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Abstract

COVID-19 and the increase in accessible online streaming services, such as Netflix, Prime Video HBO Max, Disney Plus and much more threatens the customer loyalty of pay per view television services such as DStv.

In response to declining DStv Premium subscribers, the purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the phenomenon of customer loyalty by determining the brand attributes of DStv from the perspective of both existing DStv subscribers and customers who are no longer DStv subscribers.

The purpose of this research is to explore the brand attributes of DStv that contribute towards customer loyalty. It was therefore important to gain an in-depth understanding of these brand attributes from both current DStv subscribers as well as previous DStv subscribers. The interviews consisted of questions relating to attributes that are most important to loyal customers.

The study has provided insights into the various attributes of DStv that encourages brand loyalty. It has also identified a range of risk factors that impacts loyalty and causing customers to cancel their subscription.

DECLARATION

I, Shaun Julian Holworthy, declare that this research dissertation is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BCom Honours in Strategic Brand Management at the Vega, Online. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other institution.

Shaun Julian Holworthy



Signed at Pretoria

On the 29 Day of November 2021

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Chapter 1: Background and Context

1.1 Introduction

Customer loyalty is imperative for every business where it measures the customer's likeliness repeat business with a brand (Singh, 2020). Freedman (2020) describes customer loyalty as a consumer's eagerness and aspiration to frequently buy a product, or use a service, from an organisation they have had a remarkable experience with. Ramaswami (2017), identifies loyalty as an authentic enthusiastic connection that happens when the customer values the benefit of a product or service, in addition to the manner in which the organisation delivers the service. According to Freedman (2020), attracting customers is one of the most difficult parts of running a business and keeping these customers is even more challenging. Customer retention results in customer loyalty, which provides a multitude of benefits, such as spreading word-of-mouth, less price sensitivity and lower marketing costs (Freedman, 2020). This is echoed by Wertz (2018) and Masiello (2017) who state that brands should centre their efforts on sustaining and keeping existing customers as they are liable to continue purchasing the brands' products/services. Masiello (2017), asserts that dedicated customers are bound to become vocal brand ambassadors for your organisation.

Customer satisfaction has been used as an indicator of customer loyalty (Iwashita, 2019), however, customer satisfaction with good customer service and improving product offerings is no longer good enough (Freedman, 2020). Business models and practices, sustained by a robust economy come under threat during a time of economic crisis (Ball, 2020). As a result of COVID-19 the media and entertainment industry is currently under threat and the longer the pandemic continues, the stronger the impact will be (Freedman, 2020). COVID-19 and the increase in accessible online streaming services, such as Netflix and Prime Video, threatens the customer loyalty of pay per view television services such as DStv.

The progression of technology is moving at a faster pace than ever before and the advances in technology have enabled consumers to access increased bandwidth and speed in their internet connections (Berg, Strand & Sandell, 2019). Online entertainment has become increasingly popular, decreasing consumers' willingness to pay for entertainment (Berg *et al.*, 2019). According to McKane (2020), the impact

of COVID-19 and the associated lockdown saw a decline in DStv Premium subscriber. A 3% decline in revenue was recorded due to lower advertising and commercial subscriber revenue (McKane, 2020). The DStv Premium subscriber base in South Africa has declined significantly over the past year, negating gains in mass-market subscriber growth (McKane, 2020). One of the biggest drivers of DStv's Premium subscriber decline was the lack of live sport due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Coupled with this, the COVID-19 lockdown period saw an expected rise in the consumption of streaming services as consumers were confined to their homes (Orr, 2020). However, according to Ndlovu (2019), there has been a gradual decline in DStv Premium subscribers since 2018, resulting in the decision for subscription-based media companies to focus on client retention over acquisition.

This study will explore the brand attributes of DStv that contribute to customer loyalty.

The rationale of this study is closely linked to the problem statement, namely that consideration of customer loyalty has generated a management dilemma as shown in Cooper and Schindler's (2014), Six-step Management-research Question Hierarchy. According to MyBroadband (2019), DStv is facing tremendous challenges in that their interim result has shown that there is a continued decline in the DStv Premium subscribers.

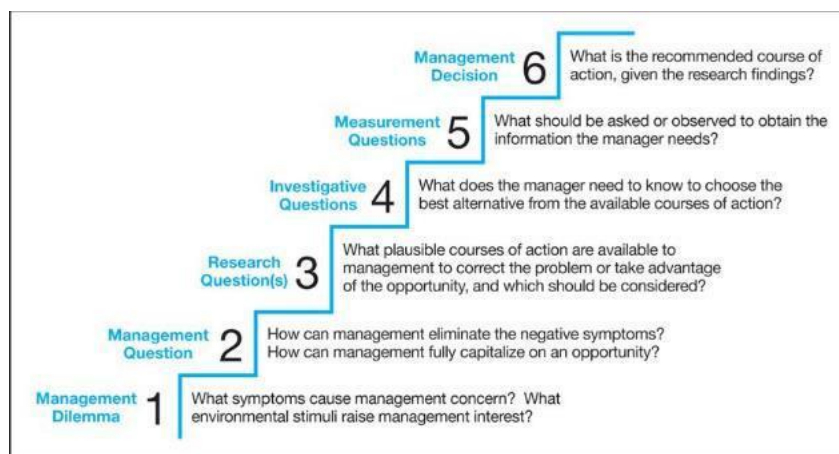


Figure 1: Cooper and Schindler, Six-step Management-research Question Hierarchy (2014: 108).

As expressed by Keller (1993) with the customer-based brand equity model, there is an association between the brand and the customer that ensures brand equity and has a superior possibility of gaining and retaining customers in this way giving an enormous advantage to the organisation.



Figure 2: Bhasin, Keller's Brand Equity Model (2019).

In using Keller's brand equity model one attempt to understand and answer the Six-step Management-research Question Hierarchy proposed by Cooper and Schindler.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

In response to declining DStv Premium subscribers, the purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the phenomenon of customer loyalty by determining the brand attributes of DStv from the perspective of both existing DStv subscribers and customers who are no longer DStv subscribers. To achieve this, an interpretivism paradigm will be used.

1.3 Problem in Context

This study aims to explore the DStv brand attributes that lead to customer loyalty. As stated by Hatami, Lacroix and Mieszala (2020), considering the Covid 19 pandemic, the crisis has in some cases made the standard decision-making tools that business rely on obsolete and is therefore compelled to re-evaluate themselves to stay competitive in the new normal.

1.4 Problem Statement

Digital technology was introduced by MultiChoice to the African continent with the launch of DStv in 1995 (MultiChoice, 2021). Ferreira (2020) assert that watching TV in South Africa has become much more convoluted. Viewers are faced with a steadily developing artillery of streaming services that rival the offering provided by DStv which can prompt viewers to churn to other content providers such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and Apple TV (Ferreira, 2020). The increased competition combined with a global pandemic has had a direct impact on the customer base of DStv (BusinessTech, 2020). Despite the business achieving sound results in a difficult time the revenue of MultiChoice has declined by 3% (BusinessTech, 2020). Nielsen (2021) concur with BusinessTech and Ferreira in that the media landscape has permanently been altered and that video streaming services account for a larger share of the overall media consumption as compared to previous years.

The past few years have seen a dramatic switch from analogue home entertainment towards internet-based behaviour, which has allowed for video streaming services to thrive (Berg *et al*, 2019). These streaming services are fundamentally changing the viewing habits of consumers (ECI, 2021) requiring media and content owners to transform their strategies in order to survive. Covid-19 lockdowns intensified the effect of video streaming services on DStv, negatively impacting revenue generation, (McKane, 2020). As new business opportunities emerge through the change in consumer preferences, it become critical to maintain subscribers as loyal customers lead to increased profits (Berg *et al.*, 2019). In order to maintain subscribers, DStv need to understand which brand attributes are associated with loyal customers as well as with previous subscribers.

Loyal customers are imperative to the success of any organisation (Chambers, 2020). This study will explore which DStv brand attributes support and encourage loyalty to the brand, preventing switching to a competing service provider.

1.5 Research Question

What are the DStv brand attributes that support and result in customer loyalty?

1.6 Research Objectives

Cooper and Schindler's (2014) Management-research question Hierarchy posits that it is the task of the researcher to assist management to formulate the specific research questions that will resolve the overall management dilemma. Cooper and Schindler (2014) further state that research questions should further be described as research objectives.

The objectives for this research are:

- To explore the attributes of the DSTV brand that are most important to loyal customers.
- To understand the brand experience of DStv customer advocates.
- To explore the brand attributes of previous DStv subscribers.

