

**THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL SELLING ON STORE LOYALTY IN ELECTRONICS
APPLIANCE STORES IN JOHANNESBURG**

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Management Sciences (Marketing) in the Faculty of Management Sciences at
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ABSTRACT

Retailers consider store Loyalty to be crucial to their long-term survival, growth and profitability. In the South African retail sector, most store loyalty strategies are obvious, and the patterns are predictable. They are either mechanical or based on simplistic behaviour-to-reward programmes that are easily imitable. The indiscriminate application of similar store loyalty programmes amongst appliance electronics retailers appears to be diminishing in its effectiveness as a cause for store loyalty. This study explores the potential applicability of personal selling dimensions as a tool for developing store loyalty in electronics appliance stores.

The purpose of the study is to examine the use of intangible marketing tools such as personal selling (person-to-person contact elements) to foster store loyalty in electronics retail stores in Johannesburg. The study approach was quantitative and the study population were shoppers and store managers of appliance retail stores in Johannesburg. A survey was undertaken using a self-developed questionnaire to collect primary data from respondents. The sample size for the study was five hundred shoppers and fifty store managers using the non-probability purposive sampling technique.

The findings of the study indicated that customers did not consider personal selling as cause for their store loyalty in appliance stores. However, the study found there was significant relationship in the personal selling attributes that customers and managers considered as important. Both customers and managers shared similar views that Product knowledge and Trustworthiness were the two most important personal selling attributes in appliance stores. The study provides an insight into the human attributes which buyers and sellers consider crucial in appliance stores. This study contributes to the body of knowledge in sales force training and recruitment by highlighting buyer and seller perspectives of the pertinent personal selling attributes that if available could influence store loyalty. The main limitations of the study was that the study was cross-sectional and thus data was collected within a limited geographic area and time, therefore generalization from sample to population is limited. The study focused on electronics appliance stores and was limited to the Johannesburg.

DECLARATION

I declare, that the work presented in this dissertation is my own and has not been previously submitted in part or whole for the application for award of a degree at any higher education institution. The dissertation acclaims no material previously published except where due reference is made.

Signature:..........

Date:.....

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To my grandmother, Cecelia and my mother Janet, thank you for your prayers and encouragement.

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, whose grace and mercy made it possible for me to complete this dissertation.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This chapter introduces the study and provides a background to the study. In addition, it presents the problem to be investigated as well as the research questions, aims and objectives of the study and the research methodology that was employed to collect the data. Finally, the limitations and layout of the dissertation and the output are presented. The following discussion concerns the selling and buying of goods.

The selling and buying of goods and services between persons and groups have been practiced since the existence of humanity and the advent of civilization. Over many centuries, human beings have rationally exchanged their goods and services with neighbours using the same goods and services as a medium of exchange. This exchange is referred to as barter trade and was the basis of trade and commerce in previous eras (Ebitu, 2016:3). However, as bilateral and multilateral trade and commercial activities began to develop and expand, the weakness of barter trade began to surface. The inability to store wealth, the lack of a common measure for value and the persistent unlikelihood of the double coincidence of wants weighed down on the barter system. Eventually, a more flexible value exchange system such as money was introduced to replace the barter system (Moran, Brede, Lanni and Noble, 2013: 472).

Retail trade entails the sale of goods and merchandise directly to end-users in small quantities, either online or from a fixed location. In modern times, retail companies utilise front-line employees as one of the mediums for selling goods and services to their customers. The significance of selling to humanity is captured in a quote by Robert Louis Stevenson as cited by Kotler and Armstrong (2015:502), stating that selling is the core of the existence of every individual. In a similar quote, Ted Motley, a notable sales trainer, signified the importance of selling to businesses when he stated that a firm is non-existent until the moment it sells something to someone (Spiro, Rich and Stanton, 2008:23). In this regard, salespersons function as store ambassadors who perform the personal selling activities of the store. Personal selling activities entail direct interactions between retail salespersons and customers that lead to satisfactory profitable exchange relationships (Asiegbu, Ozuru and Awah, 2016:65). Notably, retailing and salesmanship have existed for many years in South Africa and remains a relevant gross domestic product (GDP), contributor.

The retail industry in South Africa experienced a three percent annual growth rate over the past eight years. This growth was driven by an increase in the supply of retail spaces and the number of shopping centres in the country. For instance, as of 2010, the retail industry occupied approximately 18,418,073 square meter of land in South Africa compared to 5,722,846 square meters in 2002. Furthermore, an increase from 239 shopping centres to 1,443 centres was recorded across South Africa in the same period (Gauteng Provincial Treasury, 2012). The rise in the number of shopping centres is attributed to changing consumer behaviour and the country's alignment with observable trends in other developing economies. For example, retailing tends to be shifting from traditional proximity retailing (where consumers shopped at the nearest, most convenient store) to destination retailing, where consumers are willing to travel further to get diverse choices and experiences (Ferne and Moore, 2013:1). It is evident that the increase in the extent of shopping space also poses a real problem for retailers as they scramble for the patronage of the same customer, making it more difficult for retailers to survive without a stream of loyal customers.

Recent studies by the Gauteng Provincial Treasury (2012) reveal that South Africa appears to be shifting towards a consumer-based economy. As mining and manufacturing are on the decline, industry expansion now rests on the axis of retailers. Retail trade sales in South Africa reflected an increase, growing by 5.4% compared to the same period of 2011, for the second quarter of 2012 (Statistics South Africa 2013). Additionally, it has been forecasted that food and beverages are expected to grow by an average of 11.5%; clothing by 15%; and electrical appliances and housewares by 16%, reflecting a rise in the demand for luxury consumer goods and services in South Africa (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2012: 26). Retailing, which entails the final activities to place a product in the hands of consumers or to provide a service to consumers, is one of the direct beneficiaries of the increased demand (Lusch, Dune and Carver 2011: 4). Despite this growth and the positive forecast, the sector faces real challenges such as intensifying competitive manoeuvres from local and larger foreign retailers, skills shortage and rising operational costs. The situation is exacerbated by changing consumer behaviour and the ability of today's customer to compare product prices, quality and customer experience in real-time through the Internet and social media (Gauteng Provincial Treasury quarterly bulletin, 2012; PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2012).

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

As retail spaces began to expand rapidly in South Africa, fierce competition for customers amongst retailers also increased. Therefore, customer loyalty became a significant area of interest to retailers and researchers due to its perceptible link to a firm's competitiveness, profitability and overall success (Cant and du Toit, 2012:1224). The sales-encounter between the customer and sales personnel has been recognized as a powerful driver of customer experience, which management can focus on as a means to influence customer loyalty (Kulkarni, 2012:70). Although customer experience comprises every point of contact at which the customer interacts with the business (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016: 69), several researchers believe that the interaction customers have with sales personnel could be the most significant and perceptible aspect of the customer's experience at a retail store (Beneke, Hayworth, Hobson and Mia, 2012: 30). This study adopted tenets of the Disconfirmation Theory and Social Exchange Theory in explaining the potential influence of personal characteristics of salespersons on customer loyalty in specialty retail stores. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2015:412), specialty retailers comprise of retail stores that carry a narrow product line within a particular category, such as sporting-goods stores, electronics stores and hardware stores.

The motivation for conducting this study stems from the observation that despite several studies conducted in the area of customer loyalty acknowledging the importance of salesperson-customer interaction. Only a few researchers have investigated the potential for such interactions to culminate into store loyalty, especially in the appliance specialty retail context (Kapoor and Kulshrestha, 2009: 195). In this regard, this study posits that the personal selling skills and inherent characteristics possessed by sales personnel could be leveraged towards driving customer loyalty in specialty stores and thus cannot be underestimated by retail store management.

Most loyalty strategies employed by retailers have either been similar, easily replicable by competitors or insignificant to the consumer (Naicker and Brijlal, 2012:6477). Retailers are constantly looking for ways to consistently and sustainably distinguish themselves from competitors in order to win customer loyalty. Currently, customers are unable to differentiate between electronics appliance retailers and therefore, base their store patronage on price and sales promotions.

The challenge facing South African electronic appliance retailers is how to utilise personal selling to influence store loyalty in their stores. Currently, it is unknown to what extent to which salespersons in electronic appliances retail stores in South Africa use their personal selling skills to influence store loyalty is unknown. Empirical research on this problem appears scant or non-existent. Consequently, it is essential to conduct this study to investigate how personal selling factors may be used to influence store loyalty in

the South African electronic appliances retail industry. Having discussed the background to the study, the problem statement is presented below.

1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

The proliferation of technology, heightened customer awareness and fierce competition has diminished the era in which retailers control the autonomy and patronage of stocks of faithful customers. In retailing, the concept of store loyalty faces a real threat from the availability of multiple channels from which customers could purchase products. Currently, most customer loyalty programmes that worked in the past appear to have lost their effectiveness. According to the Pareto principle, whereby eighty percent of sales in a store emanate from twenty percent of the store's customers, loyalty remains crucial to retailers (Kučerová, Pinkava and Zemanová, 2014:44).

Evidently, retailer's pursuit of unique methods to distinguish themselves from their competitors through loyalty programmes appears to be gaining momentum in South Africa. The persistent use of tangible cues, such as product; price; and sales promotions to garner store loyalty has made it difficult for customers to differentiate amongst electronics appliance retailers. Academics believe that almost every tangible element of a retailer's marketing mix could be imitated with ease by competitors except the elements that are intangible (Lusch et al. 2011:521). Furthermore, retailers have paid little or no attention to the effect of intangible elements such as person-to-person connectivity on customer loyalty. One intangible method that retailers appear to have under-utilized in South Africa to increase store loyalty is personal selling. This study, therefore, explores the impact of personal selling dimensions on store loyalty in electronics appliance retail stores.

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to explore the influence of personal selling on store loyalty in electronics appliance stores in Johannesburg.

1.4.2 The Objectives of the study

Based on the research aim, the following research objectives were derived:

- To determine whether personal selling influences store loyalty in the electronics appliance retail industry;

- To identify the personal selling factors that customers consider important in electronics appliance retail stores in Johannesburg;
- To explore if customer perceptions of the personal selling efforts of salespersons affect store loyalty in the electronics appliance retail industry; and
- To establish the relationship between management and customer preferred personal selling attributes of sales personnel in electronics appliance stores.

1.5 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to position personal selling as a potential method of reducing customer mobility and attrition.

In this regard, the study strives to contribute in the following areas:

- The study highlights the influence of the personal selling skills of salespersons on store loyalty amongst electronic appliance customers in Johannesburg;
- The study identifies the personal selling factors that electronics appliance customers consider as important;
- The study examines the effect of salespersons' personal selling skills on customer perception and subsequent loyalty intention; and
- The study aims to establish and compare the preferred personal selling skills and attributes of front-line employees of management and customers of electronics appliance retail stores.

1.5.1 GEOGRAPHIC DEMARCATION

1.5.2 Delimitations

The proposed study was conducted in the retail sector and was limited to 50 appliance specialty stores in Johannesburg. The interest of the researcher in the city of Johannesburg is due to it being the most populated city in South Africa and is also considered to be the commercial capital of the Country. Specialty stores habitually carry goods which customers often require assistance and information from the store sales personnel, hence salesperson-customer interaction in these stores are of interest to the researcher in the study. The focal point of the study is on how customer perception of sales personnel characteristics relates to store loyalty in specialty stores. The study does not deal with marketing strategy or policy development. However, there was a discussion on how salesmanship falls into strategic marketing structure of a retailing company. It is not the intention of the study to address the issues of benchmarks and branding in salesmanship.

1.5.3 Limitation

A major limitation of the study was time and cost, which resulted in the sample size being relatively small, cross-sectional and restricted to the Johannesburg area.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

A quantitative research methodology was chosen for the study as it was deemed to be most appropriate for collection and analysis of data especially since there has been little empirical research on the topic. The purpose of quantitative research is to objectively examine data statistically for quantity, intensity and frequency (Welman, Kruger and Mitchel, 2005:8). An empirical exploratory survey approach was used as the main aim of the study was to understand if and how the personal selling efforts of front-line employees influence customer store loyalty intention. According to Sanders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007:134) exploratory studies are useful in establishing causal relationships between variables. Quantitative data was collected and statistically analysed to answer the research questions. Due to the scant empirical study conducted on the topic, a more exploratory research approach was appropriate for the study. The delimitations and limitations of the study are discussed next.

The proposed research was conducted as an empirical exploratory survey using primary data. In using this approach, quantitative data was collected and statistically analysed to answer the research questions. Since there has been little empirical study on the topic, a more exploratory research approach is appropriate for the study. A five point Likert scale questionnaire was designed and given to respondents to complete and return to the researcher.

1.6.1 Target Population

The research population for this study consists of shoppers and managers of fifty (50) appliance retail stores in Johannesburg. The names of the selected stores were withheld for confidentiality purposes but will be made available on request. The selection of appliance retail stores comes as a result of their candid reflection of high sales personnel-customer interaction.

1.6.2 Sampling technique

A sample was drawn from the target population for the study after it was grouped into five zones. Sampling is a deliberate choice of a small number of people who are to provide the researcher with data from which to draw conclusions about a larger group (the population), whom these individuals represent (Jancowicz, 2000; Welman, Kruger and Mitchel 2005: 65; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007: 206). A purposive sampling method was adopted using quantitative approach for the study due to time, convenience, and cost constraints reasons. The aim of a purposive sample is to generate a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population. This is often achieved by applying expert knowledge of the population to choose in a non-random manner a sample of elements that represents a cross-section of the population (Battaglia .& Lavrakas 2013: 1).

In this regard, the researcher judgmentally selected five stores from each of the ten zones. Thus fifty (5x10) retail stores constituted the sample frame. A total of 550 respondents was selected from the sampled stores and given questionnaire to complete.

1.6.3 Data collection method

In gathering data for the study, a survey approach was used. Two sets of questionnaires (5 point Likert scale) was administered. One set of questionnaires was be administered on shoppers and another set on retailer managers. Permission was obtained from the management of the stores where data was collected before the questionnaires were administered. An informed consent was also obtained from shoppers and retail managers that were willing to participate in the study. The motivation for using a Likert scale survey questionnaire is that the participants are very busy people (especially the customers/shoppers and it was hoped that they will be able to respond faster to this approach.

1.6.4 Data analysis

The data collected from the field was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical. Two descriptive statistics was calculated namely mean and standard deviation. Two inferential statistics were also calculated which are correlation coefficients and regression. Computerised software such as SPSS, Microsoft Excel was used for the data manipulation where feasible. For easy analysis, presentation and interpretation of the data collected from the field, diagrams, tables, charts, and pictograms was used to present information in a statistical format.

1.6.5 Validity

Validity test was also conducted on the instrument by using expert agreement of academics and experienced industry professionals to ensure that the content of the instrument is a true representation of the research objectives (Sekaran 2003).

1.6.5.1 Reliability

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, it was first pilot tested on 20 respondents before applying it in the field. This was supported by conducting cronbach alpha coefficients test to determine the reliability of the instrument. Discrepancies in the test results were adjusted to make the instrument reliable.

Content validity was conducted by researcher, to ensure that there is no misunderstanding in the instrument which the respondent may not understand. The study consists empirical quantitative survey, using a five-point likert instrument (questionnaire) for data collection. The target population was shoppers and store managers in fifty appliance retail stores in Johannesburg. The sampling size of the study is 550 respondents using non-probability purposive sampling technique to select the sample.

Descriptive and inferential statistical tools was used to interpret the field data and then a cronbach alpha coefficients test applied to determine the reliability of the instrument.

1.7 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Introduction to study

The chapter presents the background to the research; the research problem and question; research objectives; the importance of the study; and limitations. This is followed by the literature review chapter which is subdivided into three chapters.

Chapter 2: the importance of retailing and retail taxonomies in South Africa

The chapter describes the retail landscape of South Africa and its relevance to the nation's economy. The strategies, characteristics and dimensions of retailers are also discussed.

Chapter 3: Characteristics of the retail consumer and the dimensions of loyalty

This chapter provides an overview of retail consumer characteristics and discusses the dimensions of loyalty. The chapter focuses on the implications of consumer behaviour for loyalty by juxtaposing the two constructs.

Chapter 4: Untangling the influence of personal selling and salespersons

The chapter untangles the personal selling variable and discusses salespersons literature. The conjoint engagement of the two variables and their concomitant influence on store loyalty are discussed.

Chapter 5: Research methodology

This chapter describes the research methods and the sampling techniques applied by the researcher. It also clarifies the procedures for data collection and analysis. A discussion of ethical clearance and issues is also included in the chapter.

Chapter 6: Research Findings and Data Analysis

This chapter presents the data obtained in the study in the form of charts, figures and tables. The data is also analysed. The relevant statistical calculations are interpreted from the data.

Chapter 7: Discussion of Results

This chapter discusses the findings of the study of relations to existing literature.

Chapter 8: Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study. Recommendations in accordance with the findings of the research are also made. The study limitations are discussed, together with suggested future areas of research.

1.8 OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

1.8.1 Theoretical background

In this era of fierce competition and high consumer mobility, many retailers have been forced to rethink their strategies in order to survive. Organisations are becoming more conscious of the link between customer perceptions of in-store experience and their decision to re-patronize or recommend the store to friends and family. More recently, several academics and practitioners have altered their views of retail transactions as merely an exchange process to that of an ongoing buyer-seller relationship (Vesel and Zabkar, 2010:1335). According to Gentile, Spiller, and Noci (2007:397), customer experience is defined as a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction. This experience is essentially personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels, namely rational, emotional, sensorial, physical and spiritual. Furthermore, Verhoef,

Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros and Schlesinger (2009: 32) suggest that the customer experience construct involves the customer's cognitive, affective, emotional, social and physical responses to the retailer. It has been noted that friendly service provided by sales personnel impacts and facilitates customer experience positively (Beneke, Lykiardopulos, de villiers and Rawoot, 2009:40).

According to Lee and Dubinsky (2003:22), during a sales encounter with friendly, empathic knowledgeable sales personnel, customers may experience positive emotions such as excitement, delight, comfort and contentment. Hence, it is the intention of the proposed study to examine if customer perceptions of sales personnel behavioural attributes influence customer loyalty, particularly in stores where there is high sales personnel-customer interaction, such as specialty retail stores.

The premise of the proposed study is that there are many lucrative channels available to retailers in their pursuit of loyalty objectives, such as location, store ambience, price and product quality. In essence, salespersons function as social intermediaries at the borderline between their respective firms and customers. Therefore, they can potentially be used by management as a tool to foster customer loyalty intentions. In keeping with the proposed research aim and objectives, this section sets out to define and identify salespersons' characteristics and dimensions which are clear, relevant and effectively utilizable for empirical analysis. Following this will be the use of a combination of insights from the perspective of the Social Exchange Theory and other theoretical references to briefly clarify the concept of the influence of sales personnel characteristic and customer loyalty to specialty stores. Thereafter, a review of antecedent factors that moderate customer perceptions of salesperson's characteristics in a specialty store context, such as consumer shopping goals or motivational mindset and customer experience. Finally, a conceptual framework and model to be tested by the empirical study will emerge.

1.8.2 The function of personal characteristics in personal selling

Ennis (2008:4) describes personal characteristics as a component of employee competency needed to perform or function in a given role. This would include intangible behaviours embedded in an individual's values, motives and self-concept. Such attributes galvanize a person's knowledge, skills and abilities (also referred to as KSAs). Additionally, the authors' state that some competencies are more crucial than others for certain jobs. For instance, in the example of a salesperson and a cashier in a retail store, the salesperson requires a higher capacity of interpersonal skills and product knowledge than a cashier. Generally, roles are conveyed in an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities and may be regarded as mutual expectations regarding how an individual ought to act in a given situation (Homburg, Muller and Klarmann, 2010: 797).

Personal selling usually entails a series of mutually exclusive and adaptive activities involving interactions between an organisation's salespersons and customers. These activities include performing one or more of the following activities: prospecting, communicating, selling, servicing, information gathering and relationship building (Kotler and Armstrong, 2015: 515). Conversely, personal characteristics or soft skills include the salesperson's behavioural features and qualities that are perceptible when relating to customers. These characteristics or qualities are synonymous with personality and capture essential dimensions of personality, such as physical, psychological, emotional and social aspects (Ma, Yu and Cheng, 2013:1179). More specifically, the interest of the proposed study is not on the salesperson's role, but rather on the effect of specific traits, attributes and attitudes of sales personnel that customers can perceive during a dyad. The difference in a role and personal characteristics can be discerned from the concomitant disparities found in salespersons' performance and conduct (Wachner, Plouffe and Grégoire, 2009: 33). Spiro, Rich and Stanton (2008: 136), identified ten such traits and their related abilities, as listed in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 TRAITS AND RELATED ABILITIES OF SALESPERSONS

1. Analytical intelligence-Ability to solve problems	6. Emotional Intelligence- Ability to understand customers and adapt to their needs
2. Integrity – Ability to build trust	7. Creative Intelligence- Ability to generate ideas that solve customer problems
3. Risk taker -Ability to be innovative	8. Social competence- Ability interacts with customers and build relationships
4. Resilience- Ability to close a sale	9. Optimism- Ability to handle rejection
5. Co-cooperativeness- Ability to work in a team.	10. Self-motivation- Ability to work hard unsupervised

Source: Adapted from Spiro et al. (2008: 136)

Based on the discussion above the study presents the following hypothesis;

H0: Personal selling factors does not influence store loyalty

H1: Personal selling factors influences store loyalty

Notably, it is difficult to define and outline the competencies associated with personal characteristics because the assessment of these competencies is not objective but rather subjective (Ennis, 2008). Hence measurements that meet professional standards are essential. Therefore, a rationale exists for a study to be conducted to examine sales personnel characteristics that in essence influence loyalty in the context of an appliance specialty store.

1.8.3 Personal characteristics and store loyalty

Research shows that sales personnel characteristics such as product knowledge, social competence, likeability and reliability can influence customers' choice of store, and foster customer store loyalty (Beneke et al., 2012: 37). Other studies also mention that the physical appearance of salespersons such as clothing, demographics and physical attractiveness could influence retail customer emotions, store image and purchases (Kim, Ju and Johnson, 2009: 412; Kim and Kim, 2012: 824). On the other hand, customer loyalty has been defined as a customer's expressed a preference for an organisation and the intention to continue to purchase from it and to increase business with it in the future (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1996 cited in Homburg, Muller and Klarmann, 2010: 799). It is also known that loyal customers exhibit behaviours and attitudes such as spreading positive word-of-mouth about the retailer; repeat purchase; and resist competitive pressure (Machirori and Fatoki 2011: 7667).

Other research studies mention that the specific salesperson's behaviour, skills and traits that may impact on the effectiveness of selling in explaining the difference in individual-level sales personnel performance remains an open question for researchers (Wachner, Plouffe and Grégoire, 2009: 33; Schwepker, 2003: 166). Thus, more research is needed to fully uncover the individual characteristics dimensions underlying the effect of sales personnel on customer loyalty. Therefore, the study introduces the following hypothesis as a base point to explore the efficacy of these behaviours as a proxy for loyalty in the context of electronics appliance retail stores:

H0: There is no significant difference between personal selling and store loyalty

H1: There is a significant difference between personal selling and store loyalty

Keeping in mind that the salesperson and personal selling are not mutually exclusive in the context of personal selling, the influence or effect of personal selling and salespersons' characteristics may be described as the degree to which customers perceive sellers' overall competence and the value of the store offerings as a determinant for their interest to be loyal customers (Guenzi and Pelloni, 2004:2).

This may also be considered consistent with tenets of the Social Exchange Theory which rationalizes that

any behaviour which creates a positive outcome is likely to be repeated (Tarver and Haring, 1998:15). The fact that high-quality service influences customers' loyalty behaviour means that every individual salesperson may be responsible for providing such service (Jayawardhena and Farrell 2011:14).

1.8.4 Customer perceptions of salespersons' characteristics

According to Lamb, McDaniel Jnr, Summers and Gardiner (2018: 63), perception is the manner in which a person interprets or assigns meaning to stimuli in the environment. Previous research mentions that consumers do not exist as bystanders during a sales encounter; neither do they process the experience in a vacuum but rather as a concomitant process of their cognition, emotion and motivation. In their model of the customer perception process, Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2009) considered two kinds of customer motivational mindsets associated with shoppers namely: assessment and action mindset.

Accordingly, a consumer in an assessment mind-set would be motivated to deliberate before making the purchase decision in order to ensure that they make the right decision and avoid consequences. On the other hand, a customer in an action mind-set is goal oriented and simply wants to make a concrete exchange purchase. In other words, under a given motivational mind-set, consumers are likely to assess sales personnel behaviour as either congruent or incongruent with their motivation for entering the sales encounter.

Similarly, Buttner, Florack and Goritz (2013: 2) suggest that consumer' approaches to shopping are between an experiential-orientation and a task-orientation. When shopping under an experiential shopping orientation, consumers seek pleasure and enjoyment whilst shopping; conversely, when shopping under a task-focused orientation, consumers view shopping as an activity that ought to be accomplished as effectively as possible (Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006; Baker and Wakefield, 2011, cited in Buttner et al. 2013:3). Customer affective reactions cannot be ruled out during a sales encounter as customers have specific shopping goals riddled with constraints such as time pressure and budget limit (Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006; Bloch, Ridgway and Sherrell, 1989 cited in Buttner et al. 2013:3). Therefore, there seems to be a rational linkage of subjective internal and external seller-buyer factors which impact customer perceptions of sales encounters with salespersons. Although several authors examined how shopping goals affect customer perceptions of the sales encounter, this study will not concentrate on the impact of customer constraints on the perception of salespersons individual characteristics (Hou, Wu and Hu, 2013; Homburg, Muller and Klarmann, 2011).

Evidently, the purchase encounter between sales personnel and customers holds several opportunities to explaining how customer shopping goals, cognition and emotions impact consumer perceptions of the encounter and their attributed preference. This relationship is explained in the Disconfirmation Theory which posits that prior to the sales encounter buyers hold an attribute norm or expectation with which they compare the actual performance to the prior expected standard (Oliver and Swan, 1989:373). Whilst performance below the prior expected standard is considered a 'negative disconfirmation', performance above the prior expected standard is termed 'positive disconfirmation'.

Furthermore, the authors mention that the product types sold can communicate customer expectations and influence customer perceptions especially in the case of a specialty store which sells only technical goods. Consequently, service-intensive operations and intense interaction between sales personnel and customers is a norm.

The impact of salespersons behavioural attributes in such stores cannot be overlooked as findings suggest that customers generally absorb the personal attributes of sales personnel (such as courtesy, friendliness, physical appearance, attitude and product knowledge, etc) in forming their perception of a retailer (Beneke, Hayworth, Hobson and Mia, 2012: 38; Kim and Kim, 2012: 824). These findings lead to the following hypothesis:

H0: Customers' perception of personal selling efforts does not influence store loyalty

H1: Customers' perception of personal selling efforts does influence store loyalty

Drawing from the inherent assumption of the Disconfirmation Theory, a customers' evaluation of a store is based on pre-formulated expectation. This is because customers shopping goals impact how they perceive the sales encounter experience (Kapoor and Kulshrestha, 2009:188). The proposed study examines the impact of the personal characteristics of salespersons on customers in the context of loyalty to an electronics appliance retail store.

1.8.5 Conclusion

The primary function of personal selling is to influence buyer behaviour and attitude (Kotler and Keller, 2012:582). Similarly, the purpose of store loyalty strategies is to influence the behaviours and attitudes of customers. Loyal customers are known to re-purchase from the store, spread positive word of mouth concerning the store and resist competitive pressure (Machirori and Fatoki, 2011: 7667). However, scholars have noted that store loyalty does not occur by accident but rather through deliberate actions

taken by an organization (Li and Green, 2011:1). Likewise, successful personal selling does not merely thrive on having sales persons who perform personal selling activities but also requires a deliberate effort of the organisation in selecting and recruiting sales personnel with the right attitudes and behaviour. Although some research evidence reveals that customer expectation and preference differ and in turn interfere with their perception of the experience with the salesperson. The fact remains that personal selling efforts of salespersons' do exert influence on customer repeat purchase behaviour (Mende, Bolton and Bitner, 2013; Jayawardhena and Farrell, 2011:14; Kim and Kim, 2012: 837).

