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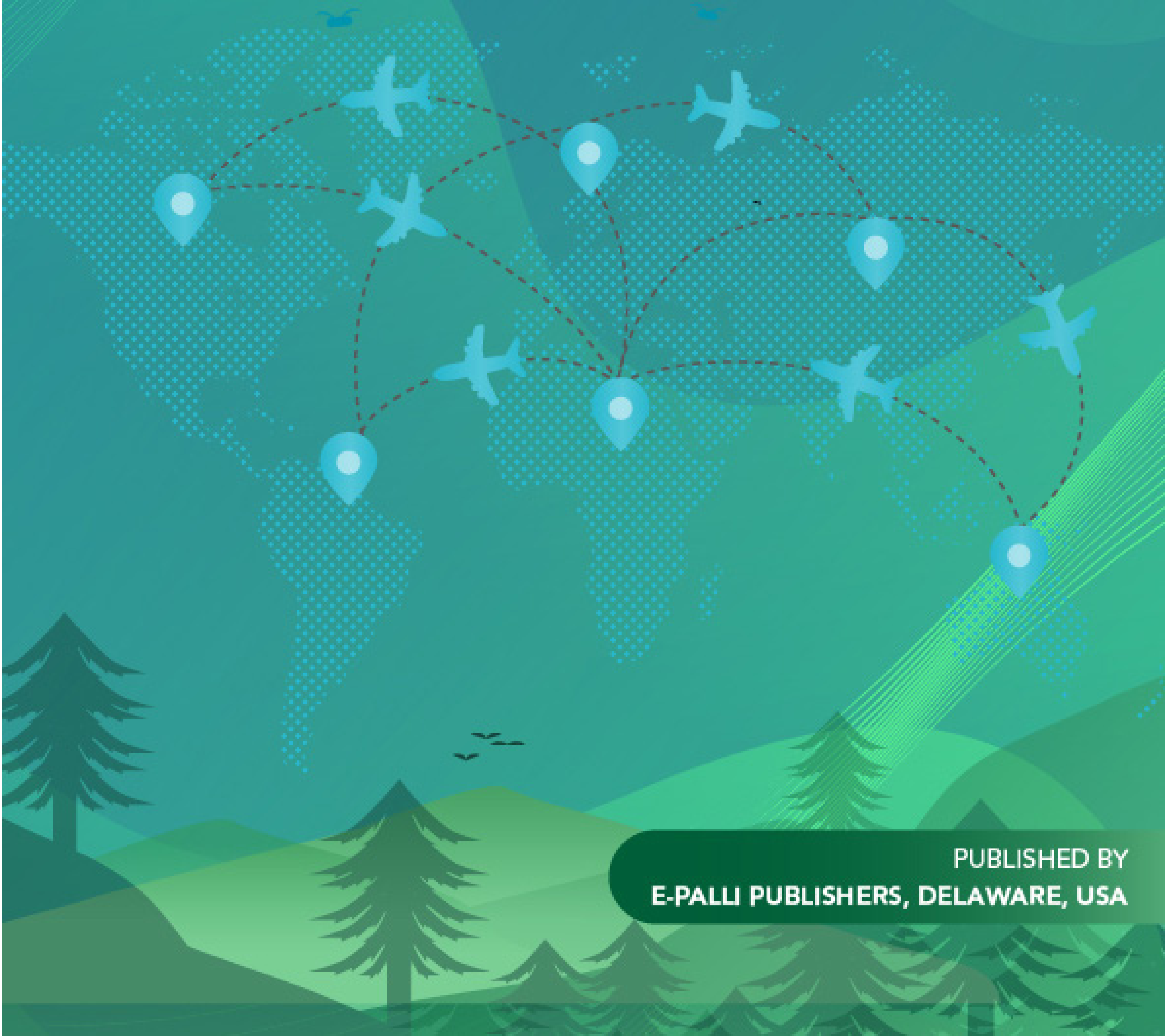

