

A Comprehensive Study of Factors, Assessment Methods, and Strategic Consequences of Customer Commitment in Marketing Relationships

Elizabeth Lee^{*1}, Tan Seng Teck¹, Lim Swee Geok¹, Reynold Tom Fernandez¹, Chee How Liau², Shaurya Prakash³

¹INTI International University, Nilai, Seremban, Malaysia

²Lecturer in Marketing, Danford Higher Education, Melbourne, Australia

³Assistant Professor, Assam down town University, Guwahati, Assam, India

***Corresponding Author**

Email: ID : i25038231@student.newinti.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Customer commitment has become one of the foundations of relationship marketing which provide important ideas on how, and why, customers continue to engage in long-term relationships with companies operating in dynamic and competitive markets. As organizations tend to change transactional orientation to relational orientations, the drivers, dimensions and consequences of customer commitment have become vital in maintaining competitive advantage. The review paper is a synthesis of available literature on the subject of customer commitment with three main aims: (i) to review the major issues that have impacted on customer commitment, (ii) to review the main approaches that have been applied in assessing and measuring customer commitment in marketing relationships, and (iii) to review the strategic implications of customer commitment to companies. Based on classic and modern literature, the paper conceptualises the customer commitment as a multidimensional construct that includes the affective, continuance, and normative dimensions. According to the review, the factors influencing customer commitment are relational, economic, psychological and social and that its measurement involves the combined use of attitudinal, behavioural and experimental methods. Also, the importance of customer commitment towards customer loyalty, retention, advocacy and long term firm performance is discussed in the paper. This review offers an in-depth framework of research that could further the theoretical knowledge and provide practical information to marketing practitioners and researchers by combining fragmented streams of research

Keywords: - Customer Commitment, Relationship Marketing, Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Normative Commitment, Customer Loyalty; Economic Growth

INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Contemporary Marketing Challenges and the Shift toward Relationship Marketing

In modern marketing situations where competition is intense, customer choice is growing, and technology is changing at a very high pace, companies have high customer acquisition and retention challenges (Steinhoff et al., 2019; Gazi et al., 2025). Digitalization and globalization has reduced gateway barriers in all sectors, other competitors can copy products, services and even pricing modes rapidly. This has led to customers being exposed to a broad array of options making them have greater bargaining power and less switching costs. Under those circumstances, companies cannot depend on product differentiation and short-term promotional strategies as the only way to achieve a long-lasting success in the market. The conventional transactional marketing strategies, where key elements are discrete and one-time transactions and immediate sales results, have

not been adequate in meeting such challenges (Riley & Nicewicz-Scott, 2025). Although transactional strategies can yield short term revenue, it is usually not able to develop lasting relationships between the customers and companies. In addition to that, the escalating cost of reaching out to customers, and decreasing customer concentration lengths alongside rising demands of personalized experiences, have further increased the pressure on more sustainable means of marketing.

Relationship marketing has, in its turn, become a strategy paradigm with a focus on long-term relationships, joint value creation, trust-building, and continuity of relationships. Relationship marketing also changes the emphasis on individual transactions and instead focuses on relationships, as it regards customers as long-term collaboration and not as buyers (Usman et al., 2024). This school of thought underlines the essence of building emotional, psychological, and structural relationships that incorporate customers to companies in the long run. Trust, satisfaction, engagement, and commitment are some of the constructs that have gained primary significance in

this paradigm in comprehending the quality and longevity of relationships (Sudirjo, 2023). Customer commitment is one of the constructs that have become very crucial predictors of the relationship stability. In comparison to satisfaction, which can vary with personal experiences, commitment is a psychological state more profound and long-term and encourages the customer to stay in relationships despite the presence of appealing alternatives or occasional service failures. Customer commitment, therefore, plays a central role in the relationship marketing theory and practice.

1.2 Conceptualizing Customer Commitment in Marketing Relationships

Customer commitment can be described as a long-term desire of a customer to have a valued relationship with a firm (Nora, 2019). It is a mental attachment that encourages the continuity and loyalty even when the cost-benefit consideration is not very rational. Commitment is a willingness to invest time, effort and resources into a relationship on the part of the customers meaning that there is an inherent value in the relationship to the customers. In contrast to behavioural loyalty, which can either be an indication of habitual buying or absence of options, customer commitment offers the motivational drivers that form the basis of customer loyalty to a firm (Rather & Hollebeek, 2019). One of the customers who is committed is not just a person who comes back to the store over and over but someone who values the relationship and finds it significant. This difference is especially applicable in the competitive markets, where loyalty in behaviour can be weak and easily broken by the price promotions or innovations of the competitors (Khan et al., 2020).

