



## How Customer Relationship Management Practices Enhance Competitiveness within Five-Star Hotels? The Mediating Effect of Customer Loyalty

Samar Nabil Khalaf<sup>1</sup>, Hamad Ali Batikh Hamdoun<sup>2</sup>, Maisa Fathey Abd El-latif<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hotel Studies Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University, Fayoum, Egypt

<sup>2</sup> Hotel Studies Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Luxor University, Luxor, Egypt

<sup>3</sup> Hotel Studies Department, Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotels - Luxor (E.G.O.T.H), Luxor, Egypt

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### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the effect of customer relationship management (CRM) practices on hotel competitiveness, emphasizing the mediating role of customer loyalty. This field study took a random sample of 284 department managers at five-star hotels in Luxor and Aswan, where the percentage of questionnaires amounted to about 71% of the total questionnaires distributed. Their responses were analyzed using SmartPLS v.4. Findings confirmed that knowledge management had the most significant impact on customer loyalty compared to the other dimensions. Additionally, customer loyalty was identified as a significant partial mediator in the relationship between CRM practices and hotel competitiveness. Results underline the need for hotels to focus on knowledge management, as it plays a vital role in hotels' long-term relationship with their customers and ability to compete effectively. By findings, this paper suggests that hotel management should employ recruitment and advancement of knowledge-sharing systems, up gradation of personalized services, and digital solutions to improve customer loyalty. Hence, this will help the hospitality industry gain sustainable competitiveness. The most important recommendations were to use customer relationship management systems based on modern technologies to enhance customer engagement and to leverage digital marketing strategies to engage guests more effectively and to improve customer loyalty to brands through online interactions.

## **1. Introduction**

Customer relationship management (CRM) practices have become a key part of contemporary hotel management and one of the strategic tools for ensuring customer loyalty (Opoku et al., 2025). Due to the nature of the hospitality industry, hotels are always in pursuit of new ways to create and manage guest relationships (Sofi et al., 2025).

From hotel manager perspectives, CRM initiatives are the crucial tools that help improve customer satisfaction, personalize guest experiences, and boost retention (Bardukova, 2023). However, data-driven insights and targeted engagement strategies empower hotels to develop meaningful interactions beyond transactional relationships (Troisi et al., 2023), turning first-time visitors into loyal customers. Transitioning away from service models to relationship-based models creates long-term customer loyalty and improves hotels' overall position in markets (Valmohammadi et al., 2025). In hospitality globe where customers have numerous options, well-implemented CRM systems ensure (Ozuem et al., 2024) that hotels do not lose relevance by adjusting to guests' changing demands and priorities (Sofi et al., 2025).

CRM practices enable hotel managers to understand customer behavior, preferences, and expectations (Singh et al., 2023). By analyzing data, segmenting customers, and executing personalized marketing approaches (Bilgihan & Ricci, 2024), hotels are reasonably able to adapt and personalize their services to address the distinct demands of various customer profiles (Adeniran et al., 2024). Examples would be loyalty programs, personalized offers, and proactive engagement that allow hotels to build a sense of exclusivity and appreciation for guests (Bardukova, 2023). Moreover, CRM allows seamless guest interactions through multiple touch points before, during, and after their stay, enabling consistent and high-quality service delivery (Liu et al., 2024). With CRM tools including artificial intelligence chatbots, automated booking systems, and preference-tracking technologies hotel managers can manage guest experiences and operational efficiency (Bilgihan & Ricci, 2024). Hence, this allows managers to make educated decisions, resulting in higher customer satisfaction, which leads to higher chances of repeat visits and recommendations (Opoku et al., 2025).

In addition to improving guest experiences, CRM practices create emotional ties between hotels and their customers a fundamental aspect of sustaining long-term loyalty (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Recognition is a fundamental avenue to personalize engagement; acknowledging repeat guests, remembering crucial moments, and providing custom-made offerings embody customers and demonstrate values (Han et al., 2021). When guests feel a sense of brand attachment, hotel

brands are sensed as caring about guests, their preferences and well-being (Kim et al., 2021). It ensures responsive communication and positive engagement with potential guests, driving bookings and visibility and managing customer feedback proactively (Troisi et al., 2023), allowing hotels to address customer concerns in real time while taking steps to improve service standards (Singh et al., 2023). Being responsive minimizes possible customer dissatisfaction and enhances customer trust and brand credibility. As a result of focusing on relationships, hotel managers will build a more robust customer base that will prefer to stay at their property (Bilgihan & Ricci, 2024) instead of competing properties regardless of price fluctuations or market disruption (Sofi et al., 2025).

CRM practices enable hoteliers to gain a strategic advantage over their competitors with regard to long-term sustainable development and profitability (Khan et al., 2022). Repeat bookings, higher revenue per customers, and better brand recognition are the causes why better relationship management strengthens customer loyalty (Bilgihan & Ricci, 2024). In addition, loyal customers are advocates for brands and naturally convert new potential guests with good testimonials on recommendations by word-of-mouth (Adeniran et al., 2024). In closely contested hospitality settings, hotels that are able to effectively roll out CRM initiatives can create competitive advantages through personalized experiences (Opoku et al., 2025).

