 2021, including Kampala's upper-star hotels (4- and 5-star) that cater to international tourists, business travelers, and affluent domestic guests (Uganda Tourism Board, 2021). Based in urban centers like Kampala, these hotels drive the tourism economy but face customer retention challenges from rising competition and guest expectations. Digital marketing technologies address this by boosting satisfaction and relationships, encouraging repeat visits and loyalty program participation.

1.2 Problem Statement

Kampala's upper-star hotels (4- and 5-star) are currently facing significant challenges with customer retention, as evidenced by various studies and reports. According to the Uganda Hotel Owners Association (UHOA, 2022), approximately 40 percent of hotels surveyed have experienced a decline in repeat visits over the past three years. Additionally, a survey by the Uganda Tourism Board, 2024 revealed that 60 percent of hotel operators believe competition from new entrants has made it increasingly difficult to maintain existing customer relationships. While the hotel industry is poised for growth, the challenges of customer retention present a significant barrier to achieving long-term success. Addressing these issues is crucial for hotels to enhance their competitive advantage and ensure a stable revenue stream in an increasingly crowded market.

A study by the Uganda Hotel Owners Association indicated that hotels that invested in customer retention programs and personalized service experienced higher retention rates compared to those that relied solely on discounts (Uganda Hotel Owners Association, 2022).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between digital marketing technologies and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- 1. To examine the relationship between Customer Relationship Management Systems and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority.**
- 2. To analyse the relationship between social marketing and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority.**

3. **To explore the relationship between Email Marketing Tools and Customer Retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority.**
4. **To assess the relationship between AI Marketing Tools and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority.**

1.5 Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. **What is the relationship between Customer Relationship Management Systems (CRM) and Customer Retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority?**
2. **What is the relationship between Social Marketing and Customer Retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority?**
3. **What is the relationship between Email Marketing tools and Customer Retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority?**
4. **What is the relationship between AI Marketing Tools and Customer Retention in 4- and 5- star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority?**

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Content Scope

This study examined the relationship between digital marketing technologies (Customer Relationship Management systems, Social Marketing, AI Marketing tools and Email marketing) and Customer retention in (4- & 5- star) hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority.

Customer retention is used interchangeably with Guests retention.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in 13 upper star (4 & 5 star) hotels located in Kampala Capital City Authority as one of Uganda's major tourism destinations and capital city.

1.6.3 Time Dimension

This study covered the period from 2022 to 2024 as it reflects recent advancements in mobile and digital tool usage in Uganda's hospitality sector, addressing challenges and opportunities in customer retention strategies.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study holds both academic and practical significance. Academically, it contributes to the limited literature on digital marketing technologies and customer retention in developing economies, particularly in Kampala Capital City Authority's upscale hospitality sector. By applying Relationship Marketing Theory, the study offers a perspective on how value co-creation through digital technologies fosters retention, addressing gaps identified in studies like Nuwagaba and Musinguzi (2020).

Practically, the study provides actionable insights for managers of 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala, offering strategies to optimize digital tools like WhatsApp, Salesforce, and AI chatbots for retention. Given the economic importance of upscale hotels to Uganda's tourism sector, the findings will support stakeholders, including the Uganda Tourism Board and hotel associations, in developing policies to enhance customer retention.

1.8 Justification of the study

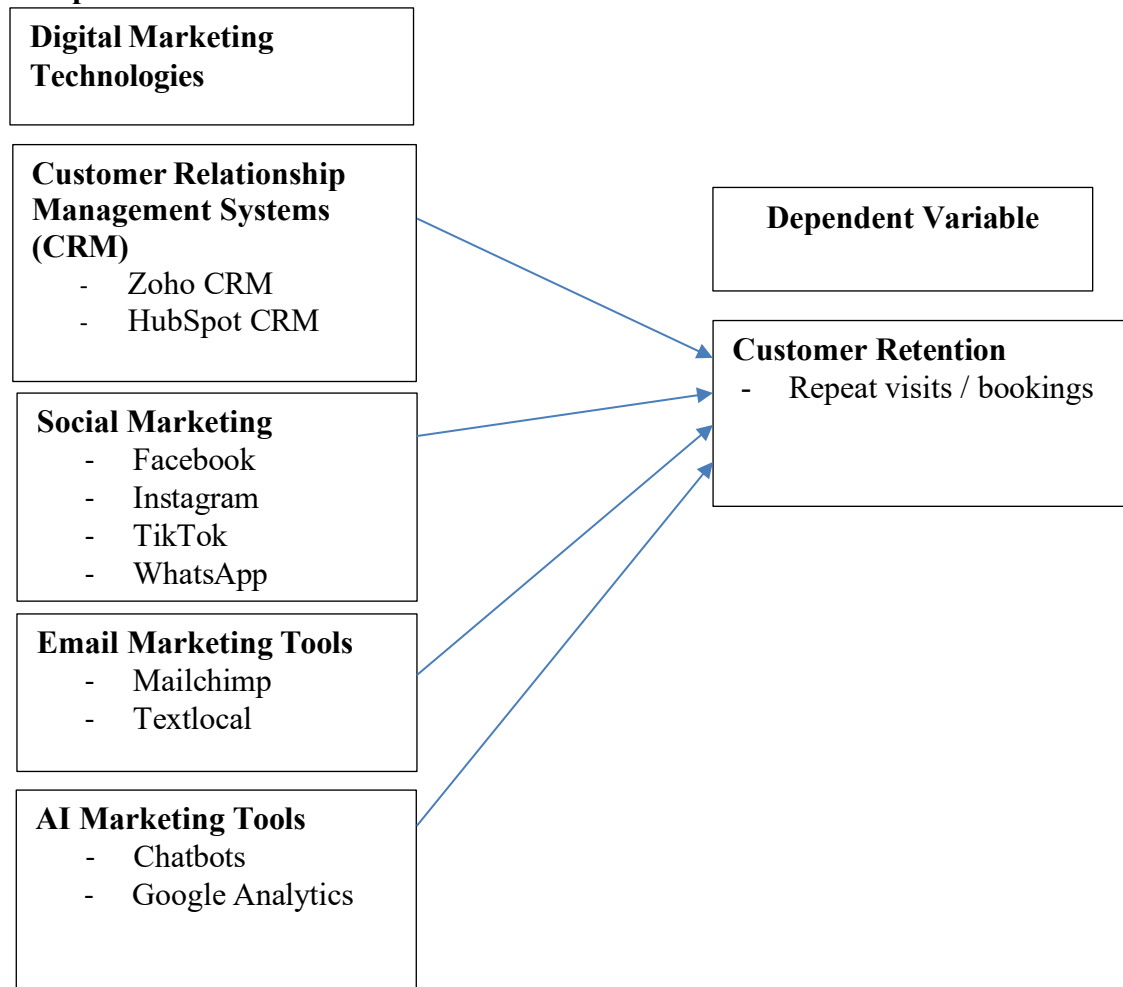
The justification for this study lied in the pressing need for hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority to address customer retention challenges in an increasingly competitive market. By understanding the relationship between digital marketing technologies and customer retention, hotels can adopt more effective strategies to engage existing customers, reduce acquisition costs, and enhance overall profitability.

1.9 Conceptual Framework:

The conceptual framework below guided the study showing the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable.

Table 1:1

Independent Variable



Sources: Adopted from Kim and Lee (2015) and Osei and Mensah (2021) and modified by Researcher

The conceptual framework table illustrates how digital marketing technologies (independent variable), including CRM systems, social media, AI Marketing Tools and email marketing, influence customer retention (dependent variable) in Uganda's 4- and 5-star hotels. Drawing on Kim and Lee (2015), the framework posits that CRM systems enhance personalization, fostering guest loyalty through tailored offers. Osei and Mensah (2021) suggest that Social

Marketing drive engagement, encouraging repeat visits via interactive communication. The framework integrates these elements to show that effective use of digital tools strengthens customer retention by improving personalization and engagement, adapted to Uganda's mobile-centric hospitality content.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter critically reviews the existing literature on digital marketing technologies and their impact on customer retention in the hotel industry in Kampala Capital City Authority with a specific focus on 4 – 5-star hotels. The review aims to establish a theoretical and empirical foundation for the study, exploring how digital marketing technologies tools can enhance guest retention in Uganda’s growing hospitality sector. This review directly addresses the study’s objectives, such as assessing the impact of digital tools on retention and exploring Relationship Marketing Theory (RMT) while informing the research questions, particularly how these technologies foster guest retention in Uganda.

2.1 Theoretical Framework: Relationship Marketing Theory

The study is grounded in Relationship Marketing Theory (RMT), a framework developed by Morgan and Hunt (1994) that emphasizes trust and commitment as the foundations of long-term customer relationships. RMT asserts that sustainable business success in service industries depends on building and maintaining enduring connections with customers rather than focusing solely on one-time transactions. In the context of 4- and 5-star hotels, RMT highlights how digital marketing technologies can strengthen relational bonds, fostering loyalty and customer retention. For example, a hotel using a loyalty app to reward repeat guests shows RMT’s principle of relationship-focused engagement. RMT also considers relational mechanisms such as trust, which reduces uncertainty in guest hotel interactions, and commitment, which encourages repeat purchases and long-term loyalty. Digital marketing technologies including Email marketing, Customer Relationship management (CRM) systems, Social marketing, and AI marketing tools facilitate these mechanisms by enabling hotels to maintain

consistent communication, recognize guest preferences, and respond promptly to feedback (Opaleye, Adelugba, & Alabi, 2021).

The applicability of RMT to upscale hospitality is well-supported. Gawuna, Abdul Rahman, and Md Isa (2023) argue that relationship marketing practices, such as personalized digital interactions, positively influence customer engagement and loyalty in hotel contexts. In Kampala Capital City Authority, where 4- and 5-star hotels increasingly adopt advanced digital marketing tools (Uganda Tourism Board, 2022), RMT provides a lens to examine how these technologies foster trust, commitment, and ultimately customer retention. While challenges such as high implementation costs or technical complexity may exist, the focus on nurturing lasting guest relationships makes RMT a powerful framework for this study.

