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Abstract

Relationship marketing remains a major predictor of brand loyalty in the telecommunication industry. Regardless of this, mobile telecommunication firms in Kenya are yet to achieve required brand loyalty levels. This is evident given high levels of switching freedom and churn rate levels which rose from 21.20% to 31.45% in Safaricom, while in Airtel, this rose from 4.9% to 6.0% in 2021. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of relationship marketing on brand loyalty in mobile telecommunication service providers in Kenya. The study was hinged relationship marketing theory and descriptive research design. Target population was 124,849 subscribers drawn from four telecoms; Safaricom, Airtel, Telecom and Equitel. Stratified sampling technique was used to select a representative sample of 443 respondents. The primary data for the study was collected using a closed ended survey instrument. The study adopted Cronbach's metrics of alpha to determine the internal consistency of the instrument while its validity was assessed by supervisors. Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Correlation and Regression). The findings indicated that there is a positive and significant relationship between relationship marketing and brand loyalty, where relationship marketing explained 60.1% of the variance in mobile telecommunication service providers brand loyalty. The study concludes that relationship marketing has a significant effect on brand loyalty. The telecoms management should put more effort on human interactions and activities, enhanced Collaborative Perspective, aligned and empowerment employee and value co-creation behaviors in order to advance relationship marketing

Keywords: *Relationship Marketing, Brand Loyalty*

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1.0 Introduction

The fundamental purpose of marketing is to help companies identify, satisfy, create longer customer lifecycles and retain beneficial customers. Moreover, marketing scholars and managers became interested on how companies can leverage company-customer relationships to acquire privileged information about customers' needs in order to improve on service delivery compared to competitors (Dushyenthan, 2012). These activities lay the foundation for what has become a strategic imperative in modern marketing; the relationship marketing (CRM).

Relationship marketing emerged in the 1980's as an alternative to the prevailing view of marketing as a series of transactions, because it was recognized that many exchanges, particularly in the service industry, were relational by nature (Berry, 1983; Dwyer *et al.*, 1987; Grönroos, 1994; Gummesson, 1994; Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2000). Within a retail banking setting, Walsh *et al.* (2004, p. 469) define RM as the activities carried out by firms in order to attract, interact with, and retain more profitable or high net-worth customers. Relationship marketing thus aims at increasing customer profitability while providing better services for customers. Several studies have empirically demonstrated a positive association between RM strategies and business performance (Naidu *et al.*, 1999; Palmatier & Gopalakrishna, 2005). Within a banking context, Keltner (1995) found that German banks, in contrast to American banks, managed to maintain a stable market position during the 1980's and early 1990's as a consequence of relationship oriented banking strategies.

One of the basic tenets of relationship marketing is customer orientation. Customers will exhibit different levels of relationship closeness and strength (Berry, 1995; Liljander & Strandvik, 1995). In order to be attractive, RM strategies should enhance customers' perceived benefits of engaging in relationships (O'Malley & Tynan, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

Relationship marketing has become a strategic requirement for businesses in almost every industry. Companies are getting closer to their consumers, putting more effort into discovering fresh ways to add value for them, and changing the customer relationship from one of selling and order taking to one of problem-solving and partnership (Szmig, 2003). However, mobile telecommunication firms in Kenya are yet to achieve required brand loyalty levels. This is evident given high levels of switching freedom and churn rate levels which rose from 21.20% to 31.45% in Safaricom, while in Airtel, this rose from 4.9% to 6.0% in 2021. In order to obtain sustainable competitive advantage, mobile telecommunication service providers are forced to be highly innovative and to do their best to ensure brand loyalty.

Taking into consideration the preceding discussion and the subsequent benefits that can be obtained from brand loyalty and relationship marketing, little research has been conducted to obtain a clear understanding of relationship marketing and brand loyalty in mobile telecom service providers. Case of Nairobi, Kenya. Thus the study aimed to answer the following research objective; what is the relationship between relationship marketing and brand loyalty in mobile in mobile telecom service providers. Case of Nairobi, Kenya.

Objective of the Study

The specific objective of the study was:

- i) To establish the relationship between relationship marketing and brand loyalty in mobile telecom service providers. Case of Nairobi, Kenya.

1.4 Hypothesis of the Study

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between relationship marketing and brand loyalty in mobile telecom service providers, Kenya.