With regular updates to their CRM strategies and responsiveness to evolving customer behaviors, hotel managers can maintain growth and robust market positioning (Fernando et al., 2023), making their hotels the top choice for global guests. The objectives of this paper are: a) to analyze the role of CRM practices in hotel managers' perspective on customer loyalty; b) to study the influence of customer loyalty on hotel competitiveness; c) to assess the pivotal role of customer loyalty in enhancing CRM practices and hotel competitiveness.

## **2. Literature review and hypothesis development**

### *2.1. Customer loyalty and hotel competitiveness*

Customer loyalty is a vital element to the competitive success of hotels, as loyal customers provide hotels with a stable revenue stream, positive brand image, and long-term prosperity (George, 2021). Several studies have documented a linkage between retention rates for existing customers and financial performance (Al-Hashimy et al., 2022; Lee & Suh 2022), loyal customers generate greater profitability than one who makes a first-time purchase (Karim & Rabiul, 2024). Ultimately, hotels that build strong relationships with guests earn higher occupancy rates, less marketing expenses, and more resilience against swings in the marketplace

(Huda, 2023). Loyal customers also spend more, trusting and receptive to brands and premium offers (e.g., room upgrades, food and beverage facilities, and spa treatments) (Karim & Rabiul, 2024). In the information age, delighted customers become brand ambassadors of their favorite hotels through various digital platforms (e.g., OTAs, review websites, and social media) (Davis, 2023); word-of-mouth marketing strengthens the impact of customer loyalty on competitiveness. Hence, hotels whose employees are trained to accommodate their customers with loyalty programs have become significantly more competitive than those focused on garnering new customers (Dixit, 2025).

In addition to financial results, customer loyalty makes it possible for hotels to set it apart in crowded landscapes (George, 2021). With high competition among customers, hotels must always look for innovation to meet changing customer preferences from loyal guests serves as great wisdom (Al-Hashimy et al., 2022), helping hotels identify the services offered during the stay, better personalize guest experiences, and predict future needs (Davis, 2023). Besides, when customers are they will be more forgiving of the occasional service fumbling because they trust brands more and their satisfaction levels (Dixit, 2025). Such stability enables hotels to work on long-term enhancements and strategic improvements instead of short-term crisis management (Karim & Rabiul, 2024). In the digital age where online reviews can heavily sway potential guests' booking decisions, a solid foundation of loyal customers creates self-perpetuating actions that enables hotels to maintain high ratings (Liu et al., 2024). This heightened level of customer loyalty helps hotels maintain their existing customers and promotes their position in competitive landscapes (Al-Hashimy et al., 2022), where they are estimated by the room rates they charge and their service quality, personal attention they provide for their guests, and reward programs (Dixit, 2025). Thus, this paper assumes that:

***H1. Customer loyalty has a statistically significant effect on hotel competitiveness.***

## *2.2. Customer relationship management (CRM)*

CRM prospects include various critical aspects that maximize customer interaction and loyalty in the hospitality industry (Bardukova, 2023). Data-driven personalization is at the heart of impactful CRM and strong customer focus is a key to CRM practices (Allison, 2024). This approach starts with understanding customer needs, segmenting guests according to their behavior, and providing tailored experiences that create lasting relationships (Bardukova, 2023). Key customer that is matters of presentation of results at hotels try to make the significance of the moment with personalized recommendations perks of elite loyalty programs, and tailored

services that further customer satisfaction (Liu et al., 2024). When customers are kept at the crux of strategies, hotel managers can witness a momentous uplift in guest retention (Allison, 2024), setting their brand apart from the competition (Liu et al., 2024).

The second critical aspect of CRM is the CRM organization to ensure that customer-centric tactics are incorporated into operational frameworks (Azeem et al., 2022). Hence, this includes creating guest-centric environments, educating employees on ensuring customer delight and optimizing back-end procedures for faster service to confidently aid departments in working collaboratively with the same guest data (Azeem et al., 2022), providing the same unified experience across multiple channels. CRM is reinforced by knowledge management through analysis and use of customer data to enhance service delivery (Yerpude & Rautela, 2023). Hotels help improve customer service through comprehensive guest profiles that keep data on customers accessible (Das, 2023), allowing hotels to anticipate customer behaviors and get to the root of issues before they arise (Allison, 2024). Moreover, technology-based CRM automation helps in improving CRM activities (Yerpude & Rautela, 2023). AI-powered chatbots, data analytics platforms, and cloud-based reservation systems give hotels the ability to manage relations with customers more successfully (Thakur, 2024). Sequentially, these technologies enable effective real-time communication, predictive analytics, and seamless service delivery (Sofi et al., 2025), leading to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Sales and marketing efforts often focus less on getting the most value from customers and more on increasing the customer base (Ahmad et al., 2021; Hernandez-Ortega & Ferreira, 2021). CRM strategies based on these principles are even more impactful in the hospitality industry (Azeem et al., 2022), where service quality and guest satisfaction are critical, and personalized interactions, tailored services, and proactive services drive customer retention (Yerpude & Rautela, 2023). Focusing on guest needs, preferences, and expectations helps hotels build relationships that are more than just a single transaction (Sofi et al., 2025). When customers feel like VIPs, they form a deeper emotional connection to brands. Hence, this translates into heightened satisfaction and a propensity to spend more money over time (Dixit, 2025). Prior studies showed that customers who feel seen and responded to are more likely to build long-term loyalty (Hochstein et al., 2023), showing that customer-centric strategies also directly translate to competitive advantages in hospitality settings.

