

The Impact of Digital Marketing Practices on Building  
Customer-Based Brand Equity:  
A Systematic Literature Review

Kourosh Sharifirad

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Primary Supervisor: Dr Ken Hyde

Secondary Supervisor: Dr Helene Wilkinson

## **Abstract**

This systematic literature review (SLR) sought to investigate the influence of digital marketing (DM) practices on various dimensions of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) within the hospitality sector. The study focused on key dimensions, including brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand trust, and brand loyalty. Following the PRISMA protocol, a standardized and transparent review process was employed. The review encompassed a comprehensive search across five prominent databases (Emerald Insight, EBSCO, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Taylor & Francis), and strict inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to ensure impartiality and adherence to systematic review principles. The SLR initially collected 611 articles. After applying SLR inclusion and exclusion criteria, 22 relevant articles were identified as eligible and thoroughly screened and analysed using the SLR methodology. The findings highlighted the growing significance of DM aspects, particularly social media marketing, within the hospitality industry. Various DM practices, such as electronic word of mouth (eWOM), online reviews, user-generated content (UGC), online experiential marketing, and other digital capabilities, were found to enhance marketing effectiveness, reduce costs, and contribute to the development of CBBE in the hospitality sector. This study contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the gaps in the existing literature and identifying the effects of DM practices on CBBE. Moreover, the study proposes an integrated conceptual framework to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of DM practices on CBBE in the hospitality sector.

**Keywords:** customer-based brand equity, digital marketing, social media, hospitality sector, systematic literature review

### **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Kouros Sharifrad

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In today's highly competitive business landscape, building and maintaining a strong brand has become increasingly vital for organizations across various industries, including the hospitality sector (Kaur & Chourasia, 2021). Brands play a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions, influencing their choices, and ultimately driving business performance (Aaker, 2009; Keller, 2016). A stronger level of communication between a brand and its consumers positively influences consumer brand preference and brand loyalty. One crucial aspect of branding is the establishment of a robust relationship with consumers, which creates the capability to influence consumer choices and foster loyalty (Kotler et al., 2009). However, with the advent of digital technology and its rapid advancements, the branding process, customer journey, and consumer behaviour have undergone significant transformations.

In 2022, the global Internet user population reached an estimated 5.3 billion, exhibiting a notable increase from the previous year's count of 4.9 billion. Google, as one of the leading search engines, played a significant role in facilitating online information retrieval, processing an impressive volume of over 8.5 billion searches daily. Moreover, a substantial 84% of respondents reported utilizing Google at least three times a day. Furthermore, Google's dominance in the realm of product searches was evident, as it served as the starting point for approximately 46% of all product-related search queries. These statistics underscore the pervasive influence of Google in shaping online search behaviour and its integral role in facilitating access to information and products for a vast global audience (StatCounter, 2023), and more than two billion prospects and potential consumers are on social media networks, actively sharing content, interacting with each other, and communicating with brands (Statista, 2023a).

These technological advancements and transformations in consumer behaviour present both opportunities and challenges for marketers, as the new digitized environment has transformed the behaviour and expectations of today's consumers (Keller, 2016; Kingsnorth, 2016; Pelsmacker, 2018; Thomas & Housden, 2017). Consumers are now more powerful, well-informed, and interactive. They have easy access to information, freely communicate with each other, possess extensive knowledge about brands, and actively participate in the interpretation of marketing messages. Consequently, consumer opinion has become crucial for digital and social media marketing campaigns and brand equity building initiatives, emphasizing the need for marketers to regularly consider and analyse consumer opinion (Chaffey & Smith, 2022; Dumitriu et al., 2019; Górska-Warsewicz et al., 2021; Kamal et al., 2020; Keller, 2016; Kingsnorth, 2016; Pelsmacker, 2018; Thomas & Housden, 2017).

Digital marketing (DM) can facilitate consumers' brand awareness by enhancing the customer journey and interactive customer relationship, thus facilitating consumers' recall and recognition process towards the brand. With immense capabilities provided by DM, firms can reach out to more consumers, analyse, and predict consumer behaviour more precisely than ever before, and build stronger brand

equity (Herhausen et al., 2020; Kamal et al., 2020; Keller, 2016; Kingsnorth, 2016; Pelsmacker, 2018; Thomas & Housden, 2017).

Within the hospitality sector, marketers encounter a fiercely competitive and uniform marketplace, necessitating the consideration of alternative strategies beyond traditional marketing activities to establish differentiation among service providers including hotels, restaurants, cafés (Callarisa et al., 2012; Šerić & Praničević, 2018; Yoopetch, 2018). Therefore, there is a pressing need to investigate how DM practices can impact customer-based brand equity (CBBE) and its dimensions in this industry. Several studies suggest that DM practices can help marketers differentiate their brands and gain a competitive edge by tapping into digital marketing capabilities to enhance the brand relationship with customers and augment the consumer's journey and experience across all brand touchpoints in the hospitality sector (Callarisa et al., 2012; Hanaysha, 2016; Ibrahim, 2021; Kushwaha et al., 2020; Nyairo, 2016; Riaz et al., 2019; Ruan et al., 2020; Schivinski et al., 2020; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012; Šeric et al., 2016; Yoopetch, 2018; Zahoor, 2022).

Although there has been significant interest from both practitioners and academics in exploring the influence of digital marketing and social media on brand equity, a gap exists in the literature regarding the measurement of these concepts and the examination of their relationships, as well as the effectiveness of digital-based branding strategies in the hospitality sector (Kayaman & Arasli, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2020; Šerić & Praničević, 2018).

The emergence of brand equity in academic literature can be traced back to the works of Keller (1993) and Aaker (1991) defined brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, emphasizing dimensions such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. Keller's conceptualization focused on the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to marketing efforts, highlighting the dynamic relationship between consumer knowledge and brand performance. Scholars and practitioners have proposed various models and approaches to define, explain, and measure brand equity in the context of digital marketing (Çifci et al., 2016). However, the literature on brand equity and its related models is diverse and fragmented, calling for further research to consolidate existing knowledge and provide insights for industry practitioners (Çifci et al., 2016; Ruan et al., 2020; Schivinski et al., 2020; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012; Šeric et al., 2016; Sijoria et al., 2019).

To comprehend the complexities of brand equity in the digital marketing era, it is essential to delve into the evolution of branding and the influence of digital technology on consumer behaviour. The evolution of brand equity models, such as those introduced by Aaker (1991), Keller (1993), Nam et al. (2011), and Yoo and Donthu (2001), provides a ground for recognizing the multidimensional nature of brand equity and its measurement.

Digital marketing, as an ever-evolving area, offers numerous avenues for brands to meet and interact with consumers online. Chaffey and Smith (2022) highlight eight key activities within digital marketing that companies should consider, including creating a coherent digital experience, developing an integrated digital marketing plan, producing content marketing, conducting search engine optimization (SEO), paid search engine marketing (SEM), social media marketing, email marketing, and analysing digital efforts and results across all online channels.

As the literature on the effect of digital marketing practices on brand equity in the hospitality sector continues to grow, numerous studies have discovered the relationship between various aspects of digital marketing namely social media marketing (SMM), modern integrated marketing communication (IMC), electronic word of mouth (eWOM), online reviews, and online experiential marketing on brand equity dimensions in the hospitality sector (Callarisa et al., 2012; Farzin et al., 2023; Hanaysha, 2016; Ibrahim, 2021; Kazemzadeh & Moradlou, 2022; Kushwaha et al., 2020; Nuseir & Elrefae, 2022; Nyairo, 2016; Perera & Perera, 2018; Qalati et al., 2019; Riaz et al., 2019; Ruan et al., 2020; Schivinski et al., 2020; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012; Šeric et al., 2016; Šerić & Praničević, 2018; Sijoria et al., 2019; Tatar & Eren-erdoğmuş, 2016; Yooetch, 2018; Zahoor, 2022).

The purpose of this study is to conduct a systematic literature review to comprehensively analyse and synthesize relevant research on the relationship between DM and the establishment of CBBE in the context of the hospitality sector. This chapter provides an in-depth exploration of the definitions, background, dimensions, and existing conceptual models of CBBE and DM as portrayed in the current literature. The chapter introduces the aim of the research, and the research question addressed in the study. The structure of the dissertation is explained.

## **1.1 Brand Equity Background and Definitions**

The origin of traditional branding practices can be traced back several centuries, with various historical examples illustrating the early forms of branding. These examples include marking bricks in ancient Egypt, the longstanding tradition of using hot iron marks to identify cattle and livestock, and the practice of inserting trademarks on artworks or branding on alcohol barrels (Farquhar, 1989; Kotler et al., 2009).

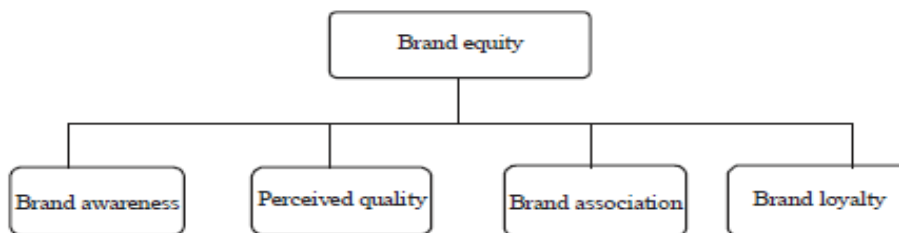
The concept of brand equity plays a crucial role in marketing by establishing a unique connection between a brand and its stakeholders, thereby fostering long-term purchasing behaviour (Keller, 2016). However, the existing literature on brand equity is not conclusive in terms of conceptual models (Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010). Scholars have approached the measurement and understanding of brand equity from two main perspectives namely the financial view (Simon & Sullivan, 1993) and the customer-based perspective (Aaker, 1991; Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010; Keller, 1993; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). The financial perspective focuses on the premium value that a business gains from a well-known branded product or service, while the customer-based perspective emphasizes the value

perceptions of customers, including product performance, emotional attachment, and lifestyle (Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010). The customer-based perspective, also known as customer-based brand equity (CBBE), has gained significant attention in brand equity literature and is favoured by a majority of marketing experts (Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010; Keller, 1993). Scholars such as Keller (1993) and Aaker (1991) have been influential in defining and constructing the concept of brand equity, particularly from the customer perspective. Keller (1993) introduced the term CBBE, highlighting that it occurs when customers have high brand awareness and favourable associations with respect to the brand in memory which is usually the outcome of marketing activities conducted by the firm. Aaker (1991) identified five components of CBBE, including brand awareness, perceived brand quality, brand associations, brand loyalty, and proprietary brand assets (Aaker, 1991). Among these components, proprietary brand assets received less attention and acceptance among scholars who research brand equity from customer-based standpoint, therefore, Aaker’s framework usually is known to include four components namely brand awareness, perceived brand quality, brand associations, brand loyalty. CBBE predicts consumers' inclination to respond more positively to branded products compared to unbranded alternatives (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). For companies, enhancing brand equity involves strengthening consumer associations and attitudes toward brands (Keller, 1993). This well-established model has been broadly applied by researchers in numerous fields (Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010).

## 1.2 Customer-Based Brand Equity Dimensions

Various dimensions of CBBE have been introduced over the past three decades (Çifci et al., 2016; Jung & Sung, 2008). However, due to differing conceptualization approaches, there is no clear consensus on how to measure brand equity (Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010; Çifci et al., 2016; Shariq, 2018). Nevertheless, the consumer brand equity models proposed by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) are extensively employed by other scholars. Keller (1993) defines brand equity as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to marketing efforts, while Aaker (1991) refers to brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities associated with a brand. Aaker (1991) proposed four key dimensions of CBBE (Figure 1) as follows:

**Figure 1: Aaker's CBBE Dimensions**



Source: (Aaker, 1991)

### **1.2.1 Brand Awareness**

Aaker (1991) highlights brand awareness as a critical element of brand equity, often overlooked by researchers and practitioners. Brand awareness involves consumers' ability to identify or recall a brand in a specific product or service type (Aaker, 1996). The concept comprises two primary levels, namely recognition and recall. Recognition creates familiarity with a brand, indicating brand awareness, while recall influences consumer choice and selection (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015). Building brand awareness is crucial for firms as it strengthens their brands and enhances their chances of success (Aaker, 1991). Establishing accurate brand identity and salience, which comprises the need for satisfaction and identification, is essential in creating a solid brand (Kuhn et al., 2008).

Several empirical studies have been conducted in the hospitality and hotel industry to identify the dimensions of brand equity specific to this context. Many of these studies adopted the conceptualization of Aaker (1991) e.g., (Kayaman & Arasli, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2020). However, the outcomes of a few studies suggest that brand awareness does not emerge as a significant dimension of brand equity in the hotel industry (Kam Fung So & King, 2010; Kayaman & Arasli, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2020). For instance, a study by Kim and Kim (2020) conducted in South Korean hospitality businesses suggested that while brand awareness had a significant impact on company performance, but it was not significant in the context of hotel brand equity. Similarly, Kayaman and Arasli (2007) found that brand awareness did not significantly contribute to customer-based brand equity in five-star hotels in North Cyprus. Furthermore, the study by Kam Fung So and King (2010) which surveyed Australia hotel guests, revealed that the effect of brand awareness on brand equity was not significant.

### **1.2.2 Perceived Quality**

As an essential dimension of CBBE, perceived quality plays a pivotal role in delivering value to consumers. It influences their purchasing decisions, sets brands apart from competitors, enables successful line extensions, and justifies premium pricing strategies (Aaker, 1991; Kuhn et al., 2008). It represents consumers' perception of a brand's superiority or excellence compared to competing brands (Aaker, 1991).

### **1.2.3 Brand Associations**

Brand associations, another crucial element of brand equity, involves the various aspects and correlations of a brand stored in consumers' minds (Aaker, 1996). Brand associations aid consumers in processing and organizing information, providing reasons to purchase, enabling differentiation and extensions, and eliciting convinced feelings (Aaker, 1991). They are utilized by consumers to process and store information and they accelerate the purchase decisions of consumers. Understanding and building strong and relevant brand associations are essential for developing brand equity (Netemeyer et al., 2004).

