

Customer service management strategies for loyalty: A systematic review

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Received: 17.09.2024

Revised: 14.10.2024

Accepted: 22.11.2024

ABSTRACT

In recent years, customer service management has had to implement strategies that go beyond providing products and services to provide an experience that achieves customer loyalty. This research focused on carrying out a literature review following the PRISMA methodology, for which relevant documentation referring to the topic of study was retrieved. From a total of 31 indexed publications, 19 articles obtained from SciELO and Scopus were analysed. At the end of the corresponding research, it was concluded that customer service management strategies are related to customer loyalty, which is why their correct implementation helps to create lasting and beneficial relationships between the company and the consumer.

Keywords: Management strategies, customer service management, customer loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, companies seek to go beyond just selling products and services in order to establish long-term relationships with their consumers. It is more important to keep a customer satisfied, since acquiring a new one implies a cost five times higher (Checasaca et al., 2022). Aware of the changing market, organizations take care of the quality of their services by putting the customer as a priority, taking care of knowing their needs in depth in order to retain them (Wentao et al., 2021). A loyal customer becomes an asset to the organization and is evident in their ability to maintain the relationship with the supplier and a frequency of use of their services (Shankar & Jebarajakirthy, 2019). The execution of these strategies is achieved with information and communication technologies because they allow storing and analyzing a wide range of data (Huamaní et al., 2023).

At the Latin American level, Zendesk's Agility in Action report (2023) showed that a large part of success of a customer service management strategy is centered on agility, this being the most valued characteristic because it allows taking the usual market changes as opportunities to anticipate, connect with customers, respond in less time without neglecting quality and distinguishing oneself from competition. Companies are increasingly investing in opening communication channels, collaboration between agents and data analysis (Rivera & Álvarez, 2024), even artificial intelligence (AI) has been incorporated as part of the customer service management strategy, significantly improving service performance in terms of interaction, problem solving and personalization (Mischia et al., 2022).

The path to having loyal customers starts with a service management strategy that drives value creation in all its phases and points of contact (Sahhar et al., 2021). Loyalty is a primary result of consumer experience that is demonstrated in their behavioral and attitudinal loyalty when their needs have been satisfactorily met, then they are less likely to opt for another, which is optimal in terms of retention and positive relationships with the consumer (Pekovic & Rolland, 2020). In this sense, the greatest emphasis lies on experience that the customer has from their purchase intention to the completion of the service since they tend to have feelings of gain or loss and adequate management produces a positive mental conversion, which is intensified with incentives such as promotions or individualized treatment (Meng et al., 2022).

There is a paradox regarding the efforts that add points to loyalty because the customer shows disenchantment when these are superficial, which is why it is necessary that these strategies be designed according to the characteristics of the customers, the sector, the purchasing situations and the emotional commitment (Lin &

Bowman, 2022). Customer service management that generates added value provides visual, intellectual, emotional, pragmatic and social experiences (Cachero & Vázquez, 2021). In addition, it has been shown that reputation is part of this package, which is why organizations with responsible initiatives and good practices. In this way, consumers have an important role as mediators, as long as their degree of satisfaction is high and constant (Barra et al., 2023; Islam et al., 2021).

Recent studies highlight customer relationship management because interactions are analyzed throughout the service cycle with the aim of improving the relationship with consumer, optimizing their retention through personalized attention and giving way to innovation (Guerola et al., 2021). Communication channels are also important for monitoring service quality, compliance with established regulations, dissemination of information to customers and problem resolution. Thus, an omnichannel service emerges for customers to access, compare, choose, purchase and make returns (Miraldo et al., 2019; Alexander & Blazquez Cano, 2020). On the other hand, the implementation of artificial intelligence allows direct contact, scheduled deliveries, supply network planning and effective data collection management (Alexander & Kent, 2022).

