

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Management



Diploma Thesis

**The Impact of Relationship Marketing On Customer
Loyalty**

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Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

DIPLOMA THESIS TOPIC

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my diploma thesis titled “The Impact of Relationship Marketing on Customer Loyalty” by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the diploma thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on date of submission

30th Nov, 2021

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The Impact of Relationship Marketing on Customer Loyalty

Abstract

Modern business world is facing a constantly increasing pressure of competition, due to which maintaining competitive edge is becoming a challenge. In such cases, customer satisfaction and customer relationship building are some of the promising ways to retain the existing customer base and develop a competitive edge to compete with other players. Luxury brands such as Apple have developed an esteemed and leading brand image in the electronics market, due to their highly effective customer relationship building strategies, which reflects on its consistently increasing customer base. This research aims to identify how Apple Inc. manages its relationship with its customers and fans and how the company retains the trust of their customers over a long period of time. The analysis in the research concludes that their premium pricing strategy, their aesthetical features, the features which makes them stand apart, their market reputation and brand image are some of the most essential factors, on behalf of which the company retains and expands its customer base.

Keywords: Apple, customer relation, customer satisfaction, customer services, customer loyalty

Abstrakt

Svět moderního podnikání čelí neustále se zvyšujícímu tlaku konkurence, a proto je udržení konkurenční výhody výzvou. V takových případech je spokojenost zákazníků a budování vztahů se zákazníky jedním ze slibných způsobů, jak udržet stávající zákaznickou základnu a vybudovat konkurenční výhodu v konkurenci s ostatními hráči. Luxusní značky, jako je Apple, si na trhu s elektronikou vytvořily vážený a přední image značky díky svým vysoce efektivním strategiím budování vztahů se zákazníky, což se odráží v jeho neustále se zvyšující zákaznické základně. Tento výzkum si klade za cíl zjistit, jak Apple Inc. řídí svůj vztah se svými zákazníky a fanoušky a jak si společnost dlouhodobě udržuje důvěru svých zákazníků. Analýza ve výzkumu dospěla k závěru, že jejich prémiová cenová strategie, jejich estetické vlastnosti, vlastnosti, díky nimž se odlišují, jejich pověst na trhu a image značky, jsou některé z nejdůležitějších faktorů, za které si společnost zachovává a rozšiřuje svoji zákaznickou základnu.

Klíčová slova: Apple, vztahy se zákazníky, spokojenost zákazníků, služby zákazníkům, loajalita zákazníků

Table of content

1 Chapter: Introduction	12
2 Chapter: Goals and Methodology	13
2.1 Goals	13
2.2 Methodology	13
3 Chapter: Literature Review	15
3.1 Concept of Relationship Marketing	16
3.1.1 Customer Satisfaction	22
3.1.2 Customer Retention	24
3.1.3 Customer Defection	25
3.1.5 Customer Relationship Management	27
3.1.5.1 Electronic Relationship (E-Relationship)	28
3.2 Concept of Customer Loyalty	29
3.3 Importance of Customer Loyalty in terms of Performance	34
3.4 Relationship between customer loyalty and performance	38
3.5 Relationship marketing in attaining sustained customer loyalty and performance for companies	41
3.6 Impact of customer loyalty and relationship marketing	45
3.7 How relationship marketing and customer loyalty helped the business	49
4 Analysis	54
4.1 Apple Inc. Description	54
4.1 Methodology	55
4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis	59
5 Chapter: Results and Discussion	75
5.1 Findings from Quantitative Analysis	75
5.2 Summary	77
6 Chapter: Conclusion	79

7 Chapter: Reference List

81

8 Appendix

88

List of pictures

Figure 1: Concept of Holistic Marketing	14
Figure 2: Difference between the two marketing strategies	15
Figure 3: Apple's customer base.....	16
Figure 4: Apple relationship among the customers with the global brands.....	17
Figure 5: Simple relationship marketing model.....	20
Figure 6: Customer satisfaction model	21
Figure 7: Customer satisfaction and the effect on customer retention.....	22
Figure 8: Customer retention research model.....	23
Figure 9: Relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality	24
Figure 10: The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Network (Modified)	25
Figure 11: Conceptual framework of e-CRM.....	26
Figure 12: iPhone customer loyalty	28
Figure 13: Analysis of customer loyalty influencing factors.....	29
Figure 14: Customer Loyalty of Apple in terms of Performance	33
Figure 15: Brand loyalty over time.....	37
Figure 16: Effect of Relationship Marketing Strategies on Consumer Loyalty	40
Figure 17: Apple's iPhone Customer Loyalty	44
Figure 18: Apple Inc. Relationship Marketing	48
Figure 19: Number of Apple Users.....	52
Figure 20: Research approach.....	54

1 Chapter: Introduction

Loyalty seems to be the stem, but customer loyalty is linked with brand identification experiences and enhances the brand image. It interacts with the brand regularly, which argues with the customers. Customer loyalty defines the customer's loyalty to working with the brand. Customer loyalty positively surveys customers, and the general estimation of the products or services a customer gets from an organization all add to it. With the loyal customer, the company perform better for the business, help to expand and enhance the profit high. While talking about relationship marketing, it is strategically designed to enhance customer loyalty, which interacts with long-term engagement. Thus, with the strong design and connections, it enhances with the customer by giving them information, opportunities that directly suited with their requirements and interests by encouraging communication. Companies are interested in increasing their sales by engaging new customers and making possible efforts to satisfy customer requirements and maintain the existing ones.

Business Performance is the business's real-time performance, which runs with the business objectives and regularly analyses the business to secure and save the business activities in the financial and management problems. Although in the processing, it improves business cost and mission for enhancing the effectiveness. Defining hierarchical objectives, following the systems used to accomplish those objectives, and discovering opportunities for the businesses to more proficiently accomplish those objectives. The businesses may survey the changes that ultimately have the results for the social change, examine the information, and cause changes to assist with making a more productive interaction. Hence, Business performance is a broader term applied to dividing specific targets and helping the business reduce the working expenses while expanding with business transactions. Thus, business performance is utilized to support worker and management performance.

2 Chapter: Goals and Methodology

2.1 Goals

The research explores the impact of relationship marketing on customer loyalty in Apple Inc. and customer preference towards the IOS rather than android smartphones. Thus, it evaluates the secondary data on customer relationship marketing and customer loyalty for Apple Inc.

The objectives defined for the research to determine customer loyalty in Apple Inc. in terms of performance and evaluate the taste and preference of customer in IOS rather than Android phones. Further, the research is planned to identify the customer relationship with Apple Inc. over the years and hence assess the impact of relationship marketing of Apple Inc. on customer loyalty.

Research is designed in a way that it will evaluate the relationship between customer loyalty and apple Inc.'s performance, how customer loyalty copes up with relationship marketing and enhances business productivity. How relationship marketing sustains customer loyalty for choosing Apple Inc. and how customer loyalty and relationship marketing impacted Apple Inc.'s business and helped the business over the years?

2.2 Methodology

The duration required to complete the whole research is three months, starting from January to March. It comprises collecting data from different sources like websites, articles, online reviews of customers, and several others (Ngo and Nguyen, 2016). This research's primary data will be collected by organising an online survey where Apple will target loyal customers through online mediums. The researcher prefers to create an online survey form that the researcher will send to some loyal customers through their mail id. These respondents mainly belong to the age group of 18-35 years who are the loyal customers of Apple Inc. and did not intend to switch to another brand of smartphones. The online survey will be based on the theme impact of relationship marketing on maintaining customer loyalty. Besides collecting the secondary data, the researcher decided to collect data from different reliable sources like

web reports, journals, business reports, etc. Still, it is ensured that these sources will be recently published. The reason for selecting the secondary data sources is to keep a supportive backup while collecting the primary data and to support the practical data with theoretical data.

3 Chapter: Literature Review

Relationship marketing refers to the marketing connection by which it establishes connections with the customers, retains the old customer, and maintains good connections with the newest customers. Maintaining such relations in marketing develops commitments, interaction, and profitability exchanges with the desired customer base. The motive of relationship marketing is to analyse and enhance the relationship with the customers and stakeholders to obtain profit by fulfilling the desired objectives, which are to be met. Several theories suggest successful marketing objectives with certain results and cooperatively characterise successful relations. The loyal customer base enhances business productivity and retains the customers, which impacts the relationship marketing over time. With this, the importance of relationship marketing is completed effectively and efficiently, yield significant determination on the organizational performance, and improve customer loyalty and make strong relationship bonds.

According to Ngoma and Ntale (2019), in the current time, marketers strongly focusing on the relationship marketing aspects, which use as the tool for evaluating customer loyalty. The key relationship among customer loyalty indicated that variables are significantly important for gaining trust, kindness, customer satisfaction, effective communication, and competence at the same time. There are significant ways that maintain strong correlations among relationship marketing and customer loyalty (Chakiso, 2015). Customer loyalty has widely seen in a competition that enhances customer satisfaction. This is one way to enhance the customer expectation in marketing which gives customers superior services and meets the overall needs. The objective of satisfying customers makes proper strategies as per customer taste and preferences, which ultimately engages relationship building and retains the customers with the time (Jumaev and Hanaysha, 2012).

No matter how unique and distinct products are offered by the organisation to maintain a strong customer base is an important element in its overall success. Brand loyalty does not happen overnight. In such an aspect, relationship marketing helps establish and maintain shoppers' commitment (Affran *et al.* 2019). The internet provides several options to the customers to pick from the best available brands, and if the company did not concentrate on the brand's requirement, they will lose it for sure. Relationship marketing is based on

underpinning relationship marketing, i.e., trust, commitment, conflict handling, sharing, or communicating secrets. Various researchers conducted a study on analysing a marketer's responsibilities is not limited to giving promises and influencing the customers to purchase the products but to keep those promises. Fulfilling those promises is equally important, like keeping the customer satisfied, ensuring long-term profitability, retaining the current customer base, and maintaining customers' trust (Kwiatek *et al.* 2020).

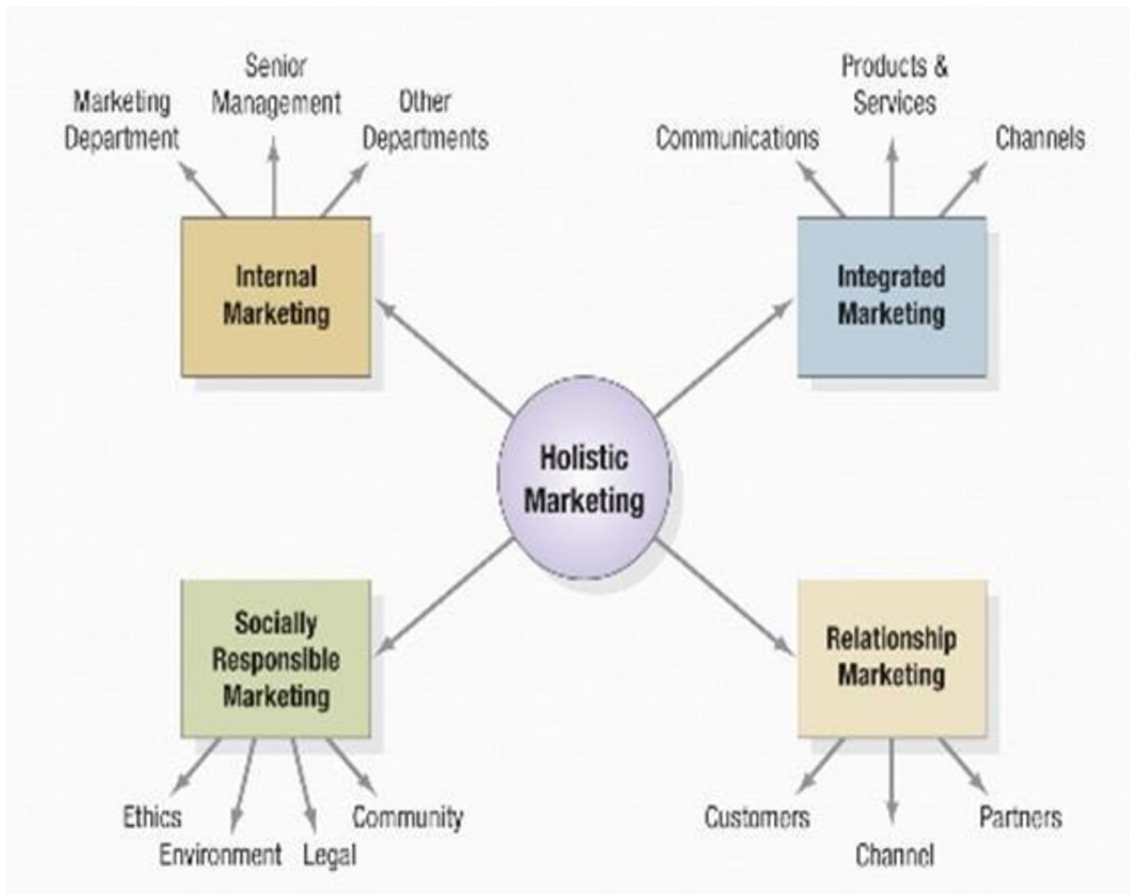


Figure 1: Concept of Holistic Marketing

Source: Civil Service India, 2021

3.1 Concept of Relationship Marketing

The concept of relationship marketing Sheth *et al.* (2015) given by described that this marketing is mainly used in service organizations and can be described as a business strategy

to entice, maintain and enhance the relations of customers with technology development. The companies are paying to establish beneficial relationships based on to enhance the perceived value of customers. Another author, i.e., Gummesson (2017), defines relationship marketing as a procedure to recognize, build, maintain, reinforce, and, if required, terminate the relationship by mutually agreeing with the customers and stakeholders the interest of all associated parties will be accomplished.

Relationship Marketing comprises the needs of the customer requirements and develops the customer's activities as per their needs. The entire concept of relationship marketing is carried upon the organization, which keenly analyses, evaluates the customer needs, seeks their attention, prioritizes their preferences, and decides for their potential customers. Relationship marketing is the old concept that relies on the idea that focuses on marketing and practice services to research for the customers. Thus, it develops marketing services, emphasizing the quality, recognition, and potential benefits for the organization, customer, and technology advancements.

	TRANSACTIONAL MARKETING	RELATIONSHIP MARKETING
FOCUS	Focus on the single sale	Focus on customer retention
ORIENTATION	Orientation on product features	Orientation on product benefits
TIME	Short time-scales	Long time-scales
CUSTOMER SERVICE	Little emphasis on customer service	High emphasis on customer service
CUSTOMER COMMITMENT	Limited customer commitment	High customer commitment
CUSTOMER CONTACT	Moderate customer contact	High customer contact
CONCERN FOR QUALITY	Quality is the concern of the production department	Quality is the concern of all

Figure 2: Difference between the two marketing strategies

Source: Super Office, 2021

In other terms, Payne and Frow (2017) relationship marketing is the marketing effort put by the company to build, maintain and strengthen the strong relationship with the associated stakeholders and customers. They believe that marketing practices move away from solo or individual transactions to establishing a strong relationship with the target customers through

different marketing networks.

Apple has direct reach to a large customer base

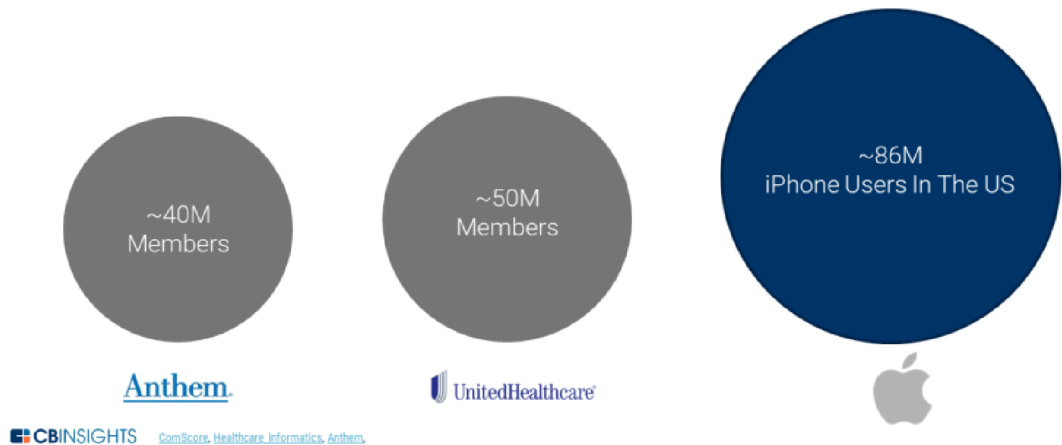


Figure 3: Apple's customer base

Source: CBI Insights, 2021

Verma, *et al.* (2016) found in their study that undoubtedly there is a significant increment in the subject and practices of relationship marketing because of the increasing rivalry in each sector, including consumer electronics. As a result, companies are looking to establish a strong relationship with the customers. Also, in the current trend, relationship marketing is beneficial to the companies and customers because they benefit from maintaining loyal with the firm.

