

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY, DOES
INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) MATTER?
(A CASE STUDY OF ZENITH BANK GHANA)**



MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

2022

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY, DOES
INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) MATTER?
(A CASE STUDY OF ZENITH BANK GHANA)**

**MILLICENT AHENKAN OWUSU
(202121396)**



**A dissertation in the Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship,
School of Business, submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Business Administration
(Marketing and Entrepreneurship)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

NOVEMBER, 2022

DECLARATION

Students' Declaration

I, Millicent Ahenkan Owusu, declares that this dissertation, with the except for quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledge, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guideline for supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Dr. Yaw Brew (Supervisor)

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my lovely husband: Mr. Rexford Ayiah Amoasi, my adorable kids: Ines Ayiah Amoasi, Othniel Ayiah Amoasi and Elian Ankrah Ayiah Amoasi for their support in diverse ways throughout my study.



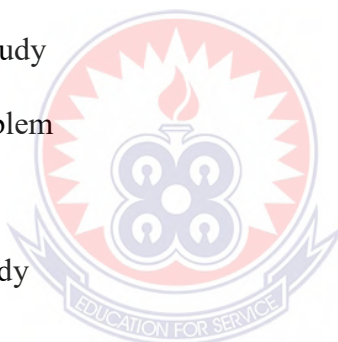
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My sincere gratitude and appreciation go to my supervisor, Dr Yaw Brew who provided invaluable assistance and support in guiding me through the completion of this research. I cannot forget to thank, my sister, respondents, friends and colleagues for their support, especially Sis Regina Arhin and all those who helped me in diverse ways to complete this dissertation successfully.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABSTRACT	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODCUTION	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	5
1.3 Purpose of the Study	8
1.4 Objectives of the Study	8
1.5 Research Questions	8
1.6 Significance of the Study	9
1.7 Delimitation of the Study	10
1.8 Limitations of the Study	10
1.9 Organization of the Study	10
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.0 Introduction	12
2.1 Theoretical Review	12
2.2 Conceptual Review	14
2.3 Empirical Review	23



2.4 Conceptual Framework	29
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	30
3.0 Introduction	30
3.1 Philosophical Assumption	31
3.2 Research Approach	31
3.3 Study Design	33
3.4 Population	34
3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure	35
3.6 Data Collection	36
3.7 Research Instrument	37
3.8 Pre-testing of the Instrument	38
3.9 Ethical Considerations	40
3.10 Data Analysis	41
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	43
4.0 Introduction	43
4.1 Background Characteristics of Respondents	43
4.2 Relationship between RM practices and customer loyalty	50
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	62
5.0 Introduction	62
5.1 Summary of Findings	62
5.2 Conclusions	67
5.3 Recommendations	68
5.4 Suggestions for Future Studies	68



REFERENCES	70
APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE	77



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1: Demographic data of respondents	44
2: Customer relationship marketing practices	47
3: Relationship between RM practices and customer loyalty	50
4: Moderating Effect of IT on RM and Customer Loyalty	52
5: Contribution of I.T. infrastructure on customer loyalty	61



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1: Conceptual Framework	29



ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of relationship marketing (RM) on customer loyalty moderated by information communication technology (ICT). The study examines a comprehensive set of variables providing a deeper understanding of the association between relationship marketing and loyalty. The study delves into the moderating role of ICT in the association of relationship marketing and customer loyalty. The study employed descriptive survey design and questionnaire was used in gathering data from 200 staff made up of branch managers and relationship staff of Zenith Bank in Central and Greater Accra Regions. The results indicate among others that banks in Ghana show high levels of competence, communicate more often with their customers, avoid manifest conflicts situations and are committed to customer needs and maintain a high level of trust with their customers. The results show that banks pay the greatest attention to trust in RM practices, followed by conflict handling. Also, the results show that ICT has a direct positive association with RM and customer loyalty. The findings let the researcher to conclude among others that RM practices jointly have a significant influence on customer loyalty. Marketers aiming at building and maintaining long term beneficial relationships with their customers hoping to win their loyalty must give special attention particularly to ICT, competence, commitment and communication. This can be done through training and development programmes for staff at all levels.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODCUTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Today, products and services are losing their emphasis as key differentiators in the banking industry due to existence of brand parity, increased competition in the global market place, changing trends in the pattern of consumers demand, growing range of choices in the products and services customers can buy, advancement of information technology and the internet. Among financial institutions, the banking sector is the largest component in any economy (Caporale, Rault, Sova, & Sova, 2015). As a result, the industry plays a critical role in the distribution of financial resources from those who have idle funds to those in need of the funds (Shaikh *et al.*, 2017). In Ghana, the banking sector constitutes about 70% of the financial and insurance sector (Kosiba, Boateng, Okoe, & Hinson, 2020) and contributes about 56.2% of Ghana's GDP (Peprah, Agyei, & Oteng, 2017). This makes the commercial banking sector an essential need for the development of the economy since the failure of this sector adversely affects the entire economy. Chakiso (2015) noted that like many businesses today, financial services take place in an ever-changing context. Similarly, financial institutions especially in banking industry creates an opportunity for the customers to choose the banks they want. As a result, fewer new customers are being pursued by an increasing number of service providers. Under these circumstances, firms' resources must be devoted to present customers, making them satisfied, loyal and returning clients."

As the financial marketplace becomes more dynamic and competitive, banks also need to focus on retaining existing clients since customer loyalty has been considered

as the backbone for firms, as it is a way for sustaining and increasing sales. As well as it plays an important role in increasing profits, as it is obvious from previous research the cost of obtaining new customers is much higher than to serving current customers (Husnain & Akhtar, 2015). These customers spread positive customer satisfaction about service providers and suggest it to other prospects as well. The invention of new technologies and computerized networks led to changes in the banking sector which reduced transaction costs and increase the speed of service level, but on the other hand, it also affects the buyer-supplier relations (Caporale *et al.*, 2015). These changes in equipment manipulate relationship marketing perspective and customer loyalty in the banking sector.”

“In this context, the benefits of long-term loyalty of existing customers, such as increased profitability, reduced costs in relation to the individual customer, and word of mouth referrals from satisfied customers, become important (Popp & Woratschek, 2017). Customer loyalty requires careful and creative work and planning which satisfies customers. Service becomes more efficient when employees learn about what customers expect and how best to meet customer needs (Zameer *et al.*, 2015). Although zero defections should be the goal of all organizations, in reality, it probably will not be achieved. It requires finding out switching factors, calculation of customers' lifetime value (Zameer *et al.*, 2015), customers loyalty rate, and building lasting consumer relationship marketing (Chakiso, 2015). Due to the above-mentioned reasons, it is imperative to apply the modern paradigm shift in marketing called relationship marketing. Bataineh *et al.* (2015) pointed out that relationship building and marketing are vital cornerstones for service industries.”

“In recent years, there has been a refocusing of marketing away from customer acquisition to customer retention. If a company is intended to benefit from retaining customers, customers also seek benefit from giving their loyalty to the company (Magatef & Tomalieh, 2015). To achieve all the above-mentioned goals of customer loyalty, firms devised a new strategy known as relationship marketing (Magatef & Tomalieh, 2015). To add up, the loyalty of customers is considered as one of the most important pillars organizations’ success, especially in the light of the strong competition facing organizations in the labor market. For example in improving the financial and competitive performance over the long term, also in reaching their goals and their reasons for existence, which will be reflected on achieving competitive advantage (Al-khawaldah et al, 2022). Indeed, competitors are not the only impediment to customer retention, unsatisfied customers' needs in terms of quality of the product and ineffective service can also cause losing customer (Al-khawaldah et al, 2022). Therefore, the organization should take into their considerations the customer loyalty and how to develop an interactive relationship with customers, because the basis of this relationship is its quality that derived from the quality of the service provided, the way of how to provide this service, and the type of dealing, complaints or inquiry, level of accuracy, how much time does this service take to be provided, level of professionalism in communication (Al-khawaldah et al, 2022).”

“A number of studies have pointed out the importance of relationship marketing practices in obtaining loyal customers (Jones *et al.*, 2015; Soimo, Wagoki, & Okello, 2015). This is of the assumption that customers tend to be loyal when they feel that they receive certain privileges by associating themselves with a brand. Relationship marketing is not as simple to implement as it is made to look (Bilgihan & Bujisic, 2015) and a few businesses have the resources to develop long-term relationships with

every customer. According to Mhidze and Njuguna (2018) relationship marketing tactics influence customer loyalty. This particular research was conducted amongst the affluent customers in the banking industry and realized that the customers were saving their money to diversify their investments and not because of any additional or privileged services that the banks provided.”

“Information communication technologies are transforming organizations” customer-side operations and organizations are eagerly looking for effective IT strategy and applications to take advantage of these technologies. Rapid pace of innovations, shorter product life cycles, diverse customer needs, and growing internationalization of businesses, have made customer service performance critical for business entities” survival and thrive (Vajpai, & Tribhuvan, 2021). Information technologies have long been used in every aspect of business, especially in the front line of the business process, which is critical for the revenue generation and business growth. Information systems use has drawn ample focus of practitioners and consistent interests of researchers.”

Therefore, the significance of loyalty is to build a good relationship between an organization and its customers. It is against this background that the study aims at investigating the interactional role of information communication technology (ICT) in the relationship between relationship marketing and customer loyalty; a case study of Zenith Bank Ghana. How relationship marketing is related with customer loyalty will be explained along with the Social Exchange Theory by Blau, 1964 as cited by (Vajpai, I., & Tribhuvan, 2021) that provides support and serves as the fundamental perspective for this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The banking sector has now been regulated to increase customer involvement and flexibility. The presence of intense price competition and expansion to the rural areas means that customers can easily switch from one bank to another. The switching costs have thus become low making it very easy to switch from one bank to another. Other benefits to the customers apart from the low switching costs include better quality services, low prices, more alternatives, and creative innovations, hence the need for relationship marketing. Low switching costs may not necessarily lead to customer defection as customer value and good corporate image may compel the customers to remain loyal (Chuah *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, customers have a tendency of maintaining multiple bank accounts in different banks thus making switching costs not a direct driver towards customer loyalty. With these prevailing market conditions, the fundamental marketing strategy or strategies must focus on retaining customers by enhancing customer loyalty and perceived value.”

“With that being said, the ongoing increase of threat of defecting customers in the Ghanaian financial service sector, especially among banks has driven such companies to use various tactics oftentimes, similar or copied tactics to sweeten their offerings and lock-in customers. Furthermore, some studies such as that of Wende (2019) shows that the one size fits all approach regarding relationship marketing practice does not always apply to all large and small businesses, small and medium-sized service firms, or all economies. With such a business environment, where little has been documented about relationship marketing and given all the benefits of relationship marketing it would be ideal to find out whether these practices can offer some solutions to the prevailing challenges of customer loyalty in the Ghanaian banking industry (Ngoma and Ntale 2019). Hence the need for this study to try and

establish the influence of information communication technology on relationship marketing and customer loyalty.”

Varying findings of relationship marketing and customer loyalty have been established by earlier studies. Thus, some studies found a positive association between relationship marketing and customer loyalty (Jones *et al.*, 2015; Soimo *et al.*, 2015; Husnain & Akhtar, 2015), some of these relationship marketing practices have proven otherwise (Boateng, 2019). Trust for starters has been shown not to always have a significant effect on customer loyalty as exemplified by the study done by Bricci *et al.* (2016) on the non-life insurance sector in South Africa. Moreover, commitment has been shown to have no significant effect on the attitudinal aspect of customer loyalty (Yao *et al.*, 2019). In addition to that conflict handling (Chakiso, 2015) has proven to have an insignificant and negligible role in the Zemen bank in Ethiopia. Relationship marketing is of strategic importance to the Ghanaian banking industry given the country’s market conditions but unfortunately, only a handful of studies have been made.”

However, the extant literature above shows there is still limited and perhaps a dearth of studies on the relationship between relationship marketing and customer loyalty in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, particularly Ghana (Boateng, 2019). Boateng (2019) argue that the growing importance of the Ghanaian financial market to the global economy means that a study of the banks in the financial service sector is necessary to find ways and means of assisting marketing practitioners in designing effective customer marketing strategies that will aid in achieving high levels of customer loyalty. Meanwhile, Abtin and Pouramiri (2016) argued that industry and geographical contexts are important to a study of this kind because these contextual

factors limit the generalizability of findings to other geographical and industrial contexts that were not involved, linking it to the notion that relationship marketing concerns differ across jurisdictions. Tahmasbizadeh et al., (2016) also, adding data collected across regions are usually affects research results because regulatory differences and pressure variations exist in different contexts.”

Although the importance of information communication technology (ICT) in providing excellent customer service cannot be over emphasized, the moderating role of ICT between relationship marketing and customer loyalty has received insufficient academic attention (Ngo & Pavelková, 2017). Menidjel *et al.* (2019) also argued that the effect of ICT on customer relationship marketing needs to be examined in other relevant sector. Cakici *et al.* (2019) also claimed that ICT and loyalty could be gained through investment in the relationship and satisfactory factors. Based on the above-mentioned study, it is believed that information communication technology (ICT) is a suitable moderator to be tested between relationship marketing and customer loyalty in the Ghanaian context.”

