ISSN: 2805-3931 2805-3923

EFFECT OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY: A CASE STUDY OF URIM MINISHOP, ABUJA

BY

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Abstract

This paper examined the effect of customer experience management on customer loyalty, using UrimMinishop, Abuja as a case study. The problem studied in this article dealt with the elements of customer experience management that drives customer loyalty. The specific objective was to determine whether or not companies can use the elements of customer experience management as strategies for creating and maintaining customer loyalty. The researcher's used Questionnaire to source for primary data from 55 customers of UrimMinishop Abuja. Chi Square Test was used to analyze and interpret the data. The findings revealed that there is a correlation (significant relationship) between Customer Experience Management and Loyalty. In conclusion, the study rejects the statement that the elements of customer experience management cannot be used to create and maintain customer loyalty and accept the statement that the elements of customer experience management can be used to create and maintain customer loyalty. Therefore, it is recommended that for organizations to create and maintain customer loyalty, they need to employ and efficiently manage the elements of customer experience management.

Keywords: Customer experience, customer loyalty, Customer experience management

Introduction

In today's business environment around the world, customers enjoy enormous choices and opportunities in the market. Here, the marketers and organization have now shifted towards customer -centric means and approach with the impetus on offering a complete customer experience in the market space. Customer experience management is like the lifeblood that drive organisation, which enables to achieve the set goals and objectives. In order to achieve competitive advantage in the market orchestrating meaningful customer experience are considered very important (Bolton et al., 2014) and loyal customers (Badgett et al., 2007). Many companies have benefited by incorporating the customer experience in their business strategies. T-Mobile Netherlands is one of the largest Dutch mobile telecommunication companies and offers a leading portfolio of mobile telecommunication. The company was able to cut costs while improving the customer experience using sound social media strategy. Orbitz Worldwide was able to harness the benefits of customer experience management by embedding the customer insights into the company to become the number one travel website and Orbitz Rewards is the number one travel rewards program. So the impetus for customer experience management is quite obvious. Even though the practitioners in the industry have recognition of the importance of the customer experience as a construct, yet the academic literature doesn't throw enough light

ISSN: 2805-3931 2805-3923

on the construct. Therefore, further research is required to understand the evolution of the construct of customer experience and its impact on the marketing.

Customer Experience Management (CEM or CXM) is the whole process involved in tracking, overseeing and organizing every interaction between a customer and the organization throughout the customer lifecycle. In an attempt to track, oversee and organize this interaction, companies encounter difficulties from time to time. Horwitz (2018), noted that the goal of CEM is to optimize interactions from the customer's perspective and foster customer loyalty. To manage the customer experience, a company needs to create a customer-centric strategy that encompasses all interactions.

With the growing competition, organizations are constantly seeking ways to create new and maintain old customers. The drive to create and maintain customer loyalty is on the rise. Organizations (whether secular or spiritual) are looking out for and fine-tuning their strategies in order to efficiently manage their customer experience and customer loyalty. if the customers experience is properly managed using different proven strategies, it will lead to customer satisfaction which will ultimately bring about customer loyalty. Hence the problem of how best organizations can use the elements of customer experience management as strategies to create and maintain customer loyalty is what prompted the researcher to conduct this research.

Customer Experience: Origin

The term customer experience as such is not known or owned by anyone in the management field but is generally attributed to Bernd Schmitt (2003) who did define it as "the process of strategically managing a customer's entire experience with a product or company." According to De Keyser et al. (2015) customer experience comprises the cognitive, emotional, physical, sensorial, spiritual, and social elements that mark the customer's direct or indirect interaction with other market actor—in essence, the raw data contained in all direct or indirect interactions that then come together as an overall experience'. According to Meyer & Schwager (2007) customer experience is the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company. Customer experience management is used for understanding the customer satisfaction and loyalty levels. Customer experience management as an idea was highlighted by Holbrooke & Hirschman (1982) in the Journal of Consumer Research. The highlighted experiences are the overall outcome of the customer's perception which is created when they try to understand and utilize the product. Moreover, it was found out social encounters facilitates the development of social bonds (Crosby & Nancy, 1987).

Research Objectives: The specific objective of this study was to determine whether or not companies can use the elements of customer experience management as strategies to create and maintain customer loyalty.

Research Question: To answer the research question "Can the elements of customer Experience Management be used to Create and Maintain Customer Loyalty?"

Research Hypothesis:

 H_0 : The elements of customer experience management cannot be used to create and maintain customer loyalty.