Relationship marketing identifies and recognizes the customer's value by making a long-lasting relationship with the improvement in the communication and technological advancement to create new methods of maintaining the interactive relationship with the existing resources, customers. Nowadays, marketers are keenly making efforts to build and sustain goodwill and enhance the consumer's confidence by showing care and maintaining relations with them. Thus, it works with the customers and shows the care of the stakeholders because they are the organization's significant players.

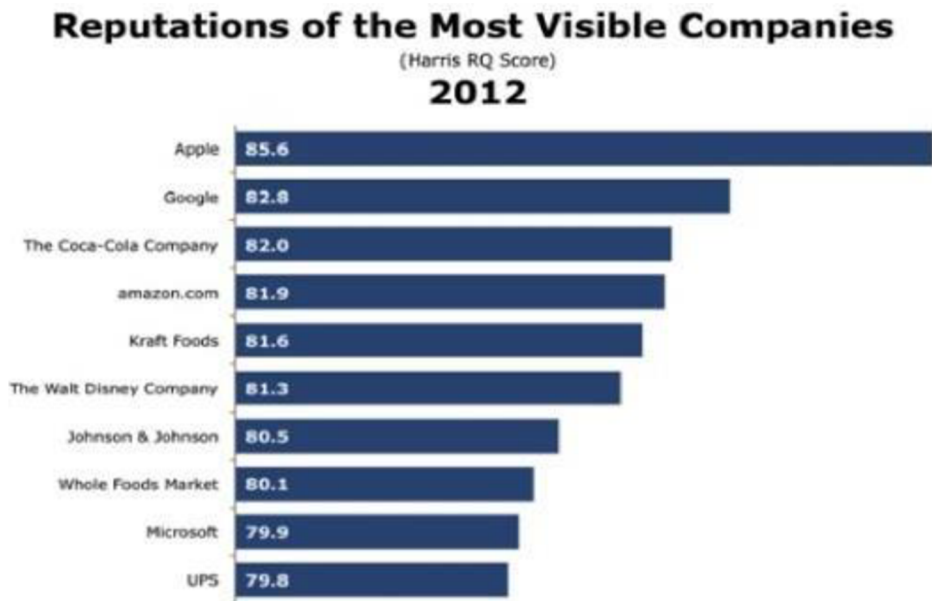


Figure 4: Apple relationship among the customers with the global brands

Source- HTQVN, 2021

Relationship marketing enables maintaining personal relationships with the potential customer and using them in the business's integral parts. It attracts, maintains, and increases the customer relationship, which serves services by selling products and services to the potential and existing customers, which can be viewed as the long-term marketing success to acquire new customers. At the same time, giving new services to retain the relation to increasing the selling. Though the marketing read the customers' mind-set to attract by new services to the customer who is merely considered the initial step in relationship marketing and later transform it several loyal ones, which is committed towards their loyalty, services to the customers.

However, it is essential to understand customer loyalty and relationship marketing's underpinnings to help smartphone companies get a higher level of loyalty among the existing customers. Several factors contribute to maintaining loyalty among customers, like conflict handling, communication, commitment, trust, etc.

Relation marketing concepts have primarily been applied to industrial and service marketing, but they may also apply to consumer marketing. This article claims that market relations are easier to build in some types of consumer markets and that this inherent "relationship-friendliness" will vary depending on the market and product sectors in question (Christopher, 2013).

A simple typology of consumer markets is proposed as a foundation for future research in this field: suppliers may take measures such as providing incentives to increase the natural relationship potentials of a specific product-market, but care must be taken to distinguish between measures aimed at developing marketing relationships and more appropriate action.

Relationship marketing is a subset of Customer Relationship Management (CRMs) that focuses on customer retention and long-term customer involvement rather than short-term objectives such as customer purchases and personal sales. Customer marketing's goal is to build strong and emotional customer relationships with a brand, which can lead to sales, free word-of-mouth publicity, and customer information. (Benouakrim and El Kandoussi, 2013).

Transactional marketing, on the other hand, focuses on increasing individual sales. Relationship marketing is the polar opposite of transactional marketing. In the transactional model, the return on customer buying expenses may be insufficient. Customers can only choose one brand, but without a strong marketing strategy, they will switch to another. They are unlikely to return. Customer relationship marketing is becoming more important for many businesses as organizations combine both relationship and transactional marketing elements.

Getting new customers can be difficult and expensive. Relation marketing aids in client retention over time, resulting in Instead of one or more rare purchases, customer loyalty. Because of its ability to keep close contact with customers, relationship marketing is important. Brands can develop new features and services to satisfy those needs by understanding how customers use their products and services and also by observing additional needs. (Benouakrim and El Kandoussi, 2013).

Velnampy and Sivesan (2012), Relationship marketing refers to marketing activities aimed at establishing and maintaining long-term customer relationships. In a sales database, Customer information, purchase methods, contacts etc. are stored, with an account manager assigned to meet customer requirements and maintain relationships successfully. The value of a customer and the significance of good connections are recognized by relationship Marketing. The advancement of communication technology has created new avenues for existing and prospective clients to maintain interactive relationships. Many businesses now keep track of their customers' birthdays and anniversaries and contact them on those occasions.

Customer relationships are attracted, maintained, and enhanced through marketing relationships. Existing customer service and sales are seen as just as important as new customer acquisition for long-term marketing success. Good service is required to keep the relationship going. It is necessary to improve good sales.

Zhang (2016) said, marketing activities aimed at developing and managing long-term customer relationships are referred to as relationship marketing. Customer information, such as purchasing patterns and contacts, is stored in a sales database, the customer needs and relationships are assigned to the account manager. Customer value and the importance of good relationship marketing recognizes. As communication technology advances, new methods for maintaining interactive relationships with existing and potential clients have emerged. Many businesses now keep track of their customers' birthdays and anniversaries and contact them on those dates.

As per Payne and Frow (2013), by demonstrating that they care, marketers hope to gain consumer trust and goodwill. Marketing relationships are a broad concept that includes not only customers but also other stakeholders who are important to the company's success. Regular suppliers, shareholders, and employees all have strong ties to the company. Relationship marketing is more than just traditional marketing; it's a long-term strategy that leads to long-term business sustainability and growth. In recent years, relationship marketing has become more focused on how businesses focus on retaining existing customers rather than attracting new ones. Relationship-based marketing Relationship marketing has emerged as a significant issue in assisting marketers to maintain and strengthen customer relationships, despite its origins in an industrial context. With the importance of the services

sector growth in the last decade, marketing relationships have emerged as a significant issue for marketers to address to help them maintain and strengthen customer relationships.

3.1.1 Customer Satisfaction

Client satisfaction alludes to customers' joy with the administrations and products outfitted by methods for an organization (Abtin and Pouramiri, 2016). In other words, it is an outlook or sensation of customers within the services and goods when they had been utilized. As per Hennig-Thurau and Hansen (2000), customer satisfaction can be noticeable as customers' survey appraisal of the products and administrations. Also, consumer loyalty has approved itself to be an indispensable piece of relationship marketing and customer regions. Moreover, client pride is likewise an essential component in relationship marketing; it's been portrayed as looking at clients' insight through service quality. To acquire protracted time-frame maintainability, the firm wishes to make the top-notch supplier serve its clients. To provide satisfaction and pay for a business, it is fundamental to fulfill customers (Egan, 2008). The straightforward relationship marketing model is committed to the below-mentioned figure.

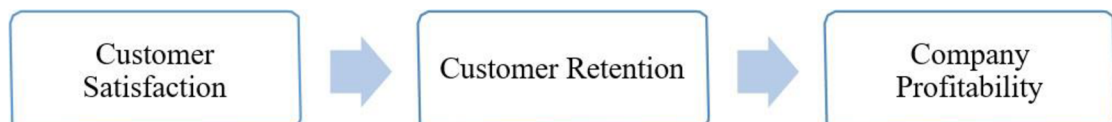


Figure 5: Simple relationship marketing model

Source: Egan, 2008

Egan (2008) indicated that if organizations can't fulfil benefactor needs in any supplier, it will bring about help disappointment, and customer pleasure can be empowered. Even though buyer fulfilment does at this point don't ensure repurchase from an organization it plays a fundamental part in achieving unwavering supporter ness in long term thing. In different expressions, supporter pride has a strong decent effect on client faithfulness. It is an important resource for each organization to get additional supporter maintenance and customer devotion. Besides, benefactor delight can be obvious as a key execution marker

for assessing the fine of pursuing among clients and organisations (Hennig-Thurau and Hansen, 2000). It is along these lines vital for study customer fulfilment to settle on choices for improving customer seeking behaviour. Satisfaction is chosen principally dependent on a huge number, alongside value, item, transporter, private components, and situational components (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2001).

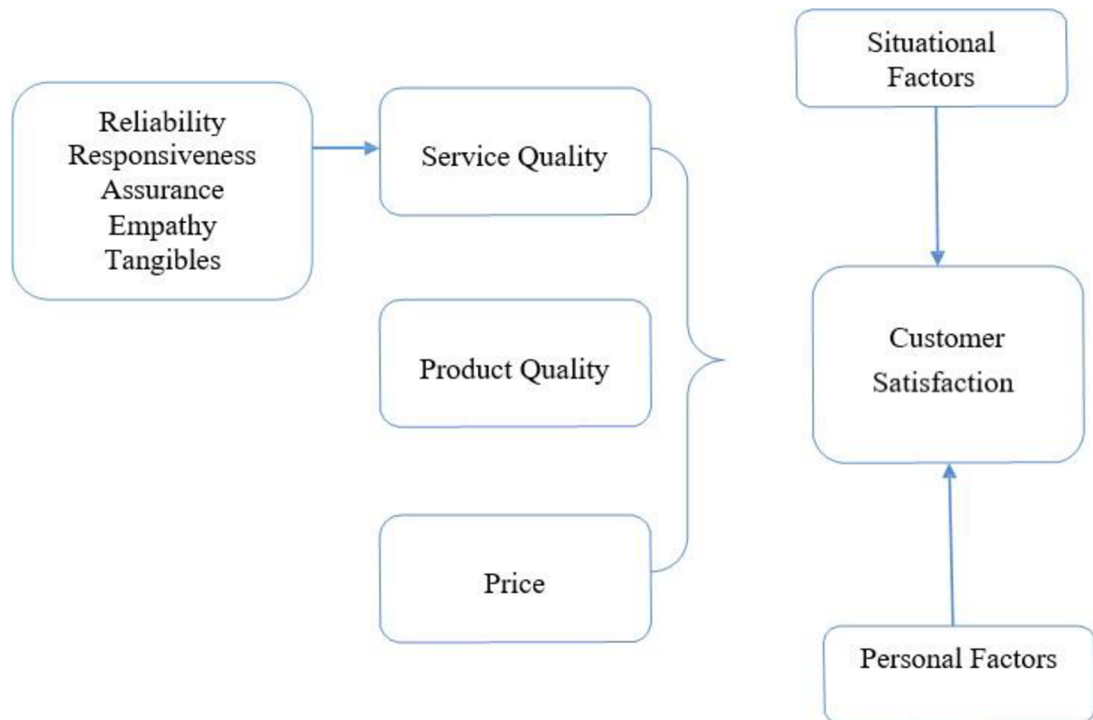


Figure 6: Customer satisfaction model

Source: Zeithaml & Bitner, 2001

As indicated by Jagdish and Parvatiyar (2000), there's a strong connection between consumer loyalty and customer renovation. All together phrases, to build the capability to continue to exist customers, it's far imperative to expand the diploma of purchaser loyalty. There are several variables that impact a fulfilled client after they select to make a buy, as an example, numerous selections, plans, characteristics and administrations. In the occasion that clients are happy with the help which the association substances, they're certain to get returned with the firm yet there is no warranty for patron preservation. In reality, if clients are upset, they

will modify their angle and alternate to any other firm or a contender. Below figure suggests the zone defection, indifference and loyalty.

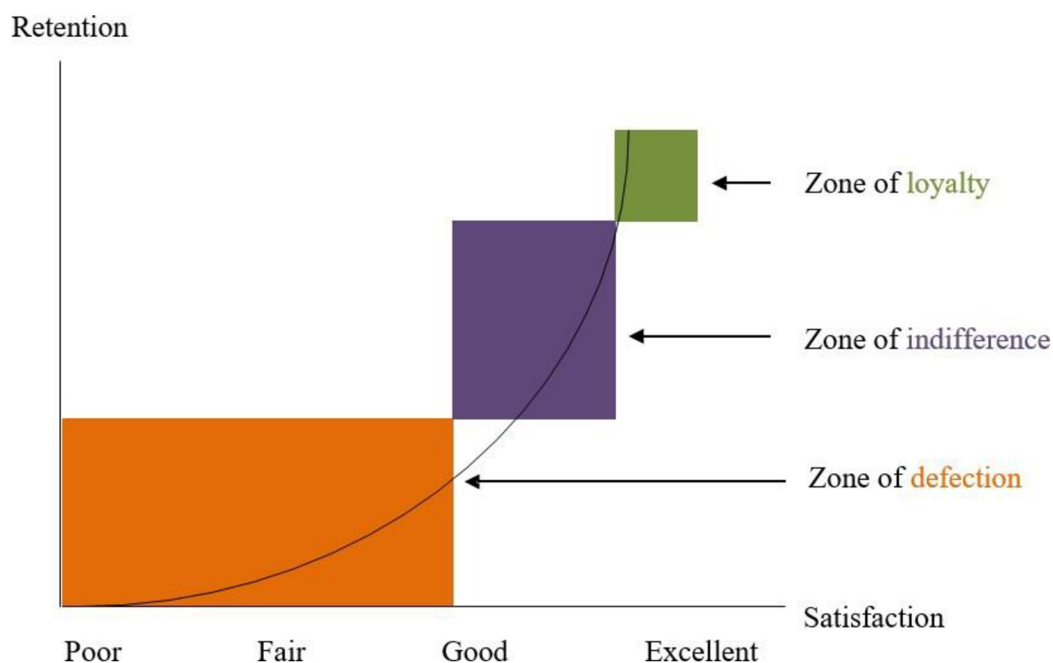


Figure 7: Customer satisfaction and the effect on customer retention

Source: Abtin and Pouramiri, 2016 adopted from Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1997

3.1.2 Customer Retention

Furthermore, Bruhn (2003) featured that keeping buyers is 5 to multiple times more affordable than getting new clients. It is consequently genuine that the possibility of supporter maintenance is a significant factor of dating promoting and advertising contemplates. Furthermore, in examining dating publicising and promoting, there might be a major standing at the pivotal piece of benefactor maintenance and related frameworks for the satisfaction of relationship showcasing (Heskett, Sasser and Schlesinger, 1997). Buyer maintenance carries numerous advantages to a business, alongside fewer costs yet more amazing benefits, discounted pay, publicizing, and advertising costs (Hennig-Thurau and Hansen, 2000). Accordingly, organisations need to put forth an attempt to upgrade their client maintenance with an end goal to do business undertaking with customers inside the long-lasting period and procure a forceful advantage inside the endeavour circle.

It is subsequently urgent to remember that customer maintenance and supporter faithfulness have unequivocally identified with the accomplishment of dating promoting and advertising inside the commercial center nowadays. A business undertaking wishes to think about the techniques and systems to improve its supporter maintenance along these lines. Additionally, a hit relationship promoting factors, along with discussion, the comprehension of the dealer, evaluation level of alternatives, participation and reliance on the merchant and accomplishment of dating top of the line, comprehensive of tolerating as obvious with, responsibility and fulfilment will prompt fruitful associations due to developing buyer maintenance (Hennig-Thurau and Hansen, 2000). The below image will represent the impact of relationship advertising on customer maintenance.

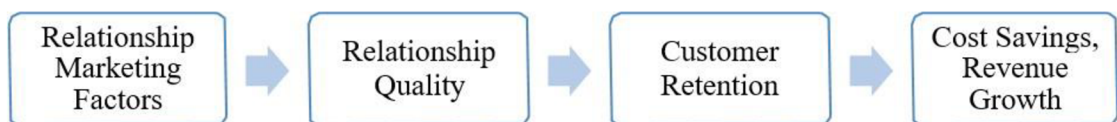


Figure 8: Customer retention research model

Source: Abtin and Pouramiri, 2016 adopted from Hennig-Thurau & Hansen, 2000

3.1.3 Customer Defection

As of late, supporter surrender can be viewed as a disappointment in big business activities. As per Godson (2009), buyer surrender is an idea pretty something contrary to supporter maintenance. All together expressions, client deserting can be portrayed as the rebate of client started of the business venture degree in relationship showcasing. Hence, it's far essential for gatherings to see truly why clients move to contenders for you to profit important records before they need to hold and upgrade customer maintenance through creating dating publicizing strategies. In request phrases, while knowing the reason, an association can put forth an attempt and make a way to deal with keep clients. It is imperative to remember that turncoats are customers who don't generally make purchase with the association and that they generally will be inclined to proceed to a contender (Godson, 2009).

