Social Data and Relationship Quality: The mediating role of Customer Expectations Matter. Empirical Evidence from Five-Star Hotels in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract

The study's main purpose was to establish the effects of social data and customer expectations on relationship quality in selected hotels in Nairobi, Kenya. The study utilized an explanatory research design with a target population of 987,883 customers from online hotel check-ins for 5 years, from three five-star rated hotels in Nairobi purposively selected. A sample size of 400 was selected using simple random sampling. Data was collected from customers using a structured questionnaire. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Model (SEM). Findings showed that the final SEM model explained 59% of relationship quality, with R2 (0.59, p=0.000<0.05), and was fit (RMSEA=0.047). The results indicated a positive and significant effect of social data on relationship quality in hotels. Further, customer expectations partly mediated the relationship between social data information and hotel relationship quality. The study concludes that social data as a dimension of social customer relationship management significantly affect relationship quality through customer expectations. From a managerial perspective, hotels should prioritize the utilization of social data as a key dimension of social customer relationship management (CRM) to enhance relationship quality. Policymakers should establish regulations to protect customer privacy while facilitating the responsible use of social data in the hospitality industry. The study contributes to theoretical understanding by highlighting the mediating role of customer expectations in the relationship between social data and relationship quality. Further research can explore additional moderating or mediating factors, such as customer engagement or the influence of different social media platforms, to deepen our understanding of social CRM dynamics in the hotel industry.
Keywords: *Social Data, Customer Expectations, Relationship Quality, Social Customer Relationship Management*

Introduction

The rise and increasing use of Information Technologies (IT) for collecting and storing information about clients has resulted in the evolution of traditional CRM to trends that reflect the use of innovative approaches to relationship marketing and gave rise to new types of CRM such as electronic (e-CRM) and Social CRM (SCRM) (Kubina & Lendel, 2015; Küpper, 2015). The onset of the Internet age and the subsequent rise of social media, which has connected and empowered customers, researchers instigated predictions of a power shift from the marketer to the consumer suggesting a new form of consumer–firm relationship (Malthouse, et al., 2013; Labrecque, et al., 2013). Social media has played a profound role in shaping people's lives, organizations, and civilizations, with individuals spending increasing amounts of time on social media platforms (Johnston, May 2014). This social data generated through social media usage has become a valuable resource for organizations to understand their customers better and tailor their CRM strategies accordingly. The increasing internet connectivity enabled through technologies such as mobile devices led to the social media landscape of ubiquitous connectivity, enhancing access to information and enabling the creation of user-generated content (Labrecque, et al., 2013). Social media has become a vital channel for conversations about brands, product evaluations, and services, making it a necessity for organizations to acquire and retain customers (Marolt, Pucihar, & Zimmermann, 2015). The availability of social data on these platforms allows organizations to gain insights into customer preferences, sentiments, and behaviors, enabling them to personalize their interactions and offerings.

Social media inclusion in CRM has profoundly transformed business processes and given birth to a new field of study called Social CRM. However, the understanding and adoption of Social CRM as a scientific phenomenon are still in their early stages for many organizations, as they often view social media merely as a CRM channel rather than a paradigm shift (Torben, 2016; Maertens, 2015). Nevertheless, social data generated through social media interactions form a crucial component of Social CRM. By analyzing and leveraging this social data, organizations can gain a deeper understanding of their customers, their preferences, and their needs, which in turn helps them foster more meaningful and personalized relationships.

Social CRM integrates all consumer data points, technology, and content distribution touchpoints in one place, providing a holistic solution for brands to track their engagements with customers at every step of the purchase journey, both online and offline (Tan, 2020). By consolidating and analyzing social data alongside other customer data, Social CRM allows organizations to gain comprehensive insights into customer behaviors, interests, and preferences. This rich social data helps organizations develop a nuanced understanding of their customers, enabling them to target them with the right messages and offers at the right moments. This focus on leveraging social data to enhance relationship quality is essential for fostering mutually beneficial and valuable relationships between organizations and their customers.