Another core strategy focused on customers under CRM is to allow hotels to gather and evaluate precious guest data so that they can help managers decide to improve service quality

(Davis, 2023). These upgraded CRM systems combine customer feedback, purchasing history, and behavioral patterns to predict needs and deliver personalized experiences (Boppana, 2023). For example, personalized recommendations, remembering guest preferences, or offering exclusive benefits create exclusivity and trust (Adeniran et al., 2024). Ahmad et al. (2024) indicated that customers who feel hotels care about their happiness, showing more significant commitment and advocacy. Ultimately, efficiently addressing customer complaints and upholding clear, consistent communication between brands and customer outlets (Boppana, 2023) through digital media enhances brand image. Hence, this ensures a repeating of visits to hotels, and customers, who feel this kind of business-customer relationship (Hochstein et al., 2023), are more likely to refer customers to others via word-of-mouth marketing approach (Adeniran et al., 2024). Thus, this paper presumes that:

***H2. Key customer-focus has a statistically significant effect on customer loyalty.***

A well-defined strategy, efficient data management systems, and a customer-centered approach that guarantees consistency in service delivery are all part of an effective CRM organization (Ofori & Appiah-Nimo, 2022). By establishing structured CRM frameworks and tracking guest preferences while analyzing behavioral patterns, hotels can provide tailored offers, leading to greater customer satisfaction (Rane et al., 2023). Loyalty programs, personalized communication, and proactive issue resolution are some practices that illustrate hotels' dedication to its guests and solidify their emotional ties to brands (Bardukova, 2023). Furthermore, well-structured CRM systems allow hotel managers to keep a centralized record of customer interactions (Sofi et al., 2025), allowing service teams to deliver uniform and personalized experiences. By implementing a systematic approach to relationship management, hotels can enhance their interaction with guests (García-Nieto et al., 2025), bolstering repeated visits' chances and fostering long-term loyalty (Sofi et al., 2025).

Notably, organized CRM practices lead to increased customer satisfaction, as guests respond positively to personalized interactions and tailored services (Spoerr et al., 2021). Properly structured CRM systems can enable multiple communication channels social media, mobile apps, and emails to be integrated to deliver timely and relevant updates to customers (Boppana, 2023). Moreover, predictive analytics in CRM systems assist hotel administrators in better predicting guests' needs and provision of services that surpass their expectations (Anubala & Philosophers, 2023). Prior studies (Nethanani et al., 2024; Ofori & Appiah-Nimo, 2022)

showed that efficient CRM strategies positively impacts repeat hotel bookings, online reviews, and visitor recommendations, which help develop successful businesses in the long run. Moreover, when customers feel that their leisure preferences matter and their hotel are providing high-level services (Rane et al., 2023), they will stay loyal even when faced with competing market offers (Anubala & Philosophers, 2023). As long as they better handle CRM, hotels can establish long-term relationships with guests to have a significant effect on customer loyalty and gain sustainable competitive advantages (García-Nieto et al., 2025). Therefore, this paper assumes that:

***H3. CRM organization has a statistically significant effect on customer loyalty.***

A process of systematically gathering, analyzing, and applying customer-related data is known as knowledge management (Chaithanapat & Rakthin, 2021); the hospitality industry can use this technique to provide another level of service quality and guest satisfaction (Ali et al., 2021). Such use of knowledge allows hotel managers to build togetherness with guests and trust which helps them keep them as long-term guests (Rane et al., 2023). By collecting and analyzing customer data systematically booking history, preferences, and feedback through integrated technology platforms (Guo et al., 2024), hotels can deliver proactive service to anticipate customer needs and exceed their expectations (Mandić et al., 2023). These high-level services helps increase satisfaction and improve chances of return visits, cementing customer loyalty (Chaithanapat & Rakthin, 2021). Data-driven CRM strategies increase retention, as evidenced by Troisi et al. (2023) specialized data enables organizations to create stronger bonds with their customers through personalized experiences.

In addition, effective management and use of customer knowledge enables hotels to have competitive advantages in providing consistent and high-quality service across touch points (Bharwani & Mathews, 2021). CRM systems allow access to guest details in real time so that hotel managers can provide seamless and personalized interactions (Sofi et al., 2025). For example, when returning guests are treated to personalized suggestions, or welcomed by name upon arrival, they feel valued and appreciated (Xue et al., 2022). Hence, this enhances their emotional connection to brands (Bharwani & Mathews, 2021). Key insights through knowledge management enable hotels to recognize patterns emerging from common irritants and potential improvement avenues to address customer complaints proactively (Fowler et al., 2024). This responsiveness prevents dissatisfaction but helps build brand credibility and trust critical

elements of customer loyalty puzzle (Spoerr, 2021). This continuous customer knowledge updating via CRM tools helps keep hotel service offerings up to date and relevant (Bharwani & Mathews, 2021). Hence, this makes sure they are a part of guest conversations and increasing loyalty (Xue et al., 2022). Thus, this paper proposes that:

***H4. Knowledge management has a statistically significant effect on customer loyalty.***

AI-powered big data analytics and automation tools are supported by an integrated CRM system that personalizes guest experiences, streamlines operations and allows continuous engagement (Iyelolu et al., 2024). By using data-driven insights, hotels are often able to better customer preferences, anticipate needs, and provide relevant promotions or services that are designed around satisfaction (Troisi et al., 2023). Furthermore, CRM-powered loyalty programs that furnish personalized rewards and incentives promote repeat bookings and foster long-term loyalty (Deb et al., 2025). Technology-driven CRM creates emotional bonds with brands by providing guests with seamless and personalized experiences (Iyelolu et al., 2024), which increases their chances of returning to hotels and recommending it to others (Xue et al., 2022). Apart from personalization, tech-based CRM leads to better customer retention through improved service efficiency and responsiveness (Deb et al., 2025). Hoteliers also employ digital platforms as a means to conveniently address feedback from guests and proactively resolve issues as they arise (Bharwani & Mathews, 2021).

Quick responses to consumer concerns paired with an emphasis on service are also essential in rebuilding trust and consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Singh et al., 2023). Cloud-based CRM solutions help hotels maintain consistency in service across multiple platforms (Yurtlu, 2021). This Omni channel strategy guarantees that guests receive consistent communication and assistance at each phase of their journey, strengthening their bond with hotel brands (Deb et al., 2025). The use of such superlative technologies has been empirically confirmed by Huang et al. (2022), which evidenced better customer retention and higher brand advocacy in hotels applying such technologies. Therefore, technology-based CRM significantly impacted customer loyalty (Yurtlu, 2021), highlighting that it can be used as a strategic asset in competitive hospitality markets (Deb et al., 2025). With innovative CRM tools, hotels can maintain long-term relationships with customers, which will drive profitability and competitive advantages (Troisi et al., 2023). Therefore, this paper assumes that:

***H5. Technology-based CRM has a statistically significant effect on customer loyalty.***

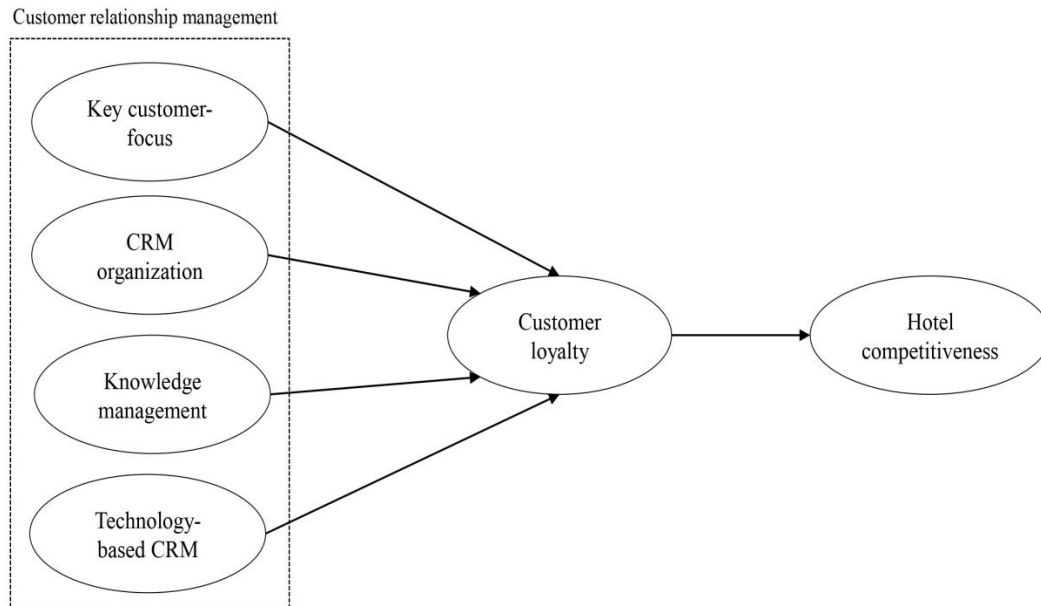


In fiercely competitive settings, hotels that devote themselves to customer-centric policies enjoy a substantial advantage by creating closer relationships with their customers (Vidili, 2021). By adopting a customer-centric mindset, hotel services can meet customer expectations and preferences, deliver personalized experiences, and cultivate guest loyalty (Bardukova, 2023). In this context, well-organized CRM organization allows hotels to improve service delivery to provide guests with consistent and premium interactions (Sofi et al., 2025). However, these actions do not necessarily improve hotel competitiveness unless they promote customer loyalty. Customers who develop a strong emotional connection and trust when it comes to hotel brands are far more likely to return and recommend the property to others (Ismail, 2022), amplifying the hotel's position. As an enduring truism, customer loyalty is the vital linkage between effective CRM strategy and sustainable competitive advantage, turning operational success into lasting profit (Yurtlu, 2021).