#### **1.2.4 Brand Loyalty**

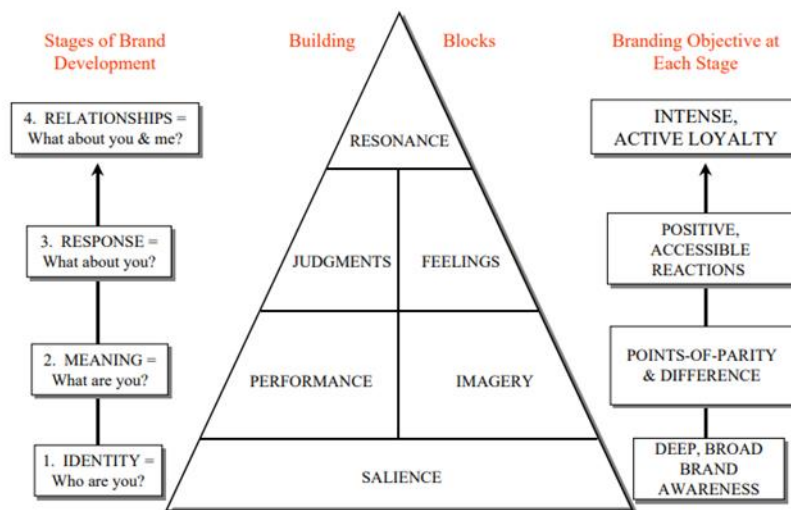
Brand loyalty represents consumers' attachment to a brand and their inclination to consistently choose it over others (Aaker, 1991; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). It reduces marketing costs and leverages trade for firms (Keller, 1993). Acquiring new customers is more costly than retaining existing ones, and brand-loyal users are less motivated to search for alternatives, making it challenging for competitors to attract them (Bilgin, 2018). Customer loyalty plays a central role in the overall brand equity, as stated by Aaker (1996), and strengthening customer loyalty typically leads to an improvement in brand equity (Yoo et al., 2000). Loyalty, as defined by Oliver (1999), denotes a steadfast commitment demonstrated by customers in their consistent repurchase behaviour or continued patronage of a preferred product or service over time.

#### **1.2.5 Brand Equity Conceptual Models**

Scholars have utilized the four-dimensional brand equity model of Aaker (1991) to develop measurement scales for assessing customer-based brand equity (CBBE), particularly focusing on goods dominant brands. However, the application of these measures to service brands has been limited, and previous attempts to apply Aaker's CBBE model to service organizations have demonstrated poor validity (Çifci et al., 2016). While their measures demonstrated reliability, the discriminant validity of the dimensions they assessed (perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand associations/awareness) was criticized for using scale items that were not distinguishable from one another (Washburn & Plank, 2002). Additionally, Yoo and Donthu (2001) also proposed a scale to measure CBBE, however, some researchers argued that Yoo and Donthu's scale is not fitting service-oriented brands due to the exclusive properties of services (Lee & Back, 2010; Nam et al., 2011). Consequently, Aaker's model is more recommended to be employed by service brands (Lee & Back, 2010).

Keller (2009) further developed the CBBE model (Figure 2), which aimed to facilitate the understanding of the process of CBBE by focusing on consumer knowledge structures, different stages of brand development, and the corresponding brand objectives. The model consist of four sequential steps, each contributing to the overall brand-building process (Keller, 2009).

**Figure 2: Brand Resonance Pyramid Model**



Source: (Keller, 2009)

The first step in the model is regarding customer identification of the brand and to establish a cognitive association with a specific product or service class related to customer need. This step involves creating brand salience and deep and broad awareness among customers (Keller, 2009, p. 143).

The next stage involves establishing the significance of the brand within consumer's perception by deliberately connecting tangible and intangible associations with the brand (Keller, 2009, p. 143). This includes delivering brand performance and meeting the functional needs of consumers (Keller, 2009, p. 143).

The third step focuses on brand imagery, which encompasses the extrinsic attributes of the product or service and its ability to satisfy psychological or social needs of the customer (Keller, 2009, p. 143).

The fourth step involves brand judgments, which reflect customers' personal opinions and evaluations of the brand. In the digital era, the growth and influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) through online communities could significantly affect brand judgments (Keller, 2009).

Moving further up the pyramid, the fifth step is to elicit brand feelings which represent customers' emotional responses and reactions towards the brand. The goal here is to evoke positive emotional responses and reactions from consumers (Keller, 2009).

Finally, the ultimate objective of the pyramid is to attain brand resonance. Brand resonance is about the type of connection that exists between customers and a brand, as well as the degree to which customers feel a sense of alignment or synchronization with a brand (Keller, 2009). It signifies a deep psychological connection and intense active loyalty through customer interactivity and engagement, particularly in the digital context (Keller, 2009). Keller (2009) suggests that to build efficient and effective brand, six criteria must be met. The six criteria consist of coverage (using wide range of

options to reach out broad customer base), contribution (facilitating process of customer communication and relationship), commonality (consistency in sharing same meaning and messages across divers brand touchpoints), complementarity (synergy among communication choices to enhance customer knowledge and experience), versatility (refers to versatility of communication options), cost (being cost effective in brand awareness and customer relationship processes). Keller (2009) states that his proposed model fits these criteria and can be used for building and measuring brand equity in the digital context.

Extending the brand resonance pyramid in the digital context becomes crucial, considering the digitally oriented behaviour of today's customers and their preference for accessing content digitally. In this instance, the concept of brand resonance becomes even more relevant when considering the specific categories, it encompasses (Keller, 2009).

These categories include behavioural loyalty, which relates to repeated purchases by customers. Attitudinal attachment is another category, focusing on deeper loyalty generated by satisfying consumer needs and fostering participation in digital communities which might be presented by liking or sharing the brand's posts on social media or user-generated content (UGC) contribution to complement firm-generated content (FGC) in digital context. Sense of community is the third category, emphasizing the feeling of kinship or affiliation with a brand community, which is increasingly prevalent in online digital communities. Lastly, active engagement represents a stronger sense of community among fan bases, leading to real loyalty and favourable intentions. This involves customers investing their time, energy, money, and resources beyond simple purchases, facilitated by digital communication platforms (Keller, 2009).

The availability of digital devices, especially mobile devices, has significantly enhanced consumer interaction and engagement. As outlined in the brand resonance pyramid (Keller, 2009), customers now have the opportunity to invest greater time and personal resources in the brand beyond the consumption phase. Digital communication platforms and online communities offer various benefits such as club membership, regular updates, ongoing dialogues with fellow enthusiasts, and the potential to act as brand ambassadors (Keller, 2009).

Nam et al. (2011) contends that current measurement scales derived from Aaker's and Keller's CBBE models are ill-suited for service-dominant brands. This is attributed to the distinct features of services, including intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity, and inseparability, which necessitate alternative measurement approaches for effectively evaluating brand equity in service-based contexts. However, there is need for more research to test these frameworks in different contexts and from different perspectives to assess the applicability and reliability.

One area of contention is the dimension of perceived quality. While Aaker (1991) suggests that perceived quality is a unidimensional construct, service marketing scholars contend that service quality

is multidimensional. Nam et al. (2011) proposed a two-dimensional approach to service quality, consisting of staff behaviour and physical quality. Additionally, Aaker's CBBE model primarily emphasizes the practical aspects of brands and overlooks the significance of a brand's symbolic aspects which is crucial for CBBE. To tackle this restriction, Nam et al. (2011) proposed three dimensions of brand equity that are associated with symbolic consumption: self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence.

Nam et al. (2011) conducted a study in the UK hospitality industry, specifically focusing on hotel and restaurant brands, and found support for the validity of their model within this context. However, the generalizability of their findings to other service sectors and national cultures remains uncertain when applying the CBBE model. Therefore, further research is required to validate the applicability of the CBBE model across diverse service industries and cultural contexts (Çifci et al., 2016). The selection of the model for this systematic literature review (SLR) is based on the underlying themes and primary focus of the included studies. Since this study does not involve empirical research, the recommendations proposed by Nam et al. (2011) are not directly applicable to the nature and context of this particular study. Nevertheless, this SLR aims to consolidate the findings from the 22 included studies and provide an explanation and synthesis of these findings by integrating existing models and relating them to the aspects and practices of digital marketing (DM).

### **1.3 Digital Marketing and Brand Equity**

The pervasive use of the Internet, social media, mobile apps, and other digital communication technologies has become a norm in the lives of billions of individuals worldwide. Recent statistics indicate that as of January 2020, approximately 4.54 billion people, accounting for 59% of the global population, actively use the Internet (Statista, 2023a). Similarly, In 2019, the count of active social media users amounted to 2.95 billion, and it is anticipated to rise to approximately 3.43 billion by the year 2023 (Statista, 2023b).

DM is a continuously evolving field, encompassing various aspects that facilitate interactions and connections of brands with consumers in the online realm (Chaffey & Smith, 2022; Kamal et al., 2020; Kingsnorth, 2016; Pelsmacker, 2018; Statista, 2023a; Thomas & Housden, 2017).

Chaffey and Smith (2022) highlight that the terminology used to describe marketing activities in the digital sphere has varied among researchers and practitioners over time. Terms such as digital marketing, online marketing, Internet marketing, and e-marketing have been utilized interchangeably. However, Chaffey and Smith (2022) provide a specific definition for digital marketing as the utilization of digital platforms, media, strategies, data, and technology in conjunction with conventional marketing communications to attain marketing goals.

The current literature on digital marketing (DM) is limited despite the widespread adoption and daily usage of smartphones, as well as the emergence of technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI). With these advanced digital technologies becoming increasingly prevalent, it has become a crucial research priority to integrate digital perspectives into marketing and branding practices (Yadav & Pavlou, 2014). The categorization of digital marketing practices proposed by Chaffey and Smith (2022) offers a valuable framework for classifying and analysing the outcomes of this study. By utilizing their relatively comprehensive categorization, it becomes possible to explain the effect of various aspects of DM on the dimensions of CBBE.

Chaffey and Smith (2022) provided an extensive overview of eight essential activities within DM that companies should consider for effective online engagement. These activities include:

1. Developing a cohesive digital experience that aligns with the brand's values and objectives.
2. Creating an integrated digital marketing plan that encompasses multiple channels and strategies for maximum impact.
3. Implementing content marketing initiatives to deliver valuable and relevant content to target audiences.
4. Utilizing Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques to enhance online visibility and organic search rankings.
5. Employing paid search engine marketing (SEM), and Google AdWords, to target relevant keywords and optimize advertising campaigns.
6. Utilizing social media marketing platforms to effectively engage with target audiences, build brand awareness, and foster customer relationships.
7. Employing email marketing campaigns to communicate directly with customers and prospects, delivering personalized messages and promotions.
8. Analysing and evaluating digital efforts and outcomes across all online channels to assess performance and inform future strategies.

These activities collectively contribute to an organization's DM success, enabling them to reach out broad customer base, effectively communicate and interact with customers and accomplish their marketing targets in the digital landscape.

Companies have increasingly turned to social media as a communication channel in their marketing efforts. Social media refers to online applications, platforms, or mass media tools that enable users to connect, collaborate, interact and share information (Kim & Ko, 2012). The influence of social media on consumer behaviour encompasses many activities, such as sharing information, idea and attitude

exchange, awareness building, mutual interaction, building brand trust and reputation, understanding consumer behaviour, and post-purchase behaviour observation without making a purchase (Tatar & Eren-Erdogmus, 2016). As a result, businesses have become more interactive in their marketing approaches and have sought advanced ways to enhance product and brand visibility through social media networks. These initiatives, collectively known as social media marketing activities (SMMA), include strategies that aim to engage consumers in product and brand selection while targeting marketing messages towards other online consumers.

According to Ryan (2020), DM encompasses a broad range of marketing strategies and activities that utilize electronic devices or the Internet to cultivate awareness, engagement, and brand loyalty. Companies utilize various digital channels, including search engines, social media, email, and websites, to establish connections with both existing and potential customers. Through social media, companies can connect with customers, enhance brand awareness, influence consumer attitudes, gather feedback, improve existing products and services, and ultimately increase sales (Alalwan et al., 2017; Kaur, 2017).

Kim and Ko (2012) introduced a prominent classification of SMMA, specifically for luxury brands. They categorized these activities as interaction, trendiness, entertainment, customization, and word-of-mouth communication. Analysis of these activities demonstrated their significant impact on consumer's brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty, which was supported by findings of other study by Seo and Park (2018). Notably, the primary effect of SMMA is observed in brand awareness, as they serve as effectively for reminding brands to the customers and staying in their minds. However, the findings of the study by Bilgin (2018) suggest that social media marketing activities have a profound influence on brand awareness, but not on brand image and brand loyalty, which is intriguing and noteworthy. The findings also suggest that consumers primarily follow brands they are already familiar with on social media (Bilgin, 2018) indicating that customers' interactions with the brand, such as creating brand-related content and sharing experiences reflect their existing brand image and loyalty. As consumers already possess a preconceived image or exhibit loyalty towards certain brands, the impact of social media marketing activities may not be sufficient to shape a constructive image of a new brand and foster brand loyalty in their minds. Therefore, it is recommended that businesses view social media marketing activities as supportive measures that enhance brand awareness. (Bilgin, 2018).

According to Algharabat et al. (2018) the emergence of social media has also empowered consumers to have direct and indirect impact on the brand image and reputation, hence, leading researchers to investigate consumer engagement, underlying characteristics, motivations, and the effect of eWOM.

Given the waning of out-dated communication approaches and the societal shift toward digital operations and communications, businesses are compelled to adopt best practices in employing digital and social media marketing strategies to retain their customer base and expand their market share (Schultz & Peltier, 2013). Several research findings revealed that DM helps firms to strengthen their

brand equity through networking, interaction, customer engagement, UGC, eWOM and community-building initiatives (Chaffey & Smith, 2022; Dumitriu et al., 2019; Górska-Warsewicz et al., 2021; Kamal et al., 2020; Karamian et al., 2015).

#### **1.4 Digital Marketing and Brand Equity in the Hospitality Sector**

The hospitality sector is diverse in terms of the range of products and services and includes hotels, restaurants, bars, lodging, event planning, and theme parks. The sector has had steady growth, due to the continuous global economy till 2018, the increase of middle-class travel lovers from progressing economies, high-tech progress, and more availability of affordable travel packages among others (UNWTO, 2019). Concurrently, the UNWTO (2019) reported that export revenues from tourism and hospitality, including international tourism income touched a stunning number of USD 1.7 trillion. While the hospitality sector experienced a great hiccup just like other industries since 2019-2020, the market value of global hospitality showed an increase from \$4,390.59 billion in 2022 to \$4,699.57 billion in 2023 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.0% and there is an expectation to raise to \$5,816.66 billion in 2027 at a CAGR of 5.5%.

The statistics suggests that the hospitality sector significantly contributes to economic growth and development. Historically, Europe has led in terms of tourism expenditure, reaching USD 570 billion, followed by Asia and the Pacific (USD 435 billion), the Americas (USD 334 billion), the Middle East (USD 73 billion), and Africa (USD 38 billion), indicating substantial industry expansion on a global scale (UNWTO, 2019).

With the advent of digitization in daily life, the democratization of many media and social network platforms, and changing business landscapes, it is inevitable for hospitality businesses to adopt a DM approach to grow and stay relevant in the market (Cobanoglu et al., 2021; Kaur, 2017; Kaur & Chourasia, 2021; Parvez et al., 2018; Pelsmacker, 2018).