ISSN: 2805-3931 2805-3923

 $\mathbf{H_1}$: The elements of customer experience management can be used to create and maintain customer loyalty.

Literature Review Conceptual Review

Customers are the real employers of labour. They pay the employees' salary. Hence, should be treated as "the boss". They are responsible for the organization's profit or loss. They require service providers to be flexible, available, creative and considerate with pricing. Therefore, new attributes are required for an organization to succeed in a dynamic world where customers wish, customer preferences, customer behavior and loyalties are equally focused (Swift 200) According to Kumar and Petersen (2012), the companies who have implemented the idea of customer relationship management are the most successful ones regardless of their business field. Therefore, managing customer relationships and relationships with other parties require a service-oriented culture and if properly managed, customers will not only become loyal, they will become ambassadors of your product.

Customer Experience Management

Chopra (2016) stated that Multiple authors in the field of business research have proposed a definition for customer experience management. CEM (customer experience creation) is the process of strategically managing a consumer's entire experience with a product or a company. (Schmitt, 2010: 24) "The aim of customer experience management is to enhance relationships with customers and build customer loyalty."

Peppers and Rogers (2005) posited that customer experience has emerged as the single most important aspect in achieving success for companies across all industries. The duo defined Customer experience management (CEM or CXM) as a strategy that focuses the operations and processes of a business around the needs of the individual customer. Business should focus on the importance of customer experience. In simple terms, customer experience management represents the discipline, methodology and/or process used to comprehensively manage a customer's cross-channel exposure, interaction and transaction with a company, product, brand or service (Peppers and Rogers 2005).

Types of Consumer Experiences

Mashingaidze (2014) pointed out Schmitt five types of experience marketing modules, referred to as "strategic experiential modules": "sense," "feel," "think," "act," and "relate."

Sense

It is a sensory experience value to provide an exciting stimulus by appealing directly to the five senses of the consumer such as the visual sense, auditory sense, sense of touch and taste, and sense of smell.

Feel (affective customer experience)

Feel or affective customer experience appeals to customers' inner feelings and emotions, with the objective of creating affective experiences that range from mildly positive moods linked to a brand (e.g. for a non-involving, non-durable grocery brand or service or industrial product) to strong emotions of joy and pride (example for a consumer durable, technology).

Think (*creative/cognitive customer experience*)

Think appeals to the intellect with the objective of creating cognitive, problem-solving experiences that engage customers' creativity. Think; appeals to engage customers' convergent and divergent thinking through surprise, intrigue, and provocation.

Act (physical customer experience)

Act aims to affect bodily experiences, lifestyles, and interactions. Act marketing enriches customers' lives by enhancing their physical experiences, showing them alternative ways of doing things (example in business-to-business and industrial markets), alternative lifestyles, and interactions.

Relate (*social-identity customer experience*) RELATE contains aspects of Sense, feel, Think, and Act marketing. However, relate expands beyond the individual's personal, private feelings, and thus adding to "individual experiences" and relating the individual to his or her ideal self, to other people or to cultures.

Elements or Determinants of Customer Experience

Based on the types of customer experience by Schmitt, the elements of customer's experience can be summarized as follows: Customer Service Delivery, Quality, Price, Physical Environment, Turnaround time, Integrity of Company/ Product, Personalized Attention, Facility and equipment, Corporate Image, Employee's Attitude

The management of these Elements creates an **Experience** for the customer. This Experience bring about Customer **Satisfaction** which in turn leads to Customer **Loyalty**. Therefore, it can be inferred that Customer Experience leads to Customer Loyalty which eventually leads to Customer Loyalty.

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is an emotional bond that exists between an organization and its customers as a result of a consistently positive experience and a foundation of trust that has been built over time which leads the customers to be advocates for the brand. Although customer satisfaction is a crucial part of a business, satisfaction alone cannot take a business to a top level. Customer satisfaction produces a positive financial result, especially in regular purchases. Today's unforgiving market where creating and maintaining customer loyalty is more complex than it used to be in the past years. This is because of technological breakthrough and widespread of the internet uses. Loyalty building requires the company to focus the value of its product and services and to show that it is interested to fulfill the desire or build the relationship with customers (Palmer 2010)

Thomas and Tobe (2013) emphasize that "loyalty is more profitable." The expenses to gain a new customer is much more than retaining existing one. Loyal customers will encourage others to buy from you and think more than twice before changing their mind to buy other services. Customer loyalty is not gained by an accident; they are constructed through the sourcing and design decisions. Designing for customer loyalty requires customer-centred approaches that recognize the want and interest of service receiver. It is built over time across multiple transactions.

