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THE IMPACT OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON LOYALTY OF MASVINGO RENAL CARE PATIENTS IN MASVINGO

BY

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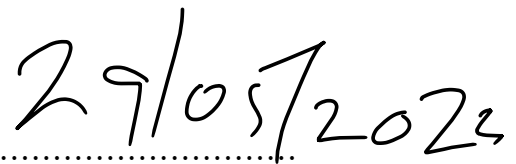
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DEDICATIONS

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, my patients and the renal and dialysis community in Masvingo.

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Glory be to God

ABSTRACT

The general objective of the proposed study is to analyse the effects of customer experience on loyalty of Masvingo renal care patients in Masvingo. The study was guided by the positivism philosophy, ultimately the quantitative approach was employed. The study adopted a survey study design in which, 123 clients of Masvingo renal care in Masvingo were studied. Convenience sampling was employed to draw questionnaire respondents. Questionnaires were personally administered to the patients. Documents were also employed as sources for secondary data for the study. The IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28 and Microsoft Excel were used to analyse the data. Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, and presented using frequency tables, graphs and pie charts. The findings show a positive and significant influence of the four dimensions of CX on customer loyalty as indicated by the coefficients of correlation. All the four hypotheses tested positive to affecting customer loyalty. This study provides a comprehensive perspective of customer experience encompassing customer satisfaction, loyalty, experience quality (Gronholdt, 2019; Gronholdt et al., 2014; Mbama, 2018).

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of customer experience on loyalty of Masvingo renal care clients in Masvingo. This chapter presents the nature and background of the study. Thus, this chapter provides the research gaps and how the study sought to close them. The problem statement, research objectives and research hypotheses are given. Moreover, justification and significance of the study is given. Research delimitations, assumptions, limitations are further outlined. The chapter concludes with the definition of key terms and the organisation of the dissertation

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The medical industry is a representative example of a service industry in which brands play an essential part in business success. It has been recognized that a well-known medical facility brand can increase shareholder value and develop competitive advantages (Morgan, 1997). To create brand loyalty and resonance, customers' experiences with the product must at least meet, if not actually surpass, their expectations (Keller, 2003). Patients select medical providers on the basis of brands, which are seen as an implied promise of the service they can expect (Xu & Chan, 2010).

Gartner (2018) revealed that 89% of business leaders and market leaders said that, nowadays, the competitive element for businesses is the customer experience (CX), which is gained from different aspects of customers in a coffee store including the quality of the products and services, the social environment with peers and family, or the personal experience. Kavitha and Haritha (2018) defined CX as the inner and personal response that customers have to all direct or indirect interactions with a firm while Bhatt and Patel (2020) views it as the perceptions of interaction between the firm and the customer that provokes a reaction. This study measured customer experience using four dimensions, sensory experience, emotional experience, social experience and service quality. Customer experiences are widely acknowledged as crucial components in conceiving perceived values (Kusumawati & Rahayu, 2020). Various researchers have Therefore, providing

superior customer experience is the key strategy for remaining competitive. Saleem et al. (2018) define loyalty as a profoundly held promise to buy again or revisit a chosen brand unswervingly in the future. Thus, it represents customers' longing to continue being faithful to an organization and continuing patronage over time (Setiawan & Sayuti, 2017). The current study takes loyalty as the commitment to repurchase and re-patronise company's offers in future frequently without any coercion (Mukerjee, 2018).

Several studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty. Customer experience and loyalty relationship have been confirmed to be positive within the banking sector (Kandampully *et al.,* 2018; Mbama & Ezepue, 2018) Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown, 2019).

Akter (2011) empirically tested that experiences which are memorable have a higher propensity to impact a person's future behaviour in the United States of America. Thuan et al. (2018) also found out that customer experience has a direct positive association with customer loyalty. This follows that when customers perceive the services that they are receiving as exceptional experience, they are more likely to stick with the organization for a while.

Urdea and Constantin (2021) conducted a study on the influence of customer experience on customer loyalty using the case of Starbucks Coffee in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Customer experience was measured using four dimensions: sensory experience, emotional experience, social experience and service quality. It was found that all the four dimensions of customer experience significantly affect customer loyalty but via customer satisfaction. In Netherlands, in the hotel context, Yu (2015) conducted a study to establish the influence of customer experience on brand loyalty. In order to Customer experience was operationalised into three dimensions, namely, core service, servicescape and brand image. An online survey was designed and the data is analysed with partial least squares. It was established that customer experience has a significant positive impact on brand loyalty in the hotel domain, and among the three constituents of the customer experience, the servicescape and the employee service have a positive impact on the customer experience with the company, while the core service is the least for the customers to considerate.

In Indonesia, Ziaid and Patwayati (2021) assessed the impact of customer experience and customer engagement on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in e-retailing in Indonesia. The results of the study found that there was a reciprocal relationship between customer experience and customer engagement. The results also found that customer experience have a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. In Malaysia, Imbug, Ambad and Bujang (2018) conducted a study to examine the relationship between customer experiences and customer loyalty in the context of telecommunication industry using a self-administrated questionnaire. Customer experience was decomposed into 3 dimensions, namely core service, charging, and brands, which have a significant impact towards customer loyalty. It is concluded that customer experience positively influenced customer's loyalty.

Manyanga, Makanyeza and Muranda (2022) investigated the moderators of the effect of customer experience, satisfaction and word-of-mouth intentions on customer loyalty using a sample from bank customers in Zimbabwe. Data were collected from bank customers using a structured questionnaire through a cross-sectional survey in Harare, Zimbabwe. It was established that customer experience, satisfaction and word-of-mouth intention were found to have a direct positive effect on loyalty. Also, Makudza (2020) conducted a study to analyse and evaluate the effect of customer experience management (virtual interaction, physical interaction and service interaction) on customer loyalty in the banking industry. The study followed an explanatory research design. The dimensions of customer experience management, namely virtual interaction, physical interaction and service interaction, were also found to be statistically significant in explaining customer loyalty behaviour. Findings indicated that there is a positive association between customer experience management and customer loyalty.

There are multiple pieces of literatures that examined the correlation between customer experience and loyalty, however, the majority have been conducted in the banking industry. None has dared to explore the same relationship in the medical context. Therefore, in order to provide a deeper insight to the medical managers, this study is purposed to fill in the gap to test the impact of customer experience on brand loyalty in the medical domain. Given the significance of customer loyalty towards the success of businesses, it is very unfortunate that no

attention has been paid to examine the influence of customer experience towards customer loyalty especially in medical industry in Zimbabwe. Specifically, the aim of the study is to investigate the effects of customer experience on client loyalty at Masvingo renal care patients in Masvingo.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The medical services market in Zimbabwe is increasingly demanding as customers use websites of the companies to make comparisons of the offers or the amount of payable for the services. The renal care market in Masvingo is highly competitive as new entrants have joined the industry offering competitive services at affordable charges. Patients are therefore spoilt of choice. Patients/Clients, if they deem themselves not satisfied, they do not stay with the same service provider. Extant literature has revealed that, in recent years, there have been an increasing number of customer experience studies across various countries, industries, products (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). Despite the widespread use of studies on customer experience, there is little evidence in the current literature to demonstrate that research on the influence of the perceived customer experience on consumer loyalty has been carried out. This research issue in a Zimbabwean context has remained underexposed. Therefore, the fundamental problem that this research intends to examine is how the consumer experience influences customer loyalty in the medical industry in Zimbabwe. Recent research suggests that customer experience could facilitate customers become advocates and ambassadors for the service providers by talking to other users and asking their opinions (McLean & Wilson, 2019; Jaiswal & Singh, 2020; Pandey et al., 2020). Thus, if Masvingo renal care can investigate customer experience, customer loyalty could improve. Therefore, the proposed study seeks to investigate the impact of customer experience on customer loyalty, specifically at Masvingo renal care.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Main objective

The general objective of the proposed study is to analyse the effects of customer experience on loyalty of Masvingo renal care patients in Masvingo.

1.3.2 Secondary objectives

This was guided by the following specific objectives.

- To examine the influence of sensory experience on loyalty of Masvingo renal care patients in Masvingo.
- To establish the influence of emotional experience on loyalty of Masvingo renal care patients in Masvingo.
- To investigate the influence of social experience on loyalty of Masvingo renal care patients in Masvingo.
- To examine the influence of service on loyalty of Masvingo renal care patients in Masvingo.

1.4 STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The following are the hypotheses of this study:

$H_1 1$ Sensory experience has a positive effect on the loyalty of patients at Masvingo renal care in Masvingo.

$H_1 2$ Emotional experience has a positive effect on the loyalty of patients at Masvingo renal care in Masvingo.

$H_1 3$ Social experience has a positive effect on the loyalty of patients at Masvingo renal care in Masvingo.

$H_1 4$ Service quality has a positive effect on the loyalty of patients at Masvingo renal care in Masvingo.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Significance to theory

Theoretically, this study's first and most important contribution is developing a conceptual framework for the customer experience to enhance customer loyalty in the medical industry in Zimbabwe. In particular, this study will assess customer experience in the context of a developing, and volatile market. To the best knowledge of the researcher this research is the first study which provides a detailed and comprehensive model assessing the influence of customer experience on customer loyalty in the medical industry, particularly at Masvingo renal care. This model is based on the concept of consumer experience, where

relationship marketing and the social exchange theory act as a fundamental theoretical basis.

An emerging notion in the marketing literature is to initiate marketing programs that connect with customers and foster customer experience beyond purchase. However, empirical research on customer experience remains sparse. From a theoretical perspective, this empirical investigation of the linkages between customer experience and key loyalty development factors serves as an important step toward building further knowledge of customer engagement in the context of customer experience, thus contributing to the existing literature.

1.5.2 Significance to practice

This research also has an important implication for brand management. The knowledge generated from this study reinforces the importance of managing the customer's experience with the brand. However, service brand evaluation may reach a point where incremental improvement is not practically feasible. Therefore, the strong influence of customer experience on service brand loyalty provides a sound reason for Masvingo renal care to also focus on marketing strategies and actions that are likely to enhance customer experience and foster customer loyalty.

1.5.3 Significance to Academia

The study will be availed to the library to be utilised for further reference by scholars who will be researching on the same topic. Thus the research will add to the rich literature of Great Zimbabwe University. This research is also going to be of paramount importance to the researcher's writing skills and will also improve her analytical skills more imperatively. The research procedure will assist the researcher to be prepared for academic researchers in future and also business researches in the area of customer experience and customer loyalty. Most importantly, the research will enable the researcher to be awarded the Master of Commerce degree in Strategic Management.

1.6 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was carried under the following assumptions:

- That the researcher observed all ethical considerations throughout the course of this study.
- Participants responded within a reasonable time period to allow the study to be carried out as scheduled.
- The study's participants supplied the researcher with true and accurate information.
- The selected sample was a true representative of the population under study.
- That the researcher observed all ethical considerations throughout the course of the study.
- Respondents clearly understood the research instrument.
- That the participants responded within a reasonable time period to allow the study to be carried out as scheduled.

1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1.11.1 Geographical delimitations

The study was delimited to local authorities in Masvingo Dialysis, Masvingo Province.

1.11.2 Time delimitations

The period concerned for the study is January 2023 to April 2023. However, data collection is delimited to patients who will visit the clinic in the month of February 2023.

1.11.3 Theoretical delimitations

The researcher was informed by literature on customer experience and customer loyalty. Thus, a research model was based on customer experience (including four dimensions: sensory experience, emotional experience, social experience and

service quality (independent sub-variables) and customer loyalty (dependent variable).

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study had several limitations. Firstly, the researcher adopted a case study approach by focusing on one institution that is Masvingo renal care and dialysis in in Masvingo urban only. Thus, the study excluded the views of other medical institutions in Masvingo. The findings from the study will not likely to be generalisable to all medical institutions in Masvingo and Zimbabwe at large.

Secondly, the cross-sectional nature of the research is likely to restrict the determination of the causality between customer experience and customer loyalty. The mitigation measure to this is that the researcher resolved in focusing on one specific company that is Masvingo Dialysis in order to obtain uniform results that can be generalised across the country.

Thirdly, the researcher as a fulltime employee, a block release student and family person is likely to face time constraints. However the researcher worked during evenings after work to complete some tasks and forego some family activities and also utilise time and weekends available to complete the study.

The researcher faced financial challenges in carrying out the research. Unavailability of resources to use during the project such as printers, reference books and other necessary resources affected the quality of the research project. In trying to overcome this constrain, the researcher sought for financial assistance from friends and relatives.

Lastly, the study used closed ended questionnaires to gather data. Closed ended questions do not give respondents the opportunity to express their views. To address this, the researcher conducted a pilot study to ensure that the questions covered every issue that was important in answering the research questions.

1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The following terms are defined in this study:

Customer experience: this refers to the inner and personal response that customers have to all direct or indirect interactions with a firm (Kavitha & Haritha, 2018).

Customer loyalty: is the longing of customers to continue being faithful to an organization and continuing patronage over time (Setiawan & Sayuti, 2017; Mukerjee, 2018).

Sensory experience: (Kavitha & Haritha, 2018).

Social experience: (Terblanche, 2018).

Emotional experience : Include not only providing valuable tangible brand clues prior to purchase, but it is also an important dimension of service experience due to its impact on customers during consumption (Trivedi, 2019).

Service quality: defined as mental picture or perception of a brand or branded product or service and may include the symbolic meaning that the consumers associated with specific attributes of a product or service (Ogba & Tan, 2009).