As of late, supporter surrender can be viewed as a disappointment in big business activities. As per Godson (2009), buyer surrender is an idea pretty something contrary to supporter maintenance. All together expressions, client deserting can be portrayed as the rebate of the client's start of the business venture degree in relationship showcasing. Hence, it's far essential for gatherings to see truly why clients move to contenders for you to profit important records before they need to hold and upgrade customer maintenance through creating dating publicizing strategies. In request phrases, while knowing why, an association can put forth an attempt and make a way to keep clients (Godson, 2009).

Client surrender can be perceived as a decreasing flow of costs from the firm to its customers. There are distinctive sorts of intentions that explicitly see the reasons for absconding a business, comprising value, item, supplier, market, and innovation. From the establishment reasons of abandonment, Foss and Stone (2001) expands a few classes of explanations behind buyer absconding, alongside comfortability, focus administration disappointments, reaction to bombed contributions, bombed administration clients, burden, moral inconveniences, and resistance. Clients who have resolved to leave an organization are influenced by these components.

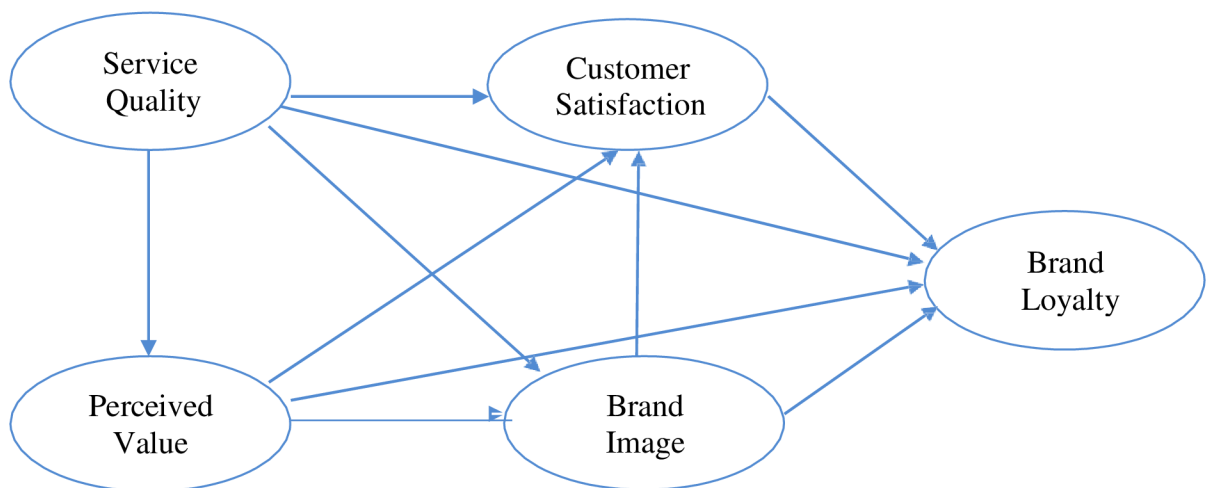


Figure 9: Relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality

Source: Abtin and Pouramiri, 2016 adopted from Lin, 2007

3.1.5 Customer Relationship Management

Peelen (2005) defined CRM as:

“a systematic procedure of determining the customer base, understanding about them, built relationships and altering their way of thinking towards the brand and its offerings”.

Whereas, Godson (2009) underlined that:

“Customer Relationship Management is the application of concepts of relationship marketing with the management of the consumer data by the help of latest technologies”.

In any case, critical CRM facilities around maintaining customers through making and conveying items and administrations better than contenders (Pepić and Duman, 2015). In this way, an association needs to provide first-rate fulfilment to their customers using pleasing their want simply as supplying them with the incredible assist. Crucial CRM is an essential part of development, all matters considered. Besides this, Pepić and Duman (2015) indicated, operational CRM is centered on robotizing and enhancing clients, just as helping a commercial enterprise pastime. To be extra effective, an organisation can address its customers depending on applying present-day innovation to business measures; for instance, advertising mechanization deals with power computerization and administration robotization.

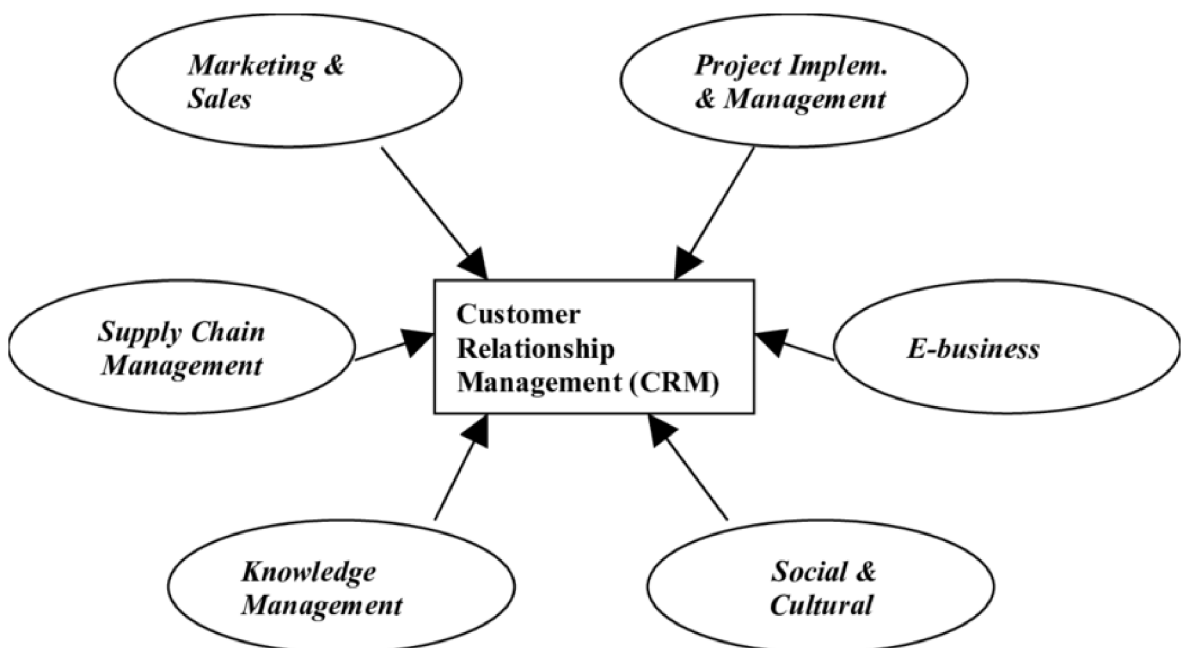


Figure 10: The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Network (Modified)

Source: Zhang, 2017

3.1.5.1 Electronic Relationship (E-Relationship)

As of now, E-Commerce has validated itself to be a crucial piece of institutions. It modifications the coordinated effort among institutions and customers just as advances the developing of e-courting. This courting makes several benefits for institutions; for instance, it is a trustworthy method to approach and oversee clients. As in step with Pepić and Duman, (2015), the enterprise region shape changed into modified via e-dating. It is therefore easy for every employer could make a corporation with one another anywhere within the international. There are four classifications of clients in e-relationship, which include B2B (business to commercial enterprise), B2C (commercial enterprise to consumer), C2B (purchaser to enterprise) and C2C (customer to client).

Conceptual framework

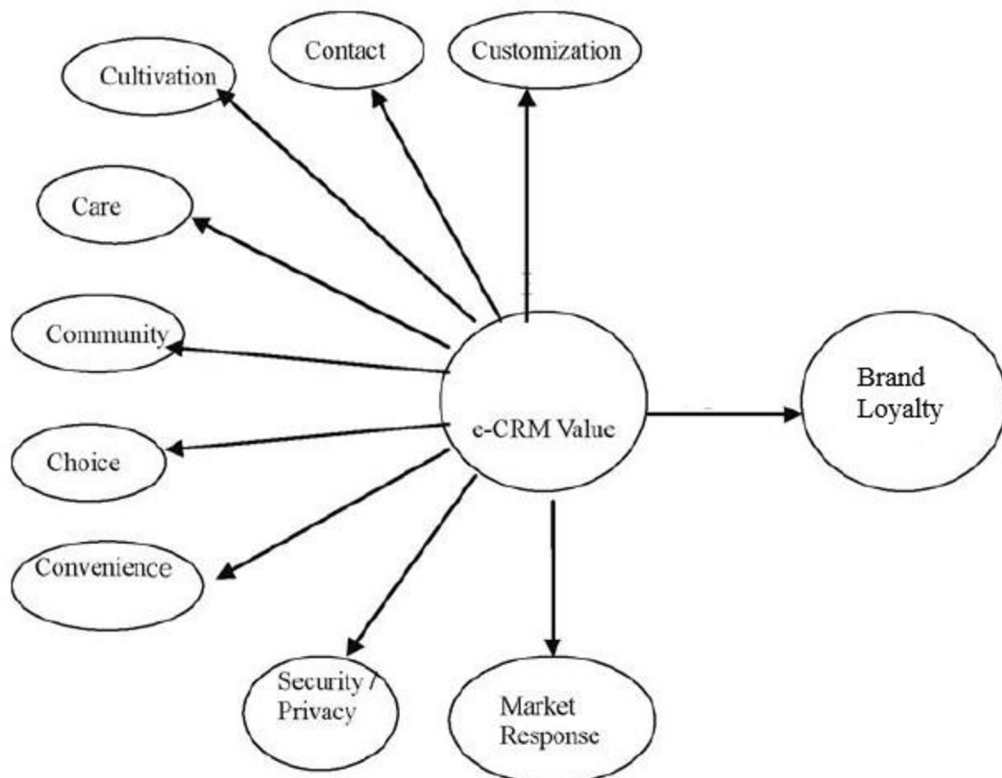


Figure 11: Conceptual framework of e-CRM

Source: Jih, 2011

From one perspective, the electronic relationship is a helpful equipment to enhance shopping and selling via the Internet to satisfy marketing targets. On account of the improvement of innovation, the affiliation gives customers to buy gadgets and administrations on-line thru its sites. Unmistakably buying on the web is a slicing part pattern of society in recent times. Because of the improvement of e-courting, an association could make some other relationship with customers. Plus, clients have gotten extra extraordinary and shrewder. They have a sample to buy the whole thing and analyse price via the Internet since purchasing on the web is amazingly adaptable and helpful simply as time and coins saving. Unmistakably e-courting is an imperative part for firms setting up electronic frameworks of courting on-line amongst clients, accomplices and associations.

Then once more, there is no stopping the essential process from getting the Internet in commercial enterprise duties. As in keeping with Pepić and Duman, (2015), electronic dating performs a considerable element in an association to lessen fees, distance and time. What's extra, the website online of an affiliation can be joined with extraordinary websites to collaborate and create. Also, the electronic courting assists customers with giving enter without any problem. With tremendous grievance from customers, institutions can zero in on having better headway and creating it taking all things collectively views to get extra client loyalty, conversely, with lousy enter from clients, an association can improve the circumstance and tackle troubles right away to satisfy purchaser's solicitations quickly.

3.2 Concept of Customer Loyalty

Watson *et al.* (2015) think that customer loyalty is the continuous positive relationship between the company and its customers. It is an outcome of customers' positive experience, customer satisfaction, and the overall value derived from the goods or services that customers get from the business. The customer's loyalty is ensured from the repeat purchases and stimulates current customers to select the company over its rival companies giving similar benefits.

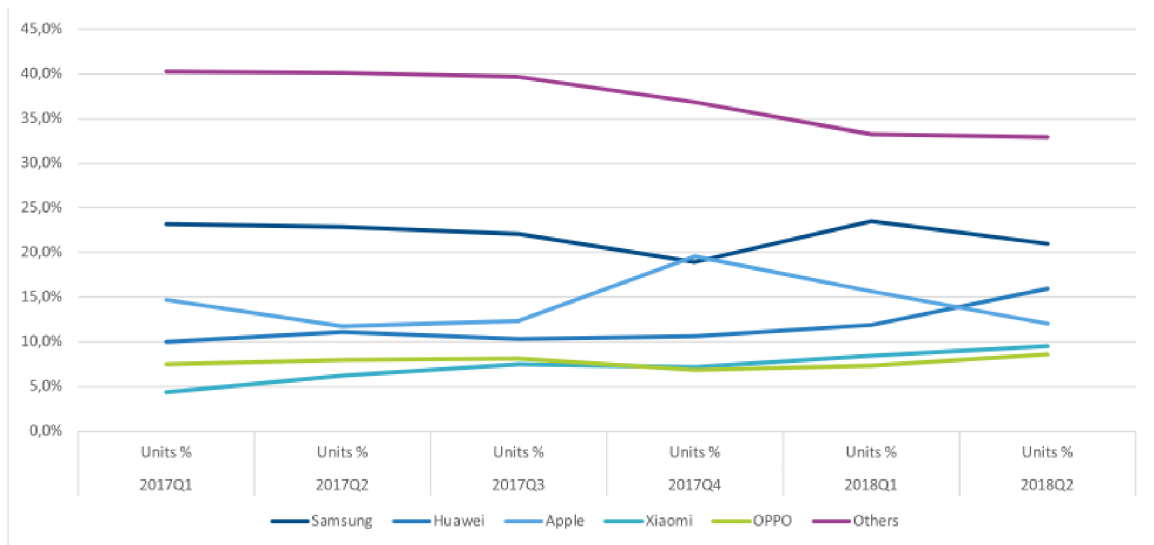


Figure 12: iPhone customer loyalty

Source- Droid Views, 2019

The above figure showed the loyalty of the customer towards Apple Inc. in which it showed that Apple Inc. has done a tremendous job by creating a huge customer with a high loyalty rate as compared with the android and also the company satisfied its potential customer with the single product line. While talking in general terms, the iPhone has a higher price rate as compared with the other android smartphones.

Lafley and Martin (2017) also add to the above authors that customer loyalty occurred from customer satisfaction, consistently positive experiences, and meeting their needs. A loyal customer continuously purchases the products or services from one company and does not switch to another brand. Brand loyalty can only be developed when the company consistently puts efforts to give the same experience, product, service, and success rate whenever they visit the store or website.

In the current scenario, Kiseleva *et al.* (2016) write that the companies give special attention to giving customers the best services and adopting practices to retain the current customer base by improving customer loyalty. They are launching different customer rewards and loyalty programs to loyal customers as a mark of appreciation for repeatedly involving them.

However, customer loyalty is not developed with a single purchase, but it happens with the repetitive purchase or establishing several positive interactions to build trust over time. Also, it does not mean that each of their interaction should be perfect. It must also be withstanding even in the negatives when there is a chance of breaking the connection between the two. Thus, a poor experience cannot convert the customers into disloyal ones.

