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The Role of Marketing Automation in sustainable competitive advantage, An Analytical Study in Five Star Hotels in the City of Erbil

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Abstract: The research aims to investigate the influence of Marketing Automation (dependent variable) approaches on achieving sustainable competitive advantage (independent variable). In line with the research objectives, the research problem was articulated through several questions: what degree are five-star hotels in Erbil employing marketing automation strategies? Additionally, the study examines the relationship and impact of Marketing Automation on sustainable competitive advantage. Analytical descriptive techniques were employed by researchers. They provided detailed descriptions of the main and secondary variables, and explored the connections and effects among the research variables. The research population consisted of leaders in Five-star Hotels located in the city of Erbil. A total of 160 questionnaires were distributed, all of them being retrieved and utilized for the study. Hypotheses were tested using statistical techniques, specifically the computer application SPSS V.25.

The study yielded several significant findings. It revealed positive associations between Marketing Automation and sustainable competitive advantage at both macro and micro levels. Furthermore, at the macro level, the independent variable (Marketing Automation) demonstrated a positive impact on the dependent variable (sustainable competitive advantage) according to the study's indicators. The research also provided a set of recommendations, with a particular emphasis on Five Star Hotels in Erbil. It suggests that Five-star hotels must prioritize the adoption and integration of advanced marketing automation tools to optimize operations, improve customer targeting, and provide tailored guest experiences. Additionally, Implement Automation Throughout Departments: Broaden the advantages of marketing automation to encompass operations, sales, and customer service for a cohesive and effective strategy in enhancing visitor happiness. Enhance Sustainability Initiatives: Integrate marketing automation into sustainability initiatives by advocating for eco-friendly practices, enhancing resource efficiency, and conveying these efforts to guests to coincide with global trends.

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دور الأتمتة التسويق في تحقيق الميزة التنافسية المستدامة
دراسة تحليلية في الفنادق الخمس نجوم في مدينة أربيل

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المستخلص

يهدف البحث إلى دراسة تأثير استراتيجيات الأتمتة التسويقية (المتغير التابع) على تحقيق الميزة التنافسية المستدامة (المتغير المستقل). وبما يتماشى مع أهداف البحث، تم تحديد مشكلة البحث من خلال عدة أسئلة، من بينها: إلى أي مدى تعتمد الفنادق الخمس نجوم في أربيل على استراتيجيات الأتمتة التسويقية؟ بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يبحث الدراسة في العلاقة بين الأتمتة التسويقية والميزة التنافسية المستدامة وتأثير الأولى على الثانية. اعتمد الباحثون على الأساليب الوصفية التحليلية، حيث قدموا أوصافًا تفصيلية للمتغيرات الرئيسية والثانوية، واستكشفوا العلاقات والتأثيرات بين متغيرات البحث. تكون مجتمع البحث من القادة في الفنادق الخمس نجوم الواقعة في مدينة أربيل. تم توزيع ما مجموعه 160 استبيانًا، وتم استرجاعها جميعًا واستخدامها في الدراسة. تم اختبار الفرضيات باستخدام الأساليب الإحصائية، وتحديدًا عبر برنامج SPSS الإصدار 25.

توصلت الدراسة إلى عدة نتائج مهمة، حيث كشفت عن وجود ارتباطات إيجابية بين الأتمتة التسويقية والميزة التنافسية المستدامة على المستويين الكلي والجزئي. علاوة على ذلك، أظهرت النتائج أن المتغير المستقل (الأتمتة التسويقية) له تأثير إيجابي على المتغير التابع (الميزة التنافسية المستدامة) وفقًا لمؤشرات الدراسة. كما قدم البحث مجموعة من التوصيات، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على الفنادق الخمس نجوم في أربيل. ومن بين هذه التوصيات: ضرورة إعطاء الأولوية لاعتماد ودمج أدوات الأتمتة التسويقية المتقدمة لتحسين العمليات، وتعزيز استهداف العملاء، وتوفير تجارب ضيافة مخصصة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يوصي البحث بتوسيع نطاق الأتمتة ليشمل الإدارات المختلفة مثل العمليات والمبيعات وخدمة العملاء، وذلك لتحقيق استراتيجية متكاملة وفعالة تسهم في تعزيز رضا الزوار. كما يشدد على أهمية دمج الأتمتة التسويقية في المبادرات البيئية من خلال الترويج للممارسات الصديقة للبيئة، وتحسين كفاءة استخدام الموارد، والتواصل مع الضيوف حول هذه الجهود لتتماشى مع الاتجاهات العالمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اتمتة التسويق، الميزة التنافسية المستدامة، فنادق خمس نجوم في مدينة أربيل.

CHAPTER ONE
Introduction

1.1 Overview: In the competitive hospitality industry, marketing automation is essential for achieving a continuous competitive edge, especially among five-star hotels in Erbil. As customer preferences change, hoteliers must progressively adopt smart technological solutions to enhance operational efficiency and elevate client interaction. Marketing automation facilitates the collection and analysis of consumer data, enabling hotels to tailor their

services and marketing strategies to meet the distinct needs of their clientele (Ali& Mahmood,2022,826). The hospitality sector has always been a fiercely competitive arena, with hotels competing for patrons and striving to distinguish themselves in the marketplace. In recent years, the surge in hotel options has heightened competition, compelling hoteliers to prioritize marketing efforts to keep a competitive advantage (Karson & Murphy, 2013, 49).

The current literature on hotel marketing emphasizes the necessity of customized tactics for independent and group hotels, along with the importance of post-opening marketing evaluation. Researchers have investigated the influence of crises and economic situations on hospitality marketing, highlighting the necessity for innovation and the strategic application of information technology (Papadopoulos, 2014, 294).

This study will investigate the specific marketing automation technologies and strategies employed by hotel managers, as well as their perceived impact on hotel performance and competition, through interviews and analysis of customer feedback. Furthermore, this research will examine the intricate function of marketing automation in positioning five-star hotels in Erbil as paragons of sustainability and excellence, exploring how these technological advancements bolster long-term market relevance amid rising competition and shifting consumer preferences.