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY
Chapter 1: General introduction

The section introduced the dissertation by presenting the main problem area as well as the rationale for undertaking the study. The chapter also establishes the limitations and delimitations of the study, its assumptions and the benefits to different stakeholders that accrue from its undertaking.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The chapter provides a discussion of the theories guiding the study. More so, a review of related literature on the study's key variables that is customer experience and customer loyalty. It also establishes the knowledge gap which this study was intended to fill.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

The chapter outlines how the research was carried out with a special focus on the research design, targeted population and sources of data, sampling methods and data gathering instruments.

Chapter 4: Presentation, analysis and discussion of findings

In this chapter, data was presented and analysed with a special focus on emerging trends and patterns. The main research findings were reported and examined in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

In Chapter 5, a summary of findings is given, conclusions are drawn, and recommendations are suggested. More so, the chapter discusses limitations of the study, providing a gap for further research is also highlighted.

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the study by providing the background of the study and problem statement. It outlined the research objectives and research hypotheses. The chapter further provided the rational of the research, the research significance, delimitations, and the conceptual framework of the research and dissertation structure. The following chapter provides literature review pertaining to the theories guiding the study and the relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented the nature and background to the study. Chapter two aims at identifying knowledge gaps within the available literature on customer experience and customer loyalty. The theoretical models guiding the study are discussed first followed by an examination of the study constructs that is customer experience dimensions and customer. Existing findings on the relationship between the study variables are explored so as to develop the study hypotheses. This is followed by a critique of the existing findings clearly articulating the research gaps. The chapter summary wraps the chapter.

2.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

According to Saunders et al. (2019) a theoretical framework is a model of how one theorises or makes logical sense of the relationships among several factors that have been identified as important to the problem under investigation. In essence, theoretical framework attempts to integrate key pieces of information especially variables in a logical manner (Sekeran & Bougie, 2019). The purpose of a theoretical framework is to direct research objectives as it provides a schematic description of relationships between and among independent, dependent and extraneous variables (Cohen et al., 20118). This study is guided by the Theory of Relationship Marketing Commitment-Trust and the "Gaps Model" (SERVQUAL) of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry. The next section discusses the Theory of Relationship Marketing Commitment-Trust.

2.1.1 Theory of Relationship Marketing Commitment-Trust

Scholars have identified various virtues that have been theorized in the relationship marketing literature, but trust (Dowell *et al.,* 2015) is central to relationship marketing because it encourages marketers to work to preserve relationship investments by cooperating with exchange partners. Trust also helps firms resist appealing short-term alternatives in favor of the expected long-term benefits of staying with existing partners, and resist appealing short-term alternatives in favor of the expected long-term benefits of staying with existing

partners (Cha and Borchgrevink, 2018). As a result, outcomes that encourage efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness are accomplished when both trust and commitment-not just one or the other-are present (Möllering & Sydow, 2018). In a nutshell, trust and commitment result in cooperative actions that help relationship marketers succeed (Tsai, Cheng, & Chang, 2010). Before they can begin, both parties must acknowledge that there is a relationship.

According to Ashnai et al. (2016), relationships are thus a sequence of transactions that, through trust and commitment, create a sense of shared connectedness. Client retention is linked to higher levels of trust and commitment, which leads to increased profitability for the organization (Mahmoud et al., 2018). The other party inspires a widespread sense of trust and security, and trust is concentrated. The parties believe that the other will behave in the best interests of the other, that the other is trustworthy, and that the other has the necessary knowledge (Schirmer et al., 2018). Trust is defined as a partner's belief that the other will engage in activities that will result in positive outcomes while avoiding actions that would result in bad ones. Customers' and companies' trusting relationships are linked to overall positive outcomes, and trust in the company should increase the advantage gained from trade with it (Ashnai et al., 2016).

Long-term partnerships require commitment in order to succeed (Vanneste, 2016). It is based on mutual trust, shared ideals, and the assumption that partners are difficult to replace. Partners who are deeply connected to one another are more inclined to work together to safeguard their related assets. This suggests that a partner prioritizes long-term benefits associated with present partners over short-term options. Customers will only make promises to trustworthy partners since commitment entails vulnerability and makes them subject to exploitation (Ashnai et al., 2016).

Individuals who believe they gain more value out of a connection are more devoted, therefore highly committed clients are more inclined to reciprocate effort on behalf of an organization based on previous benefits received (Schirmer et al., 2018). As a result, commitment in this sense refers to both parties' recognition that they are in this market together for the long haul. Because they are mutually dependent on one another, they are willing to make sacrifices for their spouses in order to reap long-term rewards from their psychological and financial investments (Baran,

Galka, & Stunk, 2008). For example, how an organization's employees carry out their jobs can develop trust, which has a significant impact on the customer's commitment and, as a result, customer loyalty (Helkkula & Kelleher, 2010).

A successful relationship necessitates dedication (Hessling et al., 2018; Jain et al., 2014). Continuous investment in activities that are likely to keep the relationship going in the future demonstrates the desire to keep it going. Because reaching a point when a commitment is made can take time, it could signify that the relationship has reached a certain level of maturity (Chandrashekaran et al., 2017).

High levels of commitment are also associated with future benefits perspectives, relationship identity, a limited desire to seek out alternatives, the amount of effort put into a relationship, the investment made in the partnership, and the individual's presumed position in the relationship (Möllering & Sydow, 2018).

The following is how Morgan and Hunt (1994) describe trust and commitment obligation. Relationship commitment is a big part of CRM (Mahmoud et al., 2020). If a company has proven to be trustworthy and has demonstrated its ability to give solutions and successfully support the customer's value-generating operations, a customer will be loyal to it (Bianchi & Saleh, 2020). Although commitment and trust are closely intertwined, it is unclear which comes first. Commitment can develop as a result of a partnership's development of trust, or it can develop as a result of the individuals in the relationship agreeing to commit to each other. Furthermore, a breakdown in commitment can be triggered by a breakdown in trust, and vice versa (Alteren & Tudoran, 2016).

2.1.1.1 Critical analysis of the Theory of Relationship Marketing

According to Alteren & Tudoran (2016), the success of an enterprise does not depend on the enterprise's subjective decisions but on the value and satisfaction the product and service can provide the customers. Under the transaction relationship of the buyer and seller, the importance played by trust and relationship commitment becomes an important indicator thus (Mahmoud et al., 2020), the strategies of relationship marketing has its potential value. The existence of trust and relationship marketing can be used to determine whether the buyer and the seller have the main principle of strong emotions (Möllering & Sydow, 2018). Relationship marketing theory upholds that not all customers are similar in terms

of profitability to the organization and retention rather than the acquisition of new customers is more profitable.

However, the theory has been criticised due to its over-emphasis on commitment and trust. The theory creates barriers for customers to exit from the relationship. The switching costs are created by the supplier, or the relationship itself. These costs can be monetary or non-monetary, examples include search costs, learning costs, emotional costs, inertial costs, risk, social costs, financial costs and legal barriers.

Despite its criticism, the Theory of Relationship Marketing has been chosen in this study for two main reasons. Firstly, relationship commitment and trust are essential in order to build successful customer loyalty in the medical industry. Interactions with customers fail to develop into relationships if businesses lack these elements. To build customer loyalty is to ensure customers feel reassured that the business will fulfil service expectations and honour its commitments. Trust is particularly relevant to the medical industry as customers prefer bread suppliers who deliver the right quality at the right time. Trust is therefore an important element of a relationship-building programme, as it generates confidence, fosters cooperation and offers the service provider a 'second chance' when inevitable mishaps occur. Commitment implies that both parties are loyal, reliable and demonstrate stability in the interaction with one another.

2.1.2 The "Gaps Model" (SERVQUAL) of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry

According to Parasuraman et al. (1985:42) the "Gaps Model" of service quality (Figure 2.1) or SERVQUAL is based on a "disconfirmation paradigm". This model envisages service quality as based on the difference between customer expectations of the service and their perceptions of the performance of the service by the service organization. Zeithaml et al. (2009) explain that the SERVQUAL model comprises of five domains or dimensions of service quality, which are Responsiveness, Reliability, Assurance, Empathy and Tangibles.

As already alluded to, SERVQUAL is based on the gap or variance between customer expectations and their perceptions of the actual service. The SERVQUAL dimensions would show how customers differentiate performance on these dimensions (Bebko, 2000) cited in Hu et al. (2009:112). The "Gaps Model"

(SERVQUAL) of service quality views services in a structured and cohesive manner. The model is made up of Customer and the Provider (Marketer) Gaps (Zeithaml et al., 2009). A discussion of the "Gaps Model" follows:

The "Customer Gap" looks at the differences between what customers expect and what they get. Expectations are essentially standards or reference points and perceptions are subjective based on what the customer thinks would happen. Due to the importance of customer satisfaction in influencing the competitiveness of a firm, in order to deliver quality service, an organization needs to begin with an understanding of its customer. The "Customer Gap" is calculated by finding the variance between what a customer expects and what he/she gets to determine service quality. There could be a positive gap, negative gap or no gap. Of particular concern will be a negative gap, as this would mean that customer expectations exceed their perceptions of the service (Zeithaml et al., 2009:32-33).

In terms of the "Provider Gaps", four service quality gaps are prevalent, which are the "Listening Gap (Gap 1)", "Service Design and Standards Gap (Gap 2)". Service Performance Gap (Gap 3)" and the "Communications Gap (Gap 4)" as explained by Zeithaml, et al. (2009:33).

The "Listening Gap (Gap 1)" is concerned with the differences between what the customer expects of the service and the organisation's understanding and knowledge of such expectations. It arises due to an organization lacking an understanding of what customer expectations actually are. Organizations may not be aware of customer expectations due to a number of reasons. They may not be willing to ask about customer expectations or not be prepared to address expectations. Consequently, this may result in poor decisions thereby affecting service quality negatively. One of the reasons giving rise to the "Listening Gap" (Gap 1) is inadequate marketing research.

An organization may not collect accurate information on its customers, which may contribute, to a large "Listening Gap". Marketing research, through formal and informal methods, plays a crucial role in understanding customer expectations. In addition, the "Listening Gap" could manifest because of some organizations lacking upward communication. Furthermore, the "Listening Gap" can widen due to management not keeping in contact with customer contact employees or not understanding what customer contact personnel know. Furthermore, the

"Listening Gap" widens due to a lack of relationship marketing resulting from inadequate strategies to retain customers.

Consequently, the "Listening Gap" is less likely to occur when an organization has good relationships with customers. Service recovery is crucial in assisting an organization whose service has failed to rectify service failure and being able to subsequently deal with it (Zeithaml et al. 2009).

The "Service Design" and "Standards Gap (Gap 2)" occurs when there is a difference between a business's understanding and knowledge of customers' expectations and the creation of a service design and standards, which are customer-driven (Zeithaml et al., 2009). Zeithaml et al. (2009) explains that a contributing factor to the Service Design and Standards Gap (Gap 2) is the belief on the part of managers that customer expectations are unrealistic or unreasonable and that the variable nature of a service does not allow for standardization and hence the setting of standards will not help in achieving goals. The "Service Design and Standards Gap (Gap 2)" is also contributed to by the intangible nature of services, which pose difficulties in describing and communicating a service and this becomes even more evident for new services. Therefore, it is important that those involved with the service work with similar or alike ideas of the new services based on customer expectations.

The "Performance Gap (Gap 3)" arises when there is a difference between customer-based service ideals and real performance of the organisation's employees and "when the level of service delivery falls short of the standards, and falls short of what customers expect as well" (Zeithaml et al., 2009:38). Therefore, resources needed to meet standards are essential in reducing "Performance Gap (Gap 3)". There are a number of impediments to reducing the "Performance Gap". These inhibitors include, personnel who lack knowledge on their roles in their respective jobs, who experience conflict between the customer and the organisation, and are poorly selected; insufficient technology, poor reward and recognition, and a lack of team effort and empowerment. These are essentially human resource-related factors and need to be addressed in order to better service performance (Zeithaml et al., 2009).

The Communication Gap (Gap 4) represents the incongruity concerning an organisation's service delivery and its external communications. Any promises

made by the organisation can raise customer expectations and expected standards against which customers measure service quality. Hence, a difference between actual and promised service could result in a widening of this customer gap. Poor service quality perceptions can arise when employees do not fully understand the service delivery and hence may exaggerate promises which cannot be met. Therefore, coordinating service delivery with external communications helps to narrow the communication's gap and also affects the customer gap. Hence, it is important that organisations effectively manage all communications to customers in order to prevent inflated promises resulting in higher expectations (Zeithaml et al., 2009).

2.1.2.1 Critical analysis of The "Gaps Model" (SERVQUAL)

Despite its popularity and extensive application, SERVQUAL has had many criticisms leveled at it over time, and these have been widely documented in the existing literature (Bayraktaroglu & Atrek, 2010; Vaughan & Woodruffe-Burton, 2011; Souca, 2011; Al Ghaswyneh & Albkour, 2013). Buttle (1996) documents one of the earlier criticisms of SERVQUAL as follows: Firstly, SERVQUAL emphasises on expectations, which is considered inappropriate and should rather be an attitudinal model of service quality. Secondly, SERVQUAL does not expand on the extensive existing knowledge in statistics, psychology and economics.

However, despite the many criticisms levelled against SERVQUAL, it remains a very valuable tool in measuring service quality (Ciavolino & Calcagnì, 2015). In fact, according to Jayasundra (2009), the value of SERVQUAL is that it is a generic model, which can be applied to any organisation in measuring service quality. Furthermore, in support of the usefulness of SERVQUAL as a tool in measuring service quality, many authors (Duffy & Kilbourne, 2015) have made positive inputs about SERVQUAL's efficacy as a service quality-measuring tool.