A relationship with a customer is equally important in customer loyalty and this requires that company work in a broader context that extends beyond itself, as no company can be world class at everything (McDonald and Keen 2000). Normann (2001)) divided customer loyalty into three different categories that include: Behavior loyalty, Intentional loyalty, and Emotional loyalty. Behavior loyalty is repeating purchasing behavior while Intentional loyalty is the possible buying intention. Emotional loyalty, however, is achieved when a customer feels that a brand corresponds with their value, ideas, and passion.

Theoretical Framework

Customer-Integrated Business Model

Customers have different needs and demands about how they want to be treated. Therefore, very seldom organization satisfies the needs of every potential customer in a similar manner. In service contexts, it is often difficult to satisfy targeted groups of customers. Because customers frequently meet and interact with each other and influence fellow customer's perception of the service. Therefore, to manage a good customer relationship organization should deal with the customers in different ways. It is important to have a customer segment to keep in relation to a different targeted group of the customers. It is also important to keep in mind that customers in a relationship with a service provider often want to be recognized and treated individually, even though they are part of a larger segment. In addition, the modern technology available to the firms also supports the individualistic treatment of customers. Direct customer contacts in most of the services give a good starting point for the individual treatment of the customers (Grönroos 2007).

On the other hand, it is important to know the need of the customers. To maintain a relationship first of all, the service purchased by customers has to fit the customers. Designing for relationships requires a customer centred approach. Maintaining customer relationship just does not happen accidentally, they are constructed through the service and product provided. Relationships build over to create a loyal customer and loyal customer multiplies the transactions. The relationship infrastructure consists of the building blocks for a business. The components of substructure build on top of each other to create a growing infrastructure. A relationship requires the right blend of the texture and touch. There are some instances where service industry cannot provide sufficient levels to build the relationship (McDonald and Keen 2000)

Empirical Review

Songsak and Teera (2012) did study on Customer Experience Management Influences Customer Loyalty: Case Study of supercentres in Thailand. The aim of their study was to examine the influence of customer experience management components that affected customer loyalty in Thailand's supercentres. They used Structural equation modelling to test the hypotheses. According to the causal model of customer experience management on customer loyalty, the study found that customer experience management components had some influences over loyalty behavior i.e. increased purchase, cross-buying, up-buying, re-buying, word-of-mouth, and share of wallet through affective experience, cognitive experience, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are considered as the highest correlation coefficient which represented a strategy resulting in a win- win value exchange between the retailer and its customers. The study

concluded that customer experience management is a powerful company's strategy to create customer satisfaction and to maintain customer loyalty to the brand for a long-term commitment.

Ibojo and Asabi (2015) studied the impact of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty: A Case Study of a Reputable Bank in Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. The objectives were: to determine the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and to examine the impact of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty. Survey research design was adopted for this study. Primary and secondary sources of data were used. The primary data includes a structured questionnaire used to elicit information from the target respondents who were customers of a reputable bank in oyo while the secondary data encompass the use of related materials, journals and periodicals. Regression analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings shows that there is a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (r = .617**, N= 107, P < .01). The implication of this result is that a 1% shift in customer satisfaction will cause a 61.7% shift in customer loyalty. The findings also show the R2 value of 0.631 which reveals that customer satisfaction independently accounts for 63.1% of the variation in customer loyalty. The f-statistics of 33.500 reveals that the model is statistically significant at 0.05 significant level. It was concluded that a 1% shift in customer satisfaction will cause a 61.7% shift in customer loyalty, also there is a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. To this end, the study concluded that customer loyalty is a function of customer satisfaction.

Noorain, Sylvia and Imbarine (2018) carried out a study on The Influence of Customer Experience on Customer Loyalty in Telecommunication Industry. The study examined the relationship between customer experiences and customer loyalty in the context of telecommunication industry. A self-administrated questionnaire was distributed to 248 network service subscribers as a sample of this study. PLS approach to Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was applied to data analysis. In the second-order model derived from the results, customer experience is decomposed into 3 dimensions, namely core service, charging, and brands, which have a significant impact towards customer loyalty. It was concluded that customer experience positively influenced customer's loyalty. The study's results have important implications for the durability of customer relationship with the service provider since it provides the best practice guideline in building customer loyalty through customer experience. Designing good customer experience will ensure telecommunication industry to perform well.