Scope of the Study

This study covers four mobile telecommunication firms operating in Kenya focusing mainly in Nairobi County where there is over 75 percent concentration of activities including staff base. It focuses on relationship marketing practices including human interactions and activities, enhanced collaborative perspective, aligned and empowerment employee and value co-creation behaviours as they relate with customer satisfaction-brand loyalty relationship. The study involved customers of Safaricom PLC, Airtel Kenya, Telkom Orange and FinServ Africa/Equitel. Data was collected using questionnaires during the period off year 2022.

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework is based on the independent variable and dependent variable as shown graphically in Figure 1 that illustrates the conceptualized relationship between these variables.

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

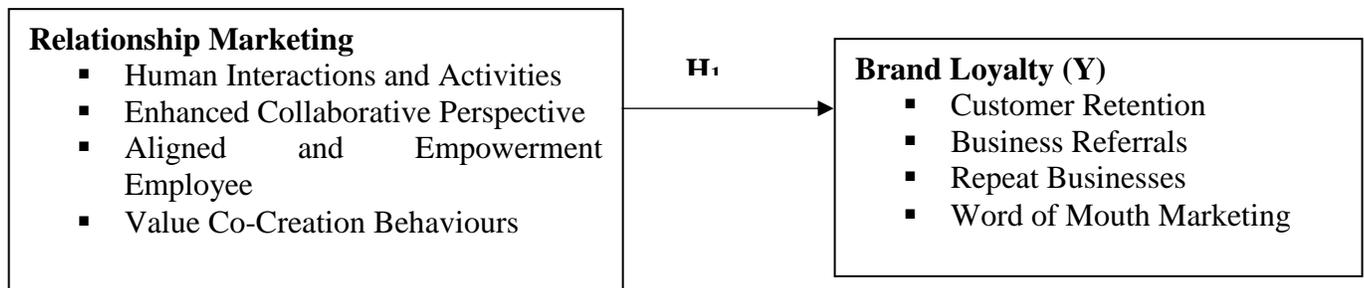


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationships of the Variables of Study

(Source: Modified Algharabat et. al., 2019)

The independent variable of the study is relationship marketing, represented by practices such as human Interactions and Activities, enhanced collaborative perspective, aligned and empowerment employee and Value Co-Creation Behaviours. The dependent variable of the study is brand loyalty, denoted by customer retention, business referrals, repeat businesses and word of mouth marketing. The study conceptualizes that customer satisfaction and brand loyalty have a relationship among customers of mobile telecom service providers. Figure 1.1 presents the conceptual framework of the study.

2.0 Literature Review

Relationship marketing Theory

The current customer relationship-marketing (CRM) is yet to be accepted as a theory of marketing. But there exist two types of relationship theories and include market-based, more consumer-oriented CRM, and network-based, more inter-organisationally-oriented CRM. Examining business exchange relationships from a relational, and often enduring ASEAA perspective, is very important for understanding contemporary marketing.

The aspect of long-term relationships with customers and other stakeholder groups has been neglected in mainstream marketing management literature, as pointed out by several scholars (El-Manstrly, 2016; Mathis, 2013; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Haghghi, Dorosti & Rahnama et. al., 2012; Mohamad, Ari & Dewi, 2014). As a current new paradigm, relationship marketing is in two dimensions including market-based relationship marketing and network-based relationship marketing. The former deals with fairly simple exchange relationships and assumes a market context, whereas the latter examines complex relationships and presumes a network-like business environment, in which case B2C or B2B is based.

Framed in the theory of planned behaviour and supported by the disconfirmation paradigm, expectancy-value theory, the IDIC theory and the relationship marketing theory, this study focuses on clarifying the moderating role of relationship marketing on the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty by understanding the means by which customer expectations are explained when developing customer satisfaction. This is useful in understanding the constructs of satisfaction and dissatisfaction that result in loyalty and disloyalty, factors that determine parties' involvement into activities including expectations value, benefits and outcomes. These theories provide the understanding of the importance of human interaction in long term relationship building and how to develop integrated technological-human infrastructure in order to provide holistic and multi-channel customer service delivery.