The state of the art highlights that customer loyalty is key to the success of a business, among its benefits is construction of long-term relationships with the consumer, the possibility of word-of-mouth recommendations from a satisfied customer, and the stability of the income stream (Makhubele, 2023). This includes contactless customer services that are common in the digital age, taking advantage of technology to provide virtual assistance and post-sale monitoring, which is a competitive advantage (Sang & DonHee, 2020). In addition, another service management strategy includes connecting with customers through stimuli and persuasion during service (attention, physical space, messages, sounds). This journey promotes the consumer's desire to repeat the experience and, therefore, be loyal to the brand (Dubuc, 2022).

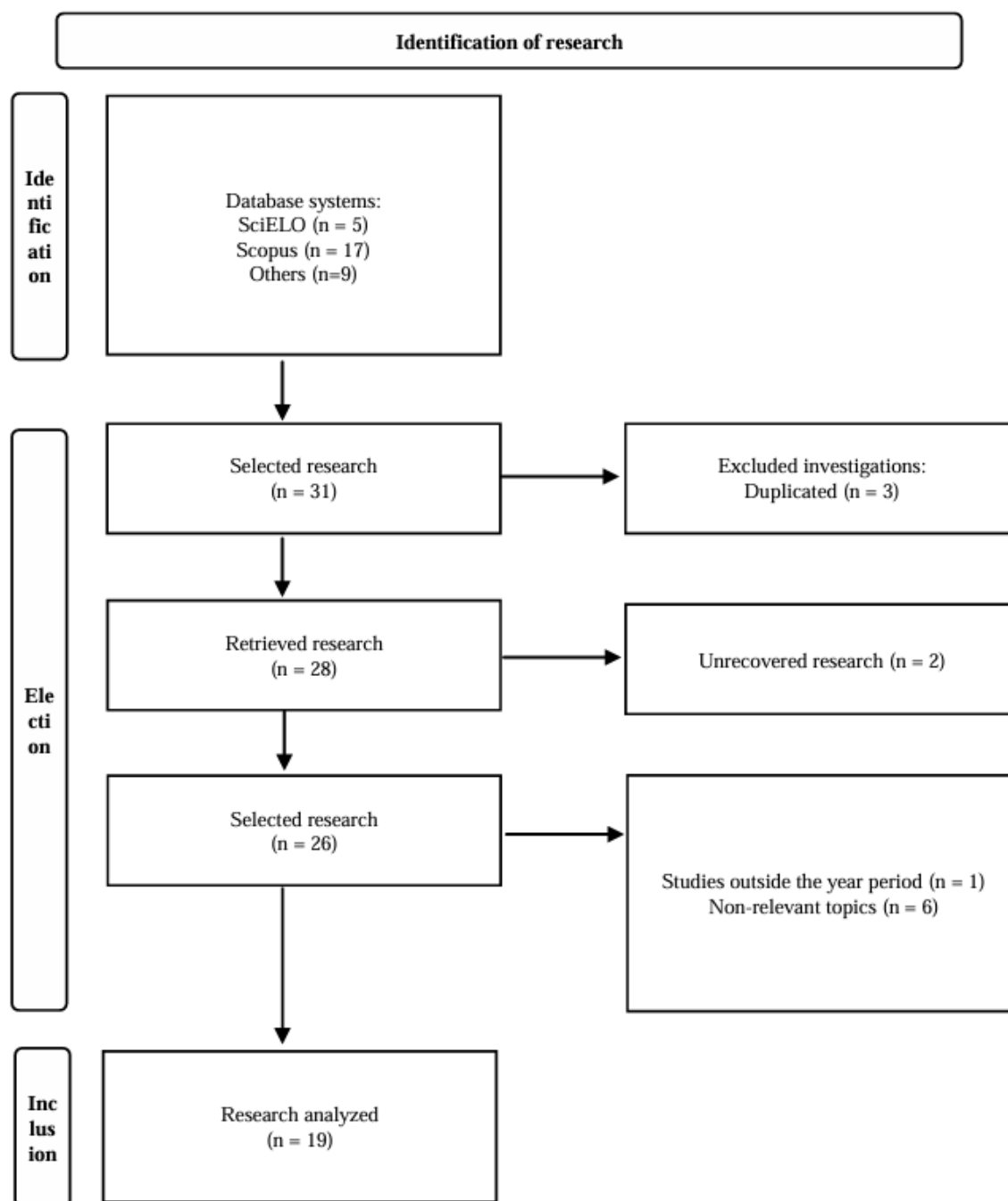
Changes in consumer behavior and the rise of the digital age represent a benefit in business practices, but also a challenge to retain customers, since high competition and abundant information limit the construction of strong relationships. Customer service management is the most basic aspect for the quality of service or product to be perceived; a good strategy allows the consumer to develop a sense of belonging through personalization of the service based on their characteristics and needs (Ling et al., 2021; Brzozowska et al., 2023). This study is transcendental because it provides an exhaustive review of impact of customer service management strategies on loyalty, identifying which are most appropriate in current context, investigating the role of technology for the benefit of organizations, the key points in consumer loyalty, and providing valuable recommendations to translate customer loyalty into organizational profitability.