Existing literature has always observed that customers who are committed show positive behavioural and attitudinal results. They would be more loyal in the long run, less sensitive to price, and will tend to stick with their loyalty even when competitors come around. Also, loyal customers will prove to be more lenient with service failures and explain such failures as temporary losses instead of a condition to end relationships (Amani, 2022). This tolerance contributes greatly to the relationship resilience and lowers the churn rate of customers. Also, customer commitment is closely linked with positive word-of-mouth behaviour and customer advocacy. Loyal customers usually become unofficial brand ambassadors and willingly refer companies to their friends, as well as protect them in case of criticism. In the era of digital technologies, where online reviews and social media communication have a significant impact on the choice of consumers, this advocacy might bring significant reputational and economic advantages to companies (Vinerean and Opreana, 2021). With these results, customer commitment is not a relational outcome only but a strategic resource directly leading to long-term profitability and competitive advantage. Those companies that manage to develop high levels of customer commitment are in a better position to record sustainable growth, to lower the costs incurred in marketing, and have a good brand equity (Zhao and Wagner, 2024).

1.3 Strategic Importance of Customer Commitment for Organizations

Knowledge of customer commitment is not merely a theoretical issue, but a strategic one that is crucial to companies that work in unstable and dynamic markets (Florek-Paszkowska et al., 2021). In management terms, loyal customers will provide the company with a stable revenue and make it more predictable and less reliant on expensive acquisition campaigns. Empirical data indicate that retention of customers is much cheaper than acquisition, and therefore, commitment-based retention is cost-effective. Customer commitment also enhances the creation of the long-term value through the augmentation of customer lifetime value (Ochie et al., 2022). Customer loyalty would make customers buy more often and take up new products more easily and keep relations during a longer period. These activities lead to accruing revenue sources that are way beyond those of transactional clients. Also, relationship based on commitment allows cross selling and up selling which further improves firm performance (Kiarie & Kinyua, 2025).

Strategically, customer commitment is a cushion against the threats of competition. Competitive markets with intense competition in pricing and numerous promotional deals will find less persuasive commitment customers to temporary offers by rivals (Saragih et al., 2024). Their loyalty to the company gives them some kind of relational isolation which safeguards the market share and enhances the competitive positioning. In addition, the organizational learning and innovation is helped by customer commitment. Long-term relations allow companies to acquire more information about the needs, preferences, and the manner of use of customers (Capatina et al., 2024). It is possible to use this knowledge to enhance the quality of services and create innovative solutions and co-value with customers (Christofi et al., 2024). Therefore, customer commitment is not only a source of relational stability but also organizational flexibility and longevity (Eldor, 2020).

1.4 Fragmentation in Customer Commitment Research

In spite of high levels of scholarly interest, studies on customer commitment are still disaggregated in terms of discipline, industry, and methodological history. There are significant differences in the ways that studies are conceptualizing commitment, determining the antecedents of commitment and the measurement of commitment outcomes. Emotional attachment is stressed by some researchers, whereas economic dependence or moral obligation are the focus of some other ones (Zeithaml et al., 2020). Such divergent views have led to the provision of inconsistent meanings and measurement procedures which have made development of theories and empirical comparison a challenge. In addition, customer commitment has been investigated in a variety of contexts, such as the service sector, retail and business-to-business relations, and online platforms. Although this diversity fills the literature with diversity, it also causes variability in context which restricts generalization. Measurement scales and constructs created in one setting

might not be directly applicable to another, which also adds to the conceptual ambiguity (Ng et al., 2020).

The methodological approaches also depict fragmentation. Although most of the literature focuses on survey-based studies, behavioural measures, experimentation, and qualitative research are used disproportionately (Singh et al., 2022). Numerous studies have been based on single-methodological setups, which do not provide the multidimensional aspect of commitment. This leads to the fact that results tend to be contextual and it is hard to combine them into a consistent theoretical construct. As a practitioner, this division poses a problem of applying the academic understanding to action plan. The lack of a clear and integrated conceptualization of customer commitment can make companies unable to develop effective relationship marketing programs, as well as inaccurately scalp commitment (Chen and Hutt, 2021). This gap explains why systematic review studies are necessary to summarize the current body of research and demarcate conceptual boundaries.

1.5 Purpose and Scope of the Review Paper

It is against this backdrop that the current review paper seeks to bring a compilation and critical analysis of available literature on the topic of customer commitment in marketing relationships. Instead of presenting a new piece of empirical evidence, the article aims to synthesise the previous research findings and present an ordered interpretation of the construct. The paper is expected to bring about conceptual clarity and practical relevance by combining shreds of research streams.

In particular, this review focuses on three basic research questions to organize and analyze it:

1. What are the key drivers to customer commitment of marketing relationships? The question is aimed at the definition of relational, psychological, economical, and social antecedents influencing the formation and maintenance of commitment.
2. How do we normally measure and gauge customer commitment?

This question looks into attitudinal, behavioural, experimental and qualitative approaches, their strengths and limitations.

3. Strategic implications of customer commitment on firms?

This query discusses the commitment implication towards loyalty, retention, advocacy and performance of long-term firms.

Answering these questions, the paper will help to fill the literature gap in relation marketing studies by providing a complex and unified insight into customer commitment. The review does not only contribute at the theoretical level but also offers practical advice towards managers who want to come up with effective commitment-based relationship strategies.