“Interestingly, most of studies on relationship marketing, ICT, and customer loyalty appear to have a Western bias (Issock *et al.*, 2019; Jones *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, Jones *et al.* (2015) believed that future researchers should operationalize their research work in a different national context, especially in Non-Western contexts. This study, conducted in a West African country like Ghana and in the banking sector, will reinforce previous findings. Again, the researcher observed that few studies, have been carried out, particularly in the Ghanaian banking sector on the effects of relationship marketing on banks' customer loyalty moderated by Information Communication Technology (ICT).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Generally, this study investigated the effect of relationship marketing on customer loyalty moderated by information communication technology (ICT) at Zenith Bank Ghana Limited.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- I. To examine the relationship between relationship marketing dimensions and the loyalty of customers of Zenith Bank, Ghana Limited.
- II. To assess the effect of relationship marketing dimensions on the loyalty of customers of Zenith Bank Ghana Limited.
- III. To assess whether ICT moderates the relationship between relationship marketing dimensions and the loyalty of customers of Zenith Bank, Ghana Limited.

1.5 Research Questions

- I. What is the relationship between relationship marketing dimensions and the loyalty of customers of Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited?
- II. To what extent does relationship marketing dimensions affect the loyalty of customers of Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited?
- III. To what extent does ICT moderate the relationship between relationship marketing dimensions and the loyalty of customers of Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited?

Hypotheses

In order to ascertain the effects of relationship marketing on customer loyalty and achieve the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were stated

- H1. Trust will have a positive effect on customer loyalty in the banking sector
- H2. Bonding will have a positive effect on customer loyalty.
- H3. Commitment Conflict Handling will have a positive effect on customer loyalty
- H4. Competence will have a positive effect on customer loyalty
- H5. Conflict Handling will have a positive effect on customer loyalty
- H6. Communication will have a positive effect on customer loyalty
- H7. ICT will positively moderate relationship marketing and customer loyalty

1.6 Significance of the Study

In a fast-growing competitive way of doing business and rendering services to customers worldwide more importantly within the banking space, attracting customers and maintaining their loyalty is an important strategy in improving the profit performance of a business. As such the findings of this study will contribute significantly to humanity in three ways. Firstly, the outcome of the study will help policymakers to realize the need to have and implement relationship marketing effectively. It will provide marketing with information on the dimensions of relationship marketing and its impact on customer loyalty in the banking service. The information provided will also help marketing on how to adjust and effectively institute effective policies and strategies on customer relationship marketing and effective ways of achieving customer loyalty. The financial service sector on the other hand will be equipped with relevant information regarding how relationship marketing influences customer loyalty amongst the banks in Ghana and which dimensions are more important than others.”

“The study will also contribute to the literature by responding to calls from previous studies that argue for marketing researchers to move toward consensus on relationship

marketing practices, as this would help develop a cutting-edge relationship marketing approach that is suitable for most, if not all situations (Islam *et al.*, 2020). It also fills the gap in literature calling for studies to test the moderation effect of ICT on relationship marketing and the loyalty of customers (Amoako *et al.*, 2019). Finally, government, stakeholders, and other regulatory bodies may fall on the findings to formulate and implement relationship marketing policies that will help to neutralize the deficiencies repeatedly reported on the satisfaction and loyalty of customers.”

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The current study investigates relationship marketing, ICT, and customer loyalty at Zenith Bank Ghana Ltd. Thus, the study examines the degree to which relationship marketing dimensions at Zenith Bank Ghana Ltd, specifically, trust, commitment, and conflict handling influence banks’ customer loyalty. The researcher selects Zenith Bank Ghana Ltd as the case because the researcher is an employee of the bank, therefore facilitated data collection to obtain accurate and reliable data to achieve the aim of the study. The researcher included the headquarters and some selected branches within Winneba.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study was however limited to only three branches and one agency of Zenith Bank within the Central region of Ghana even though there are about 40 and 6 agencies all over the country. The study again was only limited to the Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited which is only an aspect of the financial services industry.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one covered the general introduction to the study grouped under the following headings; background of the

study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, the scope of the study, and organization of the rest of the study. Chapter two identified and review previous and relevant work done on the topic. It included the theoretical framework, conceptual review, and summary of the chapter. In chapter three, the research methodology outlined included the research design, target population, sample and sampling procedures, instrument, data collection procedure, and data analyses as well as ethical consideration. Chapter four dealt with the data analysis, presentation, and discussion of results. Chapter five covered the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations, implications, limitations, and suggested areas for further studies.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section of the study is devoted to critically examine the previous knowledge in the academic literature that forms the basis for justifying the need and the motivation for undertaking this study. Accordingly, the social exchange theory was reviewed since it served as the underpinning assumption of the study, the concept of relationship marketing and its dimensions, ICT, and customer loyalty were reviewed and the conceptual framework was developed. The subsequent sections provide the highlights of the review.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This section of the study discusses the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) as cited by Vajpai, and Tribhuvan (2021) as the main theoretical perspective that provide the main support and serves as the fundamental for this research. In this study, the theory is used to explain how the association between relationship marketing and customer loyalty is moderated by ICT. The foundation of Social Exchange Theory was created in the 1960s. Vajpai, and Tribhuvan, (2021) identified social behaviour as exchange and claimed that “to consider social behaviour as an exchange of goods may clarify the relations among four bodies of theory: behavioural psychology, economics, propositions about the dynamics of influence, and propositions about the structure of small groups”. Small group research was done to connect experimental and real-life studies. Base on the findings, they summarized that social behaviour is an exchange of goods, material goods but also non-material ones, such as the symbols of approval or prestige. Persons that give much to others try to get much from them, and persons that get much from others are under pressure to give much to them. This process of

influence tends to work out at equilibrium to a balance in the exchanges”. If a person engaged in exchange, what he gave might be a cost to him, just as what he got might be a reward. One’s behaviour changed to maximize the reward. Not only did he seek a maximum for himself, but he tried to see to it that no one in his group made more profit than he did.”

Dunbar (2015) strengthened the general exchange approach. They employed different strategies of theory construction. They analyzed social relations in two parts: the properties of two-person relations and an extension of the chief concepts to the complex relations of larger groups. They began with psychological concepts that were built upward to the dyad from there to the small groups. Starting with the assumption that most social interactions must be reinforced to be repeated, they analyzed two-person matrices, which were designed to express all the possible interactions and outcomes in terms of rewards and costs to the participants. Based upon the two-person relationship analysis, they then studied the larger groups for issues related to interdependence, status, conformity, and group goals.”

The theory is appropriate for this study because service encounters can be viewed as social exchanges with the interaction between bankers and customer being a crucial component of satisfaction and providing a strong reason for continuing a relationship (Dunbar, 2015). Social exchange theory attempts to account for the development, growth and even dissolution of social and business relationships. In other words, people (or business firms) evaluate their reward - cost ratio when deciding whether or not to maintain a relationship. Rewards and costs have been defined in terms of interpersonal (e.g. liking, familiarity, influence), personal (gratification linked to self-esteem, ego, personality) and situational factors (aspects of the psychological

environment such as a relationship formed to accomplish some task). In the Ghanaian banking context, considering the level of interpersonal contact needed to produce services, there is a range of psychological, relational and financial considerations that might act as a disincentive for a change of service providers.”

“While social exchange theory can be very useful conceptually, it is mainly criticized for its lack of empirical foundation. Factors such as commitment and trust should be able to substitute (at least in part) contractual governance structures (Dunbar, 2015). Presumably, this is attributable to social exchange theory’s neglect of opportunism. Moorman, et al (2009) noted that dependence and vulnerability inherent in close relationships may eventually lead to the perception that one party takes advantage of the other, creating the need for formal governance structures that can serve as safety nets.”

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 The Concept of Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing is a business philosophy that developed out of the need for maintaining a base of current customers who are committed to the organization. According to Berry et al, (2017), it involves strengthening relationships with current customers and retaining them rather than acquiring new ones. The logic underlying relationship marketing is that customer relationships should be approached on a long-term basis such that customers acquired are retained (Dibb and Meadow, 2019). They further assert that a long-term relationship with customers enables the firm to add value to its offerings. Accordingly, relationship marketing is an “*integrated effort*” to identify, maintain and build networks with individual consumers and to strengthen continuously the network for the mutual benefit of both sides, through interactive,

individualized and value-added contacts over a long period of time. This definition buttressed the existence of interpersonal relationships built between exchange partners through continuous interactions. Such interaction between exchange partners is a necessary precondition for strengthening relational bonds between exchange partners and a predictor of a long-term relationship (Kim *et al.*, 2016).”

“Customers” expects a positive outcome in the form of value and convenience in their interpersonal relationship with service provider just as company”s desire sustainable relationship. Thus, confirming Ndubuisi’s & Chan (2011) assertion that a real sustainable business growth strategy is only achievable through a mutual and symbiotic relationship that guarantees a clear understanding of the customers” needs such that superior value is created and delivered. Blomqvist *et al.* (1993) proposed the following key characteristics of relationship marketing: every customer is considered an individual person or unit; activities of the firm are predominantly directed towards existing customers; implementation is based on interactions and dialogues; and the firm is trying to achieve profitability through the decrease of customer turnover and the strengthening of customer relationships.”

“The importance of relationship marketing is being recognized to a growing extent. Webster (1992), in an analysis of the current developments in business and marketing, reported that the relatively narrow conceptualization of marketing as a profit-maximization problem, focused on market transactions or series of transactions, seems increasingly out of touch with an emphasis on long-term customer relationships and formation and marketing of strategic alliances. Ndubisi & Chan (2011) argued that the only real sustainable business growth strategy is through a mutual symbiotic

relationship with customers, which enables a business to understand their needs more clearly and to create and deliver superior value.”

2.2.1.1 Dimensions of Relationship Marketing

2.2.1.1.1 Trust

Trust has been defined as the willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence” (Moorman *et al.*, 2017). A betrayal of this trust by the supplier or service provider could lead to defection. Schurr and Ozanne (2015) defined the term as the belief that a partner’s word or promise is reliable and a party will fulfill his/her obligations in the relationship. Other authors have defined trust in terms of opportunistic behaviour (Dwyer *et al.*, 2017), shared values (Morgan & Hunt, 2014), mutual goals (Wilson, 2015), uncertainty (Crosby *et al.*, 2015), actions with positive outcomes (Anderson & Narus, 2014) and making and keeping promises (Bitner, 2015). Soltani (2018) emphasized that an integral element of the relationship marketing approach is the promise concept. He argued that the responsibilities of marketing do not only, or predominantly, include giving promises and thus persuading customers as passive counterparts in the marketplace to act in a given way, but also in keeping promises, which maintains and enhances an evolving relationship. Fulfilling promises that have been given is equally important as a means of achieving customer satisfaction, retaining the customer base, and securing long-term profitability (Reichheld and Sasser, 2010), besides fanning the fire of trust. Indeed, one would expect a positive outcome from a partner on whose integrity one could confidently rely (Morgan and Hunt, 2014).”

Trust has been observed as the cornerstone of long-term relationship and a key determinant of relational commitment (Sirdeshmukh, Singh and Sabol, 2012).

According to Morgan and Hunt (1994) trust is conceptualize as a state that exists when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity. Trust relates to the customer's confidence that the organization will reliably provide satisfactory service in a manner that is competent, honest, fair, responsible, helpful, and benevolent (Randall et al., 2011). Reichheld and Sasser (2010) provide a more succinct conceptualization by observing that "to gain the loyalty of customers, you must first gain their trust". In other words, trust is confidence in the believe that an exchange partner will fulfill its promises without acting opportunistically. Trust as a dimension of relationship marketing has an influence on building customer loyalty (Aydin and Ozer 2005; Chen and Xie 2007; Du Plessis 2010). Previous studies have amply demonstrated the significant relationship between trust and relational outcomes in the service business (van Vuuren et al., 2012; Sirdeshmukh, Ndubisi 2011).

2.2.1.1.2 Commitment

Commitment is another important determinant of the strength of a marketing relationship, and a useful construct for measuring the likelihood of customer loyalty and predicting future purchase frequency (Gundlach *et al.*, 2015; Morgan and Hunt, 2014; Dwyer *et al.*, 2018). Wilson (2015) observed that commitment was the most common dependent variable used in buyer-seller relationship studies. In sociology, the concept of commitment is used to analyze both individual and organizational behaviour (Becker, 2016) and mark out forms of action characteristic of particular kinds of people or groups (Wong & Sohal, 2012), while psychologists define it in terms of decisions or cognitions that fix or bind an individual to a behavioural disposition (Kiesler, 2017)."

“In the marketing literature, Moorman *et al.* (2019) have defined commitment as an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship. This implies a higher level of obligation to make a relationship succeed and to make it mutually satisfying and beneficial (Gundlach *et al.*, 2015; Morgan and Hunt, 2014). Since, commitment is higher among individuals who believe that they receive more value from a relationship, highly committed customers should be willing to reciprocate effort on behalf of a firm due to past benefits received (Mowday *et al.*, 1982), and highly committed firms will continue to enjoy the benefits of such reciprocity.”

According to Morgan and Hunt (2010) commitment is believe that an ongoing relationship between exchange partners is important to a partner as to warrant exercising maximum efforts at maintaining it. Relationship commitment is at the core of all successful working relationships and it is a vital ingredient in successful long-term relationships. Commitment relates to high level of perceived stakes held by partners in an exchange relationship necessitating the need to maintain such relationships. Randall *et al.*, (2011) add that commitment can result from emotional attachment or cognitive calculation. Higher levels of commitment are expected with relationship success (van Vuuren *et al.*, 2004). Commitment has been found to decrease probability of switching and also found to lead to behavioural loyalty in banking (Frow, 2007).