2.2 RESEARCH VARIABLES

In this study, an attempt is made to establish the relationships between the various constructs of the model. It is assumed that customer experience affect customer loyalty. Hence, customer experience is the independent variable while customer

loyalty is the dependent variable. These variables and sub-variables will be discussed in the following sections.

2.2.1 Customer experience

Kranzbuhler et al. (2018) conclude that the only way to remain competitive is to provide exceptional CX.This is seen as an opportunity and challenge for marketing. Sharma and Chaubey (2014, p. 18) characterise CXas "the sum of all experiences that a customer has with a supplier of goods or services, over the duration of their relationship with that supplier." They emphasised the importance of providing the experience that customers desire. They believed that successful businesses would influence their customers through real engagement and experience, which form the perceived value of customers (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020).

Consequently, CX is recognised as a crucial element that governs the success of a firm (Goodman & Broetzmann, 2019). According to Schmitt (2010), CX refers to the customers' perception, emotion and thought about the product or service when they engage in consumer activities. According to Jaiswal & Singh (2020), product, packaging, communications, store interactions and sales relationships are all examples that may be relevant to experiences as a result of direct offline activities. When customers interact with any goods and services, they receive some kind of experience, which could be anything from positive to negative (Jain *et al.,* 2017). For example, this happens when a customer is having a meal at a restaurant, meeting a doctor or purchasing a computer system.

This section discusses the definitions of customer experience in the literature and proposes a definition adopted for this study, cognisant that the literature does not recognise a definitive meaning. Two prevailing concepts are presented in the definition of customer experience: the subjective nature and the holistic nature of customer experience (Keiningham *et al.,* 2019). The subjective nature encompasses customer experience as viewed from a customer's internal standpoint (Bones & Hammersly, 2017), whereas the holistic nature focuses on the point of contact between the business and customer (referred to as a touchpoint), both directly and indirectly (Gronholdt, 2019).

Subjective nature

According to Dootson et al. (2016), customer experience proposed as a subjective definition may be limited in applicability across all environments. It is suggested that customer experience originates from interactions between a customer and a firm, which elicit a reaction (McCarthy, & Grimmett, 2019).

Hence emotions, sensations, spirituality, physicality and rational thought all play a role in defining the experience the customer has with the firm (Khan, Garg, & Rahman, 2015). Gronholdt (2019) points out that traditional constructs (service quality and customer satisfaction) are biased towards cognitive effects. This definition of customer experience assumes customers desire satisfying experiences, thereby providing the connection between a customer's mind and activity (Keiningham et al., 2019). The subjective nature of customer experience may be influenced by hedonistic properties.

Beckers et al. (2018) recommended that the customer experience definition include the dimensions of cognitive, behavioural and relational behaviour. Godovykh & Tasci (2020) caution the use based only on hedonistic properties as the reaction from ideal customer experience may be misunderstood. Defining customer experience based on a purely subjective nature seems limited and constrained, and as such a more holistic definition of customer experience is required (Bustamante & Rubio, 2017).

Holistic nature

Customer experience is understood as the total experience from initiation of the search for a product or service through to the post purchase experience (Beckers et al., 2018). De Keyser et al. (2015) observe that customer experience is a subjective, holistic interaction with a firm not limited to a specific encounter.

Customer satisfaction by contrast is proposed as an evaluation of a single event, post consumption (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). Verhoef et al. (2009) believe that customer experience is shaped by both direct and indirect contact with a firm. Direct contact is reported as general business, therefore the purchase, the usage and the service where initiated by the customer (Mbama, 2018), while indirect

contact is defined as unplanned encounters, such as advertising and word-of-mouth.

No single definition of customer experience is agreed upon in the literature (McCarthy, & Grimmett, 2019). The nature of customer experience and the incorporation into a definition is acknowledged as encompassing both customers' subjective nature and a holistic inclusion (De Keyser et al. 2015). Based on the above beliefs, the following definition follows the argument that "customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organisation, which provoke a reaction from a customer" (LaSalle & Britton, 2003 quoted by Gentile et al., 2007:397).

As such the definition for customer experience proposed for this study is "all about understanding the experience expectations you are creating as an organisation with your customers and how they manifest themselves as real experiences across all the touchpoints and all levels of contact as the customer relationship develops" (Roy et al., 2020). This definition encompasses aspects of all identified characteristics demonstrated in previous research. As such this definition is adopted for this study for describing business-to-customer experience. Schmitt (2010) proposes four types of customer experience which are: sensory experience, emotional experience, social experience and service quality. Various industries, including the hospitality, sports, retail banking, internet shopping, and convenience stores, have researched these dimensions extensively (Cuong & Khoi, 2019; Lin et al., 2009; Ngo & Nguyen, 2016). These will be adopted in the current study. The following section discusses the four types of customer experiences.

2.2.1.1 Sensory experience

Sensory marketing (Krishna, 2011) has been defined as "marketing that engages the consumers' senses and affects their perception, judgment, and behaviour" (pp. 333). Krishna and Schwarz (2014) emphasized the significance of "sensory marketing and embodied cognition," which outlines the belief that we experience the world through our senses and our physical sensations have a substantial impact on the decisions we make beyond our consciousness. Critically speaking, sensory marketing offers customers a sensory experience that gives additional value to their consumption (Hultén, 2011; Roggeveen et al., 2020).

In theory, the typical viewpoint of establishing more sensory touchpoints with consumers is an exemplary concept, particularly as a tactic for creating marketplace differentiation (Vukadin et al., 2019; Wiedmann et al., 2018). As shopping in physical stores involves a unique premium experience (Moreau, 2020), by way of systematic and comprehensive sensory appeal, consumers' emotions can be strengthened and connected to a comprehensive brand experience (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2018). As a result, consumers may get attached to the brand which can influence their consumption behaviour (Turley & Milliman, 2000).

The human senses contribute significantly to the understanding of customers and have a great influence on their purchase outcome (Hultén, 2011). In a limited time manner, marketers have assimilated the senses into brand communication to create an emotional connection with a particular brand or product (Shimul et al., 2019). Researchers (Chen & Lin, 2018) have reported that consumer emotions are extensively influenced by sensory cues, which play a key role in the formation of emotional connections between consumers and brands. Nowadays, by activating all the senses (Krishna, 2012) and triggering emotions, sensory marketing has been recognized as a critical tool to reinforce the bond between product and customer. Moreover, sensory marketing cues are considered a key antecedent for the marketer's search to communicate with—and respond to—the ever‑emerging and progressively ambitious modern customers by relating to them on an emotional level (Walsh et al., 2011). Sensory marketing influences all five human senses to affect mechanisms of perception, memory, and learning, which control the emotions, preferences, and actions of customers (Krishna & Schwarz, 2014).

2.2.1.2 Emotional experience

The role of emotions has gained the interest of both academics and practitioners as a critical element in understanding consumption experiences and behavior (Han and Jeong, 2013; Mattila and Enz, 2002). Emotions are markers, mediators and moderators of consumer responses (Bagozzi et al., 1999). In comparison to the cognitive aspect of customer experience, emotional customer experience (ECX) has received only scant attention (De Keyser et al., 2015). ECX is evoked following a cognitive appraisal of a service interaction with a service provider, which can subsequently influence customer co-creation behaviour (e.g., a disappointed

customer decides to spread negative word-of-mouth) (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Failures in hospitality services often occur when services providers do not pay sufficient attention to the emotional aspect of customer experience (Crosby and Johnson, 2007). A deep insight into ECX, its potential sources, and customer behaviours can facilitating the co-creation of more positive ECX (Delpechitre et al., 2018).

ECX in the medical industry is affected by various sources, such as staff interactions, environment, and customer personality (Walls, 2013). Emotion sources that originate from the service context are referred to as 'emotion triggers'. In terms of the physical environment, ambience, product quality, and design factors are three common triggers in hospitality and healthy studies.

Emotional experiences have been taken into account in the explanation of the behaviors associated with leisure (Grappi and Montanari 2011), with shopping (Yuksel and Yuksel, 2007), with food (Han and Jeong, 2013), and with holidays (Nawijn, Mitas, Lin and Kerstetter, 2013). These investigations have shown that different experience aspects are influenced by the emotion felt, such as the emotion related to tourists motivation (Goossens, 2000) or choice processes (Chuang, 2007). It also influences satisfaction (Faullant et al. 2011), trust, attachment (Han and Jeong 2013) and behavioral intentions (Grappi and Montanari 2011). Krishnan & R.W. Olshavsky (1995) suggest with this effect that affective experiences may provide strong influences on overall satisfaction for products/services that are primarily hedonic in nature.

Throughout these processes, customer experiences a lot of perceptions about the hotel company but, obviously, most of them cannot be categorized as "emotional experiences." In summary, "emotional experiences" refer to emotionally engaging offerings in hotel service encounters with the ability to generate strong positive emotions and memories; "emotional experiences" imply exceeding expectations and being different "to the average" in terms of global offering, entertainment, pleasure, stimulation, excitement, surprise, curiosity, passionate, romantic, energizing, trust generating, etc. Offerings one was not expecting that make, just for themselves, the stay in a particular hotel worthwhile. It is important to highlight, to clarify the results, that only positive feelings are considered in this work.

2.2.1.3 Social experience

From the holistic viewpoint, social experience can be conceptualized from the interactive and relational behaviours of the customers. Safrona (2014) argues that social experience is the product of socialization arising from emotional relationships due to interaction with people. The customer social experience involves the feeling of community and relational value the customer gets from the patronage of the hotel services. In hotel services, social experience is related to guests who seek relational experiences to mingle with other people. This can occur, for example, when individuals visit the cafes to be seen by others and to interact with individuals, not only for the food (KK)

When the service is staged, a feeling of community is expected among the customers that participate in the service. The customers would want a type of experience that casts the service stage as a community that possesses or creates relational value. Arnould and Price (1993) [31] found that a feeling of "communita" with other tourists and guides was one component of an extraordinary river-rafting experience. Schmitt's (1999) [32] experiential marketing modules classified social experience within the "Relate Experience" marketing schema. Relate Experience can, therefore, be regarded as the hotel's customer feelings of the ideal self and the perception of positive self-esteem by other individuals such as friends, family, spouse, and colleagues [32], when a customer patronizes a hotel. The social elements of experience go beyond the hotel service and do connect the customer to a broader social system, such as country or subculture.

Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1989) [33] note that consumers tend to grant "sacred status" to consumption objects that are value expressive, in order to celebrate their connection to society and particular individuals. Schmitt (1999) [32] argues that such a development creates a paradigm shift for firms to broaden the concept of a category, by "moving over" to examining the meaning of specific consumption in its broader sociocultural context or following the sociocultural consumption vector (SCCV) to create a better meaning or experience for the customer.

Belk et al. (1989) [33] argue that an advancement of this concept can provide social cohesion and integration for society as well as a meaningful life, stability, joy, and ecstasy through connection for the customer. Hailey (2010) [34] suggests that social experience can be enhanced in the hotel industry through the use of

social-media tools. Social-media tools have been adjudged as effective tools that provide social-interaction context through online reviews, which can influence initial customer buying decisions and loyalty [35].

2.2.1.4 Service quality

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2001) cited in Hollensen (2010) service is any act or performance that a party can provide to another that is fundamentally intangible or untouched and does not affect the ownership of anything. Its production can or cannot be tied to a physical product. A service can be a performance, a deed or not thing but it can depend on things for its performance; in here, thing refer to products or any tangibles (Rathmell, 2014). Grönroos (1990) supported that service is any activities and take place in interaction between the client and services, products or systems of the service provider which are offered as solutions to solve problems for customers.

Service quality is an important factor in customer's restaurant selection (Soriano, 2002) and is regarded as an important strategy in in restaurant positioning (Chow, Lau, Lo, Sha & Yun, 2007). Importantly, restaurant customers desire unique and memorable service experiences (Walls, Okumus, Wang & Kwun, 2011) and might serve as a point of competitive advantage in the increasingly competitive restaurant industry. SERVQUAL is often used as a scale to measure the concept of service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988).

There is a belief of the academicians regarding the service quality that better service quality is an important factor that affect the firm performance (Mostafa & Eneizan, 2018; Eneizan et al, 2015). Researchers and scientists in services marketing have presented several metaphors for service quality. For example, Parasuraman et al. (1985) identified 10 key determinants of service quality as perceived by the service provider and the consumer, namely, reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding the customer, and tangibility to formulate a service quality framework, (SERVQUAL). Later (in 1988), they modified the framework to five determinants: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness, or RATER.

2.2.2 Customer loyalty

The concept of customer loyalty refers to the sustainable relationship between a customer and a company together with its products (Bleier *et al.,* 2019). Loyalty represents the customer's resistance in front of external pressure (Alghizzavi, 2019), being supported by positive emotions toward the e-business, despite the variety of other companies' marketing strategies (Al-Adwan & Al-Horani, 2019). Becker and Jaakola (2020) define loyalty of customers as the extent to which customers remain faithful to a particular brand, product or service over time. It shows the rate at which customers are satisfied with the services that they are getting from a service provider. In line with Rooney *et al.* (2020), loyalty behaviour shows the customers' conviction to say positive things, about the services they are getting, to other individuals who can also become customers. Alghizzavi (2019) notes that loyal customers also have an intention to encourage friends and relatives to do business with their service providers. Zhong and Moon (2020) link customer loyalty to customer satisfaction and loyalty behaviour. They found out that a happy shopping experience may not necessarily lead to satisfaction and loyalty because they are post-consumption effects, whereas happiness is prior to consumption.