Social media has also greatly influenced customer expectations of service, both before, during, and after consuming products and services, especially in the tourism and hospitality industries. Customer expectations serve as standards or reference points against which service performance is judged, making them a critical consideration for service marketers (Bhavani & Pawar, 2013). With the proliferation of social media platforms, customers now have a powerful channel to

express their expectations and evaluate the quality-of-service experiences. Organizations can tap into this social data to gain insights into customer expectations, allowing them to align their service offerings and exceed customer expectations.

The integration of social media and social data into CRM practices has transformed the way organizations engage with customers. Social CRM, as a scientific phenomenon, recognizes the power of social data in building and nurturing relationships. By leveraging social data organizations can enhance their understanding of customer preferences, sentiments, and behaviors, enabling them to develop more personalized and targeted strategies. The availability of social data generated through social media interactions offers organizations valuable insights into customer needs and expectations, allowing them to tailor their offerings and services accordingly (Orenga-Roglá & Chalmeta, 2016).

As most hospitality businesses heavily rely on customer relationships, the quality of these relationships becomes crucial in navigating the dynamic organizational environment. Effective relationship management is pivotal in shaping customer expectations, which, in turn, influences customer satisfaction, patronage, and ultimately the development of relationship quality (Dlačić et al., 2018; Delafrooz et al., 2013). Given the experiential nature of hospitality products, customers increasingly turn to social media platforms to share their experiences with friends and leave public reviews on third-party websites. Consequently, social media has emerged as a powerful tool for sharing experiences that can either make or break an organization (So et al., 2015). However, despite the significance of social media in the hospitality industry, few studies, particularly in Kenya, have focused on its impact on relationship quality, failing to leverage the potential of social data within the social CRM space. Methodologically, the majority of research on Social CRM and relationship quality has predominantly utilized qualitative research designs to develop a body of knowledge on Social CRM, while other studies have explored the effects of Social CRM on performance outcomes (Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Malthouse et al., 2013; Lehmkuhl, 2014; Maertens, 2015; Marolt et al., 2015; Wittkuhn et al., 2015). Some quantitative studies have focused on the relationship between Social CRM and business performance satisfaction using confirmatory factor analysis and partial least square regression (Küpper et al., 2015; Charoensukmongkol & Sasatanun, 2017). In the context of this study, the conceptualization of e-CRM by Delafrooz et al. (2013) is limited in scope compared to the more robust predecessor, Social CRM, which encompasses the dimensions of social data employed in this research. Building on theoretical and empirical assumptions, this study aims to explore the role of customer expectation in the relationship between social data and relationship quality. It is noteworthy that limited empirical research exists on the link between social data as a dimension of Social CRM and relationship quality. Consequently, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining the mediating effect of customer expectation on the relationship between social CRM and relationship quality.

Theoretical review

The Social CRM house model was applied in two dimensions of lower engagement and upper engagement by Malthouse, et al. (2013) using micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises' performance outcomes (Marolt et al., 2015; Marolt et al., 2020). In the model, Data and information technology are the second dimensions that form the bedrock of social CRM as insights derived from it are the cornerstone of Social CRM. This dimension caters to the technologies of

data capture, processing, and application. It goes further to define the different data types in social media, and how they are handled, how insight is dealt with, and challenges social media presence. Social media was viewed as a resource using the Resource-Based View theory (Barney et al., 2001; Diffley et al., 2018; Marolt et al., 2020) and Dynamic Capabilities (Barney et al 2001; Trainor, 2012; Trainor et al., 2013). This study views social media as a networking tool for connecting hotel customers and will triangulate the Social CRM house model with relationship theory and expectancy disconfirmation theory to derive variables from a hospitality service perspective. Besides, the relationship marketing theory used to explain relationship quality on tourist environmentally responsible behavior by He et al., (2018), the post-purchase perceived value of tourism package (Moliner, et al. 2006), and behavioral intention at a luxury motor vehicle dealership (Tonder et al., 2017) will be used in this study to explain value from relationships in terms of trust and loyalty in the hospitality sector.