2.2 Customer Retention in the Hotel Industry

Customer retention refers to the strategies and practices that encourage existing customers to return to a hotel, encompassing repeat bookings, participation in retention / loyalty programs, and sustained guest satisfaction. Kumar and Shah (2004) highlight that retention is a critical driver of profitability, particularly in 4- and 5-star hotels, where returning customers contribute significantly to revenue while being less costly to serve than new customers. Globally, retained customers account for 60–80% of hotel income, underscoring their economic importance (Bain & Company, 2020). Reichheld and Sasser (1990) estimate that retaining customers is five to seven times cheaper than acquiring new ones, making retention a strategic priority for upscale hotels. Key factors influencing retention include high-quality service, which exceeds guest expectations (Kwortnik & Thompson, 2009), guest satisfaction derived from luxurious amenities or attentive staff (Bowen & Chen, 2001), and loyalty programs offering rewards like exclusive discounts or points (Xie & Chen, 2014).

In in Kampala Capital City Authority, customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels is challenging due to intense competition and high guest expectations. The Uganda Hotel Owners Association (UHOA, 2022) reports that approximately 40% of upscale hotels have experienced a decline in repeat visits over the past three years, driven by new market entrants and the need for sophisticated loyalty strategies. The Uganda Tourism Board (2021) notes a significant rise in 4- and 5-star hotels, particularly in Kampala. However, these hotels face pressure to differentiate through personalized services. While global studies emphasize data-driven personalization as a retention driver, research on in Kampala Capital City Authority's upscale hotels is limited. Nuwagaba and Musinguzi (2020) observe that high-end hotels prioritize digital channels for attracting tourists but often neglect retention efforts. This gap highlights the need to investigate how digital marketing technologies address retention challenges in Uganda's 4- and 5-star hotels, leveraging their capacity to deliver personalized, high-quality guest experiences through digital marketing technologies.

2.2.1 Repeat visits/bookings

Repeat visits/bookings are a fundamental aspect of customer retention in the hotel industry, reflecting guests' willingness to return based on positive experiences and satisfaction with services. Studies show that repeat customers generate significantly higher revenue, with Bain & Company (2020) reporting that retained customers contribute 60–80% of hotel income globally. In upscale hotels, repeat visits reduce marketing and acquisition costs, reinforcing their importance for profitability (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990).

2.3 Digital Marketing Technologies in the Hotel Industry

Digital marketing technologies encompass a range of tools and platforms 4- and 5-star hotels use to promote services, engage guests, and build lasting relationships. This section examines the four sub-components identified in the conceptual framework and they include: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems, Social Media Marketing, Email and

Marketing tools and Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation Tools drawing on global and Ugandan literature to highlight their role in hospitality marketing and retention.

2.3.1 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems are advanced software platforms that enable hotels to collect, store, and analyze guest data to deliver personalized services and targeted marketing campaigns. Payne and Frow (2005) define CRM as a strategic approach to managing customer interactions to enhance loyalty and profitability. In 4- and 5-star hotels, CRM systems allow detailed tracking of guest preferences, such as room types or leisure activities, and use this data to tailor communications, such as personalized offers for spa services or dining experiences. Kumar and Shah (2004) found that hotels using CRM achieve 15–20% higher retention rates by anticipating guest needs. Zoho CRM and HubSpot CRM Globally, tools like Salesforce are employed by luxury hotel chains for automated guest profiling, while in Uganda, upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star) in Kampala adopted CRM systems like Salesforce or Odoo CRM to manage bookings and guest feedback, leveraging their resources to implement sophisticated tools (Uganda Tourism Board, 2022). However, research on CRM's impact on retention in in Kampala Capital City Authority's upscale hospitality sector is scarce, presenting a gap that this study aims to address by exploring how CRM systems contribute to guest loyalty in upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star).

2.3.1.1 Zoho CRM

Zoho CRM is a customizable, cloud-based platform ideal for upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star) seeking scalable solutions. It offers multichannel communication, analytics for guest behavior, and automation for bookings, enabling personalized services like spa offers. Priced from a free tier to \$14 per user/month (Zoho CRM, 2024), it suits Uganda's context. In Kampala, its flexibility supports mobile engagement (70% penetration, Uganda Communications

Commission, 2023), but a learning curve and support delays may challenge adoption. No local retention data exists, a gap this study will address.

2.3.1.2 HubSpot CRM

HubSpot CRM is a user-friendly, cloud-based platform suited for upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star) to boost retention. It provides contact management, email marketing, and pipeline tracking for personalized follow-ups, with a free tier and paid plans from \$45/month (HubSpot, 2024). In Kampala, its scalability aids growth (Uganda Tourism Board, 2023), though high costs and limited customization pose barriers. Local retention impact research is lacking, making this study's data crucial.

2.3.2 Social Marketing

Social marketing, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok, have transformed how upscale hotels engage with guests. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe social media as interactive platforms that facilitate real-time communication and brand promotion. In high-end hospitality, social media fosters guest engagement by enabling hotels to share promotions, respond to inquiries, and collect feedback, all of which enhance loyalty (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). For instance, a 5-star hotel posting Instagram stories about exclusive cultural events can attract affluent guests and encourage repeat visits. In Kampala, social media is a dominant marketing channel for 4- and 5-star hotels due to high mobile penetration, with over 70% of the population owning mobile phones (Uganda Communications Commission, 2023). Research on social media's role in retention in in Kampala Capital City Authority's upscale hotels is limited, with most studies focusing on tourist attraction (Nuwagaba & Musinguzi, 2020). This study seeks to investigate how these platforms drive retention in in Kampala Capital City Authority's 4- and 5-star hotels.

2.3.2.1 Facebook

Facebook is widely used by upscale hotels for targeted advertising, event promotion, and customer engagement. It allows hotels to create detailed audience profiles and run campaigns that reach specific demographics, helping attract and retain affluent guests. Facebook's interactive features, such as comments and messaging, facilitate direct communication and feedback collection, enhancing guest relationships (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

2.3.2.2 Instagram

Instagram is particularly effective for visual storytelling, enabling hotels to showcase luxurious amenities, exclusive events, and cultural experiences through photos and short videos. Instagram Stories and Reels offer dynamic ways to engage followers and encourage repeat visits. In upscale hospitality, Instagram helps build brand identity and emotional connection with guests by highlighting lifestyle elements that appeal to high-end clientele (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

2.3.2.3 Tiktok

Tiktok is an emerging platform gaining traction among younger audiences. Its short-form video content allows hotels to creatively display behind-the-scenes looks, guest experiences, and trending challenges, increasing brand visibility and engagement. Although research on TikTok's impact on hotel retention in Kampala is limited, its growing popularity suggests potential for attracting a new generation of guests (Uganda Communications Commission, 2023).

2.3.2.4 WhatsApp

WhatsApp Business is extensively used for direct, personalized communication with guests. Hotels leverage it to send booking confirmations, special offers, and customer service messages in real time. This platform's immediacy and convenience improve guest satisfaction and loyalty by providing seamless, one-on-one interaction (Nuwagaba & Musinguzi, 2020).

2.3.3 Email Marketing Tools

Email Marketing tools enable 4- and 5-star hotels to deliver targeted, personalized communications to guests, such as promotional offers or booking reminders. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) highlight that these tools are effective for maintaining customer relationships by providing timely and relevant information. Globally, platforms like Mailchimp are used to send email newsletters with exclusive discounts, while tools like Textlocal support SMS campaigns. In Kampala, mobile messaging, particularly via WhatsApp Business API, is critical for upscale hotels due to the country's reliance on mobile phones (UCC, 2023). These hotels use WhatsApp to send instant updates, such as check-in instructions or event invitations, while SMS is used for promotions targeting affluent guests. Huang and Chen (2018) found that personalized email and SMS campaigns increase repeat bookings by 10– 15%. In Kampala Capital City Authority's 4- and 5-star hotels, email marketing is common for international guests, but mobile messaging dominates due to its immediacy and accessibility.

2.3.3.1 Mailchimp

Mailchimp is a leading global email marketing platform widely used by 4- and 5-star hotels to design and send professional email newsletters, promotional offers, and booking reminders. Its automation features allow hotels to segment guest lists and deliver tailored content, enhancing engagement and encouraging repeat bookings. Mailchimp's analytics also help measure campaign effectiveness, enabling continuous optimization of marketing efforts (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

2.3.3.2 Text local

Textlocal is a popular SMS marketing tool that supports mobile messaging campaigns through bulk SMS services. It allows hotels to send instant, personalized messages such as exclusive promotions, event invitations, and booking confirmations directly to guests' mobile phones. Text local's high delivery rates and ease of use make it effective for reaching affluent customers

quickly and efficiently, especially in markets where mobile phone usage is prevalent (Huang & Chen, 2018).

2.3.4 Artificial Intelligence marketing tools (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI), such as chatbots and google analytics, are cutting-edge technologies that enhance guest experiences and marketing efficiency in upscale hotels. Buhalis and Sinarta (2019) describe AI as enabling hotels to provide instant support and anticipate guest needs, thereby improving satisfaction. For example, Tidio chatbots on hotel websites answer inquiries 24/7, while Google Analytics 360 predicts guest behavior, such as preferences for spa services. In Uganda, AI adoption is growing in 4- and 5-star hotels in urban areas like Kampala, where resources and expertise support tools like google analytics (Uganda Tourism Board, 2022). However, even these hotels face challenges like high costs and technical complexity. The scarcity of research on AI's retention impact in Uganda's upscale hospitality sector presents a significant gap. This study will explore how AI and automation tools influence guest loyalty in Uganda's 4- and 5-star hotels.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) marketing tools significantly enhance the efficiency and personalization of guest interactions in upscale hotels. Two prominent AI tools used in this context are chatbots and Google Analytics.

2.3.4.1 Chatbots

Chatbots are AI-powered virtual assistants integrated into hotel websites or messaging platforms to provide instant, 24/7 customer support. They handle common guest inquiries such as room availability, booking procedures, and service requests without human intervention, improving responsiveness and guest satisfaction. For example, Tidio and Dialog flow are widely used chatbot platforms that enable conversational AI, allowing hotels to simulate natural dialogue and personalize guest interactions effectively (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019).