2.2.2.1 Dimensions of customer loyalty

Quach *et al.* (2020) argued that customer loyalty has two dimensions which are behavioural and attitudinal loyalty. These dimensions are discussed in the following sections.

Behavioural Loyalty

Behavioural loyalty refers to repeat purchasing of certain brands or services (Inegbedon & Obadiaru, 2019). Han *et al.* (2019), repeat purchasing of the company's products occurs because the consumers would have developed a liking of the company's products, but Stanisavljević, (2017) further argue that consumers may repeatedly and frequently purchase the products and services because there will not be an alternative product to buy. Stanisavljević (2017 further added that the frequent purchases of the services may even occur even when the company has a bad image. Quach (2020) is of the opinion that behavioural loyalty can be

measured by the number of times a consumer purchases a product. The aforementioned also argued that behavioural loyalty can be developed by marketing communication, word of mouth and consumer experience with the brand. Behavioural loyalty involves a customer having a continuous relationship with a company (Quach, 2020). Loyalty behaviour also drives customers to consider their brands first in everything they do in the retail industry. Pandey *et al.* (2020) also indicate that consumer loyalty behaviour drives consumers to doing more business with a service provider for the next five years. Rizan *et al.* (2020) says the dimension is too broad and multi-dimensional as it consists of the following four dimensions: word of mouth, purchase intentions, price sensitivity and complaining behaviour.

Attitudinal loyalty

Attitudinal loyalty is regarded as emotional connection of customers to a certain specific product (Rizan *et al.,* 2020). Mohammad (2017), Dimitriadis and Zilakaki (2019) and Inegbedon and Obadiaru (2019) posited that attitudinal loyalty is when a customer shows commitment to repurchase the company's products and also spreading positive word of mouth. Tartaglione *et al.,* (2019) postulated that attitudinal loyalty is measured by customers' willingness and intention to keep on repurchasing specific company products or services. According to Imbug *et al.* (2018), attitudinal loyalty also involves customers psychologically encouraging others to purchase a specific brand. These researchers further added that customers then become committed to the brand. Attitudinal loyalty involves focusing more on establishing a relationship with the firm (Zhong & Moon, 2020). Aksar *et al.* (2019) also suggested that attitudinal loyalty is a positive attitude towards a product and also willingness and desire to have a continuous relationship with the company. According to Alghizzavi, (2019), attitudinal loyalty develops after a customer has a positive experience with the brand.

2.2.2.2.1.1 Shared values

Shared value has long been considered as an important component in building buyer–seller relationships in many studies (Zhong & Moon, 2020). Aksar *et al.* (2019) have defined shared values as "the extent to which partners have beliefs in common about what behaviours, goals and policies are important, unimportant, appropriate or inappropriate, and right or wrong". Dimitriadis and Zilakaki (2019)

has defined the concept of shared value as corporate practices that enhance the competitiveness of a company and advance social conditions in the communities in which it operates. Quach (2020) argues that customer value is a superordinate goal and customer loyalty is a subordinate goal. According to goal and action identity theories, a superordinate goal is likely to regulate subordinate goal. Thus, customer value regulates customer loyalty toward the service provider (Al-Adwan & Al-Horani, 2019).

2.2.2.1.2 Commitment

Commitment is another important determinant of marketing relationship strength and useful construct for measuring customer loyalty likelihood and predicting future purchase frequency (Gilboa et al., 2019). It explains the extent that person intends to keep a valuable relationship, and it is similar to trust in studying customers' loyalty. In marketing literature, commitment is a strong, stable and continuous tendency in order to keep and preserve a valuable relationship (Nella & Christou, 2020). Marketing scholars have documented that relationships can be built upon multiple forms of commitment. Social bonding can be a contributing factor of a potential emersion of trust and commitment, although the impact of social bonding might differ depending on the customer segment commitment is a desire to maintain a valued relationship, and can be based on many facets (Al-Adwan & Al-Horani, 2019). Commitment in marketing refers to an orientation that specific intentions and behaviours characterize with the purpose of realizing value for both parties over the long term (Tartaglione et al., 2019).

2.2.2.1.3 Bonding

Both seller and buyer must link together in order to have a long term association with one another (Rizan *et al.*, 2020). Bonding is one dimension of a business relationship between parties acting in a unified manner toward a desired goal. Various bonds exist between parties and indicate different levels of relationships. Bonding controls social and business behaviour in society, and may remove doubt, forms close relationships, and build trust (Gilboa et al., 2019).

2.2.2.1.4 Trust

Trust is the faith which exists between parties. In reality is the bond that keeps in touch two parties for the longer time (Rizan et al., 2020). Trust indicates that each person of relationship, to what extent can considered other person promise and is

defined as the willingness to trust and reliance to audience (Nella & Christou, 2020). Trust is an important construct in relational exchange because relationships characterized by trust are so highly valued. According to Imbug *et al.* (2018), trust has been posited as a major determinant of relationship commitment. Creating trust in customer mind sets its commitment. In order to increase the levels of trust, companies must focus on keeping promises to their customers and consistently carry their best interest at heart (Inegbedon and Obadiaru, 2019), hence trust is considered a key determinant of loyalty. Tartaglione *et al.,* (2019) explain trust as a set of beliefs, which is based on an individual's own perception about attribute. It can be divided between honesty and good will.

2.4 EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

The power of customer experience is usually underestimate by business leaders. Brand management firm Prophet released a State of the Market study in 2011 showing that only 13 percent of executives believe the purchase experience is the most critical driver of future brand equity, whereas 36 percent said product and service quality would be the top driver (Minh-Tri HA, 2021; Huang & Cai, 2015). A number of studies have been conducted to test the value of customer experience on customer loyalty.

For instance, Kim (2008) empirically tested that experiences which are memorable, more probably impact a person's future behavior and he also made a scale to measure memorable experiences and proved that it highly and positively influenced the future behavioral intentions. Yeng and Mat (2013) empirically tested the antecedents of loyalty in Malaysian retail and found that while promotion activity, store atmosphere, product quality, and service quality strongly impact the attitudinal/cognitive loyalty, affective (attitudinal) loyalty is directly influenced by retailer brand equity, loyalty programs, and satisfaction.

In Vietman, Minh-Tri HA (2021) examined the influence of customer experience on customer satisfaction and loyalty using the case of Starbucks Coffee in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. A research model was developed based on customer experience (including four dimensions: sensory experience, emotional experience, social experience and service quality), customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

The study adopted a questionnaire-based survey to gather data from 335 respondents using a convenience sampling technique. The findings showed that all four dimensions of customer experience significantly affect customer loyalty via customer satisfaction.

In China, Xue-Liang Pei et al. (2020) conducted a study to examine what kind of shopping situations will influence customer experience and customer satisfaction. A total of 288 questionnaires were collected from two different shopping situations, and multiple regression analysis was adopted to test the hypotheses. It was found that customer experience with service, shopping environment, and shopping procedure has a positive influence on customer satisfaction. However, different shopping situations significantly moderate the relationships among customer experience with the shopping environment, product experience, and customer satisfaction but rarely influence customer experience with service and service procedures.

Zaid and Patwayati (2021), in Indonesia, conducted a study to investigate the impact of customer experience and customer engagement on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in e-retailing. This study used data from 512 respondents in six e-retailing namely; Bukalapak, Tokopedia, Lazada, Blibli, Shopee and Zalora. The results of the study found that there was a reciprocal relationship between customer experience and customer engagement. The results also found that customer experience and customer engagement have a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction had a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. In this study it was also found that customer experience has an indirect effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty through customer engagement, and customer engagement also has an indirect effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty through customer engagement.

Bennett and Molisani (2020) in the United States of America (USA) investigated the impact of customer experience on market capitalisation. The sample consisted of 1605 US customers of US publicly traded companies. Using correlation analysis, multiple linear regression, and confirmatory factor analysis, the individual variables

of customer experience were positively and significantly correlated with market capitalisation and with each other.

In Turkey, Eskiler and Safak (2022) conducted a study to examine the antecedent and consequences of customer experience in fitness services. This study was based on a non-experimental, depictive, and descriptive design. Within the scope of this study, 287 participants selected through a convenience sampling technique applied a self-administered questionnaire. The findings show that service result quality, customer–employee interaction quality, and customer–customer interaction quality affect customer experience quality, which in turn affects customer loyalty.

In Iran, Nobar, Reza Rostamzadeh (2018) investigated the impact of customer satisfaction, experience, and loyalty on brand power in the Hotel industry. This study used a descriptive-survey research design based on the correlation method. The structural equation modeling was used to evaluate the causal simulation and to examine the reliability and validity of the measuring model. The results showed that customer experience has the most impact on customer satisfaction with path coefficient of 0.74. This study helps to understand that customer satisfaction and customer experience are positive drivers of customer loyalty.

Silviana et al. (2022) aimed at determining and analysing the effect of e-service quality and customer experience of trust on customer loyalty both directly or indirectly through e-satisfaction mediation. The population were all new students of State University in East Java in the 2019/2020 school year. The analysis method used is descriptive analysis and Partial Least Square (PLS) using the smartPLS software application. Findings indicate that e-service quality has a significant effect on e-satisfaction, and the mediation test shows that e-satisfaction plays a partial mediation role in the effect of E-service quality on customer loyalty. E-trust had a significant effect on e-satisfaction; mediation testing shows that e-satisfaction plays a partial mediation role in the effect of E-trust on customer loyalty.

In Italy, Ieva and Ziliani (2017) offered an examination of customer experiences contribution to customer loyalty in mobile service operators. Data were collected by means of a survey on almost six thousand subjects belonging to the Nielsen consumer panel. The findings show that customer reach has a significant

relationship with customer loyalty as far as eight touchpoints are concerned. Positivity contributes to customer loyalty as far as nine touchpoints are concerned.

Locally, there has not beem much in regard to the studies on the impact of customer experience on customer loyalty. Manyanga et al. (2022) examined the effect of customer experience, customer satisfaction and word of mouth intention on customer loyalty. Data were collected from bank customers (n = 650) using a structured questionnaire through a cross-sectional survey in Harare, Zimbabwe. Customer experience, satisfaction and word-of-mouth intention were found to have a direct positive effect on loyalty. The study advised banks to consider customer experience, satisfaction, word-of-mouth intention and age when designing strategies to improve customer loyalty.

Makudza (2020) analysed and evaluated the effect of customer experience management (virtual interaction, physical interaction and service interaction) on customer loyalty in the banking industry. The study followed an explanatory research design to sample 384 respondents. Stepwise regression analysis was used to validate the relevance of the study model. The results indicated that there is a positive association between customer experience management and customer loyalty. The dimensions of customer experience management, namely virtual interaction, physical interaction and service interaction, were also found to be statistically significant in explaining customer loyalty behaviour.

2.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Fig. 2.1: Conceptual framework
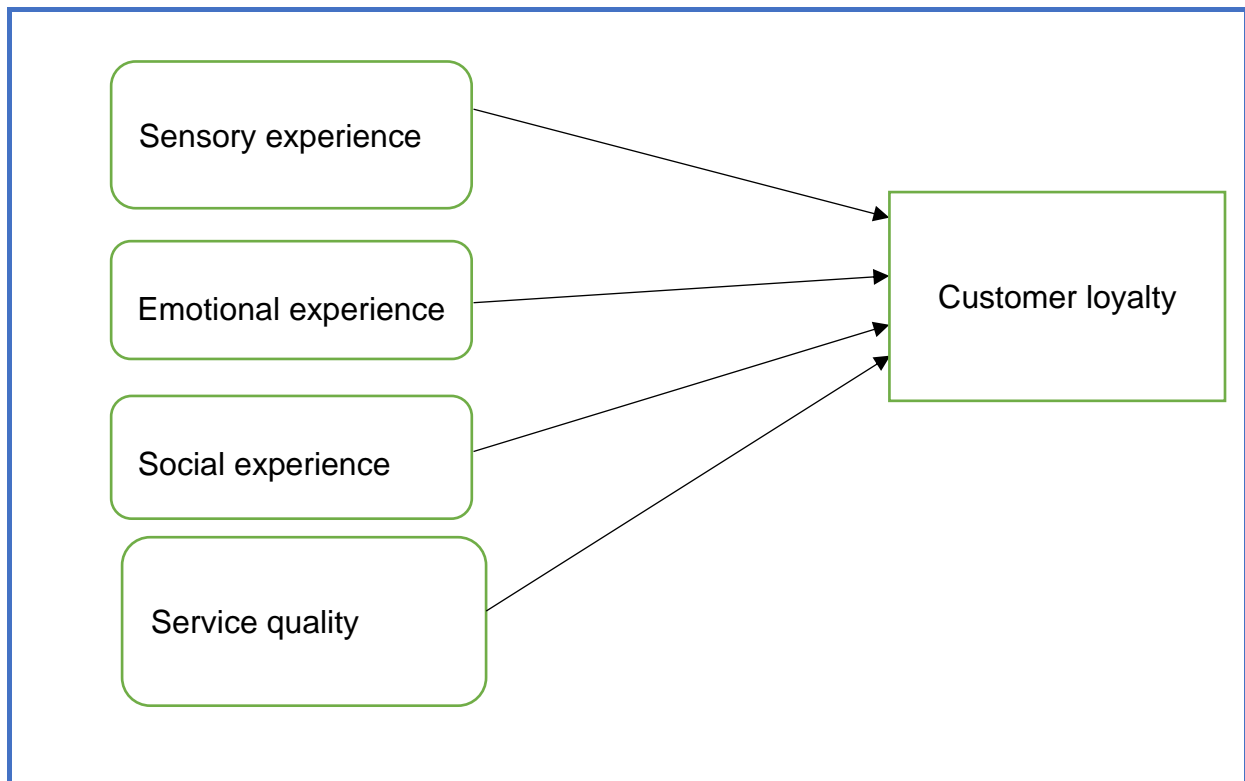
Source: Minh-Tri HA (2021)

From the figure above, the developed hypotheses could be stated as follows: Customer loyalty is positively affected by sensory experience (H1), emotional experience (H2), social experience (H3), and service quality (H4). Meanwhile, loyalty is positively influenced by all the CRM dimensions.