Literature review

Social media has a positive impact on marketing because it is a marketing tool that can be used to interact with new customers and retain old customers (Alt & Reinhold, 2019). However, unstructured data management is needed from the corporate and its environment, for example, social data from social networks (Gopalsamy & Gokulapadmanaban, 2021). Social media is a key that allows companies to get customer data and increase customer knowledge which can also be used to increase competitive power especially to improve relationships with customers (Gamage, Gnanapala & Ashill, 2021). With so many online rating sites and sites where individuals may submit their opinions in written or video format, businesses now have an incredible chance to engage more directly involved with their consumers (Woodcock et al. 2011; Edosoman et al. 2011; Jekimovics et al. 2013). Social media provide easily accessible customer data used for making strategic marketing decisions (Bachmann & Kantorová, 2016).

According to Küpper (2015), Social CRM capabilities are defined as customer-facing activities, including processes and infrastructural aspects in the context of Social Media data designed to engage customers in collaborative conversations and so enhance customer relationships. Infrastructure aspects capability describes activities and results of infrastructural aspects which include an IT dimension, for example, IT-readiness, and a cultural dimension (Küpper, 2015).

Social CRM strategies are described by data collection, analysis, and application form (Malthouse, et al., 2013). In Social CRM, customer data is managed and active participation through various social media can contribute to improving the quality and adaptation of products according to the customer's wishes and needs (Meyliana, et al., 2015). social CRM is a transformation from traditional CRM where initial information in the form of data collection of customer characteristics obtained from past behavior was stored in the data warehouse. It was then analyzed to get the possibility of future behavior, which would be obtained from interaction through social media so that the process of documenting customer information was done quickly (Ibrahim, 2022).

Social CRM provides the connection of social data with existing customer records from the customer database (CRM) which enables companies to provide new forms of customer insight and relevant context (Woodcock, Green, & Starkey, 2011). Social CRM increases the amount of data available to CRM software and provides marketers with a new channel to connect with consumers

more efficiently, improving their relationships (Ibrahim, Abbas & Kamal, 2021). Establishing close relationships with customers and marketing activities would be more efficient because they knew what the customers wanted and needed through their active participation in collaborative discussions (Wang, et al., 2022).

However, research has shown that only 7% of marketers reported being able to integrate their social media information into their overall CRM system. Information access implies providing customer information in a convenient and timely manner to both customer-facing employees and strategic marketing decision-makers. Depending on who owns the data and who owns the modeling tools, this may be a complicated process. Today, it tends to be IT departments that run analytics on customer data, which has led to advantages such as speed and more sophisticated analyses but disadvantages such as a loss of customer focus and a lack of access to the data. To complicate things further, the third form of information access is becoming more prevalent, where customers want direct access to data on themselves and indeed more comprehensive customer interaction data (Choudhury & Harrigan, 2014). Therefore, considering the evidence presented in the literature regarding the positive influence of social media, the acquisition and management of social data, as well as the capabilities of Social CRM, it can be inferred that the study posits a hypothesis suggesting that

H_1:   *integration of social data significantly enhances relationships quality*

Customer expectations give a positive impression to the customer it will have an impact on customer recognition and will increase relationship quality; this can give a boost to the customer to make purchases and it will increase loyalty (Munyoki, Kibera & Pokhariyal, 2020). Customer experience is generated not only by elements that the service provider can control (e.g., service interface, medium, diversity, price) but also by devices - such as smartphones that the customer chooses to use in various situations - and elements out of their controls - such as being affected by other customers (McColl- Kennedy et al., 2015). Internet experience is not the experience with a particular website, but the skill or ability of the consumers who use various value-added services offered on a wide range of different websites and visit various websites. Consumer experience with the internet is important in understanding the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of customers in online environments (Soto-Acosta et al., 2014). studies conducted previously revealed that consumer satisfaction with previous online shopping has resulted in building trust in online sales firms; this affects future online transactions (Hsiao et al., 2012). In addition to this, the studies conducted previously support the idea that negative past experiences or past dissatisfaction affected the current decision-making process and those previous experiences constituted a prejudice. Customer behavior can change as they gain more experience and knowledge from past transactions. The more negative consumers perceive past transactions, the more hesitation possibility increases (Demirgüneş, 2018). Mostaghimi, Akhlagh & Danesh's (2016) findings indicate that customers' expectations of the products of Iran Khodro Company affected the perceived quality of the product as well as customer satisfaction positively and meaningfully. Suprapto et al., (2020) indicated that Instagram advertising has a significant influence on purchase intention through customer perception as the Instagram advertising has a significant influence on customer perception. Chen and Lin's (2019) results indicated that social media marketing activities indirectly affect satisfaction through customer expectations. Based on