Loyalty strategies are organizationally driven customer-centric beneficiation schemes which require careful consideration of both tangible and intangible buyer-seller factors (Sharma and Bhardwaj, 2014:22). In order to achieve store loyalty, retailers need to match the customer's relative preference and expectation of the specific retail store with corresponding salesperson's attribute and behaviour (van Scheers, 2015:197). How personal selling factors impact on store loyalty in an electronic retail store is the focus of this study. The relationship between personal selling factors (i.e. attitude, skills, and characteristics) and store loyalty remains an open question for researchers (Wachner, Plouffe and Grégoire, 2009: 33; Schwepker, 2003: 166; Evanschitzky, Sharma and Prykop, 2012:489). A review of the literature on sales and marketing shows that most authors either focus on a single dimension of personal selling factors or investigate the mediating role of the construct in abstraction.

This study examines the relationship between the following five personal selling factors and store loyalty: Trustworthiness, Product knowledge, Emotional Intelligence, Physical appearance and Social competence. These five have been identified and selected from personal selling and marketing literature for the following reasons:

- Their relevance has been thoroughly researched in respect of sales and retailing.
- They are considered to be consistent traits amongst successful salespersons.
- They have been suggested to have an impact on customer perceptions during salesperson-customer dyads.
- They have not been considered in respect of store loyalty intention.

This chapter introduced the study and provided the background to the study. The problem statement was discussed, and the research questions, aims and objectives were presented. In addition, the limitations of the study were provided and finally, the potential output of the study was identified. Chapter Two presents the relevant literature sourced for this study.

CHAPTER 2 - THE IMPORTANCE OF RETAILING AND RETAIL TAXONOMIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the landscape of retailing in South Africa, as well as the dynamics of the retail environment.

Essentially, retailers are intermediaries whose primary role is to bridge the gap between actual manufacturers of the products and final consumers of the products by providing a conducive environment where value exchange can take place (Kotler and Keller, 2012:469). Some authors believe that the retailing industry could be regarded as the largest independent sector in many countries (Luce 2013:3). Notably, everyone is either directly or indirectly involved in retailing either as a buyer, seller or consumer and retailing accounts for 20 percent of the world's labour force (Lusch et al., 2011:4). Studies such as Sharma and Gautam (2017) noted that in the South African retail context, several observable developments have occurred such as the emergence of new retailing formats. Consequently, competition has heightened the pressure on retailers to ensure that customers think, feel and experience superior shopping encounters, store appearance, aesthetics, products assortment, customer service, shopping convenience, lower prices and extended shopping hours to mention a few.

In their study of the perception of business barriers and enablers amongst small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME) owners and stakeholders, Jere, Jere and Aspeling (2015:623) stress the importance of retailing to the economy by pointing out that as much as 79 percent of SMMEs in South Africa currently engage in a form of retailing. As authors like Mafini and Dhurup, (2015) acknowledge the high value customers' place on retailing mix such as sales assistance, store atmospherics, store appeal, promotion and store accessibility. Literature highlighting the role of the retailing mix on consumer store choice and store loyalty in the South African retail industry has become more pertinent to retail management.

This section begins with a brief discussion of the importance of retailing in South Africa, then proceeds to highlight the different types of retailers and the strategies they employ.

2.2. IMPORTANCE OF RETAILING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Traditionally, South Africa is renowned for mineral commodity production and trading. However, the discovery of diamonds at the banks of the Orange River in 1867 and the subsequent development of gold fields kept the mining sector at the top of the list of the major contributors to the nation's development. However, the mining sector is currently showing signs that it is entering into its twilight days. The services sector, which includes the retail industry, appears to be the largest contributor to South Africa Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Thomas White Report, 2011:1).

With regards to the scale and significance of retailing in Europe, the retail industry sales were about 2.6 trillion Euros in the year 2011. The sector is notably highly entrepreneurial. A key driver of small and medium enterprise (SME) developments with over 5.3 million individuals engaging in retailing constituting 20 percent of businesses in Europe Sundström and Reynold, (2014:4). Similarly, in South Africa, the retail industry has been reported to be expanding significantly into a major economic contributor, especially with increasing purchasing power of the disadvantaged groups of the population. The appliances and electronic goods market account for the biggest share in the South African consumer goods sector, with the most popular products amongst consumers being audio/video devices, mobile phones and computing devices. Consumer electronics sales were forecast to reach R97.6 billion by 2015, from an expected R125.1 billion sale in 2011. This growth is attributed to factors such as a recovering economy, an increase in household spending and a shift in spending towards more technologically advanced goods (Thomas White Report, 2011:3). In contrast to the positive retail performance outlook discussed above, the Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin (2015:7) report a fall in retail industry performance in the second quarter of 2015, which was attributed to increased cost pressures, a decline in consumer demand and slow credit extension.

Furthermore, Statistics South Africa (2011) shows that the retail sector employs a total of 638 349 people, making it one of the largest employers of labour in the country. The sector contributed 0,4 percent to the overall GDP percentage growth of 2,5 recorded in 2012. It was observed that there is a rise in the use of non-traditional retail formats such as online shopping and the massive expansion of malls and retail space in direct response to demand and competitive manoeuvres (Gauteng Provincial Treasury Quarterly Bulletin, 2012). In the South Africa supermarket sector, the local retailing space is dominated by a handful of large supermarket chains. However, the presence of family run retail stores such as Spaza shops and corner shops are also on the increase in both the townships and suburban areas. In this respect, the large chain supermarkets (Shoprite, Pick' n pay, Spar, Checkers and Woolworth are thought to be dominant in the supermarket trading environment in South Africa and are frequently referred to as the big five stores (Beneke et al., 2012:27).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that South African consumers favour round-the-clock retail operations, though the sector seems to be responding slowly to this demand. Currently, only a few retail outlets such as McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) restaurants located in major cities like Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town are implementing round-the-clock operations in their outlets. Several of environmental factors contribute to the delayed response to demand for round the clock retail operations in South Africa. These include high cost-to-profit ratios, crime, strict labour legislations. Also, of pertinent consideration is the peculiarity of the selling task in South Africa. South Africa is composed of a multi-cultural and multi-lingual population. Thus, retailers need to focus on issues of diversity and cultural sensitivity (Mpinganjira and Dos Santos, 2013:16). In the following section, the different types of retailers in South Africa are described.

2.3 TAXONOMY OF RETAILERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

In simple terms, retailing may be viewed as the final step in the supply chain and involves everything that is done by a person, firm or group that results in an exchange transaction with final consumers. Fundamentally, any firm that is involved in selling its product or providing services to final consumers for their personal, non-business use is performing a retailing function (Quix and van der Kind, 2014:18). According to Kotler and Keller (2012:469), the income of retailers is usually generated directly from final consumers. Therefore, for retail businesses to grow and employ more people, spending by consumers must take place. Retail taxonomies help in the understanding and identification of competitive trends and in the tracking of changes that occur in retailing.

Accordingly, Kotler and Armstrong (2015:411) mention four retail taxonomies categorized in terms of their operation. The first, are retailers that could be distinguished by the extent of service that they are willing to offer customers; the second, entails retailers who differentiate themselves through the scope of the product line or product category they sell; The third taxonomy involve retailers that differentiate themselves according to the relative prices charged; and lastly is the classification of retailers according to the organizational approach or type of ownership. However, a slightly different retail classification scheme mainly applicable in western countries is provided by Lusch, et al., (2011:17), namely:

- The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) that identifies retailers by codes in terms of the specific product category they sell
- The number of outlets operated by each retail firm (for example, owners of chains stores or single unit owners)

- The gross margin returns on sales of a retailer
- The location strategy adopted by a retailer (For example, retailers may prefer to locate their stores in CBDs or inside shopping centres)
- Sales volume and number of workers employed by a retailer.

Table 2.1 describes the major variations of retail store classification in the South African context.

Table 2.1: Retail store formats in South Africa

Specialty stores (HI-FI Corp, Matrix computers)	Carry a narrow product line with a deep assortment, such as apparel stores, sporting-goods stores, furniture stores, florists and bookstores. A clothing store would be a limited-line store and a men's customised shirt store would be a specialty store.
Department stores (Builders-Macro)	Carry several product lines, typically clothing, home furnishings and household goods, with each line operated as a separate department managed by specialist buyers or merchandisers.
Supermarkets (Spar)	A relatively large, low-cost, low-margin- high-volume, a self-service operation designed to serve the customer's total needs for grocery and household products.
Convenience stores (Retail stores located inside filling stations, 7-Eleven)	Relatively small stores located near residential areas, open long hours seven days a week, carrying a limited line of high-turnover convenience products at slightly higher prices.
Discount stores (PEP stores, PQ Clothing, Discount factory outlets)	Carry standard merchandise, sold at lower prices with lower margins and higher volumes.

Off-price retailers (pawn shops, cash crusaders)	They sell merchandise bought at less-than-regular wholesale prices and sell them at less than retail prices, often leftover goods, overruns and irregulars obtained at reduced prices from manufactures or other retailers. These include factory outlets owned and operated by manufactures or independent off-price retailers owned and run by entrepreneurs or by divisions of larger retail corporations or clubs selling a limited selection of brand-name groceries, appliances, clothing and other goods at deep discounts to consumers who pay membership fees.
Superstores (Macro stores, Checkers hyper market)	Very large stores traditionally aimed at meeting the total needs for routinely purchased food and non-food items. Includes category killers, which carry a deep assortment in a particular category and have a knowledgeable staff and hypermarkets with up to 220,000 square feet of space combining supermarkets, discount and warehouse retailing.

Source: Terblanche (2013:42)

Regardless of the type of retail classification or scheme a store may fall into, for retail operations to be successful the right marketing mix that will cater to the retailer's customer segment and target market should be in place. Next is a discussion on the retail marketing mix and market segmentation and targeting.

2.4 RETAIL STORE STRATEGIES AND DIMENSIONS

A store needs to first attract the patronage of customers before considering how to keep the customers loyal. In this regard, retailers target their intended consumer segments by using several techniques and instruments (Dabija, Dinu, Abrudan and Postelnicu, 2014:38). The next section will discuss these levers and instruments, as well as consumer segmentation and targeting variables.

2.4.1 The Retailing Mix

When a customer walks into a retail store, they are immediately confronted by the ecological make-up of the store (retailing mix). The retailing mix is an expanded operational approach to the traditional marketing mix (4Ps of marketing).

It comprises a combination of variable elements (merchandise carried, price, location, promotion, personnel, customer service, store layout and design) of a retailer (Kumar and Mishra, 2012:29). The combination of these variables is known as the retail mix and supports the operational strategy which the retailer uses to achieve its goal of satisfying the needs of the target customers in a given location (Lusch et al., 2011:61; Fernie, Fernie and Moore, 2015:84; Beneke et al., 2012:31). According to Hosseini, Jayashree and Malarvizhi (2014:232) the impression and store preference of shoppers are affected by a retailer's retail mix. There is no fixed or rigid approach to selecting the required combination of elements that would make up a retailer's retail mix. Dabija et al., (2014:39) mention that retailers usually employ between three to ten retailing mixes. Additionally, the retail mix identifies the retailer's controllable variables (product, price, presentation, promotion, personnel/service and location) and characterizes the store format (Miotto and Parente, 2015:6). The core purpose of the retailing mix is to formulate the right strategy, co-ordinate retail operations to address customer needs, as well as respond to competitive actions (Koenig, 2016). These elements of the retail mix will be discussed in the section that follows.

2.4.1.1 Retail store Merchandise

Dictionary Oxford (2012) defines merchandise as goods bought with the intention to resell to the consumer. Retailers' merchandise includes all the product assortments and brands carried by the retailer. Merchandising or merchandise management is a crucial part of a retailer's daily operations and entails a process of analysing and defining their customer needs and wants, as well as plan the selling season. It also comprises of predicting purchase patterns and environmental trends in order to avoid overstocking or under-stocking from their suppliers. For example, the products carried should reflect an optimal mix by combining variety (the number of product lines carried by a retailer), breadth (also known as assortment and refers to the different brands within each line carried by the retailer) and depth (the number of stock-keeping units within each brand of merchandise line) (Quix and van der Kind, 2014:400).

According to Lusch et al. (2011:308), merchandise management also entails ensuring that merchandise is available when and where it is needed at the right time and in the right condition. Furthermore, merchandise management regulates the entire retailing process by ensuring that adequate financial returns are obtained from the retailer's investment in merchandise. For example, retailers ensure they receive profitable returns by matching the retailer's product assortment with target market shopping expectations (Kotler and Keller, 2012:476).

2.4.1.2 Retail Store Pricing

Price is an important consideration for most retail customers and refers to the amount paid by consumers in exchange for products or services received from a seller. Kotler and Keller (2012:405) mention that price is the only element of the marketing mix that represents revenue for the firm since other elements incur costs for the firm. However, Lusch et al. (2011:355) state that price is also the simplest element of the retail mix for a competitor to imitate and that pricing should be handled carefully with due consideration that the elastic elements of the retailers price is determined by the cost of the merchandise being sold and the gross margin that the retailer decides to add to the cost. The pricing of merchandise by retailers requires careful planning. For example, the retailer can opt to price his product at market price (that is at similar prices to competitors), below market price or even above market price (Quix and van der Kind, 2014:432).

2.4.1.3 Retail Store Location

The Internet has broadened the definition of retail location. Subsequently, location can be considered to be a physical space in a geographic area or an online platform such as the world-wide-web where the retailer conducts business (Lusch et al. 2011:223). Academics such as Bhukya and Singh (2016) consider location to be one of the primary determining success factors in retail stores. Indeed, the more store traffic a store has the higher the sales in the store.

2.4.1.4 Retail store Promotion

Promotion or marketing communication is an aspect of the retail mix that makes use of communication media and mediums to inform, persuade and remind consumers directly or indirectly about the products and brands carried by a retailer (Kotler and Keller, 2012:498).

2.4.1.5 Retail People

Retail-people is a term used to describe the employees and customers of retailers. In applying the concept of the Exchange Theory, Lusch et al. (2011:522) believe that the similarities between a retailer's employees and customers outweigh their differences. Especially since they both engage in some tasks that involve an economic exchange process that creates value. Reference is made to the similarities in how retailers recruit, motivate and compensate both customers and employees. Furthermore, Lusch et al. (2011) stated that merely hiring the right employees and attracting the best customers does not guarantee success in the current volatile retail environment. However, training, development and management of both employees, as well as retaining profitable customers does guarantee success. In essence, retailers should consider that it is easier for competitors to replicate their tangible assets such

as merchandise, location, building, technology and financial muscle than it is to replicate intangible assets such as employees and customers. Thus, acquiring and retaining the right employees and customers should be treated as an investment, not an asset.

2.4.1.6 Customer Service

According to Jooste, Strydom, Berndt and du Plessis (2009:331), customer service is a function of communication. In the retail context, this comprises pre-transaction communication, transaction communication and post-transaction communication.

2.4.1.7 Retail Store Layout and Design

Store layout and design includes the interior and exterior plan of the store and involves designing the overall intended feeling or mood perception of the store, also referred to as the store ambience. The variables include lighting design; sounds and smells; how the retailer situates merchandise departments and locates aisles in order to enable easy circulation of customers around the store while accessing the products on the shelves; the arrangement of visual communication and all visible informational aids used by the retailer both inside and outside the store to inform and identify itself and its operations to customers; checkout; and parking arrangements (Dabija et al. 2014:40).

Having discussed the various retail marketing mixes, it is vital to understand how retailers' segment and target their customers as targeting the wrong consumers with the right retail mix could result in dissatisfied and unhappy customers. Segmentation and targeting of the retail consumer are described next.

2.4.2 Segmenting and Targeting of the retail consumer

A consumer market consists of various groups of potential buyers that differ in their wants, income, locations, buying attitudes and preferences (Parumasur and Lombard, 2013:20). Prior to selecting the specific retail mix for a given consumer market, it is crucial for the retailer to decide the specific segment or group of customers they intend to serve. Segmentation enables an organization to identify and break down large, heterogeneous markets into smaller homogeneous fragments consisting of consumers with similar needs that could be serviced more efficiently and effectively with the right marketing mix that matches their unique needs (Mpinganjira and Dos Santos, 2013:275). This decision entails classifying the consumer market into groups in terms of their distinctive attributes and characteristics and then selecting the most appropriate group(s) to serve.

Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015:52) defined Segmentation as a process of dividing a total market into clusters consisting of consumers with common needs and distinct characteristics. The authors stress that segmentation enables an organization to determine who the potential consumers of their products and services are. Similarly, Kotler and Keller (2012:236) also define segmentation as a method of partitioning a heterogeneous market into a fairly homogeneous subset of customers with similar needs, capable of responding to an organization's market offering and strategy. Furthermore, Lusch et al. (2011:77) view segmentation as a method of breaking down a heterogeneous consumer population into smaller, more homogeneous groups based on certain characteristics.

Kotler and Keller (2012:32) mention that prior to targeting a particular market, retailers first identify and isolating the products and services mix preferred by consumers. For example, retailers could target the market with specific products and services according to the geographic regions; demographic details; psychographic variables; and behavioural factor. Consequently, whereas segmentation may be considered as a broad based demarcation of the market, targeting could be seen as a narrowed down selection process of segments to be served by the retailer ((Floh, Zauner, Koller and Rusch, 2014:5).

2.4.3 Advantages of Segmentation to retailers

The prime benefit of market segmentation is to assist retailers in understanding who their customers are, how they think, their desires, perceptions and shopping behaviours, in order to focus their operations on tailoring the right retail mix to match specific customer needs (Lusch et al. 2011:77). Forsyth (2009:43) lists seven benefits of segmentation;

- Segmentation assists organisations to compare opportunities and identify gaps existing in various segments;
- Segmentation assists organisations to allocate the marketing budget effectively and to concentrate marketing expenditure on segments that will provide the highest return on investment;
- Segmentation enables effective targeting by allowing the adjustments and modification of the marketing mix in order to make it more appealing to the chosen segment;
- Segmentation reveals the characteristics of individual markets;
- Segmentation enables the understanding of the influence of specific buying groups in the identified segments;
- Segmentation allows for promotional activities to be directed towards the specific market segments for optimal effectiveness; and

- Segmentation enables marketing expenditure to be focused on segments that will provide the highest return on investment.

Lorette (2016) mentions that there are several methods to segment a market; However, retailers may attempt different segmentation methods in isolation or in combination in order to determine the most suitable approach for their operations. Furthermore, market segmentation may be implemented by using various factors and criteria to group consumers that a firm intends to serve. For example, a firm may utilise geographic variables (region, climate, international/domestic or urban/suburban/rural locations), demographic variables (age, gender, ethnicity, education, social class, occupation, family status and income), Psychographic variables (values, attitudes, beliefs and lifestyle) or behavioural patterns (price sensitivity, brand loyalty and benefits sought) to segment consumers into markets they propose to serve or target (Kotler and Armstrong, 2015:75).

In addition to the above segment demarcation variables, the existence of the following characteristics and conditions should be considered before deciding on a segment eligibility and viability: The segment should be homogeneous; the segment should be large enough to be exploited; the segment should have attributes that could be quantified and qualified; and the segment should be accessible within a given cost or time frame (Kotler and Keller, 2012:253). In other words, before a cluster of customers may be considered as a segment, the cluster should be measurable, accessible, substantial, differentiable and actionable with the retailer marketing mix and resources.

Market segmentation could be an expensive operation and may limit the market coverage potential of an organisation due to the potential cost of developing a separate marketing mix for each identified segment. In other words, it may be unaffordable or unrealistic for a retailer to cater to the needs of all the identified customer segments, hence the concept of targeting. Thus, after evaluating and demarcating the different potential customer segments, a retailer may decide on which segment(s) to target or focus on (Parumasur and Lombard, 2013:21).

2.5 CONCLUSION

Retailing and retailers remain a vital livewire and growth source in many countries, including South Africa. The types of retail formations and their strategies vary from retailer to retailer and even from country to

country. The retail mix is considered a crucial part of the retailer's strategic and operational plan because it involves the optimal combination and co-ordination of elements that will ensure customer satisfaction as well as profit maximization for the retailer. Segmentation enables retailers to target the right customers effectively, with the right configuration of retail mix. In fact, the retail mix of a retailer reveals the type of store format or category, the target customers and competitors. Though the overarching objective of retailers is to increase profit through inventory turnover, the means to that end lies within the behaviour and response of consumers to the retailers' offering and the strategies they employ in order to keep their customers loyal. In other words, whereas the retail mix may point to the retailers the target market, the consumer perception and attitude towards the retail mix reveals the retailer's competitive advantage. The next chapter will discuss the behaviour of consumers as well as store loyalty.

CHAPTER 3 - RETAIL CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 presents an overview of the characteristics of retail consumers and discusses the dimensions and models of loyalty as well as its implications.

Most retailers understand that their continued survival is not merely dependent on the suitability of their retail marketing mix or the application of sophisticated customer segmentation and targeting techniques. In the era of fast paced technological advancement; increased consumer demand; evolution of retail formats; and competition, success in retailing is dependent on the understanding of customers (Paul, Sankaranarayanan and Mekoth, 2016:635). The study concurs that an understanding of the process and criteria used by the consumer in selecting and patronising a store will assist in determining the relative importance and influence of personal selling on store loyalty.

Consumer behaviour encompasses both the mental and physical activities and roles performed by consumers before, during and after purchasing a product or service from a firm. The physical activities include the customer's visit to the store, discussing the product with a salesperson, as well as selecting and paying for the product; whilst the mental activities involve a consumer recognizing that a need exists that requires satisfaction, as well as the assessment of the need satisfying options, their knowledge of the brand, experience with the product and any other opinions or views they may have regarding the product (Parumarsur and Lombard, 2013:5). These activities and roles are mediated upon by salespersons and have implication for the retailer in terms of the consumer repurchase intention, positive word-of-mouth to friends and relatives as well as competitive resistance (store loyalty).

Consumer behaviour may be viewed as the study of the manner in which people, groups and firms choose, purchase, consume and dispose of need-satisfying products, services, ideas or experiences (Kotler and Keller, 2012:173). Researchers such as Klaus and Maklan (2013:1) are of the view that the quality of customer experience with a firm is a much better predictor of customer loyalty than customer satisfaction. They describe customer experience as a cognitive and affective assessment of all direct and indirect interactions with an organisation. This includes every encounter with the organisation's employees and salespersons that have relational values (Gronholdt, Martensen, Jorgensen and Jensen, 2015:13).

This section begins by describing types of customers, thereafter, a discussion of the factors that influence consumer behaviour, the consumer decision-making process and understanding customer loyalty and its benefits to retailers and finally a conclusion are provided.

3.2 UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT CUSTOMER TYPES

Understanding customers are crucial for retailers because within every customer lies a distinct and encoded system/process of thought and behaviour that needs to be decoded by the marketer. Although it may be difficult to determine the inner working of a consumer mind, retailers could potentially predict what stimulates consumer needs and the actions they take to satisfy those needs by studying customer perception, motivation, learning, beliefs and attitude (Lamb et al., 2018: 63). In other words, all the factors that contribute to a consumer's decision to purchase a need satisfying product or service from a particular store will remain unknown, as it could swing from the most superficial to the most rational of factors.

Furthermore, in an attempt to understand the consumer purchase/mind-set interplay, scholars mention that the pre-purchase mind-set of a consumer could either be relational or transactional. This in essence plays a role in determining the outcome of the consumer's assessment of his or her experience with a store. For example, a consumer with a relational mind-set is more pro-social compared to a consumer with a transactional mind-set, which may be less pro-social (Buttner, Florack and Goritz, 2013; Homburg, Muller and Klarmann, 2011).

Although authors diverge on the determinant situational particulars, they do converge on a central viewpoint that a consumer's mind-set could be unstable from one situation to another. As discussed in chapter one, it is prognostic that moderating factors (consumer characteristics) such as consumer's shopping orientation and perception of the store retailing mix mediates consumer behaviour and subsequent satisfaction. Despite internal and external consumer pressures, the decision to purchase or not to purchase in any given buying situation remains personal to the individual consumer and just as purchase situations are dissimilar, customers are also not the same (Kotler and Keller 2012:191).

Accordingly, Lusch et al. (2011:456) identified six distinct characteristics identifiable in customers as discussed namely:

- **The defensive customers-** they are usually non-co-operative and untrusting and is usually reserved and sceptical of the sales message.

- **The interrupter customers-** they are usually unfriendly and impatient, though they are knowledgeable and aware of what they want and prefer on-point and on-time sales attendance.
- **The decisive customers-** they are similar to the interrupter-customer except that they are open to new ideas.
- **The indecisive customers-** they are less knowledgeable and cautious about purchase mistakes. They are highly dependent on the salesperson's product knowledge and assistance to make the right purchase decision.
- **The sociable customers-** they tend to be every salesperson's favourite because they are friendly, talkative and receptive to sales messages. The only disadvantage of this customer is that they resist making a commitment to purchase and thus require more tact on the part of the salesperson to obtain purchase commitment from them.
- **The impulsive customers-** they are impatient, anxious and time constrained. A salesperson attending to them should avoid lengthy sales talk by moving rapidly to highlight the benefits of the product and closing the sale as soon as possible.

3.3 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE RETAIL CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Although the basic reason why consumers purchase products or services is to satisfy a need or a want, scholars mention that there is a complex mixture of factors which influence why and how consumers behave when faced with any given purchase decision. Kotler and Keller (2012:173) mentioned three encompassing components that influence consumer behaviour, namely cultural components, personal components and social components.

- The cultural component comprises of the influence of factors such as family, values, beliefs, tradition, language and societal norms on consumption behaviour.
- The personal components refer to factors that impact the consumption and purchase behaviour of consumers such as the shoppers' individual demographic details (age, sex, ethnicity, education).
- The social components affect consumer behavioural factors such as reference groups, membership groups, aspirational groups, opinion leaders and social class.

On the one hand, consumers may be referred to as the people who purchase products and services, whilst retailers are the firms that provide them with the product and services. However, whilst consumers have needs and desires, the main challenge for retailers is to uncover the underlying reason why consumers

behave in a particular way by either purchasing or not purchasing their products or services (Kumar and Badu, 2014:65). Some authors assert that the complexity of consumer behaviour is rooted in psychological and social factors such as motivation, perception, learning ability, attitude, personality and lifestyle (Parumarsur and Lombard, 2013:5). It is important for retailers to apply knowledge of these factors in both theory and practice in order to design the appropriate retail mix. Several models have been developed to help explain and understand consumer behaviour, such as the Black Box model and the Consumer decision-making process.

Table 3.1: Consumer Black Box Model

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS		THE CONSUMER BLACK BOX		CONSUMER RESPONSE
MARKETING STIMULI	ENVIRONMENTAL STIMULI	CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS	CONSUMER DECISION PROCESS	
PRODUCT	ECONOMIC	ATTITUDE	PROBLEM RECOGNITION	PRODUCT CHOICE
PRICE	TECHNOLOGICAL	MOTIVATION	INFORMATION SEARCH	BRAND CHOICE
PLACE	POLITICAL	PERCEPTION	ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION	DEALER CHOICE
PROMOTION	CULTURAL	PERSONALITY	PURCHASE DECISION	PURCHASE TIMING
	DEMOGRAPHIC	LIFESTYLE	POST-PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR	PURCHASE AMOUNT
	NATURAL	KNOWLEDGE		

Source: Kumar and Badu (2014:66)

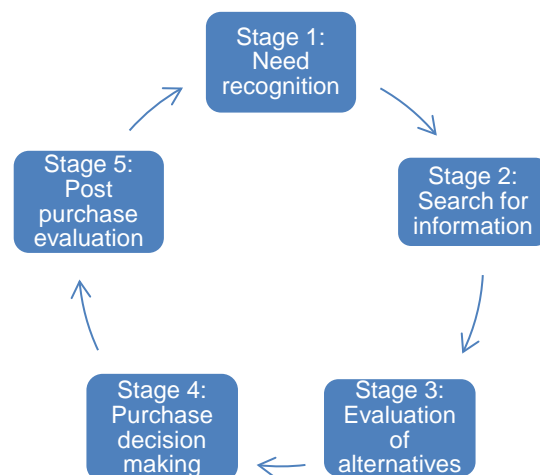
The Black Box model describes consumer behaviour as the interplay between variables, namely stimuli; consumer characteristics; decision processes; and consumer responses. Accordingly, stimuli may be subdivided into two: marketing stimuli and environmental stimuli. The Marketing stimuli consist of the retailer's planned interventions, such as merchandise, price, location and promotional activities, whilst the environmental stimuli consist of economic, technological, cultural, political, demographic and natural factors. The Black Box comprises the distinct characteristics of the consumer and the decision process which accentuates the consumers' response (Kumar and Badu, 2014:66).