There are various DM opportunities and challenges for hotels and hospitality sector players in this time of great digital connectivity era (Kaur & Chourasia, 2021). In the highly competitive hospitality industry, such as hotels, it is imperative for firms to effectively differentiate themselves from competitors to attract more bookings and increase service sales (Callarisa et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2022; Ibrahim, 2021; Kaur & Chourasia, 2021). As customers' options continue to expand, comprehending their shopping journey has become increasingly intricate. Concurrently, customers have gained more bargaining power, enabling them to exert significant influence on brand reputation (Kaur & Chourasia, 2021; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012). According to statistical data, social media has a significant impact on travel decisions, with 52% of travellers being influenced by it in their journey planning. Additionally, 44% of travellers use smartphones to research and select their destinations and hotels, and 25% utilize smartphones for flight, trip, and hotel bookings. Moreover, among luxury travellers, 75% and business

class travellers, 87%, rely on various digital devices and platforms for travel-related searches and bookings. These figures underscore the importance of maintaining a consistent digital presence across all channels, platforms, and devices to cater to the evolving preferences of modern travellers (Statista, 2023b).

In the realm of the hospitality sector, the influence of DM on CBBE has been a subject of scholarly investigation. Yasmin et al. (2015) conducted a study, suggesting that the utilization of digital marketing has equipped hospitality firms with the means to access a broader customer base through online platforms and mobile devices. Consequently, these firms are strategically leveraging digital marketing initiatives to establish connections and engage with their intended customer segments. In this evolving landscape, hospitality entities have an array of strategies, platforms, and tools at their disposal to build and promote their brands (Kaur, 2017).

Hajli (2013) underscores the multifaceted nature of successful adoption of digital marketing in the hospitality sector. He posits that this adoption depends on various contributing factors, including the digital expertise of employees and business owners, the availability of digital infrastructure and resources, digital marketing expenses, the alignment of organizational culture, the size of the organization, market trends, user-friendliness of digital platforms, digital propensity, and customer demand for digital marketing adoption. Salem et al. (2013) further underscore the significance of organizational aspects among the contributing factors that drive the adoption and utilization of digital media. They also acknowledge the impact of managerial traits and the environmental context within which hotels operate. On a contrasting note, some studies have delved into the factors hindering the adoption of digital marketing approaches by small and medium-sized businesses in the hospitality sector. These impediments encompass technological incompatibility with the targeted customer base, a limited understanding of digital marketing, and the unpreparedness of participating stakeholders, among other factors (Leeflang et al., 2014; Yasmin et al., 2015).

Notably, while certain studies within the literature, have explored aspects of brand equity in the hospitality sector, there exists a paucity of research explicitly discussing the impact of DM aspects on the construction of CBBE. Thus, this study will systematically review the studies that investigated the impact of DM practices on CBBE in the hospitality sector.

### **1.5 Aim of Dissertation and Research Questions**

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between DM and CBBE within the hospitality sector. This is achieved through a systematic literature review, which seeks to comprehensively examine the existing literature and identify the dimensions of CBBE and DM practices relevant to the hospitality industry. By doing so, this research seeks to fill the knowledge gap in this field.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to benefit the hospitality sector. Given the rapid advancements in technology and the increasing prevalence of digital platforms and devices, digital marketing has become essential for hospitality service providers enabling them to reach out broader customer bases anytime and anywhere, engage with their target audience in a more strategic and efficient manner, and reduce marketing costs. The utilization of digital marketing allows hospitality brands to differentiate themselves from competitors by foster brand relationship, and trust among their customers, which is vital for nurturing brand equity. The growing demand for the hospitality sector to establish substantial brand equity necessitates the exploration of more effective marketing techniques and tools. Furthermore, the prominence of digital marketing and social media has intensified the need for research that can yield optimal results in brand equity development. The study will shed light on the influential power of social media, online reviews, importance of content marketing including user-generated and marketer-generated content on digital platforms, online experiential marketing, IMC, as well as the impact of electronic word-of-mouth, which significantly affect brand equity. The research outcomes have the potential to guide future academic directions, highlight existing gaps, and identify areas that warrant further scholarly attention, contributing to a deeper understanding of brand equity in the digital era.

A few studies have investigated the impact of various aspects of digital marketing on brand equity. However, a lack of systematic literature review exists specifically regarding this influence within the hospitality sector. Therefore, the aim of this study is to fill this gap in the current literature by conducting a systematic review. **The primary objective of this study is to identify, review, and synthesize relevant literature to examine how previous studies have approached the examination of the relationship between digital marketing and the development of brand equity within the hospitality sector.** This study addresses the following research questions:

**RQ1:** What empirical peer-reviewed literature has been published in English language journals between 1990 and 2023 regarding the impact of digital marketing (DM) practices on building customer-based brand equity (CBBE) in the hospitality sector?

**RQ2:** What are the key constructs discussed in the literature about the impact of DM practices on CBBE in the hospitality sector, and how were they analysed by the researchers?

**RQ3:** What are the gaps in current literature regarding the impact of DM practices on CBBE in the hospitality sector?

## **1.6 Overview of Research Design**

This study applies systematic literature review (SLR) and PRISMA protocol to analyze and synthesize the research findings concerning the impact of digital marketing practices on building brand equity in the hospitality sector.

The study examines primarily empirical studies in the literature of brand equity to fill the existing gap in the scientific literature and synthesizes the findings and outcomes in the respective literature areas.

### **1.7 Theoretical and Managerial Contribution**

The results of this study could be helpful for both academia as well as marketing practitioners by clarifying the concepts, models and key factors that explain how digital marketing practices can influence the effectiveness and efficiency of the process of building brand equity, particularly in the hospitality sector. The research outcomes have the potential to guide future academic directions, highlight existing gaps, and identify areas that warrant further scholarly attention, contributing to a deeper understanding of brand equity in the digital era. Practitioners and marketers also will benefit from insights on practical aspects that require careful consideration to enhance their digital marketing strategies and activities within the hospitality sector.

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### **1.8 Structure of Dissertation**

This dissertation is structured as follows: Chapter One serves as an introduction, encompassing discussions of relevant discourses within the field of brand equity, as well as an explanation of the concepts and models of digital marketing within the context of the hospitality sector. Chapter Two provides a detailed account of the methodology employed, including the research design,

methods employed, and the systematic literature review process. Chapter Three presents and examines the findings which are presented in tabular format, providing information such as author(s), title(s), country of study, year of publication, industry/sector, and research methodology. This chapter also includes an analysis of the constructs studied, the hypotheses formulated and tested, key constructs, and the research findings. Chapter Four delves into the implications derived from the results. Chapter Five discusses theoretical and managerial implications of the findings and finally chapter Six offers a discussion of the limitations encountered throughout the study, concludes the dissertation, and provides suggestions for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Methodology**

This study conducts a systematic literature review to synthesize the collected evidence that indicates the impact of digital marketing practices on building brand equity in the hospitality sector. Systematic literature review (SLR) is the method by which a researcher synthesizes the evidence that “may enhance or undermine the trustworthiness of its conclusion or, in common social science parlance, can create threats to the validity of its conclusions.” (Cooper, 2017, p. 33). A systematic review aims “to produce an unbiased description of the cumulative state of evidence on a research problem or hypothesis”(Cooper, 2017, p. 32). Thus, syntheses are considered reliable bases of evidence applicable for practice and policy. In this approach, evidence synthesis enables researchers to highlight important progresses in a specific area of research.

A systematic review is built on strict guidelines and rules to provide an all-inclusive synthesis of a well-defined research field. The researchers who conduct the review must be capable of conducting effective online searches and identifying the most relevant records in an unbiased manner (Kostoff & Shlesinger, 2005). According to Wang and Chugh (2014), conducting a systematic literature review is an ideal approach to gathering information from prior studies and establishing a framework for comprehensively understanding a particular topic. This method allows researchers to gain a holistic view of the subject matter. Additionally, as pointed out by Paul and Criado (2020), this approach contributes to the enhancement of knowledge in a specific field.

This study applied a PRISMA protocol diagram which is specifically designed for systematic review research and has been adopted by numerous studies (Page et al., 2021). PRISMA involves three main steps such as identification, screening and assessment of eligibility and inclusion.

The first stage is related to data identification and data acquisition through databases. The identification aspect involves deciding upon the research topic, the scope of research, the general research questions that the study is based upon, the type of sources to be used in the review. The second step is to screen the search results through title, abstract and full text and compare them against the eligibility criteria to decide whether they could be included in or excluded from the SLR (Liberati et al., 2009). This will be followed by the last stage which is to make a final decision about the inclusion and exclusion of the obtained records (Page et al., 2021).

### **2.1 Data Selection**

Each step of this SLR including the search strategy was recorded to ensure transparency, accuracy and unbiasedness criteria of the systematic review is maintained. To find relevant studies that have investigated the impact of digital marketing on brand equity in the hospitality sector, online searches were undertaken through the main databases.

Five databases including Emerald Insight, EBSCO, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Taylor & Francis were selected to identify the most relevant empirical, peer-reviewed articles based on the PRISMA statement checklist. In addition to searching databases, a few more records were identified by conducting backward and forward snowballing methods. The backward snowballing refers to checking the reference lists in studies that are being analysed. The forward snowballing involves identifying new studies citing papers examined in the systematic review (Wohlin, 2014).

The following search terms and Boolean search strategies were used in various combinations to specifically comply with the search algorithm of each database and meet the search objectives.

EBSCO: TITLE-ABS-KEY "Brand equity" AND (hospitality or hotel or restaurant) AND (digital marketing or social media marketing or Internet marketing or online marketing or integrated marketing communication or IMC or EWOM or social networking sites) NOT "Tourism".

Google Scholar: "Brand equity" AND (hospitality or hotel or restaurant) AND (digital marketing or social media marketing or Internet marketing or online marketing or integrated marketing communication or IMC or EWOM or social networking sites) Not "Tourism".

Taylor & Francis: "Brand equity" AND (hospitality) AND (digital marketing) NOT Tourism.

Scopus: TITLE-ABS-KEY "Brand equity" AND (hospitality or hotel or restaurant) AND (digital marketing or social media marketing or Internet marketing or online marketing or integrated marketing communication or IMC or EWOM or social networking sites) Not "Tourism".

Emerald Insight: (content-type: article OR content-type: "case study") AND ("Brand equity" AND (hospitality or hotel or restaurant) AND (digital marketing or social media marketing or Internet marketing or online marketing) NOT Tourism.

By implementing the above-mentioned methods and search strategies, the following search results (Table 1) were obtained before scanning and comparing against the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

**Table 1: Primary Search Results from Databases**

Database	Number of Articles Identified
Emerald Insight	244
EBSCO	13
Google Scholar	605
Scopus	9
Taylor & Francis	46
Snowballing methods	25
Total	942

## 2.2 Data Screening

After deleting duplicate records, 661 records remained. Then the selected records were screened based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria by title, to determine whether the study is within the scope of the

study and covers all the main keywords. By doing so 589 records were omitted due to lacking full inclusion criteria. The screening practice is followed by deliberate abstract and full-text screening to make sure the remaining records are of sufficient value and in compliance with inclusion criteria to be included in the next stage of SLR.

One main step in the screening stage is to specify eligibility criteria. Specific criteria must be set and implemented in this stage to enable the reviewer to determine which data must be included in or excluded from SLR. Therefore, this study set proper inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 2) to facilitate the screening process as well as the analysis stage.

**Table 2: SLR Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Keywords and subject relevance	Fully related to CBBE and its dimensions and DM and its aspects and hospitality sector	Studies examining brand equity but not related to digital marketing and not in the hospitality context.
Time frame	Studies published within 1990-2023	Out of the time frame
Language	Only English-language articles and published materials	Non-English-based language studies and publications
Article Quality	only peer-reviewed articles that are academically accepted and cited	Short reports, Workshop papers, Work-in-progress papers and editorials, Book reviews, conference poster, unreliable publications
Methodology	Only empirical studies	Studies of theoretical models and practice guidelines

According to PRISMA guidelines, SLR must specify eligibility criteria regarding the report characteristics, such as time frame, language, and report status (for example, whether reports such as unpublished manuscripts and conference abstracts were eligible for inclusion) to decide what evidence was eligible or ineligible in sufficient details to enable readers to understand the scope of the review and verify inclusion decisions (Page et al., 2021). The main criteria are briefly described as follows:

**keywords and subject relevance:**

As described earlier in this section, the primary data identification and selection are implemented based on the full relevancy of the search results with the SLR objective and the scope of this study. It was decided that the obtained results should ideally contain all the main keywords, and if not then even select broadly to cover at least two keywords out of three and also consider the dimensions or related constructs to the respective keywords. In doing so, this study set the criteria for the search results to contain the exact or synonym of the following keywords. “Digital marketing”, “Brand equity”, and “Hospitality sector”.

**Time frame:**

To set the time frame for search inclusion, the time of emergence of the main concepts was considered. Since the study intended to include articles that discuss the relationship of all three main concepts

(Digital marketing, brand equity and hospitality) thus the newest concept among all, was selected (digital marketing) to determine the time frame of the SLR. According to Chattopadhyay (2019), the term “digital marketing” came into view in the 1990s, and since the years 2000 and year 2010 onwards, this term has become a well-researched and established concept among scholars. Thus, the search timeframe only covers the studies that have been produced and published from 1990 - 2023.

**Language:**

Only English-language articles and published materials will be included in this study. The reason for setting this criterion is because the selection, translation and screening of non-English language articles are out of the ability and resources of this study (Czuppon et al., 2014).

**Article quality:**

To select reliable and valid articles be worthy of review, the study used trustworthy databases that usually index only peer-reviewed articles that are academically accepted and cited. However, Google Scholar as a grey database was used to assure the inclusion of studies that are of high academic value but have not been indexed in reliable databases.

**Methodology:**

This study aimed to review only empirical studies that examined the main respective concepts and their dimensions and constructs. Hence, the author would be able to compare and synthesise the findings of previous studies.