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Personalized Loyalty Programs and Guest Retention in Five-Star Hotels in Kigali, Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

The hospitality industry increasingly relies on loyalty programs to enhance guest retention and maintain competitive advantage within the luxury hotel sector. Among loyalty program dimensions, personalization has emerged as a critical strategy for influencing customer loyalty through tailored rewards, customized communication, and preference-based service delivery. However, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of personalization in emerging African hospitality markets remains limited. This study examined the influence of loyalty program personalization on guest retention among five-star hotels in Kigali, Rwanda. A convergent mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 399 active loyalty program members using structured questionnaires, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with 15 purposively selected customer relationship management (CRM) managers and marketing officers from participating hotels. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression, while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis. Findings revealed that personalization was highly rated by respondents ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.84$). Correlation analysis indicated a strong positive relationship between personalization and guest retention ($r = 0.721$, $p < .001$). Regression analysis further showed that personalization significantly predicts guest retention ($\beta = 0.327$, $p < .001$), explaining 52.0% of the variance in retention behavior ($R^2 = 0.520$). Qualitative findings corroborated these results by highlighting personalized guest recognition and tailored communication as important drivers of repeat visitation. The study concludes that loyalty program personalization significantly enhances guest retention in Kigali's luxury hospitality sector. Hotels are encouraged to strengthen CRM capabilities, invest in data-driven personalization strategies, and enhance staff competencies to foster long-term customer loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

The global hospitality industry increasingly relies on loyalty programs as instruments for achieving competitive advantage, enhancing guest retention, and sustaining revenue growth. As of 2024, total loyalty program membership across hotel chains reached approximately 675 million, accounting for over 52.8% of all occupied hotel rooms worldwide (Adetunji, 2023). Within this expanding landscape, personalization has emerged as the central differentiating factor that transforms transactional loyalty schemes into powerful engines of emotional engagement and repeat patronage.

At the global level, research from developed markets confirms that personalized loyalty strategies those, which leverage guest data to tailor communication, rewards, and service delivery yield significantly higher retention outcomes than standardized programs. Bell and Thompson (2021) reported that 61% of hotel guests are willing to pay a premium for personalized experiences, while Skift and the Global Hotel Alliance (2024) demonstrated that individualized benefits such as room upgrades and tailored recommendations substantially enhance loyalty intentions. In these contexts, advanced data analytics and integrated CRM systems support seamless personalization at scale.

At the regional level, East African markets such as Kenya have begun integrating personalized loyalty systems in their business and high-end hotel segments, with associated improvements in repeat patronage (Ali *et al.*, 2022). However, Uganda and Tanzania lag considerably due to technological limitations and fragmented tourism structures (Aravani *et al.*, 2024). Rwanda occupies an increasingly prominent position in the East African tourism landscape, with Kigali established as a regional hub for conferences, diplomacy, and high-end tourism. According to the Rwanda Development Board (RDB, 2023), tourism contributed over 10% of national GDP in 2023, with a growing influx of international visitors.

At the national level, five-star hotels in Kigali including Kigali Serena Hotel, Kigali Marriott, Radisson Blu, Four Points by Sheraton, and The Pinnacle have introduced loyalty initiatives such as point accumulation, room upgrades, and airline reward partnerships. Yet, Rwanda's loyalty program landscape remains less mature than comparable markets, with limited integration of advanced personalization strategies (RDB, 2023). At Kigali Serena Hotel specifically, current loyalty mechanisms are largely transactional, relying on standardized benefits rather than data-driven, individualized guest experiences.

A critical research gap exists: despite global consensus on the value of personalization, there is insufficient empirical evidence from Rwanda or the broader Sub-

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Saharan African luxury hotel sector examining how personalization specifically influences guest retention behavior. Most studies focus on perceptions and satisfaction rather than behavioral retention outcomes, and none situate this analysis within Rwanda's unique digital, cultural, and economic context.