2.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter two reviewed literature by looking at two main aspects that is theoretical literature and empirical literature. The first part reviewed the theories that guided the current study. In this section, the "Gaps Model" (SERVQUAL) and Theory of Relationship Marketing Commitment-Trust were discussed. The chapter also discussed customer experience as the independent variable; and the customer loyalty as the dependent variable. The second part presented the review of empirical investigations on the CX and customer loyalty. It was noted that academics and researchers are yet to agree on the effect of individual CX

dimensions on the firm performance. The following chapter focuses on the research methodologies applied for the study to be a success.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides detailed information on how the research was designed, planned, and executed. The chapter provides explanation on how the study was conducted and sought answers to the research questions. It provides details on the research philosophy, research method, and research strategy and research design. This chapter also embodies and discusses study population, data collection instruments, pre-testing, method of data collection and data analysis. In addition, the chapter also addresses sample size, sampling techniques, instrument's reliability and validity issues as well as ethical considerations.

3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

A research philosophy shows the researcher's world view representing a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guides a researcher's inquiry (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Research philosophical assumptions help to shape the understanding of research questions and the methodologies to be adopted in answering the research questions (Saunders et al., 2019).

The three major research philosophies identified in management research include pragmatism, interpretivism and positivism (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In line with research objectives, positivism was adopted for the study. Positivism was used for the study since it depends on quantifiable observations that would lead to statistical analyses. The main assumptions of the positivist research philosophy include the following: there are no differences in the logic of inquiry across sciences, research should aim to explain and predict; research should be empirically observable through human senses and that science is value-free and should be judged only by logic (Soni & Kodali, 2018).

Positivism is logically connected to pure scientific laws and is based on facts in order to satisfy the four requirements of falsifiability, logical consistency, relative explanatory power, and survival. Under the positivism research philosophy, it was possible to investigate what truly happens as far as customer experience is concerned. More so, positivism produces quantitative data; uses large samples and is concerned with hypothesis testing (Cohen et al., 2018). The other benefit of

using the positivist philosophy was that it could identify the precise relationships between chosen variables (Soni and Kodali, 2018).

3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2019:132), a research method is a plan of action that provides the researcher with direction and allows the researcher to have quality results. There are three types of research designs, namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods.

3.2.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research involves exploring meaning through the use of words and non-numerical analyses. It focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences (Pandey and Pandey 2021). This strategy gives detailed information on the feelings, experiences and opinions of people. In addition, the researcher can be part of the study and interact with the respondents during the data collection process (Myers, 2019). A qualitative researcher gathers non-numerical data and uses open-ended questions, with a limited number of people. This strategy is further explained as a tool for exploring and understanding the meaning or terms that a social group gives to a certain problem or phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

3.2.2 Quantitative research

Quantitative research is an objective process of using numerical data. This strategy focuses on the relationships between variables and analysis of patterns. It focuses on the causes and effects of things (Saunder*s* & Lewis, 2017). It further involves the use of structured questions whereby respondents have options to choose, and it can be used for a large target population (Burns & Bush, 2014). When using quantitative research, it is easy to generalise the results because of the use of a large population. Moreover, the analysis is quick, thus saving time (Carroll and Bailey, 2016).

3.2.3 Mixed method research

Mixed method research is a method that includes both qualitative and quantitative methods in one study. This method offsets the disadvantages of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Saunders & Lewis 2017). A mixed approach design has both the method and methodology for conducting research that includes gathering, analysing and combining quantitative and qualitative research in the same study (Durand *et al.* 2014).

The research used the quantitative method. The quantitative research approach involved the collection of data that information could be quantified and subjected to statistical treatment so as to support or refute alternate knowledge claims. The intent of the study was to establish, confirm, or validate relationships and to develop generalisations that contributed to theory (Field, 2015). More so, the aim of the quantitative research approach was to identify potentially strong, non-random, correlations between customer experience (independent) variables and customer loyalty (dependant variables) by employing a relatively large number of cross-sectional observations (Creswell & Clarke, 2019). As such, the quantitative research approach emphasised the production of precise and generalisable statistical findings.

3.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY

Many leading scholars including Saunder *et al.* (2019) and Cohen *et al.* (2019) agree that the main research design widely used within business and management research include experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research. The research adopted the case study strategy. Case study strategy is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" Yin, 2013:13). According to Yin (2017), the case study strategy is appropriate for all disciplines. Thus the appropriateness of this strategy in the current study. The study focused on a single case: Masvingo renal care in Masvingo. The current study is in the field of marketing management, therefore, the case study was deemed appropriate (Saunders *et al.,* 2019).

Questions relating to how and why are more explanatory and can best be answered using the case study strategy (Yin, 2017). Such questions deal with the operational links that can be traced over time as such mere frequencies cannot adequately

answer them (Chen *et al.,* 2018). This made the case study strategy the researcher's choice for the study.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design gives a structure to the study so that it addresses the study objectives and research questions (Cohen *et al.,* 2019). It describes the way data is collected and justifies the different types of data collection, information sources and sampling used for a study (Saunders *et al.,* 2019). The different types are:

3.4.1 The Cross-sectional study

A cross-sectional study is when information is collected at a single point in time from the respondents. It is easy and less time-consuming to use. The only disadvantage of using this method is that it cannot measure any changes that might happen (Leedy and Ormrod 2014:194).

3.4.2 Descriptive research design

A descriptive study involves describing and observing the behaviour of the target population. This design highlights the level at which variables are related (Churchill *et al.* 2010:79). Descriptive research is an account of what is happening and it does not answer why it is happening (Sekaran and Bougie 2019:41).

3.4.3 Explanatory research design

The explanatory research design finds the links between the factors which connect to the problem of the study. It determines how and why things happen (Leedy & Ormrod 2015).

3.4.4 Exploratory research design

Exploratory research design explores the study's research questions but does not give conclusions to the problem. It is mostly used when a research problem is not well defined. Moreover, it gives an understanding of the problem and is used in cases of a new problem and where little research has been done (Saunders *et al.,* 2019).

3.4.5 Research design for the study

The study used both a cross-sectional and descriptive research design. The cross-sectional design was used because it is easy and less time-consuming to use. However, the disadvantage of using this method is that it cannot measure any changes that might happen. In addition, the study used a descriptive design after closely looking at the study problem, objectives and aim.

3.5 POPULATION

Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2017) defined population as the total collection of elements about which the researcher intends to make some inferences. A target population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate" (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). The target population for the study was made up of consumers of the services of Masvingo renal care in Masvingo in the month of April 2023. The researcher had no database showing the number of clients, however, guided by the historical experience and data, the researcher predicted that there was approximately 300 patients in the month of April 2023. This was the target population.

3.6 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Sampling is a method of drawing conclusions about the whole population based on information from only a portion of the population (Saunders & Lewis 2017). It is a selection process of choosing those with the same characteristics as the target population for use in the study. Sampling allows the researcher to gather information from a small group and generalise it (Harris *et al.* 2019). There are two sampling methods, namely probability and non-probability.

3.6.1 Probability sampling

Probability sampling involves the random selection of samples, with every member having an equal chance of being selected (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). Probability sampling has representative samples and it is easy to generalise the findings (Etikan & Bala, 2017). There are different types of probability sampling, namely:

- Simple random sampling

Simple random sampling entails the random selection of a sample from a sampling frame. Simple random sampling gives every respondent an equal chance of selection. It works best when the researcher has full confidence that the sampling frame is complete (Kumar, 2014). However, this can be a disastrous technique if there are gaps in the sampling frame (Tille & Wilhelm, 2017).

- Stratified cluster sampling

Stratified sampling helps to ensure that the sample matches the population if there are issues concerning the completeness of the sampling frame. The strata represent the divisions in the population. The sample will be drawn from each stratum in proportion to the gender balance in the population (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

- Cluster random sampling

Cluster sampling is similar to stratified sampling in that the population is divided into groups. The groups for this technique are mostly smaller than strata. The clusters should be as heterogeneous as the population for this method to be effective (Mellenbergh, 2019).

- Systematic sampling

Systematic sampling uses random numbers to pick a sample from the list. The sample size is divided by the population size and this sample fraction produces an nth number for selection. This method is used when the population size is not known and the population elements arrive at a certain location over time (Maree, 2020).

3.6.2 Non-probability sampling

Non-probability sampling is when respondents do not have an equal chance of being selected. The researcher uses their own judgement to select the respondents (Tille & Wihelm, 2017). There are various types of non-probability sampling, namely:

- Snowball sampling

The snowball sampling method is used in cases where the population is hard to find. The researcher makes contact with one or more persons who belong to the

population and these are asked to provide information about other people in the population (Maree, 2020).

- Convenience sampling

Convenience sampling is a method used when the population elements are selected based on their availability or convenience. This method is quick and cheap, but it does not give a representative sample (Yadav, Singh and Gupta, 2019).

- Quota sampling

The quota sampling method is used when the researcher first identifies categories of people that need to be in the sample and the number of quotas required. Convenience sampling is used until the required number of respondents is reached (Maree, 2020).

- Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is used when sampling is done with a specific purpose in mind. For example, the researcher is targeting a certain group of people. The researcher will first ask specific questions, for example the age of respondents, so that they get the required target population (Peregrine, 2018).

3.6.3 Sampling technique for the study

The study made use of the convenience non-probability sampling technique. Convenience sampling was used to administer questionnaires to the clients. Convenience sampling was the best to use because the researcher did not have any database with the names of clients. Therefore, he had to select those respondents that came when the researcher was present. This method was used because it made it quick and easy to select the respondents.

3.7 SAMPLE SIZE OF THE STUDY

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) views sample size as the actual number of elements chosen as a sample to represent the target population. Given the absence of a sampling frame, the researcher resorted to convenience sampling where 123 study participants were selected.

3.8 DATA SOURCES

Data sources are places where data is obtained. In research, there are two main data sources, that is primary and secondary data sources (Saunders et al., 2019). The researcher used both primary and secondary data collection methods. These methods are further explored below.

3.8.1 Secondary sources

Secondary data involves a systematic review of appropriate literature from accredited journal articles, textbooks, internet, and other relevant sources (Khaldi, 2017). Secondary data was useful as it allowed the researcher to explore the management problem as well as develop the background of the study from relevant journal. Past empirical studies on customer experience and customer loyalty were reviewed thus providing insights on existing answers to the problem. The researcher was able to make critical assessments and draw invaluable insights from prior studies.

3.8.2 Primary data

Saunders et al. (2019) defines primary data as a type of data that is collected by researchers directly from main sources through surveys, interviews, observations, etc. This study took place in the form of a survey. Surveys involve reaching a large number of people to answer a set of questions and they are mostly used to assess thoughts, opinions and feelings (Saunders *et al.,* 2019). Thus, the study involved gathering of data in real life settings. Bryman and Bell (2015) note that primary data is information that the researcher gathers by using interview questionnaires, observation and tests. Primary data were gathered by use of questionnaires.

3.9 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

A research instrument is a tool used to collect, measure and analyse data related to the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Various research instruments are used in the collection of data. Quantitative research uses questionnaires and structured interviews (Cohen *et al.,* 2018). A questionnaire is a structured schedule used to collect quantitative data. Questionnaires are convenient when collecting primary data (Krosnick, 2018).

The current study used the self-administered questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. Cohen *et al.* (2018), a questionnaire as a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate for analysis. Questionnaires are well known for mitigating 'middle-man' bias. In this study, a questionnaire is used to collect quantitative data.

The use of a questionnaire was appropriate in this study as the study was descriptive in nature, and the data collected was used to suggest possible reasons for particular relationships customer experience and customer loyalty. More so, the questionnaire offered many advantages to the current investigation. Firstly, data was easily gathered from a large number of people (Saunders *et al.,* 2019). The researcher was able to gather voluminous data quickly and the data was presented in a way that it was easy to interpret.

The questionnaire had three sections. **Section A:** collected data such as age, education levels, years of experience. **Section B:** gathered data relating to the four ethical customer experience dimensions, and lastly **Section C:** collecting data on customer loyalty data.

The questionnaire used the Likert scale to guide respondents to choose their answers. According to Saunders *et al.* (2019) the five point Likert scale "makes the response items standard comparable amongst the respondents and the answers are easy to code and analyse directly from the questionnaires." The Likert scale read 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree to indicate the respondents' level of agreement for the customer experience and customer loyalty indicators.

The questionnaires was be made up of closed ended questions to facilitate easy statistical analysis of data. The study's questionnaire was greatly informed by the scholarly works of Godovykh and Tasci (2020), Jaiswal and Singh (2020). However, the questions were adapted to suit the current study and context.

Questionnaires are designed to basically achieve three goals (Martins *et al.,* 2002): to maximise the relevance and accuracy of the data collected; to maximise the participation and cooperation of the target respondents; to facilitate the collection and analysis of the data. As such questionnaires gave relevant, and timely data to

facilitate analysis. The questionnaire was relatively simple for the researcher to analyse, it limited the apprehensiveness of respondents when self-administered and avoids the elements of researcher intrusiveness of the respondents (Bell *et al.,* 2018).