1.7 Theoretical Foundation

This section discusses the theoretical model with regard customer loyalty. The value of theory is that it allows for the description, interpretation, understanding, evaluation and prediction of customer loyalty (Fourie, 2007). For the purpose of this research the following models will be considered:

- Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity model (CBBE).
- Uses and Gratifications Theory

1.7.1 Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity model (CBBE)

As characterised by Keller (2001) the basic premise of the model is that the power of a brand lies in what customers have learned, felt, seen and heard about the brand over time. The concept behind the Brand Equity Model is simple: to build a strong brand, you must shape how customers think and feel about your brand (Keller, 2001). It is therefore important to build the right type of experiences around the brand, so that customers have specific, positive thoughts, feelings, beliefs, opinions, and perceptions about it.

When a brand has strong brand equity, the customers will buy more, will recommend the brand, are more loyal, and the brand is less likely to lose them to competitors (Keller, 2001).

Bhasin (2019) identified the advantages of using Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model as follows:

- Creates brand loyalty and encourages repeat purchases or purchases in high quantity
- Creates a sense of community by being associated with the brand
- Measures the consumers' emotional attachment to brands
- It helps marketers to set strategic direction and inform their brand-related decisions.

Keller's CBBE model builds equity from a customer perspective, which aligns with the aim of this study, which will explore the needs of loyal DStv customers as well as the brand attributes of new acquisition customers in order to understand potential customer loyalty attributes for DStv. As expressed by Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) marketers want exclusive brand repurchase and this happens when customers develop and have a profound emotional bond with brands.

1.7.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratification Theory was integrated as a method to understand why and how people vigorously seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs (Katz, 1959). The Uses and Gratifications Theory is an audience-centred approach to understanding mass communication (Katz, 1959). Du Plooy (2011) and McQuail (2010) explain that this approach is based on the assumptions that people are different, and therefore they have different social and psychological gratification needs, expectations, views on mass media, patterns of media exposure and gratification needs.

According to Fourie (2009), the Uses and Gratification Theory has provided valuable contributions to the field of media studies. The theory emphasises the role that the audience plays when choosing a specific media that will gratify their specific needs (Fourie, 2009). In essence, the Uses and Gratification Theory refers to the audience's motivation for choosing a specific media, whereby the motive is transformed to gratifications that are experienced. This theory emphasises the need of the audience that is fulfilled by media therefore, new media technologies provide audiences more choices and needs to be catered for.

According to Hasebrink (2011), the corresponding theoretical basis is the Uses and Gratification approach to media research, which postulates that media use can be seen as the maximisation of individual gratification. Approaches that attempt to understand what quality means for recipients are theoretically as well as methodically closely connected to this theory. The central objective is to identify dimensions of gratifications for different media offerings. Even if more comprehensive approaches towards models of quality and accountability in the media are adopted, users are only taken into account regarding the satisfaction of their individual needs. These needs are usually contrasted with normative criteria extracted from theories of democracy and then taken as contradictory poles of these normative perspectives which are classified as high quality but which usually do not receive high audience ratings.

Hasebrink (2011) argues that users have an interest in the media offering that serves their individual needs. Users should be empowered and more actively involved in making media responsive to their diverse needs for information and media content (Helberger, 2011).

The assumptions that are outlined above suggest that the users are actively seeking the platforms whereby their entertainment needs are met. Therefore, this theory will be incorporated to understand why and how customers are seeking out specific media to satisfy their needs. This is particularly relevant as this research study aims to explore the brand attributes of DStv that lead to customer loyalty, thus focusing on customer satisfaction as the basis of this theory. Customer satisfaction according to Kierczak (2021), is a measurement that determines how products or services provided by an organisation will meet the customers' expectations, therefore, leading to customer satisfaction that is one of the most important indicators of customer loyalty.

1.8 Conclusion

This research focused on the DStv brand attributes that contribute to customer loyalty. It looked at the various challenges that DStv are facing with the myriad of competitors available in the market.

Research questions and research objectives were identified to attempt addressing the concerns facing the DStv brand. The contributions of this study might assist DStv to identify the attributes that the loyal customers portray and capitalise and duplicate them to the non-loyal customers.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Fourie (2007) defines media studies as the systematic, critical and analytical study of the media which includes television, radio, press, video, film and the internet as one of the most important producers and disseminators of content to the public. Fourie (2007) further argues that the omnipresence of the media and its impact on everyday life can no longer be underestimated. Streaming services, such as Netflix and Google's YouTube, pose a significant threat to MultiChoice's future growth potential, but they are by no means the only risks (McLeod, 2019). The group's business environment is subject to rapid technological change and changes in consumer preferences and viewing habits, which could render the products and services it offers less attractive (McLeod, 2019). In 2019, MultiChoice added 1.6 million subscribers across its 50 markets in Africa which came from lower-priced — and presumably lower-margin — bouquets (McLeod, 2019). There was however a loss in demand for higher priced bouquets and the broadcaster is actively looking for ways to curtail the loss, which was attributed to a weak economy (McLeod, 2019).

The MultiChoice Group (MCG) has released its financial results for the period ended 30 September 2020, showing that the coronavirus lockdown and a lack of live sports has had a direct impact on its subscriber mix (Business Tech, 2020). Revenue declined by 3% to R16.5 billion due to lower advertising and subscriber revenues (Business Tech, 2020). Premium subscribers are gradually leaving DStv, which is a direct consequence of the growth of competing internet-based streaming services (Ndlovu, 2019). Consumer preferences have changed as new services and products become available, including less expensive or more innovative alternatives. MultiChoice's ability to remain competitive and develop successful products and services depends on its ability to understand the brand attributes that lead to customer loyalty and to accurately predict and anticipate changes in consumer demand (McLeod, 2019).

Subscription-based media companies are more focused on client retention than acquisition, and DStv must preserve its client base (Ndlovu, 2019). In order to do this it is necessary to have an in-depth understanding of the DStv brand attributes which

result in customer loyalty. The aim of this section is to provide a reflective review based on a theoretical scholastic enquiry of the research aim and objectives of this study.

This review will consist of a theories and frameworks of brand attributes that relate to customer loyalty as well as the acquisition of new customers. Cooper and Schindler (2014) maintain that constructs need to be unravelled. In this chapter the topics that will be unravelled to reveal their appropriate relationship within this research are as follows: Television industry; Customer Loyalty and Attributes that affect customer loyalty.

2.2 Construct 1 Television industry

Gray (2008) defines television entertainment as programmes, segments or channels that enjoy, amuse, delight and sometimes even enlighten the viewer. According to Wu *et al.*, (2006), television is one of the most cost-effective media that performs multiple functions which include messages that inform, educate and entertain the general public, not only locally but globally. Greenberg (2009) states that while producing video, audio and other rich media is easier than ever, as is commenting, the true value lies in the ability to take that content and put it in a public place that can be seen by millions.

Television, which was once used as a centrepiece in each living room in various households, has now evolved not only in terms of programming, but also in terms of accessing content (Satell, 2015). There are five types of television platforms, namely satellite, cable, internet protocol, terrestrial and digital terrestrial (Abu-Alhaija, 2018). According to Bailey (2011), the rapid changes in the television industry have consistently been caused by competitive changes in the environment. With the Covid-19 pandemic these competitive changes have been accelerated as consumers were lock up in their respective homes for an extended period of time (Nielsen, 2021). The pandemic was a total lifestyle change for everyone and Nielsen (2021) is of the view that consumers will always gravitate towards those changes in media consumption that appeal to them the most. Tripas (2007) is of the view that when a product is part of a broader modular system like the television, interdependencies and shifting bottlenecks can impose new functionality and/or performance requirements. Tripas

(2007) asserts that new technology invades an industry when the old technology is approaching its performance limits. Bailey (2011) further asserts that this can be due to the shift in societal preferences which is also a contributing factor for media houses to become dependent on the latest entertainment and media technology. Organisations offering television services need to re-focus on the loyalty concept in order to preserve loyal customers, who are considered vital for market success (Abu-Alhajja, 2018).

In a review by Goolsbee and Petin (2004), it was found that since the start of cable television broadcasts in the 1950s, the main goal of network television was to improve the network broadcast signals of rural households. After the dawn of the millennium, talks about the death of television was an extremely worrying debate according to a report in the Business Insider (2016). However, Nielsen (2015) highlighted the evolving status of television, which has extended beyond the traditional television screen (Nielsen, 2015). Nielsen (2015) agrees watching television in a linear fashion is changing for many, as one is now in more control of what we watch. Thibeault (2016) found that people subscribe to cable television just as much as any of the previous generations did and that generally this cohort are viewing television five times more than through streaming content. According to Mungadze (2019) South Africa is one of the largest OTT (Over-the-top Television, this is streaming services and not broadcast services like DStv) markets on the content with streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Cell C Black, Showmax, Vodacom Video Play and Discovery Digital.