This study therefore addresses this gap by examining the influence of loyalty program personalization on guest retention at Kigali Serena Hotel, Rwanda. The specific objective is: to examine the influence of loyalty program personalization on guest retention at Kigali Serena Hotel. The study is grounded in Relationship Marketing Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), which posits that long-term customer relationships are built through personalized engagement, trust, and sustained emotional connection. The findings are significant for hotel managers, tourism policymakers, and academic researchers seeking context-specific evidence on loyalty program effectiveness in emerging luxury markets. Based on the foregoing, the following hypothesis is tested: H_1: Loyalty program personalization has a significant positive effect on guest retention at Kigali Serena Hotel, Rwanda.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Loyalty Program Personalization and Guest Retention

Empirical evidence from developed hospitality markets consistently identifies personalization as a key determinant of guest satisfaction and behavioral loyalty. Bell and Thompson (2021) found that 61% of hotel guests are willing to pay more for personalized services, and that guests who receive tailored loyalty experiences exhibit significantly higher return intentions. Similarly, findings from the Global Hotel Alliance (2024) reveal that individualized benefits such as room upgrades, curated dining experiences, and preference-based communication substantially enhance loyalty scores in affiliated luxury hotels.

In comparable work, Kim *et al.* (2023) demonstrated that data-driven personalization in luxury hotel settings significantly improves repeat booking rates, particularly when personalization is powered by AI-integrated CRM platforms. Zhang and Lee (2022) further reported that customized offers enhance perceived value and emotional connection to the hotel brand, both of which are established antecedents of repeat patronage. These studies collectively affirm that personalization improves retention not only through utilitarian means (better-suited rewards) but also through relational mechanisms (emotional attachment and recognition).

Evidence from emerging economies presents a more nuanced picture. Remountakis *et al.* (2023) reported that AI-driven personalization in a Kenyan boutique hotel improved guest engagement and perceived service quality. However, the study was limited by a small sample and focused primarily on satisfaction rather than behavioral outcomes. Bianchi and Russo (2024), studying Indian luxury hotels, found that AI-based customer profiling improved perceived personalization, but did not establish direct causal links with actual repeat patronage. These studies suggest that personalization's behavioral impact beyond attitudinal outcomes remains under-examined in developing market contexts.

A methodological concern runs across the broader literature: most personalization studies rely on cross-sectional self-report data at a single point in time and use satisfaction or intention as proxies for retention. Very few employ behavioral tracking data or longitudinal designs. This limits the strength of causal inference, particularly in markets such as Rwanda, where loyalty programs are still maturing (RDB, 2023).

In Rwanda, empirical research on personalization within hospitality loyalty programs is extremely limited. Available evidence from RDB reports (2023) focuses primarily on tourism volume and service quality rather than loyalty program design. Existing studies by Nkurunziza *et al.* (2025) document awareness-level patterns but do not measure the behavioral impact of personalization on guest retention. This creates a clear contextual and empirical gap that the current study addresses.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on three complementary theoretical perspectives.

Relationship Marketing Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) emphasizes the development of long-term, trust-based relationships between service providers and customers through personalized engagement, consistent communication, and relational value creation. In this study, personalization serves as the primary mechanism through which hotels build emotional bonds with guests. When guests perceive that a hotel understands and caters to their individual preferences, relational trust deepens, reducing the likelihood of switching to competing brands.

Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) proposes that individuals are motivated to act when they expect their efforts will lead to valued and attainable outcomes. Applied to loyalty programs, guests are more likely to participate and remain loyal when personalized rewards are perceived as both achievable and meaningful. Personalized offers that match individual travel behavior lower perceived effort and increase perceived reward value, creating stronger retention incentives.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) explains that behavior is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Personalization shapes guest attitudes toward the hotel (more positive through recognition), social norms (perceptions that other guests benefit from membership), and perceived control (ease of benefitting from personalized offers). This combined effect strengthens intentions to return, translating into actual retention behavior.