Relationship marketing and Brand Loyalty

Relationship marketing has been the main focus targeting customer retention and commitment and a share of the customer business instead of market share owing to the paradigm shift in marketing practices. According to Moorman, Zaltman and Deshpande (1992) customer loyalty was an intention to keep a valued relationship. A mutual relationship between a service provider and a customer who will lead to formation of profitability is developed, built and continued through relationship marketing. Therefore, mobile service operators can acquire and retain profitable customers and increase their brand loyalty by planning in their marketing strategies (Kim, Park & Jeong, 2004).

Salem (2021) carried out an empirical study within the hotel industry on whether relationship marketing constructs enhance consumer retention; using cross-sectional survey for data collection, that made it more difficult to identify relationships between RM and customer retention, the findings showed that customer retention is directly influenced by conflict handling, whereas customer engagement is directly affected by trust, conflict handling, and commitment. However, conflict handling, commitment, and trust indirectly affected customer retention via customer engagement. They suggested that customer engagement and conflict handling had the highest effect on customer retention. It meant that commitment and customer engagement had the highest

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performance on customer retention in the hotel industry. Therefore, managers can focus on relationship marketing practices to enhance and improve customer engagement and thereby improve customer retention.

From these studies, it is important to note that literature on relationship between relationship marketing and brand loyalty within the mobile telecommunication sector in Kenya in particular with constructs of relationship marketing including human interactions and activities, enhanced collaborative perspective, aligned and empowerment employee and value co-creation behaviours is limited. Most of the past studies focused on banking sector, insurance, superstore, and in Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Iran Jordan and a few from telecommunication firms. Locally, Mwai, Muchemi and Ndungu (2015) used a population of cosmetic products to investigate customer retention strategies and concluded that product innovativeness was a key determinant of customer retention.

3.0 Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design for this study was descriptive. Descriptive design was ideal because it presents a systematic and accurate description of certain groups, to estimate the frequency or proportion of subjects in a specified population, to analyze relationships between variables, or to make specific predictions. It aims to determine the answers to who, what, when, where and how questions. In other words, it is concerned with the conditions or the relationships that exist, describes social events, social structure, social situations such as determining the nature of the prevailing conditions, practices and attitudes; opinions that are held; processes that are going on; or trends that are developed (Zikmund, 2003). In this study, it helped to explain how customer satisfaction relates to brand loyalty (Zikmund, 2003). The descriptive research design was intended to produce statistical information about the aspects of the research issue, in this case brand loyalty that may interest managerial decision makers. Equally, effect relationship between RM practices and brand loyalty among mobile service operators necessitates the use of correlational design in this study.

Descriptive research is a technique where information is gathered from a sample of people using a questionnaire or interview technique. The method of data collection used is often either observation or interview or questionnaire (Kothari, 2004). Correlation design was used to compare two or more characteristics from the same group and to explain how characteristics vary together and predict one from the other.

The Study Area

The study area of this research was Nairobi, which is the capital city of Kenya in eastern Africa. Nairobi is the most populous city in East Africa, with a current estimated population of about 3.5 million. The city is home to thousands of Kenyan businesses and over 100 major international companies and organizations. This makes it the 4th largest city in Africa in terms of trading volume, capable of making 10 million trades a day. This population is served by various telecommunication companies including Safaricom PLC, which has the highest market share for mobile data subscriptions, and other major players such as Airtel Networks Ltd., Finserve Africa Ltd., Telkom Kenya Ltd., and Mobile Pay Ltd. Other companies include iWay Africa Kenya, which announced an agreement to merge its internet service provider operations with Echotel International (Mwencha, 2015).

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The Capital City is situated in the South-Central Kenya, 140 Kilometers (87 miles) south of the Equator. It is surrounded by 113 km² (70 mi²) of plains, cliffs and forest that makes up the city’s Nairobi National Park. It is adjacent to the eastern edge of the Rift Valley. It is situated in the south-central part of the country, in the highlands at an elevation of about 5,500 feet (1,680 metres). The city lies 300 miles (480 km) northwest of Mombasa, Kenya’s major port on the Indian Ocean. The city is situated at 1°09’S 36°39’E and 1°27’S 37°06’E and occupies 696 square kilometres (270 sq mi). The City is situated between the cities of Kampala and Mombasa. The Ngong Hills, located to the west of the city, are the most prominent geographical feature of the Nairobi area. Mount Kenya is situated north of Nairobi, and Mount Kilimanjaro is towards the south-east.