the insights provided by previous studies on the impact of customer expectations on relationship quality, we hypothesized

H_2 *customer expectations play a mediating role in the relationship between social data and relationship quality.*

Methodology

This research used the research onion model proposed by (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016) as a guide through the various philosophical orientations, research approaches adopted and data collection techniques employed in the research work. This research utilized quantitative methods in sequential explanatory research design to test the causal effect of social data, and customer expectations on relationship quality.

Sampling

The study targeted one four-star and two five-star rated hotels in Nairobi Kenya according to rating by Tourism Regulatory Authority, Kenya (Tourism Regulatory Authority, 2018). The sample size of the study was 400 derived from Israel's (1992) sample size table for the target population of over 100,000 at a confidence level of .05. A proportionate sample was used where hotels received the number of questionnaires according to their bed capacity to fill in. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the four- and five-star hotels. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the guest relationship officers who assisted access the social media customer directory.

Convergent validity, discriminant validity, and Reliability of Measurement of Variables

The research has variables classified as exogenous which include social Data and the endogenous variable is Relationship quality. The mediating variable, the Customer perceptions variable acted as both exogenous and endogenous. social Data as dimensions for Social CRM strategy was adapted from Malthouse, Haenlein, Skiera, & Wege, (2013) and Wittkuhn, Lehmkuhl, Küpper, & Jung, (2015).

Measures of relationship quality were adapted and modified from the works of Tonder, Petzer, & Zyl, (2017) and Walter, Mueller, & Helfert, (2011) to fit the hospitality industry. The authors conceptualized relation quality to trust, commitment, and customer satisfaction which will be used in the study. Finally, customer perceptions were adopted from the works of Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, (2018) and Elkhan & Bakri, (2012).

Principal Components Analysis (PCA) technique was used to reduce items into a smaller set of principal components, which account for most of the variance in the original variables. After conducting 2 components (RQ1 and RQ2) were derived from 25 items of relationship quality. Also based on Eigenvalue, five components (DI1, DI2, DI3, DI4, and DI5) were derived from 24 items used to measure social data. The factor analysis also revealed 5 components (CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, and CP5) of 34 items of customer expectation. Table 1 showed the results of reliability (Cronbach alpha values) of latent variables derived from factor analysis, the two latent variables of

relationship quality (RQ1 and RQ2), five latent variables of social data (DI1, DI2, DI4, DI3, and DI5), and five latent variables of customer perception (CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP5) had Cronbach coefficients of .887, 0.887 and 0.911 respectively. All the latent variables depicted coefficients of Cronbach's Alpha greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010), thus, the study latent were reliable for model measurement development. Further, composite reliability which is more concerned with individual reliability referring to different outer loadings of the indicator variables (Hair et al., 2017) indicated that relationship quality (RQ1, RQ2), social data (DI1, DI2, DI4, DI3, DI5), and customer perception (CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP5) had composite reliability coefficients of 0.749. 0.919 and 0.934 respectively. According to Hensele &, Sarstedt (2013), The cut-off for composite reliability is the same as any measure of reliability, and a score between 0 .6 and 0.7 is a good indicator of construct reliability. In examining the convergent validity of a measure in PLS, the average variance extracted (AVE) and item loadings are assessed (Hair et al., 2013). Results in Table 1 AVE coefficient for relationship quality (RQ1, RQ2), social data (DI1, DI2, DI4, DI3, DI5), and customer perception (CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP5) was 0.599, 0.694, and 0.739 respectively. All the AVE coefficients were above 0.5 according to Janadari, et al., (2016) AVE value equal to or higher than 0.50 indicates that on average, the construct explained more than half of the variance of its indicators. This is supported by the cumulative variance of 89.810%, 69.336%, and 73.865% for relationship quality, social data, and customer perception this shows all latent variables for all the constructs explained more than 50% variance in each construct. This means that indicators have high consistency in measuring latent constructs. From the analysis above, namely the analysis of the overall suitability of the measurement of variables,