According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), the advantages and disadvantages of using questionnaires are:

Advantages

- Questionnaires are familiar and non-threatening to human beings;
- They have the potential to minimise bias as each question is presented uniformly throughout the questionnaire;
- Economical: saves resources such as time and money as data can be analysed statistically;
- Respondents' anonymity can be assured;
- Questionnaires reach respondents conveniently; and
- They are low cost, even when the target population is large and geographically widespread.

Disadvantages

- A menu of responses is restrictive and makes the whole questionnaire inflexible, thereby limiting a deeper analysis;
- Response rates can be very low if the questionnaire is poorly designed;
- The researcher has limited control over the questionnaire; and
- Questionnaires can be used only when respondents are educated and cooperative.

3.10 PRE-TESTING

Pre-testing the research instrument is vital as it allows the researcher to see if there are problems before it is administered to a large sample. Pre-testing helps refine the research instruments. Moreover, it helps eliminate problems and errors before conducting the main study (Ikart, 2019). Pre-testing was done with a limited number of people from the Masvingo General Hospital. Pre-testing was conducted using 15 patients, and these were not part of the study.

3.11 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The identified potential respondents were contacted and asked to participate in the study. The researcher first obtained permission from the University supervisor to start data collection. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires. The questionnaires also addressed the research purpose in the invitation letter, along with the confidentiality of respondents' answers, so as to increase the response rate and eliminate response bias (Bryman, 2016). The researcher made follow-ups by calling at different times reminding respondents of the questionnaire (Saunders *et al.,* 2019). Data were collected between February and April 2023.

3.12 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION PROCEDURE

According to Creswell and Creswell, (2017), data analysis procedure includes the act of packaging the collected information, putting it in order and structuring its main components in a way that the findings can be easily and effectively communicated. The essential sequential operations for data included editing, coding and data entry. The aim of editing questionnaires was meant to achieve consistency within the collected data and detect, correct and eliminate any outliers (Hair *et al.,* 2019). As such, the completed questionnaires were edited for ensuring completeness and consistency in the responses. On the other hand, coding was a necessary step since the data was to be processed by computer software.

The researcher collected data from the respondents and tabulated it by compiling the frequency table in accordance with the Likert-scale. In analysing data, the researcher used both Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28 to facilitate the analysis of quantitative research data. The data for the study was analysed through both descriptive (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analysis) to address the research objectives. Frequencies tables, pie charts, and graphs were used to present data.

3.13 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Validity is the ability of the measuring instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure (Leedy & Ormrod 2015:12). There are various forms of validity, as explained below:

Content validity: Content validity is how the questionnaire is representative (Hayashi *et al.,* 2019:102). In this study, content validity was ensured by making sure that questions in the questionnaire are related to the objectives, aim and problem statement.

Face validity: Face validity establishes if the research instrument measures the things it appears to be measuring (Sekeran & Bougie 2019). In this study, face validity was ensured by having the questionnaire checked by the supervisor before administering it. In addition, a pre-testing of the questionnaire was done to see if the questions are understandable and there are no errors. P-testing was done with a limited number and any errors corrected before data is collected.

Criterion validity: Criterion validity is the extent to which the instrument relates to other similar indicator concepts (Mohajan, 2017). In this study, this was ensured by looking at other instruments at the measuring instrument forming stage.

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency or accuracy with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure (Saunders *et al.,* 2019). The research objectives and the problem statement were measured against the results of the study with the main purpose of finding out whether or not we measure what is intended to be measured and efficiency of the measurement. Reliability deals with the level at which study findings are repeatable (Bell *et al.,* 2018).

Reliability of the questionnaire was determined by using Cronbach's Alpha test. Cronbach's alpha is the widely used index to determine reliability (Saunders *et al.,* 2019). Cooper and Schndler (2017) claims that acceptable reliability is indicated by alpha values from 0.75 to 1. Sekeran and Bougie (2019) adds that "reliabilities that are less than 0.6 are rated poor, those in the range of 0.7 are acceptable while those over 0.8 are considered really well". To enhance reliability, the current

study's questionnaire adapted more that 80 % of the questionnaire items from previously used scales.

On the other hand, reliability of the qualitative study was addressed by a detailed description of the research process, presented in the first part of this chapter, to ensure a level of transparency (Cohen *et al.,* 2018), which makes the repeatability of this study possible to a certain degree.

3.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), ethics refers to norms or standards for conduct that distinguish between right and wrong. Ethical practices allow researchers to be ethical and respect their respondents. A researcher needs to be ethical when conducting research (Kumar 2018). The study followed all the ethical standards involved during research.

All willing research participants were thoroughly informed beforehand that there will be no potential harm from the study. Although there was no harm, research participants were still given absolute freedom to either share their own narratives or not in whatever way they felt comfortable with. The researcher requested that all the participants should complete a consent form indicating their willingness to be a part of the research process.

In this study, no identifying information was collected and the researcher assured all the participants that effort will be made to ensure that in the final report the data they would have provided will not be traced. The researcher also used pseudo names to preserve anonymity of study participants.

Lastly, the researcher had a non-disclosure of information agreement with the study participants. Information on customer experience and customer loyalty data was to be kept in strict confidence. The researchers assured the participants that all questionnaires will be kept in a lockable safe.

3.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The philosophy and research design that guided the research design and approach were provided in this chapter. A survey study technique and numerous quantitative approaches were used in this investigation. This chapter also introduced and examined the research population, data gathering instruments, data collection

methods, and data analysis. Furthermore, the chapter addressed sample size, sampling methodology, instrument reliability and validity, as well as ethical aspects. The next chapter gives analyses and examines the study's findings.

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

Chapter three covered the research methodology employed for the study. This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis, and discussion of the study's empirical results. The SPSS Version 28 and Microsoft Excel was used to analyse the research data. The first section covered the questionnaire response rate followed by the reliability of the instrument. Data was analysed in the order of their appearance in the questionnaire that is from section A to section C. The chapter wraps with the chapter summary.

4.1 Questionnaire response rate

The study had a sample size of 123 respondents and 107 questionnaires were returned. However, only 102 questionnaires were collected fully completed, yielding a response rate of 82.92 %. This is an acceptable response rate, considering studies of this nature (Saunders et al., 2009). Baruch and Holton (2008) assert that a response rate of 65% is suitable and for a well-designed questionnaires. This implies that meaningful descriptive and inferential analyses can thus be performed.

4.2 Questionnaire reliability

Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to test the internal consistency and reliability of all the variables on the questionnaire in order to determine the truthfulness of the results of the research study. Table 4.1 overleaf, shows the results of reliability test of the measurement instrument.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire reliability

SECTION	CONSTRUCT	QUESTIONS	ALPHA VALUE	COMMENT
B	Customer experience	20	0.892	Internally reliable
C	Customer loyalty	5	0.783	Internally reliable
	Average	**27**	**0.834**	**Internally reliable**

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

The study used the Cronbach's alpha as discussed in section 3.8.1, chapter 3. Table 4.1 illustrates that the alpha coefficient values ranged from 0.783 to 0.892, with an average index above 0.834. The results are supported by Creswell (2016) who put forward that the accepted Cronbach's alpha value for a measurement instrument should be above 0.70. This demonstrated that questionnaire reliability was high and acceptable.

4.3 Demographic data for respondents

The first section solicited for respondents' demographic data. Thus, this section covers results from the first section of the questionnaire.

4.3.1 Gender

Figure 4.1: Distribution of respondents by gender
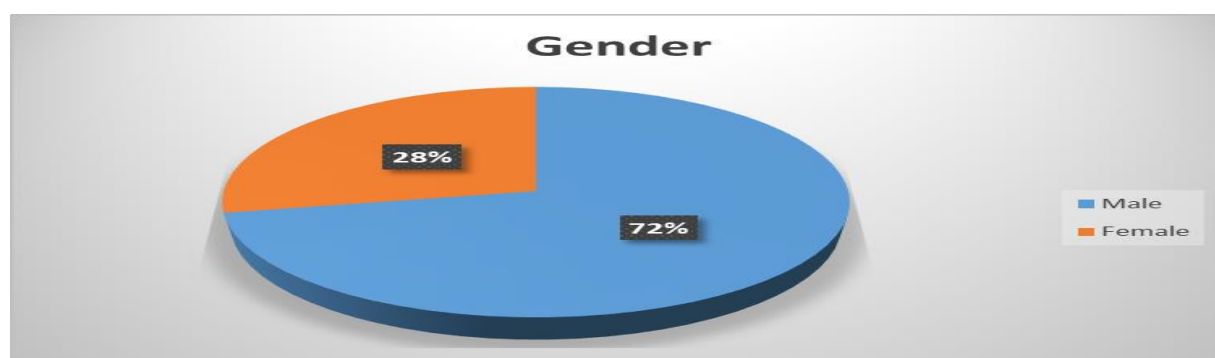
The frequency distribution of respondents based on gender shows that 72 % were male whilst 28 % were female. These results illustrate that more males need dialysis assistance in Masvingo. This can be considered a true reflection of the country's health status.

Table 4.2: Gender distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Male**	67	66	65.7	65.7
	Female	35	34	34.3	100.0
	Total	**102**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

Table 4.2 illustrates that almost 66% of the respondents were males while 34% of them were females. This indicates that service sector is male dominated industry.

4.3.2 Age

Figure 4.2: Age of respondents
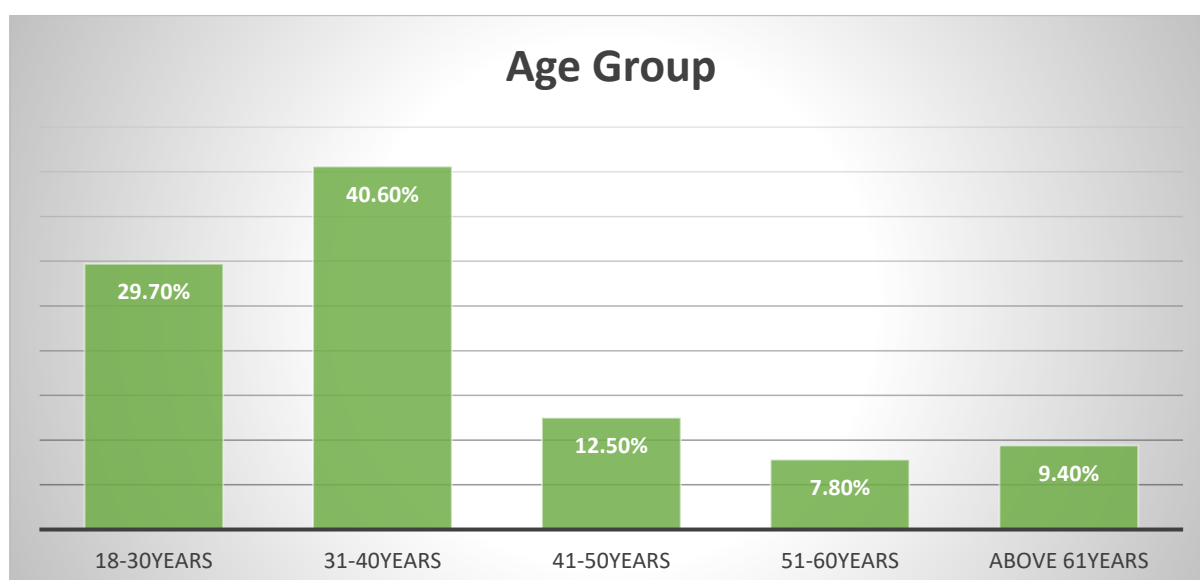
Source: Primary data (2023)

Figure 4.2 above shows that most respondents were in the range of 31-40 years (40.60%), followed by the age group 18-30 years (29.70%). In the age group 41-50, there were 12.50% while respondents above 61 years were 9.40%. The results indicated that the age group 51-60 had the lowest number of respondents. The table illustrates that the majority of the study participants are between 31 and 40 years. This could be because this group are the economically active.

4.3.3 Level of education

Figure 4.3: Level of education
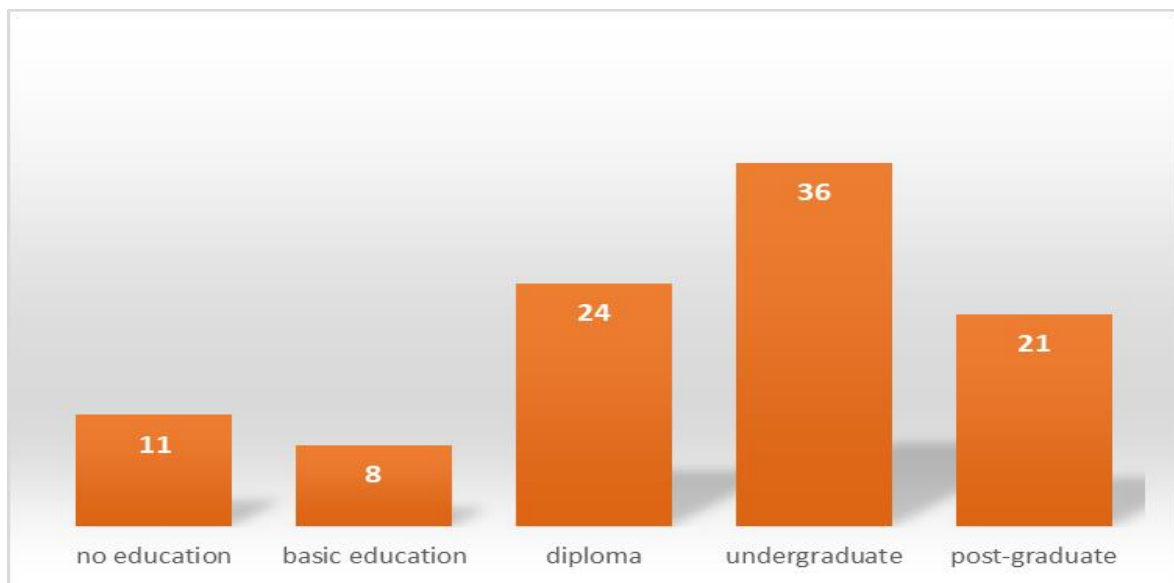
Source: Primary data (2023)

Figure 4.3 above illustrates that only 8% had basic education that is Ordinary Levels while 11% had no any form of education. Diploma holders were 24% while 36% had a bachelor's degrees. Twenty-one percent of the respondents had postgraduate certificates. The results shows that 81% of the respondents hold at least a diploma. This high figure is an indication that the majority of the respondents are educated. It can be noted that the majority of the respondents hold at least a diploma this could imply that these respondents were more responsive as they appreciate the importance of research.