METHODOLOGY

This work was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA methodology guidelines, which facilitate the documentation of reasons for the review and the transparency of methodology. Furthermore, the PRISMA guidelines enable the presentation of a visual flow of information and the selection of studies throughout the process (Barrios et al., 2021). Furthermore, a systematic review was conducted to identify and evaluate available information on the research topic, thereby obtaining an impartial and updated overview that is synthesized in a single document (Newman & Gough, 2020).

To identify pertinent academic literature, databases such as Scopus, SciELO, and others including Emerald and Springer were consulted. In accordance with the established inclusion criteria, articles pertaining to the study variables were deemed eligible for consideration. These articles were required to have been published within the past five years and to adhere to a standard structure, comprising an introduction, methodology, results, and conclusions. Given the objective of this study, priority was given to content written in English and Spanish. Documents were excluded if they lacked relevance or a clear relationship between the management type in question and customer loyalty, or if they were outside the specified time frame or had an unconventional structure.

In addition, the search terms included the following keywords: "Customer service management strategies," "Customer loyalty," "Building customer loyalty," and "Service management to build customer loyalty."

**Figure 1:** Selection flowchart**Table 1:** Previous research

| Cod | Author | Country | Title | Summary | Database |
|-----|---------------------------|-----------|---|--|----------|
| 1 | Barra et al. (2023). | Argentina | Outsourcing as a production model and customer loyalty of a financial company | When they do not see results in customer loyalty, many companies resort to outsourcing so that another company designs and executes strategies to retain customers and ensure competitive advantage. | SciELO |
| 2 | Cachero y Vásquez (2021). | España | Building consumer loyalty through e-shopping | Customer service management in digital media also has the emotional purchase experience | Scopus |

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| | | | experiences: The mediating role of emotions. | as a mediator of customer loyalty. | |
| 3 | Checasaca et al. (2022) | Paraguay | Importancia de la herramienta Customer Relationship Management (CRM) en las empresas de Latinoamérica. | What is most valued in a company is its ability to form a long-term relationship with its public that generates profitability. | SciELO |
| 4 | Chen, C. (2024) | Taiwan | Atmospherics fosters customer loyalty: Exploring the mediating effects of memorable customer experience and customer satisfaction in factory outlet malls in Taiwan | The study highlights the effects of the atmosphere in physical spaces where customer service is provided, as it affects customer satisfaction so that they repeat the experience and perceive the quality of the service. | Scopus |
| 5 | Chen, Y., Mandler, T., y Meyer, L. (2021) | Francia | Three decades of research on loyalty programs: A literature review and future research agenda. | Customer loyalty is addressed as a marketing strategy to identify, reward and retain attractively profitable customers. | Scopus |
| 6 | Dimon, C., Popescu, D., y Bilbiie, R. | Rumania | Efficient and Collaborative Decisions for Supplier-Customer Services Management. | An alternative to increase the efficiency of customer service management is the interaction between supplier and consumer. | Scopus |
| 7 | Desveaud, K., Mandler, T., y Eisend, M. (2024) | Francia | A meta-model of customer brand loyalty and its antecedents | Metaconcepts about customer loyalty with the brand are suggested: offer, alignment, experience and bond. | Scopus |
| 8 | Dubuc. (2022) | Venezuela | Marketing sensorial como estrategia persuasiva para la fidelización del cliente en el sector de servicios. | A persuasive strategy within customer service management is sensory marketing (stimulation of the senses), which in turn is complemented by commercial strategies. | SciELO |
| 9 | Gaofer, R.; Chen, Y., y Yang, M. (2024) | China | Customer perception, integration behavior, and loyalty of internet of things enterprises. | The article focuses on customer integration to build customer loyalty and maintain competitiveness in the technological market. | Scopus |
| 10 | Haleem, A., Javaid, M., y Pratap, R. (2024) | India | Exploring the competence of ChatGPT for customer and | The capacity of AI is transformative for the need for better services, as it allows a high range of information | Scopus |