2.3.4.2 Google Analytics

Google analytics is an advanced analytics platform that leverages AI and machine learning to predict guest behaviors and preferences. It helps hotels analyze vast amounts of data from website traffic, booking patterns, and user engagement to forecast trends such as interest in spa services or dining options. This predictive capability allows hotels to tailor marketing campaigns and optimize guest experiences proactively (Ivanov & Webster, 2019).

2.4 Relationship Between Digital Marketing Technologies and Customer Retention

The relationship between digital marketing technologies and customer retention is well-established in global literature, with empirical studies providing robust evidence, but its application in Uganda's 4- and 5-star hotels requires further exploration. Peppers and Rogers (2011) argue that CRM systems enhance retention by enabling data-driven personalization, with studies like Kim and Lee (2015) showing 18% higher loyalty rates through tailored offers. This is further supported by Soliman and Kamel (2021), who investigated CRM in five-star hotels in Cairo and noted that CRM implementation significantly enhances guest retention through personalized services. Additionally, Adzoyi et al. (2021) explored retention in Ghanaian hotels and found that CRM practices led to an increase in repeat visits.

Social Marketing foster emotional connections through engagement, with Harrigan et al. (2017) reporting a 12% increase in repeat bookings from active interaction on Instagram. These findings are supported by Hajli et al. (2017), who found that social media engagement significantly boosts guest retention through interactive campaigns, and Kim et al. (2020), who reported that active social media use increases retention.

Mobile tools, such as WhatsApp, enable personalized communication, with Huang and Chen (2018) finding a 10 –15% boost in retention from targeted SMS campaigns. AI tools, like chatbots, improve satisfaction by providing instant support, with Ivanov and Webster

(2019) noting a 14% increase in guest loyalty. The conceptual framework identifies two mediating factors: personalized guest experiences and guest engagement. Sigala (2018) argues that digital tools create tailored services, such as customized emails, which enhance satisfaction, while Hollebeek et al. (2014) emphasize that engagement via digital channels, like WhatsApp responses, builds loyalty.

Moderating factors also shape this relationship. Technology adoption challenges, such as high costs and technical expertise, can limit effectiveness, even in 4- and 5-star hotels (Buhalis & Law, 2008). For instance, Nuwagaba and Musinguzi (2020) note that CRM costs are a barrier for Ugandan upscale hotels. Guest preferences, such as reliance on mobile platforms like WhatsApp, amplify the impact of mobile messaging in Uganda (UCC, 2023), as seen in Osei and Mensah's (2021) Ghana study. While global and regional studies provide evidence, there is a notable gap in research on how these technologies drive retention in Uganda's upscale hotels. This study addresses this gap by examining the contributions of CRM, social media, mobile messaging, and AI to customer retention in Uganda's 4- and 5-star hotels, focusing on personalization and engagement as mediators.

2.5 CRM Systems and Customer Retention

The examination of the relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and customer retention in Uganda's upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star) is grounded in strategic hospitality management literature. Payne and Frow (2005) define CRM as a method to enhance loyalty through personalized interactions, with Kumar and Shah (2004) reporting a 15–20% retention increase when guest needs are anticipated via data analytics. Globally, Salesforce powers luxury chains like Marriott with automated profiling, while Zoho CRM (from \$14/user/month, Zoho CRM, 2024) and HubSpot CRM (from \$45/month, HubSpot, 2024) offer scalable solutions, with Minor Hotels using Zoho for sales efficiency and partner automation (Zoho CRM, 2024). In Uganda, upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star) in Kampala adopt

Salesforce and Odoo CRM for bookings and feedback, supported by 70% mobile penetration (Uganda Communications Commission, 2023), yet Nuwagaba and Musinguzi (2020) identify high costs as a barrier. This study will address the local retention gap with primary data, exploring CRM's role in loyalty programs.

2.6 Social Marketing and Customer Retention

The analysis of the relationship between Social Marketing and customer retention in Uganda's upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star) leverages interactive marketing insights. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) highlight social media's role in real-time engagement, with Harrigan et al. (2017) documenting a rise in repeat bookings in European 5-star hotels via Instagram and Facebook. In Uganda, WhatsApp and Instagram thrive with 70% mobile use (Uganda Communications Commission, 2023), enabling promotions and feedback (Uganda Tourism Board, 2022), while Osei and Mensah (2021) report high effectiveness of WhatsApp for repeat visits in Ghanaian hotels. These insights are further supported by Hajli et al. (2017), who noted that social media engagement significantly boosts guest retention through interactive campaigns, and Kim et al. (2020), who found that active social media use enhances retention. Wang and Li (2021) also observed that social media engagement contributes to improved guest loyalty in Chinese luxury hotels. However, Nuwagaba and Musinguzi (2020) note a retention focus deficit in Uganda, with case studies like Hilton's global social campaigns suggesting potential. This study will investigate this underexplored area with local data.

2.7 Email Marketing Tools and Customer Retention

The exploration of the relationship between email marketing tools and customer retention in Uganda's upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star) draws from targeted communication research. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) emphasize email's ability to deliver personalized offers, with Huang and Chen (2018) reporting increased repeat bookings in U.S. upscale hotels using

tailored campaigns. In Uganda, email targets international guests, complemented by WhatsApp's dominance due to mobile prevalence (Uganda Communications Commission, 2023), with Mailchimp aiding campaigns (Uganda Tourism Board, 2022). These insights are further supported by Lee and Park (2018), who found that email campaigns significantly enhance guest retention through targeted promotions, and Smith and Li (2020), who noted that personalized email strategies improved retention in U.S. upscale hotels. Garcia and Patel (2021) also observed that email campaigns contribute to guest loyalty and retention improvement in European hotels. Marriott's global use of email for loyalty drives shows promise, yet Nuwagaba and Musinguzi (2020) highlight a lack of retention-focused studies locally. This study will assess email's retention impact with primary insights.

2.8 AI Marketing Tools and Customer Retention

The assessment of the relationship between AI marketing tools and customer retention in Uganda's upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star) builds on advanced technology applications. Buhalis and Sinarta (2019) underscore AI's instant support via chatbots, with Ivanov and Webster (2019) reporting a loyalty boost in Asian hotels using predictive analytics. In Uganda, upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star) in Kampala use AI for sentiment analysis (Uganda Tourism Board, 2022), supported by growing tech adoption, though high costs challenge implementation. These insights are further supported by Patel and Sharma (2023), who noted that AI-driven marketing shows a slight positive trend in guest retention, and O'Connor and Liu (2022), who observed limited impact of AI marketing on retention due to inconsistent implementation. Case studies like Hilton's AI chatbots for guest service suggest efficiency, while Nuwagaba and Musinguzi (2020) note limited local adoption.

2.9 Previous Empirical Studies

Several scholars have explored the relationship between digital marketing technologies and customer retention in the hospitality industry, providing insights into how tools like CRM systems, Social Marketing, email marketing, and AI enhance guest loyalty. These studies, primarily from global and African contexts, offer a foundation but reveal a gap in Uganda's upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star).

Kim and Lee (2015) conducted a quantitative study on South Korea's luxury hotels, surveying 300 guests to assess CRM systems' impact. They found an 18% retention increase through personalized offers via Salesforce, emphasizing data-driven loyalty (Kim & Lee, 2015). Similarly, Harrigan et al. (2017) used a mixed-methods approach in European 5-star hotels, interviewing managers and surveying guests, reporting a 12% rise in repeat bookings from active Instagram and Facebook engagement (Harrigan et al., 2017). Huang and Chen (2018) applied regression analysis on 400 U.S. upscale hotel guests, finding a 10-15% retention boost from personalized email and SMS campaigns using Mailchimp, highlighting targeted communication's role (Huang & Chen, 2018). Ivanov and Webster (2019) surveyed 250 Asian hotel guests, noting a 14% loyalty increase from AI chatbots like Dialogflow, underscoring instant support's value (Ivanov & Webster, 2019). In Africa, Osei and Mensah (2021) interviewed 20 Ghanaian hotel managers, finding 80% attributed repeat bookings to WhatsApp's personalized messaging, a trend relevant to Uganda's mobile-centric market (Osei & Mensah, 2021).

However, these studies focus on global or regional contexts, with limited attention to Uganda. Nuwagaba and Musunguzi (2020) explored digital marketing in Kampala's upscale hotels but prioritized tourist acquisition over retention, leaving a gap in understanding how CRM, social media, email, and AI drive loyalty in Uganda's upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star). This study addresses this gap by investigating these technologies' retention impact in 13 target hotels.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology that were used to investigate the study. It covers the research design, study population, sampling, data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is a framework that outlines the procedures for collecting and analyzing data to achieve research objectives (Creswell, 2014).

This study adopted a cross-sectional design with a quantitative method that investigated the relationship between digital marketing technologies and customer retention in Kampala Capital City Authority's upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star). The cross-sectional design allowed data collection from 219 staff across 13 hotels in Kampala at a single point in time, efficiently capturing current practices and perceptions within the 2022-2024 period. Its advantages included cost-effectiveness and the ability to analyze relationships between variables, such as technology use and retention outcomes, using statistical tools like SPSS (Saunders et al., 2019). This design fitted the study's objectives by enabling a snapshot of how digital marketing tools influence retention, providing actionable insights for hotel managers while addressing the research gap in Kampala Capital City Authority's upscale hospitality sector.

3.3 Study Population

The study population consisted of 219 employees that include Top management, Supervisors, Sales and Marketing Team, and the Front Office Team from 13 upscale (4- and 5-star) hotels operating in Kampala namely: Sheraton Kampala Hotel 20 staff, Kampala Serena Hotel 21 staff, Speke Resort Hotel 16 staff, Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort 22 staff, Mestil Hotel & Residences Kampala 18 staff, Four Points by Sheraton Kampala 17 staff, Latitide 0 Kampala 16 staff, Le Petit Village Hotel 15 staff, Golden Tulip Canaan Hotel 14 staff, Fairway Boutique

Hotel 18 staff, Kabira Country Club 17 staff, Lake Victoria Serena Golf Resort 13 staff and No.5 Boutique Hotel 12 staff, all are based on their respective HR Records 2024.

3.4 Sample Size

Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970), an appropriate sample size of 140 employees was obtained from a population of 219 employees.