1.6 Contribution to Relationship Marketing Literature

First, it formulates the different viewpoints on customer commitment into a singular conceptual framework, which increases the theoretical coherence. Second, it addresses the issues of gap between academic studies and managerial practice by pointing out strategic implications and implications of measurement. Third, it points to areas in which future research is necessary, especially regarding the issue of digitalization, cultural diversity, and the changing customer requirements. All in all, the paper presents a systematic review and integration of existing literature to further support the focal role of customer commitment in relationship marketing and its significance as a source of sustainable competitive advantage in the modern marketing settings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gazi et al. (2024) tested a model of customer relationship management (CRM) according to the experiences of telecom customers with the services in Bangladesh. It investigated the relationship between organizational commitment and knowledge management and CRM as well as the relationship between CRM and customer profitability and loyalty directly and indirectly via customer satisfaction where brand image served as an intermediate. Online and offline surveys were done among 100 telecom consumers and structural equation modeling was done. In the findings, it was established that knowledge management and organizational commitment were significant in the improvement of CRM performance, which is positive in customer profitability and loyalty. These relationships were mediated by customer satisfaction and moderated by brand image key CRM linkages.

Yum and Kim (2024) the authors examined the connections between the perceived value and the customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty in the online entertainment platform industry. The conceptualization of perceived value was in terms of utilitarian, hedonic and social. To test the proposed model, the survey data of the users of the platform was analyzed. The findings indicated that utilitarian and hedonic values made a significant contribution to customer satisfaction whereas the three value dimensions positively affected trust. Utilitarian value and loyalty had a partial mediating relationship with customer satisfaction whereas hedonic value and loyalty had a complete mediating relationship with customer satisfaction. Trust was not, however, a mediator. The research offered both theoretical and management information about the strengthening of customer loyalty in online entertainment systems.

Roy, Gruner, and Guo (2022) studied how customer experience can be used to determine customer commitment and engagement behavior in the retail industry. Theoretical framework was put forward to describe the relationship between customer experience, customer commitment, and customer engagement throughout the customer purchase behavior. The Australian retail customers were surveyed and the data were analyzed through partial least squares path modeling. The results indicated that customer experience had a positive impact on customer commitment, which later led to a positive customer engagement practices.

Nevertheless, the sub-dimensions of customer experience had different influences, which means that there is a more subtle relationship. The paper added to the service marketing theory and offered practical findings as well as identified future research directions.

Khan et al. (2022) examined how customer relationship management and reputation of a company affect customer loyalty in small and medium-sized enterprises in Pakistan and used customer satisfaction as a mediating factor. Structured questionnaires were used to collect the data of already registered SMEs in Islamabad and Rawalpindi and AMOS was used to analyze the data. The findings showed that the customer loyalty was affected by CRM and company reputation in a significant positive way. The relationship between CRM and company reputation as well as loyalty were partially mediated by customer satisfaction. The paper has highlighted the need to build trust, manage reputation and strategic marketing in turbulent markets as a way of increasing customer loyalty and organizational sustainability.

Agha et al. (2021) involved an analysis of the influencing factors of customer loyalty within the mobile telecommunication industry of Pakistan, specifically the Jazz customers. An analysis through a quantitative research method was conducted on four determinants, namely service quality, trust, corporate image, and switching costs. The questionnaires were close ended and used to collect primary data by administering questionnaires to mobile phone users. The statistical results showed that the effects of all the chosen independent variables were significant and positive on customer loyalty. The result found the significance of providing high service quality, corporate credibility, building trust and management switching barriers as a strategy of retaining customers in a very competitive telecommunications market.

Arora et al. (2021) evaluated the impacts of the Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) on customer engagement and the resulting impacts of customer loyalty, retention, and satisfactions. Primary data were gathered by using self-administered questionnaires and were analyzed by using SPSS and AMOS by using a research design of descriptive type. The results indicated that best SCRM practices had a positive impact in customer engagement. Greater customer involvement, in its turn, had a positive effect on customer retention, customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction. It was concluded in the study that the interaction and engagement-based strategy should be given the first priority by the organization that is starting to convert traditional CRM to SCRM to build strong customer relationships in the digital age.

Bhati and Verma (2020) carried out a synthesis of the available empirical studies based on the meta-analysis methodology. A total of 63 empirical studies were analyzed that were published in 1988 and 2019. The results grouped antecedents into personal, relational, as well as social. The personal factors were found to be opinion leadership and the relational factors were found to be brand trust, customer satisfaction, brand identification, and commitment. The social dimension

was the normative influence. A large degree of heterogeneity between studies indicated the existence of contextual and methodological moderators. The research helped to explain conflicting data and develop knowledge on customer brand advocacy.

Amoako et al. (2019) have tested the impact of the relationship marketing practice on customer satisfaction within the Ghanaian hotel industry. The positivist research approach was used to gather data on 167 clients of a three-star hotel, and structural equation model was used. The findings proved that there was a strong positive correlation between trust, commitment and customer satisfaction. It was observed that commitment mediated the connection between satisfaction and trust partially. The results pointed to the fact that a good relationship marketing grounded on trust and commitment led to customer satisfaction and patronization. The research presented useful information that can be used by hospitality managers who want to enhance long-term relationships with customers.