Together, these three theories explain the pathway from personalization to guest retention: personalized experiences build relational trust (Relationship Marketing Theory), create positive motivational expectations

(Expectancy Theory), and reinforce pro-retention attitudes and intentions (Theory of Planned Behavior).

Conceptual Framework
The conceptual framework positions loyalty program personalization as the independent variable and guest retention as the dependent variable. Personalization was operationalized through customized rewards, personalized communication, utilization of previous stay information, and preference-based service delivery. Guest retention was measured through repeat visitation, reduced switching behavior, positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and long-term patronage. The study hypothesizes that higher levels of loyalty program personalization are associated with increased guest retention among hotel guests.

Research Gaps
Three key gaps motivate this study. First, a geographical gap: existing personalization research is predominantly concentrated in Europe, North America, and parts of Asia; African studies remain scarce, with virtually none in Rwanda's luxury hotel segment. Second, a contextual gap: no existing study examines personalization effectiveness within Rwanda's unique hospitality environment, characterized by emerging digital infrastructure, varying digital literacy, and culturally specific service expectations. Third, a methodological gap: most existing studies capture intentions and satisfaction rather than behavioral retention outcomes, and few integrate both quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve explanatory depth. This study addresses all three gaps by providing behavioral, mixed-methods evidence from Kigali Serena Hotel.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
Research Design
A convergent mixed-methods design was adopted, integrating quantitative (primary) and qualitative (supplementary) approaches. The quantitative component employed a cross-sectional survey design, enabling the assessment of relationships between personalization and guest retention at a defined point in time (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2022). This design was appropriate given the study's objective of measuring perceptions and behavioral patterns among active loyalty program members. The qualitative component employed semi-structured interviews with hotel staff to provide contextual explanation and operational validation of the quantitative findings.

Study Location and Population
The study was conducted among selected five-star hotels located in Kigali, Rwanda, namely Kigali Serena Hotel, Kigali Marriott Hotel, Radisson Blu Hotel, Four Points by Sheraton Kigali, and The Pinnacle Kigali. Kigali was selected due to its strategic position as Rwanda's principal tourism and business destination and its concentration of internationally recognized luxury hotels.

The target population comprised active loyalty program members and hotel personnel directly involved in loyalty program administration. According to Rwanda Development Board (2024) records, the combined population of active loyalty program members across the participating five-star hotels was approximately 125,000. Additionally, 75 staff members were identified as directly involved in customer relationship management, loyalty program implementation, and marketing activities. These personnel constituted the population from which qualitative participants were selected.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique
The guest sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for large finite populations:

$n = N / (1 + N \cdot e^2)$

Where N = 125,000 represents the target population and e = 0.05 denotes the acceptable margin of error at a 95% confidence level. The calculation yielded a sample size of 399 respondents. Yamane's formula was adopted due to its appropriateness for estimating sample sizes from large, known finite populations in social science research (Taherdoost, 2021).

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation of loyalty program members across the participating hotels. Each hotel constituted a distinct stratum, and respondents were selected proportionately from the respective loyalty program membership databases using random sampling procedures.

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was utilized to select 15 participants from a population of 75 hotel staff members involved in loyalty program operations. Participants were selected based on their expertise and direct involvement in customer relationship management (CRM), loyalty program administration, and marketing activities. Specifically, CRM managers and marketing officers with substantial knowledge and practical experience in loyalty program design and implementation were targeted. This approach ensured the inclusion of information-rich participants capable of providing in-depth insights relevant to the study objectives, consistent with the principles of purposive sampling in qualitative research (Bryman, 2021).