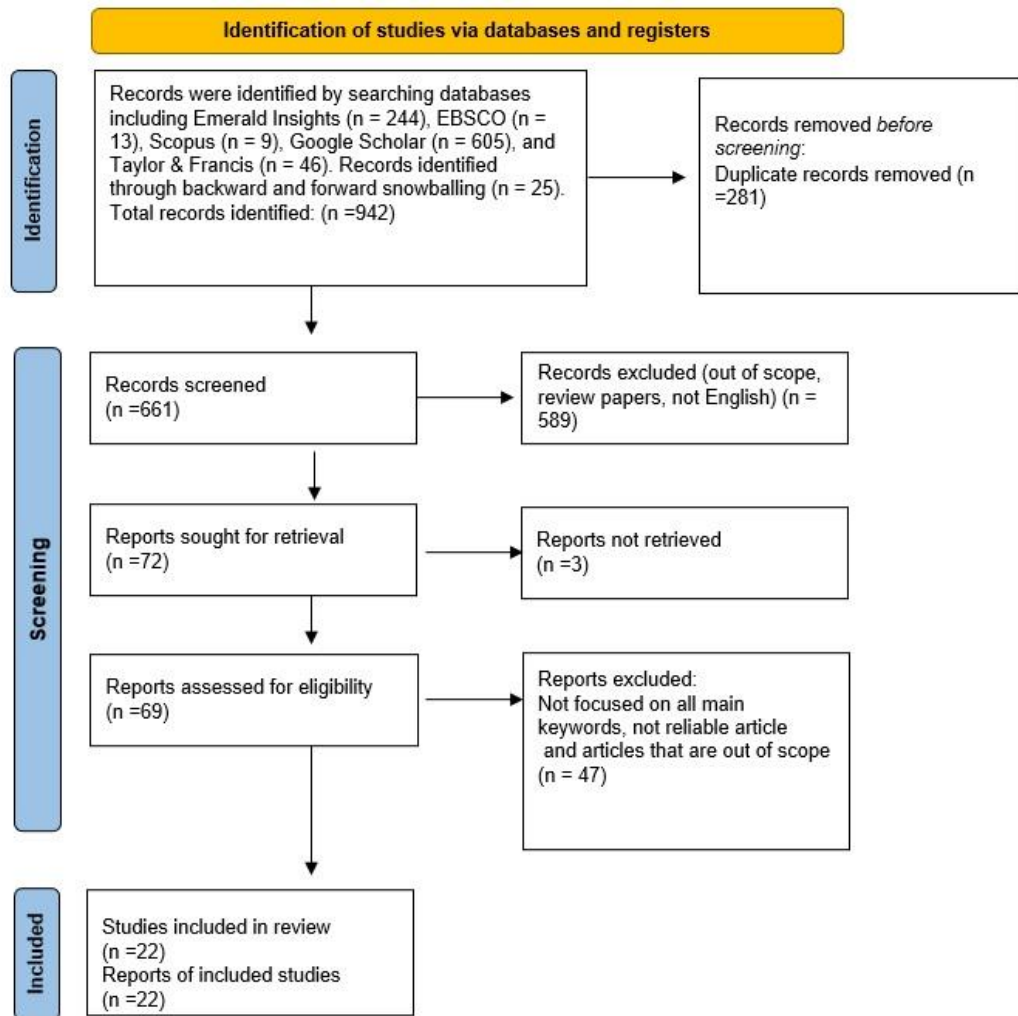
This study also set exclusion criteria to determine which documents and articles will not be searched and screened. The exclusion areas of this study are as follows:

- Non-English-based language studies and publications.
- Studies of theoretical models and practice guidelines.
- Studies examining brand equity but not related to digital marketing and not in the hospitality context.
- Short reports, Workshop papers, Work-in-progress papers and editorials.
- Book reviews.
- Conference posters, and abstracts.

The PRISMA statement and protocol (Figure 3) were applied to facilitate reporting procedure of the recorded documents in a fully transparent and complete manner. This statement provides guidelines for three main stages including identification, screening, assessment of eligibility and inclusion of obtained results for the SLR. All the subsequent search results were downloaded and exported to Endnote, where

they were run through an eligibility criterion round. Some records were removed because they were duplicates (n = 281), which was followed by the exclusion of some other obtained search results after screening (n = 589) for being in non-English-language, articles out of scope or short of main keywords, and non-empirical articles (e.g., book chapters, short reports, conference posters, and merely theoretical or conceptual studies).

**Figure 3: PRISMA Flowchart**



Source: (Page et al., 2021)

## **Chapter 3: Findings**

The systematic literature review conducted in this study has yielded valuable insights that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the current literature landscape in the intersection of CBBE, DM, and the hospitality context. In this chapter, the collected data from the SLR is organized and presented in three sections to facilitate a better understanding of the direction, findings, and potential gaps in the existing literature which are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Section 3.1 provides general information, offering an overview of the studies included in the review. This section highlights key details such as the number of studies, their publication dates, and the methodologies employed. These insights contribute to establishing a foundational understanding of the literature's breadth and depth.

Section 3.2 focuses on the hypotheses, constructs, and findings of the included studies. It delves into the specific research questions and objectives addressed by each study, as well as the key constructs that are examined. This section provides a comprehensive summary of the empirical evidence presented in the studies, shedding light on the relationships between DM, CBBE, and the hospitality sector.

Section 3.3 identifies the relationship between DM and CBBE constructs that were examined within the 22 studies. This section critically evaluates the adequacy and comprehensiveness of the constructs employed, identifying potential gaps and opportunities for further research.

By categorizing and explaining the data within these three sections, this chapter contributes to a thorough understanding of the current literature, guiding future research directions and identifying areas for further exploration and development.

### **3.1 General Information**

Table 3 provides general information about the 22 included studies, consist of the title, author(s), year of publication, country of study, industry/sector, research methods, and sample sizes. The reviewed studies were published between 2012 and 2023, falling within the predetermined time frame, consistent with the inclusion criteria of this study (1990-2023). Table 3 shows that the highest number of articles included in this study were published in 2016, totalling six articles. Regarding research methods, while all the reviewed studies were empirical, they employed various research methods. One study employed interview for data collection, and one study conducted research based on data extraction and analysis from the TripAdvisor website. However, most of the studies used surveys as their primary data collection method (19 studies). Additionally, one study employed a mixed research method. Surveys were conducted with sample sizes ranging from 60 to 536 respondents. The distribution of sample sizes is as follows: up to 200 respondents (five studies), 201-400 respondents (seven studies), 401-500 respondents (three studies), and over 500 respondents (five studies).

The reviewed studies were conducted in several countries, including India (three studies), Croatia (two studies), Iran (two studies), Pakistan (two studies), China (one study), Cyprus (one study), Italy (one study), Kenya (one study), Macau (one study), Malaysia (one study), Poland (one study), Spain (one study), Sri Lanka (one study), Thailand (one study), Turkey (one study), UAE (one study), and one global study conducted through analysing a global-scale dataset extracted from TripAdvisor. As the hospitality sector encompasses various sub-sectors, ranging from hotels to restaurants and food chains, the distribution of the reviewed studies among sectors is as follows: hotel industry (including low- and high-scale hotels) (12 studies), food sector (including fast food, food chains, and restaurants) (7 studies), Airbnb (1 study), and a broader focus on the overall theme of hospitality (2 studies).

**Table 3: General Information**

No	Title	Author/s	Year	Country of Study	Industry	Research Method & Sample Size
1	Can advanced technology affect customer-based brand equity in service firms? An empirical study in upscale hotels	(Šerić et al., 2016)	2016	Italy	Upscale hotels	Survey The empirical research was conducted in 20 upscale hotels in Rome-Italy, collecting data from 335 guests.
2	Harnessing social media platforms to measure customer-based hotel brand equity	(Callarisa et al., 2012)	2012	Online Data (TripAdvisor site)	Hotel industry	Dataset Analysis
3	ICT, IMC, and brand equity in high-quality hotels of Dalmatia: an analysis from guest perceptions	(Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012)	2012	Dalmatia, Croatia	High-quality hotels	Survey Sample size: n = 101 guests from 13 high-quality hotels
4	A new path for building hotel brand equity: the impacts of technological competence and service innovation implementation through perceived value and trust	(Ruan et al., 2020)	2020	China	Hotel industry	Survey Sample size: n = 615
5	Impact of the antecedents of electronic word of mouth on consumer-based brand equity: a study on the hotel industry	(Sijoria et al., 2019)	2019	India	Hotel industry	mixed-method approach
6	Social media brand engagement in the context of collaborative consumption: the case of AIRBNB	(Schivinski et al., 2020)	2020	Poland	Airbnb	Content analysis and survey. The overall sample

						of 530 respondents
7	Integrating social media and digital media as new elements of integrated marketing communication for creating Brand Equity	(Kushwaha et al., 2020)	2020	India	Hospitality & tourism	Survey Sample: n= 512
8	Developing brand equity through online and offline marketing: an investigation in hotels of Tehran	(Kazemzadeh & Moradlou, 2022)	2022	Iran	Hotels in Tehran	Survey Sample size n = 384
9	The impact of social media on hospitality brand and image	(Yoopetch, 2018)	2018	Thailand	Hotel industry	Interview n = 20 experienced business travellers
10	Analysing the Effect of Social Media on Customer Equity: A Study of Fast-food Restaurants	(Zahoor, 2022)	2022	India	Fast-food restaurants	Survey Sample size n = 400
11	The effect of social media marketing on brand trust and brand loyalty for hotels	(Tatar & Eren-erdođmuş, 2016)	2016	Turkey	Hotels	cross-sectional survey Sample size n= 515
12	Consumer-Generated Reviews on Social Media and Brand Relationship Outcomes in the Fast-Food Chain Industry	(Šerić & Praničević, 2018)	2018	Croatia	Fast-Food Chain	Quantitative research (Survey) Sample: n = 500
13	The Importance of Social Media Advertisements in Enhancing Brand Equity: A Study on Fast Food Restaurant Industry in Malaysia	(Hanaysha, 2016)	2016	Malaysia	Fast-food restaurant	Quantitative research (Survey) Sample size n = 384
14	The Role of Social Media Marketing on Building Brand Equity (An Insight of Fast-Food Industry of Pakistan)	(Riaz et al., 2019)	2019	Pakistan	Fast-food industry	Empirical, survey-based research using convenience sampling. Sample size n = 200
15	Influence of Social Media Marketing on the Brand Image of Organizations in the Hospitality Industry of Sri Lanka	(Perera & Perera, 2018)	2016	Sri Lanka	Hospitality Industry	Empirical Survey Sample size n = 60
16	The effect of online and offline experiential marketing on brand equity in the hotel sector		2018	Spain	Hotel sector	Empirical, survey-based research using convenience sampling. Sample size n=153

17	The effect of sensory brand experience and brand equity on WTP a price premium in Iranian fast-food restaurants: Mediating role of eWOM.	(Farzin et al., 2023)	2023	Iran	Fast-food Industry	Empirical Survey Sample size n = 387
18	The Nexus between Social Media Marketing Activities and Brand Loyalty in Hotel Facebook Pages	(Ibrahim, 2021)	2021	Cyprus	Hotel sector	Empirical, survey-based research using convenience sampling. Sample size n=407
19	The Effect of Social Media Use on Building Brand Equity Among Three Star Hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya	(Nyairo, 2016)	2016	Kenya	Hotel sector	Empirical, Survey Sample size n = 68 three-star hotels in Nairobi City County
20	Hotel brand equity and online reviews on social commerce intention: A cross-level identification process	(Huang et al., 2022)	2022	Macau	Hotel Sector	Empirical. Survey. Sample size: n= 401
21	The effects of facilitating conditions, customer experience and brand loyalty on customer-based brand equity through social media marketing	(Nuseir & Elrefae, 2022)	2022	UAE	Restaurant	Empirical. Survey. Sample size: n = 309
22	Influence of Brand Equity on Brand Performance: Role of Brand Reputation and Social Media	(Qalati et al., 2019)	2019	Pakistan	Food Chain	Empirical. Survey. Sample size: n = 369

### 3.2 Hypotheses, Constructs, and Findings of the Included Studies

Table 4 provides a more in-depth consideration of the included studies, including key constructs, research questions, hypotheses, and research findings. This Table demonstrates the various approaches applied by them to examine the impact of digital marketing practices on building brand equity in the hospitality sector. All 22 studies examined at least one or more dimensions of "CBBE" in relation with "DM" in the "hospitality sector". Some constructs were examined in multiple studies, while others were explored in only a single study.

Table 5 recognizes three categories of constructs namely branding, digital marketing and social media, and hospitality constructs which were extracted from the 22 studies presented in Table 4. In the field of brand equity research, the most frequently examined research constructs were "brand equity" (19

studies), "brand loyalty" (11 studies), "brand perceived quality" (5 studies), "brand trust" (4 studies), "brand image" (9 studies), "brand awareness" (5 studies), "brand satisfaction" (2 studies), and "brand value" (2 studies).

From the perspective of "digital marketing" impact, the studies focused more on examining the following DM constructs: "social media" (14 studies), "e-Word of mouth" (3 studies), "online reviews" (4 studies), "ICT" (2 studies), "IMC" (2 studies), "online marketing" (2 studies), and the other constructs only emerged once in the studies. The frequency of these constructs indicates a higher research concentration on exploring "social media" and its dimensions as an approach to digital marketing and its impact on brand equity in the hospitality sector.

In terms of hospitality constructs, the studies investigated the relationship among the constructs in the contexts of "hotels" (12 studies), "fast-food brands" (6 studies), "hospitality" in general (2 studies), "restaurant" (1 study), and "Airbnb" (1 study). These factors reflect the diverse areas within the hospitality sector that were investigated in the reviewed studies.