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| | | | patient service management. | management and response. | |
| 11 | Islam et al. (2021). | China | The impact of corporate social responsibility on customer loyalty: The mediating role of corporate reputation, customer satisfaction, and trust. | Customer loyalty is more viable when companies carry out responsible practices. At the same time, these actions build their corporate reputation and trust with their public. | Scopus |
| 12 | Lin, C. y Bowman, D. (2022). | | The impact of introducing a customer loyalty program on category sales and profitability. | The article delves into the effects of a customer loyalty plan, showing that loyal customers are less sensitive to changes in prices and promotions, which benefits profits regardless of the market context. | Scopus |
| 13 | Kar et al. (2024) | Reino Unido | Causal recipes of customer loyalty in a sharing economy: Integrating social media analytics and fsQCA. | The interaction with customers at different stages of the service is studied to generate positive perceptions and feelings that create loyal customers. | Scopus |
| 14 | Makhubele, KC. (2023). | Sudáfrica | Innovation in health-care companies: a strategy to increase customer service productivity. | Happiness with the service is synonymous with return and, therefore, loyalty. The study explores the importance of this aspect for customers to become brand advocates. | SciELO |
| 15 | Misischia, C., Poecze, F. y Strauss, C. (2022) | Austria | Chatbots in customer service: Their relevance and impact on service quality. | Chatbots are tools that open up opportunities for improvement in customer service, optimizing interactions, personalization and problem solving. | Scopus |
| 16 | Orazgaliyeva et al. (2024) | Kazajistán | Trust as a critical driver of customer loyalty in the pharmaceutical market: A study of Kazakhstan | Trust is proposed as the fundamental factor in customer loyalty as a competitive advantage within the market. | Scopus |
| 17 | Pekovic, S. y Rolland, S. (2020). | Francia | Recipes for achieving customer loyalty: A qualitative comparative analysis of the dimensions of customer experience. | Consumers seek to acquire memorable experiences and not just products or services. These experiences are highly valued when they are personalized and produce cognitive, social and emotional responses. | Scopus |
| 18 | Quezada, W., y Chamba, C. (2023). | Ecuador | Sistema CRM para la gestión de atención al cliente en las cooperativas | It is necessary to implement customer relationship management within services since their expectations are | SciELO |

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| | | | de ahorro y crédito ecuatorianas. | better known in order to provide quality in each experience with the company. | |
| 19 | Sinh, H. (2024) | | The impact of value co-creation behavior on customer loyalty in the service domain | The study evaluates the customer as a proactive agent in the creation of value during service management for their loyalty. | Scopus |

RESULTS

In this study, 19 articles were recorded from a total of 31 publications found in SciELO (5) and Scopus (14). The selected documentation presents the main customer service management strategies for customer loyalty, as well as importance of having a loyal customer base within a competitive market and the benefits this entails in terms of profitability and reputation.

The results show that a synergy between technology, people management and incentives within customer service is required to achieve high levels of loyalty. In addition, they highlight the role of the customer in the creation of value and their satisfaction as a mediator of their loyalty.