Data Collection
Quantitative data were collected from hotel guests using structured questionnaires comprising Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) measuring personalization perceptions (5 items) and guest retention behaviors (10 items). Questionnaires were administered through on-site guided distribution at hotel reception points and via email through hotel loyalty program databases. A 100% response rate was achieved (n = 399), attributed to guided on-site administration, real-time completion monitoring, and prior authorization from hotel management to access loyalty program members at checkout. While a 100% response rate is uncommon

in survey research, the structured conditions of on-site administration and direct management facilitation made this achievable in this context. Researchers acknowledge this as an unusually high rate and recommend that future studies implement independent response tracking to further validate data completeness.

Qualitative data were collected from 15 purposively selected hotel staff members (CRM managers and marketing officers with direct loyalty program responsibility) through audio-recorded, face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis supported by NVivo software.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha from a pilot test ($n = 30$ guests, $n = 5$ staff). The personalization construct returned $\alpha = 0.82$, exceeding the recommended threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ (Field, 2022). Guest retention returned $\alpha = 0.83$. Content validity was established through expert review by three academics in hospitality management and two industry practitioners. Face validity was confirmed during the pilot phase. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data sources further enhanced construct validity and credibility of findings (Saunders *et al.*, 2022).

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were entered into IBM SPSS Statistics Version 28 and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviations), Pearson correlation analysis, and simple linear regression. Pearson correlation was used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between personalization and guest retention. Linear regression was used to quantify the effect size and predictive significance of personalization on retention. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was applied throughout.

The regression model for Objective 1 is specified as: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$, where Y = Guest Retention, X_1 = Loyalty Program Personalization, β_0 = intercept, β_1 = regression coefficient, and ε = error term.

Ethical Considerations

Formal institutional authorization was obtained from Kigali Serena Hotel management prior to data collection. All participants provided written informed consent and were assured of anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Data were anonymized using unique codes and stored in password-protected files accessible only to the research team. The study adhered to Mount Kenya University's ethical guidelines and international research ethics standards (Resnik, 2023). Plagiarism was maintained below the 15% institutional threshold.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate and Demographic Profile

All 399 questionnaires distributed to hotel guests were completed and returned (100% response rate), and 15 staff members participated in semi-structured interviews as planned. The high guest response rate was facilitated by guided on-site administration, management coordination, and real-time retrieval. Table 1 summarizes the socio-demographic characteristics of guest respondents.

The demographic profile reveals a near-gender-balanced sample (male: 52%; female: 48%). The majority of respondents (45%) fall within the 26–35 age bracket, followed by the 36–45 cohort (25%), suggesting a predominantly young to middle-aged professional clientele. Most respondents hold a bachelor's degree (40%) or higher, indicating a well-educated guest base with the cognitive capacity to engage with complex loyalty program structures. Occupationally, private sector employees (38%) and civil servants (30%) dominate, reflecting the hotel's predominantly business-oriented clientele. Repeat visitation is common: 65% stay quarterly or monthly, confirming that the sample is well positioned to evaluate loyalty program effectiveness. All 399 respondents are active loyalty program members, ensuring relevance and analytical reliability.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Hotel Guests

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	207	52
Female	192	48
Age Group		
18–25 years	40	10
26–35 years	180	45
36–45 years	100	25
46–55 years	50	12
Above 55 years	29	8
Education Level		
Diploma	120	30
Bachelor's Degree	160	40
Postgraduate	79	20
Frequency of Stay		
Quarterly	140	35
Monthly	120	30
Once a year	80	20
Rarely	60	15

Descriptive Statistics: Loyalty Program Personalization

Table 2 presents descriptive findings on the five personalization indicators measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). All five personalization indicators recorded high mean scores ranging from 4.22 to 4.29 (overall mean = 4.25; SD = 0.84), indicating strong agreement among respondents that loyalty program personalization is effectively implemented and positively perceived at