2.2.1.1.3 Conflict Handling

“Conflict handling refers to the supplier’s ability to minimize the negative consequences of manifest and potential conflicts (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 2017). Conflict handling reflects the supplier’s ability to avoid potential conflicts and solve manifest conflicts before they create problems, and the ability to openly discuss

solutions when problems arise. Rusbult *et al.* (2018) argued that the likelihood that an individual will demonstrate loyalty, exit, or voice depends on the degree of prior satisfaction with the relationship, the magnitude of the person's investment in the relationship, and an evaluation of the alternatives one has. The ability of the bank to handle conflict well will determine customer satisfaction and customer loyalty."

"Conflict in our lives is obvious. In general conflict is considered as a harmful, destructive experience by people, but it is more natural and invasive phenomenon in their understanding (Boonsathorn, 2007). Conflict can be healthy and normal in an organizational perspective, lack of tension is ultimately dull and stagnant and unlikely to foster creativity and growth. Putnam & Poole (1987) consider conflict from the communicational point of view. Communication is viewed as one of the five elements of "conflict situations". Customer interactions of service providers with their customers contain complaint handling as an integral part. It poses negative impact on credibility and on trust of service provider if viewed by customer as inappropriate and slow handling of complaints (Ganesan, 1994). Conflict handling was described by Dwyer *et al.* (1987) as the firm's capability to reduce the harmful outcomes of apparent and possible conflicts."

"Conflicts handling depicts the supplier's capability to keep away from possible clashes, resolve apparent conflicts before they generate troubles and the ability to talk about frankly, clarification as problems occur. How conflicts are resolved will make sure loyalty, leave or say. Rusbult *et al.* (1988) said, chances that a person will connected in such behaviours based on the level of preceding satisfaction with the relationship, the degree of the person's involvement in the relationship and an assessment of the choices one has. Once conflict is known, accepted, as well as

managed in an appropriate approach, organizational and personal benefits will end result (Silverthorne, 2005).”

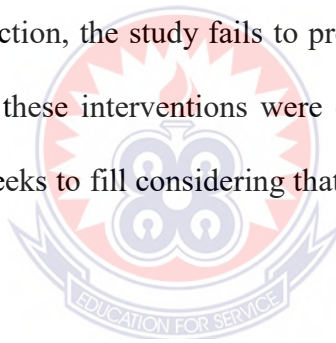
“Furthermore, Conflict handling reflects the supplier’s ability to avoid potential conflicts and solve manifest conflicts before they create problems, and the ability to openly discuss solutions when problems arise. Rusbult *et al.*, (1988) argued that the likelihood that an individual will demonstrate loyalty, exit, or voice depends on the degree of prior satisfaction with the relationship, the magnitude of the person’s investment in the relationship, and an evaluation of the alternatives one has. The ability of the bank to handle conflict well will determine customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.”

2.2.2 The Concept of Information Communication Technology (ICT)

“Information and communication technologies (ICTs) play a key role in today’s service economy (Rai and Sambamurthy, 2006). ICT services have become the main driver of productivity and economic growth in the world economy (Bilbao-Osorio *et al.*, 2013). ICT service innovation has become a high priority for companies to gain competitive advantage in an environment of rapid technology evolution (Wu, 2014). Information communication technology is defined as „all forms of technology utilized to create, capture, manipulate, communicate, exchange, present, and use information in its various forms (business data, voice conversations, still images, motion pictures, multimedia presentations) (Ryssel *et al.*, 2004). ICT involves among many things the study of computer devices and accessories, the operation of these devices and applications of programs that run these devices. It can also be defined as the medium that utilizes both telecommunication and computer technologies to transmit information (Garrison and Anderson, 2003). This consists of

hardware, software, networks and media for collection, storage, processing, transmission, presentation of information (voice, data, text, and images) and the hand held devices like mobile phones (Garrison and Anderson, 2003).”

“ICT has become so important in the world today that it has gradually controlled the way of life and influenced human behaviour in many ways. The influence of ICT in society is what has drawn the attention of sociologists and some social scientists to take keen interest in studying this dominant phenomenon. Alzouma (2006) examined the specific appropriation and adoption process of cell phones and computers in the African context. Although the study reveals attempts made by the Senegalese government to expand telecommunication channels in the country which also introduced internet connection, the study fails to present the extent of usage as well as the activities users of these interventions were engaged in. It is this gap in the literature that this study seeks to fill considering that ICT has come to stay especially in marketing.”



“The literature points out the existence of two main dimensions for information technology assessment, thus information technology advancement and information technology alignment (Hausman & Stock, 2003; Wu et al., 2006). Information technology advancement has been defined as the extent to which a firm adopts the most sophisticated technology as a measure of the company’s proactivity in adopting and implementing IT to offer solutions to its customers ahead of competitors (Wu et al., 2006). ICT alignment is defined as the extent to which a firm’s ICT is compatible with that of its channel partners (Powell, 1992). The literature points out that technology contributes positively to relationship marketing (Fernie & Grant, 2008). Nevertheless, regarding the influence of ICT on buyer – supplier relationships, there

is evidence supporting that technology can be a source of satisfaction or of dissatisfaction, depending on customer attitude towards technology (Azeem et al., 2021; Parasuraman & Colby, 2001; Walker et al., 2002) and or employee responsiveness (Bitner, 2001; Azeem et al, 2021).”

2.2.3 The Concept of Customer Loyalty.

“Customer loyalty is one of the main factors that facilitate the attainment of firm competitive advantage (Prentice and Loureiro, 2017). It is an important asset that helps firms to secure future sales from their customers, as well as enhance their profitability (Kamran-Disfani et al., 2017).

Customer loyalty is defined as the positive attitude exhibited by customers toward a given product or service provider, resulting in repeat purchase behaviour (Anderson and Srinivasan, 2018). Initial conceptualizations of the concept tended to focus on the behavioural components which made it difficult to distinguish between true loyalty and spurious loyalty (customers who show behavioural loyalty without attitudinal loyalty) (Kumar & Shah, 2014). But, some researchers aver that customer loyalty is best measured using both attitudinal components and behavioural components, to distinguish between the true loyalty and spurious loyalty that may result (Kumar and Shah, 2004; Anderson and Srinivasan, 2003). Several factors influence customer loyalty, including customer satisfaction and customer trust, which according to Pan *et al.* (2018) have a relatively high level of predictive power when it comes to achieving customer loyalty. Even so, Srinivasan *et al.* (2017) have also highlighted the significance of interactivity to customer loyalty.”

“Furthermore, customer loyalty is a vital aspect in relationship marketing which can be defined in different ways, such as: a positive attitude or allegiance toward a firm,

the trend to choose a service or a product from that firm or the process of building committed relationship in long-term. On the other hand, it cannot be denied the fact that the long-term relationship exists based on customer loyalty and firm's profitability (Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1997; Baron, Conway & Warnaby, 2010.) Buttle (2009) argued that customer loyalty is more involved and committed to the organization rather than just repeat purchases. Therefore, an organization needs to make effort to achieve more loyal customers which are an essential element for developing a sustainable competitive advantage in business market (Brink & Berndt, 2008).”

“Loyal customers will also help promote the corporate image of the organization. They will provide strong word-of-mouth, create business referrals, provide references, and serve on advisory boards. According to Raman (2019), loyal customers of any organization serve as a fantastic marketing force by providing recommendations and spreading positive word-of-mouth to the public. They can be seen as the best available advertising a company can get. Loyal customers increase sales by purchasing a wider variety of the bank's products and by making more frequent purchases. Finally, loyal customers cost less to serve, in part because they know the product and require less information.”

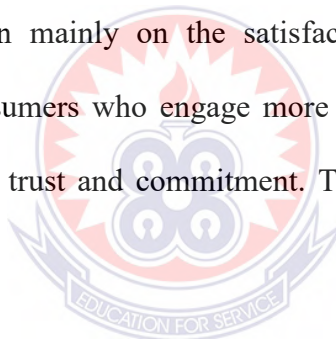
2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Trust and Customer Loyalty

Trust is one of the key influencers of relationship marketing (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). A significant number of studies have attributed trust and commitment to the success of relationship marketing efforts (Palmatier, 2018; Morgan & Hunt, 2014). Morgan and Hunt (2014) add that the use of power to condition others does not facilitate

relationship-marketing success. Trust has in some cases not been shown to have a significant influence on customer loyalty. One such case is among the non-life insurance providers in South Africa, where customer relationship marketing is used as the intervening variable (RobertsLombard et al., 2018).”

Literature reflects trust as emerging from interactions a customer has with a particular brand and his or her perception of those interactions. In their research, Dagger and O'Brien (2019) find that trust and commitment are contingent on the amount of relationship experience the consumer has had with that brand. Furthermore, in their work on these consumer-brand relationship factors, Garbarino and Johnson (2019) find that those customers who do not engage frequently with the brand form their opinion mainly on the satisfaction connected with individual experience, whereas consumers who engage more frequently with a brand tend to form their opinions from trust and commitment. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:



H1. Trust will have a positive effect on customer loyalty in the banking sector

2.3.2 Commitment and Customer Loyalty

“Henning et al., (2014) suggest that there is no difference between commitment and customer loyalty while other studies choose to identify commitment as an antecedent to customer loyalty (Bricci et al., 2016; Morgan & Hunt, 2014). Consumer commitment has complex relationships to a variety of other elements. For example, Hsu et al., (2010) find that consumer satisfaction directly influences commitment, trust, and community identity, as well as consumer purchasing behaviours, creating loyalty. Furthermore, the success of corporate image depends on the extent to which they specifically engage consumer trust and commitment (Hsu et al., 2010). Not all

studies have attributed commitment to the success of relationship marketing efforts. One study in particular in the non-life insurance sector in South Africa has shown that commitment has a significant negative influence on relationship marketing (Roberts-Lombard et al., 2013).”From the above discussion, it can be hypothesised that:

H2. Commitment will have a positive effect on customer loyalty.

2.3.3 Conflict Handling and Customer Loyalty

“Conflict handling reflects the supplier’s ability to avoid potential conflicts before they escalate and the ability to discuss the problems openly and provide solutions when problems arise. In addition, the authors note that the effective marketing of conflict is a significant factor in creating consumer loyalty (Prasad & Aryasri, 2008; Kulet, 2017). To add up, some studies even emphasize that conflict handling is the first strong contributor of customer loyalty as opposed to trusting as in the case of most studies (Gedefaw, 2014).”

“The marketing of conflict will directly influence a consumer's perception of the brand and how he or she retains the conflict (Prasad & Aryasri, 2018). Consumers exhibit increased loyalty to those brands which they do not retain negative conflict perceptions (Prasad & Aryasri, 2018). Leonidou et al., (2008) find that conflict has a negative correlation with trust and consumer loyalty, whereas consumer satisfaction builds it. Therefore, the avoidance of conflict is key in building consumer trust and loyalty. On the contrary, some studies have identified a negative relationship between conflict handling and customer loyalty. An insignificant and negative relationship has been shown between conflict handling and customer loyalty in Zemen Bank in Addis Ababa (Chakiso, 2015). It is important to note that these

results came about when conflict handling was regressed cumulatively. The study pointed out that conflict handling can influence customer loyalty as an individual effect.”

“Ndubisi and Chan, (2011) found a significant relationship between conflict handling and customer loyalty, indirectly through trust and perceived relationship quality. In the course of delivering a service, there are bound to be occasional service failures in spite of all the efforts put in by the service provider (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007). According to Bahadar et al (2021), service failure is inevitable even for the best firms with the best of intentions and even for those with “world class” systems. Dwyer et al. (1987) viewed conflict handling as a supplier’s ability to avoid potential conflicts, solve manifest conflicts before they create problems, and discuss solutions openly when problems do arise. How well this is done will determine whether the outcome is loyalty, “exit” or “voice.” Lo et al. (2010) found that effective conflict handling between luxury hotels and guests is an important component of building valued relationship with customers.”

H3. Conflict Handling will have a positive effect on customer loyalty

2.3.4 The Moderating Role of Information Communication Technology (ICT)

“In today’s fast-speed world the immediate access to necessary customer loyalty is not a whim but a critical factor for organization’s survival. The fast flow of information became possible because of technological innovations, which have taken place in previous decades. Thanks to new technologies, all the processes of relationship marketing within organizations became more efficient and less time-consuming. Data mining applications, Intranet solutions, Extranet, wireless web and other information and communication technologies allow to constantly create new

knowledge, effectively acquire external one, quickly share it and embody. However, even now the role of information communication technology in relationship marketing and customer loyalty is arguable. The development of technological solutions and their increasing implementation in the sphere of relationship marketing prompt practitioners and academics to believe that every relationship marketing is built mainly on the solid basis of IT infrastructure (Othman & Kamarohim, 2021; Stankovsky & Baldanza, 2000). The importance of information and communication technologies in the relationship between relationship marketing and customer loyalty has been studied for a long time, and there are many evidences that they positively influence relationship marketing.”