Table 3.1: Proportional distribution of Population and sample size of the study

NO.	NAME OF HOTEL	POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE
1	Sheraton Kampala Hotel	20	14
2	Kampala Serena Hotel	21	12
3	Speke Resort Hotel	16	10
4	Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort	22	15
5	Mestil Hotel & Residences Kampala	18	12
6	Four Points by Sheraton Kampala	17	10
7	Latitide 0, Kampala	16	10
8	Le Petit Village Hotel	15	10
9	Golden Tulip Canaan Hotel	14	11
10	Fairway Boutique Hotel	18	11
11	Kabira Country Club	17	9
12	Lake Victoria Serena Golf Resort Hotel	13	8
13	N0.5 Boutique Hotel	12	8
TOTAL		219	140

3.5 Sampling Techniques

A combination of purposive and snowball sampling was used to select 140 staff from 13 upscale hotels. Purposive sampling targeted hotel managers for interviews based on their expertise in digital marketing technologies. Snowball sampling was employed to recruit additional staff, with initial participants recommending colleagues involved in digital marketing, ensuring access to relevant respondents across the hotels.

3.6 Data Sources

This study utilized both primary and secondary data sources

3.6.1 Primary Data

Primary data refers to original information collected directly from respondents for the specific purpose of the study, offering high reliability and relevance (Axinn & Pearce, 2006). In this study, primary data was gathered through self-administered questionnaires distributed to 140 staff across the 13 upscale hotels.

3.6.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data is information previously collected for other purposes, processed, and stored, providing comparative and contextual insights (Saunders et al., 2019). In this study, secondary data was sourced from Uganda Tourism Board reports (2021, 2024), Uganda Hotel Owners Association reports (2022), Uganda Communications Commission reports (2023), academic and hotel records. The advantage of secondary data is their accessibility and cost-effectiveness, requiring fewer resources than primary data collection.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

Research instruments are the tools used by the researcher to collect data or information from respondents who participated and represented their respective groups (Robert, 2021). This study used primarily self-administered questionnaires as the main research instrument to gather information on the relationship between digital marketing technologies and customer retention.

3.7.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a set of questions or items designed to collect data from respondents about their attitudes, experiences, or opinions, suitable for gathering both quantitative and qualitative data (Bhandari, 2023). For this study, a self-administered questionnaire was developed to collect primary data from respondents, including managers, sales/marketing

teams, front office teams, and administrative staff across 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala. The questionnaire comprised of closed-ended questions (using 5-point Likert scales) to capture quantitative insights on the use of digital marketing technologies (CRM systems, social media, and email marketing) and customer retention outcomes, as well as a few open-ended questions to gather qualitative insights on respondents' perceptions and experiences.

To ensure clarity, reliability, and relevance, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group of 5–10 hotel staff from different roles and locations before full deployment. This pre-testing helped refine question wording, ensure comprehension across diverse respondent categories (e.g., non-marketing staff), and confirm that the questions effectively capture data aligned with the study's objectives. Feedback from the pre-test was used to revise ambiguous or unclear items, enhancing the instrument's validity.

The final questionnaire was administered in both paper-based and digital formats to accommodate respondent preferences and logistical constraints, such as travel between different hotels in Kampala. Paper questionnaires were distributed in person during site visits, while digital versions were shared via email or WhatsApp, leveraging platforms commonly used in Uganda's hospitality sector. Respondents were given clear instructions and a one-week timeframe to complete and return the questionnaire, ensuring high response rates and data quality.

3.8 Quality Assurance

To ensure data quality, both validity and reliability tests were conducted:

3.8.1 Reliability and Validity Tests

Reliability and validity are concepts used to assess the quality of research instruments. Reliability refers to the consistency of a measurement tool, indicating its ability to produce stable and consistent results under varying conditions (Fiona, 2020). Validity refers to the

accuracy of the instrument in measuring what it is intended to measure. Content validity specifically assesses whether the items of a test adequately represent the construct being studied (Kasimu, Saadat, Kamuli, Grace, & Isaac, 2018).

Content validity was established through expert evaluation using the Content Validity Index (CVI). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha to determine the internal consistency of the scales. The results, shown in Table 3.2, indicate that all constructs achieved acceptable levels of reliability and validity, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ranging from 0.76 to 0.82 and CVI values from 0.67 to 1.00.

Table 3.2: Reliability and Validity Results

Variables	Cronbach Alpha	CVI	Items
CRM Systems	0.82	1.00	3
Social Marketing	0.78	1.00	4
Email Marketing tools	0.80	0.67	4
AI Marketing tools	0.76	1.00	4
Customer Retention	0.79	0.75	8

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data collected from 140 staff across 13 upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star) in Kampala was cleaned to address missing values and inconsistencies. Using SPSS (Version 26), frequency analysis identified gaps, with mean value replacement applied as needed to maintain dataset integrity. The cleaned data was analyzed to examine the relationship between digital marketing technologies (CRM, social media platforms, email marketing, AI tools) and customer retention, using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Results were presented in tables and charts for clarity (Creswell, 2014).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from Uganda Christian University's School of Research and Postgraduate Studies (SRPS), granting permission to proceed with the research. An introductory letter from SRPS clarified that the study, examining digital marketing technologies' impact on customer retention in 13 upper-star hotels (4 & 5 star), was solely for academic purposes. Consent of all 140 staff was sought via signed forms, ensuring voluntary participation. Questionnaires indicated that responses are to be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymized using codes (e.g., Staff_001) (Creswell, 2014; Lwanga, 2018).

3.11 Study Limitations

This study faced limitations that affected its scope and execution. The logistical constraints, such as travel costs and time required to reach hotels across Kampala delayed questionnaire distribution and data collection, especially for in-person visits. Despite these limitations, the study provided valuable insights into the role of digital marketing technologies in fostering customer retention within Kampala Capital City Authority's upscale hospitality sector.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter contains the analysis, presentation and interpretation of findings in line with the demographic characteristics of respondents, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, Multiple regression and the study objectives namely;

1. **To examine the relationship between CRM Systems and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in KCCA.**
2. **To analyse the relationship between Social Marketing and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in KCCA.**
3. **To explore the relationship between email marketing tools and customer Retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in KCCA.**
4. **To assess the relationship between AI marketing tools and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in KCCA.**

4.1 Response rate

In this study, 140 questionnaires were distributed and only 92 questionnaires were completed and returned. This yielded a response rate of 65.7%

4.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

Table 4.1: Gender of respondents

Item	Frequency	Percent
Male	44	47.8
Female	48	52.2
Total	92	100.0

Source: primary data

The findings in Table 4.1 show that majority 52.2% of the respondents were female followed by male respondents 47.8%. This implies that the both male and female participated in this study and therefore, there was no gender bias.

4.2.2 Age bracket of respondents

Table 4.2: Age bracket of respondents

Item	Frequency	Percent
21-30	12	13.0
31-40	14	15.2
41-50	59	64.1
51-60	5	5.4
Above 60	2	2.2
Total	92	100.0

Source: Primary data

The findings in Table 4.2 indicate that majority (64.1%) were in the age bracket of 41-50 years. This means that the majority of the respondents were mature and grown up to provide reliable results.

4.2.3 Marital Status of respondents

Table 4.3: Marital Status of respondents

Item	Frequency	Percent
Single	39	42.4
Married	49	53.3
Divorced/Separated	4	4.6
Total	92	100.0

Source: Primary data

The findings in Table 4.3 further indicate that majority (53.3%) of the respondents were married. This implies that the study captured views of a key group who value or experience long term relationships with hotels as married people tend to visit with their children who can also be future return customers when grown.

4.2.3 Highest educational level

Table 4.4: Highest educational level

Item	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	2	2.2
Degree	49	53.3
Professional	27	29.3
Masters	14	15.2
Total	92	100.0

Source: Primary data

The findings in Table 4.4 show that majority (53.3%) were bachelor's degree holders of the respondents. This implies that the respondents were able to read and comprehend the questionnaire on their own.

4.2.4 Work experience of respondents

Table 4.5: Work experience of respondents

Item	Frequency	Percent
1-5	17	18.5
6-10	56	60.9
11-15	6	6.5
16-20	7	7.6
Above 20	6	6.5
Total	92	100.0

Source: Primary data

The findings in Table 4.5 revealed that majority (60.9%) had worked with the hotels for a period of 6-10 years. This implies that respondents had adequate knowledge and experience regarding the current study.

4.2.5 Department Held by Respondents

Table 4.6: Work experience of respondents

Item	Frequency	Percent
Top Management	37	40.2
Supervisors	20	21.7
Sales & Marketing	25	27.2
Front Office Team	10	10.9
Total	92	100.0

Source: Primary Data

The findings in Table 4.6 indicate that the majority (40.2%) were from Top Management, followed by Sales & Marketing (27.2%). This implies that the study captured strategic insights from high-level decision-makers, who oversee the adoption of digital marketing technologies for customer retention efforts in the hotels.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics for the study variables

To ease the interpretation of findings, the following scale developed by Alkharusi 2022 in relation to the Likert scale used in the questionnaire.

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics

Interval Range	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low (Strongly Disagree)
1.81 – 2.61	Low (Disagree)
2.62 – 3.42	Moderate (Neutral)
3.43 – 4.23	High (Agree)
4.24 – 5.00	Very High (Strongly Agree)

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Customer Relationship Management

Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics for Customer Relationship Management Systems

	ITEM	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
CRM	CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS					
CRM 1	The CRM systems provide actionable insights for guest retention strategies	92	1.0	5.0	3.76	.99
CRM 2	The CRM systems effectively track guest preferences for personalized services.	92	1.0	5.0	3.29	1.27
CRM 3	The CRM systems improve communication to encourage repeat bookings	92	1.0	5.0	3.28	1.28
Average Mean					3.44	.92
<i>SF</i>	<i>Salesforce</i>					
SF 1	The hotel utilizes Salesforce to automate follow-up communications with guests' post-stay.	92	1.0	5.0	4.10	1.15
SF 2	Salesforce enables our team to analyse customer data for better loyalty program targeting	92	1.0	5.0	4.05	1.10
SF 3	Integrating Salesforce has reduced customer churn in our hotel by identifying at-risk guests.	92	1.0	5.0	3.95	1.20
SF 4	Salesforce's reporting features help our hotel measure the impact of marketing campaigns on repeat visits.	92	1.0	5.0	4.00	1.12
Average Mean					4.03	1.14
<i>HSCRM</i>	<i>HubSpot CRM</i>					
HS 1	HubSpot CRM is used in our hotel to manage leads from online inquiries efficiently.	92	1.0	5.0	2.95	1.18
HS 2	Our hotel leverages HubSpot CRM for creating personalized email sequences to encourage return bookings.	92	1.0	5.0	2.90	1.20
HS 3	HubSpot CRM's free tools have made customer tracking more accessible for our small marketing team	92	1.0	5.0	2.85	1.22
HS 4	Integrating HubSpot CRM with our website has improved guest engagement and retention rates.	92	1.0	5.0	2.88	1.19
Average mean					2.89	1.20
GRAND MEAN					3.45	1.09

Source: primary data

The findings in Table 4.8 indicate a grand mean of 3.45 and SD of 1.09. This implies that all respondents highly agreed with the items presented under Customer Relationship Management Systems. Average mean for Sales force was 4.03 and SD of 1.14 implying that the respondents highly agreed with Salesforce being important in customer retention. Average mean for HubSpot CRM was 2.89 and SD OF 1.20 implying moderate agreement from the respondents about the importance and effectiveness of HubSpot in customer retention as it is less pronounced / used in upscale hotels in KCCA.