**Table 4: Research Constructs and Findings Included in SLR**

No	Author/s	Year	Research Question/Hypothesis	Key constructs	Findings
1	(Šeric et al., 2016)	2016	<p>Can advanced technology affect customer-based brand equity in upscale hotels?</p> <p><b>H1.</b> Advanced ICT perception has a positive and significant impact on hotel brand image. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2.</b> Advanced ICT perception has a positive and significant impact on hotel perceived quality. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3.</b> Advanced ICT perception has a positive and significant impact on brand loyalty. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H4.</b> Hotel perceived quality has a positive and significant impact on hotel brand image. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H5.</b> Hotel perceived quality has a positive and significant impact on brand loyalty. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H6.</b> Hotel brand image has a positive and significant impact on brand loyalty. (Supported)</p>	<p>Brand image, Brand loyalty, Perceived quality, Information and communication technology (ICT), Customer-based brand equity,  Brand perceived quality,  Brand loyalty,</p>	<p>Advanced Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has a direct influence on perceived quality and brand image. Furthermore, the impact of ICT on customer loyalty is mediated by the perceived quality. The study identified ICT as a potential predictor of various dimensions of customer-based brand equity. Moreover, the analysis revealed positive and statistically significant relationships among the three brand equity dimensions, namely perceived quality, brand image, and brand loyalty.</p>
2	(Callarisa et al., 2012)	2012	<p>How to measure customer-based hotel brand equity using social media platforms?</p> <p><b>H1.</b> Brand value has a positive impact on a hotel's brand loyalty. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2.</b> Brand quality has a positive impact on a hotel's brand value. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H3.</b> Brand quality has a positive impact on a hotel's brand loyalty. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H4.</b> Brand awareness has a positive impact on a hotel's brand value. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H5.</b> Brand image has a positive impact on a hotel's brand value. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H6.</b> Brand image has a positive impact on a hotel's brand loyalty. (Not Supported)</p>	<p>Social media platforms, Customer-based brand equity,  Brand value, Brand Quality, Brand awareness, Brand Image,  Brand loyalty</p>	<p>Social media platforms have been recognized as effective tools for assessing customer-based brand equity. Among the various dimensions of brand equity, brand awareness holds a central position, serving as a key element in interconnected relationships. The validated model reveals a specific sequence of relationships as follows: brand quality serves as a precursor to brand image, which further contributes to brand awareness. Subsequently, brand value is established,</p>

					ultimately leading to the development of brand loyalty.  brand quality→brand image→brand awareness→brand value→brand loyalty.
3	(Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012)	2012	<p>What is the impact of ICT and IMC on brand equity in high-quality hotels of Dalmatia?</p> <p><b>H1:</b> The guests' perceptions of ICT application have a positive impact on their perception of IMC implementation. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2:</b> The guests' perceptions of IMC have a positive impact on their perception of the hotel brand image. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3:</b> The guests' perceptions of IMC have a positive impact on the perceived quality of the hotel. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4:</b> The guests' perceptions of IMC have a positive impact on their brand loyalty. (Supported)</p>	ICT, IMC,  Brand equity,  Brand image, Perceived quality,  Brand loyalty	The findings indicate that both ICT and IMC have a positive effect on brand equity in high-quality hotels of Dalmatia.
4	(Ruan et al., 2020)	2020	<p>How do technological competence and service innovation implementation impact brand equity in the hotel industry through perceived value and trust?</p> <p><b>H1.</b> The technological competence and service innovation implementation of starred hotels will have a positive interaction effect on customers' perceived value. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2a.</b> The technological competence of starred hotels will affect customer trust through customers' perceived value. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2b.</b> The service innovation implementation of starred hotels will affect customer trust through customers' perceived value. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3a.</b> Customers' perceived value will affect the brand image of starred hotels through customers' trust. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3b.</b> Customers' perceived value will affect the perceived quality of starred hotels through customers' trust. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4a.</b> Customer trust will affect the brand loyalty of starred hotels through brand image. (Supported)</p>	Technological competence, Service innovation implementation, e-Word of Mouth, Perceived value, Trust,  Brand equity,  Perceived quality,  Brand image,  Brand loyalty	The results of the study indicate that the hotel industry's technological competence and successful service innovation implementation have a positive impact on perceived value, trust, and brand equity.

			<p><b>H4b.</b> Customer trust will affect the brand loyalty of starred hotels through perceived quality. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H 5.</b> Customers' acceptance of EWOM will positively moderate the relationship between their perceived value of starred hotels and their trust. (Supported)</p>		
5	(Sijoria et al., 2019)	2019	<p><b>RQ1:</b> Does the trust in the online information, information quantity and quality, source quality and subjective norms about a hotel positively impact CBBE of that hotel?</p> <p><b>RQ2:</b> Does the satisfaction, loyalty, social relationships, trust in the online information, information quality and quantity, subjective norms and source quality affect CBBE through eWOM?</p> <p><b>H1:</b> Superior Information Quality of the online reviews enhances positive eWOM about a brand. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2:</b> Enhanced Trust on the online reviews enhances positive eWOM about a brand. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3:</b> Enhanced Loyalty towards a brand enhances positive eWOM about it. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4:</b> Enhanced Satisfaction derived from a brand enhances positive eWOM about it. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H5:</b> Enhanced Online Social Relationships of the reviewer enhances positive eWOM about a brand. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H6:</b> Enhanced Source Quality of online messages enhances positive eWOM about a brand. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H7:</b> Increase in Information Quantity of online reviews increases positive eWOM about a brand. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H8:</b> Increase in Subjective norms of the reviewer increases positive eWOM about a brand. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H9:</b> Positive eWOM about a hotel has a positive effect on its CBBE. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H10:</b> Enhanced Satisfaction of the customer has a positive impact on CBBE. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H11:</b> Enhanced Loyalty towards a brand positively impacts CBBE. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H12:</b> Increase in Online Social Relationship increase CBBE. (Not supported)</p>	<p>Electronic word of mouth,</p> <p>Brand awareness, Perceived quality,</p> <p>Brand loyalty, consumer-based brand equity,</p> <p>Satisfaction,</p> <p>Social relationship,</p> <p>Online reviews,</p> <p>Online messages,</p> <p>Subjective norms,</p> <p>Information Quantity,</p> <p>Source quality</p>	<p>In the study, it was observed that brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty positively contribute to consumer-based brand equity (CBBE). Additionally, the study revealed that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) antecedents play a partial mediating role in the relationship between these constructs. Notably, when eWOM intention is taken into account and controlled, it can alter the influence of eWOM antecedents on CBBE.</p>

			<p><b>H13:</b> Increase in Satisfaction of the customer with a hotel increases CBBE through eWOM. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H14:</b> Increase in Loyalty towards a hotel increases CBBE through eWOM. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H15:</b> Increase in Social Relationships on the online platform increases CBBE through eWOM. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H16:</b> Increased Information quality about a hotel increases CBBE. (Not supported)</p> <p><b>H17:</b> Increased Trust on the reviews about a hotel increases CBBE. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H18:</b> Increased Information quantity about a hotel increases CBBE. (Not supported)</p> <p><b>H19:</b> Increased Source quality increases CBBE. (Not supported)</p> <p><b>H20:</b> Increased Subjective norms increase CBBE. (Not supported)</p> <p><b>H21:</b> Increased Trust on online information increases CBBE through eWOM. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H22:</b> Increased Online Information Quality about a hotel increases CBBE through eWOM. (Not supported)</p> <p><b>H23:</b> Increased Online Information Quantity about a hotel increases CBBE through eWOM. (Not supported)</p> <p><b>H24:</b> Increased Subjective Norms increase CBBE through eWOM. (Not supported)</p> <p><b>H25:</b> Increased Online Source Quality increases CBBE through eWOM. (Not supported)</p>		
6	(Schivinski et al., 2020)	2020	<p>To investigate the relationship between social media brand engagement and brand equity in the context of Airbnb.</p> <p><b>H1:</b> Airbnb functional brand image positively influences (<b>H1a</b>) consumption (Not supported), (<b>H1b</b>) contribution (Not supported), and (<b>H1c</b>) creation of social media brand-related content (Not supported)</p>	<p>Social media, Brand engagement, Overall brand equity, Hedonic Brand image, Functional, Brand image,</p>	<p>In the context of Airbnb, the study revealed that social media brand engagement positively influences brand equity. Moreover, the findings suggest that brand image significantly influences consumer-based brand equity (CBE) behaviours on social media. Among the various aspects of brand image,</p>

			<p><b>H2:</b> Airbnb hedonic brand image positively influences (<b>H2a</b>) consumption, (<b>H2b</b>) contribution, and (<b>H2c</b>) creation of social media brand-related content. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3:</b> OBE mediates the positive relationship between Airbnb functional brand image and (<b>H3a</b>) consumption, (<b>H3b</b>) contribution, and (H3c) creation of social media brand-related content. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4:</b> OBE mediates the positive relationship between Airbnb hedonic brand image and (<b>H4a</b>) consumption, (<b>H4b</b>) contribution, and (<b>H4c</b>) creation of social brand-related content. (Supported)</p>	Social brand-related content,	hedonic associations are found to play a more prominent role than functional attributes in driving consumer engagement, contribution, and creation of brand-related content.
7	(Kushwaha et al., 2020)	2020	<p>To propose the integration of social media and digital media as new elements of integrated marketing communication for creating brand equity.</p> <p><b>H1:</b> Traditional Integrated Marketing Communication has positive impact on building brand equity. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2:</b> Modern Integrated Marketing Communication has positive impact on building brand equity. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3:</b> Advertising has positive impact on building Traditional Integrated Marketing Communication. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4:</b> Sales promotion has positive impact on building Traditional Integrated Marketing Communication. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H5:</b> Public relation has positive impact on building Traditional Integrated Marketing Communication. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H6:</b> Direct marketing has positive impact on building Traditional Integrated Marketing Communication. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H7:</b> Social media has positive impact on building Modern Integrated Marketing Communication. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H8:</b> Digital marketing has positive impact on building Modern Integrated Marketing Communication. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H9:</b> Advertising has positive impact on building Modern Integrated Marketing Communication. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H10:</b> Sales promotion has positive impact on building Modern Integrated Marketing Communication. (Supported)</p>	<p>Social media, Digital media, Integrated marketing communication (IMC), Digital marketing, Direct marketing, Brand equity, Public relation, Sales promotion, Traditional IMC</p>	The results indicate that both social media and digital media exhibit higher effectiveness compared to traditional Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) tools. Additionally, the study suggests that Modern IMC tools are more efficient than traditional IMC tools when it comes to building brand equity.

			<p><b>H11:</b> Public relation has positive impact on building Modern Integrated Marketing Communication. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H12:</b> Direct marketing has positive impact on building Modern Integrated Marketing Communication. (Supported)</p>		
8	(Kazemzadeh & Moradlou, 2022)	2022	<p>To investigate the impact of online and offline marketing on brand equity in hotels in Tehran.</p> <p><b>H1:</b> Offline experiential marketing has a significant effect on brand equity. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2:</b> Online experiential marketing has a significant effect on brand equity. (Supported)</p>	Online experiential marketing, Offline experiential marketing, Brand equity	The study's findings suggest that both offline experiential marketing and online marketing significantly contribute to the perceived value of hotel branding. Moreover, online marketing not only influences the unique value of hotel branding but also impacts offline experiential marketing among customers. The online marketing efforts of hotel customers were found to have a positive and significant effect on the hotel's brand equity.
9	(Yoopetch, 2018)	2018	What is the impact of social media on corporate image and brand equity in customer's perception?	Social media, hospitality, Brand image, Brand awareness, Corporate image Brand equity	The study's findings indicate that social media has a positive influence on corporate image and the establishment of business equity. Hotels have widely adopted social media due to various advantages, such as cost-effectiveness, enhanced customer responsiveness, and its potential for brand and image development.
10	(Zahoor, 2022)	2022	<p><b>H1:</b> Social media has a positive effect on value equity. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2:</b> Social media has a positive effect on brand equity. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3:</b> Social media has a positive effect on relationship equity. (Supported)</p>	Social media, customer equity, Brand equity, Value equity,	The study's results suggest that social media has a noteworthy and beneficial impact on the three fundamental drivers (Brand equity, Value equity, Relationship equity) of

				Relationship equity, Firm-generated-content, User-generated-content	customer equity within the fast-food restaurant context.
11	(Tatar & Eren-Erdođmuş, 2016)	2016	<p>Does social media marketing have an impact on brand trust and brand loyalty in the hotel industry?</p> <p><b>H1:</b> Social media marketing of a hotel has a positive effect on brand trust. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H1a:</b> A clear website has a positive effect on brand trust. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H1b:</b> Website security has a positive effect on brand trust. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H1c:</b> Active and updated social media tools has a positive effect on brand trust. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H1d:</b> Online interactivity has a positive effect on brand trust. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H1e:</b> Collaboration with other useful websites has a positive effect on brand trust. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2:</b> Social media marketing of a hotel has a positive effect on brand loyalty. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H2a:</b> A clear website has a positive effect on brand loyalty. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H2b:</b> Website security has a positive effect on brand loyalty. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H2c:</b> Active and updated social media tools has a positive effect on brand loyalty. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H2d:</b> Online interactivity has a positive effect on brand loyalty. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H2e:</b> Collaboration with other useful websites has a positive effect on brand loyalty. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H3:</b> Brand trust has a positive effect on brand loyalty. (Supported)</p>	Social media marketing, Brand trust, Brand loyalty, Website, online interactivity Hotels	The findings demonstrate the favourable impact of various social media marketing elements, such as a user-friendly website, website security, online interactivity, and collaborations with other relevant websites, on brand trust within the hotel industry. Moreover, the study highlights the significant role of brand trust in influencing brand loyalty among customers.
12	(Šerić & Pranićević, 2018)	2018	What is the relationship between consumer-generated reviews on social media and brand relationship outcomes in the fast-food chain industry?	Consumer-generated reviews,	In the fast-food chain industry, positive consumer-generated reviews on social media play a

			<p><b>H1.</b> Consumer-generated reviews on social media affect positively and significantly brand satisfaction. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H2.</b> Consumer-generated reviews on social media affect positively and significantly brand trust. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H3.</b> Consumer-generated reviews on social media affect positively and significantly affective brand commitment. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4.</b> Consumer-generated reviews on social media affect positively and significantly brand loyalty. (Not Supported)</p> <p><b>H5.</b> Brand satisfaction affects positively and significantly brand trust. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H6.</b> Brand satisfaction affects positively and significantly affective brand commitment. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H7.</b> Brand satisfaction affects positively and significantly brand loyalty. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H8.</b> Brand trust affects positively and significantly brand loyalty. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H9.</b> Affective brand commitment affects positively and significantly brand loyalty. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H10.</b> Brand trust affects positively and significantly affective brand commitment. (Supported)</p>	<p>Brand loyalty,</p> <p>Brand trust,</p> <p>Brand satisfaction,</p> <p>Brand commitment,</p> <p>Social media,</p> <p>Brand relationship</p> <p>Brand equity</p>	<p>significant role in shaping brand relationship outcomes. Additionally, social media communication has an indirect impact on brand loyalty, with this influence being mediated by factors such as brand satisfaction, trust, and affective commitment.</p>
13	(Hanaysha, 2016)	2016	<p>What is the role of social media advertisements in enhancing brand equity in the fast-food restaurant industry in Malaysia?</p> <p><b>H1:</b> Social media advertisements have positive effect on brand image. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2:</b> Social media advertisements have positive effect on brand loyalty. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3:</b> Social media advertisements have positive effect on brand preference. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4:</b> Social media advertisements have positive effect on brand leadership. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H5:</b> Social media advertisements have positive effect on overall brand equity. (Supported)</p>	<p>Social media advertisements,</p> <p>Brand equity,</p> <p>Brand image,</p> <p>Brand loyalty,</p> <p>Brand preference,</p> <p>Brand leadership</p>	<p>In the fast-food restaurant industry of Malaysia, social media advertisements have a considerable impact on bolstering various dimensions of brand equity, including brand image, brand loyalty, brand preference, and brand leadership.</p>