Nora (2019) Partial least squares modeling was used to analyze the data obtained on 100 bank customers. The research results showed that, trust, religious commitment and customer knowledge had a positive effect on customer intimacy. The customer intimacy played a significant role in improving relational commitment and repurchase intention. Nevertheless, customer knowledge did not have a direct influence but an indirect influence through customer intimacy of the repurchase intention. The paper indicated the customer intimacy as a pivotal mediating variable in the Islamic banking relationships.

Balci, Caliskan, and Yuen (2019) used social exchange theory to test how relational bonding strategy can influence customer satisfaction and loyalty in the container shipping industry. Data relating to 175 freight forwarders were gathered, and analyzed through the structural equation modeling. The findings showed that financial bonding strategies exerted the most direct effect on customer satisfaction whereas social bonding strategies the most significant effect on customer loyalty. There was also the highest total effect on loyalty with financial bonding strategies. The research gave useful insights to the container lines to allocate resources efficiently and enhance long-term customer relationship in a very competitive market.

Petzer and Van Tonder (2019) evaluated the mediating role of customer engagement between relationship quality antecedents with the loyalty intentions within the context of the short-term insurance business. The quantitative research design was utilized and 491 insurance customers were used. The results showed that customer engagement was positively affected by commitment, customer satisfaction, trust and customer value. The improved customer engagement, in its turn, resulted in the increased loyalty intentions. The research paper emphasized the need to establish engagement by means of relationship marketing strategies and helped in the enhancement of the theory of customer engagement in the insurance setting.

Abbas et al. (2019) have tested the connections between corporate social responsibility and environmental effects,

customer value, and sustainable performance, and the use of social media marketing as a moderating factor. The random sampling method was used to select 548 respondents in Pakistan, which were analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS. The results indicated that the sustainable performance was positively influenced by corporate social responsibility. The relationship between sustainable production and CSR was greatly moderated by social media marketing tools. The research emphasized that the strategic value of digital marketing can be used to improve the sustainability outcomes and recommended that future research should be expanded to other regions and industries.

Table 1: Comparison Table of Selected Studies on CRM, Customer Satisfaction, and Loyalty

| Auth or(s) & Year | Context / Industry | Key Variabl es Studied | Metho dology & Sampl e | Major Findings |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Gazi et al. (2024) | Telecomm unication (Banglade sh) | CRM, Organiz ational Commit ment, Knowle dge Manage ment, Custom er Satisfac tion, Profitab ility, Loyalty , Brand Image | SEM; 100 teleco m custom ers | Organizati onal commitme nt and knowledg e managem ent significantly improved CRM, which enhanced customer profitabilit y and loyalty directly and indirectly through customer satisfactio n; brand image moderated key relationshi ps. |
| Yum & Kim (2024) | Online Entertainm ent Platforms | Perceiv ed Value (Utilitar ian, Hedoni c, Social), Satisfac tion, Trust, | Survey -based analysi s; platfor m users | Utilitarian and hedonic value increased satisfactio n; all value dimension s increased |

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|----------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| | | Loyalty | | trust; satisfactio n mediated value–loy alty links, while trust did not mediate loyalty. |
| Roy et al. (2022) | Retail Industry (Australia) | Custom er Experie nce, Commit ment, Engage ment | PLS- SEM; retail custom ers | Customer experienc e positively influenced commitme nt, which enhanced engagem ent behaviors; sub- dimension s showed varied effects across the purchase journey. |
| Khan et al. (2022) | SMEs (Pakistan) | CRM, Compa ny Reputat ion, Satisfac tion, Loyalty | SEM (AMOS); 181 SME manage rs | CRM and company reputation positively influenced loyalty; customer satisfactio n partially mediated the relationshi ps. |
| Agha et al. (2021) | Telecomm unication (Pakistan) | Service Quality, Trust, Corpora te Image, Switchi ng Costs, Loyalty | Quantit ative survey; teleco m users | All selected variables had a significant and positive impact on customer loyalty in the telecom sector. |
| Arora et al. (2021) | Digital & Social Media Marketing | Social CRM, Custom er Engage | Descrip tive study; SPSS & | Social CRM significant ly enhanced |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|
| | | ment, Satisfaction, Retention, Loyalty | AMOS | customer engagement, leading to higher satisfaction, retention, and loyalty. |
| Bhati & Verma (2020) | Multi-industry (Meta-analysis) | Brand Trust, Satisfaction, Commitment, Brand Advocacy | Meta-analysis of 63 studies | Relational factors such as trust, satisfaction, and commitment were the strongest antecedents of customer brand advocacy; results varied across contexts. |
| Amoako et al. (2019) | Hospitality Industry (Ghana) | Relationship Marketing, Trust, Commitment, Satisfaction | SEM; 167 hotel guests | Trust and commitment significantly influenced customer satisfaction; commitment partially mediated trust-satisfaction relationship. |
| Nora (2019) | Sharia Banking (Indonesia) | Trust, Religious Commitment, Knowledge, Intimacy, Repurchase Intention | PLS-SEM; 100 customers | Trust, religious commitment, and knowledge enhanced customer intimacy, which increased relational commitment and repurchase |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| | | | | intention. |
| Balci et al. (2019) | Container Shipping Industry | Financial & Social Bonding, Satisfaction, Loyalty | SEM; 175 freight forwarders | Financial bonding most strongly influenced satisfaction, while social bonding had the strongest effect on loyalty. |
| Petzer & Van Tonder (2019) | Insurance Industry | Commitment, Trust, Satisfaction, Customer Value, Engagement, Loyalty | Quantitative survey; 491 customers | Customer engagement mediated the relationships between relationship quality variables and loyalty intentions. |
| Abbas et al. (2019) | Business Firms (Pakistan) | CSR, Environmental Effects, Customer Value, Sustainability, Social Media Marketing | SPSS & SmartPLS; 548 respondents | CSR positively influenced sustainable performance, and social media marketing moderated the CSR-sustainability relationship. |