In light of this, Downes (2016) viewed the future of traditional television as extremely grim as video services are moving from hardware to software. In a study conducted by Nielsen (2015) it was found that television remains at the centre of video consumption. Television is the primary device of choice for viewing video across all generations, but its leadership status is highest among older consumers (Nielsen, 2015). Downes (2016) believes that younger generations want to define their own viewing experience, hence their mixing of traditional and self-produced content and the enjoyment of it on the device of their choice. Thibeault (2016) disagrees with Downes arguing that it is not an either-or situation; it is rather a combination of streaming and cable television. On the other hand, Lachman (2013) believes that

media use among the younger generation has increased significantly; such media include television, computers, and smart phones.

Oblinger (2003) is of the view that the internet is more powerful than television. According to Sinclair (2014), in the era of media convergence, the internet must also be taken into account, not only for the ready access to information which it gives, and its unprecedented capacity for social networking, but also as a means of delivering the traditional media of print, radio and television. Today, people across the globe use electronic devices for three primary purposes: relationship building/maintaining, information gathering and entertainment viewing (Nielsen, 2015).

The shift to streaming video services may seem inevitable, however the media and entertainment industry is facing another challenge as the previously profitable business model of paid subscriptions used by cable and satellite-based pay TV brands for years is no longer relevant (Arkenberg, Ledger, Loucks & Westcott, 2021). According to Ndlovu (2019) the decline in DStv subscribers can be directly linked to the growth of internet-based streaming services available in South Africa. However, other reasons for this decline can be attributed to DStv being comparatively expensive, it is a monopoly that offers poor service and communication with customers and both its technology and the business used are becoming obsolete (Ndlovu, 2019).

Subscription services, such as DStv, are considered indulgent subscriptions and customer attrition for these subscriptions is a real risk (Cierzan, 2018). This is evident in the loss of DStv Premium Package subscribers, majority of which have downgraded their subscriptions due to the poorly performing economy (Ndlovu, 2018). Indulgent subscriptions have to keep their customers engaged through continual new and interesting product or service offerings (Cierzan, 2018). Beyond providing great content, subscription brands have to produce additional benefits to retain their customers by treating them more like valued members of a club, delivering more value and creating increased loyalty (Arkenberg *et al.*, 2021). Indulgent subscriptions rely on customers who choose to keep their services and when the customer no longer feels that they are receiving value they tend to cancel or downgrade their subscriptions (Cierzzan, 2018). In Namibia, MultiChoice's DStv has been criticised for repetitive programs, increased monthly payments, long queues when customers visit the DStv

customer service centres, busy and unavailable call centres and poor signals during inclement weather, all of which contribute to poor customer satisfaction and potential customer attrition (Neshuku, 2009).

In conclusion the need for the viewers to have faster and more frequent access to content on demand, when and how they want to consume content. In the next section focus will be placed on customer loyalty.

2.3 Construct 2 Customer Loyalty

Roesier (2021) is of the view that it costs five times more to acquire a new customer than it is to retain an existing customers, therefore customer loyalty is the key to profitability. Carter (2020) defined customer loyalty as when a customer consistently transacts with a particular brand and effectively advocates the brand to their social groups. Lawrence and Greene (2020) characterised customer loyalty as making an enduring relationship with customers that incorporates fulfilling their requirements: physical, intellectual and emotional. It is critical to make every encounter memorable and make a personalised connection with customers to guarantee that they feel special and taken care of.

Lawrence and Greene (2020) asserts that customer loyalty is essential to an organisation since it eventually decides if the business will be prosperous. Kittur and Chatterjee (2021) concur with Lawrence and Greene (2020) and state that brand loyalty in the present competitive environment is viewed as perhaps one of the main facets of business to business marketing because it brings about a predictable income stream and a decrease of marketing costs as far as customer acquisition and services which improves the productivity of the organisation. Accordingly for an organisation to support customer loyalty a strategy for sustaining customer loyalty ought to incorporate properties, such as trust in the product or service, caring and attentive customer service and establishing an individual relationship with the organisation (Shupe 2017).

For customers to have that relationship with an organisation Mostafa and Kasamani (2021) claim that memorable encounters drive customers to purchase again from the brand subsequently upgrading their brand loyalty. Mostafa and Kasamani (2021) go

further and express that experiential brands drive emotional relationships and produce desirable connections with customers, embrace customers' self-identity and stimulate customers' feeling of devotion towards the brand. As indicated by Cover Story (2018), organisations ought to consider what the essence its product is, and should not just serve the product to customers the product, but include every one of the senses when advertising the product. This is because customers purchase a product not in light of the appealing attributes that that product holds, however a wholesome product with all the product attributes; the brand image, the service received and every one of the visible and non-physical attributes.

Mostafa and Kasamani (2021) concur with Cover Story (2018) and claim that 65% of consumers are impacted by a positive encounter all through their purchase journey and states that customers purchase an all total experience, consequently brands are propelled to make significant encounters for customers, for instance; extraordinary customer service, well helpful staff. According to Lawrence and Greene (2020), Disney theme park customers are referred to as 'guests' being the recipients of hospitality as opposed to the purchaser of a product or service. This service orientated approach creates a sense of caring about the level of the guest experience, making and effort to ensure that the guest experience is truly magical. Disney's approach is an example of creating of brand image, which is one of the significant drivers of brand loyalty. Pahwa (2021) defines brand image as how customers think of a brand. Therefore one of the significant drivers of brand loyalty is brand image, a high brand image prompts trust, lowered apparent risk of the organisation's goods and services which thus prompts higher satisfaction and loyalty (Kittur & Chatterjee, 2021).

Diallo, Moulins and Roux (2021) found that an emotional brand connection is significant in the loyalty-building process, According to Cierzan (2018) subscription brands can only continue successfully by retaining customers and capitalising on drivers of emotional loyalty. Customers with an emotional connection to a brand form an attachment to the brand resulting in a brand relationship. Customer loyalty built on an emotional connection and attachment are a more compelling indicator of brand loyalty than those dependent on identification and trust. Braxton and Lau-Gesk (2020) state that belongingness is seen as a driver of happiness, though brand authenticity prompts brand loyalty. The two systems work simultaneously, with the end goal that

authenticity advances belongingness, which thus prompts customer happiness and brand loyalty it is, therefore, the human connection that fulfils the principal want to feel like one has a place.

Mostafa and Kasamani (2021) express that differentiating the brand from its competitors relies to a great extent upon the capacity of the brand to foster the various points by which the customer is able to access the brand. Being outwardly warm, fun, interesting to the various senses since consumers are not, at this point simply searching for substantial and utilitarian qualities while buying a product or service yet, in addition, the elusive and symbolic tenets, for example, a particular encounter that emerges from the brand's current environment, communication, identity and elements (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021). Cover Story (2018), found that a valuable brand that incorporate the healthiness of the brand, the pertinence of the brand in the market, the customers perception of the brand value, the positioning of the brand and the harmony between continuous marketing and the need to stay relevant are all considered as brand value.

To amplify attitudinal loyalty among customers Umashankar, Bhagwat and Kumar (2016) are of the view that value should be instilled, particularly in the fundamental offerings. Services organisations should zero in additional on improving customers' satisfaction with fundamental services and less on pre and post-utilization features. Attitudinal loyalty is a significant arbitrator that assists organisations with accomplishing the ideal result of reducing the price sensitivity of behaviourally loyal customers (Umashankar *et al.*, 2016). Purohit (2015) concurs that a satisfied customer that plans to purchase a similar product or service in future, and if the degree of satisfaction is low or the customers are not happy with the performance of their product or service then they can scrutinise and spread negative word of mouth on the product or service performance, customer disappointment can and will prompt customers switching to different brands. Therefore Mostafa and Kasamani (2021) express that experiences ought not exclusively to be restricted to the actual store, but that every stage of the customer journey with the brand is additionally consistent with the brand style even while unpacking a purchased product the customer should feel a feeling of energy fully expecting the item that will be inside.

In this section, it was established that customer loyalty is a fundamental element of any organisation (Lawrence & Greene, 2020), and the need for pricing ought to correlate with customers' opinion about a product or service (Cover Story, 2018). Lastly that the relationship between collective brand personification, customer happiness and brand loyalty are driven not just by a more profound connection with the brand from the increased sense of belonging but also by increased brand authenticity (Braxton & Lau-Gesk, 2020). As indicated by Dawi *et al.*, (2018) keeping up customer's ideal social expectations, for example, repurchase intention, positive recommendation and willingness to pay more, will have monetary benefits and sustain the organisation. Accomplishment in customer engagement in positive practices would benefits organisations in term of lessening advertising and operational expenses, building brand loyalty, and expanding benefit per customer (Dawi *et al.*,2018). In order to reduce churn, these premium subscriptions should focus on the following drivers of emotional loyalty (Cierzan, 2018).

