

RESEARCH ARTICLE

From Digital Strategies to Loyal Stays: Exploring the Impact of DMC, CRM, and Trust on Hotel Revisit Intentions

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the dynamic interplay between Digital Marketing Capabilities (DMC), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), trust, Customer Engagement (CE), and Customer Revisit Intentions (CRI) within the hospitality industry in Kashmir, India. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the research evaluates both direct and indirect effects among the constructs. The findings reveal that DMC and CRM significantly influence revisit intentions, both directly and indirectly, through the mediating role of trust—a critical psychological mechanism that fosters customer loyalty. Moreover, CE moderates these relationships, amplifying the positive effects of DMC and CRM on revisit intentions. This suggests that engaged customers respond more favorably to digital initiatives and relationship-building efforts. The study offers practical insights for hospitality managers by emphasizing the strategic importance of integrating digital technologies and CRM systems to build trust and enhance engagement. It advocates for a trust-centric, inclusive approach to digital transformation within the regional hospitality sector.

1 | Introduction

In recent years, the hotel industry has undergone a profound transformation in customer behavior and service delivery systems, largely driven by rapid advancements in digital technology. The proliferation of the internet, widespread mobile device usage, and the rise of online travel platforms have compelled hospitality firms to adapt and innovate their marketing strategies (Sigala 2018; Buhalis et al. 2024). Within this context, digital marketing capabilities (DMCs) have emerged as a vital strategic resource, enabling hospitality organizations to deliver timely, personalized, and effective brand experiences across diverse customer touchpoints (Mathew and Soliman 2020). Digital marketing capability refers to a firm's ability to leverage technology-enabled processes to engage with customers and partners in a targeted, measurable, and integrated manner that

creates value (McIntyre and Virzi 2019; Sridhar and Fang 2019). These capabilities not only streamline operational efficiency but also strengthen customer engagement (CE) and satisfaction—key drivers of revisit intentions (Alves et al. 2025; Gupta 2019; Mathew and Soliman 2021; Akhtar et al. 2025; Ketter and Avraham 2021). DMCs also allow hospitality firms to identify and reach potential customers effectively, while enhancing their ability to manage customer relationships (Chikazhe and Makanyeza 2022).

Simultaneously, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has evolved from traditional data management systems into intelligent platforms that support engagement, satisfaction, and long-term loyalty (Sofi et al. 2025). Modern CRM systems empower hospitality firms to collect and utilize consumer insights, provide personalized services, proactively