Observations on individual responses show that respondents agreed that The CRM systems provide actionable insights for guest retention strategies (Mean=3.76, SD=.99). Individual observations show that respondents were moderate on some items such as; the CRM systems effectively track guest preferences for personalized services (mean=3.29, SD=1.27) and the CRM systems improve communication to encourage repeat bookings (Mean=3.28, SD=1.28). For Salesforce, respondents agreed that the hotel utilizes Salesforce to automate follow-up communications with guest's post-stay (Mean=4.10, SD=1.15) and that Salesforce enables the team to analyze customer data for better loyalty program targeting (Mean=4.05, SD=1.10). For HubSpot CRM, respondents were moderate on items such as HubSpot CRM being used to manage leads from online inquiries efficiently (Mean=2.95, SD=1.18) and leveraging HubSpot CRM for creating personalized email sequences to encourage return bookings (Mean=2.90, SD=1.20). Based on the findings, it can be concluded that CRM systems providing actionable insights for guest retention strategies is critical in regard to Customer Relationship Management.

Social media

Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics for social media

	ITEM	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
SMP	SOCIAL MARKETING					
SMP 1	Social media content builds strong connections with guests	92	1.0	5.00	4.08	.97
SMP 2	Social Marketing engage guests through timely promotions	92	1.0	5.00	4.04	.95
SMP 3	Social Marketing are effective for responding to guest inquiries.	92	1.0	5.00	3.69	1.20
Average Mean					3.94	.98
FB	Facebook					
FB 1	Our hotel posts regular updates on Facebook to showcase events and attract repeat visitors.	92	1.0	5.00	4.10	0.98
FB 2	Facebook ads targeted at past guests have boosted our hotel's repeat booking rates.	92	1.0	5.00	4.05	0.96
FB 3	We use Facebook Messenger for quick responses to guest queries, enhancing retention.	92	1.0	5.00	3.90	1.10
FB 4	Facebook groups created by our hotel foster a community that encourages loyal customers to return	92	1.0	5.00	3.95	1.05
Average Mean					4.00	1.02
IG	Instagram					
IG 1	Instagram stories and reels are used by our hotel to highlight amenities and inspire repeat stays.	92	1.0	5.00	3.80	1.12
IG 2	Our hotel collaborates with influencers on Instagram to reach and retain high-end clientele in Kampala.	92	1.0	5.00	3.60	1.18
IG 3	User-generated content shared on our Instagram page builds trust and encourages guest loyalty.	92	1.0	5.00	3.65	1.15
Average Mean					3.68	1.15
TT	TikTok					
TT 1	Our hotel creates short videos on TikTok to engage younger demographics and promote return visits.	92	1.0	5.00	3.85	1.14
TT 2	TikTok challenges hosted by our hotel have increased brand recall among past guests.	92	1.0	5.00	3.80	1.16
TT 3	We use TikTok ads to target local Kampala audiences for loyalty discounts and repeat bookings.	92	1.0	5.00	3.75	1.18

TT 4	TikTok's viral potential has helped our hotel build a fun image that attracts returning customers.	92	1.0	5.00	3.82	1.15
Average Mean					3.81	1.16
WA	WhatsApp					
WA 1	Our hotel uses WhatsApp for sending personalized booking confirmations and follow-ups to retain customers.	92	1.0	5.00	4.05	0.95
WA 2	WhatsApp groups for VIP guests in our hotel facilitate exclusive offers that encourage repeats.	92	1.0	5.00	3.95	1.00
WA 3	Quick responses via WhatsApp have improved guest satisfaction and loyalty in our operations.	92	1.0	5.00	4.00	0.98
Average Mean					4.00	0.98
GRAND MEAN					3.89	1.07

Source: primary data

The findings in Table 4.9 indicate a grand mean of 3.89 and SD of 1.07. This implies that all respondents highly agreed with the items presented under social media as a form of Digital Marketing Technologies. Average mean for Facebook was 4.00 and SD of 1.02, implying high agreement among respondents about Facebook's importance in influencing guest retention. The average mean for WhatsApp was 4.00 with SD of 0.98, suggesting high agreement on its effectiveness. The average mean for Instagram was 3.68 and SD of 1.15, implying high agreement of its impact on customer retention. The average mean for TikTok was 3.81 with an SD of 1.16, reflecting agreement on its growing role in engaging younger demographics, though slightly less impactful than Facebook and WhatsApp in upscale hotel settings.

Observations on individual responses show that respondents highly agreed that social media content builds strong connections with guests (Mean=4.08, SD=0.97) and that Social Marketing engage guests through timely promotions (Mean=4.04, SD=0.95). For Facebook, respondents agreed that the hotel posts regular updates on Facebook to showcase events and attract repeat visitors (Mean=4.10, SD=0.98) and that Facebook ads targeted at past guests have boosted repeat booking rates (Mean=4.05, SD=0.96). For WhatsApp, respondents strongly

agreed that quick responses via WhatsApp have improved guest satisfaction and loyalty (Mean=4.00, SD=0.98) and that personalized booking confirmations and follow-ups via WhatsApp retain customers (Mean=4.05, SD=0.95). For Instagram, respondents were in agreement like on the item regarding collaboration with influencers to reach high-end clientele in Kampala (Mean=3.60, SD=1.18). For TikTok, respondents highly agreed that creating short videos on TikTok engages younger demographics and promotes return visits (Mean=3.85, SD=1.14). Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Social Marketing are critical for building guest connections and delivering timely, personalized engagement to enhance customer retention in KCCA’s upscale hotels.

Artificial Intelligence

Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics for Artificial Intelligence

	ITEM	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
AIMT	AI MARKETING TOOLS					
AIMT 1	AI-driven features, such as automated chatbots, improve guest engagement and loyalty	92	1.00	5.00	2.26	.86
AIMT 2	AI marketing tools help tailor promotions to increase customer return rates.	92	1.00	5.00	2.22	1.18
AIMT 3	AI tools effectively analyze guest data to improve retention strategies	92	1.00	5.00	1.91	1.04
AIMT 4	AI provides real-time insights for dynamic adjustment of retention strategies	92	1.00	5.00	1.77	1.30
	Average Mean				2.04	1.095
CHA	Chatbots					
CHA 1	Chatbots on our hotel website handle booking inquiries 24/7, leading to higher retention through convenience.	92	1.00	5.00	2.05	1.10
CHA 2	Our chatbots provide personalized recommendations based on past stays to encourage repeat visits.	92	1.00	5.00	2.40	1.15
CHA 3	Integrating chatbots has reduced response times, positively impacting guest loyalty in our hotel.	92	1.00	5.00	2.45	1.12

	Average Mean				2.45	1.12
GA	Google Analytics					
GA 1	Google Analytics helps our hotel track website traffic from marketing campaigns aimed at repeat customers.	92	1.00	5.00	2.80	1.05
GA 2	We use Google Analytics to measure the effectiveness of digital ads in driving return bookings.	92	1.00	5.00	2.75	1.08
GA 3	Insights from Google Analytics allow our team to optimize content for better customer retention.	92	1.00	5.00	2.70	1.10
GA 4	Google Analytics data informs our decisions on which digital channels best retain Kampala's upscale guests.	92	1.00	5.00	2.78	1.07
	Average Mean				2.76	1.08
	GRAND MEAN				2.42	1.10

Source: primary data

The findings in Table 4.10 indicate a grand mean of 2.42 and SD of 1.10 for Artificial Intelligence Marketing Tools. This implies that respondents disagreed with the items under Artificial Intelligence. The average mean for AI Marketing Tools was 2.04 with SD of 1.095, implying that respondents disagreed on the overall impact of AI tools, likely due to low adoption in KCCA's upscale hotels. The average mean for Chatbots was 2.45 with SD of 1.12 implying the low agreement on the importance of chatbots in customer retention. The average mean for Google Analytics was 2.76 with an SD of 1.08, showing moderate agreements implying neutral responses about its importance in supporting customer retention in upscale hotels in KCCA.

Observations on individual responses show that for AI Marketing Tools, respondents strongly disagreed that AI provides real-time insights for dynamic adjustment of retention strategies (Mean=1.77, SD=1.30). For Chatbots, respondents disagreed that chatbots on the hotel website handle booking inquiries 24/7, leading to higher retention through convenience (Mean=2.50,

SD=1.10), For Google Analytics, respondents were neutral about Google Analytics helping track website traffic from marketing campaigns aimed at repeat customers (Mean=2.80, SD=1.05). This implies that AI Marketing Tools importance to supporting customer retention in upscale hotels in KCCA is low, as respondents disagree with their impact on customer retention.