“Information communication technologies provides organizations with the tools, which enhance communication among employees and customers. They help to categorize, organize, and to identify knowledge resources within the organization (Chugh et al., 2013). Cabrera (2002) believed that IT department, responsible for maintenance of IT infrastructure, plays important role in relationship marketing. Launching IT tools in the organization significantly increases the level of trust by eliminating time and space limitations. IT tools provide companies with the ability to codify and store knowledge, and when the categorization becomes too complex, modern technologies solve this problem by including functions such as indexing, hyperlinking and duplication removal (Schacht et al., 2015). With the use of IT applications the access to the knowledge and its search in the system becomes easier for all employees, which leads to more intensive reuse. It is hard to overestimate the importance of IT in the process of knowledge acquisition. Here again the main role of computer technologies is communication. The ability to receive feedback from employees, customers, suppliers, partners and competitors on-line and its further

analyses helps to save time and money. Computer software is used to analyze open sources of information, so increasing the knowledge base about the outer world and conditions on which the organization operates. All in all, technologies can significantly enable relationship marketing. However, the existence of tools doesn't mean their proper application. IT tools are not a panacea, they do not solve all the problems connected to relationship marketing, but their implementation within the organization, *ceteris paribus*, can facilitate existing processes and improve customer loyalty." "Furthermore, marketing perceive that relationship marketing strategies enhanced by ICT solutions have a stronger positive outcome for the whole customer loyalty (Soltani et al, 2021; Zahra, 2013). ICT capabilities are limited to the overall environment within the company and many factors not directly connected to technological infrastructure. This means that the technology introduced without specific or latent needs derived from the structural and cultural circumstances will be not effective.

"To sum up, we see that information-communication technologies are crucial for relationship marketing in every organization. Relationship marketing could be significantly empowered by information communication technology. The related relationship marketing strategies in various spheres also depend on the ICT background the company has. So, in order to achieve maximum benefits for customer loyalty through the usage of relationship marketing the company needs to develop the appropriate ICT system."

2.4 Conceptual Framework

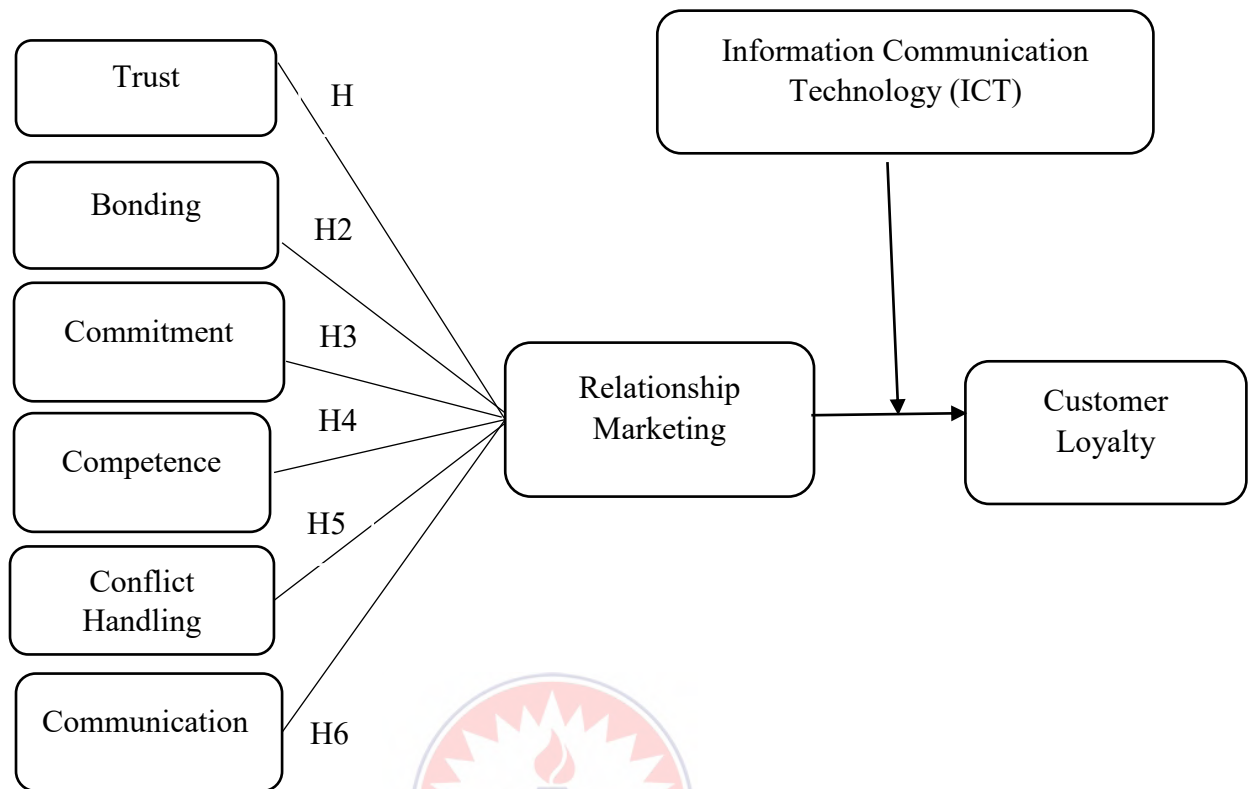


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's Construct (2022)

The model above depicts the mediating role of ICT in the relationship between relationship marketing dimension and customer loyalty drawing on the Social Exchange Theory and relevant literature such as Churchill and Surprenant (1982) and Morgan and Hunt (1994).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Research methods are a mix of concepts and ideas that are utilised to determine, through neutral observation and analysis, the truth of a situation (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006). This chapter explains how the study was conducted. It guided the researcher in data collection and method of analysing data collected from the field. It also discussed the various methods that were employed in generating research data to answer the research questions. Sub-headings discussed were the study area, study design, population of the study, sample and sampling procedure, data collection, design of instrument, pre-testing of the instrument, ethical considerations, field work, and data analysis.

Generally, this study investigates the effect of relationship marketing and customer loyalty moderated by Information Communication Technology at Zenith Bank Ghana. As such, this chapter of the study discusses the methodology followed by the researcher in conducting the study. Specifically, this chapter presents the methodological approach and designs adopted for the study as well as the justifications for the choices made with respect to the approach and the design that were used in undertaking the study. The constituent elements of this chapter include issues such as research approach, research design, population, sampling procedure and sample, data collection procedure, measurement instruments and data analysis. The ethical consideration issues are also considered under this section in the bid to address anonymity, confidentiality and other ethical issues in any systematic research inquiry.

3.1 Philosophical Assumption

The philosophical paradigm a researcher adopt influences the choice of methodology or research enquiry strategy. As a result, there is the need to adopt the right philosophical research paradigm the study is situated. The study which is a descriptive survey and correlation study sits well with the positivist paradigm. The positivist paradigm is derived from the natural sciences and handle research as an independent observation of events occurring within a system. It is grounded on the belief that the study of human behaviour should be conducted in the same ways as studies in natural sciences and is based on assumptions that social reality is independent of us and exists regardless of whether we are aware of it. This paradigm is associated with a quantitative research method that typically incorporates tools to measure numbers indicating cause-and-effect relationships. Its explanation consists of establishing causal relationship between variables by establishing causal laws and linking them to deductive or integrated theory. The positivistic paradigm is typified by data collection methods using quantitative techniques such as experiments, surveys and statistics (Kumar, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study to an extent tried to adhere to the principle of positivism by collecting quantitative data by surveys and by analysing data using statistical techniques. Also, the specified hypotheses of the study were tested.

3.2 Research Approach

A research approach is the overall procedure selected by the researcher to collect, analyze and interpret data with the least amount of effort and time during the research process (Bhandari, 2022). These approaches include quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. Xie, et al, (2020) noted that qualitative research focuses on individual cases and subjective impressions. This requires an iterative study design where data

collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned. Finally, Nunkoo et al., (2020) notes that qualitative studies are done with few respondents and are supposed to provide insight into the setting of a problem, serving as a source of inspiration to generate hypotheses for a subsequent quantitative project. On the other hand, quantitative research deals with numbers and figures (Balne, 2020). It quantifies opinions, attitudes, behaviours, and other defined variables to support or refute hypotheses about a specific phenomenon and potentially contextualise the results from the study sample in the broader population (or specific groups). The unique feature of quantitative research is that it explicitly specifies what is measured and how it is measured to uncover patterns such as behaviour, motivation, emotion, and cognition (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2021). This makes quantitative data collection much more structured than qualitative methods. Jacobsen (2020) noted that quantitative techniques typically comprise various forms of questionnaires and surveys, structured interviews, and behavioural observation based on explicit coding and categorisation schemes. This often necessitates much bigger sample sizes than qualitative research but allows you to make more solid conclusions backed up with data. In addition, the quantitative approach would enable the researcher to collect data from more expansive geographical areas and a huge sample size. It is for these reasons that this study used a quantitative approach as its attributes are more suited to the requirement of the study's objectives. Thus, the right tools can be used to collect the correct amount of data and analysed an interpreter.

Also, by adopting a quantitative approach, the researcher can formulate questions based on measurable variables. This would enable the study to explain, predict and control the studied phenomena (Mayer, Breugst & Mayr, 2019). Consequently, the researcher gains a better understanding of the problem and thus, can either affirm or

decline the research hypothesis and make appropriate inferences. This is akin to Dhiman, Kalbar and Inamdar's (2019) observations that the quantitative approach gives precision through reliable measurement, giving the researcher the ability to control the sampling and research design. For similar reasons, Pearce and Pons (2019) noted the researcher can produce causality statements using statistical techniques that allow for sophisticated analyses and replicability of the research.

3.3 Study Design

According to Malhotra and Birks (2007), a research design is a framework or a blueprint for conducting a business research. It specifies the detailed procedures necessary for obtaining the information needed to structure or solve business research problems. Since the study focused on addressing an issue that involves survey of employees' views on the issues, situations and processes, the researcher found it appropriate to use the descriptive survey design. Descriptive research design involves systematic gathering of data about individuals and collectivities in order to test hypotheses or answer research questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study (Ary et al., 2006). It determines and reports the way things are. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) consider this design to be wholesome when information is needed about conditions or relationships that exist; practices that prevail; beliefs, points of view, or attitudes that are held or process that are going on.

In the view of Schmidt and Rattenbury (2018), descriptive design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect data to assess current practices for improvement. They further point out that the design gives a more accurate and meaningful picture of events and seeks to explain people's perception and behaviour on the basis of data gathered at any particular time. An advantage of a descriptive

survey is that it helps the researcher to collect data to enable him draw the relationship between variables and analyse the data. It helps to observe, describe and document aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs (Saunders et al., 2007).

However, it is a relatively laborious and time-consuming method. It is susceptible to distortions through the introduction of biases in the measuring of instruments and so on (Malhotra & Birks, 2007; Yin, 1994). It is sometimes regarded as focusing too much on the individual level, neglecting the network of relations and institutions of society (Saunders et al., 2007). The study thus presented data systematically in order to arrive at valid and accurate conclusions. It helped in bringing out the issues, views and the characters as they were.

3.4 Population

A research population is generally an extensive collection of individuals or objects that focus on a scientific query (Etikan and Bala, 2017). Therefore, it is for the benefit of the population that research is done. However, due to the large sizes of populations, Schmidt and Rattenbury (2018) noted that researchers often could not test every individual in the population because it is too expensive and time-consuming. For these reasons, researchers rely on sampling techniques because all individuals or objects within a specific population usually have a standard, binding characteristic or trait.

For the purpose of generalisation, the research population for this study comprises all staffs of Zenith banks in Ghana. Officers or managers and some cases branch managers who work hand in hand with relationship staff in the practice of relationship marketing. The decision to include branch managers is as a result of the fact that such managers are reasonably involved in customer relationship issues and hence have

applicable knowledge to understand and provide accurate answer to the issues. The relationship staff being the people who manage relationships were used to determine relationship marketing practices from the firm's point of view, as the study seeks to determine relationship outcomes from the banks perspective rather than the customer point of view.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Sampling is a process in statistical analysis where researchers take a predetermined number of observations from a larger population. The method of sampling depends on the type of analysis being performed, but it may include simple random sampling or systematic sampling (Etikan & Bala, 2017). In other words, sampling units are selected at random so that the opportunity of every sampling unit being included in the sample is the same. This is the basic method of sampling. In this method, numbers are assigned to every member in the study group of population. Then the sample would be selected from a table of random numbers or random selection.

Simple random sample technique was used to sample of 200 staff (branch managers and relationship staff in the four (4) Zenith Bank branches and one (1) agency in both Central and Greater Accra regions. The respondents were the managers in charge of customer relation and other relationship staff of the various branches, the managers and the relationship staff from all the 4 Bank Branches and the Agency were justified by the fact that, these bank branches appear to be endowed with modern facilities and qualified personnel which bolstered effective relationship marketing practices.

Furthermore, the bank has greatest number of clients in the country at the moment, and therefore their choice gave fair representation of the entire banking industry in the study area. It must be admitted, however that there was an obvious variation in the

ratings of the banks and definitely not all banks had same capacity to deliver quality relationship marketing. Therefore the number of relationship staff surveyed as per individual selected bank varied to the extent of the level of co-operation obtained from the respective branches and that of the size of relationship staff, hence the wide variation in terms of the number of respondents representing each branch.

The relationship staffs were able to provide data that facilitated in examining the use of customer relationship marketing as a strategic tool to achieve customer loyalty in the banking industry. The researcher believe that the respondents share adequate attributes, skills and knowledge about customer relationship marketing and its effect on customer loyalty as a whole that will help in enriching the data collection. The staff provided data that assisted the researcher in tackling the issue at stake.