3. Conceptual Foundations of Customer Commitment

The concept of customer commitment is based on the social exchange theory, the study of the organization behaviour at large, where commitment is framed as a psychological state that connects people to relationships or organizations as time goes by (Roy et al., 2022). The social exchange theory explains relationship continuity to be a result of mutual value, trust and perceived benefits that are gained through the recurrence of such interactions. This view has been applied in marketing situations to explain the customer firm relationships, where customer commitment is viewed as a lifelong need to be in an appreciated relationship with a service provider or brand. Customer commitment as opposed to short-term

satisfaction is a more profound motivational force that remains even when uncertainty arises, when the service is offered by other competitive options or in case of services failures, which is reflected by immediate evaluations of service encounters. Likewise, commitment is not the same as a repeat purchase behaviour because a customer might be able to buy again due to convenience or the lack of alternatives but not be psychologically committed (Jaiswal et al., 2020). Therefore, commitment is used in capturing the intention that underlies the reason why customers willingly engage in relationships throughout their time.

Another common theory in the literature that attempts to characterize the concept of customer commitment identifies customer commitment as a multidimensional construct which includes affective, continuance, and normative levels. Affective commitment is characterized as the emotional attachment, identification and involvement of a customer towards a firm. Affective commitment customers stay in relationships as they simply like the organization and feel they are well aligned with its values and they get emotionally satisfied with sustained interactions (Nagpal, 2022). Continuance commitment on the contrary is based on calculative and rational consideration. The customers are stuck by the fact that they would have to incur financial costs, inconvenience, or lack of appropriate alternative, like the termination of the contract, which can be punishable by money or benefits developed over some time. Although the two forms lead to stability in relationships, affective commitment is linked to better relationship outcomes, whereas continuance commitment is more of dependency and not attachment.

Normative commitment displays the feeling of moral obligation or duty of a customer to keep a relationship with a firm (Al-Jabari and Ghazzawi, 2019). This kind of commitment is also guided by social norms, cultural values, moral values, and investments done by the organization to the individual like personalized service or long term support. Strongly normatively committed customers will believe that staying loyal is the correct thing to do despite the possibility of switching to be economically or functional beneficial. Normative commitment has not been sufficiently addressed by marketing research but is important in the maintenance of relationships especially in collectivist culture and relationship prevailing markets. A combination of affective, continuance and normative commitment will give a holistic picture in explaining the intricate motivation that forms the basis of customer commitment and its core in the relationship marketing.

4. Factors Influencing Customer Commitment

4.1 Relational and Psychological Factors

Relational causes are essential in creating customer commitment, especially the affective commitment, which is based on emotional attachment and relational proximity (Nora, 2019). The concept of trust has been established to be one of the strongest antecedents of commitment because it minimizes perceived risk and uncertainty during customer-firm relationships. As customers develop the perception that a particular firm is trusted, truthful,

and acting in their best interests, they will tend to become more involved with the firm emotionally. This bond is reinforced further by satisfaction as a result of constant positive service experiences which validate the expectations of the customers and increase their trust in the relationship (Roberts-Lombard et al., 2022). Trust and satisfaction are combined to bring out perceived relationship quality which is the overall judgment of the customers with respect to relational benefits as compared to costs.

In addition to relational quality, psychological variables are also influential determinants of the extent and permanency of customer commitment. The perception of value, which includes functional, emotional, and social benefits, is of primary importance to encourage customers to develop long-term relationships (Rather et al., 2021). When customers feel that a firm provides a high value in comparison to the competitors, they tend to be more loyal to it even in situations where there are other options. Emotional involvement also increases devotion because it promotes the sense of pleasure, pride, and individual reliability in the bond (Uddin, 2025). Also, brand identification enhances affective commitment in situations where customers sense that a brand shares their self-concept with the brand. When this happens, then the brand remains an aspect of the customer and thus, terminating a relationship is psychologically expensive. Together, relational and psychological aspects form a robust emotional attachment that fosters willing and enduring devotion and produce positive results like loyalty, recommendation, and robustness to the pressure of competition.

