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## Article

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# An examination of customer loyalty and customer participation in the service recovery process in the Pakistani hotel industry: A pitch

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**Abstract:** This pitch research letter (PRL) applies the pitch template developed by Faff (2015) to an academic project on customer loyalty and customer participation in the service recovery process in the hotel industry of Pakistan. The pitch template helped the pitchers to identify the core elements that form the framework of the research project. This PRL provides a brief background about the pitchers and pitch, followed by a brief commentary on the pitch and personal reflections of the pitcher on the pitch exercise itself.

**Keywords:** Pitching research, services marketing, service recovery process, hotel industry, Pakistan

**JEL codes:** L83

## 1. Introduction

This letter is a discussion of the application of the pitch template developed by Faff (2015), which is readily adaptable in many fields including business studies, physics, mathematics, computer science, humor, organic chemistry, phytology, pharmacy, philosophy. I am the second author currently doing Master of Business Administration (MBA) (leading to MPhil) with a marketing specialization at the University of the Punjab, Pakistan. In the first semester of the MBA, Prof. Ahmad

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Ashraf (first author), my course instructor of services marketing, encouraged me to explore the dynamic field of research, assigning me the topic of “An examination of the parts of customer loyalty and customer participation in process of service recovery”. As it was my first practical experience of academic research writing, so I faced many problems and difficulties. Fortunately, in March 2016, my course instructor arranged a “Pitching Research” seminar. In this seminar, Searat Ali (PhD Candidate, Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics, Griffith Business School) thoroughly explained Faff’s (2015) Pitching Research template. This 3 to 4 hours session about pitching research gave me a new tool with which to explore research.

I and my coauthor have found this pitch template to be, as suggested by Faff (2015), a ‘simple and systematic approach’ to organizing research ideas. The template focuses ideas into key areas, giving clear and concise direction in planning and structuring the research idea.

The remainder of this pitch letter is organized as follows. Section 2 contains a brief commentary on the completed pitch. Section 3 offers personal reflections on the exercise of completing the pitch, and section 4 concludes the pitch letter.

## **2. Brief commentary on the application of the pitch template**

The initial pitch template was completed over a period of one week, which was then work-shopped with other academics, updated and completed within two weeks. During that time, we spent approximately 15 hours together and 10 hours individually working on the pitch, which included meeting with several academics to discuss various elements and refining the written version of the pitch. Table 1 shows the completed pitch template for the research project. Section (A) describes the working title: “An examination of customer loyalty and customer participation in the service recovery process in the Pakistani hotel industry”.

**Table 1. Completed 2-page pitch template on services marketing**

Pitcher's Name	Hafiz Ahmad Ashraf and Nauman Manzoor	FoR category	Services Marketing	Date Completed	10th August 2016
(A) Working Title	"An examination of customer loyalty and customer participation in the service recovery process in the Pakistani hotel industry"				
(B) Basic Research Question	Does the nature of the relationship really matter?				
(C) Key paper(s)	Grönroos, C. & Voima, P. (2013) "Critical service logic: Making sense of value creation and co-creation", <i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i> , vol. 41, no. 2: 133–150 Kandampully, J., Zhang, T. & Bilgihan, A. (2015) "Customer loyalty: A review and future directions with a special focus on the hospitality industry", <i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i> , vol. 27, no. 3: 379–414 Cambra-Fierro, J., Melero-Polo, I. & Sese, J. (2015) "Does the nature of the relationship really matter? An analysis of the roles of loyalty and involvement in service recovery processes", <i>Service Business</i> , vol. 9, no. 2: 297–320				
(D) Motivation/Puzzle	There is no research work done on the growing hotel industry in Pakistan especially in the service recovery process when service-based employees fail to perform. According to Gardezi (2014) the hotel industry in Pakistan shows gradual growth since 2012 and in the first quarter of 2014, the growth rate was 7% more than the corresponding previous year. The local hotel industry contributes about 20% to GDP.				
THREE	<b>Three</b> core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the " <b>IDioTs</b> " guide				
(E) Idea?	The core idea is to identify the moderating effect of customer loyalty and customer participation in the service recovery process in the hotel industry of Pakistan, with perceived effort and perceived fairness as independent variables. <b>Central hypothesis:</b> Customer loyalty and customer participation enhance the customer satisfaction in the service recovery process. <b>Theoretical "tension":</b> exploit the service recovery process when one firm fails to perform the services.				
(F) Data?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Country/setting:</b> Pakistan because hotel industry is increasing day by day in Pakistan.</li> <li>2) <b>Unit of analysis:</b> individuals. <b>Sampling:</b> random sampling technique</li> <li>3) Expected <b>sample size:</b> cross sectional study and rule of 10 is used for calculating sample size that is 220. <b>Time frame:</b> 3 months, 1<sup>st</sup> January to March 31, 2016.</li> <li>4) Data <b>source:</b> data collection through previously accepted instrument; Research <b>assistance</b> needed?: "minor" assistance; Funding/<b>grants</b>?: not essential for viability, but potential opportunities.</li> <li>5) Standard data – nothing novel, high <b>quality</b> data collected from questionnaire.</li> </ol>				