Moreover, the enriching influence of customer loyalty in improving hotel attractiveness is ascertained by the replicative assurance of knowledge management and technology-based CRM. The ability of hotels to analyze and utilize guest data helps establish this as guests note their desires and pique their interest with customized services (Deb et al., 2025). By leveraging this information to customize offerings and proactively address guests' concerns (Troisi et al., 2023), hotels are able to strengthen customer satisfaction and improve repeat bookings (Yurtlu, 2021). Moreover, AI-based CRM tools (e.g., chatbots, mobile apps, or digital bookings) play a pivotal role in streamlining operations and delivering efficient guest service (Bilgihan & Ricci, 2024). Customer loyalty serves as a vital connective tissue, transforming CRM investments into real-world competitive advantages that help hotels stand out and succeed in crowded markets (Bardukova, 2023). Consequently, hotel competitiveness is defined by operational capabilities and CRM strategies' performance in cultivating long-term customer relationships that will sustain success (Vidili, 2021). Therefore, this paper assumes that:

***H6. Customer loyalty mediates the nexus hotel competitiveness and a) key customer-focus, b) CRM organization, c) knowledge management, and d) technology-based CRM.***

As shown in Figure (1), this can enhance customer loyalty levels from hotel managers' standpoint; potentially leading to significant competitive advantages for five-star hotels on the local, regional, and international levels.



**Fig. (1)** Research model  
Source: Prepared by authors

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Study population and sample

The study population consists of employees of five-star hotels in Luxor and Aswan. The study sample was selected using appropriate methods. The study was conducted on a sample of five-star hotel managers in Luxor and Aswan. Luxor and Aswan were chosen at this time because they are considered great historical tourist attractions, and what unite these two cities are the beautiful Nile cruises. Tourism in Luxor and Aswan has always been associated with unique Nile cruises and has the enormous number of five-star hotels and many tourists during this period. The selected hotels were chosen as shown in Table (1).

**Table (1):** Hotels' Capacity.

No	Hotel Type	Hotel No.	Category
1.	Fixed Hotels	11	5 stars
2.	Floating Hotels	112	

Source: Central Department of Information and Decision Support General Department of Information and Statistics, Ministry of Tourism (2023).

#### 3.2. Data collection methods

The study combines two basic types of data. First, researchers relied on secondary data to establish the theoretical aspect of the variables, relying on scientific journals and foreign references that were interested in dealing with the study variables from their various aspects. Second, the questionnaire method was used to collect study data because it is one of the most common methods in previous and current studies. This study relied on the quantitative approach,

using the questionnaire as a tool for data collection, as the data was collected by mail and distributed manually in hotels. A total of (400) questionnaires were distributed to managers of five-star hotels in Luxor and Aswan governorates, and (284) valid questionnaires were retrieved, thus the percentage of valid retrieved questionnaires was about (71%) of the total distributed questionnaires between October 2024 and February 2025.

### *3.3. Description of the questionnaire*

A questionnaire was used to measure the impact of CRM practices on hotel competitiveness via customer loyalty within five-star hotels at Luxor and Aswan. The first part was devoted to collecting information about the respondents and included (i.e. gender, age, department, educational qualification, and total years of experience), while the second part included six constructs. The first construct is customer-focus, while the second construct is CRM organization. The third construct is knowledge management, the fourth construct is technology-based CRM, the fifth construct is customer loyalty, and last construct is hotel competitiveness. All measurement statements were measured on the basis of a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Researchers relied on previous studies when preparing the questionnaire items.

CRM practices were measured using four subsections: key customer-focus, CRM organization, knowledge management, and technology-based CRM with four items each adapted from Sofi et al. (2025). To gauge customer loyalty, four items were cited from Cheema et al. (2019), Latif (2021), and Rahimian et al. (2021). Hotel competitiveness was assessed using five items derived from Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye (2020) and Awad & Mahmoud (2024). Next, the survey validity was verified through a pilot study on 35 hotel managers that were examined. After collecting the questionnaires online, they were sorted and incomplete questionnaires were excluded. Finally, the operations were carried out.

Through SmartPLS v.4, we evaluated measurement and structural models using the analytical method known as partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) (Amora, 2021). PLS-SEM outperformed CB-SEM for several reasons. First, PLS-SEM often does not require data (Rasoolimanesh, 2022). Second, this paper's main objective may be predicted using PLS-SEM, which is extensively applicable and adaptable in theory and practice (Aburumman et al., 2022). Third, PLS-SEM may also be applied in hospitality settings when the sample size is constrained (Lim, 2024). Finally, while evaluating a theoretical framework in an inquiry from a prediction aspect, this approach performs better than CB-SEM (Memon et al.,

2021). Table (2) shows respondent information, where 76.1% were males, 46.8% had 45 to less than 50 years old, 81.3% had high school degrees, 33.5% had 4 to below 6 years of career experience, and 35.9% worked in the kitchen department.