Target Population

According to Zikmund (1997), population is any complete group of entities that share some common set of characteristics. Davis and Cosenza (1989) also mentioned that a population is the complete set of unit of analysis being investigated. The target population of this study was 124,849 registered subscribers visiting customer service shops within the CBD in Nairobi County.

The researcher collected data from customers of these Mobile companies of Kenya which was stratified and judgmentally selected because they were offering easier access and most conversant with mobile satisfaction and brand loyalty represents the case institution and how they could benefit in the study. Safaricom, Airtel, Telkom Orange and Equitel have their headquarters and major service points (Customer Service Shops) spread across Nairobi and this generated a desired population mix for the survey. The target population was therefore intercepted from the major service point from which the respondents were sampled for interrogation after receiving the service. Owing to the nature of the study and the type of data required for analysis, only subscribers who have visited the mobile subscribers’ service point and interacted with their staff were sampled for the questionnaire and hence became the most appropriate for generalization. In addition, Nairobi County is considered as a business and service hub for the national and county governments and many private enterprises hence the crowd convergence in the city makes it more convenient and eases the burden of respondent approachability.

Table 1: Study Target Population

Stratum of Participants		Estimate of Total Subscribers	Accessible Population at Service Points in CBD
Safaricom	(A)	64.5%	80,528
Airtel	(B)	27.9%	34,833
Telekom	(C)	6.3%	7865
Orange	(D)	1.3%	1,623
Total		100%	124,849

Source. Communication Authority of Kenya (2023)

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Sampling Frame

A sampling frame is also a working population because it provides a list that can be worked with operationally; therefore, a researcher draws study samples from the list (Zikmund et. al., 2013). Malhotra and Krosnick (2007) argues that the sampling frame facilitates formation of a sampling unit that refers to one member of a set of entities being studied which is the material source of the random variable. The sampling frame of this study constituted of 124,849 subscribers of the four mobile telecom firms in Nairobi County as per Table 1.

Sample Size

For confidentiality, each of the four companies was referred to by a letter (A, B, C and D) in this study. A sample is a smaller group of subject drawn from the population in which a given study was conducted for a purpose of drawing conclusions about the population targeted. According to Kothari (2010), a sample is a section of a population that is selected for examination and analyses and used to make inferences to the population from which it is obtained. This subgroup is carefully selected to be representative of the whole population with the relevant characteristics. Each member or case in the sample is referred to as respondent or participant. Kombo and Tromp (2006) argued that an effective sample population should be diverse, representative, accessible and knowledgeable on the topic being investigated. Kothari (2004) adds that the result from the sample can be used to make generalizations about the whole population as long as it is truly represented. This is because a good sample to be truly representative of the population, result in a small sampling error, viable, economical and systematic. The study was executed to different subscribers of the mobile telephony who qualified for the study design. There are several approaches to determining the sample size, which include using a census for small populations, imitating a sample size of similar studies, using published tables, and applying formulas to calculate a sample size.

A sample size of 399 respondents was selected using Cochran (1963; 1977) and Yamane (1967) (Israel, 2013) to calculate the sample size from the sample frame for study as shown below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where; n – is the Sample Size

N – is the Population Size

e – is the level of precision (95%; e = 0.05)

Given that N=124,849

$$e^2 = (0.05)^2$$

$$n = \frac{124,849}{1 + (124,849) * (0.05^2)} = 398.722545.$$

A margin error of 0.05 was used to work out the sample size, which according to Yamane (1967) gives the largest sample size at a given confidence level. Substituting the margin error of 0.05 and

the target population of 124,849 in the formula above gives a sample size of 399. To cater for non-response, the study increased sample by 10% to 443 sample size. Jones (1996) noted that in order to reduce non-response bias there is need to do oversampling by 10%. According to Bartlett et al., (2001) the most common and time effective way to ensure good responses rate is to increase the sample size by 1-50% in the first distribution of the survey. The proportionate sample sizes for each stratum were computed on the basis of the size of the stratum and the target population. This study therefore used a sample population of 443 respondents for data collection as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Sample Size

Stratum of Participants	Accessible Customer Shops in CBD	Population Service	Expected Sample size for Strata
Safaricom	80,528		286
Airtel	34,833		123
Telekom	7,865		28
Orange	1,623		6
Total	124,849		443

Source: Researcher, 2023

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from Maseno University which enabled for the application for a research permit from National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) before commencing the study. The researcher thereafter availed the introduction letter to the respondents in order to explain the purpose of the research. To ensure that the instrument used for data collection was valid and reliable, a pilot study was conducted at jamii telecommunications limited in Migori County, which helped to clarify issues arising from the questionnaire.