- Reliability – These brands need to zero in on reliably conveying quality products. A mistake can be detrimental and mean the loss of a subscriber. Therefore, these subscribers are likely to be brand ambassadors within their social groups for the organisation.
- Appreciation – Very much like necessity subscriptions, extravagance subscriptions need to compensate customers remaining with the organisation. Try not to put a conventional rewards program in play; rather consider the conveyance of unforeseen and not widely known prizes, as this will fit well with what drives these customers.
- Shared Values – Premium subscriptions for the most part offer speciality products to a particular group of customers. These customers fragments regularly share comparative interests and economic status. It is reasonable to expect that they likewise share numerous qualities. Brands should plan to benefit from these common qualities and affect areas that matter most to their customers.
- Investment – While premium subscription brands might be hesitant to offer discounts on their products, they should collaborate with different brands to offer discounts on opportunities on products or services their customers may like. While they should be mindful so as not to spam their customers, investing

in them and giving extra external advantages can additionally broaden their relationship with different features of their customers' lives, while extending the relationship simultaneously.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter viewed work by various authors on how the entertainment environment has affected trends in the evolution of the television industry. The need for the viewers to have faster and more frequent access to content on demand, when and how they want to consume content. Work on customer loyalty in the different industries were investigated and found that customer loyalty is a fundamental element of any organisation.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this section the primary focus will be placed on the research method in terms of the design, and the theoretical framework which will underpin the approaches and methodology of this study.

Cooper and Schindler (2014) define a research design as the outline for accomplishing research goals and addressing the inquiries that emerge. In this section, the attributes of the different methodologies and strategies for gathering, measuring and examining the information gathered for the research will be considered.

Figure 3.1 depicts the classification of research designs.

Classification of research designs

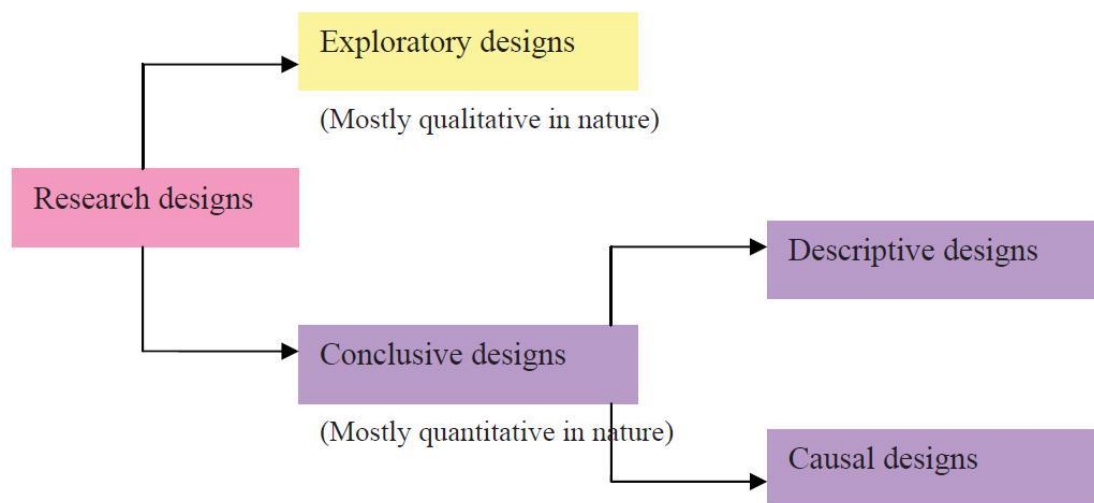


Figure 3: Shukla, Classifications of research designs (2008:30)

This research aims to understand and explore the brand attributes that lead to customer loyalty. According to Maree (2016) and Kolb (2013) concur that qualitative research is based on social science principles and generally keen on how people arrange themselves and their settings and how occupants of these settings figure out their environmental factors through symbols, ceremonies, social constructions and social roles. Hague (2006) sees qualitative research as an exploration methodology to mirror individuals' mentalities and emotions, as affirming that it tends to be

exploratory and distinct and that it includes utilising unstructured procedures dependent on little examples of examination. Qualitative research also aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experience of participants/respondents. Therefore, for this study, qualitative research method will be used.

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) characterise qualitative research as a data collection technique that comprises either interviews or a data collection system that creates and utilise non-mathematical information.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Bryman (2008), characterises the research paradigm as a group of convictions that directs the phenomenon to be studied, how research ought to be led and how the outcomes ought to be examined and deciphered. Saunders *et al.*, (2009), on the other hand, define a research paradigm as a method of inspecting social wonders where, one can acquire a specific comprehension from these events and endeavour to clarify them and that the research philosophy decides one's suspicions about the way one perceives the world. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014), the epistemological position of interpretivism is that common sense guides people in their daily lives and in order to understand human behaviour, it is necessary to understand what people view as common sense. Reality is socially constructed and depends on circumstances and experiences and that the social world is what people perceive it to be (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Exploring the brand attributes of DStv, from the perspective of both loyal customers and those that are no longer DStv subscribers, must consider each customers' experienced sense of reality as well as their social context. For this research, an interpretivism worldview will be utilised. As demonstrated by Edirisingha (2012), the position of interpretivism according to ontology and epistemology is the belief that the fact of the matter is different and relative. Edirisingha (2012), clarifies that the interpretivist researcher enters the field with earlier knowledge of the exploration setting, yet accepts that this is inadequate in building up a fixed research design because of the unusual nature of what is seen as the real world.

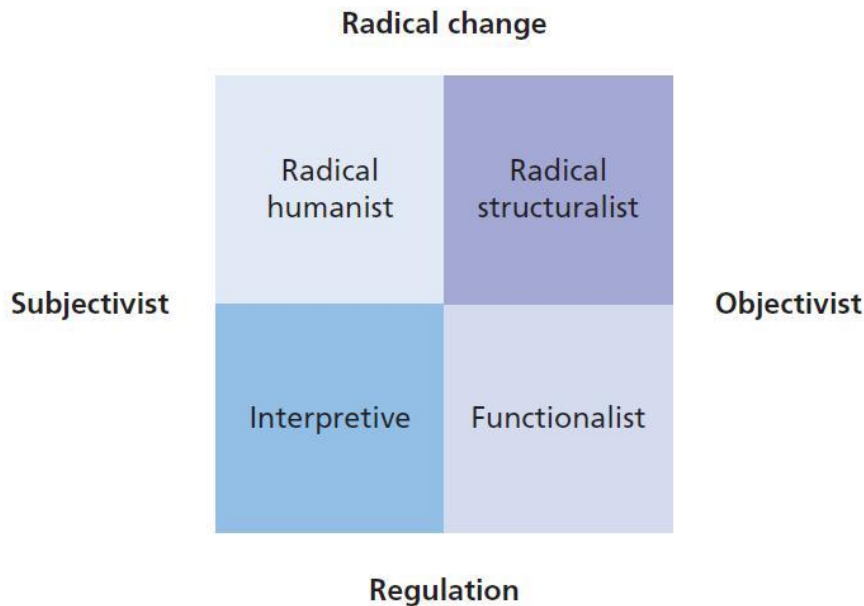


Figure 4: Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill. Four Paradigms (2009:120)

The purpose of the four paradigms identified in Figure 3 by Saunders, *et al.*, (2009), are as follows:

- To clarify assumptions that the researcher has about the nature of science and the society;
- To suggest the different ways in which researchers approach their work;
- To assist researchers to design routes for their research and to gain an understanding of possible outcomes for the research.

For this study the researcher will be exploring the brand attributes of loyal DStv customers as well as those of newly acquired customers, in order to understand the brand attributes customers consider necessary from DStv. According to O'Halloran (2018) people are different and they have different opinions and views, especially when it comes to their entertainment from broadcasters and from subscription services like Netflix. O'Halloran (2018) asserts that there are various reasons why people watch television, which attribute towards the reason for customer loyalty.

3.3 Population and Sample

3.3.1 Population

As indicated by Momoh and Scott (2021), a population is an unmistakable gathering of people, regardless of whether those people involve a country or a group of individuals with a common characteristic. For this research, the population consisted

of both DStv subscription customers, as well as previous DStv subscription customers. The population characteristics allow the researcher to gain insight from both current subscribers as well as previous subscribers in terms of brand attributes of DStv. Additionally, the researcher was able to gain insight into the reasons for cancelling DStv subscriptions. The reason for cancellation might share some light as to aspects that are within the control of the business that can be adjusted to retain these customers, as well as aspects that are outside the control of the business like macro-economic variables. For this qualitative research, an inductive approach was taken. In this approach, the researcher had little insight into the outcome of the sample population.

3.3.2 Sampling

DStv has a customer base of 14 million people across 50 countries (Multichoice 2021). According to Moss (2021), as it is usually impossible to include the entire population in a research study due to resource constraints, it is necessary to make use of sampling. Shukla (2008), defines sampling as selecting a relatively small number of elements from a larger defined group of elements and expecting that the information gathered from the small group of elements will provide an accurate judgment about the larger group. According to Kolb (2013), and Hague (2006), a sample is a group of people that are selected to take part in a research study because they represent the population group to participate in a study.