**Table (2):** Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 284).

Category	Frequency	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	216	76.1
Female	68	23.9
<i>Age group (years)</i>		
35-below 40	29	10.2
40-below 45	64	22.5
45-below 50	133	46.8
50 and above	58	20.4
<i>Education</i>		
Elementary school	12	4.2
High school	231	81.3
University	15	5.3
Master/PhD	26	9.2
<i>Career experiences</i>		
< 4 years	66	23.2
4 to < 6 years	95	33.5
6 to < 8 years	68	23.9
8 to < 10 years	36	12.7
≥ 10 years	19	6.7
<i>Department</i>		
Kitchen	102	35.9
Restaurant	98	34.5
Front office	42	14.8
Marketing and sales	18	6.3
Housekeeping	24	8.5

Source(s): Prepared by authors.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Measurement model estimation

Factor loadings were assessed for each item in Table (3), accounting for the measuring item's non-dimensionality (Aburumman et al., 2022). As a result, Table 3 demonstrated that all constructs, including average variance extracted (AVE above 0.50) and composite reliability (CR above 0.70), fall within acceptable limits. Thus, there is substantial convergent validity in the model (Amora, 2021). An essential next step in analyzing a model is to decide the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio. As seen in Table 4, discriminant validity was validated when all HTMT

values fell below the 0.85 cutoff. Hence, the discriminant validity of this model was strong (Rasoolimanesh, 2022).

**Table (3):** Reliability and Validity Analysis.

Construct	Items		Factor loading	CR	AVE
Customer loyalty	CLY1	Our hotel's success heavily depends on guests who return for multiple stays.	0.905	0.947	0.816
	CLY2	Implementing and maintaining customer loyalty programs significantly improve retention rates.	0.901		
	CLY3	Customers who have a positive experience are more likely to become repeat customers and recommend our hotel to others.	0.904		
	CLY4	Offering personalized experiences (e.g., tailored room preferences and exclusive deals) strengthens customer loyalty.	0.904		
Hotel competitiveness	HCM1	Our hotel's ability to provide high-quality service differentiates us from competitors and enhances our market position.	0.872	0.916	0.686
	HCM2	Continuous innovation in services, technology, and guest experiences strengthens our hotel's competitiveness.	0.846		
	HCM3	Our hotel's pricing strategy is effectively aligned with market demand and competitor pricing to maintain a competitive edge.	0.860		
	HCM4	A strong brand reputation and customer trust significantly contribute to our hotel's competitive advantage.	0.767		
	HCM5	The strategic location and accessibility of our hotel play a crucial role in maintaining our competitive position.	0.792		
Key customer-focus	KCF1	We engage in continuous dialogue with individual key customers to tailor our offerings to their specific needs.	0.915	0.954	0.838
	KCF2	Our hotel delivers personalized services and products designed to meet the unique requirements of our key customers.	0.903		
	KCF3	We actively seek to understand the needs and preferences of our key customers.	0.919		
	KCF4	When our hotel identifies customer desires to adjust services, the relevant departments collaborate to implement changes.	0.926		
CRM organization	COG1	Our hotel possesses the marketing skills and resources necessary for effective CRM implementation.	0.851	0.924	0.754
	COG2	We offer training programs aimed at enhancing employees' abilities to maintain customer relationships.	0.880		
	COG3	Clear objectives have been set for our hotel regarding customer acquisition, development, retention, and reactivation.	0.846		
	COG4	We assess and incentivize employee performance based on their ability to meet customer needs and provide exceptional service.	0.894		
Knowledge management	KNM1	Our hotel's staff is readily available to assist customers in a timely and efficient manner.	0.898	0.940	0.797
	KNM2	Our hotel has a comprehensive understanding of the needs of our key customers through knowledge acquisition and learning.	0.911		
	KNM3	We offer avenues for continuous, two-way communication between our key customers and our hotel.	0.862		
	KNM4	Customers can rely on receiving prompt and efficient service from our hotel's employees.	0.900		
Technology-based CRM	TCM1	Our hotel utilizes appropriate software solutions to effectively serve our customers.	0.879	0.931	0.772
	TCM2	Our hotel is equipped with the necessary hardware to meet our customers' needs.	0.893		
	TCM3	Customer information is accessible at each interaction point within our hotel.	0.885		
	TCM4	Our hotel keeps an extensive and detailed database of customer	0.855		

		information.			
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Source(s): Prepared by authors

**Table (4):** Discriminant Validity.

Constructs	HTMT approach					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Customer loyalty						
2. Hotel competitiveness	0.597					
3. Key customer-focus	0.681	0.481				
4. CRM organization	0.661	0.597	0.496			
5. Knowledge management	0.593	0.341	0.425	0.427		
6. Technology-based CRM	0.505	0.705	0.452	0.499	0.426	

Source(s): Prepared by authors

#### 4.2. Structural model estimation

According to the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) results (see Table 4 and Figure 2), our model can account for 53.2% and 88.6% of the variance in hotel competitiveness and customer loyalty, respectively. The next step was to compute the Stone-Geisser ( $Q^2$ ) value-based model prediction power index. According to Lim (2024), this value is used as a benchmark for evaluating the cross-validated predictive relevance of the PLS path model. If an endogenous latent variable's  $Q^2$  value is higher than zero, the PLS path model is predictively relevant. When each  $Q^2$  value was more significant than zero (Amora, 2021), the proposed model was robust (see Table 4). The  $Q^2$  scores of hotel competitiveness and customer loyalty were 0.433 and 0.715, respectively, demonstrating the predictive usefulness of this model. Further, Cohen's  $f^2$  values fell between minor and substantial effects as shown in Table 4 (ranged between 0.090 and 0.777).