3.6 Data Collection

The data collected involves issues bordering on customer relationship marketing and its effect on customer loyalty. The data collected were largely quantitative. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used for the study. The primary data were responses obtained from the relationship staff. Primary data is a data collected for the survey purpose (Schmidt & Rattenbury, 2018). The secondary sources of data were those obtained from the respective banks branches records sections. These include the banks' annual reports; and other information from books, journals, articles and the internet. A letter of introduction from the Marketing and Entrepreneurship Department of University Education, Winneba granted the researcher the permission to collect data for the study. The letter assisted in introducing the researcher, establishing rapport with the respondents and sought permission from all the respondents before the due date to administer the questionnaire. The researcher

addressed all requests for clarification on the questionnaire. The respondents were comfortable in responding to the questionnaire because the researcher assured them of strict confidentiality. The questionnaires were administered to the employees using the drop and pick technique of visiting the sampled organizations to distribute the questionnaires then picked them from the Secretaries of the organizations on the same day or the next day.

3.7 Research Instrument

Questionnaire was the sole data collection instrument used in gathering data from the respondents. The questionnaire was self-designed instrument. It was used to collect data from the relationship staff. The questionnaire was made up of both close-ended and open-ended items.

The questionnaire seeks to establish the extent of relationship marketing practices in the banking industry and its effect on customer loyalty. It tried to identify the factors that impacted on banks expectation, experience, and perception of the quality of relationship delivery by Ghanaian banks. The close-ended questions were developed on a five point rating scale ranging from strongly agree to weakly agree such that one represents the least agreement to the issues while five represents the strongest agreement to the issues. The open-ended questions on the other hand requested general information on the respondents' own thoughts and understanding of how relationship marketing is implemented in their organisation. It also elicited information about the background of the personnel (seek information on the characteristics of target respondents and other demographic features such as age, gender and number of years of experience).

The background information was placed at the bottom of the questionnaire to avert the possibility of potential sensitivity. Such sensitive questions may be embarrassing especially when it begins a survey instrument and may also create dissatisfaction and disinterest. The wording and language that was used in the questionnaire was as simple as possible. Due to the fact that questionnaires are likely to be less cumbersome in terms of data collection and analysis than face-to-face interviews, the data collection employed written questionnaires to collect the data from relationship staff rather than personal interviews.

Another reason for the choice of written questionnaire is its potential of being distributed to a large number of respondents in a large geographical area at a relatively low cost. A cursory look at the work of most authors and researchers revealed that they have used this method to study large samples. There are potential shortfalls associated with written questionnaire such as the possibility of questionnaire been misunderstood and interpreted differently by different people. However, the respondents were given opportunity to request for any further explanation regarding the questionnaires via a mobile phone number stated at the bottom of the questionnaire. The researcher carried out an initial pre-testing of questionnaires to evaluate respondents understanding of the research area.

3.8 Pre-testing of the Instrument

To enhance the content validity of the instrument designed, the questionnaire was made available to the researcher's supervisors, to review and comment with the view of establishing content validity. Under the guidance of the supervisors, the researcher modified and deleted materials the study considered inaccurate or which the study felt infringed on the confidentiality of the respondents. The supervisors further scrutinised

unclear, biased and deficient items, and evaluated whether items were members of the subsets they have been assigned.

In finding the reliability of the questionnaire, it was pre-tested on a sample of 30 relationship staff of the various bank branch in the Winneba and Cape Coast. Emphasis was on the close-ended items. The number of respondents used for the pre-test was sufficient to include any major variations in the population as confirmed by Schmidt and Rattenbury (2018) that for most descriptive survey studies using a range of five to ten percent, of the sample size, for pre-test is sufficient. Winneba and Cape Coast was selected because relationship staff of the bank in the area share similar characteristics such as educational qualifications, years of experience, age and so on. The area was also selected due to its closeness and easy accessibility to the researcher.

The questionnaires were administered personally to the respondents. The internal consistency of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. The Cronbach Alpha was used over the Kuder Richardson (KR) formula, or Split-half reliability coefficient because the Cronbach Alpha can be used for both binary-type and large-scale data (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006). The Cronbach Alpha of the instrument generated was 0.803 with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 26.0. With regard to the pre-testing of the instrument, there was 100 percent response rate. Research has shown that scales with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.70 or more are considered to be reliable (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006; Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Based on the responses given during the pre-test, few modifications were effected to improve the final instrument for the main survey which was then administered. Items that were not clearly stated were corrected.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

An introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Marketing, University of Education, Winneba, to introduce the researcher to the bank. To gather data from the sampled individuals, permission was sought from the marketing Manager branches in Central Regions. The relationship staff captured to participate in the study was contacted with the help of the managers and other senior staff of the banks. The consents of the relationship staff were sought through the managers.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and what objective it sought to achieve. The instructions were read to them and further clarifications were made where needed. After the researcher was sure that the respondents understood the content very well, the questionnaires were administered. Respondents were encouraged to feel free and air their views as objectively as possible and that they have the liberty to choose whether to participate or not. They also had the option to withdraw their consent at any time and without any form of adverse consequence.

Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed and the research did not cause harm or mental stress to those who choose to participate. This was achieved by ensuring the respondents that their identity or known source will not be mention anywhere in this study. The respondents were further assured that the study would be discrete in keeping secret information about them. This research and its associated methodology adhere to all of these ethical considerations. An organisational entry protocol was observed before the data were collected. Individual staff of the banks were informed of the reason for the whole exercise and the tremendous benefit would derive if the research was carried out successfully.

A period of three weeks was used to collect the data. The respondents were given at most 20 minutes to complete each questionnaire. Not all the respondents completed or return their questionnaire on the day of visit and were picked up a day after. This demanded a considerable length of time to gather the stipulated number of questionnaires administered. Prior to the administering of the questionnaires, an informal familiarisation visit was made to the various the bank branches in the Regions.

The administering and collection of the questionnaires were done from one branch to another. The respondents were taking through all the questionnaire items and anything that may not be clear was explained. They were again taken through how to respond to the items. In order not to disturb their working time, they were asked to complete the questionnaire during break time or immediately after working hours. Unlike the pre-testing of the instrument, the main study registered 94.8 percent response rate.

3.10 Data Analysis

The data that were collected were first grouped for editing. After the editing, they were inputted into the variable view of the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) Version 26.0. This was possible because the responses to the closed-ended items that were measured with five-point scale were expressed in numbers, and for that matter were numerical values and not categorical or nominal scale. The numerical measurement arranged in a way that the number one represents the least agreement to the items while the numerical value five was used to represent the strongest agreement to the items. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the study. Cross tabulations, mean, median, skewness, standard deviation, frequency, percentage, Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression analysis

were used to analyse the data in order to answer the research questions and also to test the research hypothesis (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006).



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter of the study presents the findings emanating from the data collected from the self-administered instrument. The discussion includes the interpretation of the findings in reference to previous findings and theory. The chapter is organized into two main parts. The first part deals with the background characteristics of respondents while the second part is devoted to responses given by the respondents in accordance with the research objectives. The results are based on 200 relationship employees of the 5 selected branches in Central and Greater Accra Regions.

4.1 Background Characteristics of Respondents

The background characteristics of respondents section deals mainly with the distribution of the respondents by gender, age and highest educational qualification. The results are presented in Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4. Table 1 presents the age distribution of respondents by sex. As contained in Table 1, 102 (51.0%) of the respondents were males while 98 (49.0%) were females. Since the study used simple random method in capturing the respondents, this may mean that the number of employees in the study institutions outnumbers that of respondents needed with regard to relationship staff for the study.

Table 1: Demographic data of respondents

Sex of Respondents	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Male	102	51
Female	98	49
Age group of respondents		
16-25 Years	10	5
26-35 Years	135	67.5
36-45 Years	35	17.5
46 And Above	20	10
Educational qualification of respondents		
HND	28	14
Degree	102	51
Post-Graduate	49	24.5
Professional	21	10.5
Years of experience		
1-5 Years	67	35.5
6-10 Years	99	49.5
Over 10 Years	34	17

Source: Field data, 2022

Table 1 further shows that majority (67.5%) of the respondents were between 26 and 35 years of age. This is followed by those who were between 36 and 45 years (17.5%), 46 and 60 years (10%) and 18 and 25 years (5%) respectively. In general 90 percent of the respondents fall in the young adult age (18-45years). It therefore, means that the future of the bank in the study area is bright since most of the relationship staffs were within the youth age group and will champion their energy

and strength into the Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited as expected. The study further elicited data on respondents' highest educational qualification

As presented in Table 1, majority of the respondents represented by 51.0 percent had a first degree while 24.5 percent of them had postgraduate degree. Also, 14.0 percent of the respondents had HND and 10.5 percent of the respondents had professional qualification. The results show that all the respondents had some level of tertiary education and for that matter were able to understand the various items in the instrument. The study further presents data on the distribution of respondents by their organization or bank. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that about half (49.5%) of the respondents had been working in the Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited for a period between six and 10 years, followed by those of them who have worked for a period between one and five years (33.5%). However, 17.0 percent of the respondents had worked for more than 10 years in Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited. The combined percentage shows that majority (66.5%) of the respondents had worked in the Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited for more than five years. This is a good sign for the study since most of the respondents have enough experience with Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited to understand the issues in the questionnaire. Customer relationship marketing practices in the Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited. The first substantive objective of the study was to examine the extent of customer relationship marketing practices in Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited. The main variables considered with regard to respondent's relation marketing practices were trust, communication, conflict handling, social and financial bonds, commitment and competence. Each of the variables were made up of many close ended items that were measured with five-point scale such that one represents the least agreement to the

issues while five represents the strongest agreement to the issues. The items were pooled together to form each of the main variables using their corresponding average scores (mean values) because the normality test conducted indicated that the distribution was normal. This pooling process is in line with the recommendation of Ary et al., (2006) who posit that one can pool all items under one construct or variable to form the average score of the variable provided the measurement of the responses of each item scale are discrete, numerical and the same. The averages of the numbers or scores that represent the responses generated for each major variable were calculated with the help of the Statistical Package and Service Solutions Version 26.0. After the pooling process, descriptive statistics such as mean, median, skewness and standard deviation were used to tackle the research objective. The analysis was done first by determining the normality of the data distribution. In a normal distribution the mean, mode and media are approximately equal. The skewness values must have a threshold of - 0.5 to 0.5. The skewness values were closer to each other and were within an acceptable threshold of a normal distribution. The values are depicted in Table 5. The standard deviations were also moderate (less than 1.0), indicating the non-dispersion in a widely-spread distribution. The moderateness of the standard deviations of the variables means that the views of the respondents are coming from a moderate homogeneous group that is, a group with similar characteristics. That means respondents view on the issues was an approximation to a normal distribution. Therefore, it is appropriate to use the mean values in analysing the data. The results are depicted in Table 1. As contained in Table 1, the internal consistency of the responses with regard to relationship marketing practices was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha co-efficients for all the six variables were more than 0.70. Research has shown that scales with Cronbach's alpha co-efficient of

0.70 or more are considered to be reliable (Pallant, 2001). The responses obtained on relationship marketing practices were found to be very reliable based on the Cronbach Alpha values obtained.

Table 2: Customer relationship marketing practices

Dimension of RM Practices	Mean	Std. Deviation
Trust	4.15	0.57
Communication	3.85	0.68
Conflict handling	3.91	0.68
Social and financial bond	3.65	0.55
Commitment	3.67	0.70
Competence	3.76	0.70

Source: Field data, 2022

Based on the five-point scale used, the average response score used in categorising the data into positive (agree) and negative (disagree) was a mean score of 3.0. That is $(1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5) / 5 = 3.0$. Therefore, any mean value greater than 3.0 was deemed to be perceived as positive (agree) while any mean score equal to 3.0 or less than 3.0 was deemed to be perceived as negative (disagree). Table 2 depicts that respondents perceived trust (Mean = 4.15). The banks employees show respect to customers, they fulfil their obligation to customers and also customers have absolute confidence in banks services. The finding is in line with the submission of Claycom and Martin (2002) who argues that in a service sector, because customers buy promises and not tangible goods, they must trust service providers to ensure sustained relationship. They further aver that trust helps to build confidence, foster cooperation, and facilitate service recovery when things go wrong in the service delivery process. It is frequently

argued that an abuse of this trust by a service provider will lead to customer dissatisfaction and defection (Ndubisi and Chan, 2011). Within the Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited, one could argue that building a trusting relationship will require delivering core services efficiently and effectively in addition to ensuring honesty, reliability, and integrity in dealing with customers (Narteh, 2009). A mean of approximately 4.0 was obtained for communication (Mean = 3.85, Std. Dev. = 0.68), conflict handling (Mean = 3.91, Std. Dev. = 0.67), social and financial bonds (Mean = 3.65, Std. Dev. = 0.55), commitment (Mean = 3.67, Std. Dev. = 0.70) and competence (Mean = 3.76, SD = 0.70). This means on the average, the respondents agree that communication, conflict handling, social and financial bonds, commitment and competence are factored in the relationship marketing practices of the banks. The findings show that the various banks captured for the study provide timely and trustworthy information, try to avoid potential conflicts, regularly check on customers, and also treat customers as friend and partners. Furthermore, respondents agreed that the banks value its relationship with customers, they regularly makes adjustments to suit customers' needs, and that the banks discusses with customers new ways of improving service. Specifically, the least standard deviation of 0.55 was obtained for social and financial bonds.