Table 1: Convergent validity, discriminant validity, and Reliability of Measurement of Variables

		loadings	CVA	reliability (Cronbach alpha)	CR	AVE
Relationship quality	RQ1	0.948	89.810	0.887	0.749	0.599
	RQ2	0.948				
Social Data	DI1	0.827	69.336	0.887	0.919	0.694
	DI2	0.875				
	DI4	0.812				
	DI3	0.833				
	DI5	0.816				
Customer perception	CP1	0.885	73.865	0.911	0.934	0.739
	CP2	0.840				
	CP3	0.859				
	CP4	0.859				
	CP5	0.854				

Data management and analysis

Data cleaning was done to ensure that missing values (these values seriously distort results in Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)), outliers (to ensure no extreme cases affect data thus normality), and normality of distribution (using kurtosis and skewness to measure peakedness and symmetry respectively). Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarise the data to enable the meaningful description of the distribution of the scores or measurements and data were presented using mean, standard deviation, and variance. Data was also subjected to inferential

statistics (SEM) to test for the nature of the correlation between the independent and dependent variables.

Findings

Table 2 illustrates the demographic characteristics of the customers. From the results in the table, most of the customers are between the 31 to 50 years age bracket, 56.4% of the customers were female while 43.6% were male and a majority (56.4%) of the customers are married. Notably, the customers are fairly educated with most possessing college and university education. The findings imply that most customers occasionally use the Internet.

Table 2: Sample Respondent's Characteristics

		Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below 20 yrs	16	4.7
	21 to 30 yrs	74	22
	31 to 40 yrs	117	34.7
	41 to 50 yrs	104	30.9
	above 50 yrs	26	7.7
	Total	337	100
Gender	Male	147	43.6
	Female	190	56.4
	Total	337	100
Marital Status	Married	190	56.4
	Single	95	28.2
	Widowed	24	7.1
	Divorced	16	4.7
	Separated	12	3.6
	Total	337	100
The highest level of education	Primary School	4	1.2
	Secondary School	73	21.7
	College	120	35.6
	University	140	41.5
	Total	337	100
Use of Social Media	Never	3	0.9
	Rarely	54	16
	Occasionally	156	46.3
	Everyday	124	36.8
	Total	**337**	**100**

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The purpose of CFA is to confirm the relationship between the questions within each measure, and the proposed relationships of our model. In Table 3 the model had a CMIN/df ratio of 1.6. According to Lacobucci (2010), the CMIN/df ratios should be close to 1 for correct models. Results also showed that CFI= 0.985 and GFI=0.937. According to Joreskog and Sorbom (1984),

The goodness of fit (GFI) indices are at least 0.90; GFI values of 1 indicate a perfect fit. For the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Shadfar and Malekmohammadi, (2013 indicated that CFI values close to 1 indicate best fit. Incremental Fit Index (IFI) also should be equal to or greater than 0.90 to accept the model. IFI is relatively independent of sample size and is favored by some researchers for that reason. IFI of this study is reported at 0.985. Normed Fit Index (NFI) was developed as an alternative to CFI, but one which did not require making chi-square assumptions. "Normed" means it varies from 0 to 1, with 1 = perfect fit. NFI reflects the proportion by which the researcher's model improves fit compared to the null model (uncorrelated measured variables). The reported NFI for this study is 0.963. Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) or Non-Normed Fit Index, is similar to NFI but penalizes for model complexity. Marsh et al. (1996) found TLI to be relatively independent of sample size. TLI close to 1 indicates a good fit. Rarely, some authors have used the cutoff as low as 0.80 since TLI tends to run lower than GFI. However, more recently, Hu and Bentler (1999) have suggested TLI >= 0.95 as the cutoff for a good model fit and this is widely accepted (ex., by Schumacker & Lomax, 2004) as the cutoff. As shown in Table 4.36, the TLI of this study model is 0.982, and therefore, the model fits. Relative Fit Index (RFI), also known as RHO1, is not guaranteed to vary from 0 to 1. However, RFI close to 1 indicates a good fit. Reported RFI for this model is 0.955. Parsimony-Adjusted Measures Index (PNFI) is also shown in Table 5. There is no commonly agreed-upon cutoff value for an acceptable model for this index. By arbitrary convention, PNFI>0.60 indicates a good parsimonious fit (though some authors use >0.50). In the case of this study, PNFI is 0.787 which is acceptable.

The root mean square residual (RMR) and the Root Mean Square Error of approximation (RMSEA) are both less than 0.05. The smaller the RMR is the better; an RMR value of 0 indicates a perfect fit. For the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), a value of about 0.05 or close to 0 indicates a perfect fit (Browne and Cudeck, 1993). In this study, RMSEA was 0.044 indicating all the variables that measured latent constructs in this model achieved convergent validity and discriminant validity and were fit to develop PLS_SEM (Fig. 4.1). These results are adequate and deem the CFA satisfactory and continue the analysis. In the CFA relationships are constructed to expect rather high loadings between the constructs. Optimally loadings should be above 0.5.

Table 3: Summary of Final CFA Measurement Model

| Fit Indices	(CFA) Measurement Model fit results
χ^2(df)	206.688(125), p=.000
CMIN/df	1.654
IFI	0.985
TLI	0.982
CFI	0.985
GFI	0.937
NFI	0.963
RFI	0.955
PNFI	0.787
RMSEA	0.044

Hypothesis Testing (PLS-SEM models)

PLS-SEM was used to establish the mediating effect of customer perceptions on the relationship between social customer relationship management dimensions and the relationship quality of hotels. To perform the mediation test using SEM. In this study, SEM was used to conduct mediation tests using AMOS version 22. The preceding five-step procedure by Kenny (1998), Hair et al., (2006), Preacher and Hayes (2008), and; Zhao et al., (2010) was followed.

Based on the findings in Fig 1 and Table 4, there was a positive significant effect of social data on the relationship quality (β = .329, p<.05). The hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. Hence, the study infers that social data positively affects relationship quality in hotels.

The study tests the mediating effect of customer perceptions on the relationship between data and information and relationship quality. The effect of data and information on the relationship quality of hotels, the direct effect is. .329 (the path coefficient from data and information to relationship quality of hotels). The indirect effect, through customer perceptions, is computed as the product of the path coefficient from data and information to the customer perceptions and the path coefficient from customer perceptions to relationship quality (.359*.571=.205) as shown in Table 5 and Fig 1.

The total effect is the sum of direct and indirect effects (.329 + .205 = .534). From the results in Figure 1, the indirect effect is .205, which is lower than the direct effect of .329. Thus, based on Hayes's rule of thumb (4) the study concludes that the construct customer perceptions are a mediator in the relationship between data and information and relationship quality of hotels. The type of mediation is partial mediation since the direct effect is significant when the mediator was introduced in the model. The researcher, therefore, concludes that there is a partial mediation of customer perceptions relationship between social data and the relationship quality of hotels hence this model attains steps and guidelines suggested by Hair et al., (2006); Preacher and Hayes (2008) and Zhao et al. (2010) (as above). The study, therefore, rejects hypothesis H_2 and infers that the customer perceptions variable partially mediates the relationship between data and information on the relationship quality of hotels.
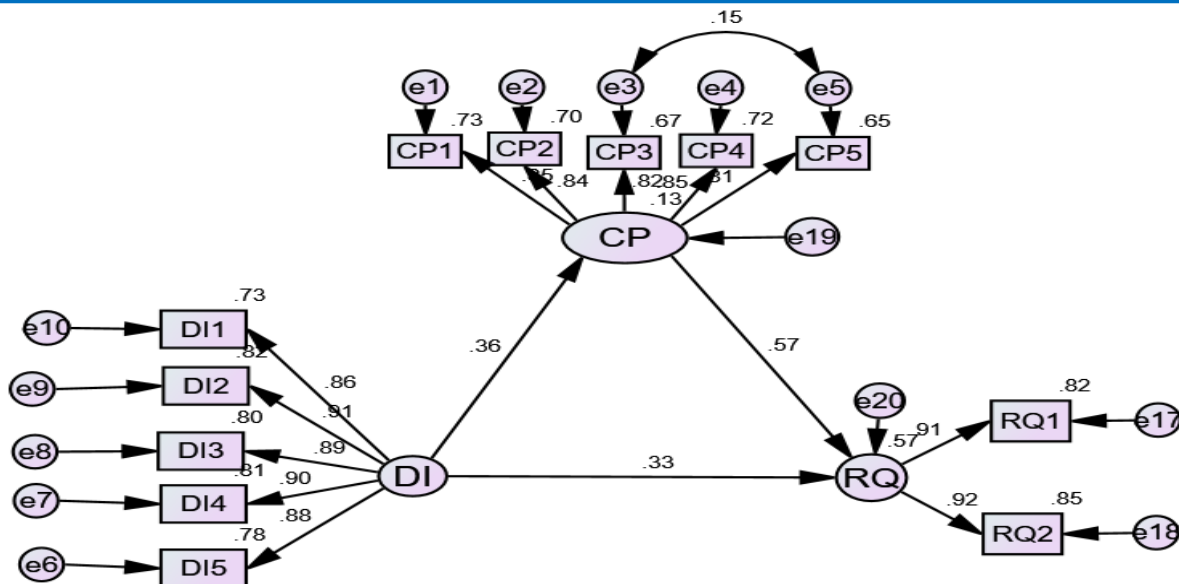
χ2(df) 92.986 (51), p=.000, CMIN/df = 1.823, IFI =.988, TLI=0.988, CFI=0.988, GFI=0.957, NFI= 0.974, RFI=0.966, PNFI= 0.753, RMSEA=0.049

Figure 1: **PLS-SEM Model for Mediating Effect of Customer Perceptions on social data and Relationship Quality**

Table 4: Regression Weights for Mediating Effect of Customer Perceptions on social data and Relationship Quality

			Standardized Estimate	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
CP	<---	DI	.359	.251	.040	6.357	***
RQ	<---	CP	.571	.645	.056	11.424	***
RQ	<---	DI	.329	.261	.037	7.004	***

Table 5: Total Effect, Direct Effect, and Indirect Mediating Effect of Customer Perceptions on social data and Relationship Quality

		DI	CP	RQ
Standardized Total Effects	CP	0.359	0.000	0.000
	RQ	0.534	0.571	0.000
Standardized Direct Effects	CP	0.359	0.000	0.000
	RQ	0.329	0.571	0.000
Standardized Indirect Effects	CP	0.000	0.000	0.000
	RQ	0.205	0.000	0.000

Discussion of the findings

The study found that there is a positive significant relationship between data and information dimension and relationship quality in selected hotels in Nairobi, Kenya. The study suggests that the use of data and information can improve the quality of relationships in hotels. This finding conforms with Ibrahim, et al., (2021) that Social CRM increases the amount of data available to CRM software and provides marketers with a new channel to connect with consumers more efficiently, improving their relationships. The positive relationship can be explained by Sigala's (2018) argument that social CRM document and analyze customer information and data in getting a better and broader understanding of customer value and the possibility of future behavior, which improves interaction through social media so that the process of documenting customer information was done quickly (Ibrahim, 2022). This finding also agrees with Wang, et al., (2022) that using social CRM has been more effective in collecting data in knowing what the customers want and need through their active participation in collaborative discussions resulting in improved relationships with customers. Similarly, Gamage, Gnanapala & Ashill (2021) indicated that Social CRM improves relationship quality by allowing companies to get customer data and increase customer knowledge which can also be used to increase competitive power.