1.2 Research Problem: The hospitality sector, especially five-star hotels in Erbil, functions within a competitive landscape where differentiation and long-term sustainability are essential. Marketing automation has become a vital instrument, allowing firms to optimize operations, customize client interactions, and improve decision-making. Nonetheless, its particular role in attaining sustained competitive advantage remains inadequately examined, particularly concerning five-star hotels in a vibrant city such as Erbil.

The current research emphasizes the theoretical capacity of marketing automation to enhance efficiency, foster innovation, and improve consumer happiness. However, a gap exists in comprehending how this potential converts into quantifiable results in practical organizational applications. The viewpoints of five-star hotels—a sector that depends significantly on superior service and branding—regarding the incorporation of marketing automation for sustainable competitive advantage are inadequately explored.

This study aims to examine the perceptions and utilization of marketing automation by five-star hotels in Erbil, the problems encountered, and the degree to which these technologies enhance their competitive sustainability in a swiftly changing market environment. The study seeks to offer practical insights for integrating marketing automation initiatives with long-term business objectives by addressing this gap. From this perspective, scholars contend that the research problem revolves around the following inquiries:

1 To what degree are five-star hotels in Erbil employing marketing automation strategies?
2 Have the five-star hotels in Erbil attained a sustainable competitive advantage?
3 Is there a statistically meaningful correlation between marketing automation and sustained competitive advantage among the scientific community?
4 Is there a statistically meaningful association between marketing automation and sustained competitive advantage among the scientific community?

1.3 Research Objectives: Based on the title "The role of marketing automation in Sustainable competitive advantage" the research objectives are as follows:

1. Identifying the theoretical concepts of marketing automation and sustainable competitive advantage.
2. Revealing the extent of marketing automation dimensions in five-star hotels in Erbil city.
3. Identifying the level of achievement of five-star hotels in Erbil city sustainable competitive advantage.
4. Identifying the nature of the relationship and impact between marketing automation and sustainable competitive advantage.

1.4 Research Importance: This research is crucial as it addresses the imperative to explore innovative strategies that could enhance the sustainability and competitive position of these enterprises in a volatile and often unpredictable market landscape. Marketing automation, as a rapidly evolving technological advancement, has the potential to revolutionize client engagement, improve resource efficiency, and adapt to market changes. This study highlights the specific and practical implications of marketing automation by analyzing the perspectives of five-star hotels in Erbil, thereby linking theoretical frameworks with practical implementations in a unique and under-researched geographical context.

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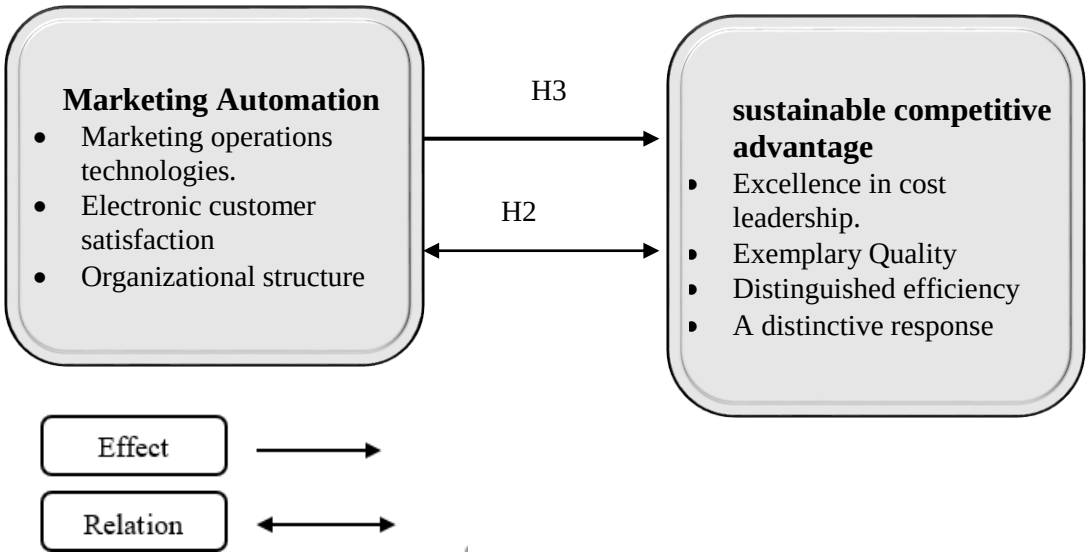
This study enriches academic discourse by offering actual information regarding the integration of marketing automation into strategic frameworks for achieving long-term competitive sustainability. It provides actionable insights for practitioners, legislators, and industry leaders, enabling them to utilize marketing automation to enhance consumer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and brand loyalty. This research is pertinent due to the increasing importance of digital transformation and the rising demand for sustainable business practices in the global hospitality sector.

1.5 Research Model:



Source: Prepared by researchers

1.6 Research Hypothesis:

1. **First Research Hypothesis:** The ordinal relevance of the search variables varies. Depending on the respondents' perceptions of the research hotels.
2. **Second research Hypothesis:** There is a significant relationship between marketing automation and sustainable competitive advantage in five star hotels in Erbil**.**
3. **Third research Hypothesis:** Marketing automation has a statistically significant effect on the sustainable competitive advantage of five-star hotels in Erbil**.**

CHAPTER TWO
Literature Review

2-1. Marketing Automation:

2-1-1. Concept of Marketing Automation: The phrase "Marketing automation" was initially coined by John D.C. Little during his presentation at the 5th Invitational Choice Symposium at UC Berkeley in 2001, denoting automated marketing decision assistance on the Internet (Little, 2001: 23). Artificial intelligence has emerged as a crucial factor in revolutionizing digital marketing through improved automation, customer involvement, and personalization (Keegan, et al., 2024: 1028). These breakthroughs are transforming business-customer interactions and fundamentally altering marketing methods. Digital marketing (DM), reliant on real-time data and client interaction, expects to gain significantly from the advantages provided by AI (Ziakis & Vlachopoulou, 2023: 664). AI can enhance processes, refine strategies, and provide tailored experiences to consumers through predictive analytics, machine learning algorithms, and the automation of routine jobs (UDDIN, et al., 2024: 1559). The study (Stallone, et al., 2021: 5) defines marketing automation as the automated technologies and processes employed by firms to streamline diverse marketing tasks. The study (Abdul Rahman, et al., 2020: 3) stated that marketing automation entails the development of novel business models arising from contemporary digital technologies, which encompass current trends, methodologies, and approaches for conducting business and enhancing organizational market positioning. The research (Semerádová & Weinlich, 2020: 58) characterized it as a process utilizing a central platform to monitor existing and prospective clients, encompassing a range of automated and personalized marketing activities, along with the capacity to assess and analyze the efficacy of marketing channels. Refers to (Ahadul Islam, et al., 2024: 6501)Marketing automation refers to the utilization of AI-driven tools and technologies to enhance and refine marketing processes. It includes diverse applications such as automated customer segmentation, targeted advertising, content personalization, and the administration of client interactions via customer relationship management (CRM) systems. These technologies facilitate the collection and analysis of customer data, forecast client demands and behaviors, and automate repetitive marketing processes, hence improving the efficiency and efficacy of marketing efforts. (Atta, 2023: 433) defines