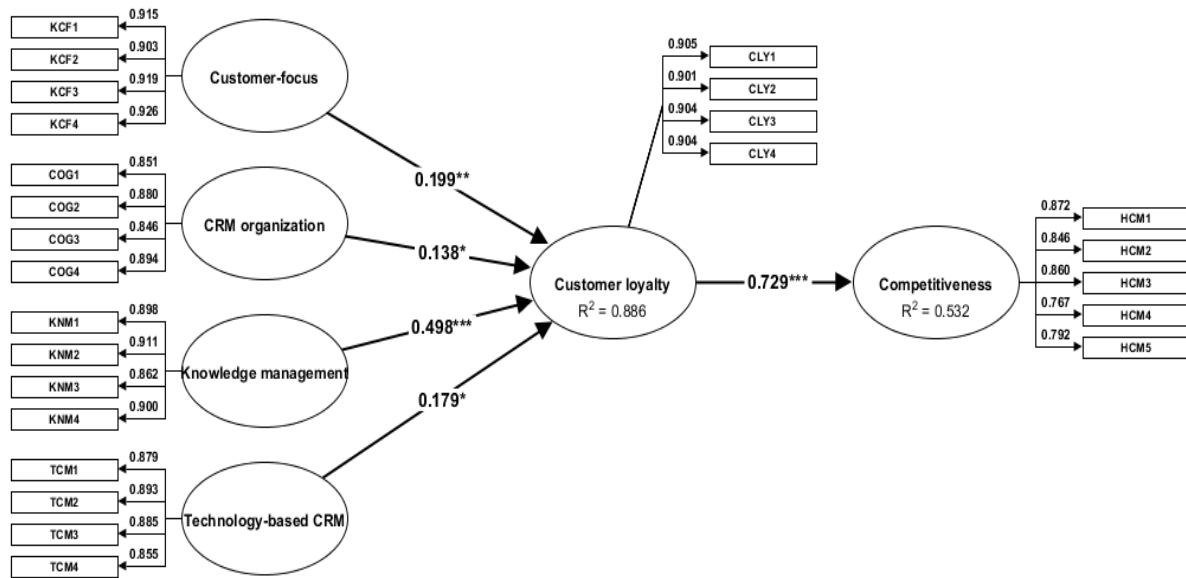
The PLS-SEM results (see Table 5 and Figure 2) demonstrated that customer loyalty positively affected hotel competitiveness ( $\beta = 0.729$ ,  $t = 19.906$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Hence, hypothesis H1 was supported. Additionally, customer loyalty was positively affected by key customer focus ( $\beta = 0.199$ ,  $t = 3.079$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), CRM organization ( $\beta = 0.138$ ,  $t = 2.134$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), knowledge management ( $\beta = 0.498$ ,  $t = 3.843$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and technology-based CRM ( $\beta = 0.179$ ,  $t = 2.291$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Hence, hypotheses H2-H5 were supported. By testing the indirect effect between CRM practices and hotel competitiveness, customer loyalty was employed as a mediating variable between these practices to achieve greater competitiveness for five-star hotels in Luxor and Aswan. As such, Table 5 results confirmed that key customer focus positively affected hotel competitiveness via customer loyalty ( $\beta = 0.145$ ,  $t = 3.171$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $CI = [0.054; 0.236]$ ), supporting H6a.

Likewise, CRM organization positively affected hotel competitiveness via customer loyalty ( $\beta = 0.101$ ,  $t = 2.107$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $CI = [0.018; 0.198]$ ), supporting H6b. Moreover, knowledge

management positively affected hotel competitiveness via customer loyalty ( $\beta = 0.363$ ,  $t = 3.660$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $CI = [0.193; 0.574]$ ), supporting H6c. Besides, technology-based CRM positively affected hotel competitiveness via customer loyalty ( $\beta = 0.130$ ,  $t = 2.300$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $CI = [0.023; 0.246]$ ), supporting H6d. The previous results confirm that customer loyalty partially mediates the relationship between CRM practices and hotel competitiveness. Hence, this guarantees that achieving competitiveness through these practices requires more focus on implementing loyalty programs for current and potential customers.

**Table (5): Results of Direct and Indirect Effects.**

Direct effects							
Relationship	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Effect size ( <i>f</i> <sup>2</sup> )	Coefficient of determination ( <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> )	Stone-Geisser ( <i>Q</i> <sup>2</sup> )	Remark
H1: Customer loyalty → Hotel competitiveness	0.729***	19.906	0.000	0.777	0.532	0.433	Supported
H2: Key customer-focus → Customer loyalty	0.199**	3.079	0.002	0.104	0.886	0.715	Supported
H3: CRM organization → Customer loyalty	0.138*	2.134	0.033	0.090			Supported
H4: Knowledge management → Customer loyalty	0.498***	3.843	0.000	0.284			Supported
H5: Technology-based CRM → Customer loyalty	0.179*	2.291	0.022	0.097			Supported
Mediation effects							
Model	B and <i>p</i> -value	<i>t</i> -value	95% CI		Mediation type		
			UB	LB			
H6a: Key customer-focus → Customer loyalty → Hotel competitiveness	0.145* (0.012)	3.171	0.054	0.236	Supported (Partial mediation)		
H6b: CRM organization → Customer loyalty → Hotel competitiveness	0.101* (0.036)	2.107	0.018	0.198	Supported (Partial mediation)		
H6c: Knowledge management → Customer loyalty → Hotel competitiveness	0.363** (0.001)	3.660	0.193	0.574	Supported (Partial mediation)		
H6d: Technology-based CRM → Customer loyalty → Hotel competitiveness	0.130* (0.022)	2.300	0.023	0.246	Supported (Serial mediation)		
Note: *** <i>p</i> < 0.001, ** <i>p</i> < 0.01; CI = confidence interval Source(s): Prepared by authors							