The following section discusses the consumer decision-making process and model.

3.4 CONSUMER SHOPPING AND PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS

According to Cicala, Smith and Bush (2012:79) whilst the ultimate goal of a salesperson is to close the sale, it is the customers that make the final decision whether a sale will occur or not. Generally, the three-fold function of retail consumers is to choose a need satisfying product, pay for the product and consume the product (Parumasur and Lombard, 2013:4). The key goals of retailers may entail attracting as many as possible of their target customers into their store, translate these customers into loyal customers and perform the last two tasks as effectively and efficiently as possible (Lusch et al. 2011:52). Clearly, the customer retail function mentioned earlier is tied to the retailer's task and profit goals. Therefore, retailers do not only have to know what customers need or want but should also understand how these customers make purchase decisions. Figure 3.1 below depicts the five stages of the consumer decision-making model.

Figure 3.1: FIVE STAGE CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING MODEL



Source: Mpinganjira and Dos Santos, (2013:343)

The five stages of the consumer purchase decision process highlighted in Mpinganjira and Dos Santos (2013:341) is discussed next.

The **need recognition stage** is the first stage of the consumer decision-making process, whereby the consumer's present state differs from their desired or ideal state. The existence of a problem or need is usually triggered by external or internal stimuli. For example, a customer may feel hungry after perceiving the odour emanating from a Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) store or a consumer may realise that his or her cell-phone screen is cracked and needs replacement.

The entire consumer purchase process is activated when a problem or need that requires to be satisfied is recognised (Ashman, Solomon and Wolny, 2015: 128).

Once the problem or need has been recognized, the consumer proceeds to the **information search stage**. During this stage, the consumer engages in the mental and physical exercise of gathering information to solve the identified problem. A consumer in this stage would generally consult two sets of sources for information, namely internal sources (frame of references such as memory or previous experiences) and external sources (friends, relatives, other consumers or salespersons). Consumers in this stage attach more value to their external sources than other sources of information if the perceived risk of purchase is high (Lamb et al., 2018: 50). Anecdotal evidence suggests that stores with a loyal stream of customers could benefit from positive word-of-mouth from loyal customers in this stage of consumer purchase decisions.

Similarly, a store can benefit from having a loyal stream of customers during the stage of evaluation of alternatives. This stage entails processing and comparing competitive offering and making value judgments. The identification and assessment of all the alternative ways of satisfying the recognised need occur during this stage. The higher the involvement of the consumer and importance of the purchase, the more alternatives the consumer will consider and vice-versa. However, loyal customers at this stage will likely resist competitive offerings and purchase from the store they trust and are committed to.

The **purchase stage** is the stage in which the consumer selects the most suitable alternative from the list of alternatives identified in the previous stage and it is at this stage that consumers exercise their vote with their wallet and more often the vote goes to the store they trust and are committed to. Finally, the **post-purchase evaluation** is a post-consumption stage and is a form of assessment stage whereby consumers examine the purchase process to determine whether the purchased product or service has fulfilled the need and expectation of the consumer. The outcome of this stage is marked by either the consumer being satisfied or dissatisfied. Consumers may experience post-purchase satisfaction or post-purchase dissatisfaction at this stage depending on whether their expectation was met or not (Kotler and Keller, 2012:194).

Lusch et al. (2011:101) provide a different approach to the consumer shopping and purchase process that is dependent on the level of extent of problem-solving. They mention that the pace in which a consumer could move from the stimulus stage where they become aware of a need to the final stage of purchasing a need satisfying product is dependent on whether the consumer is engaged in a habitual problem-solving

exercise, a limited problem-solving exercise or an extended problem-solving exercise. According to Lamb et al. (2018:52) in habitual problem-solving, product purchases involve frequently purchased goods and are usually low cost. Thus, the consumer relies on his or her own past experience in the purchase decision and compares fewer alternatives. Whilst in consumers in limited problem-solving, the consumer already has no prior experience with either the store or brand and therefore engages in a lengthier process of gathering information and comparing of alternatives. Lastly, the authors mention that extended problem-solving occurs when buying an unfamiliar expensive product in which a consumer has no previous experience with either the store or brand in their memory and is preferentially indifferent. Such consumers tend to gather as much information as possible and evaluate alternatives extensively before deciding to purchase.

There are four different categories of consumer goods for which consumer behaviour and purchase patterns may differ, namely **convenience goods** such as tooth paste, salt and newspaper which the customer usually purchases frequently and with minimum effort entail a shortened buying process; the next category is **shopping goods** such as furniture, electronics and household appliances. Shopping goods is not a habitual process like in the case of convenience goods and thus requires a more lengthy buying process entailing in-depth comparison of brands and suppliers; the third category is **specialty goods**, which include the purchase of expensive automobiles and property which usually requires an extensive buying process that entails a significant amount of time being spent on information gathering and decision-making; the last category is **unsought goods** such as life insurance and long-term investments such as purchasing government bonds (Kotler and Keller (2012:349).

Other aspects affecting the intensity of the consumer purchase decision process, besides the complexity of the buying decision, is the level of involvement of the consumer during the decision-making process (Mpinganjira and Dos Santos, 2013:17). For example, the selection process will vary if a consumer is engaged in a high-involvement approach compared to a low-involvement approach. High-involvement products are products which are complex, expensive or that have only recently been introduced to the market and thus require more time for consumer evaluation and purchase; whilst low-involvement products are usually lower cost and routinely purchased products such as toothpaste or cereals, whereby the search and evaluation and decision process is short (van Heerden and Drotsky, 2011:69). Furthermore, the level of involvement and perceived risks of a buying situation could also impact on the extent and sequence of the consumer decision-making process (Kotler and Keller, 2012:193).

Given that loyalty is implicated in the consumer purchase decision, the study will now discuss store loyalty and its advantages to retailers.

3.5. UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF LOYALTY

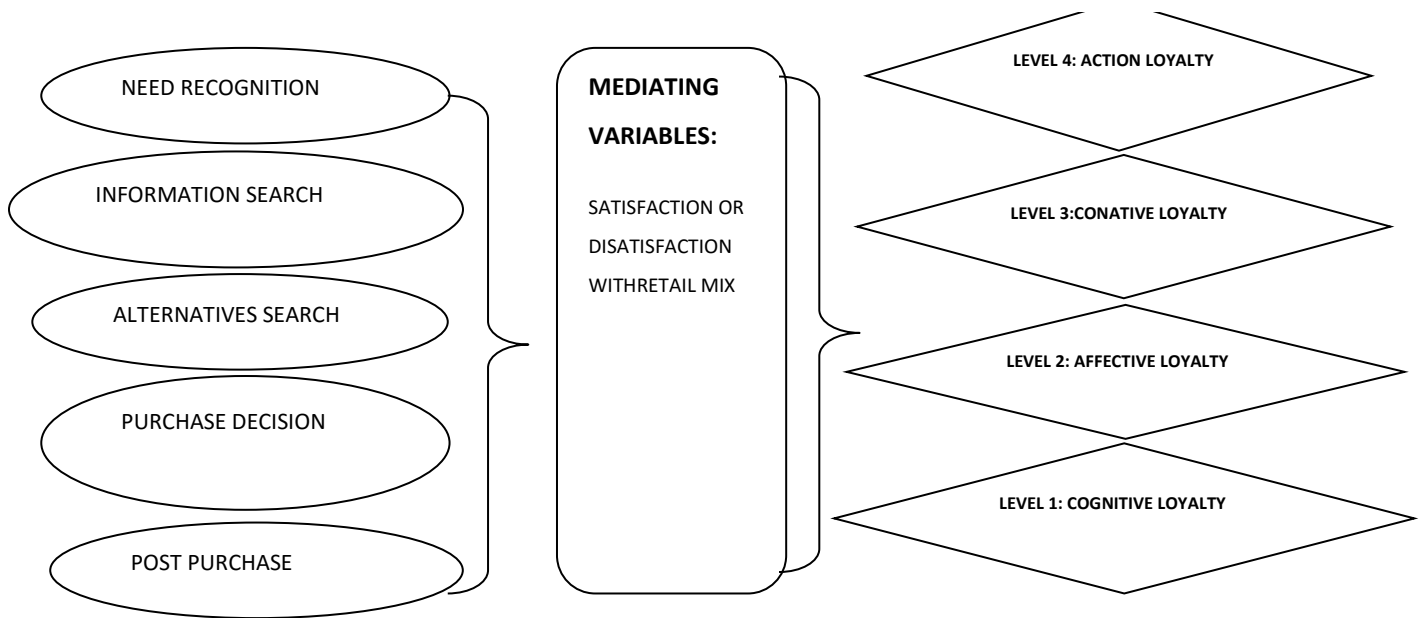
Generally, the concept of loyalty relates to a customer's feeling of affinity towards an organization, product, service, brand or person. This phenomenon is essentially reflected in a customer's attitude and behaviour towards the organization before, during and after the sale (Homburg et al., 2011:799). Loyalty has been explained and interpreted in diverse ways by several authors and defined in various ways by the literature consulted for this study. It is impossible to define loyalty to the extent of fully incorporating all the diverse ways in which the term is used and applied. The basic dictionary definition of loyalty defines loyalty as a resilient unequivocal support for a person or organisation (Oxford, 2012). Other definitions and applications of the concept of loyalty remained faithful to the basic Oxford Dictionary definition (Cant and du Toit, 2012; Oliver, 1999; Azim, Hussain and Ali, 2013).

The concept of loyalty plays a crucial role in marketing and has been applied to several observable marketing elements, such as loyalty to a brand; loyalty to store; and loyalty to store salesperson. For example, Guenzi and Pelloni (2004) examined the effect of interpersonal factors on store loyalty and their finding implicated a customer-salesperson relationship with loyalty. Subsequently, Cant and du Toit (2012) investigated the factors that inspire customer loyalty in fashion retail stores and their findings indicate that both merchandise availability and interpersonal factors stimulate store loyalty. The authors also conceptualize store loyalty as any observable favourable consumer behaviour, mind-set or attitude towards a firm. For example, consumers who re-purchase a retailer's products or services at the expense of patronising other stores with similar products and services or who recommend the store to others. On the other hand, other authors mention that affective and cognitive appraisal of customer experience with salespersons drives loyalty in retail stores (Wang, Singh, Li, Mishra, Ambrose and Biernat, 2017:109).

An alternative view was proposed by Oliver (1999) proposed a four-phase Loyalty Evolution model, which postulates that consumer loyalty evolves through four different levels. The first level of consumer loyalty is the **cognitive phase**, whereby the customer is seen as loyal if he or she continues to purchase and use the retailer's merchandise. This loyalty is mainly influenced by the extent of information available to the consumer during the decision-making process. The second level of loyalty is the **affective phase** whereby the loyalty is dependent on the consumer's positive evaluation or contentment with the outcome of purchase encounters inspired by the previous level of loyalty. The third level is referred to the **conative**

loyalty. This phase of loyalty is usually expressed in consumer commitment and tendency to repurchase from the same store, emanating from the judgment of value and contentment obtained in the cognitive loyalty phase and in the affective loyalty stage respectively. Finally, the **action loyalty phase** connotes a deeper level of loyalty expressed in the consumer becoming devoted to patronising the same store, to the point of defending and advocating for the store.

Figure 3.2: A Model of Consumer Loyalty phases



Source: Yeng and Mat (2013:2).

The model adopts the consumer behaviour theory mediated by the retail mix to explain loyalty. As discussed earlier, consumer need recognition leads to a search for information and alternatives available for the satisfaction of the need. The decision to purchase or not to purchase from the store is usually the outcome of the previous stage of the consumer decision-making stage. According to Yeng and Mat (2013:2), the first level of loyalty (Cognitive loyalty) is typified in a consumer's decision to purchase from a store as mediated upon by the cost-benefit assessment and comparison of the problem-solution(s) information available to the consumer. For example, the consumer's recall of store attributes such as the retail mix and the opinions of consulted sources may contribute their purchase decision. The second level (Affective loyalty) is reflected in a positive attitude towards the store. This type of loyalty is usually determined by the outcome of the consumer's appraisal of the overall performance of the purchased product and shopping experience (assistance received from the salesperson, check out time, customer service and return policy).

The aforementioned authors assert that if the result of the customer's appraisal of the purchase process is that of satisfaction and if the customer also perceives value in the cognitive stage, the next level of their loyalty usually progresses to the conative loyalty phase. During the conative phase, customers usually demonstrate a commitment to patronize the store as well as encourage friends and relatives to purchase from the store. The final loyalty level is the action loyalty phase. Consumers within this level of loyalty are not mere store advocates but also ignore competitors and even become devoted to patronising the store. Loyalty, therefore, may be considered as a partisan commitment to repurchase from a store and maintain a long-term relationship with the store for diverse reasons (Azim, Hussain and Ali, 2013:185). Despite diverging on the attributes of loyalty, scholars generally maintain that within the loyalty concept includes an attitudinal and behavioural component (Cant and Du Toit 2012; Clottey, Collier and Stodnick, 2008; Akbar, 2013).

A derivative from the discussion above is that an understanding of loyalty precedes its benefits. This study adopts the definition of Cant and Du Toit (2012) and defines loyalty as a mind-set and action of a consumer to consistently and persistently re-purchase from a store despite competitive pressure and spreading positive word-of-mouth. The next section briefly discusses the antecedents of customer loyalty, which serves as a precursor to explaining the phenomenon.

3.5.1 The attitudinal and behavioural outcomes of loyalty

The outcomes of loyalty are tied to attitudinal and behavioural dimensions, such as repeat purchase, positive word of mouth and competitive resistance (Cant and Du Toit 2012; Clottey, Collier and Stodnick, 2008; Akbar, 2013; Kotler and Keller, 2012). Some of the dimensions proposed by the authors include the following.

- **Repeat purchase**

Repeat purchase may be regarded as an overt demonstration of satisfaction with the store and may be classified as a behavioural component of loyalty and is expressed in the repetitive patronage of the same organization (Clottey, Collier and Stodnick, 2008:37). The benefits of repeat purchase are increased Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), which is the projected net profit of long-term customer support and purchase from a store; and the increased share of customer spending (Kotler and Keller, 2012:156).

- **Positive word-of-mouth**

Positive Word-of-Mouth may be considered both an attitudinal and behavioural component of loyalty reflected in customers' emotional attachment to the store and habitual advocacy, promotion and even defence of the store. These customers refer friends and relatives to the store and are considered by some scholars as an effective cost-free advertising and a source of revenue (Cant and du Toit, 2012:1224). Providing the organisation with improvement suggestion may also be considered a form of positive word-of-mouth. According to Kumar, Dalla Pozza and Ganesh (2013:251), customers who spread positive feedback about their experience with a store and perform referrals is a powerful tool for selling stores.

- **Competitive resistance**

Competitive resistance may be considered as a consumer's state of mind where he or she persistently purchases from a particular store despite the availability of competitors that offering similar products and services. Competitive resistance is an attitudinal component of loyalty. Loyal customers are also known to be less sensitive to price variation and temporary service failures. They are also a source of competitive intelligence and feedback for retailers since they promptly inform the store of their needs and expectations (Li and Green, 2011:2).

3.5.2 Advantages of loyalty to retailers

Despite retailing being one of the fastest growing sectors of the South African economy, retailers operate in a volatile competitive environment due to low entry barriers as well as the low margin/turnover nature of retail operations. In general, loyal customers are customers who persistently re-purchase from a particular retailer and thus contribute to the retailers bottom-line. The benefits of loyalty to a retailer are numerous and could be easily discerned from the four point loyalty/customer retention dynamics mentioned by Kotler and Keller (2012:162) namely;

- Customer acquisition cost is reduced through customer retention, given that it could cost a firm five times more to acquire new customers than to retain existing ones.
- Given that 10% of a firm's customer base is lost to varying factors every year, loyalty could serve as a buffer since the cost/consequence of short-term service errors and failures is usually minimal or non-existent amongst loyal customers.
- Loyal customers are more likely to purchase more items from the firm and are less price sensitive and as they increase the share of wallet towards the retailer, the customer-retailer relationship ties further strengthen, which reduces defection.

- Loyal customers are more profitable due to increased word-of-mouth referrals; reduced marketing and servicing costs; and the ability to charge price premiums.

The primary benefits of loyalty include an improved short-term and long-term sales volume and profitability (Das, 2014; Beneke, Lykiardopulos, Villiers and Rawoot, 2011).

3.6 CONCLUSION

Consumer behaviour is dynamic and retailers study consumers purchase behaviour in order to adequately satisfy their needs. However, customer satisfaction has been proven not to guarantee re-patronage or loyalty to the store. Customer loyalty intention was attributed to several consumer behaviour and store factors. Whereas consumer behaviour refers to the purchase and consumption actions in response to consumer needs, loyalty to a store relates to a deep-seated attitude residing within the customer's cognitive and emotional value chain. This is expressed in behaviours of commitment towards re-purchasing from the store, recommending the store to other, as well as resisting competitors. The next chapter deals with the important contribution that personal selling and salespersons make towards building loyalty for retailers.

CHAPTER 4 - THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF PERSONAL SELLING AND STORE LOYALTY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In any given retail encounter, customers interact with the retailer's salesperson and this experience contributes to the subsequent attitude and perception the customer will hold concerning a retailer. Positive experience with salespersons has been found to influence customer loyalty (Chinomona and Sandada 2013:579; Babin, Griffin, Borges and Boles, 2013:471). Several research studies and findings have also implicated the skills and qualities of salespersons in the creation of customer experiential value and loyalty during interpersonal encounters (Echchakoui, 2015:64; Wang and Ha, 2011:339). Though echoed in several of the literature consulted for the study, the study advances the view that the dynamic nature of personal selling as well as the potential flexibility of a salesperson in retail stores remains a vital underutilized source of competitive advantage to a specialty store retailer (Goudge, Good, Hyman and Aguirre, 2017:1268). This chapter attempts to synchronise intrinsic theories, frameworks and perspectives on personal selling and salespersons with a view to specifically exploring buyer-seller relationships and to understand whether personal selling activities and the behaviour of salespeople have an effect on consumer re-purchase intention, competitive resistance and word-of-mouth.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of marketing and sales evolution, followed by a discussion of sales-force taxonomies, activities and their benefits in retailing. This will be followed by a scrutiny of personal selling as a role and function of salespersons. The unique characteristics of personal selling that make it stand out amongst other marketing promotion elements will also be examined as well as the benefits of personal selling as a relational and selling tool.

4.2 EVOLUTION OF MARKETING AND PERSONAL SELLING IDEOLOGIES

Personal selling and sales derive their function from the communication aspect of marketing and just like its progenitor (Marketing) has progressed through the several stages.

Accordingly, Keller and Kotler (2012:40) mention the three evolutionary stages of marketing to be: The Production Era; the Sales Era; and the Marketing Era. The Production Era existed between the periods of the industrial revolution until the 1920s.

During which the mind-set of typical production-oriented organizations was to produce as many products as possible to satisfy the unlimited wants of the masses; the Sales Era came after the Production Era around the 1930s.

During this period, the excess stockpile of manufacturers' products from the previous era led to product over saturation and the oversupply of unsought products. Therefore, organizations began to pressurize salespersons to sell off their stockpiles at any cost, even if it meant convincing customers to purchase products they had no need for; Then the Marketing Era surfaced in the mid-1950s and is the foundation for contemporary marketing orientation. During this era, the emphasis of organisations was on the philosophy of customer sensitivity, segmentation and organisational ethics (Ali and Talwar 2013:18).

Similarly, personal selling and sales were not left out as they equally evolved alongside marketing embracing the marketing concept from an evolutionary perspective. Van Heerden and Drotsky (2011:18) identify five distinct evolutionary stages of personal selling. The first is the provider stage, during which salespersons' activity was constrained to accepting orders for available products; the second stage is the persuader stage, whereby sales involved persuading customers to purchase the product; Next was the prospector stage, where sales entailed a systematic search for buyers with a need and the necessary resources and authority to purchase products; the fourth was the problem-solver stage, whereby consultative selling took place and sales focus was on assisting customers in identifying their needs and helping them find solutions to those needs; lastly is the procreator stage, where salespersons moves from problem-solver to collaborator. Sales people assist customers through networks and sales teams to find solutions and anticipate problems.

4.3 SALES-FORCE DYNAMICS

4.3.1 The selling task and careers in retail stores

Regardless of the type of selling, salespersons either sell their product offerings directly to consumers, businesses or Government. Furthermore, the application of personal selling skills is usually dependent on the type of product sold, the customer type and the organisation's sales strategy (Spiro et al. 2008:14). There are diverse career paths in sales and therefore, enough roles for different personality types in sales. While some sales roles require an aggressive approach; others may require a friendlier approach, whilst some entail a combination of the two approaches. The three main career paths are, selling in retail; selling for a wholesaler; and selling in business markets (van Heerden and Drotsky, 2011:11).

A retail salesperson sells goods and services directly to consumers for their personal non-commercial use (Quix and van der Kind, 2014:36). According to van Heerden and Drotsky, (2011:13), the three types of retail sales people are: the in-store salesperson-these are salespersons whose role is to interact and assist walk-in customers with their purchases or perform direct selling activities by focusing on face-to-face selling to customers, likewise using the telephone to sell from a remote office. The second type of sales job involves salespersons who sell to wholesalers. Wholesalers purchase directly from manufacturers and sell to other businesses that either use the products in their operations or resell the products. Lastly, include the salespersons who sell in business markets. These salespersons may also be called account representatives and usually sell to huge numbers of already established business clients. They sell products and services such as insurance, advertising space, computers and maintenance contracts. They often engage in direct order getting or routine re-purchases activities, rather than directly soliciting for orders.

According to Adesoga (2016:106), there are diverse personal selling roles and tasks for salespersons requiring varying levels of selling skills. These task of includes Order Getters, Order Takers and Sales Support. However, Asiegbu, Ozuru and Awah (2016:64) mention that the level of problem-solving involved in each task is determined by whether the organisation is selling directly to consumers or to businesses. For example, salespersons who sell directly to customers in retail stores are mainly focused on order taking and closing sales, whereas salespersons who sell to businesses focus on order getting and relationship building. According to van Heerden and Drotsky, (2011:13), sales support (also known as missionary salespersons) function as consultants to buyers and do not sell directly but facilitate sales by either introducing a new product to customers, providing them with information or resolving customer problems. These are highly knowledgeable salespersons that use their expertise to assist customers by answering questions regarding delivery, installation and purchase satisfaction. An example of this type of salespersons is customer service personnel.

4.3.2 Sales-force structuring

The arrangement or working structure of salespersons and their activity is critical to the successful implementation of any sales plan. Since sales tasks, activities and strategy do not necessarily compare across different firms. It is pertinent that every organisation adopts a structure that reflects its realities. From the organisational point of view, the primary priorities of every sales-force structuring scheme are three-fold, a) to ensure that sales territories are adequately covered; b) to ensure that performance is measurable; and c) to minimise costs (van Heerden and Drotsky, 2011:119).

Spiro et al. (2008:96) mentioned four sales territory coverage approaches commonly employed by organisations, namely: geographic-based sales force specialisation; Product-based sales force specialisation; and Market-based sales force specialisation; and lastly, the Combination method. The Geographic-specialization is a widely used and straightforward method, involving assigning a salesperson to a particular region or area to be responsible for all activities necessary to sell the firm's products to all potential customers in the allocated territory. In Product-specialization the firm divides its sales-force into teams with each team assigned to sell a particular line of the firm's products. Market-specialization entails arranging the firm's sales force based on customer or industry type served. Lastly, the combination method occurs in firms that adopt a one or more of the market coverage methods a strategy to reach its customers.

4.3.3 The impact of technology on selling

Generally, technology in a retail sense may be referred to as systems and tools that are developed to interface with employees and customers in order to improve and facilitate complex and standard retail functions (Lusch et al. 2011:65). According to van Heerden and Drotsky (2011:316), the term sales-force automation (SFA) may be used to describe the technology and equipment used to improve communication and efficiency of salespeople in the 21st century. Such technology and devices include software for sales, laptops, personal computers, tablets, portable hand-held devices, cell phones, social media, email addresses and access to the Internet. Some authors are upfront in their comments concerning technology by mentioning that it is a creative and destructive tool that should be embraced as a price for advancement in modern times (Kotler and Keller, 2012:103). For example, Arndt and Harkins (2011:67) contend that business automation may be classified into two categories, namely automation that completely eradicates the relevance of employees during transactions and automation that facilitates employee activities and productivity.

Notably, technology that occurs without the intervention of salespersons has been either resisted or criticised in some quarters as a threat to salesperson's roles (Spiro et al. 2008:428). However, such arguments are narrow in that communication technology has peaked to a point whereby there are devices that could perform almost every sales function from prospecting to order taking, keeping in close contact and maintaining long-term relationships with the customer (Richardson and Benbunan-Fich, 2011:143). Regardless of the side of the argument, van Heerden and Drotsky (2011:314) believe that salespersons should cultivate a receptive attitude towards technology and view technology as a means to improve their productivity and not as a threat to their jobs.

4.4 UNDERSTANDING PERSONAL SELLING

The prime marketing function in a firm is to provide the right product at the right place at the right price and to ensure that customers are constantly informed, reminded and persuaded through marketing promotional efforts to purchase the firm's offering (Kotler and Keller, 2012:27). Although personal selling is often construed as being synonymous with marketing, in reality, it is a component of Marketing Promotions. Conversely Marketing Promotion is a part of the 4Ps that constitute the marketing mix (product, price, place and promotions). However, personal selling is unique because it is personal and entails a high degree of human contact (Asiegbu, Ozuru and Awah 2016:62).

Several authors believe that the personal selling attributes of salespersons can be viewed as a combination of hard skills (such as product knowledge or a university degree or diploma) and soft skills (such as individual qualities like trustworthiness, emotional intelligence, neatness or social competence) required to establish successful relationships with customers that continue long after the initial sale (Carlos and Coelho, 2011; Srivastava, de Run and Fam, 2008:130). Furthermore, van Heerden and Drotsky (2011:7) posits that the personal selling process can be viewed as both an art and a science. Although, the initial task of any personal selling effort is to initiate the selling process. The overriding goal in most personal selling efforts remains to obtain purchase commitment from the buyer and build the foundation for long-term relationships (Adesoga, 2016:112).

However, Hamman (1975:151) maintains that the initial visit of retail customers to the store is usually to gather information, seek advice and explanations or product demonstrations. Thereafter the customer may depart from the store and begin to process the information gathered before finally deciding whether to purchase from the store or not. Hence, the personal selling effort of retail salespersons should not merely be focused on selling products to customers at the first meeting, but the focus should rather be on winning the trust and confidence of customers by demonstrating expertise and integrity of intent on solving the customer's problem. More specifically, in their seminal article, Saxe and Weitz (1982) stated that the intensity of personal selling activities varies depending on whether the objective of the salesperson is to establish a long-term relationship commitment with customers or to make a once-off sale. Therefore, it suffices to highlight that the motive of salespersons in electronic appliances retail stores is usually to establish a long-term relationship rather than conclude a once-off sale. Essentially, salespersons may also be considered a source of competitive advantage for a retailer. Especially since personal selling activities entail a high degree of creativity and flexibility much like any other marketing tools (location, price and product) (Echchakoui, 2016:64).