4.0 Data Analysis

This study used quantitative data analysis method. Quantitative data such as statistical information on biographical backgrounds of the respondents, customer satisfaction, brand loyalty practices, and the moderating effect of relationship marketing were analyzed by descriptive and correlational and multiple regression methods. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and percentages were used to summarize biographical information of study respondents, while Pearson’s correlation and multiple regressions were used to analyze the relationship between service promptness, responsiveness, staff courtesy and customer problem understanding and brand loyalty among the sampled mobile telecom service providers as recommended by Hair, Babin, Money & Samouel (2003). These variables were tested from a general multiple regression equation of the form:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon \text{ (Source: Adopted from Hair et. al., 2003).}$$

Where:

Y = Brand Loyalty

β_0 = Constant brand loyalty when relationship marketing is nil

β_1 = Beta coefficients

X_1 = Relationship marketing (measured on a summated scale of 1 to 5)

ε = Error term

Relationship Marketing

In this study, relationship marketing was measured by 12 statements. Respondents were asked to rate these statements on a scale of 1 to 5; where 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree and 5= Strongly Agree. The analysis is on Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Relationship Marketing

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees working alongside customers has led to a greater social interaction, mentoring and collaboration	406	1	5	3.14	1.46
Working with customers of different backgrounds and goals in generating interdisciplinary teams for collaborative across strategic alliances is pleasing	406	1	5	3.48	1.14
The designing of products and services in co-creation with customers allowed improvement of skill sets, and experience levels	406	1	5	3.62	1.051
incorporates the voice of customers for co-creation of value to create products and services that an individual alone cannot develop	406	1	5	4.07	.810
Co-Creation can be a platform to create more long-term customer relationship behaviors in the telecom service	406	1	5	3.86	.864
Collaborating appears to be a highly effective means of generating innovative and successful new product	406	1	5	3.51	.981
Tinkering is an effective tool for soft launching of products and services or as test market	406	1	5	3.27	1.187

Co-designing uses inputs from specific and small group of customers making the management and steering of marketing easier	406	1	5	3.83	.922
Submitting by engaging and communicating with customers normally transpires through customer inquiry, focus groups and surveys	406	1	5	3.19	1.59
Customer Alliance building enhances adds value through collaborative ventures	406	1	5	3.88	.830
Customer targets leads to development of products and services that are less costly but high quality	406	1	5	3.44	1.29
Market segmentation leads to enhanced sustained customer relationships generating effective models of collaborations	406	1	5	4.16	.742
Grand Average Score				3.62	1.072

Source: (field data, 2023)

Table 3 reveals that the highest ranked relationship marketing dimension is “Market segmentation has enhanced sustained customer relationships generating effective models of collaborations” ($M = 4.16$, $SD = .742$), followed by “incorporates the voice of customers for value co-creation create products and serial services that cannot be developed by an individual alone” ($M = 4.07$, $SD = .810$) and then “Customer Alliance building enhances adds value through collaborative ventures” ($M = 3.88$, $SD = .830$). Respondents further agreed that co-creation can be a platform to create more long-term customer relationship behaviours in the telecom service market ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .864$). Similarly, co-designing uses inputs from specific and small group of customers making the management and steering of marketing easier ($M = 3.83$, $SD = .922$). Most respondents also agreed that designing of products and services in co-creation with customers allowed improvement of skill sets, and experience levels ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.051$). In addition, collaborating appears to be a highly effective means of generating innovative and successful new product ($M = 3.51$, $SD = .981$). Furthermore, working with customers of different backgrounds and goals in generating interdisciplinary teams for collaborative across strategic alliances is pleasing ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.14$). Besides, customer targets lead to development of products and services that are less costly but high quality ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.29$). Respondents also agreed that tinkering is an effective tool for soft launching of products and services or as test market ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.187$). Submitting by engaging and communicating with customers normally transpires through customer inquiry, focus groups and surveys ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.59$). The least ranked relationship marketing dimension is “Employees working alongside customers has led to a greater social interaction, mentoring and collaboration” ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.46$). The results gave an overall mean of 3.62 and a standard deviation of 1.072 indicating all the 12 dimensions as describing their perceptions about relationship marketing in the mobile telecom given that all the means of the 12 relationship marketing dimensions were > 3 .