This means the respondents, irrespective of the type of bank, have the most related views as far as „social and financial bonds“ as a component of relationship marketing practices is concerned. The respondents have more diverse view with regards to the issue of commitment, perhaps commitment depends on the type of bank. Comparatively, the banks pay the biggest attention to trust in relationship marketing practices. This is followed by conflict handling, communication, commitment, competence and social and financial bonds respectively. The emphasis on trust is

probably due to the fact that the entire spectrum of the banker-customer relationship is governed by the bankers' secrecy/confidentiality a breach of which gives rise to legal action. Since people by nature prefer to keep their financial affairs secret, trust can be derived from assurance of confidentiality. The literature on relationship marketing even postulates that some relationship employees serve as private confidants of their customers. The finding on commitment is in line with the assertions of Gummesson (2019) who posits that customers must have an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship. This implies a higher level of obligation to make a relationship succeed and to make it mutually satisfying and beneficial. Since, commitment is higher among customers who believe that they receive more value from a relationship; highly committed customers should be willing to reciprocate effort on behalf of the banks due to past benefits received and highly committed banks will continue to enjoy the benefit of such reciprocity. Similarly, the finding on communication support the views of Anderson and Mittal (2010) who indicate that companies must try to establish an interactive dialogues between them and their customers, which takes place during the pre-selling, selling, consuming and post-consuming stages.

Therefore, it is appropriate for the various banks to provide information that can be trusted, provide information when delivery problems occur, provide information on quality problems and fulfilling promises (Ndubisi & Chan, 2011). The frequency of communication between the parties indicates the strength of the relationship. To be effective, astute communicators argue that organisations must integrate all their communication tools to provide consistency, persuasive and timely information to the customers (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Furthermore, the findings are consistent with the views of Donthu et al (2021) who aver that it costs six times more to attract a new customer than to retain an existing one, therefore it is appropriate for banks to

concentrate on the ability to effectively identify, acquire, foster, and retain loyal profitable customers. The relationship between customer relationship marketing practices and customer loyalty.

4.2 Relationship between RM practices and customer loyalty

The second objective of the study focused on the relationship that exists between relationship marketing practices and customer loyalty. As indicated earlier, many items were pooled together using their average or mean scores to form each of the main variables as suggested by Ary et al. (2016). The Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to examine the relationships that exist between the six dimensions of RM practices and customer loyalty since the scale of measurements were numerical. The results of the relationships between the main variables are presented in Table 3

Table 3: Relationship between RM practices and customer loyalty

Dimension of CR Practices	Customer loyalty	
	Correlation coefficient (r)	Sig
Trust	0.53*	0.041
Communication	0.62**	0.000
Conflict handling	0.54**	0.004
Social and financial bond	0.52*	0.012
Commitment	0.67**	0.000
Competence	0.69**	0.000

Source: Field data, 2022. **p<.01 *p<0.05 N=200

As contained in Table 3, all the six dimensions of relationship marketing practices have statistically significant positive relationship with customer loyalty. The results show that trust ($r = 0.53$, $p = 0.041$), which support the hypothesis (H1) that trust has

statistically significant positive relationship with customer loyalty. Similarly, there was a statistically significant positive relationships between customer loyalty and social and financial bonds ($r = 0.52$, $p = 0.012$), commitment ($r = 0.67$, $p = 0.000$) which support H2 and H3. Likewise, there was a statistically significant positive relationships between customer loyalty and competence ($r = 0.69$, $p = 0.000$), conflict handling ($r = 0.54$, $p = 0.004$) and Communication ($r = 0.62$, $p = 0.000$), the result support H4, H5, and H6. The relationship between competence and customer loyalty was the strongest among the RM dimensions studied. Using Schmidt and Rattenbury (2018) suggestion for interpreting correlation coefficients, the association between the variables were all strong. The findings are consistent with that of N Donthu et al (2021) whose study on relationship marketing has established that RM practices are highly correlated with customer loyalty. The results mean that the more the various banks ensure that there is security for transaction, they fulfil their obligation to customers, they provide timely and trustworthy information and also they try to avoid potential conflicts then they are likely to experience high customer loyalty and retention rate. This will in turn increase the bank's profitability since most of their customers will not leave the institution. Furthermore, the results may mean that the more the various banks treat their customers more as friends and partners, deliver on their promise, make adjustments to suit customers' needs, and ensure that there is excellence service delivery they are likely to retain large chunk of their customers. The findings are in line with the comments of Donthu et al (2021) who advanced the argument that the best customers and employees become part of the loyalty-based system. Competitors in such a situation are left to survive with less desirable customers and less talented employees.

To compete on loyalty, the relationship between the customer and other part of the business must be understood. Given this background, marketers must be able to quantify the linkages between loyalty and profits. In order that the organisations achieve the goals of customers loyalty and relationship marketing in general, the marketers will have to focus on four interrelated activities—attracting, satisfying, and enhancing of customer relationships. It must be noted that relationship marketing derives its roots from relationship marketing which is aimed at improving long run profitability by shifting from transaction bases marketing, with its emphasis on winning new customers, to customer retention through effective marketing of customer relationships (Christopher et al., 2011). Thus relationship marketing is more complex and sophisticated application that mines customer data has been pulled from all customer touch points, creating a single and comprehensive view of the customer while uncovering profile of key customers and predicting their purchase patterns (Chen & Popovich, 2003; Pickton & Broderick, 2015). The variables were made up of five items respectively. These items were pooled together to form the main moderating variables.

Table 4: Moderating Effect of IT on RM and Customer Loyalty

Moderating variable	Customer loyalty	
	Correlation coefficient (r)	Sig.
I.T infrastructure	0.512**	0.000
Relationship Marketing	0.614**	0.000
Source: Field data, 2022. **p<.01 (N = 200)		

The results in Table 4 show that the moderating variables have significant positive correlation with customer loyalty ($P < 0.01$). This means, an improvement in their

practices would lead to improvement in customer loyalty. The results mean the banks have excellent I.T and other infrastructures and also if the banks give the necessary tools or resources to the staff in order to serve the customers, then customers will be more loyal to the banks.

The findings are consistent with the assertions of Peppers and Rogers (2010) and Chen and Popovich (2003) who posit that information technology and other infrastructure in the organisation help in boosting its customer loyalty. Innovation in network infrastructure, clients/server computing, and business intelligence applications are leading factors in relationship marketing development. Relationship marketing systems accumulate, store, maintain and distributes customer knowledge throughout the organisation. The effective marketing of information is of supreme importance so far as success in relationship marketing is concerned. Information is critical to product tailoring, service innovation, consolidated view of customers, and calculating customers lifetime value (Peppers and Rogers, 2000). Among others, data warehousing, enterprise resource planning systems and the internet are the central infrastructures to relationship marketing applications (Chen and Popovich, 2003). As indicated earlier, the individual variables were made up of many items that were pooled together using the corresponding mean scores to form each major variable. The multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis. This was possible because the distribution was normal and also the response scores were measured numerically. The results are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Regression Result on Relationship Marketing and Customer Loyalty

Dimension of CR Practices	Customer loyalty	
	Regression coefficient (r)	Sig
Trust	0.093	0.023
Communication	0.012**	0.000
Conflict handling	0.044**	0.013
Social and financial bond	0.122	0.031
Commitment	0.027**	0.000
Competence	0.019**	0.000
Source: Field data, 2022. **p<.000		*p<0.05
		N=200

As depicted in Table 5, the six relationship marketing products were entered as independent variables while customer loyalty was entered as dependent variable in the regression model. The variables such as trust and social and financial bonds were not statistically significant contributors of customer loyalty. However, communication ($r = 0.012$, $p = 0.000$), commitment ($r = 0.027$, $p = 0.000$), conflict handling ($r = 0.044$, $p = 0.013$) and competence ($r = 0.019$, $p = 0.000$) contribute significantly to customer loyalty. The most contributing variable is communication followed by competence, commitment and conflict handling.

This means that if the banks are excellent in service delivery, make extra effort to understand customer needs and provides relevant solutions, regularly make adjustments to suit customers' need, are flexible in serving customer needs and also provide timely and trustworthy information to their customers, then customers' loyalty will be high. Therefore, banks must ensure that they strengthen their competence, communication, staff commitment and conflict handling in order to

increase customer loyalty. The result suggests that the relationship marketing practices alone do not contribute significantly to customers' loyalty and that they do so when other variables are considered. The findings are in line with the submissions of Frow and Payne (2004) who posits that RM is built on the philosophy of relationship marketing that aims to create, develop and enhance relationships with carefully targeted customer to maximize customers' value, corporate profitability and thus shareholders value.

Frow and Payne (2004) added that the goal is to improve customer's experience of how they interact with the company, which hopefully will turn into more satisfaction, which can lead to customer loyalty and ultimately an increase in customer profitability. The findings further confirm the views of Ndubisi and Chan (2011) who aver that relationship marketing has certain core practices which are clearly delineated as trust, commitment, communication, conflict handling, competence, and relational bonds, and that these practices have significant influence on customer loyalty. Statistically, this argument may hold true, in reality trust and relationship bonds (social and financial) tend to have „silent“ but equally significant effect on loyalty and the effect may be more profoundly felt when they are absent from the equation. The study can therefore conclude that competence, commitment and communication jointly determine customer loyalty to a great extent. Perhaps it may be prudent to argue that these factors tend to operate as main customer loyalty „intensifiers“ in the relationship building chain since they are conspicuously the „tools“ commonly at play in day-to-day transactions. It stands to reason that a unit change in these variables will affect customer loyalty to a significant degree than the „silent“ ones. Hence, an improvement in competence, commitment, conflict handling and communication will lead to a more than proportionate increase in customer loyalty (Table 5). Narteh

(2009) also conceptualised trust as a partner's confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity. However a look at the regression model appears to disconfirm the views in the scholarly literature. The coefficient (0.093) of the result presented in Table 5 indicate a no relationship between trust and customer loyalty, meaning that trust is inversely related to customer loyalty. Thus, it is not statistically significant to customer loyalty. With regard to communication and customer loyalty, the literature shows that the role of communication in business has been demonstrated over the years (Narteh, 2009). Communication is seen as the process through which a communicator transmits stimuli to modify behaviour of other persons. In context, communication refers to the ability to provide timely and trustworthy information.

Today there is a new view of communication as in an interactive dialogue between the company and its customers, which takes place during the pre-selling, selling, consuming and post-consuming stages (Anderson & Mittal, 2000). The researcher therefore assumes that communication is positively correlated with customer loyalty. In the above, customer loyalty was regressed against communication. It can be seen from the results (Table 5) that the coefficient (0.012), indicating statistically strong significant relationship between banks' communication effectiveness and a customer loyalty with corresponding positive effect. This appears to suggest that banks in Ghana should consider the communication standard in their banks as positively correlated with customer loyalty. It stands to reason that respondents regard the provision of timely information, supplying information on new products, discussing with customers on ways to improve services and being approachable to customer as good reason to be loyal to their respective banks. This finding thus shows that Ghanaian customers' loyalty to their banks is strongly dependent on how their respective banks communicate effectively with them in their relationship building

efforts. In relation to conflict handling and customer loyalty, it is an established fact that service failures are bound to occur in the normal course of service delivery in any human institution. In the course of delivering a service, there are bound to be occasional service failures in spite of all the effort put in by a service provider (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007). It is almost impossible to imagine a flawless service delivery, and occasional service failures could occur in the service delivery chain (Narteh, 2009). According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2000), service failure is inevitable even for the best firms with the best of intentions and even for those with world class systems. The researcher therefore assumed that by handling conflict amicably, it will create the avenue for increased customer loyalty. In line with the expectation of the researcher, the result of Table 5 above indicated that there is positive coefficient between the two variables. This shows that the current finding agrees partially with earlier findings by Ndubisi & Chan (2011) that there is a strong relationship between conflict handling and customer loyalty.

By implication, conflict handling is a major contributor to customer loyalty in Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited. Thus, the loyalty of customers to their banks is influenced only to a higher degree by how effectively the banks handle conflicts with their customers. This could portray context specific differences in that bank customers in advanced society tend to have a higher zone of tolerance than their counterparts in less developed societies since Ndubisi & Chan (2011) was done in Malaysia. Another possible angle to this finding is that banks in Ghana are meeting services expectation by reducing conflict situations and having in place effective conflict handling mechanisms that conflicts tend not to be issues of great concern to customers. Hence the statistical results indicate that most customers consider conflict handling to be not so relevant to their loyalty to their respective banks. In short, avoiding potential

conflicts, solving manifest problems before they arise, openly and promptly discussing solutions when problems arises, and listening to customers grievances do not provide concrete grounds for the customer to decide whether to become loyal or not to a banks within the Ghanaian setting. In relation to social and financial bonds“ and customer loyalty, the literature shows that social bonding refers to the degree of mutual personal friendship and liking shared by the buyer and seller (Wilson, 1995). Narteh (2009) provided a more complete view by defining social bonds as personal ties that relate to service dimensions that offer interpersonal exchanges, friendship and identifications. In general, social bands consists of many aspects, including familiarity, friendship, social support, keep in touch, self-disclosure, or any interpersonal interaction. On the other hand, financial bonds have been described as frequency marketing or retention marketing, where the service provided uses economic benefits, such as price, discount or other financial incentives to secure customer loyalty (Berry et al, 2017).