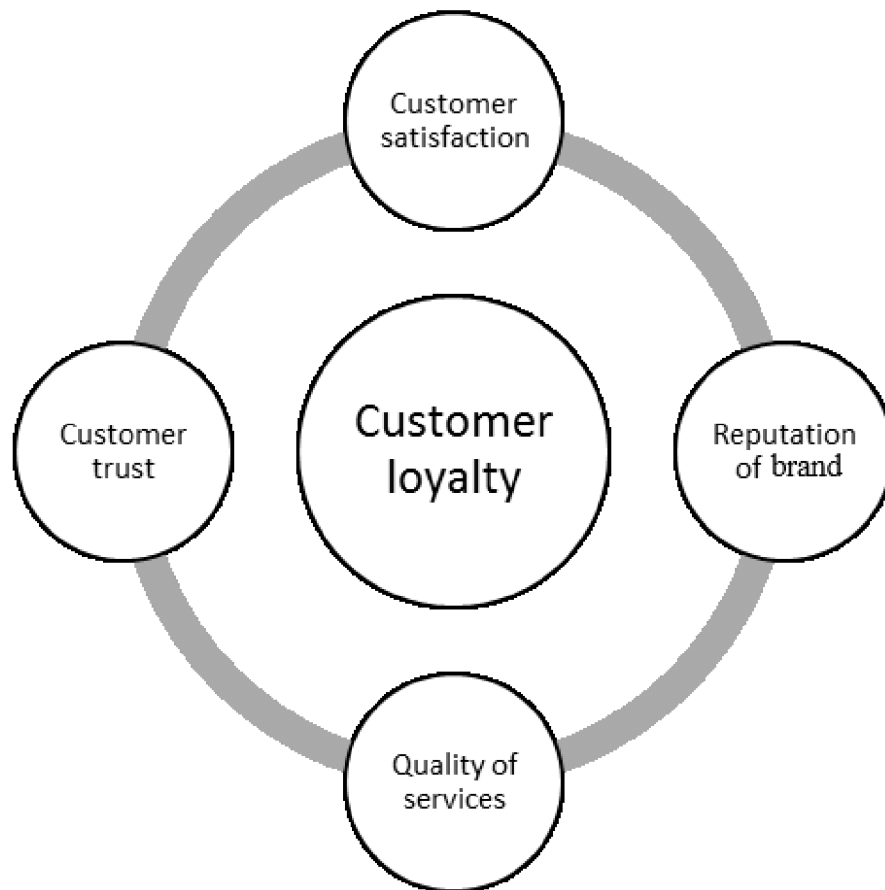


Figure 13: Analysis of customer loyalty influencing factors

Source: Ivascu and Cioca, 2016

In business or running an organisation, loyalty can be considered as commitments for the customers for which they repeat their purchasing regularly and evident a sustainable relationship with the company and customer to maintain relationship. Well, it can be seen as customer willingness to buy the products with the company for the long-term use, sell or use the services of company, and repeat their products, and at the same time recommend the products and services to other people. Specifically, loyal customer are the keen assets of the

company which enhances the relation and increase their profits of company. Having sustainable and strong relation with the customer can increase performance of the product and help the company to promote their products or services via word of mouth, or by references.

Further, customer loyalty is importance in relationship marketing which is rich in several ways to maintain positive attitude, and choose the services over the products while building commitment over the products in positive manner. Thus, the company can only maintain its relation in the market with customer loyalty and firm's productivity. Customer loyalty comprises commitment to the organisation which insists the customers to repeat their purchasing which is necessary for developing and maintaining competitive relation in the business market.

Additionally, the relationship marketing and customer loyalty both have their own meaning which continuously grow, sustain with the market activities and attract the customer for long-term relation. Without neglecting the fact, loyal customer is precious asset which endorse products and services of the company by word of mouth. Also, the customer has trust with the company that create customer loyalty to gain the success and accomplish the relationship marketing process. It strengthens relation and loyalty to achieve the results and take the advantage of retaining the valuable customers. Loyal and confident customer impacts the profitability of the company which increase relations and expand the business activities in different aspects.

Rahim (2012) said fairness also implies that, despite having other options, the customer remains loyal to the supplier. Although the supplier may be experiencing supply issues, the customer prefers to ignore other options and stick with the same supplier because the supplier, in the customer's opinion, provides them with more value and advantage than others. The customer has no complaints about the vendor. Customers who are loyal to a company are more likely to spend money by buying more, buying for a longer period, and learning more about the product or the company. The only way to build long-term customer loyalty is to give customers the impression that the supplier is their top priority.

He research by Wang and Wu (2012) suggests that a customer who is committed to his long-term profitability wants to create and keep every supplier. Customer loyalty is a measure of the Supplier's success in maintaining long-term customer relationships. Customer loyalty is thus the ultimate reward for a supplier's efforts in interacting with his customer. The

customer's loyalty allows him to select a specific product for his own needs. Loyalty can be specific to a product or a company.

If a loyal customer requires the same product regularly, they are said to be 'brand loyal.' Different products from the same manufacturer, on the other hand, may be required. In other words, they make significant purchases from the same supplier and are regarded as the company's special loyalty. Some customers, regardless of the provider with whom they do business, are inherently predictable and loyal (Rahim, 2012). You simply want long-term relationships with him. Loyal customers are more likely to reject competing offers and to advise others to stick with a specific product or supplier.

Nguyen (2013) said if the company is directly linked to the company, the loyalty is also directly linked to the company. If the sale is made through two or more intermediaries, however, loyalty must be assessed on multiple levels. In this case, the end customers' loyalty is contingent on the loyalty of the intermediate customers. The supplier must then focus its loyalty retention strategy in this manner, as well as judge and analyse intermediary loyalties. Every intermediary's importance and value to the final customer is determined by this process. However, properly managed customer retention programs are certain to be loyal to customers in the end. True, customers who participate in a retention program show greater loyalty to the company. Regular customer contact should be included in such retention programs, as well as opportunities for customers to remain actively involved and choose to do business with the supplier.

Zakaria (2014) concluded that the majority of businesses, such as retail businesses, used loyalty programs to enhance customer satisfaction, and prevent their competitors from being defective. However, the program has not been proven to be successful. The problem appears to be that the supermarket chain's loyalty programs are not successful. All suffer from excess, and the majority of loyalty programs are promoted with a membership card. Customers are part of several loyalty schemes to receive special prices and promotions, so these loyalty mechanisms do not create supermarket loyalty. This study investigates the relationships between loyalty, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty programs in the retail industry.

Coelho and Henseler (2012) suggested that the customer's actions demonstrate loyalty. However, just because a customer is satisfied does not mean that his loyalty can be measured. Client satisfaction is not the same as client loyalty. Customer satisfaction is the foundation of any successful business. A customer may be pleased with the agreement but not yet loyal.

The customer, on the other hand, is dissatisfied but wishes to remain loyal to the supplier for reasons that prevent him from doing so. To the same degree of satisfaction, different suppliers may have different levels of loyalty. Loyalty, on the other hand, should not be viewed solely as a mind-set. Customer loyalty should be directly linked to a company's financial performance. The provider should be able to plan for a clear and direct economic benefit of any kind as a result of the strategies and tactics used to increase customer loyalty.

3.3 Importance of Customer Loyalty in terms of Performance

According to Carranza *et al.* (2018), there are several benefits of improving a customer's loyalty. The primary focus of improving loyalty is to improve the company's overall financial performance, leading to increased purchases and the ability to capitalise on each customer. It is cheaper to attend to the current loyal customer base as compared to acquiring new customers. Apart from this, another benefit associated with maintaining customer loyalty is to get a sustainable competitive advantage in the industry and further increases the referral business and positive word of mouth.

The implementation of loyalty programs can be best understood by taking the example of the organisation. The branding strategy of Apple permits it to get benefits from all the above-mentioned factors. Over the last few years, Apple's financial performance is unprecedented, and they become the world's most valuable company. With the emergence of different competitors like Samsung, Oppo, Vivo, etc., as some strong competitors, customer loyalty with Apple proved to be the most treasured competitive advantage. They stick to their premium pricing policy, whereas Samsung reduced its prices to gain Apple's market. But the loyalty and passion that customers of Apple have with their brand do not lead to this happen,

which results in spreading positive word of mouth and further strengthening Apple's brand identity.

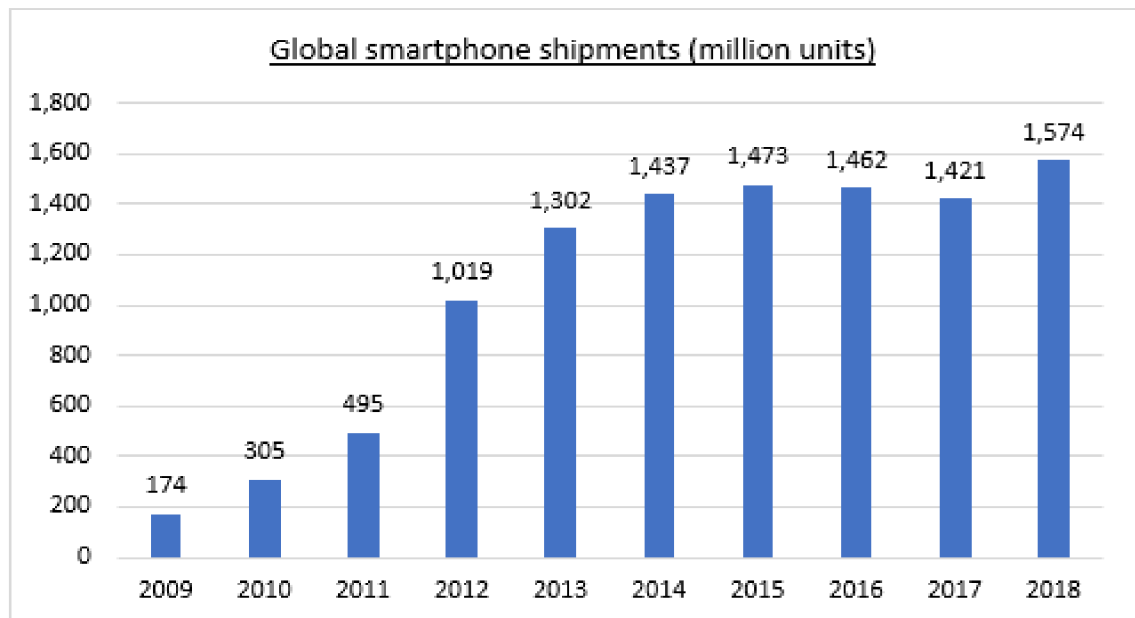


Figure 14: Customer Loyalty of Apple in terms of Performance

Source: Televisory, 2021

With the above chart, the iPhone is a global brand that has high performance among the people and have a high volume of purchasing rate from the year 2009 to 2013. Thereafter, in 2014, The organisation has become more motionless for the users in terms of performance and remain motionless. Thus, the company has introduced the cloud storage and wallet facility to enhance the performance which showed good signs of growth and enhancement in performance.

Zhou *et al.* (2019) said that it is not possible by adopting a single promotion strategy but maintaining a relationship with the customers, encouraging the formal referral program where the informal word of mouth publicity is considered an effective strategy to expand its loyal customer base. Another benefit associated with maintaining customer loyalty with the

brand is to reduce the marketing costs as the marketing spend's effectiveness can be attained through its innovative strategies, effective segmentation, adding new features and benefits to the products to make it unique, and many more. Also, the loyal and stable customer base gives a high return on investment compared to marketing investment.

Ramanathan *et al.* (2017) write in their study that it is always advised to the companies that they must always try to target the existing and loyal customers to get more return rather than spending on reaching the new customers. However, relationships with loyal customers cannot be maintained by making fake promises but to keep the promises by delivering the goods and services as promised in an advertisement or other mediums.

Customer loyalty is important in almost every important metric for a business. Without happy customers who continue to buy from you, your business will not survive. New customers are more expensive than loyal, repeat customers and they spend less money. Keeping customers coming back for more is critical for business success. Also, why short-term profit collection is ineffective. Clients who are loyal to your business will only help you grow and maintain high profits. While it is obvious that customers who spend more money return the favour, there are other, less obvious benefits to loyal customers. Many factors contribute to customer loyalty, but most loyal customers have had a positive experience with a brand and are more likely to shop there again.

Customers who are loyal to a company are more likely to stick with them in good times and bad. Many businesses focus on gaining new customers, but it's also important to keep the ones you already have. Customers who continue to transact with you through a loyalty program remain the focus of your company. Your employees will be more motivated to do their best and meet the highest standards if they have a sense of loyalty. You will have productive and efficient employees if you have loyal employees working for you. Employee loyalty reduces the likelihood of your company experiencing high turnover rates. Customers who are connected are more likely to become repeat customers, which are crucial to business success. Connected customers may not need to be persuaded to return because they want to.

You can make more purchases and become a supporter of your business. It's important to remember that loyal customers are more profitable, but they can also quickly switch to the competition if the company offers them something. The simplest and most efficient way to accomplish this is through a customer loyalty program. To promote customer loyalty, any

company's marketing strategy should include time and energy. If you don't invest in customer loyalty, you might lose more customers than you make, which isn't a good business model.

A good client loyalty system should be used to keep track of profiles and the interactions between each customer and your company. This should include what you buy, why you buy it, and when you buy it. This knowledge enables you to provide specific and useful rewards, such as coupons and special offers for what you buy. Premiums like this are far more likely to be used because they will truly benefit the recipient – and keep in mind that loyal customers spend more. As the customer redempts offers and spends more money on your company, you will make more sales. Benefits that are customized and targeted can also have a much higher perceived value than special generic offers. Bespoke's offers not only show appreciation for the customer but also help to improve your relationship with him. This demonstrates to them that they understand their needs and contributes to increased customer loyalty. It also gives the impression that you take the time to focus on them, which aids in eliciting a positive emotional response.

This positive response can be capitalized and nurtured with careful communication. Keeping in touch, for example, via email or newsletter, will assist you in developing relationships and ensuring that your customers are aware of important relevant offers. This is another technique for establishing a consistent commitment to customers to foster customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is critical for any business-to-business (B2B) organization. It assists in ensuring that your business clients remain committed to their offer, remain loyal to you, and always purchase your services and products from their competitors.

Customer service is critical in the worlds of e-commerce and business. In this article, we will discuss why customer service is a good customer retention strategy for any company – retail, travel, fashion, and so on. Businesses frequently invest heavily in acquiring new customers, which causes them to overlook the critical task of keeping existing customers satisfied. Satisfied customer loyalty to your products, buying them again, and telling friends and family about it is becoming increasingly important. There are numerous ways to improve customer retention, but I am focusing on the most important customer service tactics and how they can have a positive impact while attracting new customers.

Customer service is sometimes seen in customer problems and complaints. In the worst-case scenario, some people dismiss it as a collection of issues. There are a variety of perspectives on customer service. It is viewed as an opportunity to make a positive impression on customers by effectively answering their questions and ensuring that they are satisfied with your service. This has an impact on marketing as well. Customers who are dissatisfied with their service are not only likely to become ex-customers, but they are also likely to tell others about it. They are much more likely to complain after a bad experience.

3.4 Relationship between customer loyalty and performance

The current scenario suggests that the company is out of the field in all of its serving areas, and people are delighted with products and services. According to the book by Gallo (2012), with the title 'The Apple experience: Secrets to building insanely great customer loyalty found many unique things about the company that makes them the leader in the markets.

They have high-quality and reliable products; they have products that people desire, keep their customers at the core of their business, and many more. While some of the recent trends found in the company are digital media, customer relationship management, customer touchpoints, and physical presence, all this is to enhance customer loyalty. Meanwhile, Johnson, *et al.* (2012) illustrated the meaning of The Innovative Success that is Apple, Inc. By this title statement; the authors mean that it is a highly innovative company. By their innovation, they have achieved success overtime period.

Chart 2: Brand Loyalty (% of phone activators remaining with brand)

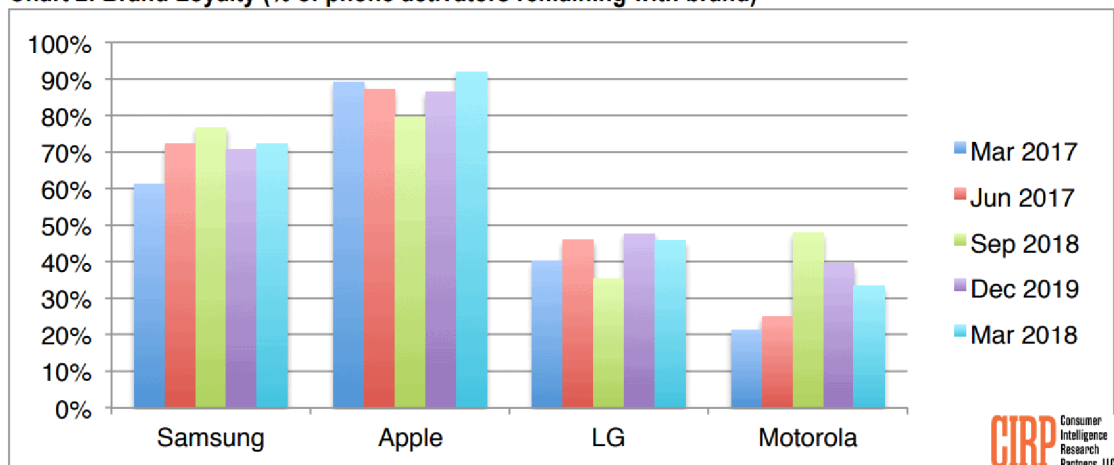


Figure 15: Brand loyalty over time

Source: Stark Insider, 2021

Yang (2020) mentioned that brand innovativeness could be directly linked with customer loyalty as they tend to get the best benefits by the implemented promotions. The research emphasised the users to determine the double-edged impact of brand innovations and customer relations. There has been a positive impact on the customers and their loyalty, while there are some implications.