To ensure the content validity of the scales, the items selected must represent the concept about which generalizations are to be made. Therefore, items selected for the constructs were mainly adapted from prior studies to ensure content validity. Four items for the trust construct were adapted from Gefen et al. (2003). The items to measure customer satisfaction were taken from previous measures of overall level of user satisfaction or Web customer satisfaction (Wang et al., 2001; Doll et al., 1988; Palvia, 1996; Rai et al., 2002). Perceived value was measured by three items adapted from Lassar et al. (1995). Items for the loyalty were taken from the previous validated inventory (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001) and modified to fit the e-service context studied. Finally, commitment was measured by four items adapted from the Pritchard et al. (1999) "resistance to change" scales. Likert scales (1~7), with anchors ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" were used for all questions. Pre-testing and pilot testing of the measures were conducted by selected consumers from the B2C e-commerce field, as well as

experts in the e-commerce research area. The items were modified to make them relevant to the e-service context. The Appendix lists the items used in this study

Methodology

The researcher used Questionnaire to source for his primary data from 55 customers of UrimMinishop Abuja. Chi-square test was used for Data Analysis and Presentation. The customers of UrimMinishopis estimated to be about 200. The researcher used this number as his population size. Since the population is finite, the sample of this research is calculated by using Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1973) formula with 90% confidence level (10% error of margin).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n =Sample size; N =Population size =200 and e =error of margin =0.1 200

 $1 + 200 (0.01)^2$ n = 67 (rounded)

For this study, Primary sources of data were used. Information on the elements of customer experience was collected through administering of questionnaires. A total of **67** questionnaires were distributed but only 55 were returned which is 82% compliant rate

The Decision Rule

EDECLIENCY

If the p-value is lower than the level of significance which is 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H₀) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H₁). If p-value is greater than the level of significance which is 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis (H₀) and reject the alternative hypothesis (H₁).

Results

	FREQUENCY 1= Lowest; 5 = Highest							
S/NO	To what extent did the company meet your expectation as regard:		2	3	4	5	Total	
1	Customer Service Delivery	3	5	13	23	8	52	
2	Quality of Product	2	4	12	22	7	47	
3	Price	1	3	11	21	6	42	
4	Physical Environment (cleanliness, Ease of Accessibility)	2	1	15	19	4	41	
5	Turnaround time (Speed of service)	3	5	19	9	15	51	
6	Integrity of Company/ Product	1	3	19	21	6	50	
7	Personalised Attention (Value Added Services)	2	8	14	10	18	52	
8	Facility and equipment (<i>User friendliness</i>)	2	4	12	22	7	47	
9	Corporate Image	20	3	11	5	3	42	
10	Employee's Attitude Source: Field Survey 2019	3	0	15	18	9	45	

PERCENTAGE 1= Lowest; 5 = Highest							
S/N O	To what extent did the company meet your expectation as regard:		2	3	4	5	total
1	Customer Service Delivery	6%	10%	25%	44%	15%	100%
2	Quality of Product	4%	9%	26%	47%	15%	100%
3	Price	2%	7%	26%	50%	14%	100%
4	Physical Environment (cleanliness, Ease of Accessibility)	5%	2%	37%	46%	10%	100%
5	Turnaround time (Speed of service)	6%	10%	37%	18%	29%	100%
6	Integrity of Company/ Product	2%	6%	38%	42%	12%	100%
7	Personalised Attention (Value Added Services)	4%	15%	27%	19%	35%	100%
8	Facility and equipment (<i>User friendliness</i>)	4%	9%	26%	47%	15%	100%
9	Corporate Image	48%	7%	26%	12%	7%	100%
10	Employee's Attitude	7%	0%	33%	40%	20%	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

_	FREQUENCY 1= Lowest; 5 = Highest							
S/NO	Rate the following based on your experience at URIM	1	2	3	4	5		
11	How likely are you to continue shopping at URIM?	1	3	19	13	19	55	
12	Overall, How satisfied are you with the services of URIM?	2	8	14	16	12	52	
13	How often do you shop at a different shop other than URIM?	22	18	6	5	1	52	
14	How likely are you to provide referrals to Urim Stores?	2	8	13	10	18	51	
15	To what extent has your overall experience as a customer affected your loyalty to URIM?	4	7	12	15	17	55	
	Source: Field Survey 2019							