The study therefore assumes that having strong social and financial bonds with customers will enhance customer loyalty. The result of Table 5 further shows that social and financial bonds have no significant relationship with customer loyalty. This shows that social and financial bonds are not one of the major contributors of customer loyalty in Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited. This finding shows that customers“ loyalty is not strongly dependent on how banks build social and financial bonds with them. This therefore means that, regular checks on customers sending gifts to customers on special occasions, changing concessionary rates, treating customers as friends and involving employees in family events of customers in themselves will not lead to any significant increase in customer loyalty through its impact will still be felt to a certain extent. This finding agrees with early findings of Narteh (2009), and

Ndubisi and Chan (2011). With regard to commitment and customer loyalty, like trust, commitment is another important variable for understanding the strength of a marketing relationship, and it is a useful construct for measuring the likelihood of customer loyalty and predicting future purchase frequency. Wilson (1995) observed that commitment was the most common dependent variable used in buyer-seller relationship studies. Hence the researcher expects that commitment to customers will impact positively on customer loyalty. The result in Table shows a statistically strong significant relationship between commitment and customer loyalty such that the higher the commitment of banks towards the satisfaction of the need of their customers, the higher the probability that these customers are going to become loyal to the bank. The strength of the relationship judging from the interpretation of the regression coefficient is very strong and this means customers' loyalty to their banks is greatly affected by the level of commitment that their banks demonstrate towards them. In consequence, where banks continuously make changes in line with customer needs, offer personalized services to meet customers' personal needs and show flexibility in serving customer needs, they are sure that customers will value their relationships with the banks and consequently become more loyal to their banks. The results of the present study suggest that customers expect their banks to be committed to ensure that they (customers) are really satisfied when transacting with them. The finding therefore in agreement with the research findings of some leading researchers who describe customer loyalty as a function of commitment at the instance of their providers (Ndubisi & Chan, 2011).

The last variable considered was competence. Competence is defined as the buyer's perception of the supplier's technological and commercial competence (Anderson et al., 1994). They operationalised competence in four ways: the suppliers knowledge

about the market for the buyer, the ability to give good advice on the operating business, the ability to help buyer plan purchases and the ability to provide effective sales promotion materials. Competence has been mentioned in relationship marketing literature as one of the underpinnings of relationship marketing practice. The view has been seriously corroborated by this study and stands out as one factor that has the most significant impact on customer loyalty. It can be observed from the results of Table 5 that the significant coefficient means a statistically moderate significant relationship between bank competences and how it affects customer loyalty. This appears to suggest that as respondents consider the competence levels of their banks high, the more they become loyal to their respective banks. This result corroborates earlier findings by Ndubisi & Chan (2011) who also found that, competence played a key role in determining customer loyalty among Malaysian Banks. Hence, one can conclude that when a bank delivers excellent service, understands the nature of business, possess relationship building skills and partners with customers on new ways to improving service, the bank is on course to achieving high and sustainable customer loyalty. Studies on RM have shown that for relationship marketing to be successful, certain mediating variables must exist to ensure effective implementation (Chen & Popovich, 2003). This section therefore tests the extent to which these mediating variables moderated between relationship marketing and customer loyalty.

Table 5: Contribution of I.T. infrastructure on customer loyalty

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients					
	Standardised Coefficients	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	p-value
(Constant)		.835	.198		4.215	.000
Relationship marketing Practices		.685	.066	.691**	10.304	.000

Source: Field data, 2022

Further analysis on the mediating variable for each of the error terms a value of about 0.67 with a p-value of about 0.50 shows that there is no strong evidence of moderation. Therefore the association between RM and customer loyalty is not significantly reduced by the inclusion I.T. infrastructure in the model. The last mediating variable considered was employee motivation. Both RM and employee motivation have partial significant more significantly determines customer loyalty than employee motivation with ($\beta = 0.250$, $p < 0.01$) as presented in Table 6. However, relationship marketing with ($\beta = 605$, $p = < 0.01$).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of major findings and conclusions drawn from the study. The key findings are reported based on the objectives of the study. These are followed by the conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The major goal of this study was to examine the relationship between relationship marketing practices and customer loyalty in Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited. Thus the question that comes to the fore is whether the practice of RM leads to increased customer loyalty in the Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited.

In order to tackle the research objectives posed in chapter one, the study adopted relationship marketing practices as proposed by Narteh (2009). Those variables include trust, commitment, social and financial bonds, conflict handling, competence and communications.

A descriptive survey design was used for the study. The major data collection instrument was a questionnaire and the targeted population for this study comprised all staffs of Zenith banks in Ghana. Out of the 200 relationship staff of Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited in both Central Regions that were surveyed with questionnaire, two hundred (200) respondents completed the questionnaires that were administered to them. The 200 retrieved questionnaires were used for the final analysis. Statistical tools such as cross tabulation, frequency, percentage, Pearson Product moment

correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to analyse the data. The findings have been discussed in relation to the objectives of the study.

The first substantive objective of the study establishes the practice of relationship marketing in Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited.

The key findings that emerged were as follows:

- The results of the study further gave clear indication of evidence of relationship marketing practices as the responses received from the various banks showed appreciable level of consistency with all the relationship marketing practices.
- It is theorised that the adoption of the six relationship marketing practices will constitute effective relationship marketing practice since these elements together serve as blueprint or best practices due to their frequency of occurrence in relationship marketing literature.
- Banks rely heavily on long-term relationship building in a bid to foster loyalty and retain their customers. The practice of the various relationship marketing constructs tested in this study showed appreciable level of consistency. Thus banks in Ghana appear to be relying heavily on the use of relationship marketing to achieve competitive advantage by increasing customer loyalty.
- The responses showed that trust, communication, conflict handling, social and financial bonds, and competence all obtained a mean score of approximately four. This means that banks in Ghana show high levels of competence, communicate more often with their customers, avoid manifest conflicts situations and take steps to resolve any conflict that may arise amicably, are committed to the needs of their customers, relates very well with their

customers and maintain a high level of trust between themselves (banks) and their customers.

- Amongst all the practices however, the findings clearly established that banks pay the greatest attention to trust in relationship marketing practices which is closely followed by conflict handling, communication, commitment, competence and social and financial bonds.

The second substantive objective of the study examined the effect of relationship marketing practices on customer satisfaction. In tackling this objective, the study first examined the relationship between the two main variables.

The main findings that emerged were as follows:

- There is a significant relationship between relationship marketing and customer satisfaction ($F = 40.106$, $p < 0.05$). This means competence, communication, conflict handling, Commitment, relational bonds (social and financial), and trust jointly determine customer satisfaction.
- The results show that competence, commitment and communication have significant effect on customer satisfaction ($p < 0.05$) hence they constitute the major determinants of customer loyalty in Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited. On the other hand social and financial bonds and conflict handling showed a positive but insignificant relationship to customer satisfaction.
- Hence there is clear indication that for relationship marketing to accomplish the desired result of achieving customer satisfaction, is a co-existent variable for success in relationship marketing implementation.
- The results further show that when a bank has excellent information technology infrastructure that can facilitate prompt and efficient service, easy retrieval of customer information, provision of customised solutions and

provision of internet banking to facilitate customer interaction, these variable per se will not directly lead to increasing customer satisfaction although they are necessary. It has to be emphasized that information technology infrastructure tend to support employee motivation, and the other elements of relationship marketing practices such as competence and communication.

- This study therefore suggests that any information technology introduction by marketing must be done with prior consultation with staff in order to ensure optimum result.
- Both relationship marketing practices and employee motivation showed significant partial relationship with customer satisfaction.
- The moderation test conducted between relationship marketing practices and employee motivation showed that there is a strong evidence of moderation.
- There was a clear indication that for relationship marketing to attain the desired result of attaining customer satisfaction, employee motivation is necessary for relationship marketing success. In this regard, when employees are well trained and given the necessary tools to serve customers, given extra incentives and adequate remuneration and staff are assessed based on customers-centric criteria; there is a greater chance that relationship marketing will achieve the desire result of increase customer satisfaction.

Lastly, the study looked at the theoretical and practical implications for bankers with regard to the influence relationship marketing practices have on customer loyalty.

The key findings that emerged were:

- If a bank wants to achieve a high rate of customer loyalty, then relationship marketing has to be adopted as a strategy. In other words banks must take continuous efforts to effectively manage their relationship with their

customers because the way they build and maintain these relationships determines customer loyalty.

- Specifically, banks must take the necessary steps to improve upon their competence. In this instance, managers must have a greater understanding of the needs of their customers and envisage a customer's experience as satisfying a need rather than just selling a service.
- By improving competence level, managers should take the necessary steps to deploy knowledgeable staff and equip them with the requisite skills in relationship marketing that will enable them provide accurate and timely services whilst being passionate about service quality.
- Continuous training and investment in customer service as well as other training are needed to ensure consistency in quality service delivery.
- Everybody in turn must display a desire to provide first class service to its customers to win their confidence. These factors in combination lead to customer loyalty.
- Commitment also proved to be strong determinant of the strength of relationship marketing and thus a useful construct for measuring customer loyalty.
- Furthermore, if banks want to increase customer loyalty, they must encourage the building of strong rational bonds in the form of social bonds between their employees and customers. Employees must therefore regularly check on their customers, send customers' special gifts on special occasions such as surprise birthday cards and flowers.

5.2 Conclusions

The first objective sought to examine the relationship between relationship marketing dimensions and the loyalty of customers of Zenith Bank, Ghana Limited. The study has clearly shown that relationship marketing practices jointly have a significant influence on customer loyalty Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited. This means that, marketers aiming at building and maintaining long term beneficial relationships with their customers hoping to win their loyalty must give special attention particularly to competence, commitment and communication. The promise of relationship marketing as an effective strategy for keeping customer is very captivating.

The second objective also sought to assess the effect of relationship marketing dimensions on the satisfaction of customers of Zenith Bank Ghana Limited. Some of the benefits that accrue to the bank undertaking the relationship marketing initiative include better communication with the customer, increased efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, the effective integration relationship marketing operations as a strategic tool and into a single focused operation will enable the bank to meet the needs of their respective customers which will in turn boost their satisfaction in the long run. This according to Kotler & Keller (2009) argued that to be effective and satisfactory to customers, organizations must integrate all their communication tools to provide consistency, persuasive and timely information to their customers.

Finally, the third objective sought to assess whether ICT moderates the relationship between relationship marketing dimensions and the loyalty of customers of Zenith Bank, Ghana Limited. The study revealed that ICT moderates the relationship between relationship marketing dimensions and the loyalty of customers of Zenith Bank, Ghana Limited. The study of Fernie & Grant (2008) is of consonance with this

conclusion and points out that technology contributes positively to relationship marketing.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the key findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendation and implication are made:

1. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the management of Zenith Bank should be equipped with enough skills and professionalism to handle all manner of customers of the bank. This can be done through training and development programmes.
2. The services they rendered to customers are of higher quality since other factors such as service quality helps in boosting customer loyalty.
3. The policy makers of the bank should ensure Customer relationship marketing practices cut across all staff, including those that are outsourced (such as security men/women). BOG as well as the banks must establish a comprehensive accommodation plans for customer is satisfied right from the initial point of call to the final end of business transactions.
4. Finally, the study implies that government and other regulatory bodies formulate and implement relationship marketing policies that will help to neutralize the deficiencies repeatedly reported on the satisfaction and loyalty of customers.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Studies

The study was limited to Zenith Bank Ghana, Limited which is only an aspect of the financial services industry. It is suggested that future studies should include other banks in the sector and even cover other African countries in order to explore the

extent of relationship marketing practices and the strategic role of ICT in the sector for a more generalization of the findings. More so, the approach adopted by the study was quantitative and hence further studies could look at using mixed method in exploring relationship marketing practices in other respective banks and how it impacts on customer loyalty in Ghana and Africa at large.



REFERENCES

- Abtin, A., & Pouramiri, M. (2016). The impact of relationship marketing on customer loyalty enhancement (Case study: Kerman Iran insurance company). *Marketing and Branding Research*, 3, 41-49.
- Adam, A.S., Stalcup, L.D. and Lee, A. (2010), "Customer relationship management in Hong Kong", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 139-159.
- Al-khawaldah, R., Al-zoubi, W., Alshaer, S., Almarshad, M., ALShalabi, F., Altahrawi, M., & Al-hawary, S. (2022). Green supply chain management and competitive advantage: The mediating role of organizational ambidexterity. *Uncertain Supply Chain Management*, 10(3), 961-972.
- Amoako, G. K., Neequaye, E. K., Kutu-Adu, S. G., Caesar, L. D., & Ofori, K. S. (2019). Relationship marketing and customer satisfaction in the Ghanaian hospitality industry: an empirical examination of trust and commitment. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*.
- Atul, P., & Mona, S. (2015). The conceptual foundations of relationship marketing: Review and synthesis. *Экономическая социология*, 16(2), 119-149.
- Azeem, M., Aziz, S., Shahid, J., Hayat, A., Ahmed, M., & Khan, M. I. (2021). The impact of customer-centric business strategies on customer relationship management: pharmaceutical field-force perspective. *International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing*.
- Bahader, M., Idrees, H., & Naveed, M. A. (2021). Customer relationship management practices in university libraries of Pakistan. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 0_1-24.
- Balaji, M. S., Khong, K. W., & Chong, A. Y. L. (2016). Determinants of negative word-of-mouth communication using social networking sites. *Information & Marketing*, 53(4), 528-540.
- Bataineh, A. Q., Al-Abdallah, G. M., Salhab, H. A., & Shoter, A. M. (2015). The effect of
- Berry, C., Burton, S., & Howlett, E. (2017). It's only natural: the mediating impact of consumers' attribute inferences on the relationships between product claims, perceived product healthfulness, and purchase intentions. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45(5), 698-719.