Email Marketing

Table 4.11: Descriptive Statistics for Email Marketing

EMT	EMAIL MARKETING TOOLS	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
EMT 1	Email campaigns increase guest responses for retention initiatives	92	1.00	5.00	4.34	0.95
EMT 2	Email campaigns deliver personalized offers to attract repeat guests	92	1.00	5.00	4.29	0.98
EMT 3	Email marketing tools provide analytics to improve retention strategies.	92	1.00	5.00	3.87	1.02
EMT 4	Email marketing promotes loyalty programs effectively	92	1.00	5.00	3.97	1.00
	Average Mean				4.12	0.99
MC	MailChimp					
MC 1	MailChimp is used in our hotel for designing attractive email templates that boost open rates among loyal customers.	92	1.00	5.00	4.30	0.98
MC 2	Our hotel tracks email performance with Mail Chimp to refine strategies for customer retention.	92	1.00	5.00	4.25	0.99
MC 3	Mail Chimp's automation features send birthday offers to guests, enhancing repeat purchase intent.	92	1.00	5.00	4.20	1.01
	Average Mean				4.25	0.99
TL	Text local					
TL 1	Text Local enables our hotel to send SMS alerts for flash sales to encourage immediate repeat bookings.	92	1.00	5.00	4.15	1.00
TL 2	We use Text Local for post-stay feedback requests, which helps improve services and retain customers.	92	1.00	5.00	4.10	1.02
TL 3	Text Local's bulk messaging supports our loyalty program reminders to Kampala-based guests.	92	1.00	5.00	4.12	1.01

	Average Mean				4.12	1.01
	GRAND MEAN AND SD				4.16	0.88

Source: Primary data

The findings in Table 4.11 indicate a grand mean of 4.16 and SD of 0.88 for Email Marketing Tools implying that respondents highly agreed on the effectiveness of email marketing tools in enhancing customer retention in upscale hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). The average mean for Email Marketing Tools was 4.12 with an SD of 0.99 implying high agreement from respondents on the role of email marketing tools in customer retention. The average mean for MailChimp was 4.25 with an SD of 0.99, implying high agreement in MailChimp's importance in customer retention in upscale hotels in KCCA likely due to its ability to leverage systematically collected guest emails for ongoing, personalized campaigns. The average mean for Textlocal was 4.12 with an SD of 1.01, implying high agreement on its importance in customer retention.

Observations on individual responses show that for Email Marketing Tools, respondents highly agreed that email campaigns increase guest responses for retention initiatives (Mean=4.34, SD=0.95), highlighting the significant impact of email campaigns on guest engagement. For MailChimp, respondents strongly agreed that MailChimp is used for designing attractive email templates that boost open rates among loyal customers (Mean=4.30, SD=0.98), highlighting its effectiveness in creating compelling campaigns. For Text Local, respondents highly agreed that Text Local enables the hotel to send SMS alerts for flash sales to encourage immediate repeat bookings (Mean=4.15, SD=1.00 implying its value for timely promotions. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that email marketing tools are critical for customer retention in KCCA's upscale hotels due to their ability to deliver personalized, ongoing campaigns using systematically collected guest emails and SMS.

Table 4.12: Descriptive Statistics for Customer Retention

	ITEM	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
RP	REPEAT PURCHASE					
RP 1	Personalized digital marketing campaigns effectively drive repeat purchases from guests in our hotel.	92	1.00	5.00	2.35	0.98
RP 2	Our hotel’s loyalty programs successfully encourage guests to make repeat bookings.	92	1.00	5.00	2.25	1.00
RP 3	Positive online reviews significantly influence guests to return for repeat stays at our hotel.	92	1.00	5.00	2.48	1.02
RP 4	Timely follow-up communications after a guest’s stay increases the likelihood of repeat purchases in our hotel.	92	1.00	5.00	1.60	1.01
RP 5	Over the past three years, our hotel has seen consistent repeat bookings from both domestic and foreign guests.	92	1.00	5.00	1.65	0.99
RP 6	Digital tools used by our hotel effectively track guest preferences to secure repeat purchases.	92	1.00	5.00	1.55	0.97
RP 7	Guests frequently return to our hotel due to consistent digital engagement efforts that promote repeat bookings.	92	1.00	5.00	2.40	0.95
GRAND MEAN AND SD					2.04	0.99

Source: Primary data

The findings in Table 4.12 indicate a grand mean of 2.04 and SD of 0.99 for items under Customer Retention measured by repeat purchases implying that that the level of customer retention is still low in upscale hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA).

Observations on individual responses show that respondents strongly disagreed that timely follow-up communications after a stay increase the chances of guests returning to the hotel (Mean=1.22, SD=1.01). Respondents highly disagreed that tracking guest preferences through digital tools has improved the ability to secure repeat business (Mean=1.21, SD=0.97). Based on the findings, it can be concluded that customer retention remains a critical challenge in KCCA’s upscale hotels.

Correlations analysis

Table 4.13: Correlation results

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
Customer Relationship Management (1)	1				
Social media (2)	.593**	1			
Artificial Intelligence (3)	.450**	.520**	1		
Email Marketing (4)	.221*	.190	.413**	1	
Customer Retention (5)	.365**	.318**	.052	.604**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

4.3.1 Study Objective One: Customer Relationship Management Systems and customer retention

The findings in Table 4.13 indicate that there is a significant and positive relationship between Customer Relationship Management Systems and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority ($r=.365^{**}$, $P<0.01$). This implies that CRM systems contribute 36.5% to customer retention. Implying that changes in Customer Relationship Management Systems are associated with changes in customer retention in the 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority.

4.3.2 Study objective Two: Social Marketing and customer retention

The findings in table 4.13 indicate that there is a significant and positive relationship between Social Marketing and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority ($r=.318^{**}$, $P<.01$). This implies that changes in Social Marketing contribute

31.8% to customer retention. Implying that changes in social media are associated with customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority.

4.3.3 Study objective Three: AI Marketing Tools and customer retention

The findings in Table 4.13 indicate that there is a positive but not significant relationship between AI marketing tools and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital Authority. AI Marketing Tools are associated with changes in customer retention ($r=.052$, $P>.05$). This implies that changes in AI Marketing Tools contribute 5.2% to customer retention. Implying that changes in Artificial Intelligence Marketing Tools are not strongly associated with customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority.

4.3.4 Study Objective Four: Email Marketing Tools and Customer Retention

The findings in table 4.13 also indicate that there is a significant and positive relationship between Email Marketing Tools and Customer Retention ($r=.604^{**}$, $P<.01$). This implies that changes in email marketing Tools are associated with changes in Customer Retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority.

Regression analysis

Table 4.14: Multiple regression results

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized		
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.816	.27		2.93	.004
	Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	.325	.04	.41	4.34	.000
	Social media	.207	.06	.19	3.41	.001
	Artificial Intelligence	.043	.07	.06	.58	.562
	Email Marketing	.365	.06	.52	5.89	.000
	R		.73			
	R		.54			
	2		.54			
	Adjusted R ²		.39			
	Std. Error of the Estimate		130.23			
	F		.00			
	Sig					

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Retention

Source: Primary data

The findings in Table 4.14 show that Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a significant positive predictor of customer / guest retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority (Beta=0.41, $P<0.01$). This implies that every unit change in CRM results into an increase in customer / guest retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority by

0.41 units. The findings also indicate that social media is a significant positive predictor of customer / guest retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority (Beta=.19, $P<0.01$). This implies that every unit change in social media results into an increase in customer / guest retention by 0.19. The findings further indicate that Email Marketing is a significant positive predictor of customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City (Beta=.52, $P<.01$). This implies that every unit change in Email Marketing results into an increase in customer retention by 0.52 units. Although Customer Relationship Management (CRM), social media and Email Marketing were found to be significant predictor variables of customer retention, Artificial Intelligence Marketing tools was found to be positive and not significant (Beta=.06, $P>0.05$) implying that a unit change in AI Tools doesn't result in an increase in customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority.

The multiple regression results also revealed that all predictors in the model namely; Customer Relationship Management (CRM), social media, Email Marketing and Artificial Intelligence, account for 54.2% (Adjusted $R^2=.542$) in customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority.

It can be concluded that Email Marketing has more predictive potential than the counterparts namely; Customer Relationship Management (CRM), social media and AI Marketing Tools. It should therefore be given the first priority.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of findings, conclusion, recommendations as well as the study limitations and areas of further research.

5.2 Discussion of findings

5.2.1 Descriptive Analysis

The findings revealed that Customer Relationship Management had a grand mean score of 3.45 on the Likert scale. This indicates that respondents agreed with the points of Customer Relationship Management Systems in this study. This finding as well confirm that the respondents agreed that Customer Relationship Management Systems influence customer retention among upper-star hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority. Social Marketing had a grand mean score of 3.89. This reveals that respondents agreed with the matters of social media put up in this study. Artificial intelligence marketing tools received a grand mean score of 2.42, meaning that respondents disagreed with artificial intelligence issues put up in this study. Email marketing tools had a grand mean score of 4.16, suggesting that respondents agreed with email marketing affairs that were put out by this study. Lastly, customer retention had a grand mean score of 2.04, which indicates that respondents disagreed with the issues of customer retention that were raised in this study.

5.3 Discussion

5.3.1: Study Objective One: To examine the relationship between CRM Systems and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in KCCA.

The Pearson correlation results are ($r=0.365^{**}$, $p<0.01$) which indicate a positive and significant correlation between Customer Relationship Management systems and customer retention. The findings are supported by Soliman and Kamel (2021), who investigated CRM in five-star hotels in Cairo and noted, “CRM implementation significantly enhances guest retention through personalized services” reporting a correlation of ($r=0.41$ ($p<0.01$)). Additionally, Adzoyi et al. (2021) explored retention in Ghanaian hotels and found a similar trend, stating, “CRM practices led to a 35% increase in repeat visits”, with a significant correlation of $r=0.37$ ($p<0.01$)

The regression analysis indicated that CRM systems have a positive and significant predictive power ($\text{Beta}=0.41$, $p<0.01$) meaning that it predicts 41 percent change in customer retention. These findings are supported by Saglam and El Montaser (2021) who mention in their study on “the effect of Customer Relationship Management Systems in customer retention and customer acquisition” revealed that Customer Relationship Management Systems are significant and predictive to customer retention.

5.3.2: Study Objective Two: To analyse the relationship between Social Marketing and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in KCCA.