14	(Riaz et al., 2019)	2019	<p>What is the role of social media marketing in building brand equity in the fast-food industry of Pakistan?</p> <p><b>H1</b>= Online conversation by fast food brands on social media sites has an influence on building brand equity. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2</b>= Content shared by fast food brands on social media sites has an influence on building brand equity. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3</b>= Easy Accessibility of social media networks has an influence on building brand equity of fast-food brands. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4</b>= Credibility of social media networks has an influence on building brand equity of fast-food brands. (Supported)</p>	<p>Social Media Marketing, Brand Equity, Fast Food Brands,</p> <p>Social Media</p>	<p>The results suggest a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing and the development of brand equity in the fast-food industry of Pakistan.</p>
15	(Perera & Perera, 2018)	2016	<p><b>RQ</b>: How does social media marketing influence the brand image of organizations in the hospitality industry of Sri Lanka?</p> <p><b>H1</b>: Positivity and Consistency has a positive influence on the Social Media Marketing of Hospitality Brands. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2</b>: Differentiation has a positive influence on the Social Media Marketing of Hospitality Brands. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3</b>: Emotional Connection has a positive influence on the Social Media Marketing of Hospitality Brands. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4</b>: Engagement Opportunity has a positive influence on the Social Media Marketing of Hospitality Brands. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H5</b>: Social Media Marketing has a positive influence on the Social Media Marketing of Hospitality Brands. (Supported)</p>	<p>Social media marketing, Brand image,</p> <p>Emotional connection, Positivity,</p> <p>Consistency, Differentiation, Engagement Opportunities,</p>	<p>The research revealed a notable and positive impact of social media marketing on the brand image of organizations within the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka. The constructs of Emotional Connection and Positivity displayed the highest levels of influence, while Consistency, Differentiation, and Engagement Opportunities demonstrated moderately strong effects.</p>
16		2018	<p><b>RQ1</b>: To what extent does online experiential marketing affect brand equity in the hotel industry?</p> <p><b>RQ2</b>: To what extent does offline experiential marketing affect brand equity in the hotel industry?</p> <p><b>H1</b>. The experience of a tourist during a stay in a hotel influences his perception of brand equity. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2</b>. The experience of the tourist during the online purchase process influences hotel brand equity. (Not Supported)</p>	<p>Online experiential marketing, Offline experiential marketing, Brand equity,</p>	<p>The findings indicate that the hotel stay experience has a more substantial influence on hotel brand equity compared to the online purchase process. However, it is important to note that the online experience still holds significant importance and impacts the overall hotel stay experience.</p>

			<b>H3.</b> The experience of the tourist during the online buying process influences his/her hotel stay experience. (Supported)		
17	(Farzin et al., 2023)	2023	<p><b>H1</b> Sensory brand experience has a positive effect on brand equity. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2</b> Brand equity has a positive effect on eWOM. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3</b> Brand equity has a positive effect on WTP a price premium. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4</b> eWOM has a positive effect on WTP a price premium. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H5</b> eWOM mediates the relationship between brand equity and WTP a price premium. (Supported)</p>	<p>Sensory brand experience, Brand equity,</p> <p>Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM),</p> <p>Willingness to pay (WTP) a price premium, S-O-R framework</p>	<p>The study's findings indicate that investing in social brand equity (SBE) positively impacts overall brand equity (BE), leading to its enhancement. SBE demonstrates a significant and positive effect on BE. Moreover, BE has a significant and positive influence on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and willingness to pay (WTP) a price premium. Interestingly, consumers tend to place a higher value on external information (eWOM) from their peers compared to internal information (BE), which results in their WTP a price premium being influenced more by peer opinions.</p>
18	(Ibrahim, 2021)	2021	<p><b>RQ:</b> What is the effect of social media marketing activities on brand loyalty in hotel Facebook pages?</p> <p><b>H1:</b> There is a positive relationship between social media marketing activities and brand loyalty. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2:</b> There is a positive relationship between social media marketing activities and purchase intention. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3:</b> There is a positive relationship between social media marketing activities and brand trust. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4:</b> Brand trust will mediate the relationship between SMMA and purchase intention. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H5:</b> Brand trust will mediate the relationship between SMMA and brand loyalty. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H6:</b> Hotel ratings (five-star or four-star hotels) will moderate the effects of SMMA on brand loyalty. (Supported)</p>	<p>social media marketing activities, Brand loyalty,</p> <p>Brand trust,</p> <p>Purchase intention,</p> <p>Hotel</p>	<p>Social media marketing activities have a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty in hotel Facebook pages.</p>

			<b>H7:</b> Hotel ratings (five-star or four-star hotels) will moderate the effects of SMMA on purchase intention. (Supported)		
19	(Nyairo, 2016)	2016	<b>RQ:</b> What is the effect of social media use on building brand equity with reference to three-star hotels in Nairobi?	Social media, Brand equity, Brand image, Brand awareness, Brand loyalty, Online reviews, Hotels	The use of social media positively affects brand equity in three-star hotels in Nairobi County
20	(Huang et al., 2022)	2022	<b>H1.</b> Argument quality of online reviews has a positive effect on social identification intention toward a brand. (Supported) <b>H2.</b> Post popularity of online reviews has a positive effect on social identification intention toward a brand. (Supported) <b>H3.</b> Post attractiveness of online reviews has a positive effect on social identification intention toward a brand. (Supported) <b>H4.</b> Customers' social identification has a positive effect on social commerce intention. (Supported) <b>H5.</b> Brand equity moderates the relationship leading from ( <b>H5a</b> ) argument quality (Supported), ( <b>H5b</b> ) post popularity (Rejected), and ( <b>H5c</b> ) post attractiveness (Rejected) to social identification. <b>H6.</b> Brand equity moderates the relationship between social identification and social commerce intention. (Supported)	Persuasive message compliance, Brand equity, Social identification, Social commerce, Hotel, Online reviews	The findings of the study reveal potential opportunities for less established brands to utilize online persuasive messages to capture the interest of potential customers. Furthermore, customers with high brand equity in the hotel industry demonstrate a stronger inclination towards transitioning from social identification to social commerce intention. Notably, the effectiveness of persuasion through online reviews is more pronounced for properties with weaker branding, while guests from strongly branded hotels seem to be less influenced by eWOM in relation to the formation of social identity.
21	(Nuseir & Elrefae, 2022)	2022	<b>H1:</b> Social Media Marketing efforts influence consumer-based brand equity among the restaurant industry of UAE. (Rejected) <b>H2:</b> Facilitating Conditions influence the adoption of social media marketing efforts among the restaurant industry of UAE. (Supported)	Facilitating conditions, Customer experience, Brand	The study findings indicate that social media marketing does not have a direct influence on consumer-based brand equity.

			<p><b>H3:</b> Facilitating Conditions influence the consumer-based brand equity among the restaurant industry of UAE. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4:</b> Customer Experience influences the adoption of social media marketing efforts among the restaurant industry of UAE. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H5:</b> Customer Experience influences the consumer-based brand equity among the restaurant industry of UAE. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H6:</b> Brand Loyalty influences the adoption of social media marketing efforts among the restaurant industry of UAE. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H7:</b> Brand Loyalty influences the consumer-based brand equity among the restaurant industry of UAE. (Rejected)</p> <p><b>H8:</b> Social Media marketing mediates the relationship of facilitating condition and consumer-based brand equity among the restaurant industry of UAE. (Rejected)</p> <p><b>H9:</b> Social Media marketing mediates the relationship of customer experience and consumer-based brand equity among the restaurant industry of UAE. (Rejected)</p> <p><b>H10:</b> Social Media marketing mediates the relationship of brand loyalty and consumer-based brand equity among the restaurant industry of UAE. (Rejected)</p>	loyalty, Social media marketing, Consumer-based brand equity	However, facilitating conditions, customer experience, and brand loyalty were found to significantly affect consumer-based brand equity. Interestingly, the results reveal that social media marketing does not mediate the relationship between facilitating conditions, customer experience, brand loyalty, and consumer-based brand equity.
22	(Qalati et al., 2019)	2019	<p><b>H1:</b> the Brand association has a significant influence on brand reputation. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H2:</b> Brand awareness has a significant influence on brand reputation. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H3:</b> brand reputation has a significant impact on brand performance. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H4:</b> The relationship between brand association, and brand performance are significantly mediated by brand reputation. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H5:</b> The relationship between brand awareness and brand performance are significantly mediated by brand reputation. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H6:</b> Social media has a significant impact on brand performance. (Supported)</p> <p><b>H7:</b> Social media significantly moderate the relationship between brand reputation and brand performance. (Supported)</p>	Brand Equity, Brand Awareness, Brand Association, Brand Reputation, Brand Performance, Social Media, Online Reviews	The findings of this study demonstrate that brand awareness and brand association positively influence brand reputation, and in turn, brand reputation has a favourable impact on brand performance. Therefore, this study provides evidence supporting the mediating role of brand reputation in the relationship between brand equity dimensions and brand performance.

**Table 5: Key Constructs Examined in Reviewed Studies**

Key Constructs	Frequency	Studies
<b>Branding Constructs</b>		
Brand Association	1	[22]
Brand Awareness	5	[2], [5], [9], [19], [22]
Brand Commitment	1	[12]
Brand Engagement	1	[6], [15]
Brand Equity	19	[1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8], [9], [10], [12], [13], [14], [16], [17], [19], [20], [21], [22]
Brand Image	9	[1], [2], [3], [4], [6], [9], [13], [15], [19]
Brand Leadership	1	[13]
Brand Loyalty	11	[1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [11], [12], [13], [18], [19], [21]
Brand Preference	1	[13]
Brand Perceived Quality	5	[1], [2], [3], [4], [5]
Brand Relationship	1	[12]
Brand Reputation	1	[22]
Brand Satisfaction	2	[5], [12]
Brand Trust	4	[4], [11], [12], [18]
Brand Value	2	[2], [4]
Brand Performance	1	[22]
Sensory brand experience	1	[17]
Value Equity	1	[10]
WTP	1	[17]
Relationship Equity	1	[10]
Perceived Value	1	[4]
Customer Equity	1	[10]
Emotional Connection	1	[15]
<b>Hospitality Constructs</b>		
Hotel	12	[1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [8], [9], [11], [16], [18], [19], [20]
Hospitality	2	[7], [15]
Fast Food Brands	6	[10], [12], [13], [14], [19], [22]
Restaurant	1	[21]
Airbnb	1	[6]
<b>Digital Marketing &amp; Social Media Constructs</b>		
Social Media (SM Marketing, SM Advertisement, SM Platforms, SM Networks)	14	[2], [6], [7], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], [14], [15], [18], [19], [21], [22]
Social Networking Sites	1	[2]

Social Relationship	1	[5]
Consistency	1	[15]
Differentiation	1	[15]
Digital Marketing	1	[7]
Social Commerce	1	[20]
Social Identification	1	[20]
Technological Competence	1	[4]
User-generated-content	2	[10]
Digital Media	1	[7]
e-Word of Mouth	3	[4], [5], [17]
ICT	2	[1], [3]
Information Quantity	1	[5]
IMC	2	[3], [7]
Online Marketing	2	[8], [16]
Online Messages	1	[5]
Online Reviews	3	[2], [12], [19], [20]
Engagement opportunity	1	[15]
Firm-generated-content	1	[10]
Service innovation implementation	1	[4]
Persuasive message compliance	1	[20]
Facilitating conditions	1	[21]
COBRAs (Consumers' Online Brand-Related Activities)	1	[6]
Website	1	[11]

### 3.3 Interrelationship Between CBBE Constructs and DM Aspects

In order to comprehensively understand the relationship between DM practices and CBBE in the hospitality sector, it was crucial to analyse the perspectives adopted by the 22 studies included in this systematic literature review. This analysis aimed to identify the specific aspects of DM and dimensions of CBBE investigated by these studies, as well as the corresponding findings. Additionally, it was essential to determine whether the studies employed any conceptual frameworks or models to explore the interrelationships among the constructs under investigation (see Table 6). By examining these aspects, a more nuanced understanding of the research landscape and its implications for the DM-CBBE relationship in the hospitality sector can be attained.

Table 6 provides insights into the areas of focus within the included studies. The majority of the studies examined the effect of DM on CBBE in general, while others specifically investigated the influence of social media (SM) on dimensions such as brand image, brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand trust, and

brand engagement. Notably, the dimensions of brand trust and brand engagement were less emphasized in the conceptual framework proposed by Aaker (1991) but were highlighted within brand resonance model by Keller (2001).

Furthermore, Table 6 illustrates the impact of other DM aspects, such as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), online reviews, modern integrated marketing communications (IMC), information and communication technology (ICT), and online experiential marketing on various dimensions of CBBE. These dimensions include brand perceived quality, brand image, brand loyalty, brand trust, brand engagement, brand satisfaction, brand performance, brand association, and brand value.

By comparing the findings of the included studies with existing conceptual frameworks in the literature, it will be possible to identify any gaps and propose an integrated conceptual framework that encompasses all relevant dimensions and aspects. This framework will provide a foundation for future studies to further examine and expand upon.

**Table 6: Relationship Between DM Constructs and CBBE Constructs**

DM Constructs	Brand Equity Constructs										
	CBBE	BAW	BI	BL	BT	BPQ	BAS	BV	BP	BE	BS
SMM	2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 19,20, 21, 22	2, 9, 19, 22	2, 6, 9, 13, 15, 19	2, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 21	11, 12, 18	2	22	2	22	6, 12	12
eWOM	4, 5, 17		4	4, 5	4	4		4		4, 5	5
Modern IMC	3, 7		3	3		3, 5					
ICT	1, 3, 4		1, 3	1, 3	4	1,3		4			
Online Reviews	2, 12, 19, 20	5		12							
Online Experiential Marketing	8, 16										

BAW: Brand awareness; BI: Brand image; BL: Brand loyalty; BT: Brand trust; BPQ: Brand perceived quality; BAS: Brand association; BV: Brand value; BP: Brand performance; BE: Brand engagement; BS: Brand satisfaction; CBBE: Customer-based brand equity; SMM: Social media marketing; eWOM: electronic word of mouth; IMC: Integrated marketing communication; ICT: Information technology communication.

## Chapter 4: Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between DM practices and CBBE dimensions within the hospitality sector. To achieve this aim, the three research questions of this SLR are addressed in this chapter.

**RQ1: What empirical peer-reviewed literature has been published in English language journals between 1990 and 2023 regarding the impact of digital marketing practices on building brand equity in the hospitality sector?**

In order to ensure rigor and adherence to established protocols, this study followed the criteria outlined in the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) protocol (Figure 3, p.26), namely keywords and subject relevance, time frame, language, article Quality, and methodology. Through a rigorous selection process, 22 empirical studies which were in accordance with the inclusion criteria were identified from a pool of 661 initially identified articles. These selected studies were further reviewed and deemed eligible for inclusion in the subsequent analysis, which aimed to explore and examine the relationship between DM and CBBE within the hospitality sector (See Table 3, p.28). **RQ2: What are the key constructs discussed in the literature about the impact of DM practices on CBBE in the hospitality sector, and how were they analysed by the researchers?**

To answer the second research question, the SLR sought to identify the research methods employed and the key constructs and constructs examined by the 22 included studies that investigated the relationship between DM and CBBE. Hence, a thorough review was conducted, encompassing both the abstracts and full texts of all 22 studies, in order to extract and document the key constructs and research methods.