marketing automation as the technologies, regulations, software solutions, and platforms that facilitate the delivery of content, enhancing the utilization of electronic systems in marketing operations and educating prospective customers about services, thereby enabling the organization to attract potential clients and contend with competition.

AI is integral to these components by automating and optimizing operations that would otherwise be laborious and intricate. Automation in personalized marketing denotes the utilization of AI technology to oversee and implement marketing duties autonomously (Olsen & Pracejus, 2020: 249). This entails categorizing clients into specific categories, providing tailored material at ideal moments, and always assessing performance to enhance strategies. The advantages of automation in tailored marketing are numerous (Ochuba, et al., 2024: 426). Firstly, automation enhances efficiency by minimizing the time and resources necessary for executing marketing tasks. AI-driven systems can process extensive datasets more rapidly than people, delivering prompt insights that can be acted upon without delay. Secondly, automation improves the precision of marketing initiatives. Utilizing machine learning algorithms enables firms to make data-driven decisions that are more likely to align with their target audience (Viale & Zouari, 2020: 187). Thirdly, automation facilitates scalability. AI solutions can manage extensive data and several client contacts concurrently, enabling organizations to expand their tailored marketing initiatives without a corresponding rise in costs (Obinna & Kess-Momoh, 2024: 1422).

2-1-2. Dimension of Marketing Automation: The facets of marketing automation are numerous: The study (Putra & Sfenrianto, 2020: 474) asserted that the dimensions of marketing automation encompass the employed information technology and innovative business models. The subsequent study (Silva, et al., 2023: 148) incorporated administrative support for information technology, the software industry, and the utilization of information technology platforms as additional dimensions of marketing automation. Furthermore, the study (Christian, et al., 2021: 12) delineated the dimensions of marketing automation as organizational structures and prioritization of potential customers. Lastly, the study (Nyuga & Tanova, 2024: 6) identified the dimensions of marketing automation as electronic customer relationship management, governance mechanisms, and organizational structure. Additionally, (Atta, 2023: 433) mentioned the

aspects of marketing automation, the tactics of marketing operations, and electronic consumer happiness. This study has utilized the following dimensions for analysis, as derived from the sources(Meroet al:2019, 28), (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019: 68), (Christian, et al., 2021: 12), (Atta, 2023: 434): -

- **Marketing operations technologies** refer to the function of digital technologies in marketing endeavors and the degree to which companies integrate technology into their digital marketing business models, as well as the development of multi-channel electronic marketing communications for promoting their products, to facilitate the transfer of products from the manufacturer to the consumer and implement the electronic customer service standard(Atta, 2023: 434).
- **Electronic customer satisfaction** refers to the customer's sense of contentment derived from comparing the actual performance of services against their anticipated expectations. Electronic customer happiness influences future customer behavior, serving as a critical determinant of client loyalty. It is regarded as the primary performance metric in the business sector, a crucial differentiator for the organization, and an essential component of its business strategy (Atta, 2023: 434).
- **Organizational structure:** Organizational Structure refers to the arrangement and coordination of roles, responsibilities, and communication flows within a company to support the effective implementation of marketing automation. In the context of digital marketing, this includes aligning teams such as IT, sales, and marketing, defining ownership of automated processes, and ensuring clear governance over tools and data usage. A well-structured organization enables seamless integration of automation technologies, fosters collaboration across departments, and enhances the efficiency and consistency of customer engagement strategies (Chaffey& Ellis-Chadwick, 2019,68).

2-2. Sustainable Competitive Advantage

2-2-1. Concept of Sustainable Competitive Advantage: The notion of sustainable competitive advantage has emerged as a significant focus in numerous studies pertaining to strategic thinking and planning, suggesting that most organizations endeavor to fulfill fundamental prerequisites to attain sustainability in their competitive advantage (Al-Aqidi, 2018: 32). Sustainable competitive advantage refers to an organization's capacity to

operate more efficiently than its competitors. It is also referred to as performance in one or multiple ways that rival organizations cannot replicate now or in the future. A multitude of definitions for competitive advantage have been articulated in the literature. It is described as the organization's capacity to attain superior levels that surpass those of other organizations by delivering preferred goods and services. It is characterized as a system wherein the advantages surpass those of competitors, founded on the value the business has generated to provide it to the consumer efficiently (Hill & Jones, 2001: 43). To comprehensively grasp the notion of sustainable competitive advantage, it is essential to delineate the components that constitute the concept: advantage, competitiveness, and sustainability. Advantage is defined as all outcomes derived from the efforts of companies in terms of service or benefit. Competitiveness is defined as the attributes that differentiate a company from its counterparts. Sustainability is characterized as that which can be maintained (Al-Fadel & Al-Naimi, 2018: 227). According to (Hussein, 2020: 11)Sustainable Competitive Advantage is the enduring advantage of attaining a distinctive value that surpasses both present and prospective competition while remaining inimitable. (Ismail & Mohamed, 2021: 107) characterized it as the domains where the organization may surpass its competition, including excellence in manufacturing, marketing, finance, or human resources. Competitive advantage is contingent upon the outcomes of the possibilities and dangers present in the organization's environment relative to its competitors. (Al-Kshak, et al., 2022: 53)elucidated that sustainable competitive advantage comprises the distinctive qualities and characteristics inherent to an organization, which it strives to preserve for an extended duration, thereby enabling superior performance relative to competitors due to the challenges associated with imitation. (Nyuga & Tanova, 2024: 12) delineated Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA) refers to a firm's capacity to sustain superior performance relative to competitors by leveraging unique resources and competencies that are difficult to reproduce. The research explicitly examines the influence of cultural values and entrepreneurial innovativeness on sustainable competitive advantage among Malaysian ethnic entrepreneurs. (Poulova, et al., 2024: 5) Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA) is characterized by the impact of cultural values and entrepreneurial innovation on the performance of ethnic entrepreneurs in Malaysia. The authors propose that

sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is attained when companies effectively generate distinctive innovations that enable them to surpass their rivals over an extended period. The research highlights that innovation-driven initiatives, commonly associated with an innovative culture, substantially enhance a company's long-term performance and sustained competitive edge. (Hill T., 2009: 38) underscores that the significance of sustainable competitive advantage centers on the following aspects:

- ❖ sustainable competitive advantage signifies an organization's capabilities by achieving a dominant position and possessing a greater market share than its rivals, together with the capacity to keep existing consumers and attract new ones.
- ❖ The firm may leverage its competitive edge to confront market problems and competitors by continuously enhancing its capabilities, hence becoming more adept at investing in quasi-opportunities. C- Competitive advantage is the most precise metric for assessing success, characterized by its unwavering conviction that today's performance must surpass that of yesterday, and tomorrow's accomplishments must exceed today's.

2-2-2. Dimension of Sustainable Competitive Advantage: Alwan (2021) asserted that numerous elements contribute to the development and maintenance of sustainable competitive advantage, which are its dimensions. He identified three factors that contribute to establishing competitive advantages: efficiency, quality, and responsiveness to customer needs. These elements serve as the foundational pillars of competitive advantage construction, applicable to any organization irrespective of its sector (Alwan, 2021: 1083). (Salih, 2017: 155)has articulated the three elements of sustainable competitive advantage: cost leadership, differentiation, and focus, which have been embraced by several firms and have attained success across various sectors in both service and industrial domains. Consequently, the researchers utilized the four characteristics of cost leadership, distinguished quality, distinguished efficiency, and flexibility (distinguished reaction) to tailor these dimensions to the present study.

- ❖ **Excellence in cost leadership:** The cost leadership strategy focuses on minimizing product costs to the lowest feasible extent while maintaining productivity and quality standards. This can be accomplished by enhancing the experience levels of all employees and prioritizing learning as the optimal investment of the organization's resources, serving as a foundational

element for executing this strategy. Additionally, it is essential to emphasize production efficiency to attain maximum productivity at minimal costs, while leveraging advanced manufacturing capabilities, machinery, and equipment. Continuous efforts to minimize costs across production, expenses, advertising, and after-sales services will endow the organization with distinctive competitive advantages, particularly when its costs are lower than those of its competitors (Macmillam & Tampoe, 2001, 38). The (Salih, 2017: 156) posits that while cost leadership appears attainable, it necessitates exceptional proficiency in attaining the lowest costs, particularly the intangible ones, as managing quality costs represents the most challenging and precise avenue for cost leadership amidst intensifying competition.

- **Exemplary Quality**: Quality denotes the degree of emphasis on enhancing manufacturing processes and activities to augment client happiness and product reliability (Mardatillah, et al., 2021: 235). The notion of quality entails aligning product and service specifications with management-established standards that fulfill the requirements and preferences of various consumer segments (Knudsen, et al., 2021: 369). To sustain market presence, the organization must implement a system that guarantees the ongoing provision of high-quality information. To preserve competitiveness, it is essential to identify methods for enhancing information quality without escalating costs. Achieving this quality necessitates the utilization of advanced information technology and the refinement of processes through improved management and effective training (Al-Shuwayat, 2019: 84)
- **Distinguished efficiency:** denotes the optimal utilization of a company's resources to generate outputs whose value above that of the inputs employed in their production. The efficiency of an organization is assessed by the reduction in inputs necessary to generate specified outputs, as efficiency underpins the long-term sustainability of the company's operations and facilitates the achievement of particular objectives such as profit and innovation (Al-Shuwayat, 2019: 84). (Ismail & Mohamed, 2021:108) assert that efficiency entails the capacity to consistently adapt to the environment and thrive within it, achieved through the systematic and effective utilization of available resources, workforce training, and skill enhancement to augment individual productivity.
- **A distinctive response to customer needs**: is demonstrated by satisfying customers' needs and desires in terms of the quality of the goods and services

offered, considering the significance of time and adaptability in addressing factors associated with varying customer preferences, and depending on offering goods and services that surpass competitors in terms of delivering the expected value for customers (Abu Al-Haija, 2020: 76). Addressing customer inquiries and fulfilling their requirements is a critical metric for evaluating organizational performance, as acquiring customers and securing their loyalty is the primary objective of competing entities. To achieve superior responsiveness to customers, an organization must excel beyond its rivals in recognizing and addressing customer preferences, thereby enhancing product value for the consumer and fostering a competitive advantage ((Al-Shuwayat, 2019: 85) (Doğru, 2021: 74)).

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3-1. Research Design: This research is considered to be both analytical and descriptive. It uses a quantitative method to address the issues raised by earlier studies and seeks to understand how marketing automation affects sustainable competitive advantage. A literature review is the initial stage in developing a model for the topic. Expert interviews and a review of the literature are done before developing the questionnaire that will be used to collect the data for this project. Executives from Erbil's five-star hotel industry then provided information in response to a questionnaire. After collection, the data was analyzed and coded using SPSS. Normality, validity, and reliability were then assessed, as well as the correlations between the variables. Lastly, the sub-hypothesis was tested using multiple regressions.

3-2. Study Population, Sample, and Unit of Analysis: Leaders from Erbil's five-star hotels make up the study's population. 160 surveys were sent to executives of five-star hotel companies. All of them are employed in statistical analysis.

3-3. Data Collection Methods: The data collected for this study was divided into two categories: primary data and secondary data.

Secondary information Secondary data was gathered from a range of sources, including journals, working papers, research, theses, publications, and the Internet.