PERCENTAGE						
1= Lowest; 5 = Highest						

S/NO	Rate the following based on your experience at URIM	1	2	3	4	5	
11	How likely are you to continue shopping at URIM?	2%	5%	35 %	24 %	35%	100%
12	Overall, How satisfied are you with the services of URIM?	4%	15 %	27 %	31 %	23%	100%
13	How often do you shop at a different shop other than URIM?	42 %	35 %	12 %	10 %	2%	100%
14	How likely are you to provide referrals to Urim Stores?	4%	16 %	25 %	20 %	35%	100%
15	To what extent has your overall experience as a customer affected your loyalty to URIM?	7%	13 %	22 %	27 %	31%	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Response on Research Objective

The **specific objective** of this study was to determine whether or not companies can use the elements of customer experience management as strategies to create and maintain customer loyalty. The research was able to show that companies use the elements of customer experience management as strategies to create and maintain customer loyalty.

Response on Research Hypotheses

Having given a careful analysis of the responses, the hypotheses earlier formulated in the introduction of this study are approach by the use of chi-square at 0.05 (5%) level of significance.

 H_0 : The elements of customer experience management cannot be used to create and maintain customer loyalty.

 H_1 : The elements of customer experience management can be used to create and maintain customer loyalty.

Chi Square Test

Question 1

To what extent does Customer Service Delivery at Urim's meet your expectation?

	Observed (%)	Expected	Difference	Difference Sq.	Diff. Sq. / Exp Fr.
1	6	0.2 (20)	-14.00	196.00	9.80

2	10	0.2 (20)	-10.00	100.00	5.00
3	25	0.2 (20)	5.00	25.00	1.25
4	44	0.2 (20)	24.00	576.00	28.80
5	15	0.2 (20)	-5.00	25.00	1.25
					46.100

The Chi² value is 46.1. The *p*-value is < .00001. **The result is significant** at p < .05.

Question 7

To what extent does Personalized Attention (Value Added Services) received at Urim meet your expectation?

	Observed (%)	Expected	Difference	Difference Sq.	Diff. Sq. / Exp Fr.
1	4	0.2 (20)	-16.00	256.00	12.80
2	15	0.2 (20)	-5.00	25.00	1.25
3	27	0.2 (20)	7.00	49.00	2.45
4	19	0.2 (20)	-1.00	1.00	0.05
5	35	0.2 (20)	15.00	225.00	11.25
					27.800

The Chi^2 value is 27.8. The *p*-value is .00001. **The result is significant** at p < .05. Question 14:

How likely are you to provide referrals to Urim Stores?

	Observed (%)	Expected	Difference	Difference Sq.	Diff. Sq. / Exp Fr.
1	4	0.2 (20)	-16.00	256.00	12.80
2	16	0.2 (20)	-4.00	16.00	0.80
3	25	0.2 (20)	5.00	25.00	1.25
4	20	0.2 (20)	0.00	0.00	0.00
5	35	0.2 (20)	15.00	225.00	11.25
					26.100

The Chi² value is 26.1. The *p*-value is .00003. **The result is significant** at p < .05.

Question 15:

To what extent has your overall experience as a customer affected your loyalty to URIM?

	Observed (%)	Expected	Difference	Difference S	Sq. Diff. Sq. / Exp Fr.
1	7	0.2 (20)	-13.00	169.00	8.45
2	13	0.2 (20)	-7.00	49.00	2.45

ISSN:	2805-3931
	2805-3923

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3	22	0.2 (20)	2.00	4.00	0.20
4	27	0.2 (20)	7.00	49.00	2.45
5	31	0.2 (20)	11.00	121.00	6.05
					19.600

The Chi² value is 19.6. The p-value is .0006. The result is significant at p < .05.

Discussion of Findings

If the p-value is lower than the level of significance which is 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (Ho) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H₁). If p-value is greater than the level of significance which is 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis (H₀) and reject the alternative hypothesis (H₁). In the four situations, we can see that the result is significant at p < .05. as the p-value is < .00001. so, we reject the null hypothesis (Ho) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H₁).

This study revealed that indeed companies can use the elements of customer experience management as strategies to create and maintain customer loyalty. From our findings, we can see that the result is significant at p < .05. as the p-value is < .00001. so, we reject the null hypothesis (Ho) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H₁). The study rejects the statement that the elements of customer experience management cannot be used to create and maintain customer loyalty and Accept the statement that the elements of customer experience management can be used to create and maintain customer loyalty.

Based on the conclusion of the study, it is recommended that for organizations to create and maintain customer loyalty, they need to employ and efficiently manage the elements of customer experience management.

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