For the purpose of this research purposive sampling was used. According to Saunders *et al.*, (2009), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method where the judgment of the researcher is used to select the cases that make up the sample. Purposive sampling occurs when elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher. The sample consisted of six current DStv subscribers and six customers who are no longer subscribed DStv customers. The sample consisted of participants known to the researcher.

The sample selected; 6 loyal DStv customer and 6 non-loyal DStv customers. The sample participants were selected based on the following characteristics:

- Loyal customers needed to be DStv customers for more than 5 years.
- Non-loyal customers needed to have cancelled their DStv subscription within the last 1-2 years.

The sample participants were contacted by the researcher via WhatsApp, informing them of the research topic and asking them to participate in the research. All 12 participants agreed to be interviewed and appointments were scheduled to take place (when? Where? For how long?) and appointments was made with them. The first five interviews were conducted and interviews were scheduled on the 31st of July 2021, another four interviews were conducted and scheduled on 1st August 2021 and the last three interviews were conducted and scheduled on the 2nd of August 2021.

The selected loyal DStv customers consist of the following:

	Male	Female	Age	# Years DStv Customer
Participant A	X		65	9 years
Participant B		X	55	32 years
Participant C		X	47	15 years
Participant D		X	52	Over 25 years
Participant E	X		37	17 years
Participant F		X	33	12 years

Table 1: Loyal DStv Customers

The selected non-DStv customers consist of the following:

	Male	Female	Age	# Years DStv Customer
Participant G	X		47	15 years
Participant H		X	23	Since Childhood
Participant I		X	35	7 years
Participant J	X		40	5 years
Participant K		X	31	10 years

Participant L	X		34	Since Childhood
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Table 2: Non-loyal DStv Customers

3.4 Data collection methods

This research follows a qualitative research orientation and therefore the data collection approach selected was qualitative structured interviews. As indicated by Kolb (2013), structured interviews are utilised to collect data on how a few members feel about an issue. Hague (2006) affirms that interviews have been generally the favoured technique for gathering qualitative data. Shukla (2008) states that interviews are quite possibly the most utilised research instrument as the interviewer can probe for more data and can record the reaction of a participant as well as non-verbal communication. Structured interviews were used as the research aims at exploring the experience of each participant. As indicated by Gill *et al.*, (2008), structured interviews are, verbally conducted questions, in which a rundown of pre-established questions are posed, with little or no variation and with no extension for follow-up questions to reactions that warrant further elaboration.

The purpose of this research is to explore the brand attributes of DStv that contribute towards customer loyalty. It was therefore important to gain an in-depth understanding of these brand attributes from both current DStv subscribers as well as previous DStv subscribers. The interviews consisted of questions relating to attributes that are most important to loyal customers.

Exploratory research makes use of open-ended questions rather than close-ended questions in order to allow the participant to express him or herself freely on a predetermined topic (Fauvelle, 2019). Thus the use of qualitative structured interviews was appropriate as it allowed for a greater understanding brand attributes that contribute to customer loyalty.

Prior to commencing the interview, the purpose of the research was explained and each participant was asked to sign consent forms that indicated they were voluntarily taking part in the research study as well as consenting to having the interview recorded. The researcher added an additional two questions to the interviews, namely

the age of the participant as well as whether they would consider themselves to be loyal DStv customers. These questions were added for descriptive purposes. Structured interviews were conducted using the same set of questions for all participants. During these interviews, various participants asked for clarification regarding interview questions, which the researcher then explained or provided examples. Further explanations were provided to:

- Participant A for question 5, What influence's your content choices?
- Participant B for question 11, Describe your ideal television channel or platform?
- Participant D, for question 9, What about DStv would you say encourages brand loyalty?
- Participant E for question 6, What are you looking for when you choose an entertainment/content platform?

Participant J's first language is Afrikaans and the interview questions were translated into Afrikaans to make the participant feel more comfortable as the participant answered the questions in Afrikaans. Questions 5, 6 and 8 were also explained to participant J. With participant L the researcher probed for more information on questions 5 and question 7.

3.5 Procedure for data collection

As per Cooper and Schindler (2014), data analysis can be characterised as the cycle of altering and diminishing collected information to a sensible size, creating synopses, searching for designs and applying statistical methods. Kolb (2013) is of the view that exploring qualitative data incorporates different steps: The organisation of data, review of the data collected, coding of the data and analysing the data. Patton (2002) states that qualitative data changes information into discoveries. As indicated by Saunders *et al.*, (2009), qualitative data analysis systems help with offering importance to information acquired from research and permits one to create speculations from information gathered. De Vos *et al.*, (2005) distinguish the reason for directing a qualitative study as to deliver discoveries and unload information examination as the way toward bringing request, construction and importance to the mass assortment of data.

The interviews were transcribed therefore gaining some familiarity with the data collected. For this research, an inductive approach was used. Interview answers will be categorised into themes by use of thematic analysis to analyse the data collected. The researcher collected the appropriate and proper amount of data about the research topic in order to look at patterns or themes that might arise from the data collected to develop a theory to explain the collected data.

According to Mortensen (2020), thematic analysis is used when the researcher does not have a clear idea of what the patterns will be. Evans (2018), asserts that thematic analysis enables the research to deduct the meanings that people attach to a specific topic and the significance it has to their lives. Thematic analysis for the purpose of this study will highlight commonalities between the loyal DStv customers and the customer that has cancelled their DStv subscription. The purpose of themes and patterns in this research is to explore the perception and experiences of the participants about the brand attributes of the DStv brand

3.6 Validity and Trustworthiness

3.6.1 Validity

The meaning of research expresses that it is a deliberate cycle to set up realities and arrive at new resolutions (Korhari, 2004). Loue (2002) keeps up that research findings ought to be legitimate internally and externally.

As indicated by Bashir and Tanveer (2008) validity in qualitative research implies the degree to which the information is plausible, credible and trustworthy; and consequently can be protected when tested. Greener (2008) is of the view that it is significant that research techniques have face validity, construct validity and internal validity.

Face validity is the point at which a beginner peruses the research and it sounds good to him/her just as the expert researcher (Greener, 2008). When working with construct validity, Greener (2008) contends that the strategy should quantify what the researcher anticipates it should gauge. Loue (2002) contends that the scientific validity of research relies upon its internal and external validity. Loue (2002) characterises internal validity as the degree to which the researcher can say that no other variable

with the exception of the one being researched caused the outcome. Then again, external validity alludes to how the aftereffects of the research discoveries can be applied to the bigger population (Loue, 2002).

3.6.2 Trustworthiness

Korstjens and Moser (2018) define trustworthiness as the degree to which the result of qualitative research can be transferred to another context or setting with other respondents. As indicated by Statistics Solutions (2021) transferability is set up by giving the readers proof that the research study's discoveries could be relevant to different settings, circumstances, times and populations.

3.7 Anticipated Contribution

Every organisation is focused on creating loyal customers as this is vital for their survival in the marketplace. The disruptions driven by the streaming media revolution have become the new playing field. Subscription brands, such as DStv have to understand the loyalty behaviour of their customers to better understand their audiences, extend more targeted options, and provide more value to customers. It is, therefore, necessary to explore the brand attributes that contribute to customer loyalty for DStv. This research will also explore the reason why some DStv customers cancel their subscriptions and potentially share some light as to the motivations and experiences of these customers that cancelled their subscriptions with DStv.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research is considered to be a set of beliefs used to distinguish what is right and good from wrong and bad and that result in the researcher's duty or obligation to act in a certain way (Kolb, 2013). Cooper and Schindler (2014) describe ethics as the norms and values of behaviour that guide ethical choices about research behaviour.

This research will be conducted in an ethical manner, not compromising the integrity of the research and providing the researcher with the facts at hand. Cant, Van Heerden and Ngambi (2013) maintain that ethics are moral standards and principles against which certain behaviour can be assessed. The broad description of ethical behaviour includes aspects like honesty, integrity, fairness and sensitivity (Cant *et al.*, 2013). Saunders *et al.*, (2009) argue that ethics relates to the questions about how one will

formulate and clarify the research topic and gain access to, collect, store and analyse the data and write up the research findings in a moral and responsible way.

Each participant will participate willingly in the interviews. The reason for the research will be explained to each participant in a letter of consent that will accompany the interviews.

3.9 Limitations and Delimitations of the study

3.9.1 Limitation

According to Moura (2017), limitations are the impacts or the components that are outside the control of the researcher. The weaknesses place limitations on either the methodology and the conclusions. A limitation of this study is that it will not be possible to interview all DStv customers. The data collected therefore will be limited only to the sample selected and the results cannot be generalised.

3.9.2 Delimitations

Delimitations allude to the limits of the research study depends on the researchers' choice of what to incorporate and to prohibit. This can be viewed as an action to make the study more sensible and applicable to what the researcher is attempting to demonstrate. A delimitation of this study would be that the sample group will be confined to a maximum of 12 participants.