- Bhandari, P. (2022). *Research Design- A Step by Step Guide with examples*. Scriber.
- Bilgihan, A., & Bujisic, M. (2015). The effect of website features in online relationship marketing: A case of online hotel booking. *Electronic commerce research and applications*, 14(4), 222-232.
- Boateng, S. L. (2019). Online relationship marketing and customer loyalty: a signaling theory perspective. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*.
- Bricci, L., Fragata, A., & Antunes, J. (2016). The effects of trust, commitment and satisfaction on customer loyalty in the distribution sector. *Journal of Economics, Business and Marketing*, 4(2), 173-177.
- Cakici, A. C., Akgunduz, Y., & Yildirim, O. (2019). The impact of perceived price justice and satisfaction on loyalty: the mediating effect of revisit intention. *Tourism Review*.
- Caporale, G. M., Rault, C., Sova, A. D., & Sova, R. (2015). Financial development and economic growth: Evidence from 10 new European Union members. *International Journal of Finance & Economics*, 20(1), 48-60.
- Cavaliere, L. P. L., Khan, R., Rajest, S. S., Sundram, S., Jainani, K., Bagale, G., ... & Regin, R. (2021). The Impact Of Customer Relationship Management On Customer Satisfaction And Retention: The Mediation Of Service Quality. *Turkish Journal of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation*, 32(3), 22107-22121.
- Chakiso, C. B. (2015). The effect of relationship marketing on customers' loyalty (Evidence from Zemen Bank). *EMAJ: Emerging Markets Journal*, 5(2), 58-70.
- Chuah, S. H. W., Rauschnabel, P. A., Marimuthu, M., Thurasamy, R., & Nguyen, B. (2017). Why do satisfied customers defect? A closer look at the simultaneous effects of switching barriers and inducements on customer loyalty. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*.
- Creswell, J. W., & Zhang, W. (2009). The application of mixed methods designs to trauma research. *Journal of Traumatic Stress: Official publication of the international society for traumatic stress studies*, 22(6), 612-621.
- Cristo, M., Saerang, D. P., & Worang, F. (2017). The influence of price, service quality, and physical environment on customer satisfaction. case study markobar cafe mando. *Jurnal EMBA: Jurnal Riset Ekonomi, Manajemen, Bisnis Dan Akuntansi*, 5(2).

- Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Pandey, N., & Lim, W. M. (2021). Research constituents, intellectual structure, and collaboration patterns in Journal of International Marketing: An analytical retrospective. *Journal of International Marketing*, 29(2), 1-25.
- Dunbar, N. E. (2015). A review of theoretical approaches to interpersonal power. *Review of Communication*, 15(1), 1-18.
- Faed, A., Radmand, P. and Talevski, A. (2010), "The critical success factors for implementation of CRM and knowledge management in a work setting", International Conference on P2P, Parallel, Grid, Cloud and Internet Computing, pp. 140-148.
- Gupta, A., & Sahu, G. P. (2015). Exploring relationship marketing dimensions and their effect on customer loyalty-a study of Indian mobile telecom market. *International Journal of Business Innovation and Research*, 9(4), 375-395.
- Husnain, M., & Akhtar, M. W. (2015). Relationship marketing and customer loyalty: Evidence from banking sector in Pakistan. *Global Journal of Marketing and Business Research: E-Marketing*, 15(10), 1-14.
- Islam, J. U., Shahid, S., Rasool, A., Rahman, Z., Khan, I., & Rather, R. A. (2020). Impact of website attributes on customer engagement in banking: a solicitation of stimulus-organism-response theory. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*.
- Issock, P. B. I., Mpinganjira, M., & Roberts-Lombard, M. (2019). Modelling green customer loyalty and positive word of mouth: Can environmental knowledge make the difference in an emerging market?. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*.
- John, S. P., & De Villiers, R. (2022). Factors affecting the success of marketing in higher education: a relationship marketing perspective. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 1-20.
- Jones, M. A., Reynolds, K. E., Arnold, M. J., Gabler, C. B., Gillison, S. T., & Landers, V. M. (2015). Exploring consumers' attitude towards relationship marketing. *Journal of Services Marketing*.
- Kim, H.S., Kim, Y.G. and Park, C.W. (2010), "Integration of firm's resource and capability to implement enterprise CRM: a case study of a retail bank in Korea", *Decision Support Systems*, Vol. 48. No. 2, pp. 313-322.

- Kosiba, J. P., Boateng, H., Okoe, A. F., & Hinson, R. (2020). Trust and customer engagement in the banking sector in Ghana. *The Service Industries Journal*, 40(13-14), 960-973.
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and psychological measurement*, 30(3), 607-610.
- Lebow, J. L., Chambers, A. L., Christensen, A., & Johnson, S. M. (2012). Research on the treatment of couple distress. *Journal of Marital and Family therapy*, 38(1), 145-168.
- Lo, F. Y., & Campos, N. (2018). Blending Internet-of-Things (IoT) solutions into relationship marketing strategies. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 137, 10-18.
- Magasi, C. (2016). Determinants of customer loyalty in Sub Saharan African banking industry: an empirical review. *Journal of Economics, Commerce and Marketing*, 4(2), 574-588.
- Magatef, S. G., & Tomalieh, E. F. (2015). The impact of customer loyalty programs on customer retention. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 6(8), 78-93.
- Matthew, N. G., & Laryea, A. E. (2012). A financial performance comparison of foreign vs local banks in Ghana. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3(21).
- Menidjel, C., Benhabib, A., Bilgihan, A., & Madanoglu, M. (2019). Assessing the role of product category involvement and relationship proneness in the satisfaction–loyalty link in retailing. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Marketing*.
- Mhidze, R. W., & Njuguna, J. N. (2018). The Influence of relationship marketing on customer loyalty in the telecommunication industry in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: lessons for entrepreneurial leadership.
- Moorman, C., van Heerde, H. J., Moreau, C. P., & Palmatier, R. W. (2019). Challenging the boundaries of marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(5), 1-4.
- Mutuku, B. M. (2017). *Role of Relationship Marketing Quality on Customer Behavioural Intention in the Banking Sector in Kenya* (Doctoral dissertation, COHRED-JKUAT).
- Narteh, B. (2009). Relationship marketing and customer satisfaction in the Ghanaian banking sector.

- Narteh, B., & Owusu- Frimpong, N. (2011). An analysis of students' knowledge and choice criteria in retail bank selection in Sub- Saharan Africa: The case of Ghana. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*.
- Ndubisi N. O, & Chan C. M, (2011).Examining the inter-relationship among the Dimensions of Relationship Marketing. *Asian journal ofbusiness research*, 1(1)
- Ngo, V. M., & Pavelková, D. (2017). Moderating and mediating effects of switching costs on the relationship between service value, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty: investigation of retail banking in Vietnam. *Journal of International Studies*.
- Ngoma, M., & Ntale, P. D. (2019). Word of mouth communication: A mediator of relationship marketing and customer loyalty. *Cogent Business & Management*.
- Othman, M., & Kamarohim, N. A. (2021). Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System in Telecommunication Industry: A Framework Proposal on the Relationship CRM Antecedents, Information Technology Governance and Organizational Performance. In *Conference Proceeding* (p. 66).
- Payne, A., & Frow, P. (2017). Relationship Marketing: looking backwards towards the future. *Journal of services marketing*
- Peprah, W. K., Agyei, A., & Oteng, E. (2017). Ranking The 5C's of credit analysis: Evidence from Ghana banking industry. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies*, 9, 78-80.
- Popp, B., & Woratschek, H. (2017). Consumer–brand identification revisited: An integrative framework of brand identification, customer satisfaction, and price image and their role for brand loyalty and word of mouth. *Journal of Brand Marketing*, 24(3), 250-270.
- Rafiki, A., Hidayat, S. E., & Razzaq, D. A. A. (2019). CRM and organizational performance: A survey on telecommunication companies in Kuwait. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*.
- Rather, R. A., & Camilleri, M. A. (2019). The effects of service quality and consumer-brand value congruity on hospitality brand loyalty. *Anatolia*, 30(4), 547-559.
- relationship marketing on customer retention in the Jordanian's pharmaceutical sector. *International Journal of Business and marketing*, 10(3), 117-131.

- Saunders, M. N. K., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). Research Methods for Business Students Eight Edition. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*.
- Shaikh, A. A., Glavee-Geo, R., & Karjaluo, H. (2017). Exploring the nexus between financial sector reforms and the emergence of digital banking culture—Evidences from a developing country. *Research in International Business and Finance*, 42, 1030-1039.
- Soimo, V. J., Wagoki, J., & Okello, B. (2015). Influence of relationship marketing on customer retention in commercial banks in Nakuru town, Kenya. *International journal of economics, commerce and marketing*, 3(5), 1305-1319.
- Soltani, Z., Zareie, B., Milani, F. S., & Navimipour, N. J. (2018). The impact of the customer relationship management on the organization performance. *The Journal of High Technology Management Research*, 29(2), 237-246.
- Surmiak, A. (2018, September). Confidentiality in qualitative research involving vulnerable participants: Researchers' perspectives. In *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 393-418). Freie Universität Berlin.
- Swaminathan, V., & Moorman, C. (2009). Marketing alliances, firm networks, and firm value creation. *Journal of marketing*, 73(5), 52-69.
- Tahmasbizadeh, N., Hadavand, M., & Manesh, H. M. (2016). Impact of Relationship Quality with Customer (Relationship Marketing) on Customer Loyalty in Customer-Oriented Strategy: Case Study Agriculture Bank Customers, Tehran, Iran. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Marketing Review*, 33(3492), 1-7.
- Vajpai, I., & Tribhuvan, P. (2021). *Employee Engagement Based Framework for the Introduction of Internal Marketing and IntCRM in the It Sector* (No. 7062). EasyChair.
- Wende, R. M. (2019). *Influence of relationship marketing on customer loyalty in the telecommunication industry in Dar es salaam, Tanzania* (Doctoral dissertation, Strathmore University).
- Yao, T., Qiu, Q., & Wei, Y. (2019). Retaining hotel employees as internal customers: Effect of organizational commitment on attitudinal and behavioural loyalty of employees. *International Journal of Hospitality Marketing*, 76, 1-8.

Zameer, H., Tara, A., Kausar, U., & Mohsin, A. (2015). Impact of service quality, corporate image and customer satisfaction towards customers' perceived value in the banking sector in Pakistan. *International journal of bank marketing*.



APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING, PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CHAIN

MARKETING

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

TOPIC: RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY,

DOES INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

MATTER?

(A CASE STUDY OF ZENITH BANK GHANA)

The research is aimed at investigating the Relationship Marketing and Customer Loyalty, Does Information Communication Technology Matter? The researcher would therefore be grateful if you could provide answers to the questions below. Please be assured that this is purely for academic purposes so your answers will be treated with the strictest confidence.

Instruction:

Please circle/tick the number that indicates your level of agreement with each of the statements below.

The rate ranges from one (1) to five (5) where one represents the least agreement to the issues while five represents the strongest agreement to the issues.

1. Trust					
The bank is primarily concerned with security for transactions		1	2	3	4 5
The bank observes absolute confidentiality in customer's affairs		1	2	3	4 5
The bank employees show respect to customers		1	2	3	4 5
The bank fulfils its obligation to customers	1	2	3	4	5
Customers have absolute confidence in bank's services	1	2	3	4	5
2. Communication					
The bank provides timely and trustworthy information	1	2	3	4	5
The bank provides information when new products are introduced	1	2	3	4	5
The bank provides accurate information always to customers	1	2	3	4	5
The bank officials are easily approachable	1	2	3	4	5
3. Conflict handling					
The bank tries to avoid potential conflicts	1	2	3	4	5
The bank tries to solve manifest conflict to situations	1	2	3	4	5
The bank openly and promptly discusses solutions when problems arise	1	2	3	4	5
4. Social and financial bonds					
The bank regularly checks on customers	1	2	3	4	5
The bank sends customers gifts on special occasions	1	2	3	4	5
The bank involves customers in their social functions	1	2	3	4	5
The bank gives selected customers concessionary rate	1	2	3	4	5
The bank offers special packages to selected accounts	1	2	3	4	5
The bank treats the customer more as a friend and partner	1	2	3	4	5
The bank participates in clients family's social functions e.g., funerals	1	2	3	4	5
The bank delivers on its promise	1	2	3	4	5

5. Commitment					
The bank regularly makes adjustments to suit customers' needs	1	2	3	4	5
The bank provides personalized services to meet customer needs	1	2	3	4	5
The bank is flexible in serving customer needs	1	2	3	4	5
The bank values its relationship with customers	1	2	3	4	5
6. Competence					
The bank is excellent in service delivery	1	2	3	4	5
The bank staff fully understand the nature of competition in the banking industry	1	2	3	4	5
The bank always makes extra effort to understand customer needs and provide relevant solutions	1	2	3	4	5
The bank's staff possesses excellent relationship marketing skills	1	2	3	4	5
The bank discusses with customers new ways of improving service	1	2	3	4	5
B. Customer Loyalty					
The bank has very high customer retention rate	1	2	3	4	5
The bank is able to increase its share of customers' business with time	1	2	3	4	5
Customers willingly recommend the bank to others	1	2	3	4	5
Customers patronise new products when introduced	1	2	3	4	5
Customers patronise products of higher grade over time	1	2	3	4	5
The bank's customers provide favourable word-of-mouth	1	2	3	4	5
The bank is successful in cross-selling to existing customers	1	2	3	4	5
Information Communication and technology					
The bank has excellent IT infrastructure to provide customer solutions	1	2	3	4	5
(i.e. Internet, telephones, ATM's, fax machines, SWIFT etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
The IT system is flexible enough to provide customized solutions	1	2	3	4	5
Customer information can easily be obtained from a central database	1	2	3	4	5

The bank branches are fully networked	1	2	3	4	5
The bank practices internet banking to facilitate customer	1	2	3	4	5