Table 2: Descriptive Findings: Loyalty Program Personalization

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	SD
Offers benefits based on personal preferences	1.0	2.0	7.5	45.1	44.4	4.29	0.82
Receives personalized messages/ offers	1.3	2.5	7.0	45.6	43.6	4.26	0.83
Previous stay data used to enhance next visit	1.5	3.0	7.5	45.1	42.9	4.24	0.85
Rewards reflect individual travel behavior	1.3	2.5	8.0	46.4	41.9	4.22	0.85
Hotel understands individual guest needs	1.0	2.0	8.8	45.9	42.4	4.24	0.83
Overall Mean						4.25	0.84

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

Kigali Serena Hotel. Over 88% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed across all items. The highest-rated item (mean = 4.29) relates to hotels offering benefits based on personal preferences, confirming that customization of rewards is the most salient dimension of perceived personalization. The tightly clustered standard deviations (0.82–0.85) indicate strong consensus across the guest sample, suggesting that personalization perceptions are consistent rather than driven by outlier groups.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between loyalty program personalization and guest retention. Table 3 presents the results.

Personalization demonstrated a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation with guest retention ($r = 0.721$, $p < 0.001$). This Pearson r value indicates a substantial linear association, classifiable as a large effect according to Cohen's (1988) conventions ($r > 0.50$ = large effect). The result confirms that guests who perceive higher levels of personalization—tailored rewards, individualized communication, and preference-aware service delivery—exhibit correspondingly stronger retention behaviors, including repeat visits, reduced competitor switching, and heightened brand loyalty.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation: Personalization and Guest Retention

Variable	r	Sig. (p)
Personalization (X_1) → Guest Retention (Y)	0.721	0.000

*Note: n = 399; **p < 0.001 (two-tailed). Source: Primary Data (2026)*

Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression was conducted to quantify the effect of personalization on guest retention. Table 4 presents the model summary, Table 5 the ANOVA, and

Table 4: Regression Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of Estimate
0.721	0.520	0.519	0.325

Table 5: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	61.999	1	61.999	429.8	.000
Residual	57.267	397	0.144		
Total	119.266	398			

Table 6: Regression Coefficients: Personalization → Guest Retention

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	0.512	0.110	–	4.65	.000
Personalization (X_1)	0.314	0.038	0.327	8.26	.000

*Note: Dependent variable: Guest Retention. **p < 0.001.*

Table 6 the regression coefficients.

The regression model summary (Table 4) indicates that the model explains 52.0% of the variance in guest retention (R^2 = 0.520), with an adjusted R^2 of 0.519 confirming that the model's explanatory power is appropriately calibrated for a single-predictor model. The low standard error (0.325) indicates a well-fitting model. The ANOVA result (Table 5) confirms overall model significance (F = 429.8, $p < 0.001$), meaning that personalization provides a significantly better prediction of guest retention than the null model alone.

The regression coefficients (Table 6) show that personalization has a positive and statistically significant effect on guest retention ($B = 0.314$, $\beta = 0.327$, $t = 8.26$, $p < 0.001$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.314$) indicates that for each one-unit increase in perceived personalization, guest retention increases by 0.314 units, holding other factors constant. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.327$) indicates that loyalty program personalization is a significant positive predictor of guest retention. The finding suggests that higher levels of perceived personalization are associated with increased guest retention among loyalty program members.

Hypothesis Testing

The null hypothesis (H_{01}) stated that loyalty program personalization has no significant effect on guest retention at Kigali Serena Hotel. Given that $\beta = 0.327$, $t = 8.26$, and $p < 0.001$ (well below the $\alpha = 0.05$ significance threshold), H_{01} is rejected. The alternative hypothesis (H_{11}) that loyalty program personalization has a significant positive effect on guest retention is accepted. This finding provides robust statistical evidence that personalization is a key determinant of guest retention behavior in Kigali's five-star hotel sector.

Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of 15 staff interviews reinforced and contextually explained the quantitative findings. Three core themes emerged.