3.10 Conclusion

To summarise this chapter, the research design has been outlined, including sampling strategy, data collection and data analysis. The various ways employed to gather data were described with the view to obtaining a better understanding of the DStv brand attributes that contribute to customer loyalty.

The next chapter will present the results and interpret the findings from the interviews conducted.

Chapter 4: Findings and Interpretations

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the presentation of the results as well as the analysis of the research that was undertaken according to the selected approaches and methodology. For this research a qualitative approach was taken as qualitative research aims to tell the researcher how and why things happen as they do (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Interviews were held with a selected sample of the population to gain a deeper understanding into the DStv brand attributes that contribute to customer loyalty.

4.2 Research Questions and Research Objectives

	QUESTIONS	OBJECTIVES
1	Why do you watch television?	To explore the attributes of the DSTV brand that are most important to loyal customers.
2	What influence's your content choices?	To explore the attributes of the DSTV brand that are most important to loyal customers.
3	What are you looking for when you choose an entertainment/content platform?	To explore the attributes of the DSTV brand that are most important to loyal customers.
4	What are the factors that motivated you to cancel your DStv subscription?	To explore that brand attributes of previous DStv subscribers
5	How often do you use the DStv products or services?	To understand the brand experience of DStv customer advocates

6	How would you describe DStv's products and services for example BoxOffice, Catch Up, Showmax?	To understand the brand experience of DStv customer advocates
7	How satisfied are or where you with service that DStv provide?	To understand the brand experience of DStv customer advocates
8	What about DStv would you say encourages brand loyalty?	To explore the attributes of the DSTV brand that are most important to loyal customers.
9	How would you feel if you could no longer use the DStv products or services? Or now that you are no longer using the DStv Products or services.	To understand the brand experience of DStv customer advocates
		To explore that brand attributes of previous DStv subscribers
10	Describe your ideal television channel or platform?	To explore the attributes of the DSTV brand that are most important to loyal customers.
11	If you could change just anything about the DStv products or services, what would it be?	To explore that brand attributes of previous DStv subscribers
12	What about DStv would encourage you to recommend DStv to your family and friends?	To explore the attributes of the DSTV brand that are most important to loyal customers.
13	Do you have any additional comments or feedback for us?	To understand the brand experience of DStv customer advocates

Table 3: Research Questions

4.3 Presentation of findings

The main aim of this research was to identify the DStv brand attributes that support and encourage loyalty to the brand, preventing switching to a competing service provider.

Interviews were conducted to collect the relevant data to realise the following research objectives:

- To explore the attributes of the DSTV brand that are most important to loyal customers.
- To understand the brand experience of DStv customer advocates.
- To explore the brand attributes of previous DStv subscribers.

The research was undertaken to provide possible answers to the following question:
What are the DStv brand attributes that support and result in customer loyalty?

4.4 Result pertaining to the interviews

In this section the results from the interviews will be analysed for the different research questions.

Why do you watch television?

The following themes came to the fore during the interviews. The views and opinions of each participant differed from one another based on their personality, preference and stage in their lives. These are depicted in the word cloud below.

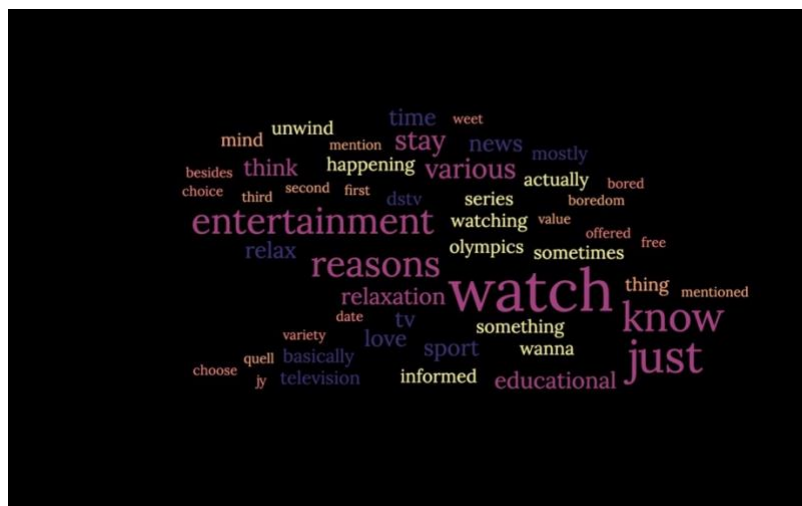


Figure 5: Word Cloud

What influence's your content choices?

For each participant, the response differed in terms of their content choices. The participants expressed their preference in terms of the various genres of content that they enjoy watching. Social media is an influencer when it comes to content choices as they would like to be part of the conversation in their social groups when the

conversation centres around a specific content piece and the same applies to the sports fans when in a social setting and discussing sporting events.

Most participants mentioned current affairs or news indicating that they would like to be aware of what is happening around them and are not just focused on escapism when choosing content.

What are you looking for when you choose an entertainment/content platform?

The responses from the participants with regards to an entertainment platform were that they want a variety of content that is not limiting and would complement their lifestyles at different stages and should have something when they are in whatever state of mind.

What are the factors that motivated you to cancel your DStv subscription?

Out of the six participants five mentioned that price of the DStv packages being too expensive. Alternative entertainment was the second most mentioned reason for cancellation.

How often do you use the DStv products or services?

For the loyal DStv participants, DStv is a part of their daily lives as they make use of the service on a daily basis. They have schedules and routines that are planned around their television viewing habits. Participant A captured his usage as follows: *"I spend my time working in the garden you are aware of that and then when you are done with that in the afternoons and you come into the house then you go and look for catchuping on what is happening in the world."*

How would you describe DStv's products and services for example BoxOffice, Catch Up, Showmax?

All the participants described the services of DStv as value-added benefits that complement their lifestyles. Catch Up came up as a major benefit as most of the participants mentioned their busy lives and that they appreciate a service like Catch Up where they do not need to be worried about missing their favorite show, they can watch it at a later stage.

Among the participants that cancelled their subscription with DStv commended the Catch Up function as well.

How satisfied are or where you with service that DStv provide?

Among the loyal DStv participants, a resounding very satisfied response was received. Participant E, in particular, used the following analogy to explain his satisfaction with the DStv service; *“So I have actually got like a little story, so we were in the UK two years ago and uhm we were we wanted to watch sport so firstly in South Africa and I'm always going to compare it to sport we've got DStv. DStv literally shows you 90% of premiership games on that day if not 100% of premiership games we had to stream one game and watch the other game I don't even know what platform they had it was more expensive than DStv but it only shows one game in that time slot and as South Africans we complain so easily uhm with what we have and what do we actually comparing it to what is the benchmark do we actually know what they have we had we haven't because they don't even have that in the UK first world we talking first world we talking BBC Amazon all of that again sport we killing the game.”*

The interesting fact is that Participant E compared DStv's service offering to a service offering of a UK based broadcaster and DStv's service offering were superior to that. He also mentioned that as South Africans we do not have a benchmark to which we can compare DStv as there is none in South Africa. DStv customers generally complain about the service offered to them but have no frame of reference in comparison to what is a better service. The service provided by DStv is world-class as stated by participant E

Among the participants that cancelled their subscription with DStv their experience with DStv when they were still subscribers were all favorable. Participant G went as far as to rate it as excellent.

What about DStv would you say encourages brand loyalty?

The loyal DStv participant mentioned the following aspects that would encourage them to recommend DStv to their family or friends;

- Variety and depth of content. Meaning there is a lot of content to choose from.
- Professionalism and know-how of their products and service

- Flexibility and keeping up with the technological trends within the entertainment industry

All of these were reasons that the participants that cancelled their subscription with DStv mentioned as to why they believe that DStv is not their preferred supplier of entertainment. The insight into that reasoning could be a lack of education about the DStv products or services or a gap in the communication from DStv to their customers.

How would you feel if you could no longer use the DStv products or services?

A void would be left in the entertainment industry if the DStv products and services are no longer available to the consumers. DStv has rooted itself in the South African entertainment industry as a force to be reckoned with.

As much as the participants that cancelled their subscription all of them are still using the DStv service by signing on with someone else's login details. Participants K and L were busy streaming the Olympic games while the interview was conducted. Participant J mentioned that he still uses the service for sports.

There are some services that can be substituted by other service providers in the industry, but when it comes to sport all the participants agreed that the DStv sports offering is unrivalled and cannot easily be replaced.

Describe your ideal television channel or platform?

Each participant had a different view from the next one as their ideal channel or platform will be based on what they are interested in. Some participants went as far as describing the genres that they would prefer.

If you could change just anything about the DStv products or services, what would it be?

Among the participants that cancelled their subscription pricing, repeats and pay as you use came out as aspects that they would change. However, among the loyal DStv participants, insights were given about their understanding of the repeats of shows. They understood the business reasoning around repeats.