Customer satisfaction refers to how well a product or service meets a customer's needs, whereas loyalty is influenced by the product's or service's quality as well as other factors. Customer satisfaction is well documented in the literature as being of critical importance and having the potential to provide a wide range of benefits to businesses. A satisfied customer is more likely to return, resulting in increased sales and market share, according to previous research. While it is clear that the satisfaction of customers improves financial performance, it has had a direct influence on market share. Customer satisfaction alone, according to several authors, does not guarantee repeat purchases when competitors, for example, offer appealing promotions.

Because repeat patronage is essentially customer loyalty, driven by a positive cognitive attitude toward the supplier, client satisfaction is increasingly viewed as a necessary, but not

sufficient, the first step in creating customer retention and influencing market share. Because customer acquisition is a costly and difficult task for enterprises that requires significant investment, time, and effort, customer retention has become a key concern for organizations that are more focused on building a solid strategic base for customers than attracting new customers. Retaining customers is more profitable for companies than investing enormous sums in attracting new ones.

Customer retention is a natural result of customer loyalty, which is linked to financial metrics like performance and market share. Increased customer loyalty leads to higher revenues, larger market shares, lower customer acquisition costs, and overall profitability, according to a study. Customer satisfaction, loyalty and market share have also been reported to have a direct connection. Within the context of the services profit chain, service quality promotes customer satisfaction, which leads to customer loyalty, growth, and profit. Because customer loyalty is becoming a top priority for businesses, the determinants or drivers of customer loyalty will be identified. Customer satisfaction has been identified as one of the most important contributors to customer loyalty in studies of marketing and service literature. Customer satisfaction is considered to be a strong predictor of behavioural variables such as customer loyalty, word of mouth, buying-back, etc. Many researchers and literature from the service profit chain indicated that customer satisfaction, customer retention and customer loyalty lead to profitability.

Customer loyalty was also found to be related to service quality. While some researchers claim that customer satisfaction has a greater influence on purchasing intentions than the quality of service, others have demonstrated empirically that quality of service increases customers' intentions to stay with a company. For example, high service quality has resulted in repeat sales and increased market share, resulting in customer loyalty. According to research, improving the quality of their services increases customers' good behavioural intentions while decreasing disadvantages. Customer loyalty is also defined by corporate image and brand image.

Higher levels of customer satisfaction increase customer loyalty by promoting a positive business image. It confirmed that corporate identity and customer satisfaction have a positive relationship that leads to loyalty. Further research has revealed that existing customers' corporate image is critical in developing customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is also determined by perceived value, which is defined as the perceived benefit to perceived cost

ratio. Customers develop loyalty to a specific enterprise when they believe they are getting a better deal than competitors. According to one study, customer value correlates positively with customer satisfaction and loyalty. According to additional research, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty trust are decisive factors leading to customer loyalty, both directly and positively.

The fact that trust leads to positive attitudes (customer satisfaction), which influence purchase intentions repeatedly, was investigated further (customer loyalty). They also functioned as a barrier between customer satisfaction and loyalty. It was also discovered to have a significant impact on customer loyalty and the development of positive customer relationships. Product development, sales, and delivery have gradually shifted to the development and maintenance of mutually satisfying long-term customer relationships. Customer loyalty gives you a one-of-a-kind, long-term competitive advantage that few other businesses can match. Customer satisfaction, loyalty, and financial performance have all been shown to improve when a strategic focus is put in place like this. Conversion costs have also become a factor in determining loyalty. Switching comes at a price in terms of time, money, and mental effort. As a result of these factors, customers are unlikely to be able to transfer the same product/service to another provider. Customers' willingness to recommend other customers is influenced by switching costs, which are positively related to customer loyalty.

3.5 Relationship marketing in attaining sustained customer loyalty and performance for companies

According to the article by Retenly (2018), customer satisfaction has grown steadily over the decade, reflecting Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 72, which is more than the overall electronic industry average. This success rate is delivering great products, exceptional experience for the customers, and relationship management. Relieving purchase anxiety, great attention to detail, employee satisfaction, and most importantly, increasing customer experience. The organisation makes efforts to understand the power of simplicity while delivering the best products in the industry with innovation. Goodson (2011), in the article

on Forbes, justifies that organisation has made its reputation by brand loyalty and customer satisfaction for their tremendous success.

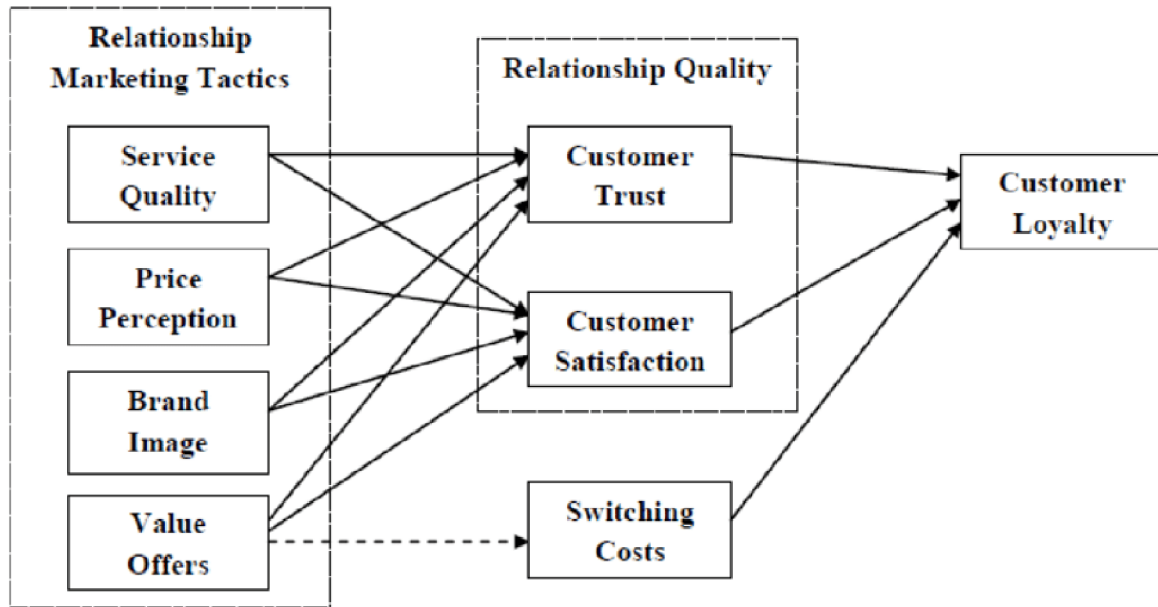


Figure 16: Effect of Relationship Marketing Strategies on Consumer Loyalty

Source: Ndubisi, et al. 2016

The research by Jumaev and Hanaysha (2012) conducted on customer loyalty which is a major concern for the business owners due to intense competition and more expectation of customers. In the same context, Rizan, *et al.* (2014) said that relationship marketing tactics and customer loyalty is variable and based on diverse aspects. Growing firms need to apply smart systems so that they can develop better customer reporting and hence attain better results. Most effective firms can systematically set out to convert customers into advocates which leads to creating customer loyalty at their heart.

Narteh, *et al.* (2013) derived the results that marketing practices, commitment, conflict handling, trust and communication are few relationship marketing factors that directly and positively affect customer loyalty. For market leaders these factors are at their core of the business and hence they can continue to generate high customer loyalty for their customers.

From the analysis, Alrubaiee and Al-Nazer (2010) said that with the help of effective relationship marketing, businesses can generate numerous benefits for themselves like performance, brand extension and high positive customer behaviour for the brand. Relationship marketing orientation provides a significant determination for the firms and their performance. Successful relationship marketing improves customer loyalty and performance with strong relational bonds. Further, the author said that sustaining long term relationships with the stakeholders can strive a great success for the company. Sohail (2012) described the antecedents of relationship marketing where trust, commitment, communication, WoM, customer retention and conflict handling are measures of high customer loyalty and hence strong business performance.

All these are their core factors to run the business and information suggests that it is very much successful in gaining high customer trust, communication, commitment, customer retention etc. People tend to buy iPhone if they use iPhone already, Apple makes official events to communicate with its customers, its products are out of the box quality material and much more that make them the leader in the globe. In terms of WoM, almost all Apple users found to be great promoters of Apple's products which define high customer loyalty.

Maggon and Chaudhry (2015) also suggested that practising focused relationship marketing can enable great customer loyalty and business performance in every area of the business. Adjei and Clark (2010) said relationship marketing develops productivity and hence high mutual values for the customers and the company. Based on their results, there is a significant relationship between personalisation and communication, both of which increases customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the customer's relationship satisfaction eventually enhances customer loyalty. McKenna (2000) long ago said that relationship marketing will lead Apple to great success and one can see where Apple Inc. stands now.

Several empirical studies have been conducted to demonstrate how behavioural loyalty affects customer retention. Loyal customer relationships have been built over time to increase the company's profitability. Some academics have emphasized the significance of competitors for RMOs, discovering that marketing relationship orientation has a significant impact on business performance determination. Customers' loyalty and relationships are strengthened as a result of successful marketing relationships. Marketing relationships are a strategic response for businesses to gain a competitive advantage. The answer is based on

the theory that recognizing market players' interdependence and mutual commitment based on trust and commitment would allow businesses to remain competitive.

In an ever-expanding and rapidly changing environment, businesses cannot maintain attitudes that attract or expand in new markets. Long-term stakeholder relationships are critical for survival in mature markets. Marketing relationships have proven to be effective in instilling trust and commitment in third parties involved in the development of loyal customer relationships. Several studies over the last ten years have found that marketing relations have a positive impact on company performance. For example, it investigates direct marketing in the insurance industry and discovers that marketing relations contribute to long-term profitability maximization. - It has been discovered that a marketing relationship orientation has significant effects on business performance by developing and validating a scale of six subscales – bonding, communication, shared value, empathy, reciprocity, and trust – and by demonstrating the importance of relationships in determining business performance.

According to empirical research, the structure and dimensions of relationship marketing vary, The idea that no one dimension or establishment of relations can completely define the general competence or climate of an exchange relationship is, however, central to conceptualisation. As a result, researchers are split on whether individual or composite relationship mediators have a better understanding of the key aspects of a relationship that have the most impact on outcomes. They were the first to suggest that building trust with customers and other stakeholders be a priority. A customer relationship continuum was identified after investigating the various roles of customer satisfaction, confidence, and commitment. Relational customers want companies with whom they interact to be confident and committed, whereas transactional customers want their interactions to be satisfied.

Customer relations is primarily concerned with 'defining and retaining customer relationships,' which includes all marketing activities aimed at increasing customer loyalty (customer maintenance and winning) by giving value to all parties participating in the exchange of relationships. Customer loyalty is defined as a strong commitment to repurchase or re-consign a preferred product or service in the future, despite the possibility of situations or marketing efforts changing. "Loyalty can result in a massive improvement in the situation. It is hoped that things will improve in the future. A loyal customer is willing to put up with a situation that is unpleasant for a short period, such as poor value for money. Believes that

loyalty stems from a sense of fulfilment, as well as barriers to communication and voice. Loyal customers may not always be satisfied, but they can describe faithfulness as a process. Satisfaction has an effect on the recognized quality at the end of the process, which may cause some behaviour to be loyal and willing.

Marketing relationships encompass All marketing activities are focused on successful relationships, development and maintenance. The following description is proposed following a thorough examination of 26 definitions of relationship marketing: Over time, an organization engages in proactive exchanges with selected customers (partners), developing and sustaining dedicated, interactive, and profitable exchanges. "Deduces that the purpose of marketing relationships is to identify, maintain, and develop profitable relationships with clients and other stakeholders to achieve the goals of all parties involved." According to marketing relationship theory, successful marketing relations are the result of There are a few characteristics that distinguish successful cooperative relationships. Consider how well the company can identify, develop, and manage collaborative relationships with key customers that are characterized by trust, commitment, and communication.

3.6 Impact of customer loyalty and relationship marketing

According to Rasul (2018), The loyal and relationship connects with its potential based customers and cares about their concerns. They feel that its customer issue is their issue that they have to solve and understand. Thus, it has the marketing understanding and attention forms, which place them apart from the normal customer range and sleek, simplified design for those who can relate the things. Well, the organisation puts huge efforts and attention for their customers and especially focuses on the products and remains on the top with the currents and millions of customers. Thus, the customer is loyal towards the brand and in its research and development department, keen on designing and supporting the products and design as per the generation needs. From the previous results, organisation makes modification for the introduction innovative products in the market and greets customers

when they buy the products, applying smart functions in every product to push themselves whenever they need any support.

To sustain customer loyalty, organisation makes several strategies to endure the competition in the market and commitments for customer loyalty. There are advantages that developed during the years and maintain business strategy. This enhanced financial performance over the years and became the most valuable company in the entire world. The customer is loyal, positively evaluates the past performance and decides to continue the relations with the customers and deliver promises to them. The company implements new technology, tracks the records in starter personal interaction, and improves customer service.

Loyalty Rate Comparison (iOS vs Android)

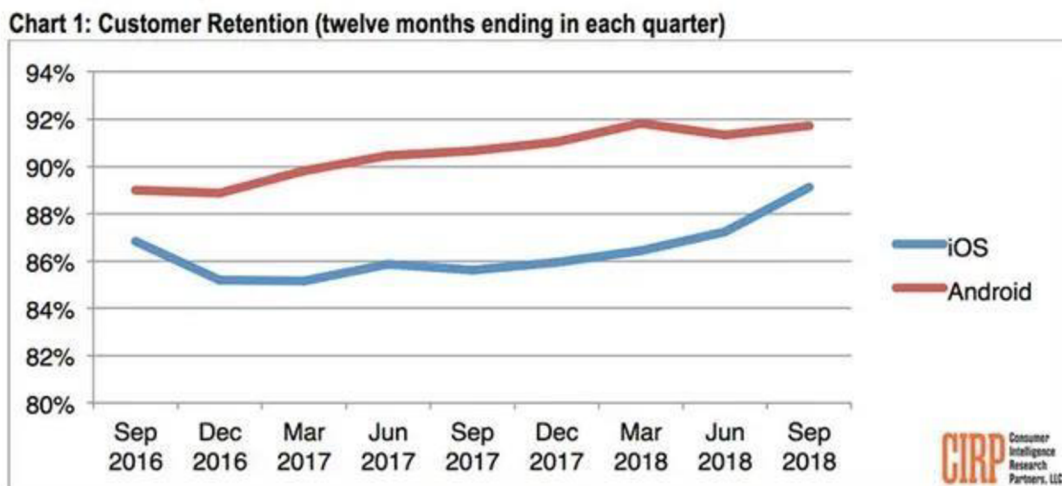


Figure 17: Apple's iPhone Customer Loyalty

Source- Market Realist, 2019

In the starting phase, Apple Inc. aimed to create a proper market for the iPhone, targeting only potential customers and capturing them for the iOS platforms. Apple Inc. always maintains and develop customer relationship and enhance commitment, retain customer and their loyalty. Over the years, the employee addresses the customer issues to help resolve their problems, gives the impression that it helps Apple Inc. to care their clients, customer satisfaction, and find easy technological tools to play with them and make the work easy and

handy. Further, Apple Inc. endorses the products with commercial and print advertisements, aiming to simultaneously target every customer and competition. With the commercial advertisement, acknowledging the compliments and working towards the creativity to solve the gripes, and feel valued. Thus, this thing helps Apple Inc. to take valuable feedback and shape long-lasting relationships with the customers.

The mature markets of today are more balanced and have distinct characteristics from those of the past. Expertise, customer power, and a reduced advertising impact are its defining characteristics. Suppliers in the industrial and consumer markets today are dealing with clients who have inexhaustible demands and are less influenced by traditional marketing techniques. Customers, on the other hand, see no discernible difference between market goods. Other brands can easily be substituted if a customer requests a brand name that is not available. As a result, customer loyalty suffers. Instead of competing on price, rather than competing on price, market-oriented and customer-oriented organizations are attempting to maintain and increase customer loyalty. The purpose of this study was to see how effective customer loyalty relationship marketing is.

Because each function in a company has its own goal and customers, customers are individuals who consume, require, or benefit from the product or function results customers can be divided into two groups: internal customers and external customers. An external client is a person who is not a member of the organization but purchases and uses only the company's products or services. In addition to external customers, every organization has important internal and external customers. An internal client is a member of an organization who receives a good or service and then offers the same product or service to other members of the organization. at all stages of organizational or operational procedures.

Long-term relationship marketing focuses on delivering superior customer value over time, with long-term customer satisfaction serving as the primary criterion for success. Customers are satisfied as a result of their consumption and purchasing experiences. Customer satisfaction is the ultimate foundation in modern marketing; thus, identifying and satisfying the needs and demands of superior customers is critical to a company's success.