DISCUSSION

Customer loyalty used to be a benefit, but it has now become a necessity. It is said loyal customers are profitable by increasing sales and reducing costs. To reach this point, the company must be characterized by an offer in which customers identify their needs and a service that is an experience that produces a stable bond (Desveaud et al., 2024). In this sense, the customer adopts a proactive role in the co-creation of value by letting themselves be known more so that the brand succeeds in meeting their expectations, which is configured as a mutual benefit: consumers perceive high performance in the service and company strengthens its competitiveness (Sinh, 2024). Therefore, efficient customer service management is distinguished by evoking quality perceptions during interaction with the consumer through resource prioritization and pattern monitoring (Kar et al., 2024).

Trust is positioned as a critical driver in customer loyalty, so strategies within service management such as price, consumer knowledge, promotion, place and satisfaction must be coherent to build "true loyalty" (Orazgaliyev et al., 2024). This state of trust, according to Quezada and Chamba (2023), can also have its foundations in customer relationship management or CRM because it is a strategic resource helps to know the preferences and needs of the consumer from an integrated vision, and this information is used to provide quality in services. Knowing the customer and winning them over translates into repetition in terms of acquiring products or services and consumer recommendation attitudes with other potential users (Desveaud et al., 2024).

Technology alone is not a determining aspect in customer service management, but combined with the aforementioned strategies it can guarantee efficiency of the service. For example, artificial intelligence improves the customer experience, as it ensures 24/7 attention, simultaneous handling of requests, overcoming communication obstacles, and compatibility with various communication channels (Haleem et al., 2024). In terms of contactless services, in physical spaces, promoting a memorable and satisfactory experience through atmosphere is a strategy uses sensory and attention stimuli as drivers of loyalty based on emotional reactions (Chen C.-T., 2024). As Sinh (2024) argued, these interactions together with tolerance, willingness to respond, responsibility, and dissemination of valuable information build customer loyalty.

The authors propose satisfaction as a mediator of loyalty, which is possible with a customer integration strategy from the motivational perspective, which is the antecedent impulse of behaviors, the psychological state perspective and the behavioral perspective occurs when the customer recommends the service, gives reviews and is an executor of word-of-mouth advertising (Ren et al., 2024). Likewise, efficient decisions must be prioritized in the management of supplier-customer services; for example, in logistics services, innovative transport control is sought to reduce congestion, production capacity and attention to demands are foreseen (Dimon et al., 2022). The service experience must be precise and optimized to promote customer loyalty and trust to consolidate long-term relationships with them and ensure the survival of the company (Orazgaliyev et al., 2024).

CONCLUSIONS

The efficacy of customer service management strategies is contingent upon customer loyalty, which in turn is a determinant of the competitiveness of the company. In other words, the implementation of these strategies with the aid of novel technologies, the adherence to responsible practices, customer relationship management, and effective marketing contribute to the cultivation of a long-lasting customer relationship that is also advantageous for the company. Based on the findings of this investigation, certain factors are identified as being of particular relevance.

Firstly, technology as a resource to carry out efficient service management strategies, which seek interaction with customers, data collection for the launch of personalized offers and providing experiences that meet the expectations of the public based on the information obtained from them. A fairly recurring point in most recent studies was the use of artificial intelligence to improve personalization and problem resolution in a precise manner.

Conversely, a pivotal element is customer relationship management (CRM) throughout the service cycle. This enables a deeper understanding of the consumer, facilitating continued innovation in products and services while fostering customer retention and streamlining interactions. Thirdly, communication was identified as a pivotal aspect of this management approach, as communication channels facilitate the dissemination of pertinent information, proactive engagement, and personalized attention. Lastly, it was demonstrated that customer experience is the primary determinant of their probable loyalty. This is why it is promoted to provide sensory stimuli throughout the purchasing process, with the objective of generating a positive experience that will encourage the consumer to repeat the experience.

The benefits of customer loyalty are evident in the stability of income and frequency of purchases, in addition to the reduction of costs by not estimating more resources for the acquisition of new consumers. This is based on long-term relationships built from added value and satisfaction with the service; having loyal consumers is a sign of having an advantage in business world.

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