

The Implementation Level of Relationship Marketing Strategies in North Upper Egypt Hotels

Mohamed T. A. Abdelmawgoud¹ Mohamed A. Ali¹ Mohamed A. Zaki¹

¹Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Minia University.

Abstract

This research aims to determine the implementation level of relationship marketing strategies in north upper Egypt hotels in the cities of Fayoum, Beni Suef, Minia, and Assiut. Random cluster samples include 517 questionnaires were distributed to customers of North Upper Egypt hotels. The results revealed that the average of the implementation level of relationship marketing is high equivalent to 81.2% (4.06 out of 5), and the standard deviation is 0.171. In addition, most customers (96.3 %) stated that there is continuous communication with the hotel, about 95 % of them evaluated the relationship marketing as a successful strategy, and customer motivations in dealing with hotels are special treatment, quality of service, confidence, appropriate prices, proximity to the site, speed of service, diversity of services and global reputation, respectively. Moreover, the level of hotel performance ranges from high to very high, in terms of the level of relationship satisfaction (81.2%), the level of customer loyalty (82%), the level of service quality (80.9%), the level of accommodation quality (73.2%), and the level of food and beverage quality (80.6%). Finally, there is a significant correlation between the level of relationship marketing and the variables of confidence (0.402), loyalty (0.371), interaction (0.398), commitment (0.365), connections (0.352), special treatment (0.347), social transactions (0.346) and satisfaction (0.332). In conclusion, the results of this research are an essential step for hospitality managers to develop effective strategies of relationship marketing in north upper Egypt hotels.

Keywords: Relationship Marketing, Marketing Strategies, Upper Egypt, Hotels.

Introduction

Relationship marketing (RM) is a mean to set up, develop, and improve long-term relationships with customers and other stakeholders. As mentioned in the theory of relationship marketing, relationships stand for much more than the goods and services are given by a provider to its customers; accordingly, the characteristics of service quality are not the only things that affect business loyalty. Nevertheless, service quality is regarded as an important factor for customers' fulfillment as is frequently tackled in the literature (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Atul & Sheth, 2000; Gummesson, 2002). Since the 2000s, there has been an increased interest in the notion of relationship marketing, among both practitioners and specialists (e.g. Guy & Urli, 2006; Tongzong & Sawant, 2007; Chang *et al.*, 2008; Yang *et al.*, 2016). The issue has renovated over as a novel and attractive strand of marketing that centers on building continuing relationships with customers and other individuals. It is founded on three major doctrines: trust, mutual value creation, and commitment.

Building a strong relationship with customers fulfill an excellent point of customers' approval, which sequentially helps obtain their faith and their devotion, so benefitting the firm as a whole (Adrain *et al.*, 1995). One main hypothesis is that a relationship helps participants fulfill their goals by relying on the stage of the relationship (whether at the first stage, cultivating stage, or enhancing stage), the strategic implications may vary. Consequently, hospitality establishments have to keep an eye on various aspects through the various stages, from building customers' knowledge to shape their perceptions (Ashnai *et al.*, 2009). Implementing relationship marketing is a complex, costly task that requires careful consideration. It can be said that deciding to implement relationship marketing without properly understanding the factors that affect its implementation may disappoint hotels and lead to a negative image of relationship marketing (Essawy, 2013). The literature on relationship marketing comes to the conclusion that the quality of the relationships among the participants is a significant determinant of their durability, thus helping in the success of relationship-marketing practices. Based on the above, this study aims to determine the implementation level of relationship marketing strategies in Upper Egypt hotels.

Literature Review

The emergence of relationship marketing has been delayed due to the growth of service marketing with an emphasis on excellence, improvement, and recognition of potential benefits for both companies and customers and technological developments. Another reason was that the marketing mix model was not able to satisfy the service firm's customer relationships in a good way, which caused service marketing to emerge as a field in its own right (Grönroos, 1994). The service business is primarily based on maintaining good relationships with clients. Nevertheless, as a consequence of the enormous number of customers, and the highlighting on the model of the marketing mix, the relationship with customers moved into the backdrop in the 1960s and 1970s (Grönroos, 1995). It was not until the start of the 1980s that relationship marketing appeared again in service practices (Perry, 1995). Although the role of customer appreciation in perceiving how to enhance relationship marketing investments has been identified (Palmatier *et al.*, 2009), practical verification of whether different strategies for investing in relationship marketing have different impacts on customer understanding of a hotel reflection.

The Concept of Relationship Marketing

In the literature, there is no clear definition and perspective to the notion of relationship marketing (Morris *et al.*, 1998). Morgan and Hunt (1994) pointed to RM as all marketing activities/applications for attracting more beneficial customers, increasing and preserving relationships with them. Grönroos's (1994) definition includes rather a definite phrase where one is able to identify with the content of RM rather than its purpose. He referred to relationship marketing as mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises to increase and stop relationships with clients where the targets of both parties are fulfilled.

Ballantyne (1994) dealt with RM in the context of a supply chain. The author showed the purpose of RM as establishing relationships to give constant and secure connections in the supply chain. Relationship quality includes reliance and dedication behavioral characteristics as stated in the theory of trust-commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

In addition, Paravatiyar (1996) paid great attention to the teamwork whilst defining RM. When one considers the definitions of all such academics that have connected to relationship marketing, it is observed that it is impossible to have an overall definition as the rationale and content of relationship marketing differ in line with the manufacturing, nation, person, and a corporation in which it is applied. To construct, increase, and preserve continuing and excellent quality relations with customers, it is necessary to build up and make some customers –focused- relationship marketing strategies. The strategy of relationship marketing includes relationship marketing policy and relationship quality. Relationship marketing tactics include three levels (Berry, 1995); level one-financial bond RM, level two-social bond RM, and level three-structural bond RM. The higher levels of RM refer to strong relationships between customers and suppliers. Still, some researchers consider the third level (structural RM) as a strategic partnership (e.g. Morris *et al.*, 1998). Quite a lot of researchers studied the bonds of relationship marketing (e.g. Berry, 1995; Campbell *et al.*, 2006), and the tactics of relationship marketing (e.g. Palmatier *et al.*, 2007), as antecedents the quality of relationship (e.g. Guy & Urli, 2006; Steven & Corsi, 2012). Moreover, relationship quality involves showing the reliance and loyalty level of the customer in the supplier's upcoming performance (Caliskana & Esmer, 2019).

In accordance with the theory of trust and commitment, relationship quality is referred as a negotiator in the relationship marketing model (Palmatier *et al.*, 2007; Schellinck & Brooks, 2016). As mediators, trust and commitment are shaped by different precursors (e.g. Communication and common standards) and bring about numerous findings such as loyalty, cooperation, and financial performance (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Esmer *et al.*, 2016). There are distinguished scholastic researches which establish empirically that the investments of a relationship marketing cause greater performance on the part of the supplier (Sirdeshmukh *et al.*, 2002; Palmatier & Gopalakrishna, 2005; Palmatier *et al.*, 2006; Bichou & Bell, 2007; Chang *et al.*, 2008; Lavissiere, 2018). Drawn in the literature, and on the commitment-trust theory of RM, relationship quality is tackled as the mediator between relationship marketing tactics and port performance (Brooks & Schellinck, 2015; Chang & Thai, 2016).

Relationship Marketing in Hospitality industry

When customers search for service experiences, they look for not only to fulfill their basic requirements, or the economical call of saving money, but also they have the social appeal, connected to the social relationship and feeling of connectedness to the society, connected with the relations with local hosts.

Thus, hotel managers began to draw on relationship marketing as a strategic means to achieve competitive benefits and customers' trust in the features of a certain product or service (Kim *et al.*, 2011). The users of hospitality services build relationships that are promoted between customers and service suppliers and the dedication to these relationships can be more touching and brings social benefits, than related to safety ones, leading to loyalty (Tajeddini *et al.*, 2013). The hosts of accommodation services build up a relationship with customers so as to provide them distinctive experiences, and to allow tourists to call the metropolis all the way through the local viewpoint (Verma *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, tourists long to build up societal and psychological relations from that experience.

The most important technique employed in the platforms of peer-to-peer to facilitate trust is the availability of reputation mechanisms throughout web reviews. Reputation information is usually offered to customers via customers' score numbers (Fullerton, 2003). Whereas user-generated content in the hotel industry is viewed as a vital starting place of feedback for quality development (Torres *et al.*, 2015), web reviews in Airbnb are primarily positive and less-than-positive reviews are made with euphemisms (Newport & McMurray, 2019). This means that interpersonal communication is very significant so that hosts may perceive service features that have room to improve in guests' viewpoint.

An approach to making online communication more personal between guests and hosts is by utilizing photos in the hosts' profiles, as they can make guests more fulfilled and experience safety, affecting their target to buy the service (Adjei *et al.*, 2009). Although it is significant to stress the features and positive characteristics, it is even more significant that these characteristics correspond as closely as possible to the actuality so as to retain legitimacy. Moreover, the means in which hosts communicate with guests via the platform can influence the expectations and level of trust with which guests stay prior to the face-to-face connection. That is why research shows that it is essential to have reachable methods, so hosts will be able to present themselves and their services in line with guests' requirements (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2010). Online and offline connections and self-disclosure between both guests and hosts, that are vital to their correlation progress and accordingly for their closeness, trust, and expected behavior (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). If a hotel recognizes repeat customers, rewards them for returning, and engages them in a two-way dialogue, they will be prompted to come back. Benefits help customers to make a commitment to a hotel (Jones *et al.*, 2000). A business like a hotel can gain and sustain a competitive advantage by implementing relationship marketing (McIllroy & Barnett, 2000). In addition, hospitality establishments need to create competitive marketing strategies to improve their ability to try to win (Egan, 2001). Satisfaction is an important condition for a party to be committed to a relationship. However, measuring how loyalty schemes encourage overnight guests to return to the hotel achieved the lowest score in the same construct (Hanai *et al.*, 2008).

Both customer-related knowledge and customer satisfaction are significant factors in retaining the competitive advantage of a firm (Bowie & Buttle, 2004). The use of electronic tools such as databases plays a significant role in the successful implementation of relationship (Lewis, 2004). There are dominating factors affecting the implementation of relationship marketing such as hotel size in terms of the number of employees, financial resources allocated for relationship marketing, business expertise (the period of time the hotel is in the business), and customer pressure. Future research should focus on further factors influencing the implementation of relationship marketing and address the customer's perspective (Essawy, 2013).

In addition, peer-to-peer accommodation services demonstrate particularities in relationship marketing, taking into account that it relies on a consumer-to-consumer business model, with higher interactions between hosts and guests throughout the experience which are generally reviewed positively (Malhotra *et al.*, 2006). Relationship marketing is very significant for business and specifically for the tourism and hospitality field. Moreover, It is well-known that the improvement of relationships with customers lets companies know their clients better and to adapt the offer to their needs, making them fulfilled and probably faithful (Lemon *et al.*, 2016).

Relationship Marketing and Hotel Innovation

In recent times, companies have found novel paths for open innovation, in the course of communication with user communities or customers, as knowledge and innovation co-creators (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2010). The greatest amount of research available about peer-to-peer sharing accommodation centers on the guests' views of what is important to a good quality stay and to make them fulfilled in this sort of accommodations (Yang *et al.*, 2013).

The growth of competition in tourism allows hospitality owners and destination managers to understand the significance of increasing constant innovations (Taguchi *et al.*, 2014). In the hotel industry, user-generated content is regarded as important insights to develop quality and identify with customers' fulfillment (Torres *et al.*, 2015). Actually, the innovation in tourism may be achieved via collaboration and partnerships with other stakeholders (Brabec *et al.*, 2018), in addition to the improvement of the tourist value co-creation procedure.

Methodology

The methodology of this research is a descriptive approach because it aims to determine the implementation level of relationship marketing strategies in Upper Egypt hotels. The research was based on the method of random cluster samples, where 600 questionnaires were distributed to the customers of North-Upper Egypt hotels in the cities of Fayoum, Beni Suef, Minia, and Assiut as shown in tables 1 and 2.

Table (1): Cluster Samples of The Study

City	No of hotels	No of Annual Nights	No of Questionnaires
Fayoum	16	186150	150
Beni Suef	8	89060	150
Minia	10	151475	150
Assiut	12	167900	150
Total	46	594585	600

Table (2): Determine The Size of The Study Sample.

Determine Sample Size		Find Confidence Interval		
Items	Value	Items	Value	
Confidence Level	0.95	Confidence Level		0.95
Confidence Interval	5	Sample Size	N	517
Population	594585			
Sample Size Needed	384	Confidence Interval		4.31

The data collection tool relied on a questionnaire to be distributed to customers of North Upper Egypt hotels. In addition, the questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with measuring the level of relationship marketing, in which the used scale is designed by John *et al.*, (2020), and the second part deals with demographic data about customers and hotels' data, which they have visited before. This research tests the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between customers with the level of relationship marketing, according to gender, marital status, educational level, hotel stars, and hotel city.
2. There is no significant correlation between the level of relationship marketing and the level of customer loyalty, the level of service quality, the level of accommodation quality, and the level of Foodservice quality.

4. Data Analysis and Results Discussion

About 600 questionnaires were distributed to the customers of North Upper Egypt hotels, and 517 are valid for analysis. By analyzing the study data, the results of the study came as follows:

Table (3): The Frequency of Respondents Demographics

No.	Factors	Items	Frequency	Percent
1	Gender	Male	398	77
		Female	119	23
2	Age	Under 18	33	6.4
		18 - 40	287	55.5
		More Than 40	197	38.1
3	Social Status	Single	137	26.5
		Married	380	73.5
4	Educational Level	University	498	96.3
		Postgraduate	19	3.7

5	Job	Governmental Sector Job	103	19.9
		Private Sector Job	291	56.3
		Free Business	123	23.8
6	Income Level	Less Than 1000	3	0.6
		1000 - 5000	293	56
		5001 - 10000	188	36.4
		More Than 10000	33	6.4

Table (3) shows the frequency of demographic data for the study participants. It turns out that most of the participants are male (77%), ranging in age from 18 to 40 years (55.5%), married (73.5%), university graduates (96.3%), and work in the private sector (56.3%). Also, their income level is ranging from 1,000 to 5,000 pounds (56%).

Table (4): The Frequency of Study Factors

No.	Factors	Items	Frequency	Percent
1	Hotel Stars	One-Star	182	35.2
		Two- Stars	12	2.3
		Three -Stars	77	14.9
		Four- Stars	71	13.7
		Five -Stars	82	15.9
		Unclassified	93	18
2	Hotel City	Assiut	118	22.8
		Minia	191	36.9
		Bani Suef	54	10.4
		Fayoum	154	29.8
3	Duration Of Dealing	Less Than 6 Months	76	14.7
		From 6 months to one year	228	44.1
		More than one year	213	41.2
4	Communication Status	Yes	498	96.3
		No	19	3.7
5	Building Relationships Foundations	Commitment	176	34
		Interaction	11	2.1
		Connections	216	41.8
		Satisfaction	114	22.1
6	Relationship Management Success	Yes	491	95
		No	26	5
7	Motives For Dealing	Confidence	109	21.1
		Special Treatment	126	24.4
		Near the Site	44	8.5
		Speed of Service	26	5
		Special Prices	66	12.8
		Quality of Service	110	21.3
		Diversity of Services	26	5
		Global Reputation	10	1.9

Table (4) presents the factors of the study, as it turns out that most of the hotels are classified as a one-star category (35.2 %). As for the location of the hotels, most of them are located in the city of Minya, 36.9%. Approximately 44.1 of the clients have been dealing with the hotel for a period ranging from more than 6 months to a year and about 41.2% of customers have gone beyond their dealings with the hotel for more than a year. It was also found that there is continuous communication between the hotel and its customers (96.3%).

Customers have indicated that the RM strategy of the hotel is considered successful (95%) in several aspects, which include communication (41.8 %), commitment (34 %), satisfaction (22.1 %), and interaction (2.1 %). Finally, the customer's motives in dealing with the hotel are special treatment, quality of service, confidence, appropriate prices, proximity to the site, speed of service, diversity of services, and global reputation, respectively.

Table (5): The Indicators of Hotel Performance

No.	Factors	Items	Frequency	Percent
1	Relationship Satisfaction Level	Very Low	19	3.7
		Low	32	6.2
		Average	46	8.9
		High	199	38.5
		Very High	221	42.7
2	Customer Loyalty Level	Very Low	16	3.1
		Low	32	6.2
		Average	45	8.7
		High	178	34.4
		Very High	246	47.6
3	Service Quality Level	Very Low	21	4.1
		Low	31	6
		Average	47	9.1
		High	184	35.6
		Very High	234	45.3
4	Accommodation Quality Level	Very Low	26	5
		Low	46	8.9
		Average	67	13
		High	174	33.7
		Very High	204	39.5
5	Food & Beverage Quality Level	Very Low	22	4.3
		Low	41	7.9
		Average	37	7.2
		High	191	36.9
		Very High	226	43.7

Table (5) presents the hotel performance indicators from the clients perspective, as it turns out that the performance levels are estimated between high and very high, equivalent to 81.2% for the level of satisfaction with hotel relations, 82% for the level of hotel customer loyalty, 80.9% for the service quality level, and 73.2% The level of accommodation quality, and 80.6% of the level of food and beverage quality.

Table (6): Descriptives Statistics of Relationship Marketing Level

No.	Tests		Relationships Marketing Level
			Value
1	Mean	Statistic	4.0550
		Std. Error	0.00753
2	95 % Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.0402
		Upper Bound	4.0698
3	Median		4.0500
4	Maximum		4.50
5	Minimum		3.43
6	Range		1.08
7	Variance		0.029
8	Standard Deviation		0.17123
9	Coefficient of Variance (%)		4.22
10	Normal Distribution	K-S	1.163
		Sig	0.134
11	Validity	No. of Items	40
		Cronbach's Alpha	0.159

Table (6) shows descriptive statistics about the implementation level of RM in hotels. The average of RM level (4.06 out of 5) and this is considered a high level. In addition, the level of relationship marketing is distributed normality, and the level of validity is 0.159. The high level of relationship marketing implementation is supported by Adrain *et al.*, (1995) who stated that building a strong relationship with customers fulfill an excellent point of customers' approval, which sequentially helps obtain their faith and their devotion, so benefitting the firm as a whole. Consequently, Ashnai *et al.*, (2009) recommended hospitality establishments to keep an eye on various aspects through the various stages, from building customers' knowledge to shape their perceptions. On the other side, Essawy (2013) stated that the implementation of relationship marketing is a complex and costly task that requires careful consideration.

Table (7): Descriptive Statistics of Relationship Marketing Factors

No	Items	Mean	Std.	Level
1	Commitment	3.8816	0.2176	High
2	Connections	3.8700	0.2228	High
3	Interaction	4.1068	0.01877	High
4	Satisfaction	4.0839	0.01771	High
5	Confidence	4.0836	0.01992	High
6	Social Transactions	4.2294	0.01978	Very High
7	Special treatment	4.0116	0.01978	High
8	Loyalty	4.1733	0.01985	High
Overall Mean		4.06	0.07	High

Table (7) reflects the descriptive statistics of the factors of RM. The factor of social transactions came at a very high level, while commitment factors, connections, interaction, satisfaction, trust, special treatment, and loyalty were at a high level. This reflects the extent to which North Upper Egypt hotels adhere to the principles of marketing with their customers, as these principles are based on trust, mutual value creation, and commitment (Guy & Urli, 2006; Tongzon & Sawant, 2007; Chang *et al.*, 2008; Yang *et al.*, 2016).

Table (8): Descriptive Statistics of Commitment

No.	Items	Mean	Std.	Level
1	Customers visit the hotel with the best possible deals.	4.03	0.930	High
2	The hotel maintains its performance levels.	3.80	1.294	High
3	The hotel abides by all procedures and operations required of it.	3.87	1.073	High
4	The hotel respects the rights of the customer in his dealings.	3.86	1.008	High
5	The hotel sets clear instructions for customers.	3.85	1.236	High
Overall Mean		3.88	0.49	High

Table (8) reflects the hotel's commitment to dealing with customers, as this level is found to be high. These procedures include that customers reside in the hotel with the best offers, the hotel maintains levels of performance, the hotel adheres to all procedures and operations required of it, and the hotel respects the rights of the customer in its transactions and sets clear instructions for customers to deal with the hotel.

Consequently, the high level of commitment between the hotel and the customer is a very important indicator of the success of the relationship marketing process (Guy & Urli, 2006; Tongzon & Sawant, 2007; Chang *et al.*, 2008; Yang *et al.*, 2016).

Table (9): Descriptive Statistics of Connections

No.	Items	Mean	Std.	Level
1	The hotel management is in constant contact with the customer.	3.84	1.253	High
2	Address the hotel employee personally when speaking with the customer.	3.85	1.054	High
3	The hotel holds conferences to introduce itself and its services.	3.86	1.097	High
4	The hotel participates, and is integrated with the customer with whom it has long-term relationships.	4.03	0.991	High
5	The hotel sends greeting cards to the customer on his or her official occasions.	3.77	1.140	High
Overall Mean		3.87	0.51	High

Table (9) shows the level of relations between the hotel and customers, as these links come at a high level. The results indicated that the procedures of the hotel management have consistently communicated with customers, the hotel staff deals in a decent manner with customers, the hotel holds a series of seminars and conferences to introduce it and its services, and the hotel participates an integration with the customer with whom it has long-term relationships. Finally, the hotel sends greeting cards to the customer on his or her official occasions. According to the literature, online and offline connections and self-disclosure between both guests and hosts, that are vital to their correlation progress and accordingly for their closeness, trust, and expected behavior (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In addition, interpersonal communication is very significant for customer relations (Newport & McMurray, 2019).

Table (10): Descriptive Statistics of Interaction

No	Items	Mean	Std.	Level
1	The employee shows kindness and respect when providing hotel service to the customer.	4.14	0.846	High
2	The hotel management issues instructions and directives that regulate the relationship between the hotel and the customer.	4.18	0.853	High
3	The hotel management is interested in the organizational climate of the service such as the waiting room - air conditioning etc	4.33	0.625	Very High
4	The hotel provides a complaint box and suggestions.	4.00	0.979	High
5	The hotel solves problems when they occur while providing service.	3.88	1.021	High
Overall Mean		4.12	0.43	High

Table (10) shows the interaction between customers and the hotel, and this interaction came at a high level. The interaction procedures indicated that the employee kindness and respect when providing the hotel service to the customer, and the hotel management issued instructions and directions that regulate the relationship between the hotel and the customer, the hotel management is concerned with the organizational climate of the service such as the waiting and air-conditioning hall, the provision of the complaints and suggestions box and the hotel management try to solve problems when they occur while providing the service. In this direction, Malhotra *et al.*, (2006) stated that higher interactions between hosts and guests throughout the experience are generally reviewed positively.

Table (11): Descriptive Statistics of Satisfaction

No.	Items	Mean	Std.	Level
1	Hotel services meet customer expectations.	4.03	0.752	High
2	Customer feels the privileged role in its strategic plans.	4.24	0.725	Very High
3	The hotel is constantly trying to understand the customer's needs and know his opinion about the service.	4.10	0.883	High
4	The hotel is concerned with customer complaints and criticisms.	4.07	0.951	High
5	The hotel treats the customer fairly.	3.99	1.146	High
Overall Mean		4.08	0.4	High

Table (11) reflects the extent of customer satisfaction with the hotel services, and this level was high. The satisfaction measures consisted of meeting the customer's expectations and highlighting the distinguished role of the customer in the strategic plans of the hotel, understanding the customers' needs, knowing their opinion about the service continuously, paying attention to the customer's complaints and criticisms, and dealing fairly with the customer. According to the literature, satisfaction is an important condition for a party to be committed to a relationship (Hanai *et al.*, 2008). In addition, both customer-related knowledge and customer satisfaction are significant factors in retaining the competitive advantage of a firm (Bowie & Buttle, 2004).

Table (12): Descriptive Statistics of Confidence

No	Items	Mean	Std.	Level
1	The services of the hotel are varied.	4.02	1.134	High
2	The hotel is very popular.	4.13	1.025	High
3	The hotel follows the transactions strictly and confidentially.	4.06	1.037	High
4	The hotel services are of high quality.	4.21	0.832	Very High
5	The hotel provides services that competitors lack.	4.00	0.901	High
Overall Mean		4.08	0.45	High

Table (12) shows the level of trust between the hotel and the customer, as this level was high. The confidence measures were represented in the diversity of the hotel services, its wide reputation, and the follow-up of operations with customers with accuracy and confidentiality. These transactions are characterized by high quality and the provision of unique and distinct services compared to competitors. According to the literature, trust and commitment are shaped by different precursors (e.g. Communication and common standards) and bring about numerous findings such as loyalty, cooperation, and financial performance (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Esmer *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, the investments of a relationship marketing cause a greater performance (Sirdeshmukh *et al.*, 2002; Palmatier & Gopalakrishna, 2005; Palmatier *et al.*, 2006; Bichou & Bell, 2007; Chang *et al.*, 2008; Lavissiere, 2018).

Table (13): Descriptive Statistics of Social Transaction

No	Items	Mean	Std.	Level
1	Hotel staff possesses dialogue skills with clients to create an honorable image of the hotel.	4.43	0.790	Very High
2	The hotel constantly follows the needs and preferences of the customer and keeps up with their satisfaction.	4.28	1.142	Very High
3	The hotel employee has good listening and attention to the customer.	4.08	1.015	High
4	The hotel focuses on finding personalized delivery systems.	4.19	0.993	High
5	The hotel wants to build relationships with the customer	4.18	0.931	High
Overall Mean		4.23	0.42	Very High

Table (13) shows the level of social transactions with clients that came at a high level. These dealings consisted of hotel employees possessing dialogue skills with customers to form an honorable image of the hotel, constantly following the needs and preferences of the customer and keeping up with their satisfaction, excellence in good listening and attention to the customer, finding delivery systems for the service in a personal capacity, and building good relationships with the customer.

Table (14): Descriptive Statistics of Special Treatment

No	Items	Mean	Std.	Level
1	The hotel seeks to quickly and easily obtain services.	4.02	0.752	High
2	The customer gets appropriate prices and discounts.	4.03	0.957	High
3	The customer gets the services at lower costs compared to the competing hotels.	3.86	1.168	High
4	The customer gets special services compared to other clients.	3.94	1.044	High
5	The hotel seeks to take into account the interests of the customer.	4.21	0.911	Very High
Overall Mean		4.0116	0.44966	High

Table (14) shows the level of special treatment with hotel customers, and these treatments were at a high level. These transactions include the speed and ease of obtaining services, the customer obtaining appropriate prices and discounts, obtaining services at lower costs compared to competitors, obtaining special services for customers compared to other customers, and taking into account the interests of customers constantly. Consequently, increase, and preserve continuing and excellent quality relations with customers is necessary to build up and make some customers –focused- relationship marketing strategies (Paravatiyar, 1996).

Table (15): Descriptive Statistics of Loyalty

No.	Items	Mean	Std.	Level
1	The hotel’s relationship with the customer is so strong that he doesn’t look at another hotel.	4.04	1.002	High
2	The hotel provides the customer with appropriate advice.	4.18	0.945	High
3	The hotel is constantly improving its services.	4.40	0.837	Very High
4	The hotel meets its obligations to the customer.	4.21	1.039	Very High
5	The hotel offers the customer more than expected.	4.03	1.078	High
Overall Mean		4.1733	0.45134	High

Table (15) shows the level of customer loyalty to the hotel, and this loyalty came at a higher level. The procedures included the strength of the relationship with customers, providing appropriate advice to clients, continuous improvement in hotel services, fulfilling obligations towards the customer, and providing continuously beyond customer expectations. Thus, relationship quality involves showing the reliance and loyalty level of the customer in the hotel’s upcoming performance (Caliskana & Esmer, 2019).

Table (16): The Relationships among Research Variables

No.	Variable X	Variable Y	R	Sig
1	Commitment	Relationships marketing level	0.365 ^{**}	0.000
3	Connections		0.352 ^{**}	0.000
4	Interaction		0.398 ^{**}	0.000
5	Satisfaction		0.332 ^{**}	0.000
6	Confidence		0.402 ^{**}	0.000
7	Social Transactions		0.346 ^{**}	0.000
8	Special Treatment		0.347 ^{**}	0.000
9	Loyalty		0.371 ^{**}	0.000

^{**}Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table (16) shows the relationships between the variables of RM, where there is a direct correlation between the level of marketing with relationships and trust (0.402), loyalty (0.371), interaction (0.398), commitment (0.365), connections (0.352) and special treatment (0.347), social transactions (0.346), and satisfaction (0.332). Essawy's study (2013) recommends the focus on factors influencing the implementation of relationship marketing and address the customer's perspective. In addition, the improvement of relationships with customers lets hotels know their customers better and to adapt the offer to their needs, making them fulfilled and probably faithful (Lemon et al., 2016).

Table (17): T-Test among Research Variables

Variables		t-test for Equality of Means			
		Mean	t	df	Sig.
Gender	Male	4.0558	0.215	224.5 34	0.830
	Female	4.0523			
Social Status	Single	4.0520	- 0.241	515	0.810
	Married	4.0561			
Educational Level	University	4.0528	- 1.510	515	0.132
	Postgraduate	4.1132			
Communication Status	Yes	4.0558	0.540	515	0.590
	No	4.0342			
Relationship Management Success	Yes	4.0525	-1.434	515	0.152
	No	4.1019			

Table (17) shows that there are no statistically significant differences between respondents in the level of relationship marketing, according to gender, social status, educational level, state of communication with the hotel, and the success of the relationship marketing strategy.

Table (18): The One Way ANOVA among Research Variables

No.	Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Job	0.45	2	0.23	0.774	0.462
		15.083	514	0.029		
		15.128	516			
2	Income Level	0.111	3	0.037	1.266	0.285
		15.017	513	0.029		
		15.128	516			
3	Hotel Stars	0.173	5	0.035	1.181	0.317
		14.955	511	0.029		
		15.128	516			
4	Hotel City	0.102	3	0.034	1.166	0.322
		15.026	513	0.029		
		15.128	516			
5	Duration of Dealing	0.036	2	0.018	0.620	0.539
		15.092	514	0.029		
		15.128	516			

6	Building Relationships Foundations	0.014	3	0.005	0.162	0.922
		15.114	513	0.029		
		15.128	516			
7	Motives for Dealing	0.178	7	0.025	0.868	0.532
		14.950	509	0.29		
		15.128	516			
8	Relationship satisfaction level	0.089	4	0.022	0.754	0.555
		15.040	512	0.029		
		15.128	516			
9	Loyalty Level	0.036	4	0.009	0.309	0.872
		15.092	512	0.029		
		15.128	516			
10	Service Quality Level	0.138	4	0.035	1.180	0.319
		14.990	512	0.029		
		15.128	516			
11	Accommodation quality level	0.256	4	0.064	2.205	0.067
		14.872	512	0.029		
		15.128	516			
12	Food & Beverage Quality level	0.111	4	0.028	0.946	0.437
		15.017	512	0.029		
		15.128	516			

Table (18) shows that there are no statistically significant differences between respondents in the level of RM, according to the job, the income level, the hotel category, the hotel location, the period of customer interaction with the hotel, the foundations of relationship building, the motives for dealing, the level of satisfaction with hotel relations, the level of customer loyalty, the level of service quality, and the level of quality of stay and the level of food and beverage quality.

Conclusion

This research aims to determine the implementation level of relationship marketing strategies in north upper Egypt hotels in the cities of Fayoum, Beni Suef, Minia, and Assiut. Random cluster samples include 517 questionnaires were distributed to the customers of North Upper Egypt hotels. It was found from the results of this study, that the majority of customers participating in this study are male (77%), their age ranges between 18 to 40 years (55.5%), they are married (73.5%), and university graduates (96.3%). In addition, they are working in the private sector (56.3 %). Also, their income level is from 1,000 to 5,000 pounds (56%). Regarding the RM strategy, virtually 44.1% of the customers have been dealing with the hotel for a period ranging from more than 6 months to a year, and about 41.2% of customers have gone beyond their dealings with the hotel for more than a year. It was also found that the continuous communication between the hotel and its customers is about 96.3%. Customers have indicated that the hotel's marketing strategy by using relationships is considered successful (95%) in several aspects, which include communication, commitment, satisfaction, and interaction, respectively.

Finally, the customers' motives in dealing with the hotel are special treatment, quality of service, confidence, appropriate prices, proximity to the site, speed of service, diversity of services, and global reputation.

The average level of RM is 4.06 out of 5, and is considered a high level. In addition, hotel performance levels range from high to very high, equivalent to 81.2% for the level of satisfaction with hotel relationships, 82% the level of hotel customer loyalty, 80.9% the quality level, 73.2% the quality of the stay, and 80.6% the level of food and beverage quality. There is a significant correlation between the level of RM and the variables of trust (0.402), loyalty (0.371), interaction (0.398), commitment (0.365), connections (0.352), special treatment (0.347), social interactions (0.346) and satisfaction (0.332). Finally, there are no statistically significant differences between hotel customers in the level of relationship marketing according to gender, marital status, educational level, the status of communication with the hotel, the extent of success of the relationship marketing strategy, position, income level, hotel category, hotel location, the period of customer interaction with the hotel, the bases of building relationships, motivation for dealing, and the level of satisfaction with relationships with the hotel. In addition, the level of customer loyalty, the level of service quality, the level of residence quality, and the level of food and beverage quality.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this research:

- It is recommended that hotels should use relationship marketing strategies to find a loyal customer relationship management.
- It is recommended to enhance the level of relationship marketing with customers.
- While implementing relationship-marketing strategies, some considerations should be given to improving confidence, loyalty, interaction, commitment, connections, special treatment, social transactions, and satisfaction.
- Hotel managers should maintain its performance levels, always contact customers, solve problems when they occur while providing service, treat the customer fairly, vary its services, constantly follow the needs and preferences of the customer, and keeps up with their satisfaction. In addition, they should provide services at lower costs compared to competing hotels. Moreover, hotel managers should offer the customer more than expected.

Limitations and Future Researches

It is not possible to generalize the results of this study as it is confined to North Upper Egypt hotels, therefore it is preferable to conduct this study on other tourist destinations in Egypt, such as Luxor, Aswan, Red Sea, and Sharm El-Sheikh.

References

- Adjei, T., Griffith, A., & Noble, M., (2009) **"When do relationships pay off for small retailers? Exploring targets and contexts to understand the value of relationship marketing"**, *J. Retail.* 85 (4), 493–501
- Adrain, P., Martin, C., Moria, C., & Helen, P., (1995) **"Relationship Marketing for Competitive Advantage"**, Oxford Butterworth Heinemann.
- Ashnai, B., Smirnova, M., Kouchtch, S., Yu, Q., Barnes, R. & Naudé, P., (2009) **"Assessing relationship quality in four business- to- business markets"**, *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 27 (1): 86-102.
- Atul, P., & Sheth, J., (2000) **"Evolving Relationship Marketing into a Discipline"**, *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, 1 (1): 3-16.
- Ballantyne, D., (1994) **"Editorial: marketing at the crossroads"**, *Asia-Aust. Marketing J.* 2 (1): 1–7.
- Berry, L., (1995) **"Relationship marketing of services—growing interest, emerging perspectives"**, *J. Acad. Mark. Sci.*, 23 (4):236–245.
- Bichou, K., & Bell, H., (2007) **"Internationalization and consolidation of the container port industry: assessment of channel structure and relationships"**, *Mar. Econ. Logist.*, 9 (1): 35–51.
- Bowie, D., & Buttle, F., (2004) **"Hospitality Marketing: An Introduction"**, Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.
- Brabec, J., & Durrant, R., (2018) **"Solution-processed organic solar cells"**, *MRS Bull.* 33: 670–675
- Caliskana, A., & Esmer, S., (2019) **"Does it really worth investing in relationship marketing for a port business?"**, *Case Studies on Transport Policy*, (7): 375–383
- Campbell, T., Nicholson, D., & Kitchen, J., (2006) **"The importance of social bonding and loyalty: an empirical investigation within UK private health clubs"**, *J. Hospitality, Leisure Marketing* 14 (1): 49–73.
- Chang, H., Thai, V., (2016) **"Do port security quality and service quality influence customer satisfaction and loyalty?"**, *Mar. Policy Manage.* 43 (6): 720–736.
- Chang, T., Lee, Y., Tongzon, L., (2008) **"Port selection factors by shipping lines: different perspectives between trunk liners and feeder service providers"**, *Mar. Policy*, 32 (6): 877–885.
- Egan, J., (2001) **"Relationship Marketing: Exploring Relational Strategies in Marketing"**, Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Esmer, S., Nguyen, O., Bandara, M., Yeni, K., (2016) **"Non-price competition in the port sector: a case study of ports in Turkey"**, *Asian J. Shipping Logist.* 32 (1): 3–11.
- Essawy, M. (2013) **"The implementation of relationship marketing by independent Egyptian hotels"**, *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 12 (4): 175–187.
- Fullerton, G., (2003) **"When does commitment lead to loyalty?"**, *J. Serv. Res.* 5 (4): 333–344

- Grönroos, C. (1995) "**Relationship Marketing: The Strategy Continuum**", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 23 (4): 252–254.
- Grönroos, C., (1994) "**From marketing mix to relationship marketing**", *Manage. Decis.* 32 (2): 4–20.
- Gummesson, E. (2002) "**Total Relationship Marketing: Marketing Management, Relationship Strategy and CRM Approaches for the Network Economy**", 2nd Edition, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.
- Guy, E., & Urli, B., (2006) "**Port selection and multicriteria analysis: an application to the Montreal-New York alternative**", *Mar. Econ. Logist.* 8 (2): 169–186.
- Hanai, T., Oguchi, T., & Ando, K., (2008) "**Important attributes of lodgings to gain repeat business: a comparison between individual travels and group travels**", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, (27): 268–275.
- Jones, M., Mothersbaugh, D., & Beatty, S. (2000) "**Switching barriers and repurchase intentions in services**", *Journal of Retailing*, 76(2): 259–274.
- Kim, I., Jeon, M., Hyun, S., (2011) "**The role of effective service provider communication style in the formation of restaurant patrons' perceived relational benefits and loyalty**", *J. Travel Tour. Mark.* 28 (7): 765–786.
- Lavissiere, A., (2018), "**Vessel Port Dues: an influence from path dependency rather than geography of ports**". *Asian J. Shipping Logist.* 34 (2): 61–70.
- Lemon, N., & Verhoef, C., (2016) "**Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey**" *J. Mark.* 80 (6): 69–96.
- Lewis, M., (2004) "**The influence of loyalty programs and short-term promotions on customer retention**", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 41(3): 281–292.
- Lovelock, H., & Wirtz, J., (2010) "**Services Marketing**", 7th Edition, New Jersey: Prentice Hall
- Malhotra, K., Kim, S., & Patil, A., (2006) "**Common method variance in IS research: A comparison of alternative approaches and a reanalysis of past research**", *Manag. Sci.* 52 (12): 1865–1883.
- McIllroy, A., & Barnett, S., (2000) "**Building customer relationships: do discount cards work**", *Managing Service Quality*, 10 (6): 347–355.
- Morgan, M., & Hunt, D., (1994) "**The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing**", *J. Marketing*, 58: 20–38.
- Morris, H., Brunyee, J., & Page, M., (1998) "**Relationship marketing in practice**", *Ind. Mark Manage*, 27: 359–371.
- Newport, F., & McMurray, C., (2019) "**U.S. small-business owners' optimism down from record high**", *Marketing Research Journal*, 49(4): 17–28.
- Palmatier, W., & Gopalakrishna, S., (2005) "**Determining the payoff from relationship marketing programs**", *MSI Rep, Marketing Sci. Inst. Working Paper Ser.* 1 (5): 49–70

- Palmatier, W., Dant, P., Grewal, D., & Evans, R., (2006) **"Factors influencing the effectiveness of relationship marketing: a meta-analysis"**. J. Marketing 70 (4): 136–153.
- Palmatier, W., Jarvis, B., Bechhoff, R., & Kardes, R., (2009) **"The role of customer gratitude in relationship marketing"**, J. Marketing 73 (5): 1–18.
- Palmatier, W., Scheer, K., Houston, B., Evans, R., Gopalakrishna, S., (2007) **"Use of relationship marketing programs in building customer–salesperson and customer–firm relationships: differential influences on financial outcomes"**, Int. J. Res. Mark. 24 (3): 210–223.
- Paravatiyar, A., (1996) **"industrial marketing and purchasing"**, during the 12th International Conference, Karlsruhe.
- Schellinck, T., Brooks, M.R., (2016) **"Does superior service performance provided to shipping lines improve the perceived value of a port?"**, Int. J. Shipping Transp. Logist. 8 (2): 175–193.
- Sirdeshmukh, D., Singh, J., & Sabol, B., (2002) **"Consumer trust, value, and loyalty in relational exchanges"**, J. Marketing 66 (1): 15–37
- Steven, B., & Corsi, M., (2012) **"Choosing a port: an analysis of containerized imports into the US"**, Transp. Res. Part E: Logist. Transp. Rev. 48 (4): 881–895.
- Taguchi, M. (2014) **"24.7% record efficiency HIT solar cell on thin silicon wafer"**, IEEE J. Photovolt. (4): 96–99.
- Tajeddini, K., Elg, U., & Trueman, M., (2013) **"Efficiency and effectiveness of small retailers: The role of customer and entrepreneurial orientation"**, J. Retail. Consum. Serv. 20 (5): 453–462.
- Tongzong, V. & Sawant, T. (1995) **"The Nature of Customer Relationship in Service"**, Advances in Services Marketing and Management, (4): 141-167.
- Torres, M., Tse, B., Yau, M., Chow, M., Lee, Y. & Lau, Y. (2005) **"Relationship marketing orientation: scale development and cross culture validation"**, Journal of Business Research, (58): 185-194.
- Verma, V., Sharma, D., Sheth, J., (2016) **"Does relationship marketing matter in online retailing? A meta-analytic approach"**. J. Acad. Mark. Sci. 44 (2): 206–217.
- Yang, J., Wang, W., & Li, X., (2016) **"Port choice strategies for container carriers in China: a case study of the Bohai Bay Rim port cluster"**, Int. J. Shipping Transp and Logist, 8 (2): 129–152.
- Zou, S., & Cavusgil, T., (2002) **"The GMS: a broad conceptualization of global marketing strategy and its effect on firm performance"**, J. Marketing 66 (4): 40–56

مستوى تنفيذ استراتيجيات التسويق بالعلاقات في فنادق شمال الصعيد المصري

محمد طه أحمد عبد الموجود^١ محمد أحمد على^٢ محمد أحمد عادل ذكي^٣

كلية السياحة والفنادق، جامعة المنيا

الملخص العربي

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحديد مستوى تنفيذ استراتيجيات التسويق بالعلاقات في فنادق شمال الصعيد في مدن الفيوم وبني سويف والمنيا وأسيوط. وذلك من خلال قائمة استقصاء تم توزيعها على عينة عنقودية عشوائية تتكون من ٥١٧ عميل. لقد أظهرت النتائج أن متوسط مستوى تنفيذ التسويق بالعلاقات مرتفع بما يعادل ٨١,٢٪ (٤,٠٦ من ٥). بالإضافة إلى ذلك، ذكر معظم العملاء (٩٦,٣٪) إن هناك تواصل مستمر مع الفندق، حوالي ٩٥٪ منهم قيموا العلاقة التسويقية كاستراتيجية ناجحة، ولقد تضمنت دوافع العملاء في التعامل مع الفنادق؛ المعاملة الخاصة، وجودة الخدمة، والثقة، والأسعار المناسبة، والقرب من الموقع وسرعة الخدمة وتنوع الخدمات والسمعة العالمية. علاوة على ذلك، فإن مستوى الأداء الفندقية يتراوح من مرتفع إلى مرتفع للغاية، من حيث مستوى رضا العلاقات (٨١,٢٪)، ومستوى ولاء العملاء (٨٢٪)، ومستوى جودة الخدمة (٨٠,٩٪)، ومستوى جودة الإقامة (٧٣,٢٪)، ومستوى جودة الأغذية والمشروبات (٨٠,٦٪). وأخيراً هناك علاقة ارتباط معنوية بين مستوى التسويق بالعلاقات ومتغيرات الثقة (٤٠٢,٠)، والولاء (٣٧١,٠)، والتفاعل (٣٩٨,٠)، والالتزام (٣٦٥,٠)، والاتصالات (٣٥٢,٠)، والمعاملة الخاصة (٣٤٧,٠)، والمعاملات الاجتماعية (٣٤٦,٠)، والرضا (٣٣٢,٠). في الختام، تعد نتائج هذا البحث خطوة أساسية لمديري الضيافة لتطوير استراتيجيات فعالة للتسويق بالعلاقات في فنادق شمال الصعيد.

الكلمات الرئيسية: التسويق بالعلاقات؛ استراتيجيات التسويق؛ فنادق شمال الصعيد.