4.4.1 Defining Personal Selling

There are diverse definitions of personal selling in literature. Although they somewhat diverge on particulars yet converge on a central view, their differences are as important as their similarities.

For example, van Heerden and Drotsky (2011:7) define personal selling as an interpersonal communication process between a salesperson and potential customer with the prime purpose of selling a need-satisfying product or service to the potential customer. Similarly, Kotler and Keller (2012:500) state that personal selling is any person-to-person interaction between a firm's salesperson and one or more potential purchasers of a firm's product. This comprises the presentation of the firm's products; answering questions concerning the products; and subsequently convincing the potential buyers to purchase the product. Other authors diverge slightly by defining personal selling as a process whereby salespersons are paid by a firm to apply a combination of skills such as their attitude, appearance and product knowledge to sell products directly to their customers (Asiegbu, Ozuru and Awah 2016:62). Inclining towards the definition of personal selling by Asiegbu et al. (2016), this study defines personal selling as an interpersonal sales interaction with potential customers whereby a firm's salesperson applies a combination of personal and learned skills to sell the firm's product and services as well as build long-term mutually beneficial relationship with customers.

4.4.2 The uniqueness of personal selling

Unlike other marketing promotion methods which make use of communication media to reach their target customers without the possibility of instant feedback or mutual exchange of value taking place. Personal selling is a direct person-to-person contact activity with the possibility for instant feedback and mutual exchange of value. Regardless of the selling situation, personal selling has some unique attributes that distinguish it from all other approaches such as flexibility, potential to build long-term relationships, effective communication and costly to execute (van Heerden and Drotsky, 2011:31).

Flexibility in personal selling is when a salesperson creatively applies a combination of their knowledge of the product, the customer and the firm in adapting the sales message to satisfy the customer needs (Evans, McFarland, Dietz and Jaramillo (2012:92). Personal selling sets the stage for Long-term relationships to be established due to the interpersonal nature of the personal selling encounter. There are many advantages to building successful long-term marketing relationships with customers.

For example, a meagre 5% reduction in customer defection could increase a firm's profit by up to 25% to 85% (Keller and Kotler, 2012:162). From a contemporary marketing perspective, long-term relationships with customers are not merely based on the convenient location of the retailer's store, specific brands

offered or low prices but rather on how effectively the firm establishes value-based, buyer-seller mutually beneficial customer-centric operations (Bernt and Tait 2012:27). Another characteristic of personal selling is that it allows for more Effective communication. Unlike other forms of promotion such as advertising which relies on one-way communication, personal selling enhances the understanding of the marketing message through direct communication with the customer (Adesoga 2016:104).

According to van Heerden and Drotsky (2011:9) personal selling may also be considered an Expensive method of selling, primarily because it involves face-to-face contact between the salesperson and the customer, making it more expensive than any other medium such as mass media communication which could reach a large group of consumers in one broadcast. Lastly, Ethical issues are of concern in personal selling especially in cases where salespeople manipulate potential customers or deliberately deceive them into buying products or services they do not need. Therefore, ensuring an ethical climate by defining what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable selling practice is necessary for firms (Evans, McFarland, Dietz and Jaramillo, 2012:96)

4.4.3 Advantages of personal selling to retailers

Traditionally, retailers utilized more quantitative variables to measure performance and success, such as sales volume, a share of customer wallet and return on asset per square meter of the store. However, in the present highly competitive market place, the attention of scholars and practitioners is shifting towards more qualitative dimensions of measuring performance and success, such as relationship building and store loyalty (Weng and de Run, 2013; Maruyama and Wu, 2014). Whilst providing customers with the right product at the right price and location may offer functional benefits and lead cognitive level of loyalty. The advantage of personal selling is that it offers the customer social benefits and emotional ties that could transcend into higher levels of loyalty such as affective, conative and action levels (Oliver, 1999:35). According to van Heerden and Drotsky (2011:14), four important benefits of personal selling are namely:

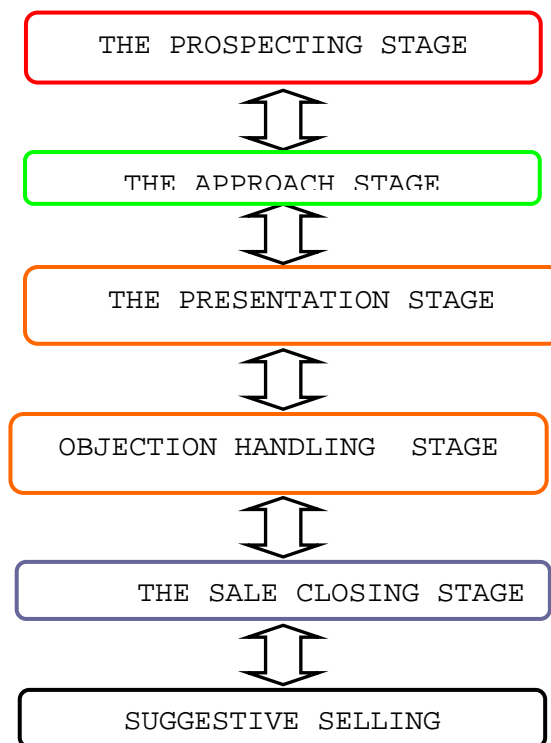
- Personal selling informs and educates customers regarding newly available products;
- Personal selling enables salespersons to help customers in understanding and comparing the added benefits of new products from the older versions;
- The face-to-face communication feature of personal selling helps in guiding customers in choosing the most suitable products that will satisfy their needs; and
- Personal selling provides a forum for customers to give and receive instant feedback from complaints regarding products.

Importantly, personal selling does not merely end at the sale of products and services but serves to develop and build long term mutually beneficial relationship between the firm and customers (Kotler and Armstrong, 2015:502).

4.4.4 Steps to executing personal selling

According to Spiro et al. (2008:66), the generic selling process involves eight steps namely: Prospecting; Pre-approach; Approach; Need assessment; Presentation; Objection; Close; and Follow-up or after sales support. However, Lusch et al., (2011:461) adapted the personal selling process for retail stores to include a five-step process: namely, Prospecting; Approach; Sales presentation; Objective handling; Closing the sale; and lastly, Suggestive selling. These personal selling stages may overlap each other in terms of sequence and combination, depending on the selling situation at hand, the specific customer and the salesperson. Also, the actual activities undertaken within each stage may vary from organization to organization and also between salespersons. Figure 4.1 depicts the personal selling process in retail stores.

Figure 4.1: The retail personal selling process



Source: Lusch et al. (2011)

Prospecting is the first step in the personal selling. The process involves identifying and qualifying potential customers that would require the firm's products. In retail stores, prospecting involves observing and responding to the behavioural cues and body language of walk-in customers to identify and differentiate between customers who are interested in purchasing products and need assistance from the store salespersons and customers that are merely looking through the store's product offering (Lusch et al., 2011:461).

The second step in the selling process is called **the Approach**. The main objective for the salesperson at this stage of the selling process is to establish rapport with the customer to determine the product needs or problem the customer is seeking to resolve. It is at this stage that a salesperson communicates with the customer for the first time and thus should be handled delicately because any impression (negative or positive) the salesperson makes at this stage could essentially be the last impression the customer will have regarding him/her and the store (van Heerden and Drotsky, 2011:180). As soon as the salesperson has successfully established communication with the customer in the previous stage by listening to the customer and obtaining all the relevant information regarding the customer's need or problem, the salesperson in this stage will select suitable products that can satisfy the customer's need and present it to the customer.

Presentation is the third stage of the personal selling process and entails demonstrating the product to the customer by displaying the features and explaining the advantages/benefits of the product to the customer (Kotler and Keller, 2012: 583). During product presentation, it is rare for a customer not to ask questions or raise objections regarding the product.

Objection is the fourth stage of the selling process and entails a statement or question from a customer to a salesperson during a presentation to highlight a concern and need for clarity. Salespersons who are experienced understand that objections are not rejections but merely highlight the issues that are pertinent to the buyer. Retail customers may, for example, raise objections concerning warranties, guarantees or general concerns such as price, delivery time and usage training, hence, it is important for the salesperson to anticipate and respond to the customers' objection during this stage. (Spiro et al., 2008:75)

According to Lusch et al. (2011:463), **the Close** is technically the last stage of the selling process and involves the salesperson asking the customer for a purchase commitment. However, sometimes this stage poses a challenge for inexperienced salespersons as there is the temptation for them to assume that

customers would routinely place an order after a successful presentation or selling process. This is not always the case, as the sales process is not an exact science but rather comprises artistry that requires mastery to recognise when to interject the sales process and request for purchase commitment (van Heerden and Drotsky, 2011:219). Customer needs are not merely a composition of needs and problems a customer is aware of but could also include needs and problems that a retail salesperson could help identify (Aaker, 2005:53). For example, a customer who purchases a cell phone or laptop from a store may require other products, such as a cell phone pouch, a laptop bag or even insurance services.

Suggestive selling the sixth step in the selling process and entails the proactive selling technique used by astute, sensitive and knowledgeable salespersons to ensure that customer needs are fully met. Aspects of suggestive selling include up-selling, which involves convincing a customer to purchase additional products that are related to the one(s) they purchased and cross-selling, which involves introducing a different product to a customer (Kotler and Keller, 2012:163).

4.4.5 Cascading the soft skills of personal selling

Hard skills of personal selling may be referred to as the basic technical selling skills and qualifications of a salesperson. The soft skills of personal selling may be seen as the inherent qualities of a salesperson or the people skills that could essentially make the difference in terms of sales performance. Though soft skills may not be as obvious or observable as hard skills, it does not make it less important. Generally, there are two schools of thought regarding sales performance: The first is of the opinion that sales performance could be enhanced through learning, training and development. The second school of thought is of the opinion that sales performance is a consequence of an individual's inherent traits that make him or her suited to a career in sales (Loveland, Lounsbury, Park and Jackson, 2015:1).

It can be argued that since sales training is basic and easily accessible, sales performance may be improved through the training of salespersons. The latter school of thought argues that for training to be successful in improving performance, stores should utilize research to pre-establish context-specific selling traits and then identify and recruit individuals who possess these traits. Spiro et al. (2008:18) maintains that it is the responsibility of sales management to perform strategic planning, organizing the sales-force, as well as the recruitment, selection, training, development, motivation and evaluation of salespersons. It remains the responsibility of salespersons to implement the retailer's sales plan. Consequently, merely considering training and qualification of salespersons in isolation may be insufficient. Applying McKay's tree and root analogy to depict the combined importance of skill and innate characteristics of a salesperson; the roots of the tree may be considered as the innate characteristics whilst the trunk, leave and fruit are the skills

and qualifications of the salesperson. In other words, without the innate characteristics (root), the skills and qualifications (trunk, leaves and fruit) will be of no effect (McKay, 2011).

Some firms believe that selling is a matter of learning whilst others believe in the existence of individuals who are dispositionally suited for the sales profession. There is evidence of consistent disparity amongst salespersons regarding their performance and turnover rates (Loveland et al., 2015:1). Two questions emerge from the conversation above. Firstly, does success in selling entail essential components of the selling process that can be learned? Secondly, are the inherent behaviours or qualities of salespeople the determining factor for success in sales?

Consistent with the theory of person-environment fit, Holland (1996) affirms that people will excel in work environments that match their personal characteristics and the implication for hiring the wrong salesperson could be anything from poor performance output to high employee turnover rates to job dissatisfaction. Similarly, the findings of Loveland et al, (2015) indicate a correlation between core individual salesperson's traits with subsequent performance and thus selecting individuals with suitable sales characteristics is more effective than training in the long run. Though recruiting and retaining good salespersons remains a challenging task for sales management (Wren, Berkowitz and Stephen, 2014:107), finding and training the wrong salesperson could cost the firm financial loss in terms of training and recruitment costs, dissatisfied customers and even profitability. Despite the above consequences of a mismatched person-environment fit, researchers and practitioners have largely ignored the individual attitude and behaviour of salespersons (Terho, Haas, Eggert and Ulaga, 2012:183).

Noticeably, the focus of most recruitment drives has been on skills and capabilities (Wren et al. 2014). Furthermore, McKay (2011:7) stress the importance of a more practical approach that is less reliant on merely establishing the suitability of a persons' qualification in relations to the job task to incorporating early detection methods that provide feedback regarding how a person will go about discharging the job task. Part of their arguments a person may conceal their true attitude and character during an interview session in order to secure the job with their qualifications. In addition, Spiro et al. (2008:136), postulate that the process of determining the requisite qualification to match sales roles is the most difficult part of any selection process because there is no general-purpose profiling approach when it comes to hiring or appointing sales people to roles. Also, there are no rigid rules regarding the sales job especially since salespersons who fail in one firm or territory may not necessarily fail in another firm or territory. Current research findings also support the study's position that personal characteristics are a better predictor of performance on sales jobs than formal qualifications. For example, Loveland et al. (2015) investigated the

efficacy of individual personality traits and sales training on job satisfaction. The findings show that the majority of salespersons differ along biologically-based traits dimensions but are mostly alike along dimensions that can be shaped by training.

Furthermore, the findings suggested that biologically-based traits are crucial to intrinsic career success and are intimately linked to core aspects of sales such as emotional stability; optimism; and extraversion, as well as job and career satisfaction. This implies that salespersons with the right traits may be more satisfied with the sales profession than sales people who do not possess these key attributes. Hammervoll and Toften, (2010:550) contend that to better understand value-creating initiatives in buyer-seller relationships, a distinction should be drawn between initiative necessary for transaction-based situations and those valuable for relational-based situations. Nevertheless, the choice of which value creation initiative to implement is contingent on factors such as the specific selling situation, the type of product or service being sold and customer preference. Given that there is fierce competition in the retail sector, retailers cannot afford to ignore the perspective of customers. In fact, some authors suggest that retailers should ensure that they hire salespeople with matching skills, knowledge and abilities to that of the target customers' expectation (van Scheers, 2015:191).

4.5 THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL SELLING FACTORS

There is a symbiotic relationship between personal selling and salespersons because personal selling is considered to be the process used by salespersons to sell their products and services to their customers (Adesoga, 2016:106). Salespersons are the human mediums utilised by organisations to sell their products and service offerings to customers (van Heerden and Drotsky, 2011:7). In the sales context, the influence of personal selling is synonymous to the influence of salespersons and may be regarded as salespersons' ability to contrive customer perceptions regarding a firm's dependability to continuously deliver value and consequently fostering the customer's interest to maintain a long-term relationship with the firm (Weitz and Bradford, 1999:241). Similarly, Naicker and Brijlal (2012:6477) also affirm that the influence of salespersons possesses relationship building potential. For example, in selling situations whereby a customer in an electronics appliance store asks for assistance from salespersons to compare product quality, price and warrantee before deciding on the most suitable product to meet their need.

Salespersons serve as information proxies to both customers and their respective organisations. To customers, they provide vital product information to mitigate perceived risk in the purchase or usage of the product or service. Whilst to their respective firm, salespersons serve as a conduit through which

information gets transmitted from the customer to the organisation from customers (Arnett and Wittmann, 2014:329). However, other authors reiterate that there are peculiar individual-owned characteristics and attributes that could differentiate one salesperson from another (Wachner et al., 2009:33; Schwepker Jr and Good 2011:610). Subsequently, Sharma and Mei (2015) examined the implication of salesperson's attributes (physical attractiveness, social competence, trustworthiness and product knowledge) on customer perceptions of service and repurchase intention. In a similar study, Lee and Dubinsky (2003) examined a cluster of salesperson characteristics that influence store loyalty. The findings confirmed that there was an interrelationship between the behavioural attributes of salespersons, customer emotions and store loyalty intention.

Subsequently and in line with the study's view of personal selling, this study examined the collective and independent influence of a short-list of personal selling characteristics identified in literature namely, trustworthiness, physical attractiveness, social competence, and product knowledge (Sharma and Mei, 2015; Lee and Dubinsky, 2003). Notably, this is not an exhaustive list of personal characteristics nor is these attributes evidently mutually inclusive in every successful personal selling effort. An exhaustive examination of literature shows them to be of particular to importance in the selling of high-involvement goods such as electronics products (the product category focus of this study) and are believed to be core salespersons characteristics that encompass several of the smaller characteristics that affect customer emotions and repurchase intentions (van Scheers, 2015:191).

4.5.1 The influence of Trust

Trust may be described as the confidence and assurance in the integrity of intent of an exchange partner and the ability to meet expectations (Sharma and Mei, 2015:2). In examining salespersons' competence that impacts upon their performance, Yang and Wu (2013:101) maintain that there are two components of trust, namely, affective and cognitive. Affective trust relates to trust between the salesperson and customer that results from salespersons emotional appeal during interpersonal interaction, whilst cognitive trust is a consequence of the customer's positive assessment of the salesperson's expertise.

Additionally, scholars note that trust is at the core of developing long-term mutually beneficial relationships with customer and that loyalty intention is usually tied to the level of satisfaction and trust derived from experience with the store (Sun and Lin, 2010:1450; Alrbaiee, 2012:9).

More specifically, trust was defined as a psychological state that involves one person's intention to accept vulnerability based upon optimistic expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another (Kotler and

Keller, 2012:507). Building trust is essential in the relationship between salesperson's and customers because customers' associate trustworthiness with other attributes like competence and sensitivity (Sharma and Mei, 2015:2).

More precisely, the importance of trust may be discerned by its absence. Trust has also been found to stimulate customer commitment towards the salesperson and store (Azim, Hussain and Ali, 2013; Guenzi, Johnson and Castaldo, 2009). In fact, van Heerden and Drotsky (2011:24) mention trust as the most important basis for stable and collaborative relationships amongst people.

Some scholars believe that trust is the key to influence and that in the absence of trust, people tend to behave negatively and are hesitant to co-operate; are apprehensive; and continually seek to scrutinize the true meanings of communication and intentions (Larson and Clifford, 2011:357). In the sales context, the more knowledgeable a salesperson-that is possessing the ability to provide customers with relevant, reliable and accurate information concerning products, the firm and competing brands-then the greater the trust of the customer he or she will gain.

4.5.2 The influence of Product Knowledge

Essentially, a product is anything that can be offered to a potential consumer to meet a need or want. This includes physical goods, services, experiences, events, persons, places, properties, organizations, information and ideas (Kotler and Keller, 2012:347). Many of the products that retailers sell such as DVDs, LCDs and computers, are technically complex and require some level of intelligence to not only understand the products but also the social competence to answer customer questions regarding products (Lusch et al., 2011:454). Product knowledge may be viewed as the depth of information a salesperson possesses regarding the products they sell; their organisation policy; and the competition. It is often difficult for a salesperson to be effective in sales without adequate knowledge of the product or service they sell.

In most cases, the initial opinion regarding product features and benefits are usually based on the information provided by a salesperson. In fact, customers develop confidence in the salesperson and the organisation they represent if salespersons are perceived as a valuable resource for product information (Sangtani and Murshed, 2013:229; van Scheers, 2015:196). According to van Heerden and Drotsky (2011:23), to be effective and successful in sales, salespeople need to possess information regarding the product or service that they sell and their organization, including information of the customer and competitors. In their study of the cognitive and affective commonalities and differences in customers and

salespersons perception of personal selling attributes, Cicala et al. (2012:83) found that both customers and salespersons value attributes such as product knowledge; trustworthiness; and adaptability during a sales presentation. However, they emphasized that duo (Customers and salespersons) possess significant differences in their expectations and perspective of the themes.

4.5.3 The influence of Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Several definitions of emotional intelligence (EI) exist in the literature consulted and most authors converge in describing EI as a pro-social behaviour. In general, emotional intelligence was construed as the ability to hold value-free interpersonal interactions with others whilst self-regulating personal emotions and feelings (Kim, 2010; Saxena, 2011; Delcourt, Gremler, van Riel and van Birgelen, 2013). In emphasising the pro-social aspect of EI, Kim (2010:2343) mentioned that effective salespeople persistently express positive emotions and understanding in their interaction with customers. The findings of Delcourt et al. (2013) suggest that emotionally competent salespersons are much more able to establish a bond with customers and influence customer satisfaction and loyalty than those without emotional competence.

Sexana (2011) mentions five qualities and attributes that are recognizable in an emotionally intelligent salesperson, namely;

Self-awareness-refers to a salesperson's ability to identify and distinguish between emotions and feelings;

Mood Management-is the ability to recognize and isolate the impact of negative feelings and emotions in human interactions;

Self-motivation-means the state of being inspired, stimulated and desirous to accomplish goals;

Empathy- pertains to the ability to understand and relate to the feelings and emotions of others without bias; and

Managing relationships- The capacity to provide value and express appreciation in pro-social situations.

Scholars contend that since customers are the main beneficiary of emotional intelligence in a retail setting, they are better placed to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of a salesperson's emotional competence (Delcourt et al. 2013:8). Other authors also mention that recruiting emotionally competent persons could improve a firm's overall performance and that a positive link exists between emotional competence, social competence and trust (Kim, 2010:2352).

4.5.4 The influence of Social Competence

Social competence or communication skills are considered to be the act of transmitting verbal and non-verbal information and understanding between persons (van Heerden and Drotsky, 2011:20). Marketing communication, on the other hand, may be construed as any form of technique employed by a firm to inform potential customers about their products, as well as to influence behaviours and attitudes of customers towards purchasing their product or services (Kotler and Keller, 2012:498). However, research suggests there is a relationship between customer loyalty and congruent employee-customer interaction (Vesel and Zabkar, 2009:1353; Mende, Bolton and Bitner, 2013:139).

Slightly deflecting from verbal oral competence, Castleberry, Ridnour and Shepherd (2011: 23) studied salespersons' listening skills. They conceptualised listening as a cognitive process that involves three steps, namely actively sensing; interpreting; evaluating; and responding to verbal and nonverbal communication. Active sensing is the process of collecting and attending to verbal and non-verbal communication stimuli, whilst sensing, interpreting and evaluation are the cognitive processing of the communication in order to assign meaning to its content, as well as the verbal and non-verbal response. The authors mention that the more familiar the message recipient is with the content of the communication, the more effective the listening process (Castleberry, Ridnour and Shepherd, 2011: 23).

In a similar twist' political skills are another aspect of communication skill worth mentioning. The effect of political skill on the job-related performance of salespersons was studied by Blickle, John, Ferris, Momm, Liu, Haag, Meyer, Weber and Oerder (2011). It refers to political skills in a job context as the ability to effectively understand people at work and to influence them to act in ways that could enhance personal and/or organizational objectives. The authors also mention that a socially competent person is able to understand and influence others during social interactions. In addition, the astute nature of social competence grants salespeople the power to express and portray genuineness and trustworthiness, thus enabling them to gain interpersonal influence, trust and confidence during a sales dyad with customers.

Furthermore, the role of salespeople requires them to be enterprising due to the different consumer types and selling situations that call for tactful verbal persuasion, combining speech and aural skills. Palmatier (2009:1) also mentions gratitude as a crucial component of social competence. In fact, some authors believe aspects of gratitude such as thankfulness, showing appreciation and gratefulness provide the basis for reciprocal behaviour and thus an improved performance level in an interpersonal dyad (Robert, 2009:1; Ahmad, Basir and Kitchen, 2010:199).

4.5.5 The influence of Physical Appearance

Physical appearance can be referred to as the noticeable features of a person that constitutes part of non-verbal communication, such as clothing, physical attractiveness and demographics such as age, sex and ethnicity (Kim and Kim, 2012:824). In some cases, physical appearance could be perceived as having implications for both job selection and performance (Little and Roberts, 2012; Ahearne, Gruen and Jarvis, 1999), especially in sales positions and job placement that by its nature demands the presence of certain physical features, such as hiring females to clean ladies' restrooms. During selection, physical appearance may also be of paramount importance, especially where the customer's first impression of the employee is of utmost importance such as the job of a hotel receptionist.

In line with the preceding discussion, Kim and Kim, (2012:837) suggest that physical appearance could affect customer emotions, store image and even purchases. Therefore, many retailers even go as far as developing a dress and appearance code for their employee. Though Little and Roberts (2012) mention that despite the positive effect of physical appearance on a salesperson's performance, there is evidence to suggest that with the passage of time, sales relationship based on the physical attractiveness of the salesperson tends to lose its effect.

Recently, several marketing messages tend to link physical attractiveness to happiness and success (Rumsey, 2008:46). Though the evidence to support the notion that physically attractive people possess more positive personalities and pro-social traits remains lacking, the physical appearance of a salesperson remains an important success factor in personal selling, given the current heightened general interest in physical appearance.

4.6 PERSONAL SELLING AND LOYALTY

Personal Selling is a contact activity which entails high interpersonal interaction between customers and salespersons. Anecdotal evidence suggests that customers respond positively to any extra role efforts of retailers and salespersons towards enhancing the shopping experience. Babin, Griffin, Borges and Boles (2013:472) affirm that types of emotional stimulation (positive or negative) contribute to customers' perceived shopping value, which could influence the retailer-customer relationship. Long-term customer relationships and store loyalty do not occur by chance but rather through planned and deliberate integrated marketing efforts undertaken by an organization to consistently communicate and deliver customer-oriented value offering to customers (Srivastava and Kaul, 2016:277).

According to Jayawardhena and Farrel (2011:203) the salesperson-customer interactions which typify retail service consumption events are crucial to customers' positive emotional response towards a

retailer. Furthermore, the relationship between a salesperson and the customer has been compared to a marriage union, where such marriage union is analogous of a restrictive trade agreement in which the two parties (salesperson and customer) agree to exchange only with one another. Typically, such a relationship is expected to last for a commercial lifetime, unless interrupted by an unfavourable balance of trade condition in terms of broader market conditions of supply, demand and competitions (MacCall, 1966 cited in Dwyer, 1987:14).

In a similar analogy, seller-buyer relationships are compared to the courtship between two individuals. Accordingly, the courtship is essentially consummated when a sale is made and thereafter, the marriage begins. The strength of the marriage relationship will be dependent on the value created and generated between the seller and buyer (Levitt, 1983, cited in Dwyer, 1987:14). In extending Dwyer's courtship analogy of the buyer-seller relationship to the relationship between personal selling and consumer store loyalty, it may be safe to say that personal selling factors of a salesperson such as likeability, sociability, product knowledge, emotional intelligence and trustworthiness create the initial attraction and desire, thereby setting the stage for the courtship and subsequent marriage between the customer and store to ensue.

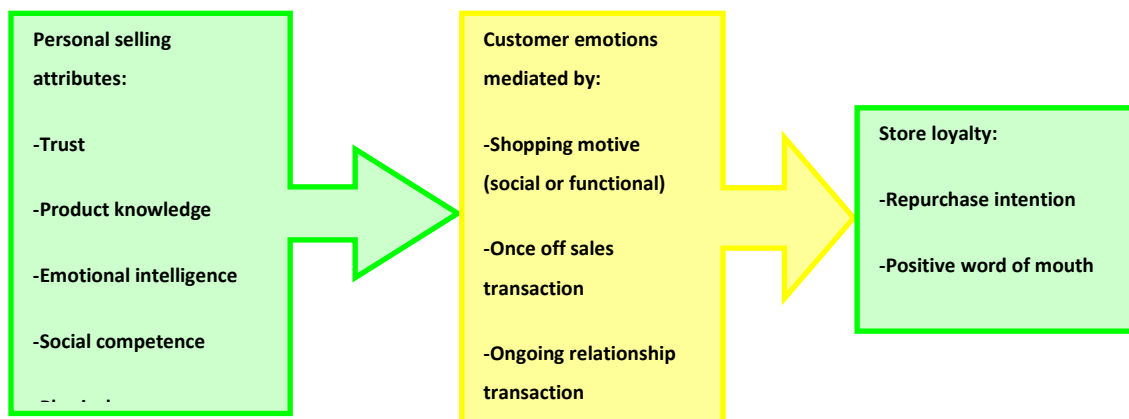
According to van Scheers (2015), South African consumers in the electronics and cell-phone sector value salespersons that possess product knowledge in contrast to American counterparts who value respect and empathy. Loveland et al. (2015) examined the antecedent effects of training and biological traits towards career satisfaction and performance amongst salespersons. It was found that salespersons can be trained but differs in terms of behavioural and biological issues. Lee and Dubinsky (2003) examined the effects of salespersons' attributes on customer emotions and proposed a model which is adopted by the current study conceptualisation. Others suggest that prior experience with salespersons could influence a customers' decision to shop at a store (Singh and Koshy, 2011; Beneke et al., 2012; Kim and Kim, 2012).