This is in agreement with Ganaie and Bhat (220), Salem (2021) and Eid and El-Gohary (2014) that constructs such as communication, conflicts handling, commitment, collaborative alliances or co-creation leading should be practically enhanced. Relationship marketing attracts, interact with, and retain more profitable or high net-worth customers. Relationship marketing thus aims at increasing customer profitability while providing better services for customers.

Brand Loyalty

In this study, Brand Loyalty was measured by 7 statements. Respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 points; where 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree and 5= Strongly Agree. The analysis is on Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Brand Loyalty

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
It is likely that I am willing to use all kinds of products or serial services of preferred service provider and pay more than competitors' prices for the benefits received	406	1	5	3.84	.844
I am likely to continue with repeat purchasing of all kinds	406	1	5	3.95	1.067
It is likely that I have formed emotional attachment with the service provider and will consistently keep the relationship over long term	406	1	5	3.74	.907
High customers retention translates to high performance	406	1	5	3.92	.934
I am likely to praise the preferred service provider and advertise it verbally, online and on social media platforms	406	1	5	3.98	.837
I am likely to refuse promotion activities of other service providers and remain price tolerance	406	1	5	3.75	.965
D7:It is likely that I always return to purchase the products and services of the preferred service provider and resist change from the competitors	406	1	5	4.16	.742
Grand Average Score				3.91	0.899

Source: (field data, 2023)

Table 4 shows that the highest ranked brand loyalty measures is “It is likely that I always return to purchase the products and services of the preferred service provider and resist change from the competitors” ($M = 4.16, SD = .742$), next was “I am likely to praise the preferred service provider

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and advertise it verbally, online and on social media platforms” ($M = 3.98, SD = .837$) and then “I am likely to continue with repeat purchasing of all kinds of products or serial services of preferred service provider” ($M = 3.95, SD = 1.067$). Respondents also were in agreement that high customer’s retention would translate to high performance ($M = 3.92, SD = 0.934$). Further, most respondents agreed that they are likely to refuse promotion activities of other service providers and remain price tolerant ($M = 3.75, SD = .965$). As well, respondents agreed that they have formed emotional attachment with the service provider and will consistently keep the relationship over long term ($M = 3.74, SD = .907$). However, the least ranked brand loyalty measure is “It is likely that I am willing to use all kinds of products or serial services of preferred service provider and pay more than competitors' prices for the benefits received” ($M = 3.84, SD = .844$). The study results gave a grand average mean score of 3.91 and a standard deviation of .899. These findings depict a picture that the respondents agreed with measures of brand loyalty on telling their perceptions about brand loyalty in the mobile telecom operators in Kenya.

These findings concurred with the findings by Coleman (2012) who found out that the higher the loadings, the more important the variable. The results also agree with other studies by Accenture Report (2016) that brand loyalty is an important part of business longevity and there is no business that can survive over long term without establishing a loyal and mutually beneficial customer base. Equally, Gures, Arslan & Tun (2014) also noted that loyalty relationship is a dominant factor in successful marketing practice.

PCA for Relationship Marketing

The study tested validation of data for customer satisfaction using exploratory factor analysis. Using SPSS, the results of this factor analysis, with the assumption of extracting via principal components method and rotating via varimax were presented in table 5.

Table 5: Factor Loading for the Relationship Marketing

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Employees working alongside customers has led to a greater social interaction, mentoring and collaboration				.778
Working with customers of different backgrounds and goals in generating interdisciplinary teams for collaborative across strategic alliances is pleasing	.962			
The designing of products and services in co-creation with customers allowed improvement of skill sets, and experience levels				.713
incorporates the voice of customers for co-creation of value to create products and services that an individual alone cannot develop				.492
Co-Creation can be a platform to create more long-term customer relationship behaviours in the telecom service		.938		
collaborating appears to be a highly effective means of generating innovative and successful new product			.500	
Tinkering is an effective tool for soft launching of products and services or as test market			.851	
Co-designing uses inputs from specific and small group of customers making the management and steering of marketing easier			.801	
Submitting by engaging and communicating with customers normally transpires through customer inquiry, focus groups and surveys	.311			
Customer Alliance building enhances adds value through collaborative ventures		.938		
Customer targets leads to development of products and services that are less costly but high quality	.962			
Market segmentation leads to enhanced sustained customer relationships generating effective models of collaborations			.433	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
 a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Source: (Field data, 2023)