The findings from Pearson correlation analysis show a positive and significant correlation between Social Marketing and customer retention ($r=0.318^{**}$, $p<0.01$). The findings are supported by Hajli et al. (2017) who explored social media’s role in luxury hotels and noted, “Social media engagement significantly boots guest retention through interactive campaigns”, reporting a correlation of 32% in their study of upscale hotels in London. This is further backed by Kim et al. (2020), who investigated social media in Korean hotels and found, “A 30% increase in retention was linked to active social media use”.

The regression analysis indicated that Social Marketing have a positive and significant predictive power (Beta=0.19, $p<0.01$) meaning that it predicts 19 percent change in customer retention. These findings are supported by Wang and Li (2021) who examined social media in Chinese luxury hotels and noted, “Social media engagement predicts an 18% retention improvement”.

5.3.3: Study Objective Three: To explore the relationship between email marketing tools and customer Retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in KCCA.

The findings from Pearson correlation analysis show a positive and significant correlation between email marketing tools and customer retention ($r=0.604^{**}$, $p<0.01$). The results are supported by Lee and Park (2018), who studied email marketing in luxury hotels in Seoul and stated, “Email campaigns significantly enhance guest retention through targeted promotions”. This is further backed by Smith and Li (2020), who explored email marketing in U.S. upscale hotels and noted, “A 55% retention increase was attributed to personalized email strategies”, with a significant correlation of $r=0.59$ ($p<0.01$).

The regression analysis indicated that email marketing platforms have a positive and significant predictive power (Beta=0.52, $p<0.01$) meaning that it predicts 52 percent change in customer retention. These study findings are supported by Garcia and Patel (2021) who examined email strategies in European hotels and stated, “Email campaigns have a predictive power of 53% to retention improvement”.

5.3.4: Study Objective Four: To assess the relationship between AI marketing tools and customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in KCCA.

The findings from Pearson correlation analysis show a positive but non-significant correlation between AI marketing tools and customer retention ($r=0.052$, $p>0.05$). The findings are supported by Patel and Sharma (2023), who explored AI tools in the hospitality industry and noted, “AI-driven marketing showed a slight positive trend in guest retention, but the effect

was not statistically significant”. This is further supported by O’Connor and Liu (2022), who investigated AI applications in Australian hotels and stated, “Limited impact was observed from AI marketing on retention due to inconsistent implementation” with a non-significant correlation found in this study.

The regression analysis indicated that AI marketing tools have a positive but non-significant predictive power (Beta=0.06, $p>0.05$) meaning that it predicts a minimal 6 percent change in customer retention.

5.4 Conclusion

First, and foremost the results indicated that the level of customer retention in upscale hotels in Kampala Capital City Authority was low with a Mean = 2.04. This means that there is need to increase customer retention.

Second, the Pearson correlation matrix indicated that most predictor variables correlated positively and significantly with customer retention, except for AI marketing tools: i.e. Customer Relationship Management systems ($r=0.365^{**}$, $p<0.01$), Social Marketing ($r=0.318^{**}$, $p<0.01$), email marketing tools ($r=0.604^{**}$, $p<0.01$) and AI marketing ($r=0.052$, $p>0.05$).The contribution of each predictor variable to customer retention: CRM systems is 36.5%, Social Marketing is 31.8%, email marketing is 60.4% and AI marketing tools is 5.2% The positive correlations between each predictor and dependent variable is an indication that enhancements in CRM, social media, and email marketing can boost customer retention, while the non-significant AI marketing tools correlation highlights its limited current impact in upscale hotels in KCCA. Additionally, strong positive inter-correlations exist among these digital marketing tools (e.g., CRM and email marketing), indicating that focusing on one can will enhance the others.

Third, the regression analysis indicated that most predictor variables have positive and significant predictive powers on customer retention, except for AI marketing tools. Customer Relationship Management systems (Beta=0.412) meaning 41 percent of the variance in customer retention is predicted by CRM systems, making it a key factor for hotels to prioritize in order to retain customers. Social Marketing (Beta=0.19) meaning that 19 percent of the variance in customer retention is predicted by Social Marketing and therefore, it is a significant factor to consider if hotels want to increase customer retention. Email marketing tools (Beta=0.52,) meaning that 52 percent of the variance in customer retention is predicted by customer retention and therefore, it is a significant factor to increasing customer retention in upscale hotels in KCCA. However, AI marketing tools (Beta=0.06,) show a positive but non-significant predictive power, predicting only 6 percent of the variance, suggesting it is not yet a significant factor to increase customer retention.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that to increase customer retention in 4- and 5-star hotels in KCCA, all four predictor variables namely: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, Social Marketing, AI marketing tools, and email marketing tools be integrated effectively into the upper scale hotels' marketing strategies and operational practices. This is so because the results of these predictor variables indicated that they were inter-related and positively correlated with each other to collectively enhance customer retention. Therefore, below are recommendations as per objective:

(1) Customer Relationship Management Systems: Hotels should enhance the use of CRM systems to build stronger guest relationships, collect guest information and data to create personalized experiences. This can be achieved by:

- **Training staff to leverage customer data for personalized guest experiences.**
- **Regularly updating CRM software to improve tracking of guest preferences.**
- **Encouraging feedback collection to tailor services to individual needs.**

(2) Social Marketing: Hotels should reinforce social media engagement to attract and retain guests. Key actions include:

- **Developing regular, interactive posts to engage with followers.**
- **Involving guests in online campaigns or contests to boost interest.**
- **Ensuring consistent responses to guest inquiries and comments across platforms.**

(3) Email Marketing Tools: Hotels should optimize email marketing to maintain communication with guests and share relevant promotions and updates. Suggestions include:

- **Creating targeted email campaigns with personalized offers and updates.**
- **Applying consistent scheduling for newsletters to keep guests informed.**
- **Providing clear unsubscribe options to maintain trust and relevance.**

(4) AI Marketing Tools: Hotels should start preparing to emphasize AI marketing tools to meet the expectations of guests, especially those from foreign countries where AI is advanced. This can be achieved by:

- **Implementing AI tools with support from technology experts.**
- **Training staff on how to use AI for marketing and guest insights.**
- **Collaborating with tech providers to enhance AI effectiveness over time.**

5.6 Limitations of the Study

The high transport costs traveling to all 13 hotels to distribute questionnaires and check on their completion. Moving between these locations in KCCA required time and money, which sometimes limited the frequency of follow-ups.

The study was conducted among upper-star hotels within Kampala Capital City Authority. The findings may therefore not be generalized to lower-tier hotels or hospitality businesses in other regions of Uganda or beyond, where digital marketing adoption and customer behaviors may differ.

The finding that artificial intelligence marketing had an insignificant effect could partly be due to its limited adoption or inadequate implementation among the surveyed hotels. Therefore, the insignificance may not reflect the actual potential of AI in hotel marketing but rather its current underutilization in the study context.

External factors such as internet penetration, digital literacy among customers, and infrastructural challenges (e.g., unstable internet connectivity) were not controlled for in the study. These may have influenced how effectively digital marketing technologies contributed to customer retention.

5.7 Ethical considerations

All respondents were fully informed about the purpose, scope, and objectives of the study before participation. Consent was sought voluntarily, and participants were assured that they had the right to withdraw at any stage without facing any negative consequences.

Personal identifiers of participants and the names of specific hotels were kept confidential. Codes were used instead of actual names to ensure anonymity. The data collected was securely stored and only used for academic purposes.

Participants were treated with dignity and respect throughout the study. Their opinions and views regarding digital marketing practices were respected without coercion, manipulation, or undue influence.

The data collected was used strictly for academic and research purposes. It was not shared with third parties for commercial gain or to advance the competitive interests of any particular hotel.

5.8 Areas for Further Research

Since CRM demonstrated a significant positive effect on customer retention, future research could examine which specific CRM components (including personalization, complaint handling, and loyalty programs) drive the strongest retention outcomes, and how these effects vary across different sectors or customer demographics.

Given the large effect of email marketing tools, further studies could investigate the optimal frequency, content type, and personalization level for maximizing retention, as well as the role of AI in automating and enhancing email campaigns.

While social media had a significant but smaller impact, future research could explore whether its influence on retention is mediated by factors such as brand trust, customer engagement, or word-of-mouth referrals, particularly in highly competitive markets.

Since AI marketing tools showed a positive but insignificant effect, further studies should investigate adoption barriers such as cost, technical expertise, customer readiness, and data quality. Longitudinal research could also assess whether AI's impact on retention becomes significant over time as adoption matures.

Building on the finding that different tools vary in effect size, future research could develop and test integrated models that combine CRM, email marketing, social media, and AI tools to determine the optimal mix and sequencing for maximizing retention.

Replicating the study in different cultural or geographical settings could reveal whether the observed patterns hold universally or are shaped by contextual factors such as technology adoption rates, consumer behavior, or regulatory environments

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Appendix 1:

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire for evaluation of Digital Marketing Technologies and Customer Retention in Kampala's Capital City Authority's Upper scale hotels (4- and 5- star).

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am Atukunda Praise, a student of Masters of Business Administration of Uganda Christian University carrying out academic research on the topic; "Digital Marketing Technologies and Customer Retention in Kampala's Upper-Star Hotels (4- And 5-Star)". You have been selected as one of the respondents in the study. Please fill this questionnaire. Your personal identity and answers provided will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

Instructions: Please tick (✓) the appropriate box or fill in the blank.

Section A: Demographic

1. What is your Gender?

Gender	Male	Female
Tick		

2. What is your Age?

Age bracket	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	Above 60
Tick					

3. What is your marital status?

Marital Status	Single	Married	Divorced/Separated
Tick			

4. What is your education level attained?

Educational level	Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Professional	Master's Degree
Tick				

5. What is your working experience in the hopsitality industry?

Years	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	Above 20
Tick					

6. What is your Current position in the hopsitality industry / hotel?

Position	Top Management	Sales/Marketing Team	Front Office Team	Administrative Team
Tick				

SECTION B: DIGITAL MARKETING TECHNOLOGIES

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement in relation to **Digital Marketing Technologies in your hotel** by ticking (√) one of the choices that correspond to the statement, using the scale below 5- *Strongly Agree (SA)*, 4 – *Agree (A)*, 3- *Not Sure (NS)*, 2 - *Disagree (D)*, 1 – *Strongly Disagree (SD)*.