4.2 Economic and Structural Factors

Continuity commitment is mainly affected by economic and structural issues that determine the cost-benefit analysis that customers have in continuing or ending a relationship. Switching costs are actually one of the biggest determinants in the category; and this can be in the form of financial fines, time, learning, or loss of accumulated rewards (Tedja et al., 2024). In the presence of high switching costs, relationship termination by customers can be seen as economically or practically inadvisable and therefore they may stay with a firm even when they are moderately dissatisfied. This form of commitment is further reinforced by contractual obligation like long term service agreements or membership commitments which impose formal restraint to exit.

Other schemes that help in continuance commitment include loyalty programs and incentive-based schemes that help to increase the perceived benefits that the relationship will have by remaining in the relationship. Gamified points, privileges based on a tier, and exclusive rewards may produce a sense of investment that a customer will be unwilling to abandon (Vivona et al., 2023). Secondly, a constraint in choices or an absence of similar services in the market can reinforce continuance commitment by reducing the perceived set of choices of customers. But, although economic and structural factors contribute to becoming a stronger relationship, they are associated with some risks (Iglesias et al., 2020). The

over-dependence on switching barrier can also undermine affective commitment in case the customers are made to feel coerced instead of being made to feel valued. These relationships could be maintained within the short term but are subject to breakage in case of the reduction of switching costs or when competing firms have better value propositions. Thus, it can be stated that economic and structural factors are effective at maintaining commitment, but are most useful with relational and emotional engagement strategy add-ons.

4.3 Social and Normative Factors

Customer commitment is influenced by social and normative factors, which alleviate perceptions of obligation, appropriateness, and moral responsibility in relation (Shuqair et al., 2022). Normative commitment arises when the customers experience a need to be loyal to a firm because of social norms, cultural expectations or ethical reasons. Examples of such traditions may include family tradition, which may predispose people to sustain long-term relations to some brands or service providers especially the banking industry, retail or medical industry. In a similar manner, the peer recommendations and community endorsement may strengthen the loyalty by creating social approval and mutual expectations of the right consumption decision.

Culture context is very instrumental in enhancing normative commitment particularly in collectivist societies where harmony, loyalty as well as long-term relationship are greatly appreciated. When this occurs, customers might view changing brands as unfaithful or unethical even in situations where they could change to other brands. Normative commitment is also related to the organizational practices (Ojeme & Robson, 2020). Transparency in marketing behaviors, ethical treatment, and communication promote a sense of reciprocity, which persuades the customers to stay loyal due to its ethical character, as opposed to their own selfishness (Vieira et al., 2023). Corporate social responsibility also increases normative commitment by improving the alignment of the firm to the wider societal values, which increases the ethical attachment of the customers. Normative commitment can also be strengthened via relational communication like individualized messages and expressions of even greater importance since it sends the signal that the corporation appreciates the relationship, not just the transactional results. Social and normative factors play an assistant role to relational and economic factors and, as a whole, lead to a more holistic and lasting sense of customer commitment (Alsaad et al., 2021).

5. Assessment and Measurement of Customer Commitment

Customer commitment should be properly measured when making choices at both academic and managerial levels as it allows companies to diagnose the strength of relationships and develop proper retention strategies (Rahman, 2024). Since customer commitment is complex with many dimensions, the measurement methods should be able to measure both mental intentions and behavioural aspects (Boadu and Achiaa, 2019). The literature has announced a variety of complementary ways of evaluating customer commitment, with each providing different

information, and a range of the degree of analytical depth. In general, these approaches can be divided into those based on surveys, behavioural and transactional measures, as well as experimental or qualitative methods (Odionu et al., 2024). These methods are usually necessary to conduct a thorough assessment of customer loyalty due to the weaknesses of a particular method (Miyonga, 2019).

5.1 Survey-Based Measurement

Survey based measurement is still the most popular method of measuring customer commitment in marketing research. The self-administered questionnaires based on the Likert-type scale or semantic differential scales are frequently used to record the attitudinal responses of customers on the affective, continuance, and normative levels (Petzer and Roberts-Lombard, 2021). These scales evaluate emotional attachment, perceived switching costs and sensations of obligation using well-constructed statements which the respondents scale using structured scales. Multi-item scales are especially useful, because they increase measurement reliability and enable the researcher to better measure the complexity of commitment than one-item scale (Uzzaman, 2025).

The survey tools also help in the large-scale collection of data, which can be statistically analyzed and compared across sections or periods of time (Moss et al., 2021). The scales of commitment that have been established have been broadly validated in industries, which increases their generalizability and methodological soundness. But survey based measures are based on self-reported data that can be affected by the social desirability bias or the insufficient self-knowledge of respondents. In spite of these drawbacks, surveys are still an essential part of customer commitment studies because of their flexibility, scalability, and a capacity to record the psychological aspects that cannot be directly observed. Well planned and tested survey-based measures can give a solid basis to academic studies as well as managerial evaluation (Raji, 2020).

5.2 Behavioural and Transactional Measures

Another and a complementary measure of customer commitment is based on behavioural and transactional indicators, which measures customer commitment based on behavioural observations. The most typically used behavioural measures are purchase frequency, tenure of the relationship, share of wallet, repeat purchase rates, and customer lifetime value (Moliner-Tena et al., 2019). These predictors serve as factual data on the continuity of relationships and are exceptionally useful in the context of management as they are easily accessible via customer relationship management (CRM) tools and transactional databases (Roy et al., 2022).