Further, the study demonstrates that customer perceptions partially mediate the relationship between data and information and relationship quality in the hotel industry. This suggests that customer perceptions play a vital role in strengthening the relationship between data and information and relationship quality. This finding underscores the importance of effectively managing and leveraging social data to influence customer perceptions positively. Hotels should strive to provide accurate, relevant, and personalized data and information to their customers, ensuring that it aligns with their expectations and needs. By doing so, hotels can enhance customer perceptions, which, in turn, contribute to improved relationship quality. This study demonstrates the significance of customer perceptions as a partial mediator in the relationship between social data and relationship quality in the hotel industry. It emphasizes the need for hotels to not only focus on collecting and utilizing data but also on understanding and influencing how customers perceive and interpret that data. By recognizing the mediating role of customer perceptions, hotels can develop strategies to effectively leverage data and information to enhance relationship quality and ultimately strengthen their competitive position in the market.

Implication and Conclusion

Customer perceptions partially mediate the relationship between social data and relationship quality in the selected hotels in Nairobi, Kenya. The hotels have implemented a variety of strategies that utilize data and information to improve the relationship quality with their customers. These strategies include providing various channels for customers to book and access personalized services, maintaining records of past visits, offering destination information and special deals, and engaging with customers through social media. These efforts appear to be effective in enhancing the customer experience and fostering positive relationships with customers.

The implementation of these strategies suggests that the hotels recognize the value of utilizing data and information to improve relationship quality, and the positive impact of these efforts on customer relationships supports the existence of a significant positive relationship between the data and information dimension and relationship quality. However, it is also likely that customer perceptions play a role in this relationship. Customers likely have certain perceptions regarding the availability and quality of data and information from hotels, and the extent to which these perceptions are met can impact their overall relationship with the hotel. For example, if a customer expects to be able to easily access personalized information and services through the hotel's website, but is unable to do so, this may negatively impact their relationship with the hotel. On the other hand, if the hotel can meet or exceed these perceptions, it is likely to improve the relationship. Therefore, it can be concluded that customer perceptions partially mediate the relationship between data and information and relationship quality in the selected hotels in Nairobi, Kenya.

Considering that social data positively to improved relationship quality, hotels looking to improve their customer relationships should not only take advantage of various channels, such as websites, social media, and personalized emails, to provide data and information to customers but also strive to create an engaging and personalized experience. Records of past visits should be kept and used to provide tailored services and special deals to returning customers, while engaging with customers on social media and other online platforms, as well as providing helpful destination content and resources on their website, which will strengthen customer relationships. Additionally, customer perceptions should be monitored and evaluated periodically, and hotels should make a concerted effort to not only meet but exceed these expectations to create positive experiences and lasting relationships.

The findings of this study have important policy implications for hotels in Nairobi, Kenya, seeking to improve their relationship quality with customers by utilizing social data. To enhance relationship quality, hotels should invest in personalized experiences by leveraging social data to tailor services and offer to individual preferences. They should actively engage with customers through social media and online platforms, responding to feedback and providing valuable content. Hotels must monitor and exceed customer perceptions regarding the availability and quality of data and information. By continuously improving data utilization strategies and adapting to changing customer preferences, hotels can strengthen their relationships with customers, enhance satisfaction and loyalty, and stay competitive in the market.

Further Research

Further studies on the relationship between data and information, and relationship quality in the hotel industry could focus on several areas. First, additional research could be conducted to explore the role of employee training and support in implementing and utilizing data and information and relationship quality. Second, future studies could also investigate the impact of other factors on the relationship between social data and relationship quality. This could include examining the role of hotel characteristics, such as location, size, and type, as well as the impact of external factors, such as competition, industry trends, and economic conditions.

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