CRM	CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS					
CRM 1	The CRM systems provide actionable insights for guest retention strategies	5	4	3	2	1
CRM 2	The CRM systems effectively track guest preferences for personalized services.	5	4	3	2	1
CRM 3	The CRM systems improve communication to encourage repeat bookings	5	4	3	2	1
<i>SF</i>	<i>Salesforce</i>					
SF 1	The hotel utilizes Salesforce to automate follow-up communications with guests' post-stay.	5	4	3	2	1

SF 2	Salesforce enables our team to analyse customer data for better loyalty program targeting	5	4	3	2	1
SF 3	Integrating Salesforce has reduced customer churn in our hotel by identifying at-risk guests.	5	4	3	2	1
SF 4	Salesforce's reporting features help our hotel measure the impact of marketing campaigns on repeat visits.	5	4	3	2	1
HSCRM	<i>HubSpot CRM</i>					
HS 1	HubSpot CRM is used in our hotel to manage leads from online inquiries efficiently.	5	4	3	2	1
HS 2	Our hotel leverages HubSpot CRM for creating personalized email sequences to encourage return bookings.	5	4	3	2	1
HS 3	HubSpot CRM's free tools have made customer tracking more accessible for our small marketing team	5	4	3	2	1
HS 4	Integrating HubSpot CRM with our website has improved guest engagement and retention rates.	5	4	3	2	1
SMP	<i>SOCIAL MARKETING</i>					
SMP 1	Social media content builds strong connections with guests	5	4	3	2	1
SMP 2	Social Marketing engage guests through timely promotions	5	4	3	2	1
SMP 3	Social Marketing are effective for responding to guest inquiries.	5	4	3	2	1
FB	<i>Facebook</i>					
FB 1	Our hotel posts regular updates on Facebook to showcase events and attract repeat visitors.	5	4	3	2	1
FB 2	Facebook ads targeted at past guests have boosted our hotel's repeat booking rates.	5	4	3	2	1
FB 3	We use Facebook Messenger for quick responses to guest queries, enhancing retention.	5	4	3	2	1
FB 4	Facebook groups created by our hotel foster a community that encourages loyal customers to return	5	4	3	2	1
IG	<i>Instagram</i>					
IG 1	Instagram stories and reels are used by our hotel to highlight amenities and inspire repeat stays.	5	4	3	2	1
IG 2	Our hotel collaborates with influencers on Instagram to reach and retain high-end clientele in Kampala.	5	4	3	2	1

IG 3	User-generated content shared on our Instagram page builds trust and encourages guest loyalty.	5	4	3	2	1
TT	<i>TikTok</i>					
TT 1	Our hotel creates short videos on TikTok to engage younger demographics and promote return visits.	5	4	3	2	1
TT 2	TikTok challenges hosted by our hotel have increased brand recall among past guests.	5	4	3	2	1
TT 3	We use TikTok ads to target local Kampala audiences for loyalty discounts and repeat bookings.	5	4	3	2	1
TT 4	TikTok's viral potential has helped our hotel build a fun image that attracts returning customers.	5	4	3	2	1
WA	<i>WhatsApp</i>					
WA 1	Our hotel uses WhatsApp for sending personalized booking confirmations and follow-ups to retain customers.	5	4	3	2	1
WA 2	WhatsApp groups for VIP guests in our hotel facilitate exclusive offers that encourage repeats.	5	4	3	2	1
WA 3	Quick responses via WhatsApp have improved guest satisfaction and loyalty in our operations.	5	4	3	2	1
EMT	EMAIL MARKETING TOOLS					
EMT 1	Email campaigns increase guest responses for retention initiatives	92	4	3	2	1
EMT 2	Email campaigns deliver personalized offers to attract repeat guests	5	4	3	2	1
EMT 3	Email marketing tools provide analytics to improve retention strategies.	5	4	3	2	1
EMT 4	Email marketing promotes loyalty programs effectively	5	4	3	2	1
MC	<i>Mail Chimp</i>					
MC 1	Mail Chimp is used in our hotel for designing attractive email templates that boost open rates among loyal customers.	5	4	3	2	1
MC 2	Our hotel tracks email performance with Mail Chimp to refine strategies for customer retention.	5	4	3	2	1
MC 3	Mail Chimp's automation features send birthday offers to guests, enhancing repeat purchase intent.	5	4	3	2	1
TL	<i>Text local</i>					
TL 1	Text Local enables our hotel to send SMS alerts for flash sales to encourage immediate repeat bookings.	5	4	3	2	1

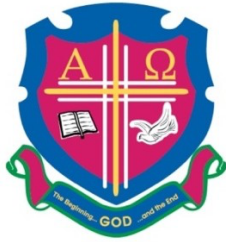
TL 2	We use Text Local for post-stay feedback requests, which helps improve services and retain customers.	5	4	3	2	1
TL 3	Text Local’s bulk messaging supports our loyalty program reminders to Kampala-based guests.	5	4	3	2	1
AIMT	AI MARKETING TOOLS					
AIMT 1	AI-driven features, such as automated chatbots, improve guest engagement and loyalty	5	4	3	2	1
AIMT 2	AI marketing tools help tailor promotions to increase customer return rates.	5	4	3	2	1
AIMT 3	AI tools effectively analyze guest data to improve retention strategies					
AIMT 4	AI provides real-time insights for dynamic adjustment of retention strategies					
CHA	Chatbots					
CHA 1	Chatbots on our hotel website handle booking inquiries 24/7, leading to higher retention through convenience.	5	4	3	2	1
CHA 2	Our chatbots provide personalized recommendations based on past stays to encourage repeat visits.	5	4	3	2	1
CHA 3	Integrating chatbots has reduced response times, positively impacting guest loyalty in our hotel.	5	4	3	2	1
GA	Google Analytics					
GA 1	Google Analytics helps our hotel track website traffic from marketing campaigns aimed at repeat customers.	5	4	3	2	1
GA 2	We use Google Analytics to measure the effectiveness of digital ads in driving return bookings.	5	4	3	2	1
GA 3	Insights from Google Analytics allow our team to optimize content for better customer retention.	5	4	3	2	1
GA 4	Google Analytics data informs our decisions on which digital channels best retain Kampala’s upscale guests.	5	4	3	2	1

SECTION C: CUSTOMER RETENTION

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement in relation to **Repeat purchases in your hotel** by ticking (√) one of the choices that correspond to the statement, using the scale below 5- *Strongly Agree (SA)*, 4 – *Agree (A)*, 3- *Not Sure (NS)*, 2 - *Disagree (D)*, 1 – *Strongly Disagree (SD)*.

RP	REPEAT PURCHASE					
RP 1	Personalized digital marketing campaigns effectively drive repeat purchases from guests in our hotel.	5	4	3	2	1
RP 2	Our hotel’s loyalty programs successfully encourage guests to make repeat bookings.	5	4	3	2	1
RP 3	Positive online reviews significantly influence guests to return for repeat stays at our hotel.	5	4	3	2	1
RP 4	Timely follow-up communications after a guest’s stay increase the likelihood of repeat purchases in our hotel.	5	4	3	2	1
RP 5	Over the past three years, our hotel has seen consistent repeat bookings from both domestic and foreign guests.	5	4	3	2	1
RP 6	Digital tools used by our hotel effectively track guest preferences to secure repeat purchases.	5	4	3	2	1
RP 7	Guests frequently return to our hotel due to consistent digital engagement efforts that promote repeat bookings.	5	4	3	2	1

Thank You for Participating



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DISSERTATION CORRECTION COMPLIANCE REPORT BY THE CANDIDATE (POST VIVA FORM)

DATE: 19th September, 2025

Name of Candidate: ATUKUNDA PRAISE Reg No.: J23M15/003

Title of Dissertation: DIGITAL MARKETING TECHNOLOGIES AND CUSTOMER RETENTION AMONG UPPER-STAR HOTELS IN KAMPALA CAPITAL CITY AUTHORITY

SN	COMMENTS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR/PAGE NO.
1	Eliminate Typographical errors, spelling mistakes, and awkward phrasing and shorten long sentences for clarity while ensuring consistent tense use	All dissertation chapters have been edited as required All dissertation chape	Chapters 1 - 5
2	Standardize table and figure numbering, align them properly within the chapters, and ensure consistent font, spacing, and heading styles.	Tables have been standardized and figure numbering redone. Font, spacing and heading styles have been adjusted accordingly	The whole dissertation
3	Simplify the background in Chapter One to avoid repetition, and refine the conceptual framework to show clearer relationships between the variables, with all constructs adequately defined in the text.	Chapter one has been simplified, the conceptual framework has been refined accordingly	Page 1 and 6

4	Make the literature review in Chapter Two more concise and analytical by strengthening synthesis and critique of existing studies, and add more recent Ugandan and East African studies for regional relevance.	Literature Review has been reviewed and rewritten accordingly	Chapter 2
5	Strengthen Chapter Three by justifying the choice of cross-sectional design more clearly, clarifying the rationale for purposive and snowball sampling, discussing potential biases, and explaining the choice of statistical techniques in more depth.	The Research design, sampling techniques, statistical techniques have been revised and corrected accordingly	Chapter 3 - Pages 22 and 24
6	Present the limitations of the methodology more systematically, addressing issues such as sampling errors, non-response bias, and generalizability.	The limitations of the methodology have been revised and addressed	Page 27 - Chapter 3s

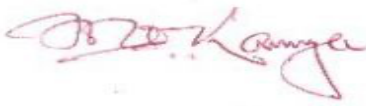
SN	COMMENTS BY INTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	Numbering of tables to follow their respective chapters	Table numbering has been revised according to the chapters	Chapter 3 and 4
2	Correct the typo graphics in the text	The typo graphics have been revised	The whole dissertation
3	Customers and guests be used interchangeably in the study	It has been explained in the content scope and appears in the whole dissertation	Page 4 and the rest of the dissertation

SN	COMMENTS BY VIVA VOCE PANEL	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	The Regression Analysis should speak to the problem	Adjusted accordingly	Chapter 4 - Page 44
2	Objective two, seemed unclear, a platform helps to... That objective should be adjusted. To social marketing. Liase with your supervisor	Objective two has been adjusted accordingly	Chapter 1

ATUKUNDA PRAISE
Candidate's Name


Signature

DR. KAMYA MOSES
Supervisor's Name


Signature