Measures of behaviour have been helpful in tracking trends of customer engagement and profitability with time, enabling the firms to classify their customers as per commitment related behaviours. Nevertheless, such metrics only reflect what customers do, but they do not address the reasons why they act in a certain way to a full extent (Puni et al., 2021). Customers can experience repeat buying out of convenience, inertia, or out of the absence of alternatives and not because of commitment. ~~Because of this, behavioural indicators will tend to~~

overestimate actual relationship strength. In order to overcome this shortcoming, scholars and practitioners are more and more using behavioural data with attitudinal surveys measures, which allow researchers and practitioners to understand both psychological commitment and actual behaviour in a more subtle manner.

5.3 Experimental and Qualitative Approaches

Experimental and qualitative designs offer a more profound understanding of the mechanisms, which cause customer commitment to occur since they examine the process of its development and changes in different situations (Arguello et al., 2020). Experimental designs, like vignette studies, can be used to control relational variables, e.g. trust, switching costs or service quality, and see their impact on commitment levels. They are causal inference environments that are helpful to investigate continuance and normative commitment, in particular (Omuso, 2025).

In-depth interviews and focus groups are examples of qualitative methods, which can provide in-depth contextual data on the perceptions, motivations, and experiences of customers (Lim, 2025). The approaches are useful in investigating complicated psychological and social processes that might not be fully represented by regular surveys. It is also found that scale development and theory refinement are supported by qualitative data as new dimensions of commitment are revealed. Even though qualitative methods cannot be generalized, they are essential in the development of conceptual knowledge and as a supplement to quantitative measurement methods (Lu et al., 2024).

6. Strategic Consequences of Customer Commitment

The commitment of the customers has far-reaching strategic implication to companies in the dynamic and competitive market. Affective commitment out of the three dimensions of commitment is always linked to the most desirable relational outcome (Majid et al., 2019). Emotionally committed customers are more loyal to a firm and it is not only in terms of repeat buying but also in terms of attitudinal attachment to the brand. These customers are very resistant to competitive against prices, even when competitor companies offer price cuts or one-time bonuses (Agustian et al., 2023). Their emotional attachment leads to trust and identification with the firm and therefore, dissolution of the relationships is psychologically expensive. Subsequently, the emotionally engaged customers will have increased chances of developing long-lasting, which will result in recurrent incomes (Ilufeye et al., 2023).

In addition to loyalty, affective commitment is also important in triggering customer advocacy behaviours (Sánchez-Gutiérrez et al., 2019). The loyal customers often indulge in positive word-of-mouth communication, both in the real world and online, and thus help shape the purchasing decisions of other people. They also become more willing to be constructive in their feedback and this can aid in service improvement and innovation. Notably, affective commitment enhances the toleration of customers to the instances of occasional service failures. ~~Instead of a sudden change of providers, loyal consumers~~
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will tend to explain the situation-based failures by the firm and provide it with a chance to salvage itself and increase relationship strength.

Continuance and normative commitment also lead to strategic results especially in terms of relationship stability and predictability of demand. Continuance commitment makes customers less likely to switch because it makes it harder to estimate switching costs and normative commitment makes customers remain loyal because of moral duty and social norms (Tollin and Christensen, 2019). Such types of commitment ensure firms with stable customer base and enhanced forecasting. Nevertheless, there can be negative consequences of over dependency on the structural limitations or the contractual restrictions without any emotional connection. When switching barriers lower defection vulnerability may exist as customers who feel trapped instead of valuably treated may express low customer satisfaction, lower engagement, and low vulnerability in switching once barriers are weakened. Accordingly, continuance and normative commitment can work best with affective relationships (Sraha et al., 2020).

In a bigger strategic view, customer commitment improves the performance of firms in terms of lowering marketing and acquisition expenses, raising customer lifetime value, and boosting brand equity. Customers who are loyal to the business do not need as much promotional value and have more cumulative value over time (Surdu et al., 2019). As well, relationships based on commitment strengthen brand reputation and competitive position, and it is harder to make competitors imitate relational benefits. Companies that are effective in developing a balanced combination of affective, continuance and normative commitment are thus in a better position to sustain a competitive advantage in the long term and profitability in a more complex marketing environment (Tuominen et al., 2023).

7. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

To the marketing practitioner, the results of this review indicate that customer commitment should be addressed as a multidimensional and dynamic process instead of a single product of loyalty programs or contractual process. Managers ought to identify that the affective, continuance and normative commitment are based on varied customer motives and as such, must be approached differently. Emotional relationships should be prioritized with the help of the uniform quality of service, significant brand storylines, and one-on-one customer relationships. The relationships are built emotionally when the customers believe that they are listened to, have respect and respect and are treated as individuals rather than as transactions. The investments in relationship touchpoints of Customer responsiveness, understanding communication, and customized products can be specifically identified as effective in enhancing affective commitment. Meanwhile, there should be transparency and competitiveness in terms of pricing, contracts and service policies to avoid loss of trust. When the customers find the organizational practices as being fair and customer oriented, they are more eager to have long-term relationships even in very competitive markets.