A pertinent component considered in the study conceptualisation is the mediating effect of consumer emotional and attachment style mentioned in Mende et al. (2013). The authors mention that knowledge of the attachment styles and preferences of consumers could assist stores to identify customers with a preference for high or low attachment inclination. Some customers seek utilitarian or basic functional benefits, whilst others seek after hedonic benefits such as intrinsic excitement and pleasurable shopping experiences. Other factors also influence the consumer decision-making process and loyalty intention, such as the type of consumer goods being purchased (Kotler and Keller, 2012:349). For example, a consumer purchasing a product such as salt, which is a low-involvement product, undergoes a shorter

decision cycle, unlike a consumer purchasing an electronics appliance such as liquid crystal diode (LCD) television sets which is a high-involvement product and would require a lengthier decision-making cycle.

Regardless of the selling context, the influence that customer-salesperson dyad on consumer behaviour and store choice cannot be ignored. Especially given that the ability of a salesperson to adapt to a customer's mood, mind-set or style is believed to be more important to customers than specific features and quality of the product sold (Spiro et al., 2008:8). Figure 4.2 depicts the study's conceptual model.

Figure 4.2: diagrammatic depiction of the study conceptual model



Source: Lee and Dubinsky (2003:25).

The model depicted in figure 4.2 posits that customer emotions and shopping motive (social or functional) play a mediating role in the assessment of interpersonal encounters between customers and salespersons. In addition, the envisaged type of sales relationship (once-off transaction versus ongoing relationship) is also believed to mediate customer evaluation of the encounter. The customer's perception emanating from their assessment of their experience with the store salesperson determines the influence of personal selling attributes on loyalty.

Due to the high-involvement nature of the product offerings in electronics appliance retailers and the lengthy consumer decision-making cycle, consumer cognitive and emotional/affective assessment of a salesperson's activities and personal traits is likely to influence store loyalty decisions. Thus, customers might experience positive or negative emotions resulting from their evaluation and perception of the experience with the salesperson.

4.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the influence that personal selling has on loyalty. The salesperson is the first point of contact between a customer and the business and, in most cases, the first impression they impose on the customer determines the customer's perception of the store and influences their subsequent decision to re-patronise the store. Furthermore, studies such as Beneke et al., (2012) show that loyal customers are usually satisfied but satisfied customers are not always loyal customers, which imply that retailers need to advance their efforts beyond customer satisfaction, thus exploring other techniques to retain customers, such as loyalty.

Consideration should be given to the fact that current proliferation and use of loyalty programmes, price cuts and sales promotions by retailers to retain customers and keep them loyal appear to be losing its potency. One option that retailers in this competitive era could consider is salespersons. However, in a similar stroke to the customer satisfaction/loyalty contradiction mentioned above, it is noteworthy that even though salespersons require personal selling skills in order to be effective in selling without possessing the concomitant innate characteristics fitting for the role, the salesperson's selling efforts will be merely mechanical and thus lack the beyond-satisfaction impact.

Evidence from the above suggests that academics and practitioners cannot afford to ignore the effect of personal traits in a personal selling encounter with customers. These personal traits have been shown to be key determinants of customer emotions and subsequent perceptions of a retailer, and even subsequent behavioural intention. Moreover, both research evidence and anecdotal evidence presented in this chapter favour basing the selection of salespeople more on key traits such as trust, emotional intelligence and social competence rather than on more trainable dimensions like product knowledge and physical appearance.

The chapter also presented cognitive and affective consumer factors that influence consumer purchase decisions. For instance, a consumer in a relational mind-set has been shown to favour high interpersonal interaction with salespersons, whereas a consumer in a transactional mind-set was shown to favour minimal interpersonal interaction with salespersons. Given the high customer-salesperson interaction that takes place in electronics appliance retail stores, wherein customers usually require assistance from salespersons to compare, contrast and select need-satisfying products, the present study is interested in how personal selling influences customer emotions to become positively biased and committed to patronizing a retailer.

Retailing is a highly competitive sector with a largely undifferentiated offering. Moreover, several research studies mention that most consumers in South Africa are unable to differentiate one retailer's offering from the other. Evidently, easily imitable tangible physical store attributes such as convenient location, assorted merchandise, store aesthetics, low prices and loyalty point cards employed by retailers may no longer be deemed sustainable competitive advantages. The fact that personal selling is a direct and dynamic approach to selling, involving interpersonal contact between salespersons and customers with the aim of closing the sale and at the same time establishing long-term relationships with customers makes it a potential tool for establishing store loyalty in retail stores.

CHAPTER 5 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research problem and the objectives of this study were described in Chapter One. The previous Chapters (two to four) focused on personal selling and retail environments, as well as their symbiotic relationships. This chapter will focus on the research process of the study. The chapter begins with restating the research objectives, followed by discussing the research design, sampling method, questionnaire design and target population, as well as data analysis and validity and reliability.

The purpose of the empirical section of this study was to collect primary data about the influence of personal selling on store loyalty in electronics appliance stores in Johannesburg. Research methodology presents a holistic view of a study and explains the rationale behind the methods and techniques adopted to answer the objectives and questions of the study (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005:2). In view of the challenges of high consumer mobility and competition facing retailers in Johannesburg, the study focuses on personal selling factors that could increase customer store loyalty in electronics appliance stores.

5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of research objectives is to provide direction to a study as well as to provide a yardstick with which to measure accomplished task. The study seeks to explore the influence of personal selling factors on store loyalty in electronics appliance' stores.

The objectives of the study include:

- To determine whether personal selling influences store loyalty in the electronics appliance retail industry;
- To identify the personal selling variables that customers consider important in electronics appliance retail stores in Johannesburg;
- To explore how customers' perceptions of the personal selling efforts of a salesperson influence store loyalty in the electronics appliance retail industry; and
-
- To establish the preferred personal selling skills and attributes of front-line employees required by management and customers of electronics appliance retail stores.

5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design outlines the broad plan or blueprint that was used to solve the research problems. This blueprint includes the general structure, activities and actions (as guided by the research questions) taken by the researcher to conduct the research study (Hofstee, 2010:112). Typically the structure of a research design consists of the following components: the research method used; the target population; the sampling process and size; the data collection method used; data analysis; and interpretation of the analysed data (Hofstee, 2010:112). A quantitative research methodology was chosen for the study as it was deemed to be most appropriate for the collection and analysis of data, especially since there has been little empirical research on the topic. The purpose of quantitative research is to objectively examine data statistically for quantity, intensity and frequency (Welman, Kruger and Mitchel, 2005:8). An empirical exploratory survey approach was used because the main aim of the study was to understand if and how the personal selling efforts of electronics store salespersons influence customer store loyalty intentions. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007:134), exploratory studies are useful in establishing causal relationships between variables. Quantitative data were collected and statistically analysed to answer the research questions. Due to the scant empirical studies conducted on the topic, a more exploratory research approach was deemed appropriate for the study.

5.4 TARGET POPULATION

The target population refers to those individuals or groups that the researcher hopes to represent in the study (Cooper, 2010:47; Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin, 2013:67). The target population for this study were shoppers and managers of fifty (50) appliance retail stores in Johannesburg. Managers of appliance retail stores were included as part of the study population in order to answer the third sub objective for the study, which is to establish managements preferred personal selling skills and attributes for salespersons. The names of the selected stores have been withheld for confidentiality purposes but will be made available on request. The selection of appliance retail stores comes as a result of their candid reflection of high sales personnel-customer interaction. Since it was impossible to conduct the study using the entire population of over 1500 shops, a sampling technique was adopted to determine an appropriate and manageable sampling size.

5.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Sampling is a method of choosing a small number of people that provide the researcher with data to draw conclusions about the large group (the population frame) (Zikmund et al., 2013:67). A non-probability sampling method was adopted for the study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013:252).

A purposive sampling technique was utilised to select the study respondents based on their availability and accessibility. A purposive sample is also referred to as a judgmental or expert sample and is a type of non-probability sample.

The aim of a purposive sampling technique is to generate a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population. This is often achieved by applying expert knowledge of the population to choose in a non-random manner a sample of elements that represent a cross-section of the population (Battaglia and Lavrakas, 2013:1).

A purposive sampling method was adopted using a quantitative approach for the following reasons:

- Time; most electronics retail customers are busy people and have limited time to complete questionnaires.
- Convenience; minimal intrusion from the perspective of the respondents and the researcher.
- Cost; due to budgetary constraints, the researcher focused more on available and accessible customers

5.6 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

According to Saunders et al. (2007:147), the result obtained in a research study is influenced by the data collection method. There are several methods in which data can be collected, namely a qualitative method, quantitative method or using a mixed method. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey method using a questionnaire meticulously compiled using expert advice as well as a focus group. The questionnaires were distributed to a sample of the study population in Johannesburg to gain understanding regarding the relationships, perception and influence of personal selling on store loyalty in electronics stores in Johannesburg. The quantitative method was applied, and the primary data collected were statistically analysed by a statistician.

5.6.1 Quantitative survey method

The study comprised a quantitative survey. Quantitative studies employ methods such as experiments and surveys, and entail producing data by measuring and counting the frequency of occurrences, things or objects in order to explain or describe a phenomenon (Brynard and Hanekom, 2006:37). Quantitative methods are structured and controlled research techniques that enable the collection of specific and relevant data through questionnaires, observations and quantitative analysis. Therefore, in gathering data for the study, two sets of 5-point Likert scale questionnaires were designed and administered to the study respondents.

One set of questionnaires was administered on customers and whilst another set was administered on retail store managers. The motivation for using a Likert scale survey questionnaire was that the proposed participants were busy people (especially the customers/shoppers) and the research instrument adopted (questionnaire) were appropriate for the respondents as it enabled an economical, easy and fast collection of data from respondents. Only customers and managers of the selected electronics stores completed the questionnaire and in order to avert error, the researchers as well as trained field workers were engaged to assist respondents in the completion of questionnaires.

5.7 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT DESIGN

The data collection for a survey is critical and therefore a researcher should consider the impact and constraints (cost and time) on the survey before deciding on the preferred method or procedure for the data collection (Blair, Czaja and Blair, 2014: 48). A questionnaire is any form of scheduled oral or written promptings for the purpose of eliciting a response from respondents. Furthermore, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007:354) adopt the general view that a questionnaire is a data collection procedure whereby respondents in a survey respond to the same set of questions in a pre-determined order. This includes structured interviews, telephonic interviews and self-administered questionnaires.

This data collection method for the study was a self-administered questionnaire. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:174), questionnaires may be designed with open-ended questions whereby the respondent may freely provide answers to questions or closed-ended questions whereby respondents are offered a range of options from which to choose their preferred responses. Since there were attitudinal objects in the problem under investigation, the questionnaire included only closed-ended questions. A Likert-scale instrument was considered to be an ideal choice to answer the research questions. The Likert-scale instrument was developed and named after its original designer Rensis Likert in 1932 and has been the dominant instrument for conducting most survey research (Salkind and Rasmussen, 2013:2). According to Salkind and Rasmussen (2013:2) and Fabrigar and Wood (2013:8), the Likert-scale instrument is a multiple-item procedure for measuring attitudes. The scales from a Likert-scale instrument provide statements (items) for respondents to provide favourable or unfavourable reactions to attitudinal objects (Salkind and Rasmussen, 2013:2).

5.7.1 Pilot study

A pilot study comprising 20 participants was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the study questionnaire. The study consisted of 16 customers, (9 females and 6 males) and 4 managers (1 female and 3 male) of electronics appliance stores in Johannesburg. The questionnaire was handed to the

participants for completion and they were requested to give comment on the content of the questionnaire in terms of the clarity of the questions and any challenges they experienced whilst completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire took the participants between 15 and 18 minutes to complete and they stated that the vocabulary content of the questions was clear and easy to understand. However, they observed that Question 1.3 in Section A was not representative of the racial and ethnic groups in Johannesburg. For example, Chinese ethnicity was not included. Thus, the questionnaire used to collect data from the target population was amended and refined by the researcher to accommodate Chinese and other racial groups.

5.8 SAMPLE REALIZATION AND SIZE

The researcher divided the target population into ten geographic zones from which a sample size of 550 was drawn. A sample of 500 customers and 50 store managers was selected from 50 stores distributed across the ten geographic zones. The overall sampling size for this study was 550 respondents, as depicted in Table 5.1. The questionnaire was distributed directly to respondents (face-to-face) by the researcher in the respective electronics stores in Johannesburg in the Gauteng province of South Africa, which was the (data collection site). The questionnaires were distributed directly to the respondents by the researcher with the response rate of 62.6%.

Table 5.1: The study geographic zones

Number of zones (nZ)	Stores per zone (SPZ)	Customer per store (CPS)	Managers per store (MPS)	Customers per zone (CPZ)	Managers per zone (MPZ)
Zone 1	5	10	1	50	5
Zone 2	5	10	1	50	5
Zone 3	5	10	1	50	5
Zone 4	5	10	1	50	5
Zone 5	5	10	1	50	5
Zone 6	5	10	1	50	5

Zone 7	5	10	1	50	5
Zone 8	5	10	1	50	5
Zone 9	5	10	1	50	5
Zone 10	5	10	1	50	5
Total zones	10			500	50
Total customers (TC)= nZ x SPZ x CPS	10x5x10=500				
Total managers (TM)= nZ x MPS x MPZ	10x1x5=50				
Sampling size= TC+TM	550				

Source: Created by the researcher (2015)

Given that the study is exploratory in nature, the researcher considered the zoning technique as the most appropriate method to select a representative sample. Furthermore, since there are over a thousand retail stores in the Johannesburg geographical area, conducting a survey in fifty appliance retail stores across 10 zones in Johannesburg was fairly ideal sampling for the subject under investigation.

5.9 DATA PROCESSING

5.9.1 Editing

According to Conversano and Siciliano (2009:1835), statistical data editing entails verifying and correcting for errors such as illegibility and inconsistencies. The researcher conducted the editing of the research instrument (Questionnaire) and in cases where an error was detected; the respondents were contacted for clarification. Where responses remained either inconsistent or contradictory, the questionnaire was discarded.

5.9.2 Coding

Codes are tags or labels assigned to independent sections of the collection instrument (Questionnaire) that essentially give meaning to raw data, whilst coding entails analysing and making sense of raw data (Welman et al., 2005:214). The study questionnaire was pre-coded to minimise errors. The coded questionnaires were captured and assessed for errors using a software package, by statisticians at the Durban University of Technology.

5.9.3 Data cleaning

Data cleaning is the process of ensuring that the research instrument (questionnaire) was completed accurately without errors or omissions (Saunders et al., 2007:476). The data cleaning process for the study was performed by the researcher.

5.10 DATA ENTRY TECHNIQUE

The data collected from the field was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, which are regarded as critical for analysing the data (Dytham, 2011:5). The study adopted a multivariate analysis whereby the mean and standard deviation was computed to describe the patterns of the collected data. According to Dytham (2011:53-55), the mean requires arithmetically obtaining the average of a set of scores and the standard deviation is a measure of the spread of scores about the mean.

Two inferential statistics (correlation coefficients and regression) were calculated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The correlation coefficient was utilised to determine the association between the score of variable X and the rank order position of variables Y (i.e. customer rating/preference of personal selling factors such as product knowledge, trust, physical appearance, emotional intelligence and social competence). Microsoft Excel was also used to capture the responses for statistical testing. This was done for easy analysis, presentation and interpretation of the data collected from the field, Diagrams, tables, charts and pictograms were used to present information in a statistical format.

5.10.1 Instrument reliability and validity

It is pertinent for researchers to pay particular attention to two aspects of the research design namely, reliability and validity. In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the study instrument, it was first pilot tested on 25 respondents to ascertain the knowledge and understanding of the respondents as well as to ensure that there was no respondent misunderstanding, error or bias in the research instrument. This was supported by conducting Cronbach's alpha coefficient tests to determine the reliability of the instrument. Discrepancies in the test results were adjusted to make the instrument reliable.

Reliability refers to the credibility and transparency of the data collection and analysis process, as well as the extent to which the research process may be replicated by other researchers to obtain a similar outcome at another time (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007:149). Whilst validity refers to the degree to which the research instrument measures the construct for which it was purposed (Welman et al., 2005:142). According to Saunders et al. (2007:150), the threats to data reliability may emanate as a result of error of participants or the researcher or bias of either participants or the researcher. The role of instrument validity is to ensure consistency in the research objectives and findings and to prevent misunderstanding, error or bias on the part of the respondents and the researcher. In line with Sekaran (2003) the opinion of expert and agreement of academics and experienced industry professionals was sought to ensure that the content of the instrument is a true representation of the research objectives.

5.10.2 Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics refers to the deduction a researcher makes about the population that is essentially based on the data collected from the study sample drawn from the population (Welman et al., 2005:236). The study applied inferential statistics to objectively determine the relationship between variables, make assumption and generalize from samples to populations.

5.10.3 Chi-square test of independence

The aim of the Chi-square test is to compare bivariate categories of data. For example, the Chi-Square test was used in Objective 4 to determine the relationship between the preferences of store managers and customers regarding the personal selling factors of a salesperson.

5.10.4 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics is the depiction, summary and comparison of variables numerically with a focus on determining the central tendency of the values of variables in terms of their mean, median and mode, as well as determining how the values are dispersed in a range around the central tendency (Saunders et al., 2007:434). This study extensively used charts, graphs and tables to describe the data in terms of variations, correlations and percentages.

5.10.4.1 Correlation statistics

Correlation statistics is used to explain the relationship between the study variables (Welman et al., 2005:234). For example, correlation was applied to explain the implications of the demographic profile and distribution of the sample, such as the age, gender and racial composition of the study.

5.10.5 Factor analysis

Factor analysis was used in the study to determine which personal selling factors customers and managers consider as important when selecting a store and employees respectively. According to Streiner (2013:112), the aim of factor analysis is to determine whether a small number of factors is a necessary and sufficient cause of phenomena within a cluster of factors.

5.11 ETHICAL CLEARANCE

This study was conducted on the premise of observing all protocols and ethical imperatives in conducting academic research. Ethical clearance was also obtained from Dut for the purpose of this study. Permission was first obtained from the management of the stores where data was collected before the questionnaires were administered. Informed consent was also obtained from shoppers and retail store managers who participated in the study. Table 5.2 shows the ethical steps which were followed in conducting the study.

Table 5.2: The ethical standards observed in the study

Ethical issue	Compliance
Informed consent	The study participants were first informed of the purpose of the research and were required to give consent to participate by signing the consent section of the questionnaire.
Confidentiality	The study participants were assured of the confidentiality of their participation in the study.
Voluntary participation	Participating in the research study was completely based on the participant's free will.
Remuneration	Participation in the study was entirely voluntary and therefore no payment in cash or kind was made to participants, nor was there any monetary cost or liability towards participants.
Disclosure	The research study respondents were fully informed of the purpose and aim of the study, as well as the number of participants involved in the study. Respondents were also given a letter of information containing their role in the study and were urged to answer all questions honestly.
Withdrawal	The study respondents were at liberty to withdraw their participation in the study at any point during the process.

Plagiarism	The study observed respect for the intellectual property and the work of others by giving appropriate recognition to individuals, organisations and academics in the research study.
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Source: Created by researcher (2015)

5.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the research design used in conducting the study. These included the target population and the sampling technique used, which formed the basis for collecting the data. This chapter has also discussed the instrument (questionnaire) used for collecting the data and the procedure followed. The validity of the data collection instrument and how it impacted on the data was examined.

In addition, the chapter examined the statistical tests conducted. Finally, the chapter provided information on the systematic approach to conducting ethical research and how this was applied to the current study.

CHAPTER 6 - RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of the study. A structured questionnaire was the primary tool used to collect data from respondents. The data collected from the respondents were analysed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23.0. Descriptive statistics in the form of graphs cross tabulations and tables were utilised. In addition, inferential statistical tests such as correlations, chi-square test, and Cronbach's Alpha and factor analysis were conducted. Customers and managers of electronics appliance stores in Johannesburg were the targeted population of the study.

6.2 THE SAMPLE SIZE AND RESPONSE RATE OF SHOPPERS AND MANAGERS

The questionnaire was administered to five hundred shoppers by the researcher. The data collection period was about three months. However, only 313 completed questionnaires were received. The response rate for the data collection in respect of shoppers was 62.6%. The second sample of 50 questionnaires was administered to managers to illicit information on personal selling factors and salespersons. The response rate from managers was 96%.

The normal response rate for data collection in social research should generally be above 70%. Although the response rate for this study was 62.6%, it does not render the data analysis invalid because for the past 25 years, response rates for data collection in social and behavioural sciences surveys have gradually decreased from 70% to as low as 30% (Keeter, 2018). Therefore, a 62.6% response rate was deemed a reasonable rate for valid data analysis.

6.3 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument (questionnaire) for this study consisted of 27 items (questions), with the level of measurement at a nominal or an ordinal level. The questionnaire was divided into four sections to measure the various themes, namely:

Part A– Biographic profile of study population;

Part B –Shopping Profile Information;

Part C – Personal selling factors\characteristics; and

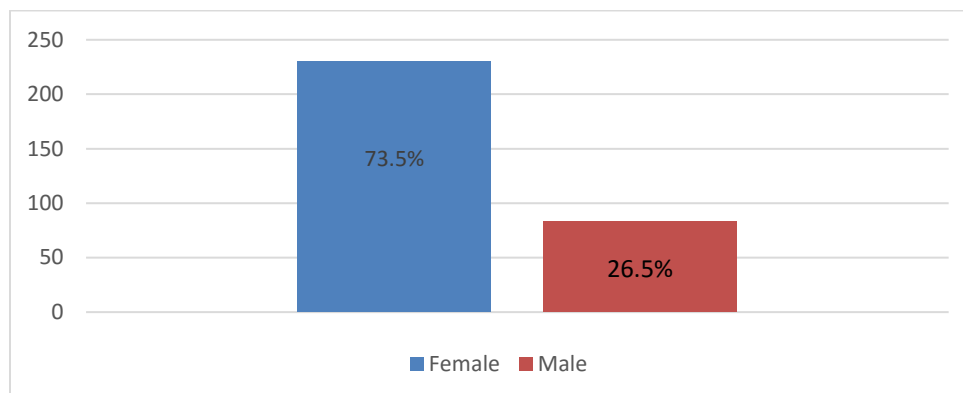
Part D – Questionnaire for Store Managers.

6.4 BIO-GRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (Shoppers)

Section A of the questionnaire entails the analysis of the bio-graphic characteristics of the respondents who participated in this study in terms their gender, age, race, monthly income, level of education and status.

6.4.1 Gender

Figure 6.1 Gender of respondents of the study



The gender profile of this study indicate that the majority of the respondents were females at 73.5% and 26.5% were males

6.4.2 Age groups

Table 6.1: Gender distribution by age

			Gender		Total
			Female	Male	
Age (years)	18 – 30	Count	150	9	159
		% within Age	94.3%	5.7%	100.0%
		% within Gender	65.2%	10.8%	50.8%
		% of Total	47.9%	2.9%	50.8%
	31 – 40	Count	75	72	147
		% within Age	51.0%	49.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	32.6%	86.7%	47.0%
		% of Total	24.0%	23.0%	47.0%
	51 – 60	Count	1	2	3
		% within Age	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
		% within Gender	0.4%	2.4%	1.0%
		% of Total	.3%	.6%	1.0%
	60+	Count	4	0	4
		% within Age	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	1.7%	0.0%	1.3%
		% of Total	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%
Total	Count		230	83	313
	% within Age		73.5%	26.5%	100.0%
	% of Total		73.5%	26.5%	100.0%

Table 6.1 shows that the overall ratio of female to male is approximately 3:1 (73.5%:26.5%) in the different age cohorts. The largest group of respondents was the age category of 18 - 30 years with a total of 159 questionnaires completed by respondents in this category. Furthermore, of the 159 respondents in this category, 150 of them (94.3%) were female and 9 (5.7%) were males. A large proportion of the respondents (147) completed the questionnaire within the age category of 31-40 years and **49.0%** of them were males (72) with 75 females which comprised 51%. Interestingly, there were no respondents in the age category of 41 - 50. The 51-60 year old consisted of 33.3% females while males constituted 66.7%. The 60 and above group constitute a relatively small percentage of the total sample of 1.7% with four females and no male respondents.

6.4.3 Race

Table 6.2 indicates the racial composition of the sample.

Table 6.2: Racial composition of the study respondents

Race	Frequency	Percent
African	274	87.5
White	1	.3
Indian	2	.6
Coloured	2	.6
Other	34	10.9
Total	313	100.0

Table 6.2 depicts the racial composition of the study population with 87.5% of the respondents being African, 0.3% white 0.6% Indian, 0.6% were coloured, and 10.9% belong to other racial groups.

6.4.4 Monthly income

Figure 6.2: Monthly Incomes of study respondents

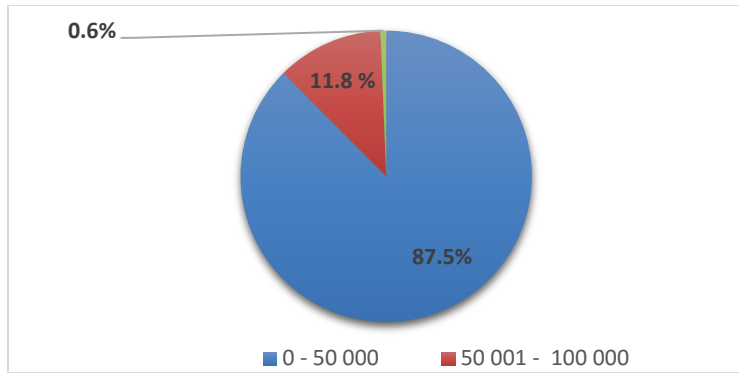


Figure 6.2 indicates that 87.5% of the respondents earned between R0 to R50, 000 per month, while 11.8% earned between R50, 000 and R100, 000 per month. The minority of respondents (0.6%) earned over R100, 000 per month.

6.4.5 Level of education

Figure 6.3 Respondents levels of education

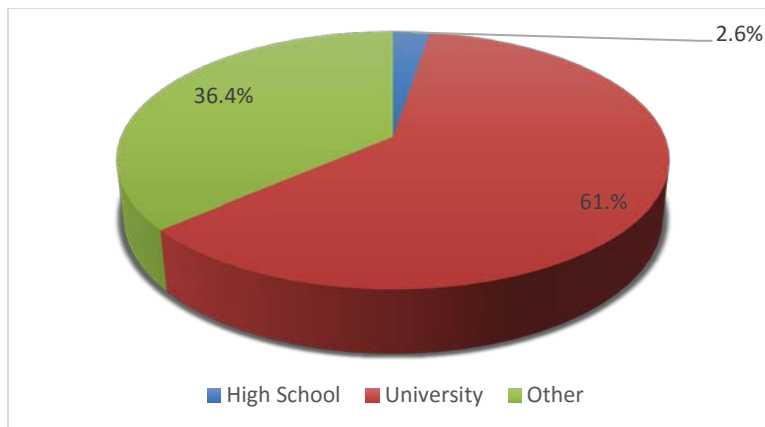
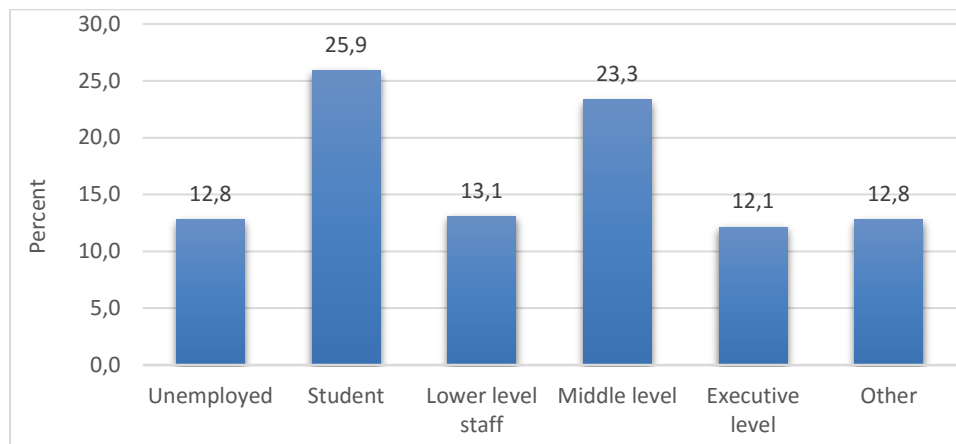


Figure 6.3 depicts the levels of education of respondents

The majority of respondents (61%) had university education. A minor percentage (36.4%) of respondents did not have formal education but could read and write. Only 2.6% of the respondents had high school level education.