First information: A questionnaire developed based on previous research and expert opinions was used to collect primary data for this investigation.

3-4. Normal Distribution Test: Table (3.1) below shows the estimated values of Cronbach's coefficient, which is used to assess the internal

consistency of the measurement. Marketing automation scores 0.731, sustainable competitive advantage scores 0.834, and the sum of all independent factors scores 0.885, according to Cronbach's alpha. All constructions passed the reliability test, as shown in Table 4, with all -values exceeding the recommended minimum Cronbach's alpha value.

Table 3.1: Measurement accuracy for all variables

Variables	Number of questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Marketing automation	15	0.731
Strategic sovereignty	20	0.834
Overall	35	0.885

Source: The table was prepared by the researchers

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Result

First/describe the research variables

1. **Describe the variables of Marketing Automation:** Since the percentages and overall index indicate that 74.82 percent of the respondents agree with the content of these statements, which is supported by the arithmetic mean (3.74) and standard deviation, the data in table (4.1) displays the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the responses to the statements (x15-x1) describing the research sample's opinions on the Marketing Automation variable, which tend to agree and at good levels. The following dimensions are included in this variable:

Description of the Electronic customer satisfaction dimension: According to the percentages and overall index, 75.48 percent of the respondents agree with the statements (x5–x1) that describe their opinions about the electronic customer satisfaction characteristic. The data in table (4.1) displays the arithmetic means and standard deviation of the responses to these statements. The substance of these utterances had a standard deviation of 1.01 and a mean of 3.77. The availability of the electronic customer satisfaction factor is the subject of this preliminary finding. With a mean of (4.61) and a standard deviation of (0.489), the phrase (X1) had the highest percentage of agreement for this attribute at the phrase level, reaching 92.25%. At the level of statements for a property, statement (x2) had the lowest percentage of agreement (68%), with a mean of (3.4) and a standard deviation of (1.011).

Description of the Organizational structural dimension: The arithmetic means and standard deviations of the responses to the statements (x10-x6) describing the respondents' opinions about organizational structural characteristics are displayed in table (4.1). The percentages and overall index indicate that 74.50 percent of the respondents agree on these statements, indicating that the respondents' opinions tend to agree at high levels. The substance of these utterances had a standard deviation of 0.85 and a mean of 3.73. This is a preliminary finding about the analyzed groups' availability of organizational structures at high levels. At the level of statements for this feature, the statement (x6) had the highest percentage of agreement (83.25%), with an arithmetic mean of 3.73. From the viewpoint of the sample's participants, the variance obtained validates the relevance of this statement. The term "what" has a standard value of (0.653), which attests to its positive relevance and level of phrases in the organizational structural dimension. With an arithmetic mean of 3.33 and a standard deviation of 1.224, the level of expressions for the organizational structure feature, such as expressions (x10), had the lowest percentage of agreement (66.50).

- **Description of marketing operations techniques dimension:** Since the percentages and overall index indicate that 74.48 percent of the respondents agree with the content of the statements (x15-x11) describing the respondents' opinions regarding the marketing operations techniques dimension, the data in table (4.1) displays the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the responses to these statements. The arithmetic mean (3.72) and standard deviation (1.07) support this. This indicates that marketing operations techniques are available in the researched categories and at good levels.

With an arithmetic mean of 3.78, the phrase (x12) had the highest percentage of agreement on the level of phrases for this characteristic (78.13%), confirming the significance of this phrase from the sample individuals' point of view and showing that hotels heavily utilize electronic devices and information technology. At the level of phrases of the marketing operations techniques dimension, the standard deviation of the aforementioned phrase was (1.008), supporting its positive relevance.

At the level of statements for the marketing operations techniques feature, the statement (x14), which said that hotel maintenance is offering internet services, had the lowest proportion of agreement (71.13%) with an

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arithmetic mean of (3.56). The importance of the respondents' responses to the aforementioned statement was confirmed by using the standard deviation (1.331) to assess the worth of these claims from the respondents' point of view.

Table (4.1): Frequency distributions, percentages, arithmetic means, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation for respondents' answers regarding the Marketing Automation variable

Marketing Automation	feries	strongly agree 5		Agree 4		Not sure 3		Don't agree 2		strongly disagree 1		Mean	S.d	coefficient of variation	Agreement rate (%)
		Repetition	%	Repetition	%	Repetition	%	Repetition	%	Repetition	%				
Electronic customer satisfaction	X1	98	61.25	62	38.75	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	4.61	0.489	10.60	92.25
	X2	38	23.75	12	7.50	86	53.75	24	15.00	0	0.00	3.40	1.011	29.74	68.00
	X3	24	15.00	89	55.63	13	8.13	34	21.25	0	0.00	3.64	0.980	26.90	72.88
	X4	62	38.75	62	38.75	0	0.00	13	8.13	23	14.38	3.79	1.406	37.06	75.88
	X5	34	21.25	36	22.50	66	41.25	11	6.88	13	8.13	3.42	1.141	33.37	68.38
Average		32.00		32.63		20.63		10.25		4.50		3.77	1.01	27.53	75.48
		64.63						14.75							
Organizational structure	X6	49	30.63	88	55.00	23	14.38	0	0.00	0	0.00	4.16	0.653	15.69	83.25
	X7	37	23.13	86	53.75	26	16.25	11	6.88	0	0.00	3.93	0.817	20.78	78.63
	X8	24	15.00	77	48.13	59	36.88	0	0.00	0	0.00	3.78	0.688	18.20	75.63
	X9	14	8.75	63	39.38	60	37.50	23	14.38	0	0.00	3.43	0.843	24.61	68.50
	X10	36	22.50	38	23.75	39	24.38	36	22.50	11	6.88	3.33	1.242	37.35	66.50
Average		20.00		44.00		25.88		8.75		1.38		3.73	0.85	23.33	74.50
		64.00						10.13							
marketing operations technicques	X11	70	43.75	42	26.25	24	15.00	0	0.00	24	15.00	3.84	1.387	36.14	76.75
	X12	61	38.13	36	22.50	50	31.25	13	8.13	0	0.00	3.91	1.008	25.80	78.13
	X13	11	6.88	88	55.00	50	31.25	11	6.88	0	0.00	3.62	0.717	19.81	72.38
	X14	49	30.63	39	24.38	48	30.00	0	0.00	24	15.00	3.56	1.331	37.43	71.13
	X15	23	14.38	77	48.13	49	30.63	11	6.88	0	0.00	3.70	0.799	21.59	74.00
Average		26.75		35.25		27.63		4.38		6.00		3.72	1.05	28.16	74.48
		62.00						10.38							