In the application of continuance and normative commitment, the practitioners should carefully balance between relational value and structural incentives. Relationship stability can be improved by exchanging loyalty programs, membership levels and contractual agreements to raise the perceived exit costs. Nevertheless, the mechanisms must be set in such a way to encourage further participation but not punish the withdrawal, since the coercive forms can destroy the feeling of emotional attachment and become a source of resentment. Marketing ethics are important in supporting the normative commitment as it gives a feeling of reciprocity and moral obligation. The normative relationships could be enhanced through corporate social responsibility, sustainable business practices and involvement of community in the activities of the organization that make the values of the organization be equal to the values of customers. In addition, engaging customers in value co-creation activities, and product customization, feedback integration and collaborative innovation improve the ownership and relational responsibility of customers. Whenever customers feel that they are valued by their contribution, commitment will shift to voluntary loyalty based on mutual respect rather than being obliged to be faithful.

The service delivery systems should also be strong and holistic in measuring customer commitment. Managers are advised to get rid of using single indicators like repeat purchase rates or tenure and use integrated frameworks that can involve attitudinal and behavioural measures. The survey-based evaluations that involve capturing of emotional attachment, perceived switching costs, and moral obligation should be complemented with behavioural analytics that are obtained as a result of customer relationship management systems, such as purchase frequency, customer engagement rate, and customer lifetime value. It is this kind of integration that gives managers the chance to differentiate between true commitment and retention based on inertia. This is further improved by advanced analytics and digital technologies, which allow real-time tracking of customer communication at various touchpoints. Providing a systematic monitoring of shifts in commitment levels, firms will be able to detect the related risks of relationships proactively and act accordingly. Finally, a relationship-based but data-informed strategy will enable managers to develop long-term customer loyalty that can facilitate long-term profitability, brand equity, and competitive advantage.

8. CONCLUSION

This review paper has presented an inclusive summary of the literature pertaining customer commitment related to marketing relationships with a focus on its conceptual basis, its determinants, measurement methodologies as well as its strategic implications. The multidimensional approach to the concept of customer commitment by covering affective, continuance and normative dimensions of the concept explains that the paper has distinguished the multidimensional aspects of psychological, economic and social motivations that form the basis of long-term relationships between customers

and firms. The multidimensional view builds upon the relationships marketing theory by leaving behind the simplistic ideas of loyalty and acknowledging the fact that customer commitment is a result of the complex of emotional attachment, calculative considerations, and moral obligation.

The review highlights the pivotal aspect of customer commitment as catalyst to the key marketing performance of loyalty, retention, advocacy and resistance to competitive forces. The most useful dimension is affective commitment which develops authentic emotional relationship, favorable word-of-mouth, and endurance to service failures. The continuity and normative commitment though considered secondary tend to add a lot of stability to the relationship as they minimize churn and increase demand predictability. The results however also indicate that overdependence on switching barrier or obligation based loyalty can undermine relationship quality unless positive relational experiences support the relational ties. Hence, companies should embrace a balanced commitment-making policy, which incorporates emotions, structural rewards, and ethics use.

On the managerial side, the integration of previous studies shows that customer commitment is a strategic resource that improves the performance of the firm through elevating customer lifetime value, decreasing marketing expenses, and building brand equity. Companies that effectively develop long term commitment are more likely to gain sustainable competitive advantage in competitive markets. In general, this review supports the significance of customer commitment as a conceptual building block in the marketing of relationships and offers a consistent framework to explain how it can be used to maintain long-lasting and mutually rewarding customer relationships.

9. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Although the literature on customer commitment is considerable, there are a number of valuable prospects that can be pursued in the future. The fact that the commitment of customers is dynamic and changes with time is one of the directions. The longitudinal research designs would be valuable in terms of understanding the process of commitment formation, becoming stronger or weaker at various disciplines of the customer lifecycle and responsiveness to the shift in the relational conditions. These studies would improve knowledge on the time dimension of commitment and how it is long-term in terms of relationship stability.

The other potential area of future research is the increased role that digital technologies, AI, and omnichannel engagement have on customer commitment. As companies become more dependent on automated services systems, personalization algorithms and digital interfaces, the interplay of the same with the development of affective, continuance and normative commitment needs to be examined. Future research might explore how the mediating relationships of technology will promote the emotional attachment or mainly the calculative dependence and the way trust and commitment are established in low-human-contact setting.

More attention should also be paid to culture context. A lot of the available research is focused in the western markets, which inhibits the applicability of the research. Relational expectations, social norms and cultural values could be studied through comparative cross cultural studies examining in which ways cultural values and social norms moderate the formation and expression of commitment. Further, future studies can examine industry-related differences in customer commitment

especially in new industries like digital platforms, subscriptions and sharing economies. The discussion of these gaps will also improve the customer commitment theory and make it more practical with respect to various marketing situations.

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