6.4.6 Occupational Status

Figure 6.4: Occupational status of respondents



The results indicated on figure 6.4 show that 25.9% of respondents were students; whilst 23.3% were in the middle management level bracket; only 13.1% were in the lower management level bracket; and 12.8% were unemployed. The remaining group consists of executive level (12.1%) and others (12.8%).

6.5 PERSONAL SELLING INFLUENCE ON STORE LOYALTY

Section B of the questionnaire dealt with personal selling influence on store loyalty. The research question was: Does personal selling influence store loyalty in the electronics appliance retail industry in Johannesburg? In an attempt to answer the research question, six items (questions) were used.

- **Frequency of electronics appliance purchases**

The questionnaire posed to respondents is how often they purchased electronic appliance(s) from the stores within the past 12 months. Table 6.3 presents the responses.

Table 6.3: Frequency of electronic appliance purchases

Number of times	Frequency	Percent
1 – 5	305	97.4

6 – 10	5	1.6
11 – 15	2	.6
16 – 20	1	.3
Total	313	100.0

Table 6.3 reveals that approximately 97.4% of respondents had made purchases between one to five times during the past 12 months. This is understandable given that electronic appliances are usually durable products and can last for some time before requiring replacement. During the same period, only 1.6% of respondents made purchases up to six to ten times.

The next five items (questions) is depicted in Table 6.4 and Figure 6.5. The aim of these questions was to determine if personal selling influenced store loyalty.

Table 6.4: Personal selling influence on store loyalty

	Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
I consider myself as a loyal customer to the store	110	35.1%	75	24.0%	128	40.9%
I need the assistance of a salesperson in the store in order to select the right product	110	35.1%	83	26.5%	120	38.3%
I purchase from this particular store because I can rely on the competence of the staff	112	35.8%	84	26.8%	117	37.4%
I purchase from this particular store because of the assistance I get from salespersons in this store	76	24.3%	114	36.4%	123	39.3%
I get value for money in the store because the salespersons are responsive to me	108	34.5%	44	14.1%	161	51.4%

The results of the questions testing the influence of personal selling on store loyalty as depicted by table 6.4 are as follows;

- Firstly, the question was to determine whether **respondents considered themselves loyal customers to the store where they purchased electronic appliances**. The results reveal that 40.9% agreed with the statement that they were loyal customers to the stores; 35.1% disagreed with the statement; whilst 24% were not sure.
- Secondly, when respondents were asked **if they needed assistance of salespersons in the stores in order to select the right product**, 38% agreed with the statement, 35.1% disagreed whilst 26.5% were neutral.
- Thirdly, customers responded to a statement: **I purchase from this particular store because I can rely of the competence of the staff**. The results indicated that 37.4% of the respondents were positive towards the statement; 35.8% disagreed with the statement; and 26% were neutral.
- The fourth statement was: **I purchase from this particular store because of the assistance I get from salespersons in this store**. The response on this statement from the respondents was that 39.3% agreed with the statement, 36.4% were neutral and 24.3% disagreed.
- On the fifth statement, **I get value for money in the store because the salespersons are responsive to me**, the results indicate that 51.4% agreed and were of the opinion that they got value for money because of salespersons; 34.5% disagreed; and 14.1% were neutral.

6.6 IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL SELLING FACTORS AND STOR LOYALTY INTENTION OF CUSTOMERS (RESEARCH QUESTION 2)

Section C of the questionnaire contains 15 items (questions). Item 1 to 10 refers to research Question 2 which was: To identify the specific personal selling factors of salespersons that customers consider to be important. The section loaded two items for each of the personal selling factors, namely: trustworthiness, product knowledge, emotional intelligence, social competence and physical. Items 11 to 15 measured research Question 3 which was: To explore whether customer perceptions of the personal selling efforts of salespersons affect loyalty intention. Using descriptive statistics, the analysis of this question incorporates a series of statements as depicted next in Table 6.5 and Figure 6.6.

Table 6.5: Personal selling factors and their influence on store loyalty

	Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %

Sales personnel in this store are reliable	22	7.0%	27	8.6%	264	84.3%
I feel safe when dealing with sales personnel in this store	19	6.1%	26	8.3%	268	85.6%
Sales personnel in this store provide me with useful product information	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	313	100.0%
Sales personnel in this store offer the most suitable products to me	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	313	100.0%
Sales personnel in this store understand my needs	118	38.1%	91	29.4%	101	32.6%
I feel Sales personnel in this store have my best interest at heart	77	24.6%	78	24.9%	158	50.5%
Sales personnel in this store are friendly	24	7.7%	117	37.5%	171	54.8%
Sales personnel in this store discuss my needs with me before offering me a suitable product	0	0.0%	7	2.2%	306	97.8%
Sales personnel in this store dress professionally	8	2.6%	81	25.9%	224	71.6%
Sales personnel in this store appear neat and tidy	42	13.4%	84	26.8%	187	59.7%
The characteristics of sales persons influence my decision to shop in this particular store	66	21.1%	137	43.8%	110	35.1%
I perceive that the sales personnel in this store possess unique characteristics which play a useful role	26	8.3%	65	20.8%	222	70.9%
The personal selling characteristics of sales persons motivate me to repurchase from this store	31	9.9%	35	11.2%	247	78.9%
I have confidence in the competence of salespersons of this store and would recommend this store to my friends and relatives	28	8.9%	66	21.1%	219	70.0%
I would rather shop at this store than shop at any other store with similar products/services	105	33.5%	51	16.3%	157	50.2%

Figure 6.5: Personal selling factors and their influence on store loyalty



The findings of the analysis were as follows:

- **Trustworthiness:** The question measured the degree of reliability of sales personnel in the store. The majority, (84.3%) of the respondents agreed that sales personnel were reliable and 8.6% were neutral or not sure about the statement and 7% disagreed.
- **Trustworthiness:** The statement was: I feel safe when dealing with salespersons in this store. The majority, (85.6%) of respondents felt safe in dealing with salespersons in the stores, whilst 8.3% were neutral and 6.1% disagreed with the statement.
- **Product knowledge:** Customers were asked if salespersons provided them with useful product information. All the respondents (100%) agreed that they receive useful information from salespersons in the stores.
- **Product knowledge:** Customers were asked if salespersons suggested suitable products that matched their needs. All respondents (100%) agreed that salespersons provided them with suitable products.
- **Emotional intelligence:** The statement measured if the stores' salespersons were sensitive to understanding the needs of the customer. In respect of the statement, 38% disagreed and 32.6% were in agreement with the statement. Only 29.4% were neutral.

- **Emotional intelligence:** The statement; I feel salespersons in this store have my best interest at heart, was to elicit the degree of sensitivity of sales personnel. Approximately half (50.5%) of the respondents agreed with this statement, 24.9% of the respondents were neutral and 24.6% disagreed.
- **Social competence:** The statement was: Salespersons in this store are friendly. In respect of the statement, 54.8% were in agreement with the statement; 37.5% were neutral or not sure; and 7.7% disagreed.
- **Social competence:** The statement was: Salespersons discuss my needs with me before offering me a suitable product. On this statement, 97.8% of the respondents agreed; 2.2% of respondents were neutral; and 0% disagreed.
- **Physical appearance:** The statement was: Salespersons in this store dress professionally. The findings were that 71.6% of the respondents agreed with the statement; 25.9% were neutral; and 2.6% of the respondents disagreed with this statement.
- **Physical appearance:** The statement was: Salespersons in this store appear neat and tidy. For this statement 59.7% agreed, 26.8% were neutral and 13.4% of the respondents disagreed.
- **Perception of personal characteristics:** The survey asked respondents if they perceive that the characteristics of salespersons had an influence on their decision to shop in a particular store. The findings were that 43.8% were neutral; 35.1% agreed with the statement; and 21.1% of the respondents disagreed with the statement.
- **Perception of personal characteristics:** I perceive that the salespersons in this store possess unique characteristics that play a useful role. For this statement, 70.9% of the respondents agreed, 20.8% were neutral and 8.3% disagreed.
- **Influence of personal selling characteristics on store loyalty:** Personal selling characteristics of salespersons motivate me to repurchase from this store. The findings for this statement were that 78.9% agreed with the statement; 11.2% of the respondents were neutral; and 9.9% disagreed.
- **Influence of personal selling characteristics on store loyalty:** For the statement: I have confidence in the competence of salespersons in this store and would recommend this store to my friends and relatives, 70.0% were in agreement with the statement; 21.1% were neutral or not sure; and 8.9% disagreed with the statement.
- **Influence of personal selling characteristics on store loyalty:** The statement was: 'I would rather shop at this store than at any other store with similar products/services'. Approximately half (50.2%) of the respondents agreed with this statement; 33.5% disagreed; and 16.3% were neutral.

A critical review of the above analysis revealed various permutations with regard to the responses from the participants.

6.7 INFERENCE STATISTICS ANALYSIS

Inferential statistical tests were also performed on the data set in this section to determine whether the scoring patterns per statements were significantly different per option.

6.7.1 Factors analysis

In this study, the matrix tables are summarised to reflect the results of KMO and Bartlett's Test (Table 6.6). The requirement is that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy should be greater than 0.50 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity less than 0.05. In this study, the conditions were satisfied for the factor analysis procedure.

Table 6.6: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Section	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
		Approx. Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
B	.644	1377.969	10	.000
C	.710	2905.779	105	0.000

The conditions for factor analysis in terms of section B (the shopping profile of customers) and section C (The personal characteristics of salespersons) were all satisfied. That is, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy value should be greater than 0.500 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity sig. value should be less than 0.05.

6.7.2 Rotated component matrix

A rotated Component Matrix technique was deployed as part of the factor analysis. Factor analysis was conducted for the Likert scale items. Tables 6.7 and 6.8 present the rotated component matrix.

Table 6.7: Rotated Component Matrix 1 (The relationship between personal selling and store loyalty-RESEARCH QUESTION 1)

Section B	Component
	1
I consider myself as a loyal customer to the store	.834
I need the assistance of a salesperson in the store in order to select the right product	.624
I purchase from this particular store because I can rely of the competence of the staff	.844
I purchase from this particular store because of the assistance I get from salespersons in this store	.924
I get value for money in the store because the salespersons are responsive to me	.945

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. 1 component extracted.

Table 6.8: Rotated Component Matrix 2 (The relationship between personal selling factors and store loyalty-RESEARCH QUESTION 2 AND 3)

Section C	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sales personnel in this store are reliable	.056	.068	-.058	.968	.044	-.024	-.011
I feel safe when dealing with sales personnel in this store	.118	.083	-.145	.942	.136	-.008	-.012
Sales personnel in this store provide me with useful product information	.017	.011	.060	-.029	-.019	.993	.042
Sales personnel in this store offer the most suitable products to me	-.002	.060	-.003	-.019	.030	.042	.994
Sales personnel in this store understands my needs	.221	.885	.222	.077	.079	-.031	.020
I feel Sales personnel in this store have my best interest at heart	.264	.905	.084	.038	-.069	.025	.057
Sales personnel in this store are friendly	.691	.202	-.067	-.037	.141	-.077	-.046
Sales personnel in this store discuss my needs with me before offering me a suitable product	.060	.055	-.277	.152	.890	-.019	.037
Sales personnel in this store dress professionally	.835	.296	.050	.063	-.218	.036	-.001
Sales personnel in this store appear neat and tidy	.927	-.042	.124	.087	-.098	.036	-.015
The characteristics of salespersons influence my decision to shop in this particular store	.813	.037	.010	.111	.202	.041	.063

I perceive that the sales personnel in this store possess unique characteristics which play a useful role	.085	.141	.918	-.001	.042	.045	-.012
The personal selling characteristics of sales persons motivates me to repurchase from this store	-.006	.131	.769	-.131	-.391	.005	.028
I have confidence in the competence of sales persons of this store and would recommend this store to my friends and relatives	.008	.364	.599	-.261	-.303	.055	-.023
I would rather shop at this store than shop at any other store with similar products/services	-.026	.951	.145	.072	.027	.015	.013

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization a.

Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Table 6.8 depicts the reduction of 15 factors into 7 categories namely:

- Factors 1: Tangibles
- Factors 2: Empathy
- Factors 3: Buyer behaviour
- Factors 4: Safety and reliability
- Factors 5: Customer needs identification
- Factors 6: Useful product information
- Factors 7: Useful product offer

6.7.3 Reliability and Validity

Tables 6.9 to 6.12 reflect the Cronbach's alpha scores for all the items used in Section B and C of the questionnaire in this study. Table 6.9 and 6.10 reflects the Cronbach's score for the items that constitute customer Shopping profile in Section B of the questionnaire. Whilst Tables 6.11 and 6.12 reflects the Cronbach's score for the items that constitute the personal characteristics of salespersons in section C of the questionnaire.

Section B.

Table 6.9: Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	313	100.0

Excluded ^a	0	0.0
Total	313	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 6.10: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.888	5

Section C:

Table 6.11: Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	309	98.7
	Excluded ^a	4	1.3
	Total	313	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 6.12 : Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.764	15

The shopping profile of customers (section B) and section C, measuring the personal characteristics of salespersons were rotated. The Cronbach's Alpha scores were 0.888 or 88% and .764 or 76%. All sections exceeded the recommended Cronbach's alpha value of above 0.700 or 70%. The score conforms to normal value for the Cronbach's alpha test which should be above 0.700 or over 70% (Leech et al., 2005; Devellis, 2003). Therefore, statistically the reliability and validity of the instruments and the data sets generated for this study were sound.

6.7.4 Hypothesis (H) Testing

Chi square test was performed to determine whether the scoring patterns per statement were significantly different per option between the variables across (rows vs columns). The traditional approach to reporting a result requires a statement of statistical significance whereby a **p-value** is generated from a **test statistic**. A significant result is indicated with $p < 0.05$. These values are highlighted with a *. Table 6.13 shows the results for H_1 , the relationship between personal selling and store loyalty and appendix four further summarised the results of the chi square tests.

Table 6.13: Chi square tests-Personal selling and store loyalty

	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp. Sig.
I consider myself a loyal customer to the store	13.923	2	.001
I need the assistance of a salesperson in the store in order to select the right product	7.022	2	.030
I purchase from this particular store because I can rely of the competence of the staff	6.064	2	.048
I purchase from this particular store because of the assistance I get from salespersons in this store	11.93	2	.003
I get value for money in the store because the salespersons are responsive to me	65.796	2	.000
The personal selling characteristics of sales persons motivates me to repurchase from this store	292.703	2	.000
I have confidence in the competence of sales persons of this store and would recommend this store to my friends and relatives	195.955	2	.000
I would rather shop at this store than shop at any other store with similar products/services	53.853	2	.000

The null hypothesis H_0 signifies there is no significant difference between two variables whilst the alternate states that there is a significant difference between the levels of agreement and disagreement. The primary objective of the study was to investigate the influence of personal selling characteristics of salespersons on store loyalty. In this regard, the study proposed and tested the following hypothesis.

H_0 : There is no significant difference between personal selling and store loyalty

H_1 : There is a significant difference between personal selling and store loyalty

The highlighted sig. values (p-values) show the level of significance less than where significance is $p < 0.05$. The differences between the way respondents scored (agree, uncertain, disagree) were entered.

For the first statement: **I consider myself a loyal customer to the store**, the sig. values (p-values) = 0.001 and this indicates a significant value in respect of this variable. Similarly, on the statements: **I need the assistance of a salesperson in the store in order to select the right product** and **I purchase from this particular store because I can rely on the competence of the staff**, the p-values were; p-values = .030; and (p-values) = 0.048 respectively. The statistical results of these two statements were partially significant in terms of their p-values. Likewise, the (p-value = .003) and (p-value = .000) were of no significant value respectively for these statements

I purchase from this particular store because of the assistance I get from salespersons in this store;

I get value for money in the store because the salespersons are responsive to me;

I get value for money in the store because the salespersons are responsive to me;

The personal selling characteristics of salespersons motivate me to repurchase from this store;

I have confidence in the competence of salespersons of this store and would recommend this store to my friends and relatives;

I would rather shop at this store than shop at any other store with similar products/services

The overall results for H_1 indicate that no significant difference exists between personal selling and store loyalty in electronics appliance stores ($v=11.135$, $p > 0.05$, $v=8.565$, $p > 0.05$, $v=94.856$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, H_0 is accepted. Next the study moved to test if there was a significant difference between personal selling factors and store loyalty. The results are presented in Table 6.14.

Table 6.14 Chi square tests- personal selling factors and store loyalty

	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Sales personnel in this store are reliable	366.639	2	.000
I feel safe when dealing with sales personnel in this store	385.348	2	.000
Sales personnel in this store understands my needs	3.606	2	.165
I feel Sales personnel in this store have my best interest at heart	41.412	2	.000
Sales personnel in this store are friendly	106.327	2	.000

Sales personnel in this store discuss my needs with me before offering me a suitable product	285.626	1	.000
Sales personnel in this store dress professionally	231.419	2	.000
Sales personnel in this store appear neat and tidy	106.703	2	.000

The following set of hypothesis relates to **the influence of personal selling factors and store loyalty**.

H₀: Personal selling factors does not influence store loyalty

H₁: Personal selling factors influences store loyalty

Table 6.4 show a significant difference in respondents' level of agreement for all dimensions where p value =0.00, except for salespersons in the store understand my needs where p value=0.165.

Next the study tested if there was a significant difference between customer perceptions of a salesperson and store loyalty. The results are presented in table 6.15.

Table 6.15 Chi square tests- Customer perception of salesperson and store loyalty

The characteristics of salespersons influence my decision to shop in this particular store	24.62	2	.000
I perceive that the sales personnel in this store possess unique characteristics which play a useful role	206.345	2	.000

This hypothesis relates to **the association between customers' perception of personal selling efforts of salespersons and store loyalty**.

H₀: Customers' perception of personal selling efforts does not influence store loyalty

H₁: Customers' perception of personal selling efforts does influence store loyalty

The results presented on table 6.15 indicate that there is a significant difference between respondents level of agreement regarding the influence customer perception of personal selling efforts of a salesperson and store loyalty in electronics appliance stores with p value=0.00. Therefore H₁ is accepted.

6.7.5 Correlations Statistics

The focus of this section was on the primary research objective and the relevant sub themes of the study. The results are found in the appendix five. The results indicate the following patterns.

The correlation value between I consider myself as a loyal customer to the store and I get value for money in the store because the salespersons are responsive to me was 0.887. This reveals a directly proportional relationship and by implication the respondents indicate that the more responsive salespersons are, the more likely they are to be a loyal customer. The correlation value between the personal selling characteristics of salespersons motivates me to repurchase from this store and the reliability of salespersons in the store was -0.212. The result indicates that respondents believe that the more standard the reliability feature of salespersons characteristics are, the less important the selling characteristics of the salesperson will be perceived.

Similarly, the correlation value between I consider myself a loyal customer to the store and salespersons in this store discuss my needs with me before offering me a suitable product was -0.016. This indicates that respondents believe that the more salespersons discuss customer needs and offer them suitable need satisfying products, the less relevant the characteristics will be in their decision to be loyal. The seeming contradiction may be explained by the fact that negative values imply an inverse relationship, thus causing product knowledge to fall within the basic expectations of the customer.

6.8 STORE MANAGERS

This section presents the analysis and results of the findings obtained from the Managers. The data collected from the respondents was analysed using SPSS version 23.0. Descriptive statistics were the main tool used to analyse the data and were presented in the form of graphs, cross-tabulations and figures. Inferential techniques including the use of correlations and chi-square test manipulation were also used.

6.8.1 The Sample

In total, 50 questionnaires were despatched and 48 were returned which gave a 96% response rate. Given that an ideal response rate is considered to be at least 70%, therefore the response rate in regard to managers is satisfactory.

6.8.2 The research instrument

The research instrument composed 18 items, with measurement at a nominal or ordinal level. The managers' questionnaire comprised of six questions.

6.8.3 Question analysis

The section that follows analyses the scoring patterns of the respondents per variable in each section. The results are shown using summarised percentages for the variables that constitute each section.

6.8.3.1 Importance of salespersons in electronics appliance stores

Section D of the questionnaire dealt with store managers' perceptions about salespersons in electronics appliance stores. The purpose of the research question was to determine the relationship between managements' and customers' preferred personal selling attributes of salespersons in electronics appliance stores? In order to answer the question a series of other questions was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools, depicted on Tables 6.16 to 6.32.

- **Managers' opinion regarding the presence of salespersons in electronics appliance stores**

The findings are depicted on Table 6.16 and Table 6.17

Table 6.16: Presence of salespersons in the store

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	48	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 6.17: Significance of salesperson's role in the store

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	1	2.1	2.1	2.1
Strongly Agree	47	97.9	97.9	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.16 depicts that all respondents (managers) (100%) confirmed that they had employed salespersons in their stores. Furthermore, majority of the respondents as per Table 6.17 (97.9%) agreed with the statement that salespersons play a meaningful role in stores.

- **Managers opinion of personal selling characteristics**

Managers were asked to indicate the most important personal selling characteristics which they considered salespersons should have in order to work in the stores. The managers were asked to evaluate the following five personal selling characteristics: emotional intelligence, social competence, trustworthiness, product knowledge and professional appearance. The results depicted in Tables 6.18 to 6.22.

Table 6.18: Importance of Emotional Intelligence

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very important	13	27.1	27.1	27.1
Somewhat important	35	72.9	72.9	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.19: Importance of Social Competence

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Very important	31	64.6	64.6	64.6
Somewhat important	17	35.4	35.4	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.20: Importance of Trustworthiness

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Very important	41	85.4	85.4	85.4

Somewhat important	7	14.6	14.6	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.21: Importance of Product Knowledge

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Very important	48	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 6.22: Importance of Professional Appearance

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Very important	12	25.0	25.0	25.0
Somewhat important	36	75.0	75.0	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

The findings are presented chronological;

Table 6.18 indicate that 72.9% of the respondents (managers) considered **emotional intelligence** characteristic to be somewhat important and 27.1% evaluated it as very important.

Table 6.19 depict that 64.6% considered **social competence** of salespersons as very important and 35.4% of respondents were of the opinion that it is somewhat important.

Approximately 85.4 % of respondents were of the view that **trustworthiness** in salespersons was very important. However, 14.6% of respondents were of the view that it was somewhat important (Table 6.20).

Table 6.21 indicates that all (100%) the respondents were of the view that salespersons with **product knowledge** are very important.

Table 6.22 demonstrates that 75% of the respondents (the managers) regarded **professional appearance** of sales persons as somewhat important, whilst a quarter (25%) of the respondents deemed it as very important characteristics.

- **Manager's perception of personal selling factors and store loyalty**
This question considered at management's perception of the influence of personal factors on store loyalty decision. The Tables 6.23 to 6.27 present the results.

Table 6.23: Emotional Intelligence and loyalty intention

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Somewhat Influential	26	54.2	54.2	54.2
Not sure	22	45.8	45.8	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.24: Social Competence and loyalty intention

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Extremely influential	28	58.3	58.3	58.3
Somewhat Influential	20	41.7	41.7	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.25: Trustworthiness and loyalty intention

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Extremely influential	35	72.9	72.9	72.9
Somewhat Influential	13	27.1	27.1	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

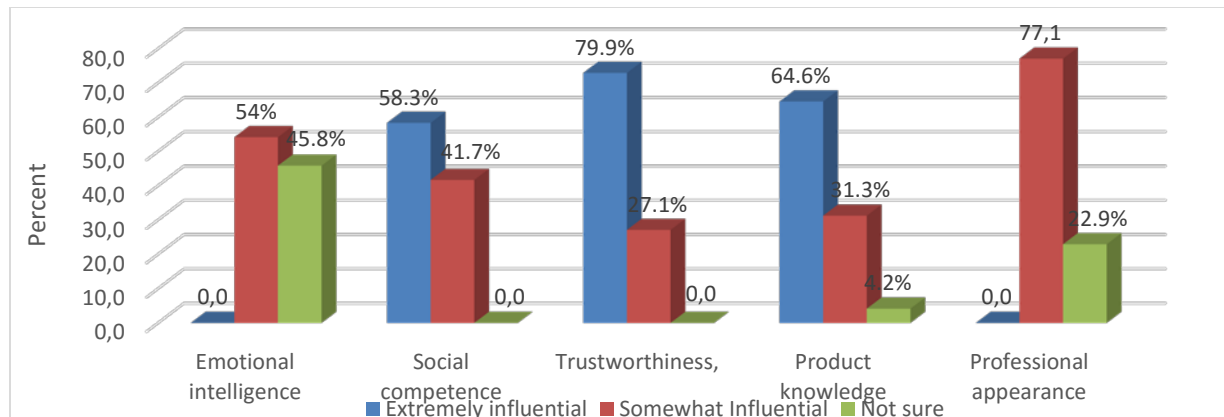
Table 6.26: Product Knowledge and loyalty intention

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Extremely influential	31	64.6	64.6	64.6
Somewhat Influential	15	31.3	31.3	95.8
Not sure	2	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.27: Professional Appearance and loyalty intention

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Somewhat Influential	37	77.1	77.1	77.1
Not sure	11	22.9	22.9	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Figure 6.6Managers perception of personal selling factors and store loyalty



The following findings from Tables 6.23 to 6.27 and Figure 6.6 indicates:

Table 6.23 show that 54.2% of respondents considered **Emotional Intelligence** characteristic as somewhat important. However, 45.8% of respondents were not sure whether salespersons' characteristics influence customer loyalty decisions in the stores.

Table 6.24 indicate that 58.3% of respondents agreed that **Social Competence** extremely influenced store loyalty decisions and 41.7% state that they were somewhat influenced by the characteristics. Approximately 80% (79.9%) of respondents agreed that the **trustworthiness** of salespersons extremely influenced their loyalty decisions. The other 27.1% confirmed that trustworthiness somehow influenced their decisions (Table 6.25).

Table 6.26 **Product Knowledge**, results indicates that 64.6% of the respondents agreed that salesperson's characteristics regarding product knowledge extremely influenced customer loyalty decision. However, 31.3% of respondents were of the opinion that this characteristic does somewhat influence customer loyalty decisions and 4.2% of the respondents were not sure.

Table 6.27 demonstrates that a significant 77.1% of the respondents were of the opinion that the Professional Appearance of salespersons somehow influences customer loyalty decisions in the stores, whilst 22.9% were not sure about this characteristic of salespersons.

- **Management rankings of preferred personal selling factors for the recruitment and Hiring of Salespersons in electronics appliance stores**

Managers were asked to rank the 5 personal characteristics of salespersons in order of importance when hiring and recruiting new salespersons on the scale of 1-5. (1 = Most Important and 5 = Least Important). Tables 6.28 to 6.32 below portray the results obtained from this analysis.