Customer loyalty is viewed as a corporate strategy and as a company's most valuable asset, ensuring success and increasing profitability. In today's rapidly changing world, creating and maintaining customer loyalty needs further effort. Electronic commerce is seen as an

instrument to reduce access obstacles and provide a wonderful opportunity for customers to see and choose the right provider (seller). New customer service techniques have been ignored by old commercial organisations, thus losing their existing clients. Furthermore, organizations should not assume that managing customer loyalty is the same as managing profitability. Loyal customers are regarded as significant marketing providers and valuable sales source.

As a result, relationship marketing aims to increase company profits by shifting marketing perspectives and emphasizing the attraction of new customers through effective customer relationship management. Marketing relationships are intended to include in the company's development and commercial operations clients, suppliers and other key economic partners. This results in close interactive links with providers, customers, and other value chain partners. An integrative relationship necessitates mutual overlap in both parties' plans and processes, as well as close economic, emotional, and structural ties. It emphasizes cooperation and non-competition among market participants rather than party independence and reflects binary dependence rather than party independence. The development of relationship marketing thus refers to an important shift from competition and conflict to reciprocal cooperation in marketing principles.

The process of forming strong customer loyalty bonds is known as relationship marketing. Three approaches were proposed for establishing a strong relationship with customers. The first strategy is to boost customers' financial benefits. However, competitors may imitate these financial benefits, so no definitive distinction will be made for the company. The second strategy is to provide social benefits in addition to financial ones to customers. This means that the company recognizes its customers' unique needs and requirements first and foremost, and then provides them with tailored services. Finally, the third approach proposes that structural links or relationships should be used to increase financial and social benefits.

The concept of customer service now includes some new definitions, such as the fact that the entire organization (not just a small part) is specialized in providing services that respond to actual customer needs. Even if a person is unable to assist the customer directly, he can assist the customer's employees. In this context, Customer Service refers to all activities undertaken by a company to satisfy its clients and to help them to maximize the services they offer. This broad definition includes all but the provision of core services that

differentiate a company's services from those of its competitors. Customer retention is profitable for businesses for a variety of reasons.

For starters, the cost of acquiring new clients is high, so customers are only profitable if they are retained. And purchased from the company for a longer period. Secondly, the optimal retention of clients and loyalty benefits will help cover the company's costs. By increasing the company's ability to acquire the majority of its clients, revenue will rise and the company will be better able to provide services to customers, lowering costs. A larger number of potential customers greets happy and loyal customers. Customer relationships benefit businesses, and loyal customers are less price-sensitive as a result. This allows company executives and employees to take a broader view and create a positive environment in which to increase customer loyalty. They should take into account the obvious need for clients to be satisfied, as well as the competitive market's demand for high-quality products at reasonable prices.

3.7 How relationship marketing and customer loyalty helped the business

The potential customer feels motivated and inspired for offerings to enhance the brand identification that can relate the values and principles to promote Apple Inc. By staying true to customer loyalty, the company works on the core values and beliefs, which appeals to the long-lasting relation with them. Apple Inc. objects to have technology-friendly, which maintains a relationship with the customer and directly addresses them and interacts with customers regularly. Hence, the company aims to understand the customers' needs and requirements, update them with advanced features, and satisfy them.

Overall Wireless Smartphone Index Rankings: Verizon Wireless

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)

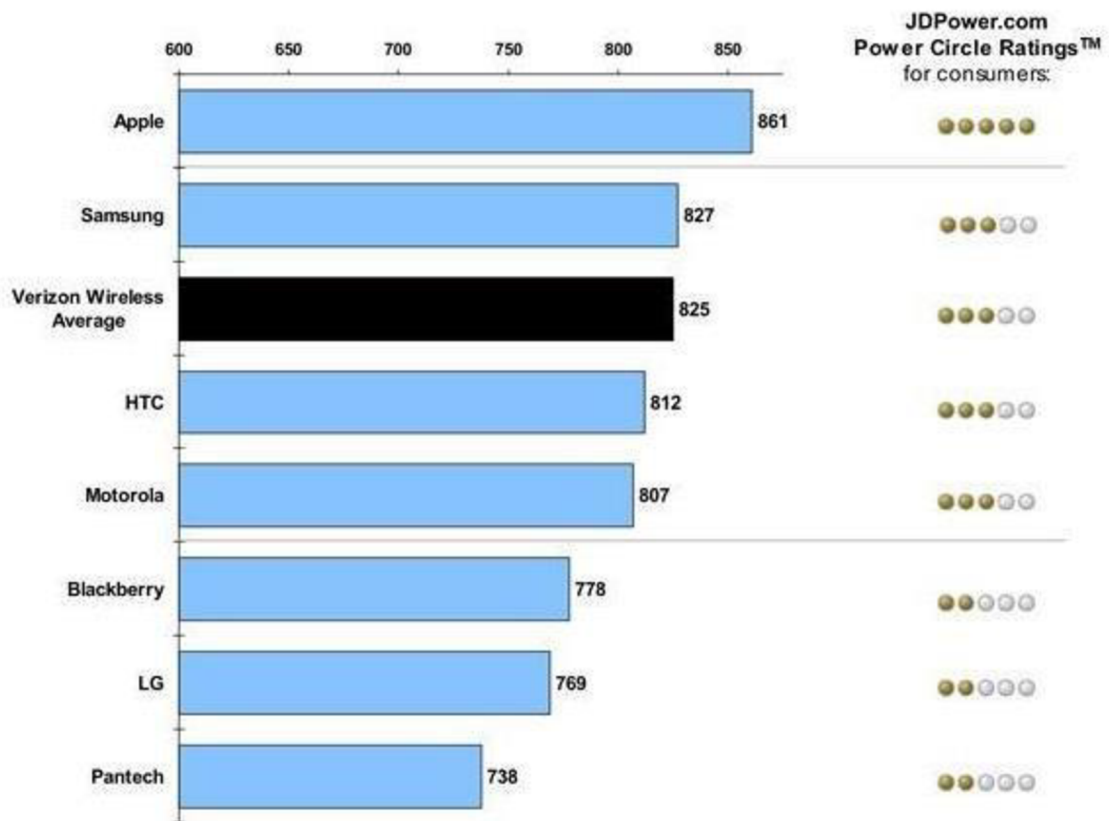


Figure 18: Apple Inc. Relationship Marketing

Source- HTQVN, 2013

Customer retention is more imperative for the corporation which leads them towards development and secure their loyal customers and ultimately maintains relations with them. Though, relationship marketing associates with the real values interact with the customers and sustain durable connections by having genuine worth, focusing on their requirements and practices. Transparency is the key to retain the customer and their loyalty. Well, the organisation moves forward in the creativity section and focuses on reviewing the technologies and ignoring the negativity to make the trust significant. Thus, trust is the biggest factor covering separate parts to focus on brand identification and sustain trust. Lastly, relationship marketing offers the probabilities to connect with the customers and communicate with the new and past customers. Nowadays, several companies and

corporation connect with them through social media and appeals directly to analyse their needs, goals, and emotional state.

Customer loyalty is inevitable for the companies who wish to attain higher success hence sustainability. The market leaders achieved that position by satisfying their customer up to their desires and maintained their loyalty. Brands become trustworthy by their products and services but the practices that they use to enhance brand loyalty makes them reliable. The aforementioned research proclaims many findings that customer loyalty is vital for any business. As an example, it has been found that relationship marketing is very important nowadays. The key findings, sayings and results from the researches utilised suggested that the aspects involved in relationship marketing by Apple are significantly important in gaining trust, kindness, customer satisfaction, communication, conflict resolution etc.

A strong client base is necessary for any type of business to succeed. Brand loyalty, on the other hand, does not happen overnight. Existing customers will only stay if you consistently give them a reason to do so. Through relationship marketing, you can gradually increase and maintain your customers' commitment to your brand. Consumers can now choose the best brands online more easily than ever before thanks to the Internet. If you don't focus on what your current customers want or need, you might lose them forever. Fortunately, establishing long-term customer relationships may not be as difficult. This guide will help you increase your loyalty, which will help you achieve better results.

Marketing relationships are intended to foster long-term relationships with customers. Its goal is to encourage buyers to not only develop a stronger commitment to your brand but also to form emotional bonds with it. When done correctly, sales become more consistent, and customer lifetime increases. It is distinctive in that it focuses on assisting current customers rather than attracting new customers. This marketing strategy is one-of-a-kind. It also recognizes that every shopper is constantly interested in the customer experience because buyers can go through the sale multiple times. Marketing relationship techniques encourage recipients to have complete faith in their company. Most corporate owners agree that finding new buyers can be difficult – and costly. Through relationship marketing, you can increase your repeat purchaser base while decreasing acquisition costs. Loyal customers can do more than just save time and money.

The broader concept of "loyalty" should not be confused with simple customer acquisition: Relation marketing is a relational business strategy that allows a company to improve the value of its employees and customers. So, it's not just about a customer's loyalty, but also about the value of the relationship that comes with it. Relationship marketing can thus be defined as a set of businesses ranging from Establishing loyal customer and mark relationships in operational terms for development, maintenance and optimisation. To put it another way, the marketing sector encompasses all processes for managing customer relationships through data analysis.

Marketing relationships is a strategy that focuses on long-term customer retention, satisfaction, and value. Marketing can be defined as current customer marketing versus new customer acquisition via sales and advertising. Relational marketing focuses on building long-term relationships with customers rather than achieving short-term goals like customer acquisition and sales. In traditional transactional marketing, a customer can choose a brand once, but they will not be loyal to the company in the future. Instead, you'll think about your options every time you buy something similar. On the other hand, by improving customer interaction with your company, you can foster customer loyalty and deter people from returning to your business. Relationship marketing aims to encourage two-way communication, as well as tracking customer activity and providing personalized information about interactions.

To succeed at relationship marketing, you must learn everything you can about your customers and strive to add value to every business interaction. Making strong connections to your brand and mission can lead to freedom of speech and business promotion. For any company, acquiring new customers is a costly endeavour. You must pay attention, deliver a persuasive pitch, and ultimately close the sale. Selling to an existing customer could cost up to five times as much.

The goal of "relationship marketing" is to increase trust and loyalty by reducing abandonment and fan loss. The emotion of what a company can achieve with specific measures (from a particular price-point camp, experiential membership plans, game instruments, commitments programmes, whether it is a retail, a sports team, a club, or a financial company) is one of the best strategies to establish relations with customers. We had a lot of chances to talk about the economy of experience, which is the foundation for creating

value through user experiences. Intangible values such as experiences, memories, emotions, time, and customer experience are used to calculate a monetary value.

The challenge for brands is to shift their approach and move toward a concept that is more sport-like, but perfectly suitable for today's relationships between people and a retail brand or even a financial institution. Customers' knowledge of companies and brands has been lost, as we mentioned earlier because they are distributed and 'dispersed' across a variety of web and social platforms and channels (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, Pinterest or LinkedIn).

4 Analysis

4.1 Apple Inc. Description

Now talking about Apple Inc., launched on 29 June 2007, intending to be the finest leader in the market and sustain the finest customer base with unique features that customers want in the initial phase. Well, Apple Inc. thinks about the customer and connects them for a very long-time with the relation, diversification, and innovation in the products. According to Ascarza, *et al.* (2018), Apple retains the customer with commitments and also with long-term relations with the customers. By empowering customers, Apple encourages their experiences by selling the products to them and unleash their creative spirit.

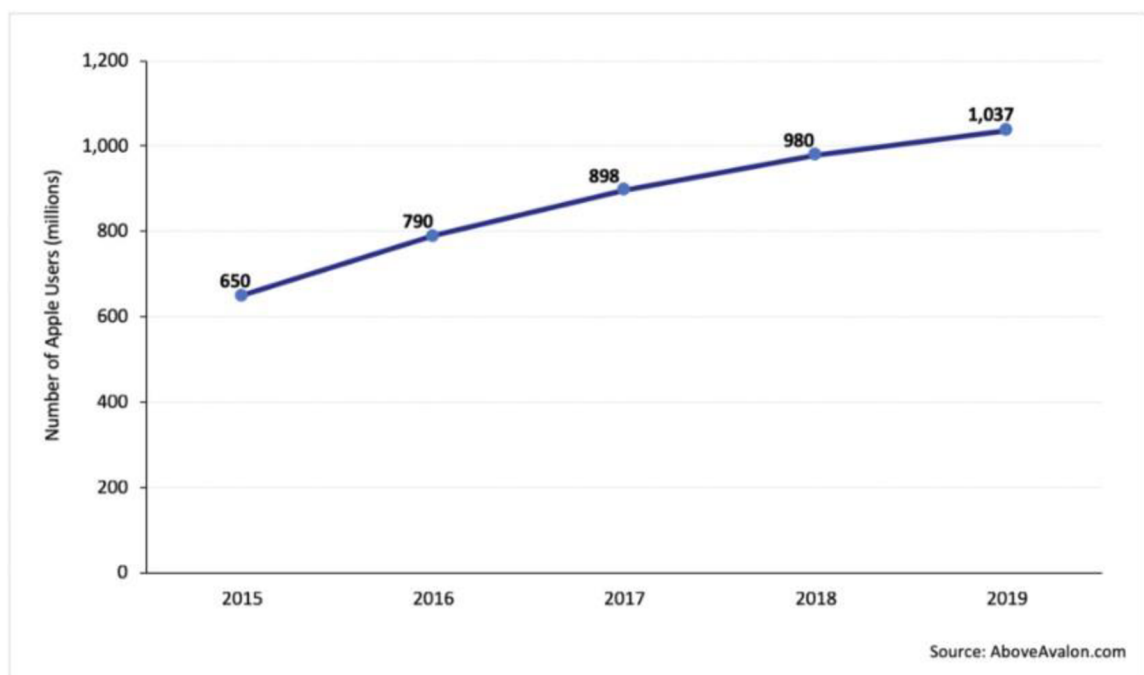


Figure 19: Number of Apple Users

Source: Above Avalon, 2019

Characterizing various levelled goals, following the frameworks to play out the objectives, and finding openings for the companies to extra capably achieve those targets. As per the

investigation of Ascarza, *et al.* (2018), Apple keeps the buyer with responsibilities and with long-time-frame individuals from the family with the clients. Apple holds its purchaser's unwaveringness to "increment stay vision" while a client purchases the Apple gadgets. Consequently, the happy customers need capacities and quality products, this forms a solid organization the different buyers appreciate and protracted.

Research problem

In the current research, the problem is to address the relationship marketing by enhancing customer loyalty with the major brand like Apple Inc. The relationship marketing is essential for the Apple Inc. company which closely connected with the customers and focus to attract them by the products and their services which fulfil their demands. Thus, it strengthens and make strong bottom that appeal the customer for the repetition. While the loyal customers aid the companies to save companies resources like money and time. By creating strong relations with the customers, it can amplify relationship marketing by applying tools and techniques. Although, Apple Inc. focuses to identify and recognize the customers to capitalise the needs and track the activities to get visibility, comprehend techniques, remain with company for the profitability and implement the plans. Hence, by developing interaction and connections with the customer, it expands relationship marketing which suited with their needs and interest for encouraging frequent communication.

4.1 Methodology

4.1.1 Research Approach

The research approach plans and processes the entire study with sequential steps from broad assumptions to a comprehensive collection of data, interpretation, and evaluation of the information. While using the appropriate plan for specified methods, the research uses the procedure which collects and evaluates the data by using the required information during the entire research study.

The research approach is categorised into two different categories shown in the below diagram:



Figure 20: Research approach

Source: Chetty, 2016

4.1.2 Research Design

Research design is the systematic framework by research methods and approaches, which states the problem and determines the design. Identification and review of research problems for evaluating the research issue and regulate the hypothetical whether is biased or unbiased. Following are the characteristics that must be present in the research design:

- *Reliability*: It must be reliable and must give the desired results.
- *Generalisation*: the research design should be done so that it can be applied to the related theme.
- *Validity*: the research work will only consider as valid if it gives generalised results after measuring from different tools.
- *Neutrality*: The obtained results should be unbiased and neutral

Research design can be shown either in the numerical or graphical form or even in the detailed explanatory form. All these ways can work in the best way until it gives unbiased results. Research design helps identify the best suitable tool suitable in the research work (Wright *et al.* 2016). This is of four different types, i.e., causal-comparative, descriptive, experimental research, and correlational.

4.1.3 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is the certainty of accepting the research results by given data collected with the help of sources and analysed them. Thus, it deals with the source information, nature, and skilled knowledge, gaining confidence about the phenomenon. Among six different types of philosophies, the most suitable philosophy for this research can be positivism related to developing the questions and hypothesis and then collecting the data to check the study's hypothesis (Saunders *et al.* 2015).

4.1.4 Sampling Technique or Methods of Sampling

Using the sampling techniques in the research, it gathers the information of every individual in diversified areas. It is advisable to gather the required data, which comprises every individual needed in research. Thus, by including simple random sampling and cluster sampling, which is considered as the non-probability method that illustrates the relationship marketing of the Apple Inc. strengths and weaknesses.

4.1.5 Sample Size

A group of subjects or general population is selected to consider the research study by understanding the sample size. It is the key aspect of choosing the research. It is essential to select the sample size carefully so that carrying out the research will be accomplished (Taherdoost, 2017). Thus, to carry out this study, a sample population of 20 respondents who are loyal customers of Apple Inc. will be selected for this research. The researcher tries to select the respondents who belong to the age group between 18 to 35 years and those who did not want to switch to other smartphone brands. It is assumed that these respondents will have complete knowledge about the strategies and practices adopted by Apple Inc. to maintain a loyal customer base with relationship marketing.

4.1.6 Data collection methods

Data collection is a complete process of accumulating and evaluating the data samples. The data collection is further divided into two different approaches:

- *Qualitative approach:* This approach mainly includes the expert's and scholars' thoughts and opinions who already conducted their studies on this theme. It is a detailed study where no numeric values are included (Leninkumar, 2017).
- *Quantitative approach:* This approach often decodes the data into statistical analysis to better connect the research's requirement and outcome. The data in this approach is shown through graphs, numeric values, and numbers. It is a type of statistical research.

Thus, to complete this research, quantitative and qualitative data approaches are used to establish the relationship between customer loyalty and relationship marketing.

4.1.7 Data analysis methods

Data analysis is the most important stage of the research approach because it is mainly used to minimise the huge data collected from different data sources. It becomes easy to interpret the collected data and take out insightful information from it. Data analysis is also of two types:

- *Deductive:* In this analysis, the researcher develops the hypothesis and theory and then further analyse the data to check the hypothesis (Cossío-Silva *et al.* 2016).
- *Inductive:* It derives new concepts and theories from raw data by analysing respondents' observations participating in the study.

4.1.8 Ethical Considerations

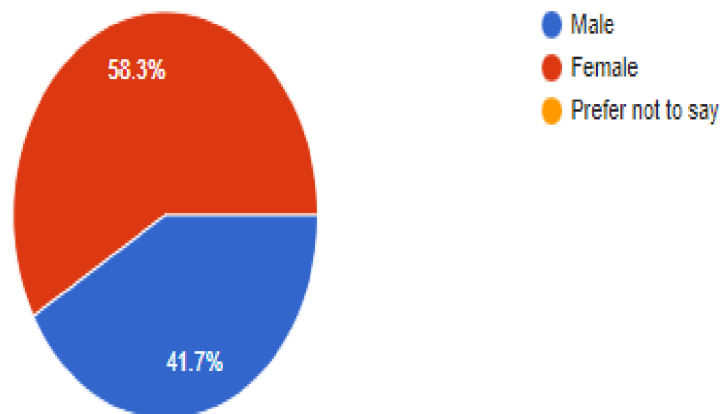
A systematic approach consists of statistical graphs and logical methods that define data validity, scope, data interpretation, and representation with facts, figures, images, tables, and drive the conclusion. Mainly there are two methods for analysing the data are discussed below-

- *Qualitative Analysis-* Using this method, the question arises "why, what or how" via questionnaires, standard results, etc. Well, this kind of analysis is used in text formats or narrate by audio and video presentations.
- *Quantitative Analysis-* Using this, it determines the numerical data and present in measurement scale in statistical manipulation.

4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Can you tell me your gender?

103 responses

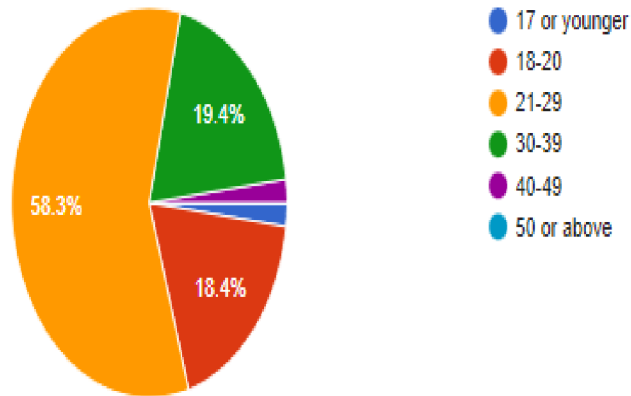


Interpretation

From the above response, it is clear that there is 41.7% of male respondents and 58.3% female respondents.

2. Can you tell me your age?

103 responses

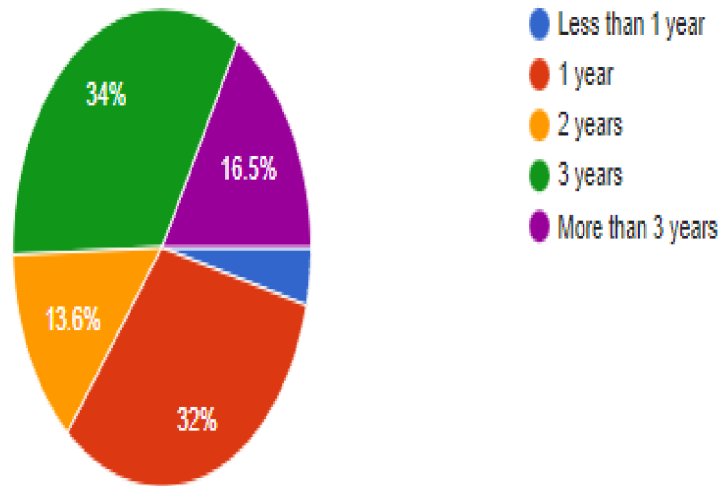


Interpretation

The above response suggests that there is 58.3% of respondents are between the age of 21-29. 18.4 % of respondents are between the age of 18-20. Whereas there are respondents of 30-39 age group are 19.4% of total respondents. The remaining 4% are either 17 and younger or 50 or above.

3. **How many years have you been using apple product(s) for? (In years)**

103 responses

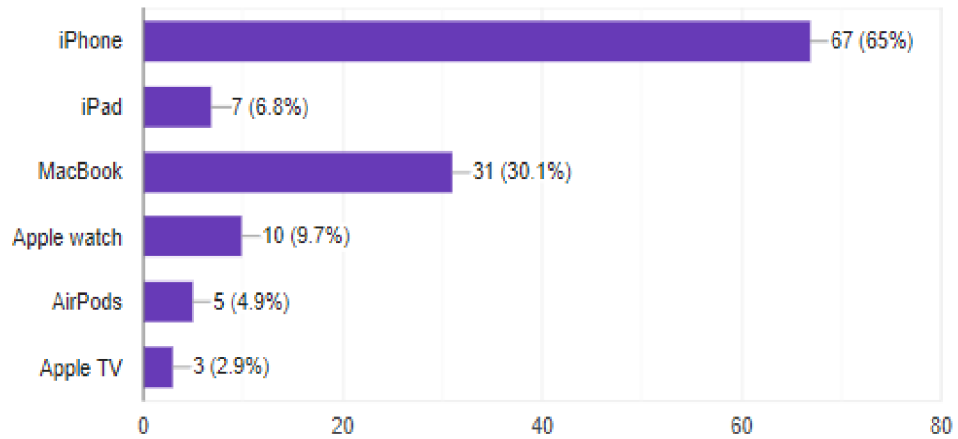


Interpretation

From the above response 34% of respondents are using apple product from 3 years. There are 32% of respondents who have recently started using apple product from one year. About 13.6% of respondents are using apple products from 2 years. About 4% of respondents have started using apple product from less than one year.

4. **What products do you own from the below mentioned Apple products? Select all if you owned every product?**

103 responses

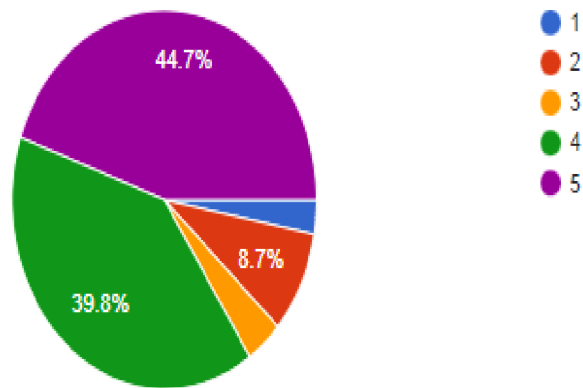


Interpretation

The above response indicates that about 65% of respondents are using iPhone. While about 6.8% of respondents are using iPad of apple inc. MacBook is used by about 30.1% of respondents. About 9.7% of respondents are using apple watch whereas 4.9% of respondents are using air pods. Apple Tv is used by only 2.9% of the total respondents.

5. How satisfied are you with your apple product on a scale of 1 to 5? (Where 1 means least satisfied and 5 means most satisfied)

103 responses

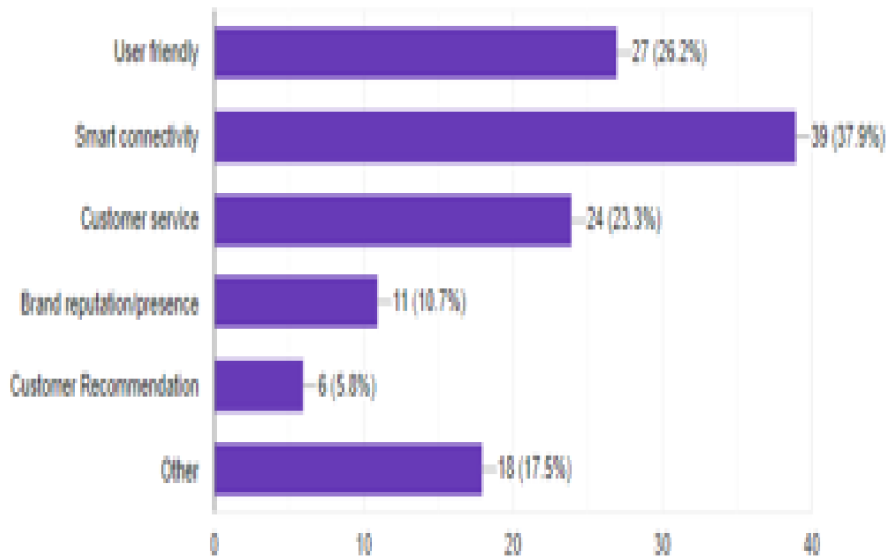


Interpretation

The above pie chart response suggests that about 44.7% of respondents are highly satisfied with the apple products. While 39% of respondent are satisfied with the apple product by 4 points on scale of 5. About 8.7% of respondents gave 2 points on scale of 5 for apple products that indicate respondents are not likely very satisfied with the apple product.

6. Why you select Apple Inc over the other brand?

103 responses

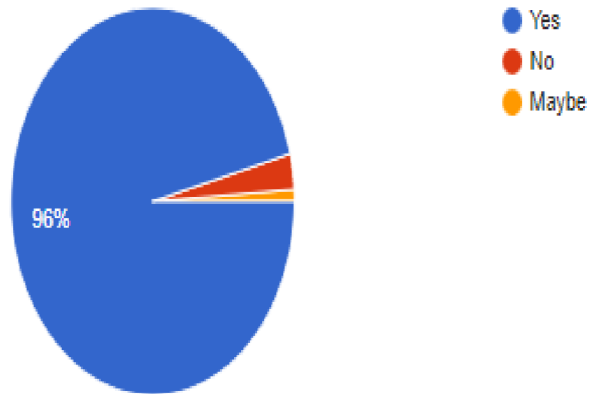


Interpretation

From the above response it is clear that about 37.9% of respondents select apple products over other because they have smart connectivity. Whereas about 26.2% of respondent prefer apple product due to its user-friendly feature. 23.3% of total respondent choose apple product due to its customer service. About 10.7% of respondent prefer apple product because of the brand reputation and presence. About 5.8% of respondent choose it due to recommendation of existing customer. While 17.5% of respondent have their reasons to choose apple products.

7. **Would you like to use Apple product(s) long time?**

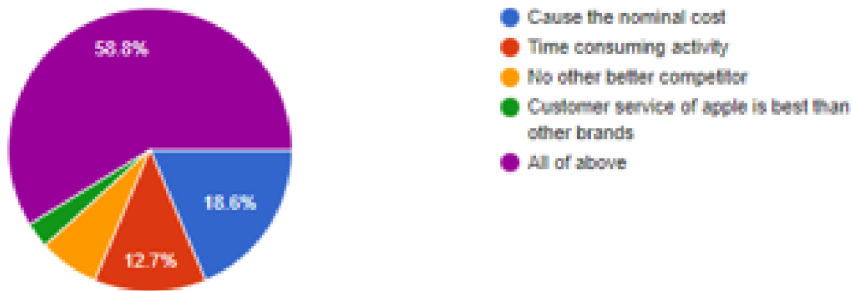
101 responses



Interpretation

From the above response it is clear that about 96% of respondents would like to use apple product for long run. Only 4% of respondents will not use it again.

8. If you don't want to switch to other brand from Apple, the reason for that would be?

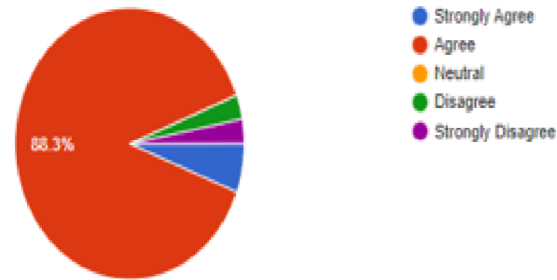


Interpretation

From the above pie chart about 18.6% believe that apple cost nominal cost and therefore they don't want to switch to another brand. About 12.7% of believe that switching to other brand is time consuming. About 6% believe that switching is not possible as there is no other better competitor. And about 58.8% of respondents believe all the above reason are valid for not switching to other brand.

9. I am satisfied with the Apple product(s) and its customer service?

103 responses

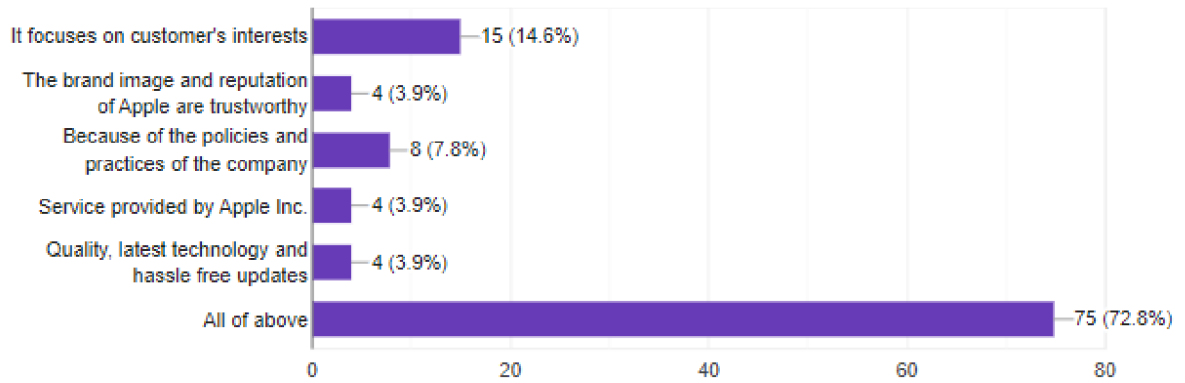


Interpretation

From the above response about 88.3% agree and satisfied with the products and customer services of apple. While about 8% strongly agree and satisfied with apple services. About 2% disagree and 2% have neutral reaction.

10. I trust Apple Inc and its products because?

103 responses

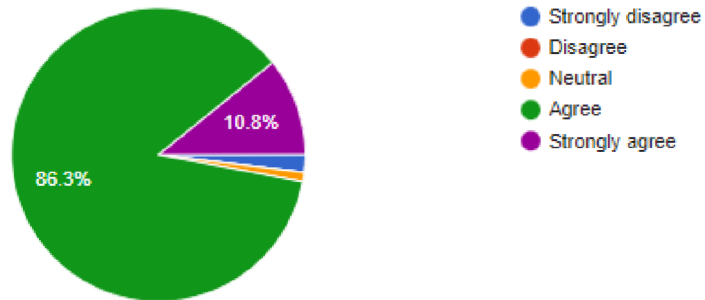


Interpretation

From the above response about 14.6% trust apple product as they focus on customer interest. About 3.9% of respondents trust apple due to its brand reputation and trustworthy. Where 7.8% of people trust apple due its policies and practices of company. About 3.9% of respondents trust apple due to its services while same percentage trust apple due to its latest technology, quality and updates. While about 72.8% believe the reason of trust is above all qualities.