All 22 studies included in this review examined various dimensions of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) in relation to digital marketing (DM) in the hospitality sector. These studies explored a range of constructs, with some constructs being examined in multiple studies and others explored in only a single study (Table 4, p.32).

Three categories of constructs extracted from the 22 studies: branding, digital marketing and social media, and hospitality constructs (see Table 5, p.45). In terms of brand equity research, the most frequently examined constructs were brand equity itself, brand loyalty, brand perceived quality, brand trust, brand image, brand awareness, brand satisfaction, and brand value. These constructs received considerable attention across the studies, indicating their significance in understanding the relationship between DM and CBBE.

Regarding the impact of digital marketing, the studies primarily focused on investigating the following constructs: social media, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), online reviews, information and communication technology (ICT), integrated marketing communications (IMC), online marketing, and

other constructs that were less frequently studied. The prominence of social media and its dimensions as a digital marketing approach highlights the extensive research concentration on its impact on brand equity in the hospitality sector.

In terms of the hospitality context, the studies examined the relationship among constructs within the contexts of hotels, fast-food brands, general hospitality, restaurants, and Airbnb. These different contexts reflect the diversity of areas within the hospitality sector that were explored in the reviewed studies, providing a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between DM and CBBE across various sectors of the industry.

**RQ3: What are the gaps in current literature regarding the impact of DM practices on CBBE in the hospitality sector?**

Research questions three aimed to identify potential knowledge gaps in the existing literature regarding the relationship between DM and CBBE in the hospitality sector. To address RQ3, the following three steps were undertaken:

Firstly, the relationship between DM constructs and CBBE constructs in the extant literature were labelled (Table 6, p.47).

Secondly, upon analysing the findings of the SLR, it was evident that the studies adopted a wide diversity of theoretical and conceptual frameworks to explain the relationship between CBBE and DM. However, a notable gap was identified in the absence of an integrated framework that comprehensively illustrates the multidimensional and complex concepts of CBBE and DM in the context of the hospitality sector. Such an integrated framework is essential for a holistic understanding of how DM practices influence the various dimensions of CBBE.

Thirdly, to bridge this literature gap and answer RQ3, this study proposed an integrated framework (Figure 4, p.55). This conceptual model combines and aligns the key aspects of DM, SMMA, and CBBE to provide a comprehensive illustration of their interplay and relationships. The proposed framework is designed to assist researchers in understanding the complex dynamics between DM practices and CBBE in the hospitality sector.

In conclusion, by addressing RQ3, this SLR has shed light on the need for a unified and integrated framework in the CBBE and DM literature. The proposed framework offers a valuable contribution to the field and serves as a basis for future research in understanding and enhancing brand equity through digital marketing strategies in the hospitality sector. In the following, each step of addressing RQ3 is discussed in detail.

#### **4.1 Step One: Review and Organisation of the Constructs Examined by Included Studies**

As discussed in Chapter 3, Table 5 was created to provide a comprehensive overview of the frequencies of constructs examined in the included studies, shedding light on the research interests of scholars in this field and the direction in which the existing literature is evolving.

On the other hand, Table 6 was specifically designed to identify the trajectories of the existing literature, particularly with regards to the various perspectives adopted by these studies when exploring the relationships among different constructs and constructs, thereby unravelling the influence of DM aspects on different dimensions of CBBE within the hospitality sector.

It is important to note that DM is a complex and multidimensional concept that is still in its nascent stages of development. Although several studies have attempted to propose models for conceptualizing the dimensions and constructs associated with DM (Abuhmeidan, 2023; Alalwan et al., 2017; Bilgin, 2018; Castañeda García et al., 2018; Chaffey & Smith, 2022; Chattopadhyay, 2019; Durmaz & Efendioğlu, 2016; Herhausen et al., 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2020; Kaur, 2017; Kaur & Chourasia, 2021; Kim & Ko, 2012; Kingsnorth, 2016; Kushwaha et al., 2020; Ra'd Almestarihi et al., 2021; Senyo et al., 2019; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012; Yasmin et al., 2015) and CBBE (Aaker, 1991; Aaker, 2009; Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010; Çifci et al., 2016; Girard & Pinar, 2021; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2016; Na & Marshall, 2005; Nam et al., 2011), the literature in this area remains fragmented, lacking integration and comprehensiveness.

#### **4.2 Step Two: Analysis of the Findings and Applied Conceptual Frameworks in the Included Studies**

The findings of this study indicates that the articles included in this SLR employed diverse CBBE dimensions and digital marketing aspects. To derive meaningful insights from the discussion, this study needed to align the examined dimensions from each article with the most relevant and applied models or frameworks that exist in the literature. Based on the findings in Table 6, the included studies have investigated the impact of various aspects of DM on some dimensions of CBBE. These aspects encompass SMM, eWOM and online reviews, modern IMC, ICT, and online experiential marketing practices that affect the dimensions of CBBE in the hospitality sector. To categorize these specific aspects, this SLR aligns the findings with the digital marketing dimensions provided by Chaffey and Smith (2022), which were discussed in chapter 1. This categorization encompasses almost all the facets of DM examined in this SLR. Additionally, the model proposed by Kim and Ko (2012), known as the social media marketing activities model (SMMA), is applied and examined by a few of the 22 included studies. This model helps to identify consumers' perceptions of using online social media platforms for entertainment, customization, trendiness, purchase intentions, interaction, and eWOM (Kim & Ko, 2012). Therefore, this SLR also employed the SMMA model to explain the impact of SMMA on CBBE. It is important to note that these models are not well established in the literature yet and require further

exploration and expansion to ensure the applicability and reliability of them in adequately explaining and assessing the determinants of DM and SMMA and how they influence CBBE.

Regarding the CBBE and its dimensions, the SLR has identified several constructs, including brand awareness (BAW), brand image (BI), brand loyalty (BL), brand trust (BT), brand perceived quality (BPQ), brand association (BAS), brand value (BV), brand performance (BP), brand engagement (BE), and brand satisfaction (BS). Analysis of the research approaches applied by the studies indicates that most of the examined CBBE dimensions are aligned with the framework proposed by Aaker (1991) and Keller (2001). Aaker's CBBE framework is based on a few well-established dimensions namely brand awareness, brand association also known as brand image, brand perceived quality, brand loyalty, and proprietary assets namely patents and trademarks. This framework provides a reliable measurement of brand strength and explores how customers perceive, feel, and behave towards a specific brand (Ra'd Almestarihi et al., 2021). Keller (2001), on the other hand proposed the brand resonance pyramid model, which outlines a systematic progression involving various stages and desired outcomes. The brand resonance stage encompasses dimensions such as brand awareness, brand performance, brand image, brand feelings, brand judgment, and brand loyalty. These dimensions collectively contribute to the stepwise development of brand resonance, which is closely associated with CBBE (Raut & Brito, 2014).

In the subsequent section, the literature direction, and the findings of the 22 included studies are comprehensively discussed to identify potential knowledge gaps in the literature. This analysis assists to address the third research question of this study and subsequently examines the findings of the studies in relation to the proposed framework (Figure 4, p.55). The aim is to identify any knowledge gaps in the existing literature.

#### **4.2.1 The Impact of SM on CBBE in the Hospitality Sector**

Within the scope of this SLR, a considerable focus was observed on investigating the influence of social media (SM) on the dimensions of CBBE which is in line with the proposed model (Figure 4, p.55). The SLR identified a total of 14 studies that specifically examined the impact of SM on CBBE or its dimensions. (Callarisa et al., 2012; Hanaysha, 2016; Ibrahim, 2021; Kushwaha et al., 2020; Nuseir & Elrefae, 2022; Nyairo, 2016; Perera & Perera, 2018; Qalati et al., 2019; Riaz et al., 2019; Schivinski et al., 2020; Šerić & Praničević, 2018; Tatar & Eren-Erdogmus, 2016; Yoopetch, 2018; Zahoor, 2022). While several studies have found a direct and strong positive influence of SM on CBBE e.g., (Hanaysha, 2016; Ibrahim, 2021; Kushwaha et al., 2020; Nyairo, 2016; Riaz et al., 2019; Yoopetch, 2018; Zahoor, 2022), the findings of Nuseir and Elrefae (2022) challenged this relationship in the context of restaurant brands in the UAE. Their findings reveal that facilitating conditions i.e., the acceptance of appropriate technological infrastructure and adequate support from top management for the implementation and utilization of a new approach, significantly influence the adoption and use of SMM practices. They also found that customer experience has a positive impact on SMM. Brand loyalty is also found to be

significantly associated with SMM. However, the study indicates that SMM does not directly influence CBBE. Instead, facilitating conditions, customer experience, and brand loyalty as independent constructs have a significant influence on CBBE. Notably, SMM does not mediate the relationship between the independent constructs and CBBE.

Similarly, Perera and Perera (2018) suggest that SMM only has a positive influence on brand image in the hospitality sector in Sri Lanka. They emphasize that SMM is not the dominant factor affecting brand image and highlight other factors such as customer experience and other DM platforms and practices that may have a stronger positive effect on enhancing brand image in this sector. However, the findings of Kushwaha et al. (2020) disclose that SM and DM are the most effective tools of modern integrated marketing communication (IMC) and posit that modern IMC has a positive impact on CBBE, implying that SM as part of IMC could have a positive influence on CBBE.

Nyairo (2016) and Riaz et al. (2019) found that SMM has a positive effect on brand equity for hotels, particularly in terms of increasing brand awareness, improving brand image, and enhancing brand loyalty. Nyairo (2016) identifies responding to inquiries as the most significant factor contributing to brand equity on social media, followed by customer engagement, page reviews, user-generated content, and hotel star ratings. The use of social media is found to benefit hotel brands by increasing global reach, facilitating effective communication and cost-effective advertising, offering accessibility and ease of use, and serving as a valuable source of sales leads, customer insights, and improved customer service. The findings of Yoopetch (2018) also contributes to the understanding of the impact of social media on hospitality brand image, highlighting its effectiveness in raising brand awareness and creating brand equity.

Zahoor (2022) examined the effect of social media on customer equity in the fast-food restaurant industry. The study examined two constituents of social media, user-generated content (UGC) and firm-generated content (FGC) and identified three drivers of customer equity: brand equity (BE), value equity (VE), and relationship equity (RE). The findings indicate that social media, particularly UGC and FGC, positively and significantly influence customer equity and its drivers. Among the three drivers, CBBE is the most affected by social media, followed by RE, while VE is affected the least. The study highlights the importance of both UGC and FGC in positively influencing customer equity in the context of social media.

Furthermore, Ibrahim (2021) examines the relationship between social media marketing activities (SMMA) and brand loyalty in the context of hotel Facebook pages. His findings show a positive and significant relationship between SMMA and purchase intention, brand loyalty, and brand trust, ultimately leading to CBBE.

Although most of the research findings indicate a positive influence of SMMA on CBBE, it is important to acknowledge that CBBE is a multi-dimensional concept, and there are various unstudied factors,

including contextual elements that could potentially impact the research outcomes. Therefore, further studies are necessary in different contexts to ensure the reliability and generalizability of these findings.

#### **4.2.2 The Impact of eWOM and Online Reviews on CBBE in the Hospitality Sector**

Sijoria et al. (2019) conducted a study in the hotel industry to explore the relationship between antecedents of eWOM and CBBE. The findings revealed that eWOM positively influences CBBE. Additionally, the study discovered a positive relationship between trust in online reviews and CBBE, an aspect not previously tested in the literature. The study emphasized the significance of satisfied and loyal customers sharing positive online reviews to enhance CBBE, particularly in the hotel industry where millennials heavily rely on web sources for brand-related information.

Ruan et al. (2020) and Farzin et al. (2023) also examined the effect of eWOM on the dimensions of CBBE. Both studies found a positive impact, highlighting the importance of eWOM as a moderator in the development and remodelling of hotel brands (Ruan et al., 2020), and as a mediator influencing consumer's willingness to pay a premium price in the restaurant industry (Farzin et al., 2023).

The hotel and hospitality industry distinguishes itself from other industries due to its experiential nature, where consumers subjectively evaluate their experiences (Lee & Cranage, 2014). Previous research has emphasized the role of online reviews and eWOM in this industry, as potential hospitality consumers rely on them to mitigate the perceived risk associated with booking hotel services (Yang, 2017). The impact of eWOM on the hospitality industry, with a specific focus on hotels, has been extensively discussed in existing literature (Cantalops & Salvi, 2014).

Callarisa et al. (2012) also conducted a study in the hotel context to explore brand equity components and propose the use of social media data, particularly reviews from TripAdvisor, as a reliable source for measuring customer-based hotel brand equity. The findings of this study reveal that online reviews offer greater credibility and access to a larger volume of reviews compared to traditional review forms used at hotels. The findings suggest that hotels should not overlook comments on platforms like TripAdvisor, as they have the potential to influence customer perceptions. Similarly, Nyairo (2016) examines the impact of social media on hotels in Kenya. The study investigates customer reviews on the TripAdvisor platform and the findings disclose that social media usage positively affects brand equity for three-star hotels in Nairobi, particularly in terms of increasing brand awareness, improving brand image, and enhancing brand loyalty. These findings align with Keller's brand resonance pyramid model, which emphasizes brand salience, judgments and feelings, and brand resonance as crucial components of brand equity (Keller, 2016). However, it is important to note that social media can also have negative effects on brand equity. The findings by Šerić and Praničević (2018) contrast the results of previous studies conducted by Callarisa et al. (2012) and Nyairo (2016). Šerić and Praničević (2018) found that online reviews exhibit a significant positive correlation with affective brand commitment,

while the correlation with brand loyalty is relatively weak. Specifically, these correlations primarily pertain to the behavioural aspects of brand loyalty, indicating that consumers who are influenced by online reviews are more likely to visit a fast-food restaurant on a regular basis. Nevertheless, they may not necessarily have the intention to recommend the brand or demonstrate strong loyalty. Consequently, it can be inferred that the impact of online reviews on CBBE appears to be relatively weak. Additional research is necessary in this area, considering the novelty of the concepts involved and the need to explore the relationships among these concepts in various contexts for a more comprehensive understanding.