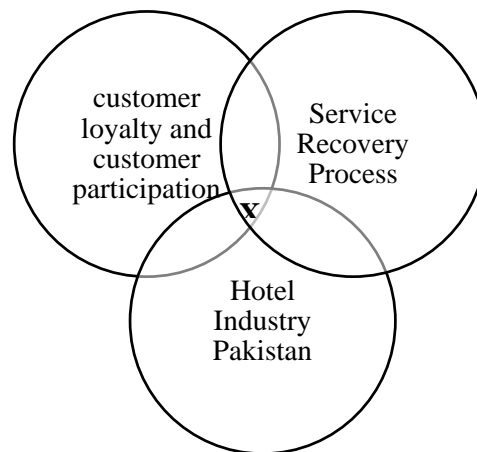
Pitcher's Name	Hafiz Ahmad Ashraf and Nauman Manzoor	FoR category	Services Marketing	Date Completed	10th August 2016
	6) Will there be any problem with <b>missing data</b> /observations? Nothing major, just standard issues – work through carefully.				
	7) Will your <b>test variables</b> exhibit adequate (“meaningful”) <b>variation</b> to give good power?: yes, since “blending” variables used in prior literature.				
(G) Tools?	Basic <b>empirical framework</b> : regression model approach focusing on partial adjustment, standard in the literature. Variable and linear modelling is used.				
	Econometric <b>software</b> needed/appropriate for job? IBM SPSS – licenses held for students.				
	Knowledge of <b>implementation</b> of appropriate or best statistical/econometric tests?: yes				
	<b>Compatibility</b> of data with planned empirical framework?: yes, building on rich recent empirical literature applying similar models				
TWO	<b>Two</b> key questions				
(H) What's New?	<b>IDEA</b> is novel – there is no work on service recovery in hotel industry. IDEA is the “driver”, and data/tools are the “passengers”: first time data are collected from the complainant that is registered by the firm and data are collected from adult individuals. <b>Data/Tools are STRONG passengers. Mickey Mouse/ Venn diagram.</b> Yes as shown in Figure 1.				
(I) So What?	The result of this research will be very important for the hotel industry regarding customer satisfaction. It also assessed the relationship theory of marketing in service sector. Clarifying the role of customer loyalty and customer participation towards customer satisfaction will be insightful for practice.				
ONE	<b>One</b> bottom line				
(J) Contribution?	The relevant contribution in literature is to critically assess the theory of relationship marketing, through empirical testing.				
	It will improve the service recovery process of hotel industry and also enhance the customer relationship management.				
(K) Other Considerations	<b>Target Journal(s)?</b>				
	1. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management				
	2. Journal of Services Marketing				
	3. Journal of Consumer Market				
	Realistic? It is real consideration that will be help in service sector.				
	<b>“Risk”</b> assessment: “no result” risk: LOW				

Confirming Faff's (2016) predictions, this pitch was completed in a 'non-linear' manner. This was largely due to the fact that the exercise of completing the pitch template began initially as a hypothetical exercise to satisfy the second author's personal curiosity as to whether we thought the tool was a worthwhile device that we could use for future research projects. This completed pitch has now morphed into a fledgling project, and we now working on completing the research project based on the pitch. Section (B) reveals the basic research question, that is: Does the nature of the relationship really matter? Section (C) cites the three key papers: Cambra-Fierro *et al.* (2014); Grönroos & Voima (2013); and Kandampully *et al.* (2015).

Section (D) is about motivation or puzzle related to our research work. There is no prior research done on the growing hotel industry in Pakistan especially in service recovery process, when employees fail to perform service as so many complaints are registered daily in this industry. According to Gardezi (2014), the hotel industry in Pakistan showed gradual growth since 2012 and, in the first quarter of 2014, the growth rate was 7% more than the corresponding previous year, which is encouraging. Moreover, the hotel industry contributes about 20% to Pakistan GDP.

There are three core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the “**IDioTs**” guide. Idea, data and tools are the most important in academic research and it can often be very lengthy and difficult to describe the research methodology but Faff's (2015) research template is very helpful to understand for the novice researchers and supervisors.

Sections (H) (I), and (J) deal with novelty and implications in accordance with our research. In last part of the template, we describe the contribution of our research to the relevant literature.



**Figure 1. Mickey Mouse diagram characterizing novelty of my research idea**

### 3. Personal reflection on the pitch exercise

As we are novice researchers, it was a challenging task to develop research ideas into a formal research proposal. We faced a lot of difficulties to start it but it was manageable with proper guidance of my course instructor Ahmad Ashraf and a student of Robert Faff, Searat Ali who gave complete guidelines. The pitch template has provided us with a systematic, guided, almost fool-proof tool to put my thoughts into a manageable and usable format. It is very challenging to make my thoughts concise, especially the motivation and basic research question. Ali's (2016a, 2016b) pitch also helped us to understand how to write a pitch letter. From our perspective, the important parts of the template are the novelty in the research relative to the literature and, likewise, what is the incremental contribution. We also found it very helpful that the template asks us to think about the target journal.

### 4. Conclusion

This letter outlines our basic pitch for a proposed services marketing research project based on an examination of the parts of customer loyalty and customer participation in the process of service recovery in the hotel industry of Pakistan. This pitch has been used to discuss the research proposal with a senior academic who is now working with me on the project. In the end, the purpose of the pitch template to produce a solid plan has been achieved in this case. We found the process of completing our first pitch template to be very challenging (and quite confronting at times). In our view, Faff's (2015, 2016) pitch template is now becoming an essential tool for research paper development by novice researchers.

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