What about DStv would encourage you to recommend DStv to your family and friends?

In recommending DStv to friends or family sport came out as a huge drawcard. Among the loyal participants, the value-added services are definitely noteworthy and can be used as motivators for acquiring new customers.

4.5 Interpretation of findings

In this section the results from research conducted will be interpreted.

4.5.1 Key Themes

Themes	Main Ideas
Sport	- Unrivalled compared to other competitors - Extensive coverage of sporting events
Variety and Convenience	- Value added services - Depth of content to choose from - Easily accessible
Flexibility	- Watch anytime, anywhere - Keeping up to current industry trends

Table 4: Key Themes

4.5.2 Theme1: Sports

Sport is a big drawcard when it comes to entertainment. Both loyal and non-loyal participants mentioned that DStv has an extensive sport offering that cannot be matched by any competitor in the South African market.

Sport is an important differentiator because when one looks at a sporting event the shelf life of that event is short compared to that of a movie or series. Once a sporting event has played out, the relevance of that event becomes dated. For that reason, it is not feasible to add sport on a streaming platform because of the high investment cost in securing the broadcasting rights for these events.

DStv is well known for their extensive sporting catalogue as mentioned by participant E *“DStv literally shows you 90% of premiership games on that day if not 100% of premiership games we had to stream one game and watch the other game I don't even know what platform they had it was more expensive than DStv.”* Comparing the sport

with international broadcasters like the BBC DStv ranks among the top. The Olympic games for example was covered extensively on DStv whereas in other countries for example you would only receive the events if one of that country's athletes competed in that event as stated by participant E *"Olympics on you can go watch archery you can watch Men's volleyball women's volleyball beach volleyball basketball threes all at the same time on different channels where I can promise you now in the UK they gonna have one channel dedicated to whoever's competing from that country"*

If one had to remove sports from the DStv offering there would be a huge outcry from the market as sports is an important social factor in South Africa. As stated by participant F *"Depression, first of all let me tell, I'm sure that my husband would lose his mind if there's no soccer in this house."* Participant C responded as follows; *"I'll immigrate joh for sure ill immigrate because for now uhm and I think people will and I'm very serious people will go into a depression because DStv is a one stop shop from news sport"*

4.5.3 Theme 2: Variety and Convenience

From the sample selected there was only one sports fanatic from the loyal DStv customers and one from the non-loyal DStv customer. The majority of the participants were not big sports fans and mentioned the variety of content that DStv offers is what they value most about DStv.

DStv offers an extensive range of programming that caters to a wide variety of customer groups as stated by participant C; *"I think at times we are a bit spoilt for choice to a point where you don't really know what to watch."* From local to international series, movies reality shows, news as stated by participant C; *"I like the fact that we are not limited to local news content but there's a huge variety of international news platforms"* and actuality and sports. Added to the variety content DStv has a wide array for value added services like, BoxOffice that showcase the latest cinematic blockbusters, Showmax gives customer the opportunity to binge watch their favourite local and international series, recording of shows when one cannot view the live event for later consumption as stated by participant E; *"I mean you can actually go and record what you want but just for convenience you can go to the folder and choose."*

DStv also has an unmatched local content slate to cater every segment of the market in all the 11 official languages, participant K cancelled her subscription but mentioned the following; *“I use it for is Catch Up for Survivor or your Bachelorette it's more like your local reality South African stuff.”*

DStv offers a one stop shop for entertainment to make it easier for customers to enjoy their content in one place and pay one subscription as mentioned by participant C; *“I say it's a one stop shop for your entertainment uhm you get value for money also because there's so many other options on the DStv.”* Giving customers options to choose from for every price point to offering customers contract to enjoy their entertainment as stated by participant D; *“I love the uhm you know that they now have packages that contract 24-month contract.”*

4.5.4 Theme 3: Flexibility

Flexibility is extremely important to the customer as they have busy lives and need to balance that with their entertainment needs as mentioned by participant F *“the Rugby World Cup I was at the office and obviously you have deadlines and you can't but you want to watch and you don't want to go on Twitter because it's not real time I want to see how things happen.”* This is important to them as the consumer today have various other responsibilities and having an entertainment platform that allows them the flexibility to juggle multiple things as stated by participant F *“it's no longer a point where you need to you have to be at home in order to watch TV, I can watch TV while I'm stuck in traffic.”*

Customers' needs an entertainment platform that complements their lifestyles according to participant H; *“Catch Up or I used to like Catch Up a lot because life is quite busy so I would prefer to Catchup.”*

Customers are also very conscientious about trends in the market and prefer an entertainment platform that can compete with the rest of the market as stated by participant C; *“I think it's flexibility and changing with the times because whatever new developments happen internationally DStv tries to stay abreast or if not ahead of the market”,* and participant E; *“Catch Up I think from this from the start of Catch Up you*

can see how it's transformed and it's totally changing the game and continuously getting better.”

4.6 Findings in context

4.6.1 Objective 1: To explore the attributes of the DSTV brand that are most important to loyal customers.

Based on Keller's customer-based brand equity model (2001), the concept behind building a strong brand is to shape the way customers feel and think about the product or service and by building the right type of experiences around the brand for customers to have specific positive thoughts about the brand. This was evident in the finding from the loyal DStv subscribers in that DStv is the leading brand in South Africa for entertainment, and provides customers with a holistic entertainment experience that are delivered professionally while keeping up with international trends and implementing these improvements to the DStv products so that the customer ultimately has a seamless entertainment experience. Customers want a platform where they have the power to make choices. As Susskind *et al.*, (2003) mention, in customer-oriented environment customers must be offered more choices and suggestions to enhance their experience. In the case of DStv, the customers are given the flexibility and variety to choose from.

4.6.2 Objective 2: To understand the experience of DStv customer advocates.

Loyal DStv customers actively advocate on behalf of DStv based on the experience that they have with the brand. These sentiments can be found in the finding that if they could no longer use the products provided by DStv there will be a void, they will go onto depression or immigrate to another country. These findings concur with Carter (2020), in that when a customer consistently interacts with a brand and effectively advocates for that particular brand it is considered that those customers are loyal to the brand.

A parallel can be drawn from Lawrence and Greene (2020) on customer loyalty and the findings in this research that are highlighted based on the intellectual, physical and emotional encounters that the loyal DStv customers derive from using the DStv

products and services and that these create a feeling of being taken care of so that each encounter with the DStv brand is memorable.

The DStv brand creates a state of belongingness for their consumers in that social conversations are often held about a specific sporting event or a show that aired on the DStv platform, this is an important brand loyalty driver as started by Braxton and Lau-Gesk (2020), that authenticity advances belongingness, which thus prompts customer happiness and brand loyalty, therefore, fulfilling the human want to feel part of a group.

4.6.3 Objective 3: To explore that brand attributes of previous DStv subscribers.

When interviewing the DStv customers that cancelled their subscription aspects that were highlighted the reasons for cancellation were the poor service quality, lack of variety and not keeping up to date with international trends, these findings concur with Purohit (2015), in that when a customer is not happy with the performance of their product or service then they can scrutinise and spread negative word of mouth on the product or service performance, customer disappointment can and will prompt customers switching to different brands. These DStv customers switched to a competing entertainment brand that satisfy their current entertainment needs.

Pricing was a theme that came up frequently among the customers that cancelled their subscription with DStv and these findings correlate to Cover Story (2018), in that pricing ought to correlate with customers' opinion about a product or service. The cancelled customer felt that the products and services offered by DStv does not warrant the price of DStv.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter key findings in to the attributes that encourages brand loyalty among the DStv customers were studied. The research objectives were analysed and matched with the different responses from the research questions.

The data gathered in the interviews were analysed to gain a deeper understanding into the mindset DStv customer and the attributes that encourages brand loyalty.

In the next section conclusions will be drawn and recommendations will be made with regards to the objectives set in chapter 1.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter conclusions will be drawn and recommendations made to identify the attributes of the DSTV brand that are most important to loyal customers.

5.2 Objectives

- To explore the attributes of the DSTV brand that are most important to loyal customers.

To a large extent the objective was achieved in this study in that the research identified various attributes that encourages brand loyalty among the DStv customers. Some of the strong characteristics that came out of this study was:

- Sports. The DStv sports offering is unmatched in South Africa and when compared to international broadcasters, the DStv offering are found to be better with regard to the variety and professionalism in which it is being presented to the consumer.
- Variety and Convenience. The DStv catalogue of content ranges from, sports, international series, international movies, Local movies and series in all the 11 official languages of South Africa, local and international soapies, kids' content, news and actuality, documentaries and much more. All of these offerings are brought to the DStv consumer in one package and one subscription fee that they have pay, therefore, not having to sign up to different service providers to gain access to all these service offerings.
- Flexibility. The Catch Up function as well as the record function on the DStv decoders allows the DStv customer the flexibility to manage their entertainment needs according to their lifestyles. They can schedule their viewing and record or catch up on a show or program that they have missed.
- To understand the brand experience of DStv customer advocates.