#### **4.2.3 The Impact of Online and Offline Experiential Marketing on CBBE in the Hospitality Sector**

Two studies included in the SLR investigated online and offline marketing experience and their impact on CBBE in hospitality. Castañeda García et al. (2018) examined the impact of online and offline experiential marketing on brand equity in the hotel sector. The study found a strong and positive relationship between the level of experience during a hotel stay and brand equity, emphasizing the importance of memorable experiences in building brand equity. However, the findings of the study indicated that online brand experience alone does not directly contribute to brand equity, highlighting the greater influence of offline experiences. Nevertheless, the online experience was found to positively impact the overall experience during the stay. Kazemzadeh and Moradlou (2022) also explored the impact of online and offline marketing on brand equity in hotels, revealing a positive effect of online experiential marketing on brand equity, which contrasts with the findings of Castañeda García et al. (2018). These studies highlight the significance of both offline and online experiential marketing in establishing a strong brand in the hotel sector. They suggest strategies such as increasing social media advertising, improving the online service experience, and monitoring customer feedback on social media platforms to enhance hotel brand equity.

#### **4.2.4 The Impact of Modern IMC and ICT on CBBE in the Hospitality Sector**

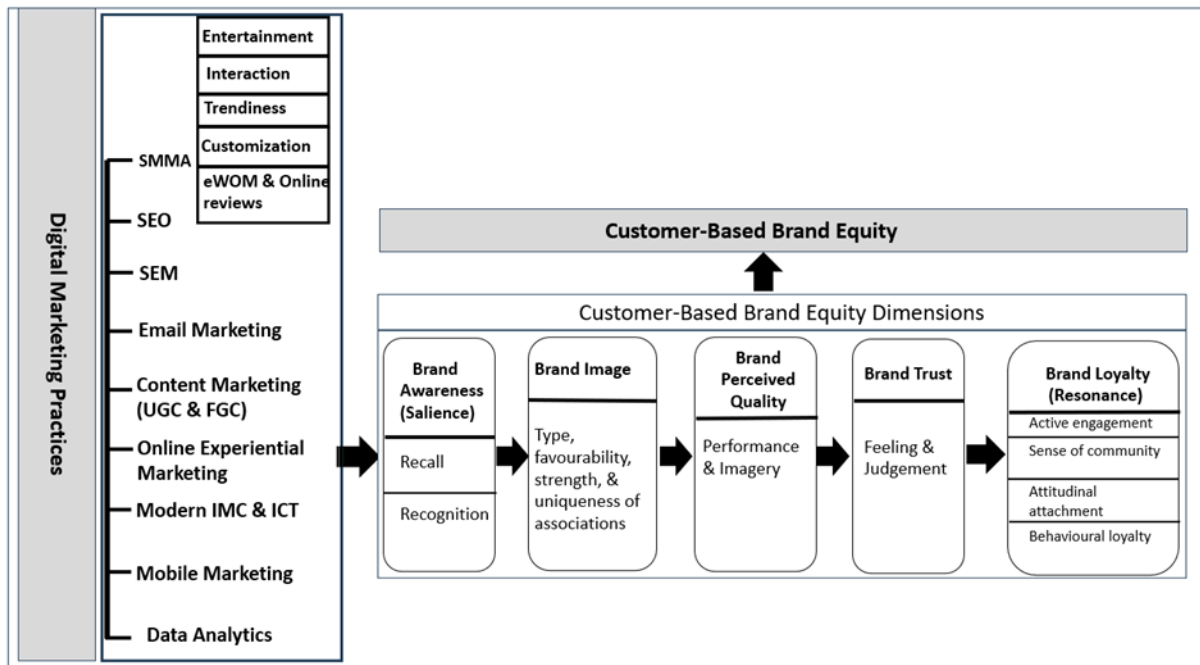
As shown in Table 6, four studies (Kushwaha et al., 2020; Ruan et al., 2020; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012; Šerić et al., 2016) examined the impact of consumer's perception of the application of ICT and modern IMC on CBBE. Šerić and Gil-Saura (2012) found a significant positive relationship between hotel guest perceptions of ICT and IMC, and perceived IMC and brand equity, particularly regarding brand image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. The study of Ruan et al. (2020) investigated the service innovation implementation and technological competence on CBBE. The research findings indicate that service innovation implementation and technological competence positively interact and contribute to customer brand loyalty. Additionally, the study confirms the significance of customer cognition and affection as intermediary mechanisms in the process of brand equity formation. Kushwaha et al. (2020) found that the integration of social media and digital media as components of IMC can enhance brand equity. They

assert that social media and DM are the most effective tools of modern IMC, offering cost-effective and customizable solutions with accountable advertising platforms. Šeric et al. (2016) also examined the influence of ICT on perceived quality, brand image, and brand loyalty in the hotel industry. They found that ICT positively affects perceived quality and brand image, but its impact on brand loyalty is inconclusive. The authors identified perceived quality as the strongest dimension of CBBE. The study found the mediating role of perceived quality between ICT and brand image, contributing to understanding the effects of technology on brand equity. Hotel managers should invest in advanced technologies and consider guest opinions to enhance brand image and perceived quality while recognizing the indirect link between ICT and brand loyalty.

### 4.3 Step Three: Introducing an Integrated DM-CBBE Framework

Given the rapid advancements in information and communication technology and the continuously evolving business landscape, it is critical to further understand the similarities and differences in brand-building processes between online and offline settings. This study proposes an integrated conceptual framework (Figure 4) to illustrate the relationship between DM constructs and CBBE constructs. This proposed framework aligns with addressing the third research question of this systematic literature review.

Figure 4: Conceptual Framework of the Impact of DM on CBBE



Note: Adapted from (Aaker, 1991; Chaffey & Smith, 2022; Keller, 2001; Kim & Ko, 2012)

The adapted model presented in Figure 4 incorporates the DM aspects proposed by Chaffey and Smith (2022) and the social media marketing activities (SMMA) model introduced by (Kim & Ko, 2012). Moreover, the proposed framework acknowledges several critical constructs that have been adequately

investigated in the existing literature. However, it also highlights certain areas that require further exploration.

DM practices encompassing SMMA, SEO, SEM, email marketing, content marketing, modern IMC & ICT, mobile marketing, and data analytics, occupy a central role within contemporary brand strategies. These multifaceted strategies empower brands to extend their reach to a broader customer base, elevate customer engagement, and actively participate in the formulation and execution of marketing strategies. This alignment with brand-building models, as adapted from Aaker (1991) and Keller (2001), underpinning their significance in modern marketing strategies. DM practices as versatile strategies empower businesses and brands to enhance their visibility and accessibility, effectively build brand awareness and brand image (Herhausen et al., 2020; Keller, 2009).

Furthermore, these digital marketing practices offer several advantages, including cost efficiency, expedited communication, enhanced customer service, and heightened customer relationship management, all of which can significantly impact customer-perceived quality (Keller, 2009). As technology continues to advance rapidly, digital channels have become standardized, interactive, omnipresent, and cost-effective (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021). This evolution presents brands with a unique opportunity to amass valuable customer insights, tailor services to individual needs, ensure data security and privacy, manage brand health and reputation, and assess the effectiveness of their digital marketing initiatives. These efforts, in turn, contribute to enhancing brand consistency and building brand trust.

Concurrently, social media marketing activities serve as instrumental tools in harnessing the potential of digital platforms for brand growth (Herhausen et al., 2020; Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021). Businesses leverage social media to cultivate dedicated fan bases, facilitate direct customer communication, nurture online brand support communities, engage in social selling, and expand their market presence. These strategic endeavours can ultimately culminate in brand resonance by positively influencing customers' emotions and judgments towards the brand, fostering customer loyalty, and promoting active engagement.

The subsequent constructs within the realm of DM delineate areas of research that have received relatively scant attention in the extant literature. These underexplored domains beckon for more extensive scholarly investigation.

### **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**

SEO is a pull digital marketing strategy employed to enhance a website's visibility and relevance in search engine results. It involves optimizing the website's technical configuration, content, and link popularity to make its pages more easily discoverable, relevant, and popular to users searching for specific queries. By implementing SEO techniques, websites aim to improve their rankings on search

engine results pages, thereby increasing their organic traffic and attracting more potential customers (Chaffey & Smith, 2022; Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021).

### **Search Engine Marketing (SEM)**

SEM is a push digital marketing strategy employed to promote websites, social media platforms, landing pages, and other content by enhancing their visibility in search engine result pages through paid advertising (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021). SEM plays a vital role in establishing brand awareness and generating traffic for websites and social media channels (Chaffey & Smith, 2022; Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021).

### **E-Mail Marketing**

Email marketing is a direct digital marketing method that involves using emails to engage with a business's target audiences. It focuses on distributing promotional or informative content to recipients with the primary goals of building product or brand awareness, generating leads, and driving sales. This approach has been successful in facilitating direct communication with customers, fostering brand loyalty, and accomplishing various marketing objectives (Chaffey & Smith, 2022; Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021).

### **Mobile Marketing**

Mobile marketing encompasses a range of digital marketing tools that organizations utilize to target and engage mobile consumers, with a particular emphasis on smartphone users. This category includes mobile apps that can serve both as a service tool and a means of interacting with the market. Additionally, SMS and MMS have been identified as significant components of mobile marketing. The key strength of mobile marketing lies in its ability to establish direct, personalized relationships with the market and its customers (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021; Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014)

### **Data Analytics:**

Data analytics is an important aspect of digital marketing, providing vital tools for assessing campaign effectiveness and guiding strategic decision-making. Through the measurement of website performance, examination of social media metrics, tracking of email marketing outcomes, analysis of customer data for targeted efforts and personalization, and evaluation of the customer journey, businesses gain valuable insights into audience behaviour, preferences, and engagement levels (Al Adwan et al., 2023).

On the other hand, to ensure the comprehensive coverage of CBBE dimensions, the proposed model integrates the established dimensions from the models provided by Aaker (1991) and Keller (2001).

The five CBBE dimensions of Aaker (1991) and brand resonance pyramid model by Keller (2001) are the most cited and utilized approaches among scholars (Abuhmeidan, 2023; Bilgin, 2018; Callarisa et

al., 2012; Castañeda García et al., 2018; Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010; Çifci et al., 2016; Farjam & Hongyi, 2015; Górska-Warsewicz et al., 2021; Ibrahim, 2021; Kayaman & Arasli, 2007; Keller, 2016; Lee & Back, 2010; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012). This model will help to identify the most recognized aspects of DM and CBBE as well as those dimensions and characteristics that are missing in the respective literature.

By incorporating both DM aspects and CBBE dimensions, this integrated conceptual framework aims to offer a more holistic understanding of the interrelationship between these constructs. It provides a valuable tool for researchers and practitioners to analyse and evaluate the impact of various DM aspects on different dimensions of CBBE, facilitating a comprehensive exploration of the relationship between DM and CBBE.

#### **4.4 Conclusion: Research Gaps**

In conclusion, the analysis of the findings from the 22 studies in this systematic literature review reveals that while the literature on customer-based brand equity (CBBE) and digital marketing (DM) in the context of hospitality is evolving, there are several gaps that need to be addressed by future research. One notable gap is the limited investigation of certain aspects of DM practices, such as search engine optimization (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM), email marketing, content marketing, mobile marketing, and data analytics, which have not received sufficient attention from scholars in the hospitality and CBBE fields.

Furthermore, the existing CBBE literature lacks a comprehensive and widely accepted model for conceptualizing CBBE in the contemporary business landscape, which is heavily influenced by digital tools, technologies and practices that have transformed customer behaviour and journeys. Therefore, there is a need for further research and scholarly initiatives to align with market changes and technological advancements, and to develop theoretical and conceptual frameworks that integrate DM, SMMA, and CBBE.

This study also highlights the importance of brand trust as a key dimension of CBBE, which bridges the gap between perceived quality and brand loyalty. Despite its significance, existing CBBE models have overlooked the inclusion of brand trust. Therefore, this study proposes the incorporation of brand trust as an essential dimension to be examined in relation to the influence of DM. Previous research by Tatar and Eren-Erdoğan (2016), Sohail et al. (2020), Ramadhani and Prasasti (2023), Cuong (2020), and Tümer et al. (2019) has demonstrated the crucial role of social media in driving brand trust, which subsequently leads to brand loyalty, purchase intention, and CBBE. By addressing these methodological and conceptual gaps, this SLR contributes to advancing the current literature in the field.

## **Chapter 5: Theoretical and Managerial Implications**

The findings of this dissertation contribute to the existing literature by enhancing scholars' understanding of the potential capabilities of digital marketing (DM) factors on customer-based brand equity (CBBE) dimensions in the hospitality sector. The systematic literature review (SLR) reveals that while the impact of social media marketing (SMM) and social media platforms has received significant attention, other aspects of DM have been underexplored, indicating gaps in the literature that need to be addressed by future research.

One of the key findings is the lack of a solid and integrated conceptual framework that comprehensively elucidates the complex relationships between DM aspects and CBBE dimensions, especially in the context of the hospitality sector. To address this gap, this study proposes an integrated conceptual framework that aims to streamline and facilitate a deeper understanding of these relationships.

The managerial implications of this study for hospitality managers are twofold. Firstly, it is crucial for managers to effectively implement advanced technologies in their communication strategies, taking into account the fragmented market and leveraging consumer opinions for continuous improvement. Meeting customer needs and wants is paramount for brand success, and the application of advanced technologies can greatly assist in achieving this goal. Secondly, adopting a holistic view of marketing communications is essential, incorporating various tools, approaches, and strategies, including traditional marketing, to ensure a thorough planning process from brand awareness to brand trust and loyalty, thereby making a significant impact on CBBE and ultimately benefiting brand success and sustainability. Compared to traditional marketing approaches, DM practices can reduce costs, efforts, and yield better outcomes.

Hospitality managers are encouraged to leverage technology to improve efficiency, service quality, and customer experiences. Advanced DM practices such as search engine optimization (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM), social media marketing (SMM), content marketing, social network technologies, mobile marketing, and data analytics are becoming essential components of the business ecosystem, serving as potential sources of CBBE. Additionally, collaboration between the digital marketing department and other departments within hospitality firms is vital to incorporate a digital perspective into various business activities. Prioritizing technology solutions based on customer needs and expectations is crucial for remaining relevant in the market and maintaining a competitive edge.

## **Chapter 6: Limitations and Future Studies**

While there are many studies that have applied Aaker's CBBE framework to investigate CBBE dimensions and expand the literature, researchers have shown less interest to apply and test Keller's brand resonance model in order to examine digital marketing impact on CBBE dimensions. Hence, this study suggests future studies to further apply and test Keller's model in their research to assess the applicability and effectiveness of this model. Furthermore, this study was limited to the context of hospitality, and it would be valuable for future research to replicate this study in other contexts.

Scholars have indeed explored the impact of specific DM practices on CBBE dimensions within the hospitality sector. However, the literature lacks sufficient research on the effects of crucial DM constructs such as SEO, SEM, email marketing, mobile marketing, and data analytics on CBBE. As a result, it is recommended that future research focuses on investigating these areas to enhance the understanding of the relationship between DM and CBBE in the context of the hospitality industry.

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