The results in Table 5 show the set of sub variables under the variable relationship marketing, as an exploratory variable that had factor loadings. It implied that all the sub variables with values more than 0.4 were accepted. The KMO and Bartlett's Test were as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.791
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7067.292
	Df	78
	Sig.	.000

Source: (Field data, 2023)

The sample suitability for the analysis was assessed by resulting correlation matrix and using Kaiser –Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy 78 with scores of .791, this was within the meritorious category and had shown a high partial correlation and that factor analysis was significant. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity whose result was significant at .000 (approximate chi-square = 7067.292) was also done to determine the suitability for factor analysis. This means that the items were sufficient for factor analysis.

PCA for Brand Loyalty

The study tested validation of data for brand loyalty using exploratory factor analysis. Prior to performing PCA, adequacy of the data was assessed through KAM and Bartlett’s Test. Using SPSS, the results of this factor analysis were presented in table 7.

Table 7: Factor Loading for the brand loyalty

	Component	
	1	2
It is likely that I am willing to use all kinds of products or serial services of preferred service provider and pay more than competitors' prices for the benefits received	.937	
I am likely to continue with repeat purchasing of all kinds	.766	
It is likely that I have formed emotional attachment with the service provider and will consistently keep the relationship over long term	.694	
High customers retention translates to high performance		.726
I am likely to praise the preferred service provider and advertise it verbally, online and on social media platforms		.794
I am likely to refuse promotion activities of other service providers and remain price tolerance		.828
It is likely that I always return to purchase the products and services of the preferred service provider and resist change from the competitors	.937	

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

Source: (Field data, 2023)

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The 7 items for brand loyalty were subjected to principal components analysis using spss version 22. Prior to performing PCA, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Factors with factor loadings of above 0.3 were retained for further data analysis. All items met this criterion and therefore 7 items were retained for further analysis.

Table 8: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.717
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	616.614
	df	15
	Sig.	.000

Source: (Field data, 2023)

The results in Table 8 shows The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure value was 0.717 exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser 1970, 1974) and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity (Bartlett 1954) was significant with p value less than 0.000 (Bartlett's test=616.614, $p < .05$) indicating the manifestation of factorization of 3 factors for brand loyalty.

Correlation between Relationship Marketing and Brand Loyalty

The Pearson’s correlation between relationship marketing and brand loyalty is 0.775, $p = 0.000$. This implies that a unit increase in relationship marketing has an increasing effect of .775 in brand loyalty. Therefore, it suggests that there is a moderate, positive and statistically significant bivariate association between the relationship marketing and brand loyalty.

Table 9: Correlations Analysis for Relationship Marketing and Brand Loyalty

		Relationship marketing	Brand_Loyalty
Relationship marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	406	
Brand_Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.775**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	406	406

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

Source ;(Field data, 2023)

Regression Analysis on Relationship Marketing and Brand Loyalty

Objective two of the study sought to establish the relationship between relationship marketing and brand loyalty in mobile telecom service providers, Kenya. A simple linear regression analysis was also performed to calculate the effect of relationship marketing on brand loyalty. The results of model summary are in Table 10.

Table 10: Model Summary for Relationship Marketing and Brand Loyalty

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.775 ^a	.601	.600	.36130	.274	152.723	1	404	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Relationship marketing

Source ;(Field data, 2023)

The model summary findings in Table 10 indicated an adjusted R square value of 0.601, $p=.000$, which implies that relationship marketing had 60.1% variation of brand loyalty explained by relationship marketing. The findings for model variance, ANOVA are presented in Table 4.26.