Table 6.28: Emotional Intelligence and employment criteria

Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
2.00	10	20.8	20.8	20.8
3.00	38	79.2	79.2	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.29: Social Competence and employment criteria

Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.00	34	70.8	70.8	70.8
2.00	12	25.0	25.0	95.8
3.00	1	2.	2.1	97.9
4.00	1	2.	2.1	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.30: Trustworthiness and employment criteria

Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.00	36	75.0	75.0	75.0
2.00	12	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.31: Product Knowledge and employment criteria

Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.00	47	97.9	97.9	97.9
2.00	1	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.32: Professional Appearance and employment criteria

Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
1.00	13	27.1	27.1	27.1
2.00	14	29.2	29.2	56.3
3.00	21	43.8	43.8	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

The findings are:

Table 6.28, **Emotional Intelligence**, the findings indicate that 20.8% of respondents ranked this characteristic as the second most important when managers are hiring people and 79.8% ranked it as the third most important characteristic.

Table 6.2, **Social Competence**, the results show that 70.8% the respondents ranked it as the first most important factor when hiring salespersons, 25.0% ranked it as the second most important whilst 2.1% considered it the third most importance; and another 2.1% ranked it as the least important characteristic.

Table 6.30, **salespersons' Trustworthiness characteristics**, the results depict that 75% of respondents believe that this characteristic is the most important when hiring salespersons. The other 25% ranked this characteristic as second when hiring salespersons.

The finds were that 97.9% of respondents ranked **Product Knowledge** characteristic as the most important when hiring salespersons (Table 6.31).

Table 6.32 show that 43.8% ranked **professional appearance** as the third most important characteristic when hiring salespersons, whilst 29.2% ranked it as the second most important and 27.1% of respondents ranked as the most important.

Table 6.33 details the overall analysis on the rankings which managers might consider as the most important characteristic when hiring salespersons. The factors are summed-up in Table 6.33:

Table 6.33: Managers' recruitment and hiring preference.

	Rank
Product knowledge	1
Trustworthiness	2
Social competence	3
Professional appearance	4
Emotional intelligence	5

The finding indicated that salesperson's product knowledge was considered as the most important characteristic, followed by trustworthiness, social competence, professional appearance and emotional intelligence in order of ranking.

6.8.3.2 Satisfaction level of customers in the absence of salespersons

The survey questionnaire asked respondents (managers) their opinions on satisfaction level of customers if there were no salespersons to help customers in the stores. The results are presented in Table 6.34.

Table 6.34: The Consequence of absence of salespersons in electronics appliance stores

Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Very dissatisfied	48	100.0	100.0	100.0

The finding was that 100% of the respondents (managers) were of the opinion that customers would be dissatisfied in stores if salespersons were not there to help them.

This analysis has examined the information which emanated from the manipulation of data collected from the field. The following section discusses the data analysis in an attempt to answer the research questions and their implications for the research study.

To determine whether the scoring patterns were significantly different for each question (and sub-questions); a chi square test was done. The null hypothesis (H_0) claims that there is no difference in the scoring patterns per statement. The alternate is that the scoring patterns are significantly different per statement. The results are shown in the Chi Square Test table 6.35

Table 6.35 Importance of selling characteristics to managers.

	Emotional intelligence	Social competence	Trustworthiness	Professional appearance	Product knowledge
Chi-Square	10.083	4.083	24.083	12.000	44.083
Df	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.001	.043	.000	.001	.000

All of the p-values (Asymp. Sig.) are less than the level of significance of 0.05. This implies that respondents favoured one direction more than the other. An examination of the results indicates that more respondents scored “more important” than “not important”. That is, the difference was significant.

6.8. 4 Correlations

This section presents correlation results of the second study instruments administered to managers. The results are found in the appendix 7. The results indicate that the correlation value between Trustworthiness and Emotional intelligence is **0.371**. This is a directly related proportionality. Respondents indicate that the more emotionally intelligent a salesperson is, the more trustworthy the salesperson is perceived to be and vice versa. The correlation value between professional dressing and product knowledge is **.162**. Thus, respondents indicate that professional dressing is not synonymous to product knowledge. Respondents also indicated that social competence is not synonymous to emotional intelligence. The correlation value between social competence and emotional intelligence is **-.235**. However, respondents associate product knowledge with trust factor’ thus indicating that the more product knowledge a salesperson possesses, the more trustworthy they are.

6.8.5 Conclusions

This chapter primarily focused on the study result presentation and discussion. The descriptive data such as biographic profile of the respondents was presented and discussed in terms of significance to the study. For example, majority of respondents were female between the ages of 18 to 30 years old. The results also show that majority of the respondents were of African race.

However, the level of income and education of the respondents was significantly high. Though the response rate was not deemed to be the ideal, it was considered acceptable in the generally prevailing

circumstance of dwindling research response rate. The results of inferential statistics such as chi square test, factors analysis, correlations and t-test were also presented and discussed. The following chapter (Chapter 7) deals with interpretation of results.

CHAPTER 7 - DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the results and provides their interpretation in the context of the research questions and findings of the study. Considering the existing literature, the data analysis provides answers to the research questions. This section begins with a discussion on the socio-demographics composition of the survey respondents. The discussion is done against the backdrop of the four research objectives namely:

- To determine whether personal selling influences store loyalty in the electronics appliance retail industry in Johannesburg.
- To identify which personal selling factors influence store loyalty in the electronics appliance stores in Johannesburg.
- To explore the relationship between customers' perception of personal selling and store loyalty in appliance retail stores.
- To establish if a relationship exists between managements and customers preferred personal selling attributes of sales personnel in electronics appliance stores.

7.2 BIOGRAPHIC PROFILING

The essence of the socio-demographic data was to provide general information underlying the demographic composition of the study. Since this study was a social research involving behavioural undertones, it was critical to analyse the socio-demographics and evaluate them in the context of the data collected for the study (Gilovich, Keltner, and Nisbett, 2006:467). The study was conducted in Johannesburg, South Africa and the socio-demographic discussion begins with the gender and age composition of the study, followed by a brief discussion on the race, income level and educational level of the sample.

- **Gender and Age groupings**

In this study, 73.5% of the respondents were female and 26.5% were male within the age groupings. The significance of this phenomenon is that females provided more information for the study than males.

There is no justified rationale behind why more female respondents were sampled than their male counterparts. However, given that the subject area of the study is about salespersons assisting customers in electronic appliance stores, the researcher was of the opinion that more females visited

electronics appliance stores than males. Therefore, more females were available for sampling than males.

According to Cardi (2009), the advent of modern appliances such as washing machines and refrigerators had a profound impact on 20th Century society. Therefore, plug-in conveniences transformed women's lives and enabled them to enter the workforce. This statement implied that females are buying more electronic appliances in recent years. Thus, the more females buy appliances, the more likely they may to ask for assistance from salespersons in the stores. Therefore, one can argue that when it comes to the usage of electronic appliances females may more likely seek assistance from salespersons in stores than males.

- **Race**

The racial composition of the study shows that 87.5% of the respondents were African, followed by Whites at 0.3; Indians at 0.6; Coloured at 0.6 and others (which includes Chinese and Malays) at 10.9%. The reason for the African race being the largest number of respondents may be attributed to the prevalently high African population in Johannesburg.

- **Monthly income**

The results show that approximately 87.5% of the respondents earned between R0 to R50, 000 per month whilst 11.8% earned between R50, 000 and R100, 000 monthly. The income level of the respondents is an indication of robust purchasing power and demand for durable products.

- **Level of education**

The majority of respondents (61%) in this study had university qualifications. This is a useful statistic as it indicates that a fair proportion of the respondents have higher qualifications and consequently, the responses gathered would have been from individuals of a high social class and lifestyle. However, 36.4% of the respondents did not have a formal education but could read and **write**, whilst 2.6% had a high school level of education.

7.3 PERSONAL SELLING AND STORE LOYALTY (Primary research objective)

The primary research objective was to determine if personal selling influenced customers to become loyal to electronic appliance stores. The questionnaire contained the following six items.

7.3.1 Frequency of purchase at electronics appliance store

The first item was to establish the eligibility of the respondents by determining whether they were regular purchasers from the store. Interestingly, there was an overwhelming indication that the majority of the study respondents (97.4%) actively patronise the stores to purchase electronic appliances.

7.3.2 Loyalty to a particular store

The second item was to determine whether the respondents considered themselves to be loyal to the store they frequently purchased from. Most of the respondents (40.9%) agreed to the statement. The fact that only 40.9% of respondents indicated that they were loyal customers of the stores may be considered significant given that a high percentage of the respondents (97.4%) indicated that they purchased electronic appliances from the same store at least 1 to 5 times per year. However, these results do not necessarily concede that all the customers are loyal and patronise the particular store because of personal selling. Also note that 35.1% of the respondents did not consider themselves to be loyal customers of the stores. Notably, personal selling and the salesperson are mutually inclusive; the latter is contingent on former since personal selling is an act performed by a salesperson. Theories such as the Social Exchange theory which rationalizes existence of reciprocity in social exchange transactions as well as several other studies support the study assumption that personal selling and salespersons factors (such as trust, product knowledge, social competence, emotional intelligence and physical appearance) does influence store loyalty (Tarver and Haring, 1998:15; Lee and Dubinsky, 2003:22; Kim, Ju and Johnson, 2009: 412; Kim and Kim, 2012: 824; Beneke et al., 2012: 37; Jayawardhena and Farrell 2011:14).

7.3.3 Customer opinion of the importance of salesperson's assistance

The third item was to determine if the respondents' value the assistance of salespersons in the store. Despite several studies concurring on the importance of salesperson's assistance to customers (Chang, Cho, Turner and Gupta, 2015; Adesoga, 2016), there are also significant amount of literature evidence to suggest that customers also feel dissatisfied with invasive and intrusive behaviour from salespersons (Mafini and Dhurup, 2015; Ergin, Ozdemir and Ozsacmaci 2015). Subsequently, in this study, the respondents were somewhat split in their views regarding the importance of salesperson's assistance.

7.3.4 Salespersons competence and customer purchase intention

The third item was to determine whether the effectiveness of salespersons influenced customers to purchase from the store. The Responses to this item was somewhat divided into two equal groups, on the one hand, were those who considered the competence of salespersons as the motivation for their purchases in the store and on the other hand were those who did not consider the competence of salespersons to be the motivating factor for their patronage. However, this outcome is followed a consistent pattern as the previous item whereby respondents were likewise divided in their opinion regarding the relevance of the assistance of salespersons in the store. This finding is not surprising given that authors like Mafini and Dhurup (2015) found that South Africans did not have a high opinion of store sales assistants partly because they considered them to be intrusive. Furthermore, given that most respondents stated that they already knew what they wanted to purchase before visiting the store, the finding may be considered consistent.

7.3.5 Influence of salesperson's assistance on store patronage

The fourth item was to determine if respondents purchased from a particular store due to the support they received from salespersons. Wang and Ha (2011:339), suggests that competency of salespersons and the value of the services they provide to customers are factors which contribute to customer loyalty in the stores. The study findings reveal the contrary for electronics appliance stores given that respondents did not consider salesperson's assistance to influence their store patronage. In fact, less than half of the respondents indicated that they required salesperson's assistance to discuss brand features and benefits.

7.3.6 Salespersons responsiveness and customer perception of value

On the fifth item which was to establish if salesperson's understanding of customer needs was tantamount to their obtaining of value for their money. The majority of the respondents indicated that they got value for money in the store because of the salesperson's responsiveness to them. This finding is supported by van Scheers (2015:197) who found that South African consumers will recognise the value of the salesperson's presence and responsiveness in electronics appliance stores if they possess sufficient product knowledge. However, in this study, it cannot be argued with certainty that the presence of salespersons necessarily influenced store loyalty in electronics appliance stores. This may be partly because South Africans generally did not consider the salespersons' role to be sufficient cause for loyalty in retail stores (Mafini and Dhurup, 2015).

Likewise, concluding from the study's empirical evidence, the presence of salespersons in electronics appliance stores in Johannesburg area in Gauteng does not influence customer loyalty and patronage.

7.4 IMPACT OF PERSONAL SELLING FACTORS (Research objective 2)

It is generally difficult to separate the personal characteristics of a salesperson and the act of personal selling from customers' overall assessment and perception of a sales encounter. This objective was to establish the personal selling characteristics of salespersons that customers considered to be vital in electronics appliance stores. The intent was to find out from customers which personal selling attributes they expect salespersons in electronics appliance stores to possess, as well as how they perceived those attributes in relation to their store loyalty intention. The respondents were required to rate the attributes on a five-point scale (Strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=5) according to their perceptions of its influence on loyalty. The factors that were tested include trust, product knowledge, emotional intelligence, social competence, physical appearance and the overall influence of the attributes. Critical analysis of these factors may be categorised into two groupings: highly rated factors, rated above 50% and lowly rated factors, rated 50%. The highly rated factors could be considered as those factors which the respondents perceived as potentially influential to their loyalty intention towards the store.

7.4.1 Trust Factor

This item was to determine the reliability and dependability of salespersons of the store. The findings suggest that majority (over 85% of the respondents) of electronics appliance customers in Johannesburg agree that trust is an important factor in their choice of store. Other authors also arrive at similar conclusions that trust is a major consideration for store patronage and loyalty intention amongst retail customers (Khalilakbar, Heidari and Jamshidian, 2015; Twing-Kwong, Albaum and Fullgrabe, 2013; Yang and Wu, 2014).

7.4.2 Product Knowledge Factor

This item was to establish if customers considered that receiving valuable and suitable information regarding products, the firm and competitors from salespersons are essential in electronics appliances stores. There was a unanimous consensus by all respondents tested on this factor. Respondents perceive this factor to be the most relevant personal selling factor. This finding corroborates the findings of a comparative study by van Scheers (2015) which found that South African electronics product consumers value salespersons' product knowledge, whereas their counterparts in the US value respect. Other authors also found the knowledge of product, firm, customer and competitors to be of high value in personal selling (Cicala et al., 2015).

7.4.3 Social Competence Factor

This item was to determine the effect of friendliness and politeness of salespersons during interactions with customers. The findings show that social competence of a salesperson was perceived by a significant percentage of the respondents as valuable. Similarly, there is research evidence suggesting a relationship between customer loyalty and congruent employee-customer interaction (Vesel and Zabkar, 2009:1353; Mende, Bolton and Bitner, 2013:139). In fact, authors like Castleberry et al. (2011) mentioned listening skills as a critical component of social competence, stating that the more familiar a person is with the content of the communication, the more receptive and effective the listening and communication process will be.

7.4.4 Emotional Intelligence Factor

This item was to establish if customers regarded salespersons' sensitivity and understanding of their unique needs as an important attribute. Surprisingly, respondents partially agreed to the importance of this attribute. Despite literature evidence to the contrary, for example, Kim (2010:2352) asserts that emotional intelligence can improve performance and that there is a linear relationship between emotional competence, social competence and trust. Though, Delcourt et al. (2013:8) are of the opinion that customers remain the best judge of emotional intelligence of salespersons since they are the direct beneficiaries of its presence or lack thereof. This result was not surprising given that literature evidence suggests that salespersons and sales-force management in South Africa appears to be adopting relational selling antecedents at a rather slow pace (Mafini and Dhurup, 2015).

7.4.5 Physical Appearance Factor

This item was to determine the importance of salespersons appearance, their oral and physical hygiene to customers. In this regard, respondents considered the dress code of salespersons to be very important. According to Little and Roberts (2012), there is a positive relationship between physical appearance and performance. In fact, some scholars even suggest that physical appearance could affect customer emotions, store image and purchase intention (Kim and Kim, 2012:837). Although evidence from the findings suggests that the majority of the respondents acknowledged that most stores do set strict standards for dressing and the appearance for salespersons.

Table 7.1 Preferred personal selling factors for appliance electronics store consumers in Johannesburg.

Table 7.1 Personal selling factors customers consider important

FACTOR	RANKING
Product Knowledge	1
Trustworthiness	2
Social Competence	3
Professional Appearance	4
Emotional Intelligence	5

A brief analysis and interpretation of the patterns of the results reveal that the respondents rated the product knowledge and expertise factor of personal selling highest, followed by the trust and integrity factor. Social competence and listening skills were third on the respondent's favourite attribute list. Professional appearance in terms of oral hygiene and the neat dressing of salespersons was fourth on the respondents' ranking whilst emotional intelligence was last on the ranking list. This survey confirms that the personal selling factors of salespersons are important to customers in electronics appliance stores.

7.5 CUSTOMER PERCEPTION AND STORE LOYALTY

The purpose of this objective was to determine if customer likeness or dislike of salespersons attributes (such as trustworthiness, product knowledge, emotional intelligence, professional appearance and social competence) could affect store loyalty. In this regard, the survey presented five items (questions) to respondents.

The first item was to determine if the respondent considered the store salespersons to possess unique personal selling attributes. Most of the respondents concurred that salespersons in the store possessed some personal selling attributes. **The second item** was to determine whether customer satisfaction with characteristics and attributes of salespersons in the store contributed to store loyalty to the particular electronics appliance store. Most of the respondents considered the personal selling characteristics and attributes of salespersons as necessary but did not consider it to be a sufficient cause for their loyalty to the store. This may be explained by literature evidence that suggests that though there is a positive relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, not all satisfied customers are loyal (Beneke et al., 2012:31).

The third item was to establish if the personal selling characteristics of salespersons serve as a motivating factor to repurchase from the store. Most respondents concurred that positive attributes of salespersons are sufficient cause for them to repurchase from the store. However, the researcher affirms that though the response to this statement may seem contradictory to the response to the previous statement, they are both unrelated given that repurchasing from a store is not tantamount to loyalty. Besides the previous statement dealt specifically with the perception of respondents on loyalty, whereas the latter dealt with motivation for a repeat purchase.

On **the fourth item**, the question was aimed at determining whether having confidence in the competence of salespersons of the store does motivate customers to recommend the store to friends and relatives. Most of the respondents agreed with the statement. Although most marketing academics believe that loyal customers provide a stream of benefits to a firm, which includes recommending the store to others (Cant and du Toit, 2012:1224).

The fifth item was to establish if the positive or negative perception of personal selling in a store prompted customers to resist the lure to shop at any other store with similar products/services. Approximately half (50.2%) of the respondents mentioned that they would not be persuaded to change their shopping destination to a corresponding store even if the store possessed similar products and services. The importance of this finding is that it supports the study's postulation as presented in the conceptual model (Figure 4.2 in Chapter 4) which shows that personal selling factors potentially influenced store loyalty in electronics appliance stores. The results show that customers who are satisfied with the quality of personal selling in a store are more likely to resist the lure of competitors. Likewise in the context of existing literature, scholars (Sun and Lin 2010:1450; Alrbaiee, 2012:9, Cant and du Toit, 2012:1224; Clottey, Collier and Stodnick, 2008; Kotler and Keller, 2012) to mention a few, have all established the link between the salesperson and customer loyalty. Notably, a strong salesperson-customer relationship ensures that customers will be loyal to the point of spreading positive word of mouth, resisting competitors and increase their purchases to the stores (Cant and Du Toit, 2012). In the current study, the findings pointed to salient factors (personal selling and salesperson's attributes) that the electronic appliances stores could harness to increase loyalty and competitiveness.

7.6 STORE MANAGERS AND PERSONAL SELLING FACTORS

The cognitive and affective opinion of electronics appliance retail store managers regarding the relevance of personal selling attributes of salespersons was the focus of objective four. The objective was to compare the derived opinion of customers regarding their preferred personal selling attributes with those of store managers.

7.6.1 Availability of salespersons in the store and relevance of their role

The first item was aimed at determining the importance of salespersons in the store. Most managers (97.9%) considered the role of salespersons in their store to be meaningful. The findings in this survey are in line with prior studies which highlight the importance of salespersons in the retailing sector where specialized skills are needed to guide customers on the features and benefits of products and services (van Heerden and Drotsky, 2011:5; Wang and Ha, 2011; 2011; Spiro et al., 2008; Naicker and Brijlal, 2012).

7.6.2 Managers ranking of important personal selling attribute

The item was to establish the personal selling attributes that managers consider for salespersons to possess in order to work in an electronics appliance store. The item required for managers to rank their opinion from the most important to the least important attribute. The attributes were Emotional intelligence; Social competence; Trustworthiness; Product knowledge; and Professional appearance. The respondents considered the most relevant personal selling attributes of salespersons in the order of highest to lowest to be Product Knowledge; Trustworthiness; Emotional intelligence; Social competence; and lastly Physical appearance. Several scholars also established links between these personal selling characteristics/attributes of salespersons and emphasize their importance from the perspective of both customer and management (Lee and Dubinsky 2003; Kim and Kim 2012; Little and Roberts 2012; Delcourt et al. 2013; Sexana, 2011; van Scheers, 2015).

7.6.3 Influence of personal selling factors and store loyalty (Store Managers)

This item was to determine the personal selling factors that store managers considered would have an influence on store loyalty. Most respondents were of the opinion that trustworthiness could influence store loyalty. This opinion was followed closely by the product knowledge factor; then the social competence factor; the emotional intelligence factor; and lastly was the professional appearance factor. Table 7.2 depicts the ordinal ranking of managers' opinion of personal selling factors influencing loyalty.

Table 7.2: Manager's perception of the Influence of personal selling factors

PERSONAL SELLING FACTORS	RANKING
Trustworthiness	1
Product Knowledge	2
Social Competence	3
Emotional intelligence	4
Professional Appearance	5

7.6.4 Management preferred attributes for the hiring of salespersons

Recruitment and hiring criteria should resonate with the target customers' needs and desires as it is a reflection of management's' mission and vision for the organisation (Nickson, Warhurst, Commander, Hurrell and Cullen, 2012:75). Thus, the essence of the question was to further shed light on the relationship between management preference of personal selling factors and that of customers. With regard to the latter, managers were asked to rank the 5 personal selling factors of salespersons in order of importance on a scale of 1-5 (1= Most Important and 5= Least Important) during recruitment of new salespersons. The results are presented in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Store Manager's most relevant Factors for Hiring Salespersons

FACTOR	ORDER OF PREFERENCE	% OF RESPONSE
Product Knowledge	1	97.9%
Trustworthiness	2	75%
Professional Appearance	3	27.1%
Social Competence	4	25%
Emotional Intelligence	5	10%

The statistics confirm the opinion and perception of the store managers regarding the personal selling attributes which they considered to be important for salespersons to possess and are also consistent with the factors that customers deem important. However, in terms of comparing management's preferred salespersons attribute from that of customers, both customers and managers' perceptions of the five personal selling factors were similar except for a slight variance in terms of the ranking position of Product Knowledge, Trust factor and professional appearance factor.

The fact that their viewpoints on the importance of salespersons' characteristics slightly diverge on particulars such as scale of preference but converge on a central view gives credence to the findings. Table 7.4 juxtapose managers and customers preferred personal selling attributes of salespersons.

Table 7.4: Comparing store Managers and Customers preferred Personal Selling attributes

FACTOR (MANAGERS)	RANKINGORDER (MANAGERS)	FACTOR (CUSTOMERS)	RANKINGORDER (CUSTOMERS)
Product Knowledge	1	Product Knowledge	1
Trustworthiness	2	Trustworthiness	2
Professional Appearance	3	Social Competence	3
Social Competence	4	Professional Appearance	4
Emotional Intelligence	5	Emotional Intelligence	5

7.6.5 The effect of the absence of salespersons in electronics appliance stores

This item was to determine the effect of the absence of salespersons in the store on customer satisfaction. All the respondents (managers) were of the opinion that customers would be dissatisfied if salespersons were not present to help them in electronics appliance stores. According to Williams (2012:22) salespersons are responsible for customer relationship which is one of the most fragile assets of a firm that could likewise be damaged by incongruent and insensitive behaviour of salespersons. Furthermore, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2010:1) assert that the dynamics of retail stores are such that customers and salespersons interact constantly and this vital interface preludes customer store perception. In this study, the admission by managers that stores could not do without the services of salespersons may be admitted as evidence of their importance towards the store's success but not necessarily towards customer loyalty.

7.7 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study extensively examined the influence of the cognitive and affective component of personal selling from an electronics appliance retail buyer and seller perspective. Four pertinent questions were answered by the exploratory study. Firstly, personal selling is not a sufficient cause or influence for store loyalty in electronics appliance retail store; secondly, customers consider personal selling factors relevant in an electronics appliance retail store; thirdly, customer positive perception of a salesperson's efforts exerts

influence on their decision to be loyal to the store?; and lastly, are major similarities in the personal selling factors preferred by management and customer. Despite the findings negating the primary objective and assumption of the study, the study uncovered some valuable facts regarding personal selling. For example, the study findings depict a unanimous concession by respondents that personal selling factors, particularly product knowledge and trustworthiness are of relevant attributes of personal selling in electronics appliance stores. Also, of importance in the findings was that positive customer perception of salesperson's efforts was a necessary cause for store loyalty. However, an interesting finding of the study was that both managers and customers had significant similarities in their opinion and expectations regarding the most relevant personal selling factors to be possessed by salespersons in an electronics appliance store. The following chapter (Chapter 8) deals with the conclusion, recommendations and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The results of the study were discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter intends to align the main findings of the study with the aim and objectives of the study. The objective of this chapter is to draw conclusions and identify implications. In addition, the chapter draws attention to the limitations of the study. The chapter ends with recommendations for future research areas and topics that researchers could investigate to further advance the body of knowledge.

Chapter 1 presented the background for the study and introduced the research objectives. The aim of the study was to explore the importance and influence of personal selling on store loyalty in electronics appliance stores in Johannesburg. It also outlines the research area, the assumptions underlying this study, the structure of the research project and the methodology that was engaged. Discussion on the significance of the study and its contribution to knowledge discussed.

The literature review section of the study was broken down into three chapters, Chapter 2, 3 and 4. Chapter 2 of the study discussed the relevance and the dynamics of the retail landscape of South Africa. The purpose of the chapter was to highlight the relevance of retailers in South Africa, as well as identifying the different types of retailers in South Africa. Chapter 3 of the study focused on the characteristics of retail consumers and store loyalty. The chapter focused on independent and interdependent variables on consumer characteristics and store loyalty. Chapter 4 of the study discussed the influence of personal selling on store loyalty. The purpose of the chapter was to determine the dimensions of personal selling and salespersons' perspectives that add value to store loyalty. Theories and concepts supporting the study were discussed. The unique characteristics of salespersons and their role towards customers in retailing stores were also discussed comprehensively.

Chapter 5 focused on the research methodology of this study and included the research design, study population, sampling size and technique employed; data collection; and analysis method for the study, including a report on the pilot study. Ethical clearance compliance was also dealt with in the chapter.

Chapter 6 and 7 focused on the research findings and presented the results of the data collection and analysis from two target population (customers and managers).

8.2 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS (PRIMARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVE)

The central thought in every loyalty strategy is to offer an organisation's profitable customers a unique and meaningful value proposition that essentially keeps them away from competitors and rivals. According to Adesoga (2016) personal selling remains a relevant and crucial tool for organisations to build long-term relationships with their customers. The primary focus of this study was to determine the influence of personal selling in electronics appliance consumer markets in Johannesburg. The results indicate that about 40.9% of the study participants considered themselves to be loyal customers whilst about 39.3% of the study participants indicated that the main reason they patronise the store was due to the assistance they receive from salespersons. Though interestingly, approximately (51.4%) were of the opinion that the influence of salespersons in the store enabled them to receive value for their money and 37.4% of the study participants agree that their decision to purchase from the store is influenced by personal selling attributes of salespersons. From the empirical evidence in the study, it would be concluded that though customers consider personal selling as a crucial element in their shopping experience, they do not consider personal selling to be a sufficient cause of influence for store loyalty in electronics appliance stores. Therefore, the study concludes that personal selling does not influence store loyalty in electronics appliance stores in Johannesburg. These statistics further highlight the evasiveness of commanding customer franchise in electronics appliance retail stores particularly in an era where information is readily available to consumers. However, the researcher supposes that the results obtained could be different if the same study was performed amongst customers in rural areas and also amongst older persons.