Deeper understanding was gained in exploring the experiences that motivates the DStv customer to advocate for the DStv brand. Some of the most prominent responses that was received was.

- Sport. This became evident that when you are a sports lover DStv becomes an easy sell to friends or family that might not have a DStv subscription. The content on the sports offering is unrivalled to the competitors in the market.

- Value-added services. Along with the DStv subscription there are a few value-added services that the DStv customers receive. These are BoxOffice, which showcases the latest cinematic releases that the customers can rent. Showmax is another value-added services that the DStv customer receive. Showmax provides the DStv customer with complete boxsets of local and international series that the DStv customer can binge watch at their convenience. DStv rewards gives the DStv customers incentives like Uber eats vouchers, discounts on BoxOffice movie rentals and Sorbet vouchers that the DStv customer can use when needed.
- To explore the brand attributes of previous DStv subscribers.

The customers that cancelled their DStv subscription highlighted the following aspects that motivated them to switch to a different entertainment service provider.

- Price of DStv too expensive. A major factor that came out as a motivator for cancelling their DStv subscription was the price being too expensive. They alluded to it not being practical paying for a service that one can substitute with a cheaper service that provides a similar experience, however, they mentioned that they do miss the sports offering of DStv and sometimes uses the DStv service just to view sports.
- Lack of variety. These customers compared the content received on DStv to international service providers like Netflix that offers a broader range of content than what they received on DStv. With the lack of variety, they mentioned that on DStv content was repeated often and that motivated them to switch to an alternative service provider.

5.3 Conclusion of the study

The aim of this study was to explore the DStv brand attributes that contribute to customer loyalty. A qualitative approach was adopted using a range of complementary methods. The study has provided insights into the various attributes of DStv that encourages brand loyalty. It has also identified a range of risk factors that impacts loyalty and causing customers to cancel their subscription. Although this was a relatively small-scale exploratory study, confidence in the trustworthiness of the headline findings is enhanced by the high level of consistency in the findings, obtained using Interviews and notable consensus among participants.

Some concluding remarks on the findings obtained by the research:

- DStv sports offering is unrivalled locally and internationally. This a major drawcard for both DStv customers as well as the customers that cancelled their subscription.
- The DStv local content and news offering are superior to other service providers. DStv caters for the South African market in all the 11 official languages and provides news and actuality programming that give the viewer a holistic view of the news covered.
- Pricing is a huge factor to considers as there are supplementary service providers that could offer a similar service at the fraction of the DStv subscription fee if one is not a sports fanatic.
- Some of the DStv customers that cancelled mentioned lack of variety of content as a reason why they cancelled, whereas the loyal DStv customer highlighted the variety of their offering one of the reasons they are loyal to DStv.

5.4 Recommendations

The interviews identified some attributes that encourages brand loyalty and also suggested some ideas for innovation. The following recommendations are based on the study findings:

1. The DStv sports offering is unmatched in the market. However, the price of the sports packages is not affordable everyone. Investigate in ways to provide the sports offering at more affordable price so more people could enjoy it.
2. DStv has a world class offering with regards to variety of content ranging from international as well as local content. There seems to be a disconnect from the customer that cancelled their subscription because of a lack of variety. Explore the possibly that there might be a disconnect between the communication message about the variety of content available and the perception that DStv does not offer variety.
3. Choose your own DStv package. The DStv packages are pre-selected channels that are offered to the consumer. However, the consumers want to dictate their content viewing behaviour, therefore, want to select the channels

that they want to consume. Give the DStv customers an option to build their own package therefore allowing them a sense of ownership in the content that they will select.

5.6 Final Conclusion

Entertainment needs in South Africa are diverse and it is therefore imperative that DStv take note of this diverse market. They know exactly what they want and they have the skills and knowledge and digital savvy to acquire substitute services when they feel that their needs are not met. They demand instant and excellent service from their entertainment service provider. Similarly, they want the very best from their entertainment platforms, where they can choose when, where and how they want to consume their content.

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Annexures

QUESTIONS FOR THE STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH DStv CUSTOMERS

Appointments will be made in person with the above-mentioned individuals. When the interviews take place, the explanation below will be made verbally and given in writing to the selected customers

CONFIDENTIALITY

The title of this study is: An exploration of the DStv brand attributes that contribute to customer loyalty

Your willingness to comment on the topic of this study is very important but completely voluntary. If you are willing to take part in the study to respond to the questions below regarding your knowledge, beliefs, ideas and understanding of the DStv brand attributes, will be the point of departure for the study.

You can decide whether your name may be used in the study or not. If not, you will be referred to as A, B, C, D and E only.

Your real identities will then only be known to the researcher and his supervisor.

The researcher, Mr. Shaun Holworthy can be contacted any time between [REDACTED]:00 and 22:00 at the cell phone number [REDACTED]. The study supervisor, Mrs. Michelle O'Hare, can be contacted during the same hours at the cell phone number [REDACTED] of at the e-mail address [REDACTED].

Should you have any questions regarding the ethical aspects of the study, you can contact the chairperson of the VEGA Research Ethics Committee,

I thank you in advance.

Shaun

Annexure A - CONSENT FORM

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is Shaun Julian Holworthy and I am a student at VEGA. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of (Michelle O'Hare) about This study will explore the brand attributes of DSTV that contribute to customer loyalty. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of This research will also explore the reason why some DStv customers cancel their subscriptions and potentially share some light as to the motivations and experiences of these customers that cancelled their subscriptions with DStv. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study?
I would like to invite you to participate in this research because (insert reason). If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to (explain exactly what participation will involve). You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your (insert what you are examining). If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.
Do I have to participate in the study?
• Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary; • If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so; • Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at DStv will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Bcom Honours in Strategic Brand Management. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Shaun Julian Holworthy

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Michell O'Hare

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Participant or respondent consent

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by [Shaun Julian Holworthy about **This study will explore the brand attributes of DSTV that contribute to customer loyalty.**

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

- I agree to be interviewed for this research.
- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

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Annexure B – Research Questions

Interview Questions (Loyal Customers)

How old are you?

How long have you been a DStv customer?

Would you consider yourself a loyal DStv customer?

Why do you watch television?

What influence's your content choices?

What are you looking for when you choose an entertainment/content platform?

How often do you use the DStv products or services?

How would you describe DStv's products and services for example BoxOffice, Catch Up, Showmax?

How satisfied are you with service that DStv provide?

What about DStv would you say encourages brand loyalty?

How would you feel if you could no longer use the DStv products or services?

Describe your ideal television channel or platform?

If you could change just anything about the DStv products or services, what would it be?

What about DStv would encourage you to recommend DStv to your family and friends?

Do you have any additional comments or feedback for us?

Interview Questions (Non-loyal Customers)

How old are you?

How long have you been a DStv customer?

What are the factors that motivated you to cancel your DStv subscription?

Why do you watch television?

What influence's your content choices?

What are you looking for when you choose an entertainment/content platform?

How would you describe DStv's products and services for example BoxOffice, catch Up, Showmax?

How satisfied were you with service that DStv provided?

Describe your ideal television channel or platform?

How do you feel now that you are no longer using DStv products or services?

What about DStv would encourage you to recommend DStv to your family and friends?

If you could change just anything about the DStv products or services, what would it be?

Do you have any additional comments or feedback for us?

Annexure C – Concept Document

Concept Document Table	
Title of the study	An exploration of the DStv brand attributes that contribute to customer loyalty
Problem Statement	This study will explore which DStv brand attributes support and encourage loyalty to the brand, preventing switching to a competing service provider
Purpose Statement	The purpose is to explore the DStv brand attributes that could lead to customer loyalty.
Rationale and relevance	DStv is facing tremendous challenges in that their interim result has shown that there is a continued decline in the DStv Premium subscribers.
Key theories and Literature	Keller, K.L. Brand Equity (CBBE) Model Uses and Gratifications Theory
Research question(s) and objectives	What are the DStv brand attributes that support and result in customer loyalty? Objectives • To explore the attributes of the DStv brand that are most important to loyal customers. • To understand the brand experience of DStv customer advocates. • To explore the brand attributes of previous DStv subscribers.
Research design/ approach	Qualitative research method
Selected paradigm/ theoretical framework	Interpretivism worldview
Population and sampling	DStv Customers that has been with DStv for over 5 years and DStv Customers that cancelled their DStv subscription.
Data collection method(s)	In-depth Interviews
Data analysis method(s)	Interpretivism inductive approach Thematic Analysis
Ethical considerations	Each participant will participate willingly

	Honesty, accountability, professional courtesy, fairness, and good stewardship. No personal information will be used Letter of consent will be signed
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