Table 11: Analysis of Variance-ANOVA for Relationship Marketing and Brand Loyalty

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	79.302	1	79.302	607.489	.000 ^b
	Residual	52.738	404	.131		
	Total	132.041	405			

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

b. Predictors: (Constant), Relationship marketing

Source ;(Field data, 2023)

The results on the analysis of variance summary reveal an F statistic value [$F(1, 404) = 607.489$, $p < 0.05$], which imply that the model linking relationship marketing to brand loyalty was statistically significant fit. The findings for model coefficients are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Regression Coefficient for Relationship Marketing and Brand Loyalty

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	.971	.122		7.969	.000
	Relationship marketing	.747	.030	.775	24.647	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

Source ;(Field data, 2023)

The findings in Table 12 reveal that the effect of relationship marketing on brand loyalty was positive and significant [$\beta = .775$, $t=24.647$, $p<0.05$]. The findings imply that an increase in relationship marketing by one unit leads to corresponding increases of 0.775, units in brand loyalty. The findings are consistent with Minta (2018) who established that effect of trusts and commitment constructs of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction was positive and statistically significant. The study established the following new regression model;

$$Y = 0.971 + 0.747Z_2$$

5.0 Summary of Findings

Relationship marketing and Brand Loyalty

The objective was to establish the relationship between relationship marketing and brand loyalty in mobile telecom service providers in Kenya. From this objective it was hypothesized that relationship marketing has an influence on brand loyalty in Kenya. Simple linear regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis. Relationship marketing was separately regressed on brand loyalty. The results revealed a positive relationship between relationship marketing and brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.604$). The relationship was also significant at 5% level of significance (P -value=0.000). This finding implied that an improvement in relationship marketing by one unit led to a 0.365-unit improvement in brand loyalty.

It was found out that the Pearson's r correlation between human interactions and activities and brand loyalty was 0.571; this implied that there is a statistical significance between human interactions and activities and brand loyalty ($p=0.000$). Also, the Pearson's r correlation between aligned and empowered employee and brand loyalty is 0.307; indicating that there was some relationship between aligned and empowered employee and brand loyalty.

This means that there is a weak relationship between the two variables. It means the changes in one variable are weakly correlated to change in the second variable since 0.571 which is less than 0.7 and not closer to one. 0.571 is however positive therefore an increase in one value leads to increase of the other. There is a statistical significance between human interactions and activities and brand loyalty ($p=0.000$). Also the Pearson's r correlation between aligned and empowered employee and brand loyalty is 0.307. It indicates an average relationship between the two variables. This means that the changes in one variable are averagely correlated to change in the second variable since 0.307 is not closer to one. 0.307 is however positive therefore an increase in one value leads to increase of the other. There is a statistical significance between aligned and empowered employee and brand loyalty ($p=0.000$). It was also shown that the Pearson's r correlation between enhanced collaborative perspective and brand loyalty is 0.547; it meant that there was a statistical significance between enhanced collaborative perspective and brand loyalty ($p=0.000$). Besides, the Pearson's r correlation between value co-creation behaviour and brand loyalty is 0.588.

These findings indicate that all the four components of relationship marketing were satisfactory variable in predicting brand loyalty. This was supported by the coefficient of determination also known as the R-square of 0.420. This means that relationship marketing explains 42.0% of the variations in the dependent variable. These results further mean that the model applied to link the relationship of the variables was satisfactory. However, the findings indicate that aligned and empowered employee was not the best predictor among the other three as it explained 30.7%

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variance in the dependent variable. The rest three components had almost equal influence on the dependent variable.

6.0 Conclusions

The findings showed that there was a statistically significant and positive relationship between relationship marketing and brand loyalty in mobile telecom service providers in Kenya.

7.0 Recommendations

Relationship marketing can be enhanced through human interactions and activities, enhanced collaborative perspective, aligned and empowerment employee and value co-creation behaviours to attract and capture different aspects of customer needs over a long-term relationship creation. It is important that the mobile telecom service providers in Kenya improve on how they provide services to customers, apart from automated services, the interactive human phase is critical to the satisfaction of customers who do not like machines only or self-service platform portals. This could be useful in eliminating the crowds that often swell in the lobbies in search for solutions that they missed over the weekends (although this practice was useful in my data collection). The staff need to be professionally trained on handling customer needs competitively while co-creation and collaborative practices are important to also build long term relationships while also enhancing products and service usability among customers. Relationship marketing within the mobile telecom service providers in Kenya should be supported with strategies that ensure its continued use and improvement within the mobile telecom service providers in Kenya at all times.

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