8.3 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS (RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2)

The second objective of the study was to identify personal selling dimensions that influence store loyalty in electronics appliance store. The results reveal that customers generally regarded personal selling factors as crucial in appliance stores. However, the study participants considered Product Knowledge to be most important factors that could potentially influence their loyalty to the store. Trust was considered the second most important factor, followed by social competence, professional appearance and lastly emotional intelligence. This finding is corroborated by other similar studies that affirm that Product knowledge and Trust factors are considered to be important to customers (Cicala et al., 2012; van Scheers, 2015). The finding is a crucial insight to appliance retail stores regarding the personal selling factors their customers consider most relevant and thus can serve as a tool to improve loyalty to their stores. The

implications of this findings concede that though possessing good personal selling skills are valuable, if the salespersons behavioural attributes are poor, customer evaluation of personal selling is likely to be negative.

8.4 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS (RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3)

It is impossible to separate personal selling from salespersons thus this finding primarily relates to the effect of the likeness or dislike of salespersons effort on customer store loyalty. The third objective focused on customer perception of salespersons and personal selling and store loyalty in an electronics appliance store. The findings show that customer loyalty to the store was not as a direct consequence of the perception of role of salespersons. Though, approximately (51.4%) were of the opinion that the influence of salespersons in the store enabled them to receive value for their money.

However, what is interesting in the findings is that customers were of the opinion that in the presence of competent salespersons, they would perform behaviours and attitude attributed to only loyal customers such as re-purchasing from the store; recommending the store to their friends and relatives; and resisting competitors even when they have similar products and service offerings. However, Martos-Partal and Benito (2013:355) explains that when different approaches are used to measure loyalty the outcome usually differs because customers differ in their views and the determinants of store loyalty. Likewise, Homburg et al., (2011) mention that customer perception and assessment of their experience differs according to the type of benefits they are seeking. For example, some consumers may be seeking hedonic values whilst others seek utilitarian values during sales encounters.

Although, the summative findings reflect a slight conflict in customer perception of personal selling providing them with value for money and its influence on loyalty. The results imply that even though customers perceive competent salespersons in a good light, they do not consider the positive perception of personal selling efforts of salespersons weighty enough to influence store loyalty intention in electronics appliance stores in Johannesburg. Considering that loyalty may be regarded as an indication of satisfaction, management of electronics appliance store should therefore consider recruiting and selecting competent salespersons with the necessary skills and competence fitted for the selling task.

8.5 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS (RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 4)

The aim of this objective was to establish if a relationship exists between management's and customers preferred personal selling attributes of salespersons in electronics appliance stores.

The objective was to determine the similarity or lack thereof in the opinion of customers and management with regard to the skills and characteristics necessary and required by salespersons working in an electronics appliance retail store. According to Cicala et al. (2012:85), the perspectives of buyers and sellers regarding personal selling attributes are usually not in tandem. For example, whilst salespersons may possess product knowledge, the customers may value a focused knowledge about their specific needs; similarly, a salesperson may interpret trust as being sincerity or doing things right at work whilst the customer values honesty or doing the right things even if it hurts.

However, the study finding reveals that a linear relationship exists between the preferred personal selling factors and attributes of salespersons from the perspective of managers and customers as depicted by Table 8.1 and Table 8.2.

Table 8.1: Managers' perception of influence of personal selling factor.

PERSONAL SELLING FACTOR	RANKING
Trustworthiness	1
Product Knowledge	2
Social Competence	3
Emotional intelligence	4
Professional Appearance	5

Table 8.2: Customers' perception of influence of personal selling factor

FACTORS	RANKING
Product Knowledge	1
Trustworthiness	2
Social Competence	3
Professional Appearance	4
Emotional Intelligence	5

The findings confirm that both managers and customers share similar views in respect of the important personal selling attributes of salespersons. There is an apparent appreciation of resourceful, trustworthy, well-spoken salespersons with a complementary appearance amongst managers and customers. The implication of this result is that electronics appliance retailers should ensure that they first determine the job-appropriate characteristics and attributes that are important to customers before recruiting and selecting salespersons.

8.6 LIMITATIONS

The following were some of the limitations of this study:

- The main limitations of the study were that it was cross-sectional, and data was collected from a limited geographic area and for a limited time.
- Generalisation from sample to population is limited.
- Funding and the budget to support this study were limited. This situation adversely delayed the data collection process. However, the researcher managed to finance the study from his own private resources, which made it possible for the completion of this study.
- Another Limitation was the lack of co-operation from some respondents during the data collection process. Some respondents were not interested in completing the questionnaire. Customers were more interested in shopping rather than completing a questionnaire, consequently, only 313 of the 500 questionnaires for customers was successfully completed. However, the few respondents who voluntarily completed the questionnaires made it possible for the study to be completed.
- The dearth of prior research in this subject area also presented a limitation, which affected obtaining academic literature for this study. However, both global and South African perspectives of published literature exist, thus making it possible for the researcher to conduct the new study.
- Time and travel constraints were also limitations in this study. The researcher had to travel to various electronic appliances stores in Johannesburg to collect data. This factor coupled with the lack of budget for research adversely delayed the data collection process.
- Finally, the study's proposed model is incomplete as it does not exhaustively consider all extraneous factors that potentially influence store loyalty.

8.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the empirical findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Personal selling attributes are not a standard component of an individual but are rather unique and latent qualities and since poor selling attributes are not easy to detect during a job interview, it is important for management to develop the necessary job specific tools and skills that can detect the presence or lack of the required skills and attributes of salespersons in order to ensure that the right salesperson is hired. Similarly, it is pertinent for management to consider personal selling training that recognises contemporary shopper needs and expectations. For example, although store salespersons often feel duty-bound to intercept customers, either at the entrance or inside the store in order to initiate the personal selling process. However, millennials respondents in the study state that they prefer that salespersons only assist them if and when needed. This is understandable as most millennials are knowledgeable and well-informed shoppers

In view of the conflict regarding the desirable the timing of approach in salesperson-customer encounters; management could provide further training to salespersons to enable salespersons recognise and manage territorial conflict issues in their stores. The timing of salespersons interception of customers should be balanced in order to avoid salespersons coming off as interfering or intruding with customers' store experience. For example, rather than intercepting or obstructing the motion of a customer walking into or through the store, salespersons could be trained to rather walk alongside the customer and keep the required spatial distance whilst engaging them in a selling conversation.

Salespersons in electronics appliance stores in Johannesburg, the site of the study, should be encouraged to harness the use of personal selling factors such as product knowledge, Trust, social competence and professional appearance to influence customer improve customer satisfaction as a precursor to loyalty and repeat patronage. This study revealed that salespersons unique characteristics have a profound impact on customer perceptions and opinions of the store, therefore salespersons should endeavour to be polite, friendly and always show gratitude to customers because they are the reason for the selling profession. Management should train salespersons to perform their responsibilities conscientiously. Management should establish strong support relationships with salespersons in order to motivate and provide confidence for salespersons to build long term relationships with customers.

8.8 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study recommends that future researchers conduct studies in other areas where personalised assistance is required from salespersons in handling specialised goods and services. Future research could focus on the following:

- The consumer mind set (Hedonic vs. Utilitarian) most likely to be influenced by personal selling factors toward loyalty to the store.
- The specific consumer segment that may be influenced by personal selling factors to be store loyal;
- Expanding the research to other retail types and formats to determine if personal selling factors influence store loyalty;
- Developing recruitment systems that could identify if potential employees possess the personal selling factors required by management and customers of particular stores;
- Explore whether differences exist in the importance of particular factors in selecting staff in other retail formats;
- Determine which retail mix inspires customer franchise and loyalty in electronics appliance retail stores;
- Customer Relation Management (CRM) focusing on salespersons and customer relationships could enhance the understanding of salespersons contribution to store loyalty; and
- Research could explore the relationship between salespersons' use of information technology tools and store loyalty in electronics appliance stores.
- The impact of Personal selling on the profitability of micro enterprises in South Africa

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Appendix 1



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study: The influence of personal selling on store loyalty in electronics appliance stores in Johannesburg.

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: (Armstrong Joseph Victor- MMS)

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: (Dr. Maharaj Mandusha-Dcomm)

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: Previous research shows that loyal customers repurchase from the same store, resist competitive pressure and perform positive word of mouth to friends and relatives. Generally, personal selling includes all the activities performed by a salesperson during and after a sales encounter with a customer. This aim of this study is to establish the importance of personal selling in stimulating store loyalty in the electronics appliance retail stores in Johannesburg.

Outline of the Procedures: The measuring tool is a questionnaire that is to be distributed to sales managers and shoppers of the participating stores. Participation is completely voluntary and participants are under no obligation to complete the questionnaire.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: Participants in this study will endure no physical, emotional or mental harm.

Benefit: The benefits of the study to the participants is that the outcome of this research will serve as a source of information to store manager regarding the personal selling factors most important to their customers so as to hire fit-for-purpose salespersons and thus enhance store loyalty. It is also expected that improved customer service and satisfaction will be the outcome for customers.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study: Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and participants reserve the right to withdraw their participation in the study at any given time. There will be no consequence if the participant decides or chooses to withdraw from the study for any given reason.

Remuneration: Participation in the study is voluntary therefore no payments in cash or kind will be made to participants.

Costs of the Study: Participants are not expected to cover any cost or hold any liability towards the study.

Confidentiality: The information provided by participants in the survey will be treated as confidential and will be protected.

Research-related Injury: The study does not involve any form of physical activity and therefore does not pose any risk of injury to the participants.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Please contact the researcher, JV Armstrong (Cell: 0833631313), my supervisor Dr. Mandusha Maharaja (Cell: 0832627929) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

General:

All respondents should note that the participation in this study is voluntary and at any given time the participant may withdraw from the study. The number of participants for this research study is five hundred and fifty (550) respondents.

Appendix 2



CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, J.V. Armstrong (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____.
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

JUST ELECTRONICS

15/08/14 Mohammed
 Full Name of Participant Date Time Signature / Right Thumbprint

J.V. Armstrong (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Joseph V. Armstrong 15/08/14 [Signature]
 Full Name of Researcher Date Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable) Date Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date Signature



CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, J.V. Armstrong (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____.
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
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- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

HABIB ELECTRONICS

4/11/14 11:07 Agress Mbali 062 035 077
 Full Name of Participant Date Time Signature / Right Thumbprint

J.V. Armstrong (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Joseph V. Armstrong 4/11/2014 [Signature]
 Full Name of Researcher Date Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable) Date Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date Signature



CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, J.V. Armstrong (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____.
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- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

CITY BLOCK MINI MART

12-08-2014
 Full Name of Participant Date Time Signature / Right Thumbprint

J.V. Armstrong (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Joseph V. Armstrong
 Full Name of Researcher 12/08/2014
 Date Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable) Date Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date Signature



CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, J.V. Armstrong (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____.
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- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

STATION VIBRATION

10-02-2015
 Full Name of Participant Date Time Signature / Right Thumbprint

J.V. Armstrong (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Joseph V. Armstrong
 Full Name of Researcher 10/02/15
 Date Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable) Date Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date Signature



CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, J.V. Armstrong (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____.
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

VIKELA ELECTRONICS

Full Name of Participant

Date Time

Signature / Right Thumbprint

J.V. Armstrong (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Full Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable)

Date

Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date

Signature

Appendix 3



Faculty of Management Sciences

Department of Public Management & Economics

Date: 14th August, 2014

Dear Participant,

I am Mr. Joseph Victor Armstrong currently studying towards M Tech degree in Marketing at the Durban University of technology. In order to complete this degree I am required to conduct a research study. The approved topic I am researching on is: The influence of personal selling on store loyalty in South Africa.

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of personal selling in stimulating loyalty in an electronic appliance retail store. To participate in this study, you need to complete a questionnaire. This should take a maximum of ten minutes. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers/responses to any of the questions or statements. I would greatly appreciate if you could participate in this study. I hereby request your consent and support in conducting this research.

Should you require further information, kindly contact the researcher or supervisor using the numbers or emails provided below.

Yours sincerely

Joseph V Armstrong (Researcher)

Contact details: Mobile 083 363 1313, Landline: 011 917 0176/ Email: joeafricana@consultant.com

Dr. M Maharaj (Supervisor/Promoter)

Contact: 083 2627929/Email: maharama@dut.ac.za

Appendix 4



Faculty of Management Sciences

Department of Public Management & Economics

Dear Participant,

Masters Research Project

Researcher: Name: Joseph V Armstrong (Tel: +27 083 363 1313), Email: joeafricana@consultant.com

Supervisor: Name: Dr. M Maharaj (Tel: +27 083 2627929), Email: maharama@dut.ac.za

I am Mr. Joseph Victor Armstrong currently studying towards a Master's degree in Marketing at the Durban University of Technology. In order to complete this degree I am required to conduct a research study. The approved topic I am researching on is: The influence of personal selling on store loyalty in electronics appliances stores in Johannesburg.

The aim of this study is to investigate whether personal selling skills and abilities of sales people stimulate repeat purchase, positive word of mouth and competitive resistance in electronics appliance retail stores. Electronics appliance stores include stores that sell, cell phones, computers, DVD players, microwave ovens, refrigerators, television sets, cameras and game consoles. To participate in this study, you need to complete a questionnaire. This should take a maximum of ten minutes. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers/responses to any of the questions or statements. I would greatly appreciate if you could participate in this study. I hereby request your consent and support in conducting this research.

Should you require further information, kindly contact the researcher or supervisor using the numbers or emails provided.

Investigator's signature_____

Date_____

CONSENT

I.....(Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the content of the document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my participation from the project at anytime, if I so desire.

.....

.....

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

Appendix 5



Questionnaire for Customers/Shoppers

PART A

1 Demographic information (Please mark 'X' in the applicable boxes provided)

1.1 Please indicate your gender

Female	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.2 Please which age grouping do you fall?

18-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
31-40	<input type="checkbox"/>
41-50	<input type="checkbox"/>
51- 60	<input type="checkbox"/>
60-above	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.3 Please indicate your race

Black	White	Indian	Coloured	Chinese	Others

1.4 Please indicate the level of your monthly income. My monthly salary is between

R0 - R50 000	
R51000 - R100 000	
R101000 - above	

1.5 Please indicate your level of Education

Primary	
High school	
University	
Others	

1.6 My level of occupation is

Unemployed	
Student	
Lower level staff	
Middle level	

Executive level	
Top Executive level	
Others	

PART B

Shopping Profile Information

2. This section deals with the influence of personal selling on store loyalty

2.1. How many times have you shopped in this store in the past 12 months?

1- 5 times	
6-10	
11-15	
16-20	
20- above	

2.2. *Would you consider yourself a loyal customer to this store?*

Strongly Disagree	
Disagree	
Neutral	
Agree	
Strongly Agree	

2.3. I need the assistance of a sales person in this store in order to select the right product

Strongly Disagree	
Disagree	
Neutral	
Agree	
Strongly Agree	

2.4. I buy from this particular store because I can rely of the competence of the staff

Strongly Disagree	
Disagree	
Neutral	
Agree	
Strongly Agree	

2.5. I buy from this particular store because of the assistance I get from Salespersons in this store

Strongly Disagree	
Disagree	
Neutral	
Agree	
Strongly Agree	

2.6. I get value for money in this store because the Salespersons is responsive to me

Strongly Disagree	
Disagree	
Neutral	
Agree	
Strongly Agree	

Part C

3. This section deals with personal selling factors\characteristics, which customers expect salespersons to have in a shop. Please express an opinion about salespersons characteristics.

Please indicate your opinion with “X”, in the scale column 1-5 provided below the statement.

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = strongly Agree

			Perceptions				
Factors		Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Trustworthiness	1	ales personnel in this store are reliable					
Product Knowledge	2	es personnel in this store provide me with useful information					
<i>Emotional intelligence</i>	3	ales personnel in this store understands my needs					
Social Competence	4	ales personnel in this store are friendly					
Appearance	5	ales personnel in this store dress professionally					
Characteristics	6	The characteristics of salespersons influence my decision to shop in this particular store					

Characteristics	6	The characteristics of salespersons influence my decision to shop in this particular store					
Characteristics	7	I perceive that the sales personnel in this store possess unique characteristics which play a useful role in					
Loyalty intention	8	he personal selling characteristics of salespersons motivates me to repurchase from this store					
Loyalty intention	9	I have confidence in the competence of salespersons of this store and would recommend this store to my friends and relatives					
Loyalty intention	10	would rather shop at this store than shop at any other store with similar products/services					

Part D

Questionnaire for Store Managers

This questionnaire is to solicit Store Managers opinion about sales persons in your shop.

Please mark 'X' in the applicable boxes provided)

1.1 Please do you have salespersons working in this store and how many are they

Yes	No

1.2 In my opinion I think salespersons play meaningful role in this store

Strongly Disagree	
Disagree	
Neutral	
Agree	
Strongly Agree	

- 1.3 Researchers have indicated that successful salespersons possess the following 5 personal selling characteristics: Emotional intelligence, Social competence, Trustworthiness, Product knowledge and professional appearance. Please which of these is most important to you as a Manager in this store? Please mark x to indicate your choice.

Factors	Very important	Somewhat important	Not sure	Somewhat not important	Not very important
Emotional intelligence					
Social competence					
Trustworthiness,					
Product knowledge					
professional appearance					

- 1.4 In your opinion do you think the 5 personal characteristics of salespersons listed below have any influence on store loyalty decision of your customers?

Factors	Extremely influence	Some influence	Not sure	Little influence	extremely no influence
Emotional intelligence					
Social competence					
Trustworthiness,					

Product knowledge					
professional appearance					

1.5

As a manager which of these 5 personal characteristics of salespersons do you consider important when hiring and recruiting new sales personnel? Please list them in the order of importance to you.

Factors	Extremely important	Somehow important	Not sure	Little important	Extremely not important
Emotional intelligence					
Social competence					
Trustworthiness,					
Product knowledge					
professional appearance					

1.6

In your opinion what will be the behaviour/attitude (satisfaction level) of customers if there were no salespersons in this store to help them.

Very satisfied	
Somewhat satisfied	
Not sure	

Somewhat dissatisfied	
Very dissatisfied	

.....**END**....Thank you Sir/Madam for your time

Please note that the information you provide in this survey is confidential and will be protected.

Your participation is completely voluntary and thus you are under no obligation to complete the questionnaire. However your participation would be greatly appreciated as this would help me to achieve accurate findings.

If you decide to participate, please ensure you have read and signed the attached letter of consent from the Durban University of Technology. After you have completed the questionnaire, please hand it over to me.

If you require further information, kindly contact the researcher or the supervisor on the numbers below.

Thank you.



Student: Joseph V. Armstrong

Contact Details: 083 363 1313

Dr. Mandusha Maharaja (Supervisor / Promoter)

Contact Details: 083 2627929

Co-Supervisor/Co-Promoter

Contact Details

159

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 7

Material		Quantity		Unit Price		Total Price		Material		Quantity		Unit Price		Total Price		Material		Quantity		Unit Price		Total Price			
Description		Unit		Quantity		Unit Price		Total Price		Description		Unit		Quantity		Total Price		Description		Unit		Quantity		Total Price	
Concrete 100mm thick		m ²		100		1.50		150.00		Concrete 100mm thick		m ²		100		1.50		Concrete 100mm thick		m ²		100		1.50	
Concrete 150mm thick		m ²		100		2.25		225.00		Concrete 150mm thick		m ²		100		2.25		Concrete 150mm thick		m ²		100		2.25	
Concrete 200mm thick		m ²		100		3.00		300.00		Concrete 200mm thick		m ²		100		3.00		Concrete 200mm thick		m ²		100		3.00	
Concrete 250mm thick		m ²		100		3.75		375.00		Concrete 250mm thick		m ²		100		3.75		Concrete 250mm thick		m ²		100		3.75	
Concrete 300mm thick		m ²		100		4.50		450.00		Concrete 300mm thick		m ²		100		4.50		Concrete 300mm thick		m ²		100		4.50	
Concrete 350mm thick		m ²		100		5.25		525.00		Concrete 350mm thick		m ²		100		5.25		Concrete 350mm thick		m ²		100		5.25	
Concrete 400mm thick		m ²		100		6.00		600.00		Concrete 400mm thick		m ²		100		6.00		Concrete 400mm thick		m ²		100		6.00	
Concrete 450mm thick		m ²		100		6.75		675.00		Concrete 450mm thick		m ²		100		6.75		Concrete 450mm thick		m ²		100		6.75	
Concrete 500mm thick		m ²		100		7.50		750.00		Concrete 500mm thick		m ²		100		7.50		Concrete 500mm thick		m ²		100		7.50	
Concrete 550mm thick		m ²		100		8.25		825.00		Concrete 550mm thick		m ²		100		8.25		Concrete 550mm thick		m ²		100		8.25	
Concrete 600mm thick		m ²		100		9.00		900.00		Concrete 600mm thick		m ²		100		9.00		Concrete 600mm thick		m ²		100		9.00	
Concrete 650mm thick		m ²		100		9.75		975.00		Concrete 650mm thick		m ²		100		9.75		Concrete 650mm thick		m ²		100		9.75	
Concrete 700mm thick		m ²		100		10.50		1050.00		Concrete 700mm thick		m ²		100		10.50		Concrete 700mm thick		m ²		100		10.50	
Concrete 750mm thick		m ²		100		11.25		1125.00		Concrete 750mm thick		m ²		100		11.25		Concrete 750mm thick		m ²		100		11.25	
Concrete 800mm thick		m ²		100		12.00		1200.00		Concrete 800mm thick		m ²		100		12.00		Concrete 800mm thick		m ²		100		12.00	
Concrete 850mm thick		m ²		100		12.75		1275.00		Concrete 850mm thick		m ²		100		12.75		Concrete 850mm thick		m ²		100		12.75	
Concrete 900mm thick		m ²		100		13.50		1350.00		Concrete 900mm thick		m ²		100		13.50		Concrete 900mm thick		m ²		100		13.50	
Concrete 950mm thick		m ²		100		14.25		1425.00		Concrete 950mm thick		m ²		100		14.25		Concrete 950mm thick		m ²		100		14.25	
Concrete 1000mm thick		m ²		100		15.00		1500.00		Concrete 1000mm thick		m ²		100		15.00		Concrete 1000mm thick		m ²		100		15.00	
Concrete 1050mm thick		m ²		100		15.75		1575.00		Concrete 1050mm thick		m ²		100		15.75		Concrete 1050mm thick		m ²		100		15.75	
Concrete 1100mm thick		m ²		100		16.50		1650.00		Concrete 1100mm thick		m ²		100		16.50		Concrete 1100mm thick		m ²		100		16.50	
Concrete 1150mm thick		m ²		100		17.25		1725.00		Concrete 1150mm thick		m ²		100		17.25		Concrete 1150mm thick		m ²		100		17.25	
Concrete 1200mm thick		m ²		100		18.00		1800.00		Concrete 1200mm thick		m ²		100		18.00		Concrete 1200mm thick		m ²		100		18.00	
Concrete 1250mm thick		m ²		100		18.75		1875.00		Concrete 1250mm thick		m ²		100		18.75		Concrete 1250mm thick		m ²		100		18.75	
Concrete 1300mm thick		m ²		100		19.50		1950.00		Concrete 1300mm thick		m ²		100		19.50		Concrete 1300mm thick		m ²		100		19.50	
Concrete 1350mm thick		m ²		100		20.25		2025.00		Concrete 1350mm thick		m ²		100		20.25		Concrete 1350mm thick		m ²		100		20.25	
Concrete 1400mm thick		m ²		100		21.00		2100.00		Concrete 1400mm thick		m ²		100		21.00		Concrete 1400mm thick		m ²		100		21.00	
Concrete 1450mm thick		m ²		100		21.75		2175.00		Concrete 1450mm thick		m ²		100		21.75		Concrete 1450mm thick		m ²		100		21.75	
Concrete 1500mm thick		m ²		100		22.50		2250.00		Concrete 1500mm thick		m ²		100		22.50		Concrete 1500mm thick		m ²		100		22.50	
Concrete 1550mm thick		m ²		100		23.25		2325.00		Concrete 1550mm thick		m ²		100		23.25		Concrete 1550mm thick		m ²		100		23.25	
Concrete 1600mm thick		m ²		100		24.00		2400.00		Concrete 1600mm thick		m ²		100		24.00		Concrete 1600mm thick		m ²		100		24.00	
Concrete 1650mm thick		m ²		100		24.75		2475.00		Concrete 1650mm thick		m ²		100		24.75		Concrete 1650mm thick		m ²		100		24.75	
Concrete 1700mm thick		m ²		100		25.50		2550.00		Concrete 1700mm thick		m ²		100		25.50		Concrete 1700mm thick		m ²		100		25.50	
Concrete 1750mm thick		m ²		100		26.25		2625.00		Concrete 1750mm thick		m ²		100		26.25		Concrete 1750mm thick		m ²		100		26.25	
Concrete 1800mm thick		m ²		100		27.00		2700.00		Concrete 1800mm thick		m ²		100		27.00		Concrete 1800mm thick		m ²		100		27.00	
Concrete 1850mm thick		m ²		100		27.75		2775.00		Concrete 1850mm thick		m ²		100		27.75		Concrete 1850mm thick		m ²		100		27.75	
Concrete 1900mm thick		m ²		100		28.50		2850.00		Concrete 1900mm thick		m ²		100		28.50		Concrete 1900mm thick		m ²		100		28.50	
Concrete 1950mm thick		m ²		100		29.25		2925.00		Concrete 1950mm thick		m ²		100		29.25		Concrete 1950mm thick		m ²		100		29.25	
Concrete 2000mm thick		m ²		100		30.00		3000.00		Concrete 2000mm thick		m ²		100		30.00		Concrete 2000mm thick		m ²		100		30.00	
Concrete 2050mm thick		m ²		100		30.75		3075.00		Concrete 2050mm thick		m ²		100		30.75		Concrete 2050mm thick		m ²		100		30.75	
Concrete 2100mm thick		m ²		100		31.50		3150.00		Concrete 2100mm thick		m ²		100		31.50		Concrete 2100mm thick		m ²		100		31.50	
Concrete 2150mm thick		m ²		100		32.25		3225.00		Concrete 2150mm thick		m ²		100		32.25		Concrete 2150mm thick		m ²		100		32.25	
Concrete 2200mm thick		m ²		100		33.00		3300.00		Concrete 2200mm thick		m ²		100		33.00		Concrete 2200mm thick		m ²		100		33.00	
Concrete 2250mm thick		m ²		100		33.75		3375.00		Concrete 2250mm thick		m ²		100		33.75		Concrete 2250mm thick		m ²		100		33.75	
Concrete 2300mm thick		m ²		100		34.50		3450.00		Concrete 2300mm thick		m ²		100		34.50		Concrete 2300mm thick		m ²		100		34.50	
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Concrete 2900mm thick		m ²		100		43.50		4350.00		Concrete 2900mm thick		m ²		100		43.50		Concrete 2900mm thick		m ²		100		43.50	
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Concrete 3050mm thick		m ²		100		45.75		4575.00		Concrete 3050mm thick		m ²		100		45.75		Concrete 3050mm thick		m ²		100		45.75	
Concrete 3100mm thick		m ²		100		46.50		4650.00		Concrete 3100mm thick		m ²		100		46.50		Concrete 3100mm thick		m ²		100		46.50	
Concrete 3150mm thick		m ²		100		47.25		4725.00		Concrete 3150mm thick		m ²		100		47.25		Concrete 3150mm thick		m ²		100		47.25	
Concrete 3200mm thick		m ²		100		48.00		4800.00		Concrete 3200mm thick		m ²		100		48.00		Concrete 3200mm thick		m ²		100		48.00	
Concrete 3250mm thick		m ²		100		48.75		4875.00		Concrete 3250mm thick		m ²		100		48.75		Concrete 3250mm thick		m ²		100		48.75	
Concrete 3300mm thick		m ²		100		49.50		4950.00		Concrete 3300mm thick		m ²		100		49.50		Concrete 3300mm thick		m ²		100		49.50	
Concrete 3350mm thick		m ²		100		50.25		5025.00		Concrete 3350mm thick		m ²		100		50.25		Concrete 3350mm thick		m ²		100		50.25	
Concrete 3400mm thick		m ²		100		51.00		5100.00		Concrete 3400mm thick		m													