Source: The table was prepared by the researchers

2. **Description of sustainable competitive advantage:** With an arithmetic mean of (3.96) and a standard deviation of (0.915), the results in Table (4.2) demonstrate that the total responses of respondents to this variable via the phrases (Y20-Y1) indicate that this variable is available at a good level, confirming the percentage of agreement (79.17%). This indicates that most respondents think that strategic masters exist and that people are generally good. The following were the findings for the partial level (dimensions) of this variable:

The Excellence in cost leadership: The statistical data summarizing respondents' perceptions of the Cost attribute is shown in Table (4.2). The findings indicate that respondents generally tended to agree with the

statements (Y5-Y1). More specifically, the total index showed that 73.23% of respondents agreed. These responses had a mean of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 0.89. This implies that the groups polled had a generally favorable opinion of the scope of impact dimension. Out of all the statements, statement (Y1) had the highest degree of agreement, with 87.50 percent of respondents agreeing. This statement had a mean score of 4.38 and a standard deviation of 0.89. Conversely, statement (Y5) had the lowest degree of agreement, with 65.63% of respondents agreeing. This statement had a mean score of 3.28 and a standard deviation of (1.4111).

Distinguished efficiency: The results presented in Table (4.2) indicate that the answers of the respondents at the aggregate level regarding this variable through the phrases (Y6-Y10) indicate that this variable is available at a good level, confirming the percentage of agreement (77.15%), with an arithmetic mean of (3.86) and a standard deviation of (0.93) This confirms that the respondents agree that competitive compression exists at a good level.

As for the highest partial level, each statement (Y6) obtained the highest value with an agreement rate of (89.50%), an arithmetic mean (4.48), and a standard deviation (0.634). The lowest percentage of agreement at the level of phrases for this dimension is for the phrase (Y10), which reached (67.13%), with a mean of (3.36), and a standard deviation of (1.066).

A distinctive response: As the percentages and overall index show that (78.20%) of the respondents agree on the content, the data in table (4.2) shows the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the responses to the statements (Y11-Y15) describing the respondents' opinions regarding the competitive configuration dimension, which tend to agree at good levels. These words. The arithmetic mean (3.91) and standard deviation (0.96) support this. This is a preliminary finding about the competitive configuration dimension's good level of availability in the categories under study.

The phrase (Y11) had the highest percentage of agreement on the level of phrases for this characteristic, at 89.38%, with an arithmetic mean of 4.47. This suggests that the hotels have a solid rapport with their patrons. To verify this phrase's significance from the perspective of the sample participants, it reached the aforementioned phrase's good relevance is confirmed by its standard deviation of (0.831), which is at the level of phrases after flexibility. With an arithmetic mean of 3.57, the phrase (Y14) had the lowest percentage

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of agreement at the phrase level for the flexibility feature, reaching 71.38%. The standard deviation (1.007) was eliminated to verify the relevance of the respondents' responses concerning the aforementioned statement, so confirming the importance of these assertions from their perspective.

Exemplary Quality: According to the results shown in Table (4.2), the respondents' overall responses about this variable using the phrases (Y16–Y20) show that it is available at a good level, supporting the 84.13% agreement rate. The arithmetic mean of (4.21) and the standard deviation of (0.88) demonstrate that the respondents concur that there is excellent quality present. With an arithmetic mean of 4.68, a standard deviation of 0.470, and an agreement rate of 93.50%, each statement (Y16) achieved the highest value for the highest partial level. With a mean of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 0.839, the phrase (Y18) had the lowest percentage of agreement at the phrase level for this dimension, reaching 78.38%.

Table (4.2): Frequency distributions, percentages, arithmetic means, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation for respondents' answers regarding the sustainable competitive advantage variable

[illegible]	feries	strongly agree 5		Agree 4		Not sure 3		Don't agree 2		strongly disagree 1		Mean	S.d	coefficient of variation	Agreement rate (%)
		Repetition	%	Repetition	%	Repetition	%	Repetition	%	Repetition	%				
cost	Y1	84	52.50	52	32.50	24	15.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	4.38	0.733	16.75	87.50
	Y2	24	15.00	76	47.50	49	30.63	11	6.88	0	0.00	3.71	0.806	21.75	74.13
	Y3	11	6.88	112	70.00	26	16.25	11	6.88	0	0.00	3.77	0.675	17.91	75.38
	Y4	62	38.75	75	46.88	12	7.50	11	6.88	0	0.00	4.18	0.843	20.19	83.50
	Y5	37	23.13	41	25.63	47	29.38	0	0.00	35	21.88	3.28	1.411	43.00	65.63
Average		27.25		44.50		19.75		4.13		4.38		3.86	0.89	23.92	77.23
		71.75						8.50							
outstanding efficiency	Y6	88	55.00	60	37.50	12	7.50	0	0.00	0	0.00	4.48	0.634	14.17	89.50
	Y7	50	31.25	87	54.38	23	14.38	0	0.00	0	0.00	4.17	0.656	15.74	83.38
	Y8	49	30.63	38	23.75	49	30.63	24	15.00	0	0.00	3.70	1.063	28.73	74.00
	Y9	48	30.00	49	30.63	12	7.50	51	31.88	0	0.00	3.59	1.220	34.01	71.75
	Y10	24	15.00	46	28.75	64	40.00	15	9.38	11	6.88	3.36	1.066	31.76	67.13
Average		32.38		35.00		20.00		11.25		1.38		3.86	0.93	24.88	77.15
		67.38						12.63							
flexibility	Y11	110	68.75	15	9.38	35	21.88	0	0.00	0	0.00	4.47	0.831	18.60	89.38
	Y12	49	30.63	75	46.88	36	22.50	0	0.00	0	0.00	4.08	0.727	17.81	81.63
	Y13	61	38.13	38	23.75	48	30.00	0	0.00	13	8.13	3.84	1.181	30.78	76.75
	Y14	38	23.75	38	23.75	61	38.13	23	14.38	0	0.00	3.57	1.007	28.22	71.38
	Y15	39	24.38	39	24.38	71	44.38	0	0.00	11	6.88	3.59	1.072	29.83	71.88
Average		37.13		25.63		31.38		2.88		3.00		3.91	0.96	25.05	78.20
		62.75						5.88							
outstanding quality	Y16	108	67.50	52	32.50	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	4.68	0.470	10.05	93.50
	Y17	62	38.75	87	54.38	0	0.00	13	8.13	0	0.00	4.28	0.777	18.18	85.50
	Y18	37	23.13	86	53.75	24	15.00	13	8.13	0	0.00	3.92	0.839	21.41	78.38
	Y19	61	38.13	62	38.75	26	16.25	11	6.88	0	0.00	4.08	0.904	22.15	81.63
	Y20	97	60.63	27	16.88	12	7.50	0	0.00	24	15.00	4.08	1.427	34.96	81.63
Average		45.63		39.25		7.75		4.63		3.00		4.21	0.88	21.35	84.13
		84.88						7.63							