**Fig. (2):** Structural Model Findings

Source: Prepared by authors

## 5. Conclusion and discussion

Our findings validate the relationships between CRM practices, customer loyalty, and hotel competitiveness. Results supported conclusions that CRM practices can enhance hotel competitiveness through customer loyalty as a critical mediator. The results showed that customer loyalty positively impacted hotel competitiveness, this supports Hypothesis H1. This is consistent with previous studies, including (Al-Hashimy et al., 2022; Lee & Suh 2022; Karim & Rabiul, 2024; Liu et al., 2024; Dixit, 2025).

Results of demographics also showed that hotel managers are mostly seasoned experts in established careers with high school degrees. The high percentage of male managers continues a trend identified in previous research about gender representation in hospitality management (Russen et al., 2021; Segovia-Pérez et al., 2021) with many sources suggesting that the hotel management sector is still male-dominated in several areas (Giousmpasoglou & Marinakou, 2024).

Results showed that customer loyalty is a significant factor in hotel competitiveness. This result is in line with prior studies (see Alzoubi, 2021; O'Connor & Assaker, 2022) that highlighted the importance of customer loyalty for the long-term success of hotel brands. Moreover, findings showed that key customer focus, CRM organization, knowledge management, and technology-based CRM significantly affected customer loyalty. Additionally, customer loyalty was positively influenced by a primary focus on customers, which supported



Hypothesis H2, as this is consistent with several previous studies, including (Bardukova, 2023; Yerpude & Rautela, 2023; Liu et al., 2024; Allison, 2024; Sofi et al., 2025; Dixit, 2025).

The results also confirmed that the organization of customer relationship management (CRM) has a significant impact on customer loyalty, and this was supported by hypothesis H3, and was indicated by some previous studies such as (Rane et al., 2023; Bardukova, 2023; Nethanani et al., 2024; Sofi et al., 2025; García-Nieto et al., 2025).

In this regard, knowledge management had the most significant impact on customer loyalty, supporting Hypothesis H4. This supports previous studies (see Capatina et al., 2024; Degbey & Pelto, 2021) that effective knowledge-sharing mechanisms improve customer retention and business performance. As customer loyalty was partially mediation, this result is supported by previous studies (see Akbari et al., 2021; Jacob et al., 2025) advocating that loyalty programs and relationship management efforts significantly increase long-term sustainability and market position.

The results also confirmed that a technology-based Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system significantly impacts customer loyalty, as technology is the primary motivator for all CRM efforts and methods. The results also confirmed that it has become imperative for organizations to focus on CRM technology to facilitate the collection of information about their customers. This is supported by Hypothesis H5, and has been confirmed by some previous studies (Singh et al., 2023; Troisi et al., 2023; Iyelolu et al., 2024; Deb et al., 2025).

By testing the indirect effect between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) practices and hotel competitiveness, customer loyalty was used as a mediating variable between these practices to achieve higher competitiveness for five-star hotels in Luxor and Aswan. Accordingly, the results confirmed that a primary customer focus positively impacted hotel competitiveness through customer loyalty, supporting Hypothesis H6a. Similarly, CRM organization positively impacted hotel competitiveness through customer loyalty, supporting Hypothesis H6b. Furthermore, knowledge management positively impacted hotel competitiveness through customer loyalty, supporting H6c. Additionally, technology-based CRM positively impacted hotel competitiveness through customer loyalty, supporting H6d. This is consistent with previous studies, including (Troisi et al., 2023; Bardukova, 2023; Bilgihan & Ricci, 2024; Deb et al., 2025).

This paper recommends that hotel industry practitioners and decision makers:

- Improve customer data analytics and personalized services through sophisticated knowledge-management systems.
- Build customer loyalty programs that offer members exclusive benefits, rewards, and personalized incentives to improve retention.
- Develop CRM organizational structures through employee training on strategies for being customer-oriented and managing relationships effectively.
- Utilize new technologies-based CRMs (e.g., AI-powered chatbots, analytics, and automated feedback) to enhance customer engagement.
- Leverage digital marketing strategies to engage guests more effectively and foster customer loyalty with brands through online interaction.
- Conduct regular surveys and feedback mechanisms to gauge customer loyalty levels and identify opportunities for improvement and innovation.

## **6. Limitations and future research**

Future research directions include examining current hotel performance in terms of market share and profitability, exploring how employee engagement improves the relationship between customer relationship management practices and customer loyalty, describing how the introduction of emerging technologies (such as artificial intelligence and block chain) impacts customer relationship management effectiveness in hotel contexts, and analyzing the effects of cultural differences on customer loyalty and customer relationship management practices in different tourist destinations inside and outside Egypt. This will then be followed by examining customer perceptions of hotel competitiveness in achieving sustainable customer relationship management initiatives.

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