4.5 Descriptive statistics

4.5.1 Customer experience dimensions

This section analyses descriptive data for the four constructs of CX. Analysis of data is done using mean, and standard deviation. The combination of mean, and

standard provide a clear picture of description of results. Descriptive statistics are presented in the order of the objectives.

4.5.1.1 Sensory Experience

The descriptive results for each items used to measure Sensory Experience are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Sensory Experience

CODE	ITEM	M	SD
SENE1	The lighting at Masvingo Dialysis is comfortable	3.03	1.47
SENE 2	The interior space of this clinic is clean and tidy	3.49	1.92
SENE 3	The beds arrangement and appearance at this clinic are attractive	3.27	1.65
SENE 4	The aroma in this clinic is pleasant	3.42	1.23
SENE 5	There are no annoying sounds in this clinic	3.22	1.52
	OVERALL RATING	**3.29**	**1.53**

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

Table 4.4 illustrate that item SENE1 "The lighting at Masvingo Dialysis is comfortable" received the least rating (M = 3.03, SD = 1.47); suggesting that clients placed the least importance on this aspect. Item SENE2 "The interior space of this clinic is clean and tidy" had the highest score (M = 3.49, SD = 1.92); implying that clients placed the most importance in this aspect. The overall item mean ± SD was 3.29 ± 1.53 (somewhat agree) out of a possible score of 5 (strongly disagree). This implies that the human senses contribute significantly to the understanding of customers and have a great influence on their purchase outcome.

4.5.1.2 Emotional experience

The descriptive results for each items used to measure Emotional experience are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Emotional experience

CODE	ITEM	M	SD
ES1	The clinic is exceptional	3.79	1.00
ES2	I have experienced positive and novel situations compared to other clinic	3.84	1.87
ES3	The stay has been memorable to me	3.17	1.27
ES4	The stay has stimulated my emotions	3.79	1.08
ES5	The stay has allowed me to escape from the daily routine	3.62	1.29
	OVERALL RATING	**3.64**	**1.30**

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

The table shows that five items measured emotional experience. The findings are illustrate that items ES1 and ES4 had the identical mean scores but different standard deviations. Clients placed more importance on ES1 "The clinic is exceptional" as it attained a rating (M=3.79; SD=1.00) with ES4 "The stay has stimulated my emotions" getting a rating (M=3.79; SD=1.08). However, their standard deviations differ by 0.08. Item ES3 "The stay has been memorable to me had the least rating scoring (M=3.17; SD=1.27) while item ES1 "I have experienced positive and novel situations compared to other clinic" had the highest rating scoring (M=3.84; SD=1.87). The overall item mean ± SD was 3.65±1.31 (somewhat agree) out of a possible score of 5 (strongly disagree). These results indicates that ECX in the medical industry is affected by various sources, such as staff interactions, environment, and customer personality.

4.5.1.3 Social experience

The descriptive results for each items used to measure Social experience are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Social experience

CODE	ITEM	M	SD
SE1	I get the community value from the patronage of the clinic services.	4.27	0.98
SE 2	I get the relational value from the patronage of the clinic services.	4.01	1.29
SE 3	I interact with other patients freely at the clinic	3.73	1.33
SE 4	The clinic staff interacts freely with patients	3.54	1.51
SE 5	The clinic staff provide prompt service and willingness to help customer	3.35	1.00
	OVERALL RATING	**3.78**	**1.22**

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

Table 4.5 above shows that item SE1 "I get the community value from the patronage of the clinic services." was important to respondents as it had the highest rating (M=4.27; SD=0.98). However, participants placed the least significance on item SE5 "The clinic staff provide prompt service and willingness to help customer" as it scored (M=3.35; SD=1.00) and this implies that this element of CX was not taken all that seriously. On the other hand, the grand mean ± SD stood at 3.78±1.22 (agree) out of a possible 5 (strongly agree). This reflects a high level of agreement on social CX. These findings imply clients feel the community and relational value from their patronage of the clinic services.

4.5.1.4 Service quality

The descriptive results for each items used to measure Service quality are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Service quality

CODE	ITEM	M	SD
SQ 1	I would say that Masvingo Dialysis gives the requested outcome to the clients.	4.08	0.94
SQ 2	I feel good about what Masvingo Dialysis provides to its customers.	3.97	1.06
SQ 3	I believe that Masvingo Dialysis provides superior outcomes to its clients	3.86	1.03
SQ 4	I think that the total experience procedure at Masvingo Dialysis is excellent.	3.64	1.00
SQ 5	I believe that we get a superior experience at Masvingo Dialysis.	3.52	1.14
SQ6	Time flies when customers are interacting with the brand.	355	1.09
	OVERALL RATING	**3.77**	**1.03**

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

The study measured service quality by six items, and their mean scores and standard deviations are as illustrated in the Table 4.11 above. The overall item mean ± SD was 3.77±1.03 (agree) out of a possible score of 5 (strongly disagree). This is evidence of a high level of agreement to the statements. Items SQ5 "I believe that we get a superior experience at Masvingo Dialysis" had the greatest mean scores (M=4.08; SD=0.94) indicating that the study respondents placed much significance on this aspect. Item SQ5 "I believe that we get a superior experience at Masvingo Dialysis" had the least rating (M=3.52; SD=1.14). This implies that the respondents placed less importance on this aspect.

Generally, these findings imply that service quality is an important factor in customer's clinic selection (Soriano, 2002). Clients regard service quality as an important strategy in in clinic positioning (Chow, Lau, Lo, Sha & Yun, 2007). Importantly, restaurant customers desire unique and memorable service experiences (Walls, Okumus, Wang & Kwun, 2011).

4.5.1.6 Summary of CX dimensions

The average mean scores and standard deviation for all the four dimensions of customer experience are illustrated in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: Summary of Customer experience dimensions

DIMENSION	M	SD
Sensory experience	3.29	1.53
Emotional experience	3.64	1.30
Social experience	3.78	1.22
Service quality	3.77	1.03
Overall rating	**3.62**	**1.27**

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

Table 4.7 above illustrate that all the five dimensions of CX had an above average mean score. Mean score ranged from 3.29 (Sensory experience) to 3.78 (Social experience).

4.6 Inferential statistics

The researcher used bivariate regression analysis to assess the strength of the relationship. In addition, multiple regression analysis (MRA) was used to establish the nature of the relationship hence the researcher was able to accept or reject the hypotheses at 5% level of significance. The hypotheses were accepted if the p-value was less than 0.05 and rejected if otherwise.

4.6.1 Linear regression Analysis

The previous section described research data using descriptive statistics. The study sought to establish the effect of CX dimensions on customer loyalty. Thus, the need for inferential statistics to establish the relationship between the dependent and independent constructs of the study. This sections presents the presentation of the regression analysis of the variables.

4.6.1.1 Sensory Experience and customer loyalty model Summary

From Table 4.8, An R of 0.462 suggests that there is a moderate positive relationship between Sensory Experience and customer loyalty. The coefficient of determination (R-squared) of 0.213 illustrates that 21.3 % of customer loyalty can be as a result of Sensory Experience.

The adjusted R-square of 0.093 shows that Sensory Experience dimension, excluding the constant variable, explains the change in the customer loyalty by 9.3 %; the remaining 90.7 % can be due to other factors excluded from the model.

Table 4.8: Sensory Experience and customer loyalty model summary

R	R square	Adjusted R square	Standard error	Observations
0.462	0.213	0.093	0.59	102

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

Table 4.9 overleaf presents the results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the regression coefficients. The results indicated that Sensory Experience is statistically significant in accounting for the customer loyalty.

Table 4.9: Sensory Experience and customer loyalty ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4. 201	1	4.201	8.773	.004
	Residual	67.771	101	0.845		
	Total	77.972	102			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer loyalty						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Sensory Experience						

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

The result of ANOVA for regression coefficient shown in table 4.9 above exhibited (F=8.773, p value = 0.004). Since the p-value is less than 0.05 it implies that the relationship Sensory Experience and customer loyalty is significant.

The linear regression results shows that customer involvement has a weak but positive relationship with customer loyalty. These findings imply that though customer involvement dimension enhances customer loyalty, its effect is weak. In Vietman, Minh-Tri HA (2021) examined the influence of customer experience on customer satisfaction and loyalty using the case of Starbucks Coffee in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The findings showed that all four dimensions of customer experience significantly affect customer loyalty via customer satisfaction. In China, Xue-Liang Pei et al. (2020) examined what kind of shopping situations will influence customer experience and customer satisfaction and established that customer sensory experience with service, shopping environment, and shopping procedure has a positive influence on customer satisfaction. Zaid and Patwayati (2021), in Indonesia, conducted a study to investigate the impact of customer experience on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in e-retailing. The results showed that sensory customer experience and have a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

4.6.1.2 Emotional experience and customer loyalty model Summary

Table 4.10 shows an R of 0.512 implying that there is strong and positive relationship between the Emotional experience dimension and customer loyalty. The table further shows an R-squared of 0.262 illustrating that 26.2% of the customer loyalty can be explained by the Emotional experience.

The adjusted R-square of 0.151 shows that the Emotional experience, excluding the constant variable, explains the change in the customer loyalty by 15.1 %; the remaining 84.9 % can be explained by other factors excluded from the model.

Table 4.10: Emotional experience and customer loyalty model summary

R	R square	Adjusted R square	Standard error	Observations
0.512	0.262	0.151	0.49	102

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

Table 4.11 below illustrate the ANOVA results for regression coefficients. The results revealed that Emotional experience is statistically insignificant in accounting for customer loyalty.

Table 4.11: Emotional experience and customer loyalty ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8. 108	1	7.148	20.182	.000
	Residual	57.778	101	0.943		
	Total	124.979	102			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer loyalty						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional experience						

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

Table 4.11 shows that Emotional experience dimension is statistically significant in explaining customer loyalty among Masvingo dialysis clients. An F statistics of (20.082) shows that the model is significant. The probability value of (0.000) supports this. Furthermore, the results of ANOVA shows that the reported probability of (0.000) is less than the conventional of (0.005) implying that the model is significant.

In this study, the results exhibited that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between Emotional experience and customer loyalty (r=0.512). Bennett and Molisani (2020) in the United States of America (USA) investigated the impact of customer experience on market capitalisation. Using correlation analysis, multiple linear regression, and confirmatory factor analysis, the individual variables of customer experience were positively and significantly correlated with market capitalisation and with each other. In Turkey, Eskiler and Safak (2022) established that emotional customer experience affects customer loyalty. In Iran, Nobar, Reza Rostamzadeh (2018) investigated the impact of customer satisfaction, experience, and loyalty on brand power in the Hotel industry. The results showed that emotional customer experience has the most impact on customer satisfaction with path coefficient of 0.74.

4.6.1.3 Social experience and customer loyalty model Summary

Table 4.12 shows the regression results of the relationship between Social experience and customer loyalty. The table illustrates an R of 0.605 suggests that there is a moderate positive relationship between the variables of the study. The

study results showed a coefficient of determination of 0.366 illustrating that 36.6 % of customer loyalty can be explained by Social experience.

The adjusted R-square of 0.231 shows that Social experience explains the change in the customer loyalty by 23.1 %; the remaining 76.9 % is explained by other factors

Table 4.12: Social experience and customer loyalty model summary

R	R square	Adjusted R square	Standard error	Observations
0.605	0.366	0.231	0.61	102

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

Table 4.13 shows the ANOVA results for the regression coefficients. The results shows that Social experience dimension is statistically significant in accounting for customer loyalty.

Table 4.13: Social experience and customer loyalty ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.178	1	3.258	8.847	.005
	Residual	58.871	101	0.845		
	Total	124.979	102			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer loyalty						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social experience						

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

Table 4.13 shows that there is a significant relationship between Social experience and customer loyalty (F=8.847, p value =0.005) and at least the slope (β coefficient) is not zero. Thus, it confirms that the model is valid.

The linear regression model results shows that firm Social experience is a strong predictor of customer loyalty (r=0.605). These results are compatible with literature which points out that firms that employ are attentive to customers are likely to have loyal customers (Lumpkin & Dess 1996). Silviana et al. (2022) aimed at determining and analysing the effect of social customer experience on customer

loyalty both directly or indirectly through e-satisfaction mediation. Findings indicate that social experience has a significant effect on customer loyalty. In Italy, Ieva and Ziliani (2017) offered an examination of customer experiences contribution to customer loyalty in mobile service operators and findings showed that customer reach has a significant relationship with customer loyalty as far as eight touchpoints are concerned.