Source: The table was prepared by the researchers

Second: Testing the research model and its hypothesis

Testing and analyzing the hypothesis of relationships: The first major premise of the correlation hypothesis, which holds that "there is a significant correlation between Marketing Automation and sustainably competitive advantage," is what we try to evaluate in this paragraph. The association between research variables and descriptive data was determined using the Spearman method's simple and multiple correlation coefficient. The validity of this hypothesis will be confirmed in the manner described below:

Correlation by overall index: As the correlation coefficient between the Marketing Automation variable and the sustainable competitive advantage variable reached a value of 0.598**, the results of the correlation analysis between the two research variables and the overall index displayed in Table (4.3) indicated that there is a significant correlation between these variables at the indicator level and high levels. and at a significant level (0.000), since this finding demonstrates a robust correlation between the two variables, indicating that a greater reliance on Marketing Automation by the hotel leaders surveyed results in a more sustainable competitive advantage.

Table (4.3): of the correlation between intellectual capital and sustain able competitive advantage

dependent variable / Independent variable	sustain able competitive advantage	current value	statistical decision
Marketing Automation	0.598**	0.000	highly significant

Source: Strong morale when you are ≤sig. N=160

The table was prepared by the researchers

Testing and analyzing the impact hypothesis: The third major hypothesis, according to which there is a statistically significant relationship between Marketing Automation and sustainable competitive advantage in five-star hotels in Erbil, is tested in this paragraph. Here, I determine the impact of the independent variable (marketing automation) on the dependent variable (sustainable competitive advantage) using the simple regression coefficient (enter), one of the instruments for appropriate statistics. The following will be used to confirm the validity of this theory and its implications:

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The calculated level of significance value (P-value) is 0.000, which is significantly lower than the hypothetical level of significance adopted by the study (0.05). This is supported by the calculated (F) value (276.865) at two degrees of freedom (159) and with a probability value (0.000), which is a highly significant value at a significant level (0.00). The explanatory value of Marketing Automation in what happens to provide sustainable competitive advantage reached 63.6%, with the remaining percentage (79.8%) being due to other factors not included in the hypothetical model adopted in the current study. Table (4.4) shows that there is a significant effect of electronic polarization in providing job opportunities at the overall index level. The coefficient (B0) value, which came to 0.798, shows that job prospects are emerging through its ways at a level of 0.934, which is when the value of Marketing Automation through its dimensions equals zero. As a result, this finding supports the third major hypothesis, according to which marketing automation and sustainable competitive advantage are positively correlated.

Table (4.4): The effect of Marketing Automation on sustainable competitive advantage at the total level

sustain able competitive advantage				**dependent variable** / **Independent variable**
R^2	**F**	**B1**	**consonant -B**	
%63.6	(276.4) sig(0.000)	(0.798) t(16.625) sig(0.000)	0.934) t(5.100) sig(0.000)	Marketing Automation

Source: The table was prepared by the researchers

As for the sub-hypotheses of the third main hypothesis:

The first sub-hypothesis Given that the calculated level of significance (p-value) was 0.000, which is less than the value of the hypothetical level of significance that the study adopted (0.05), it is evident from Table (4.5) that the cost dimension had a significant impact on the responding or independent variable (marketing automation). The (F) value of 50.222, which shows a significant effect at the threshold of 0.05, supports this. This finding suggests that the cost dimension of the Marketing Automation variable, which shows how dependent managers in the hotels surveyed are on having high levels of Marketing Automation, has an impact on the analysis's findings, which show

the following: According to the regression equation, when the value of the cost dimension and all of its dimensions equal zero, the value of the constant (B0), which equals (0.491), suggests a good emergence of Marketing Automation, which equals (1.862). This finding can therefore be viewed as supporting the first sub-hypothesis, according to which there is a significant correlation between the cost dimension and marketing automation.

Regarding the value of (R2), it came to (0.491), meaning that the cost accounts for 49.1% of the change in Marketing Automation. This finding also suggests that elements not included by the fictitious model used in the current study account for the remaining significant percentage of 50.9%. The first sub-hypothesis, which ensures that there is a positive correlation between Marketing Automation and the cost dimension, is validated by these findings.

Table (4.5): The effect of Marketing Automation on the cost dimension

Cost				dependent variable / Independent variable
R^2	F	B1	consonant - B	
%49.1	(50.222) sig(0.000)	(0.491) t(7.087) sig(0.000)	(1.862) t(6.554) sig(0.000)	Marketing Automation

Source: The table was prepared by the researchers

The Second sub-hypothesis: Since the calculated level of significance (p-value) was 0.000, which is less than the value of the hypothetical level of significance adopted by the study (0.05), it is evident from Table (4.5) that there was no significant effect of the outstanding efficiency dimension on the responsive or independent variable (Marketing Automation). The value of (F) equal to (99.274), which shows the significance of the effect at the level of (0.05), supports this. Based on this finding, it can be said that the marketing automation variable and the outstanding efficiency dimension have a significant relationship, indicating that managers in the hotels surveyed rely heavily on offering marketing automation. The analysis's findings show the following:

According to the regression equation, when the value of the remarkable efficiency dimension and all of its dimensions equals zero, the value of the constant (B0), which equals (0.621), indicates a high emergence

of Marketing Automation, which equals (0.925). Thus, the second sub-hypothesis, according to which there is a significant correlation between marketing automation and the exceptional efficiency dimension, can be accepted in order to interpret this finding.

The remarkable efficiency component is responsible for 62.1% of the change in marketing automation, according to the value of (R2), which reached 0.621. This finding also suggests that other influential elements included in the hypothetical model used in the current study are responsible for the remaining influential percentage, which comes to 37.9%.

Table (4.5): The effect of marketing automation on the competitive compression dimension

outstanding efficiency				dependent variable / Independent variable
R^2	F	B1	B-الثابت	
%62.1	(99.274) sig(0.000)	(0.621) t(9.964) sig(0.000)	(0.925) t(3.119) sig(0.002)	Marketing automation

Source: Table prepared by the researchers

The third sub-hypothesis: The results in Table (4.6) indicate that the flexibility dimension significantly influenced the dependent variable, Marketing automation. The estimated p-value of 0.000, which is below the study's established significance criterion of 0.05, substantiates this finding. The (F) value of (119.742) corroborates this, indicating the effect's significance at the (0.05) level. This indicates that managers in the studied hotels are inclined to offer marketing automation at an elevated level.

Upon analyzing the regression equation, the constant value (B0) of 0.661 indicates a minimal occurrence of marketing automation (0.657) when the flexibility dimension and its associated dimensions are absent. As a result, this finding supports the acceptance of the third sub-hypothesis, which asserts a significant association between marketing automation and the flexibility dimension.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R2) stands at (0.657), denoting that (65.7%) of the variance in marketing automation can be attributed to the flexibility dimension. This implies that the remaining (34.3%) of the influence on marketing automation stems from unaccounted factors considered in the research model.

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Table (4.6): The effect of Marketing automation on flexibility dimension

Flexibility				dependent variable / Independent variable
R^2	F	B1	B-الثابت	
%65.7	(119.742) sig(0.000)	(0.657) t(10.943) sig(0.000)	(0.661) t(2.208) sig(0.029)	Marketing automation

Source: Table prepared by the researchers

The fourth sub-hypothesis Table (4.8) indicates a significant impact of the Outstanding quality dimension on the independent variable (Marketing Automation), as the calculated p-value (0.000) is below the study's established significance threshold (0.05). The (F) value of (246.432) substantiates a significant effect at the (0.05) level. The results indicate a significant relationship between the Outstanding quality dimension of the Marketing Automation variable, reflecting the surveyed hotel managers' reliance on delivering high-quality Marketing Automation. The analysis yields the following conclusions.

According to the regression equation, the constant value (B0) of 0.781 signifies a favorable emergence of Marketing Automation, quantified at 0.290, when the Outstanding quality dimension and its subdimensions are equal to zero. This finding substantiates the first sub-hypothesis, indicating a significant link between Marketing Automation and the Outstanding quality dimension.

The value of (R2) is (0.609), indicating that (60.9%) of the variation in Marketing Automation is attributable to Outstanding quality. This outcome further suggests that the residual influential percentage of 39.1% is attributable to elements not encompassed within the hypothetical model utilized in this study. The results substantiate the validity of the fourth sub-hypothesis, which ensures a positive correlation between Marketing Automation and the Outstanding quality dimension.

Table (4.6): The effect of Marketing automation on Outstanding quality dimension

Outstanding quality				dependent variable / Independent variable
R^2	F	B1	B-الثابت	
%60.9	(246.432) sig(0.000)	(0.290) t(1.153) sig(0.251)	(0.781) t(15.698) sig(0.000)	Marketing automation

Source: Table prepared by the researchers

Conclusions:

1. Marketing automation has demonstrated its significance as an essential instrument for attaining a lasting competitive advantage for five-star hotels.
2. The affirmation of all assumptions and the existence of robust relationships suggest that marketing automation substantially improves consumer engagement, operational efficiency, and decision-making processes. By facilitating individualized communication, optimizing marketing strategies, and successfully leveraging data insights, five-star hotels may cultivate outstanding customer experiences and promote enduring loyalty.
3. These talents not only distinguish them from competitors but also guarantee sustained growth and profitability in a fiercely competitive business.
4. Marketing automation significantly enhances sustainable competitive advantage by improving customer engagement, streamlining operations, and enabling data-driven marketing strategies.
5. Five-star hotels utilizing marketing automation tools demonstrate greater efficiency in campaign management, higher customer retention, and stronger brand positioning.
6. Personalization and customer data analysis, made possible through automation, allow hotels to deliver tailored experiences, boosting guest satisfaction and loyalty.
7. Successful implementation of marketing automation requires strategic alignment, investment in technology, and skilled personnel to manage and optimize its use.
8. Marketing automation is not a standalone solution; it is most effective when integrated with CRM and hotel management systems to create a seamless customer journey.

Recommendations

1 Five-star hotels must prioritize the adoption and integration of advanced marketing automation tools to optimize operations, improve customer targeting, and provide tailored guest experiences.

2 Augment Staff Training: Guarantee that hotel personnel are sufficiently prepared to proficiently employ marketing automation solutions. This will optimize the advantages of the technology and guarantee smooth integration across marketing initiatives.

3 Formulate Tailored Marketing Campaigns: Employ automation to create campaigns that align with individual guest preferences, hence improving satisfaction, retention, and brand loyalty.

4 Ongoing Assessment and Enhancement: Consistently analyze the efficacy of automated marketing techniques and implement modifications informed by client feedback and analytics to maintain competitiveness in a fluctuating market.

5 Implement Automation Throughout Departments: Broaden the advantages of marketing automation to encompass operations, sales, and customer service for a cohesive and effective strategy in enhancing visitor happiness.

6 Enhance Sustainability Initiatives: Integrate marketing automation into sustainability initiatives by advocating for eco-friendly practices, enhancing resource efficiency, and conveying these efforts to guests to coincide with global trends.

7 Utilize Real-Time Customer Engagement: Employ automation to swiftly address client inquiries and requirements, delivering seamless service experiences that cultivate enduring relationships

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