11. Do you agree that Apple Inc. provides timely customer services?

102 responses



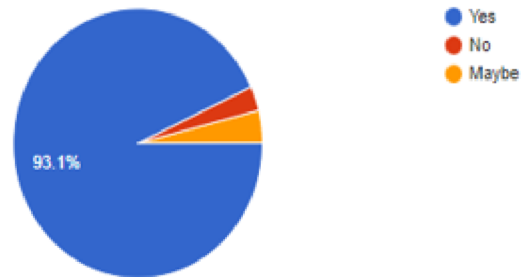
Interpretation

From the above response about 86.3% agree that apple provides timely customer services.

While 10.8% strongly about apple timely customer services. About 2 % has neutral opinion about apple timely customer services.

12. According to you. Do Apple Inc. really need to do more advertising or Promotions to attract more customers?

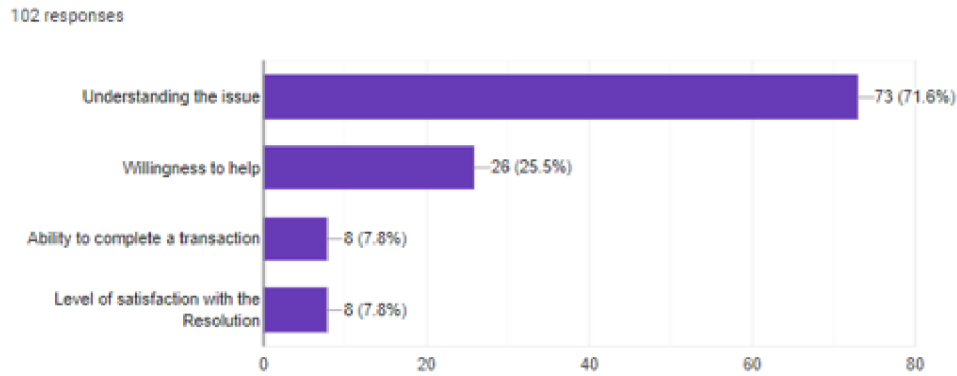
102 responses



Interpretation

From the above response about 93.1% believe that apple needs to do more promotional activity to attract customers. About 3% of respondents believe that it is not necessary to do Advertising. While the other 4% believe that they can do that but it is not necessary.

13. As per your opinion. Please select the options of activities done by Apple Inc. for customer satisfaction.



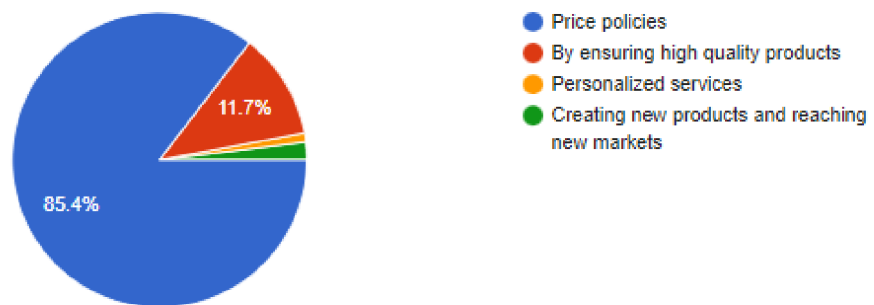
Interpretation

From the above response about 71.6% believe that apple always understand customer issue well for customer satisfaction. Whereas about 25.5% respondents say that their willingness to help customer is one of their best activities for customer satisfaction. And 7.8% of respondents believe that they have ability to complete the transaction in a good manner is what make customer satisfied. While the other 7.8 % believe that provide level of satisfaction by their resolution to the issue.

14. If you could choose one aspect that Apple could improve in, what would it be?

Interpretation

103 responses

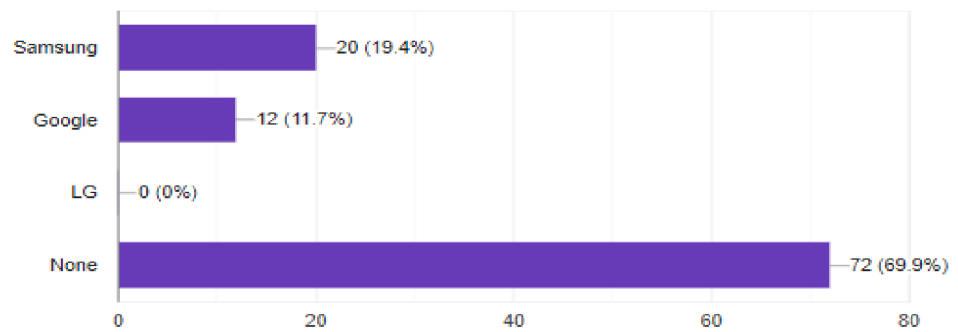


From the above response about 85.4% believe that apple needs to improve their pricing policies. About 11.7% of respondents believe that apple can improve by ensuring high quality products. While the other 3% believe that apple can improve by creating new product and reaching new market. And 2% of respondents believe that apple can improve by personalized services.

15 Other than Apple, what brands do you purchase?

Interpretation

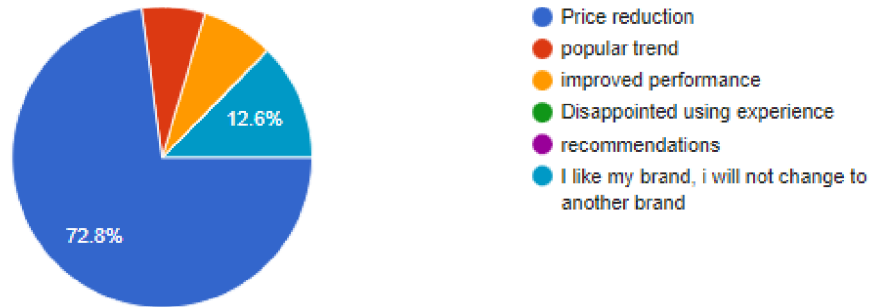
103 responses



From the above response about 69.9% don't want to purchase any other brand than apple. About 11.7% of respondents will prefer google other than apple. While the other 19.4% believe that Samsung is a good option other than apple. And none of respondent consider LG.

16. Which element would be attractive for you to switch to another brands?

103 responses



Interpretation

From the above response it is clear that 72.8% will switch to other brand if they find price reduction at same quality. About 12.6% of respondents will prefer not switching to any other brand. While the other 7% believe that they can switch if there is improved performance and the same percentage respondent will switch from apple if they find any popular trend.

5 Chapter: Results and Discussion

According to the research finding, customer loyalty is widely seen as a primary factor that enhances customer loyalty. This is one approach to decorate the customer notion in promoting which gives customers progressed contributions and meets the overall desires. Devotion has all the earmarks of being the stem in Apple Inc., yet buyer steadfastness is associated with brand ID happenstances and improves the logo picture. With a trustworthy buyer, Apple performs higher for their endeavour, help to make greater and decorate the income over the top. While talking about relationship marketing, its miles deliberately intended to improve customer reliability, which cooperates with long haul commitment. Organizations like Apple Inc. are intrigued by developing their money using alluring new customers and putting forth doable attempts to satisfy the buyer necessities and hold the current ones.

Apple retains its customer loyalty to "*enrich live vision*" when a customer buys the Apple devices. Thus, one study stated that Apple never makes efforts to buy its products, but with the quality features, the customer loves to buy the product with its brand identity. Also, customer loyalty sustains Apple's identity in the market and commitments to the customers. By developing and maintaining customer relationships, Apple increased its customer loyalty. Thus, the satisfied customers want features and quality products, which Apple easily commits to its customer; this builds a strong network among the customer experience and long-term relationship.

5.1 Findings from Quantitative Analysis

The analysis of the primary data collected from the responses of loyal customers of Apple suggested that the most appealing thing about Apple is its reputation and brand image as a luxury product. Therefore, despite its lack of features as compared to android, it has remarkably retained its customer base as well as adding new ones. The primary data suggests that the most favourite product by Apple or the most used product among its loyal customers are iPhones, MacBook and Air Pods. Further, the company has managed to secure long term loyalty with its customers which also adds to its market value and reputation. This is supported by the responses on customer satisfaction, where the majority of the customers were found to be satisfied. The data further suggests that the company should emphasize the strengthening of repeated buyers and seek

opportunities for new buyers by entering into a different product or market. The UI experience, mixed with seamless transitions, brand reputation and customer services are the key factors for its strong customer relationship building. From the above results it is clear that maximum of respondents responded that the brand was found to be very much tested among its customer base. However, the responses also suggest that the company need to enhance its relationship marketing for developing stronger customer loyalty.

The relationship among the customer loyalty and apple Inc performance –

Product excellence, personal fortitude (depth of one's commitment and passion), and social connection" are three important drivers of loyalty. Each of these elements, notably product excellence and personal fortitude, are used by Apple. From the above analysis it is clear that they meet the product advantages requirements on a regular basis. While Apple aren't always the first to incorporate cutting-edge technology, they have a strong track record of releasing new features and products effectively. Apple products are often regarded as the pinnacle of high-end consumer technology, and the business routinely fulfils this promise. It is clearly showing that how well apple is cultivating customer loyalty.

Customer loyalty copes up with relationship marketing and enhance business productivity-

From the above analysis we find that Apple has one of the greatest levels of consumer loyalty, which has propelled them to their current position of dominance. For companies who want their clients to buy from them several times throughout the course of their lives. They are successfully maintaining brand loyalty by creating a social status attached to it. The reason behind creating proper balance of business productivity and customer loyalty is by strategically creating a mindset for the apple products. Customer loyalty and brand equity are excellent ways to gain a long-term competitive edge and enhance the business productivity. They never focus on single transition but mainly focus on their larger customer base.

Relationship marketing sustains customer loyalty for choosing the Apple Inc-

The goal for maintain relationship marketing sustain with customers Apple try to make technology enjoyable. Customers' concerns about using Apple products are addressed directly by the company's employees. This is clear from above analysis that customers get the impression that Apple provides excellent customer service and genuinely cares about its customers. Attaching a distinct, relevant emotion to the brand is another way to persuade customers to trust Apple and become loyal to it. This is an emotion that customers should remember and associate with Apple products or services every time they use them. And the emotion behind it is the status one gets when they purchase apple product.

Customer loyalty and relationship marketing impacted the business of Apple Inc and help the business over the years-

Apple has accomplished the near-impossible by forging an emotional bond with its customers, resulting in a customer loyalty. Its global success is largely due to brand loyalty. This is what we can conclude easily. And the second strategy of relationship marketing that helped apple Inc all these years is that instead of telling people about their company's products, they showed what they believe in. By keeping in mind that it strikes a chord with their target market.

5.2 Summary

Overall, the collection and analysis of the primary data suggest that the current customers are quite satisfied with the brand and are not planning to switch to other brands and manufacturers. It was found that the main reason which the customers find very attractive is Apple Inc. market reputation and brand image. People use their device not only to satisfy the need but also carry it as a personality statement since Apple is known for its esteemed quality and appeal in luxury markets. Customers however do expect a bit more, mainly because other brands are evolving faster in terms of features and prices. But for Apple, its premium pricing strategy is also a major contributor to its brand image and hence customer base size and loyalty. Overall, it is clear that the reason why Apple has managed to maintain its monopoly in the market is that the company has its operating system, user interface and technologies, which makes the brand stand apart from

the rest. There are a large number of brands that manufacture and produce android smartphones, but IOS comes with Apple only. The current brand image is a result of its long-term brand development strategy which is paying off now. However, the world is changing and so are the needs which all companies, including Apple, need to understand and therefore make efforts to constantly develop their customer relationship-building strategy.

6 Chapter: Conclusion

The discussion concludes that customer loyalty is an effective tool for competitive advantage among brands in the age of strong competition. In synchronisation to the research goal of understanding the customer loyalty for Apple Inc., the overall findings are highly positive for Apple's future sustainability. This allows the company to retain its existing customer base while attracting new ones through a word-of-mouth promotion strategy. The overall conclusion from the research is:

- The discussion from survey and information available suggests that for enhancing customer satisfaction, the brand must provide its customers with personalized services since it makes the customers feel valued and hence develop the emotional bond which later turns into loyalty.
- The study further suggests that customer loyalty is strongly linked to brand identification as well. Apple started with an aim of becoming the finest market leader and gain the best and loyal customer base.
- Therefore, Apple is taking some major steps for developing or enhancing its customer relationship marketing strategies, which allows them to understand their needs better and hence achieve greater levels of customer satisfaction.
- As discussed, Apple Inc. doesn't make efforts to make the customer buy their products. Instead, the company works on the device's performance and aesthetical features in a way that it attracts its potential customer worldwide from almost all nations.
- A customer is satisfied when he/she gets good quality products and good features. Security is another major requirement which is also quite strong for Apple devices. Therefore, the performance of Apple Inc. has been strongly backed by its relationship-building since the company attempts to build a strong network among the customer's experience with their products, which also serves for the long-term relationship building. This is how the company has always managed to remain a market leader in electronics.

- The discussion in the report graphically presented the consistent growth of several customers of Apple Inc., from 2015 to 2019, with a striking rise of 1037 million users within just 4 years.
- The customers of Apple typically prefer a sleek design with a seamless experience, high-quality product with great customer services. Therefore, they prefer IOS rather than Android.
- However, it is quite evident that Android is evolving at a much faster rate and nowadays, offers way more features and possibilities than Apple. However, Apple has managed to maintain a standardized image by paying a lot more in its brand image building, which has successfully secured its position among the "luxury" items.
- Therefore, many of its customers still prefer iPhones over Android phones. This concludes that in retaining the existing customer and attracting new customers, its brand image has played a major role apart from its quality and customer services.
- Apart from this initiative, Apple takes various other approaches for building a stronger and more loyal customer base. As the discussion in this study suggests, the company also emphasizes giving rewards to their loyal customers through different rewards programs for appreciating their loyalty and trust.
- The discussion further suggests that few poor experiences for a customer also doesn't immediately turn them into disloyal ones as long as they are assisted properly at the time of issue. It is imperative to remember that turncoats are customers who don't generally purchase with the association and generally will be inclined to proceed to a contender
- For improving the financial performance, customer loyalty improvement is the key, depending upon the ability of the company to capitalize on each customer. This is the reason why despite the introduction and success of so many other brands over the past few years, such as Samsung, Oppo, Vivo, etc., the company has managed to secure its market position and reputation.

- Another major strategy of Apple is its premium pricing policy, as its products are much costlier than other brands. The company sticks to its premium pricing policy, while other brands produce all range of premium as well as budget phones and devices.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Survey Questionnaire

Can you tell me your gender?

Male
Female
Others
Prefer not to say

Can you tell me your age?

17 Or Younger
18-20
21-29
30-39
40-49
50 or above

How many years have you been using apple product(s) for? (In years)

Less than 1 year
1 years
2 years
3 years
More than 3 years

What products do you own from the below mentioned Apple products? Select all if you owned every product?

iPhone
iPad
MacBook
Apple watch
Air Pods
Apple TV

How satisfied are you with your apple product on a scale of 1 to 5? (Where 1 means least satisfied and 5 means most satisfied)

1
2
3
4
5

Why you select Apple Inc over the other brand?

User Friendly
Smart Connectivity
Customer Service
Brand reputation presence
Customer Recommendation
Other

Would you like to use Apple product(s) long time?

Yes
No
Maybe

If you don't want to switch to other brand from Apple, the reason for that would be?

Cause the nominal cost
Time Consuming activity
No other better Competitor
Customer services of Apple is best than other brands
All of Above

I am satisfied with the Apple product(s) and its customer service?

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral

Disagree
Strongly Disagree

I trust Apple Inc and its products because?

It focuses on customer interest
The brand image and reputation of Apple are trustworthy
Because of the policies and practices of the company
Services provided by Apple Inc.
Quality, latest technology and hassle-free updates
All the above

Do you agree that Apple Inc. provides timely customer services?

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

According to you. Do Apple Inc. really need to do more advertising or promotions to attract more customers?

Yes
No
Maybe

As per your opinion. Please select the options of activities done by Apple Inc. for customer satisfaction.

Understanding the issue
Willingness to help
Ability to complete a transaction
Level of satisfaction with the resolution

If you could choose one aspect that Apple could improve in, what would it be?

Price policies

By ensuring high quality products
Creating new products and reaching new market
Personalized services

Other than Apple, what brands do you purchase?

Samsung
LG
Google
None

Which element would be attractive for you to switch to another brands?

Price Reduction
Popular Trend
Improved performance
Recommendation
Disappointed user experience
I like my brand; I will not change to another brand