Data-driven recognition as the engine of loyalty. CRM managers consistently described how the systematic use of guest preference data including dietary requirements, room preferences, and stay history transforms transactional interactions into relational experiences. A CRM manager at Kigali Marriott Hotel stated: "Guests respond positively to tailored offers and messages; they feel recognized and keep coming back." A marketing officer at Radisson Blu Kigali elaborated: "By analyzing past bookings and preferences, we can anticipate needs and offer customized rewards, which significantly improves retention."

Personalized communication as a trust-building mechanism. Multiple respondents emphasized that personalized messages particularly birthday greetings, anniversary acknowledgments, and post-stay follow-ups were among the most effective retention tools. A front office manager noted, "When guests receive a message that references their last stay or personal milestone, they feel the hotel genuinely cares that converts into bookings."

CRM infrastructure as the enabler and constraint. Staff acknowledged that advanced personalization depends on robust CRM systems capable of integrating, analyzing, and acting on guest data. While larger hotels in the Kigali market have made CRM investments, smaller establishments and newer staff face challenges in maintaining consistent personalization standards, creating within-market variability in effectiveness.

Discussion

The findings revealed a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between loyalty program personalization and guest retention ($r = 0.721$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, personalization significantly predicted guest retention ($\beta = 0.327$, $p < .001$), accounting for 52.0% of the variation in retention behavior. These findings suggest that guests, who perceive loyalty programs as tailored to their individual preferences are more likely to demonstrate repeat patronage, reduced switching intentions, and stronger attachment to hotel brands.

The findings are consistent with Bell and Thompson (2021), who reported that, personalized hospitality experiences enhance customer loyalty and willingness to repurchase. Similarly, Kim *et al.* (2023) found that data-driven personalization significantly improves repeat booking behavior among luxury hotel guests. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that personalization remains a significant determinant of guest retention within the context of Rwanda's emerging hospitality industry.

The findings also support Relationship Marketing Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), which emphasizes the role of personalized interactions in fostering trust, commitment, and long-term customer relationships. Personalized communication and tailored rewards enhance guests' perceptions of recognition and value, thereby strengthening emotional attachment to the hotel. Consequently, investment in customer relationship management systems and data-driven personalization strategies may contribute substantially to sustainable competitive advantage in the luxury hotel sector.

Although the findings provide strong evidence of a significant association between personalization and guest retention, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference. Future studies should employ longitudinal approaches and objective behavioral measures to further validate these relationships over time.

Study Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional research design captured data at a single point in time, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships between loyalty program personalization and guest retention. Second, the study relied primarily on self-reported data from loyalty program members, which may be subject to social desirability bias and respondent perception errors. Third, the study was conducted among selected five-star hotels in Kigali, Rwanda; therefore, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other categories of hotels or hospitality establishments operating in different geographical contexts. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs, incorporate objective behavioral data, and expand coverage to other hospitality segments to enhance generalizability and causal inference.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the association between loyalty program personalization and guest retention at Kigali Serena Hotel, Rwanda. Findings from 399 loyalty program members revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between personalization and guest retention ($r = 0.721$; $\beta = 0.327$; $p < 0.001$). Personalization explained 52.0% of the variation in guest retention ($R^2 = 0.520$), indicating that tailored rewards, communication, and services are associated with increased repeat visits, reduced switching behavior, and stronger guest loyalty. The findings support Relationship Marketing Theory by demonstrating that personalized interactions strengthen guest relationships and contribute significantly to retention outcomes within Rwanda's luxury hospitality sector. However, the cross-sectional design and focus on a single hotel limit causal inference and broader generalization.

Based on these findings, Kigali Serena Hotel and similar establishments should strengthen customer relationship management (CRM) systems and staff capacity to deliver personalized guest experiences. The Rwanda Development Board and tourism authorities should promote industry guidelines on personalization, customer data management, and digital infrastructure development. Future studies should employ longitudinal and multi-site designs and incorporate objective behavioral data to further validate the relationship between loyalty program personalization and guest retention across the hospitality sector.

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