4.6.1.4 Service quality and customer loyalty model Summary

From Table 4.14, An R of 0.801 implies that there is a strong positive relationship between Service quality and customer loyalty. The coefficient of determination (R-squared) of 0.642 illustrates that 64.2% of customer loyalty can be explained by Service quality.

The adjusted R-square of 0.473 indicates that the Service quality dimension, explains the change in the customer loyalty by 47.3 %; while the remaining 52.7 % is explained by other factors excluded from the model.

Table 4.14: Service quality and customer loyalty model summary

R	R square	Adjusted R square	Standard error	Observations
0.801	0.642	0.473	0.26	102

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

Table 4.15 shows the ANOVA results for regression coefficients. The results illustrate that Service quality dimension is statistically significant in accounting for customer loyalty.

Table 4.15: Service quality and customer loyalty ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6. 548	1	6.548	18.637	.000
	Residual	57.871	101	0.635		
	Total	64.419	102			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer loyalty						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Service quality						

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

An F statistic of (18.637) indicate that the model is significant. This was supported by a probability value of (0.000). ANOVA revealed that the overall model is a significant predictor of the customer loyalty.

These results suggests that Service quality has a positive and significant impact on the customer loyalty. The findings are consistent with other empirical findings that customer absorption can stimulate customer loyalty (Fadda 2018; Vivek et al., 2012; Algharabat, 2018).

Manyanga et al. (2022) examined the effect of customer experience, customer satisfaction and word of mouth intention on customer loyalty. Service quality, satisfaction and word-of-mouth intention were found to have a direct positive effect on loyalty. Makudza (2020) analysed and evaluated the effect of customer experience management on customer loyalty in the banking industry. The study

followed an explanatory research design to sample 384 respondents. The results indicated that there is a positive association between service quality and customer loyalty.

4.6.2 Multiple regression analysis (MRA)

Multiple regression analysis is conducted when two or more independent variables are examined to determine which ones are good predictors of the outcome variables (Saunders et al., 2016). The researcher used this technique as the use of several predictor variables to influence a single outcome variable improved the predictive power of the technique if compared with linear regression (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Table 4.16 below shows the analysis of variance. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was done to ascertain the appropriateness of the model used. The ANOVA table shows that the F-ratio **(F=3,842 p=.035)** was statistically significant. This means that the model used was appropriate and the relationship of the variables shown could not have occurred by chance.

Table 4.16: Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.092	1.097		-.022	.983
	Sensory experience	.560	.161	.300	1.681	.091
	Emotional experience	.522	.285	.327	1.329	.083
	Social experience	.391	.156	.201	1.091	.217
	Service quality	.237	.169	.437	2.515	.032

a. Dependent Variable: Customer loyalty

Source: SPSS Output (2023)

Table 4.16 above shows the coefficients of determination. The estimated coefficients illustrate the input of the independent variables (customer experience) to the change in the dependent variable (customer loyalty).

The results on table 4.6 above show a positive and significant relationship between sensory experience and customer loyalty (Beta =0.560, Alpha =0.005). The results mean that, if the firm takes cognisance of sensory experience its customers, optimum customer loyalty will be achieved. Therefore, at 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, sensory experience had 0.005 level of significant. Zheng et al. (2015) concluded that a positive relationship is present between sensory experience and brand loyalty.

Emotional experience has a positive coefficient of 0.522 and is significant at 5% in explaining customer loyalty, as shown by the P-value of 0.83.The negative coefficient show that one unit change in Emotional experience results in 0.522 units increase in customer loyalty. Several studies indicate that Emotional experience is necessary for enhancing customer loyalty (Das 2018; Kim & Chai 2017).

Furthermore, Social experience has a positive coefficient of 0.391 and is significant at 5% in explaining customer loyalty, as shown by the P-value of 0.380. The positive coefficient show that one unit change in Social experience results in 0.391 units increase in customer loyalty. Hollebeek et al.'s (2014) studies established a positive direct relationships between Social experience enhances customer loyalty.

Lastly, service quality has a positive coefficient of 0.237 and is insignificant at 5% in explaining customer loyalty, as shown by the P-value of 0.032. The positive coefficient show that one unit change in service quality results in 0.237 units increase in customer loyalty. These findings were supported by Khan et al. (2016) who established that service quality is positively influences brand loyalty.

By substituting co-efficient in the regression equation we can predict customer loyalty when independent variables are changed.

$$\textbf{Customer loyalty} = -\textbf{0.92} + \textbf{0.560}X_1 + \textbf{0.391}X_2 + \textbf{0.391}X_3 + \textbf{0.237}X_4 + \varepsilon$$

The results show that customer experience positively influences the customer loyalty. For instance, Minh-Tri HA (2021) empirically tested that experiences which are memorable, more probably impact a person's future behavior and he also made a scale to measure memorable experiences and proved that it highly and positively influenced the future behavioral intentions. Yeng and Mat (2013) empirically tested the antecedents of loyalty in Malaysian retail and found that while promotion activity, store atmosphere, product quality, and service quality strongly impact the attitudinal/cognitive loyalty, affective (attitudinal) loyalty is directly influenced by retailer brand equity, loyalty programs, and satisfaction. In Turkey, Eskiler and Safak (2022) found that service result quality, customer–employee interaction quality, and customer–customer interaction quality affect customer experience quality, which in turn affects customer loyalty. In Iran, Nobar, Reza Rostamzadeh (2018) investigated the impact of customer satisfaction, experience, and loyalty on brand power in the Hotel industry results showed that customer experience has the most impact on customer satisfaction with path coefficient of 0.74.

4.7 SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS

Table 4.15 presents a summary of the results of hypotheses testing.

Table 4.15: Summary of results of hypotheses testing

	Hypothesis	Results
H₁	Sensory experience has a positive effect on the loyalty of patients at Masvingo renal care in Masvingo.	Supported ($p<0.05$)
H₂	Emotional experience has a positive effect on the loyalty of patients at Masvingo renal care in Masvingo.	Supported ($p<0.05$)
H₃	Social experience has a positive effect on the loyalty of patients at Masvingo renal care in Masvingo.	Supported ($p<0.05$)
H₄	Service quality has a positive effect on the loyalty of patients at Masvingo renal care in Masvingo.	Supported ($p<0.05$)

Source: Prepared for this research (2023)

These results reveal that the five hypotheses tested were accepted at 5% level of significance while only one was rejected also at 5 % level of significance. The findings indicate customer experience positively influence customer loyalty. This is consistent with the previous researchers' findings, which revealed that customer experience has a significant effect on customer loyalty.

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the analysis and interpretation of the research results based on a quantitative analysis of the data. Quantitative data were analysed using mean and standard deviation while inferential statistics that linear regression analysis was done to test the hypotheses. Chapter five presents the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The current chapter, chapter five offers the summary of the whole study, conclusions. More so, recommendations are given based upon the findings of the study. Lastly limitations of the study and areas for further studies are given. The summary of the study is provided in the following section.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the proposed study is to analyse the effects of customer experience on loyalty of Masvingo renal care patients in Masvingo. The study was guided by the positivism philosophy, ultimately the quantitative approach was employed. The study adopted a survey study design in which clients of Masvingo renal care in Masvingo were studied. Convenience sampling was employed to draw questionnaire respondents. Questionnaires were personally administered to the SMEs. Documents were also employed as sources for secondary data for the study. The IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28 and Microsoft Excel were used to analyse the data. Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, and presented using frequency tables, graphs and pie charts.

The findings shows a positive and significant influence of the four dimensions of CX on customer loyalty as indicated by the coefficients of correlation. All the four hypotheses tested positive to affecting customer loyalty. This study provides a comprehensive perspective of customer experience encompassing customer customer satisfaction, loyalty, experience quality (Gronholdt, 2019; Gronholdt et al., 2014; Mbama, 2018).

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The following section presents the study conclusions.

5.2.1 Objective 1

The first objective of the study sought to examine the effect of sensory experience on customer loyalty. The study found out that there is a moderate positive relationship between sensory experience and customer loyalty (r=0.462). The study concluded that by increasing levels of Sensory Experience by a unit would increase the levels of customer loyalty by 0.462. The study concludes that marketing skills are a significant predictor of performance.

5.2.2 Objective 2

The study aimed to find out the effect of sensory experience on customer loyalty. According to the findings, sensory experience have a greater significant correlation with customer loyalty SMMEs (0.512). The study concluded that increasing levels of sensory experience, would have a significant effect on customer loyalty.

5.2.3 Objective 3

The third objective study sought to determine the effect of social experience on customer loyalty. The study findings revealed that sensory experience have a significant positive correlation with customer loyalty (r=0.605). The study concluded that sensory experience the clinic to enhance customer loyalty. It is included that social customer experience is an important source of sustainable competitive advantage.

5.3.4 Objective 4

The fourth objective study sought to determine the effect of service quality on customer loyalty. The study findings revealed that social experience has a very strong and positive correlation with customer loyalty (r=0.801). The study concluded that increasing levels of service quality would increase on customer loyalty by 0.801. Consequently, it can be concluded that a client will be less likely to have the tendency to switch to another brand and more is likely to return to the same service provider.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following, as informed by the conclusions above:

- First, clinics need to merge online and physical facility to improve client experience and satisfaction. It can help the clinic to achieve a better and faster understanding of the customer experience and the goals of sustaining long-term competitive advantages.

- Ensuring that every client gets individual service in the experience creation. Surprising the patient in their special occasions and always doing the service with a twist.

- Therefore, the clinic employees should give attention for individual patients and willing to help them. Clinic managers should also follow up the actions of hotel employees for their ability to give attention to individual patients and willingness to help them.

- It is crucial to ensure that both doctors and therapists in the clinics to provide a consistent treatment that would create a positive experience for the customers, mainly to make them feel relaxed during and after the treatment.

- Last, the management should develop clear and consistent treatment procedures for all customers, since this aspect is found to be the highest reflector that could make customers feel proud as a member of the clinics, which in turn, create a higher level of customer trust toward the clinics.

5.4 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite the contribution of the study, the researcher feels future researchers need to consider:

- Conducting longitudinal research in order to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship.

- Conducting a mixed method research to gain complete understanding of the relationship between the two variables.

- Broadening the sample size by considering other medical facilities in Masvingo.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is **Alfred V. Sithole** and I am a student at the Great Zimbabwe University (GZU). I am required to carry out a study in a marketing related field. So I am kindly asking for your participation through completing this questionnaire. The findings of this research will be confidential and used for academic purposes only. My study topic is **"THE INFLUENCE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY"**

Please note the following: This is a self-administered, anonymous survey and your name will not appear on the questionnaire. The answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential as you cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give. Your participation in this study is very important. Please answer the questions as completely and honestly as possible. The study should not take more than 10 - 15 minutes of your time. The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in a dissertation. Your support and participation is highly appreciated.

Regards,

Alfred V. Sithole,

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This section requires you to put an 'X' in the appropriate box.
Gender

Male	1	Female	2

Age

Below 18-30	31-41	42-52	53-60	More than 60
1	2	3	4	5

Level of Education

No education	O level	Diploma	Degree	Masters	PhD
1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION B: CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements listed below by ticking (√) the number corresponds to your answer. (Please note that 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral 4 = Agree; 5 = strongly agree)

	SENSORY EXPERIENCE	1	2	3	4	5
SENY1	The lighting at Masvingo Dialysis is comfortable					
SENE2	The interior space of this clinic is clean and tidy					
SENE3	The beds arrangement and appearance at this clinic are attractive					
SENE4	The aroma in this clinic is pleasant					
SENE5	There are no annoying sounds in this clinic					
SENE6	The background music at this clinic is pleasing					

	EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE	1	2	3	4	5
ES1	The clinic is exceptional					
ES2	I have experienced positive and novel situations compared to other clinic					
ES3	The stay has been memorable to me					

ES4	The stay has stimulated my emotions					
ES5	The stay has allowed me to escape from the daily routine					
ES6	The clinic makes me feel like a special guest					

	SOCIAL EXPERIENCE	1	2	3	4	5
SE1	I get the community value from the patronage of the clinic services.					
SE2	I get the relational value from the patronage of the clinic services.					
SE3	I interact with other patients freely at the clinic					
SE4	The clinic staff interacts freely with patients					
SE5	The clinic staff provide prompt service and willingness to help customer					

	SERVICE QUALITY	1	2	3	4	5
SQ1	I would say that Masvingo Dialysis gives the requested outcome to the clients.					
SQ2	I feel good about what Masvingo Dialysis provides to its customers.					
SQ3	I believe that Masvingo Dialysis provides superior outcomes to its clients					
SQ4	I think that the total experience procedure at Masvingo Dialysis is excellent.					
SQ5	I believe that we get a superior experience at Masvingo Dialysis.					

SECTION C: CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements listed below by ticking (√) the number corresponds to your answer. (Please note that 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral 4 = Agree; 5 = strongly agree)

	CUSTOMER LOYALTY	1	2	3	4	5
CL1	I have a commitment to stay with Masvingo Dialysis					
CL2	I consider Masvingo Dialysis as my first choice among other renal clinics in the area					
CL3	Masvingo Renal Clinic is the first choice of dialysis clinics in Masvingo					
CL4	Masvingo Dialysis comes first when I am deciding on renal services					
CL5	I have intention to continuously use services from Masvingo Dialysis in future					
CL6	I will continue with Masvingo Dialysis although other renal clinics launch many promotions					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES