Abstract

Retail brands (RBs) have become a strategic feature of the retail industry. Their role in building consumer loyalty is usually taken for granted and yet has not been completely identified. The purpose of this paper is to understand how retailers manage customer knowledge relationship management through an integrated framework of CRM and Knowledge management for retail brands and their role in building store loyalty.

Introduction

As the retail industry is becoming increasingly consolidated and retailer power increases, many manufacturers and brands are losing control of their destiny at the retail level. Retailers meet and communicate with final customers personally at their stores, right where the shopping takes place and most shopping decisions are made (Thomassen et al., 2006, pp. 1 and 2). According to Keller (2003, p. 260), this consumer interaction means that retailers can have a great influence in manufacturer brand equity. According to Wise and Baumgartner (1999), globalization and increasing competition in many industries have highlighted the importance of exploring opportunities “downstream”, closer to the customer, for example by offering services, solutions or controlling their distribution. In relation to this, Floor (2006, p. 59) states that:

[...] no matter what the retail activities of a manufacturer are, it is certain that in the future manufacturers will sell directly to consumers more: through their own stores, but also via catalogues and web sites.

This seems indeed to be happening globally as many brands that have traditionally been sold to final consumers through external retailers are starting to become more retail oriented and open, for example, their own flagship stores or branded chains of stores both domestically and internationally. Examples of this type of activity are Coach, Apple and Nike who, among others including smaller brands, are seeking growth through branded retail.

In addition to the more powerful retailer, the manufacturer and its brand are also “squeezed” by the increasingly powerful global consumer (Thomassen et al., 2006). For example, Anderson et al. (1997, p. 60) state that “although many observers believe that manufacturers have lost ground to suppliers” in fact both manufacturers and retailers have lost power to the consumer. Recently, the global consumer has access to wide variety of information sources, has more disposable income than before and also demands more from the product and the consumption experience as he/she has many alternatives of which to choose from.
As Brun and Castelli (2008, p. 169) comment “consumers are no more focused only on product characteristics; their purchase attitude is everyday more influenced by the ‘complete shopping experience’ provided in the point of sale.” According to Stern et al. (1996, p. 22), “change [in a channel structure] must always take place according to an assessment of future requirements”. And as the future requirements currently seem to emphasize experiences and direct consumer contact, the investment in own retail capabilities will need to increase in the future. In such a scenario, retailers must focus on customer knowledge relationship management in order to serve customers better.

The importance of retail brands (RBs) or store brands has tremendously increased over the past two decades and contributed to changing many purchase and consumption behaviors, in particular in grocery stores. The concept of RB characterizes brands created, supervised and sold exclusively by a store. In Europe, they currently constitute from 13 to 49 percent of volume market shares, and compete in several product categories with major national and international manufacturer's brands (Buck, 1997; Burt, 2000). Their performance has altered manufacturer/retailer relationships by increasing the bargaining power of retailers (Narasimhan and Wilcox, 1998). RB also play a major role in improving stores' profitability (Ailawadi and Harlam, 2004), their differentiation strategy toward competing stores (Davies, 1990) as well as their consumer attraction and loyalty-building capacity. (McMaster, 1987; Cortsjens and Lal, 2000).

From their creation on, these products have been generally positioned to meet consumer price expectations. But over the past few years, many of them have also offered more innovative, qualitative and segmented product ranges that are close to those of manufacturer's brands' (Hoch and Banerji, 1993; Quelch and Harding, 1996; Dunne and Narasimhan, 1999; Burt and Sparks, 2002). Numerous studies point out that there are now consumer segments that are very favorable to those RBs (Livesay and Lennon, 1978; Baltas and Doyle, 1999; Mieres et al., 2006). Recent research also clarifies the optimal prerequisites for their introduction along financial and category lines (Narasimhan and Wilcox, 1998; Putsis and Dhar, 2001; Semeijn et al., 2004; Sayman and Raju, 2004). It usually regards the relationship between RB' loyalty-building capacity and the increase in their market share as an implicit one, while noting that there is actually no involvement of consumers with them (Richardson et al., 1994; Dick et al., 1995).

CRM and knowledge management (KM) were once considered entirely different disciplines, with the two sharing little but perhaps the same data warehouse hardware and a vague understanding that both efforts were meant to improve business efficiency and customer satisfaction. It has become clear, however, that the two disciplines were really working towards the same goal, and that to deliver continuous improvement to business clients, they would have to start speaking the same language.

Better KM/CRM integration can help companies navigate complex support problems more easily. Many retailers, such as computer retailers, sell a single product that may incorporate dozens or even hundreds of other components. Being able to cross-reference the entire
collected library for technical support and conflict resolution can make the difference between first-call resolution and a lingering headache.

Many companies still have not attained the level of deep integration that ties knowledge base activity (particularly at the self-service level) to a CRM-facing customer record, but companies like computer peripheral manufacturer Adaptec use the intersection of CRM and KM to guide product and service decisions and attempt to waylay customer service overloads before they begin.

Given the important role being played by knowledge management (KM) systems in the current customer-centric retail business environment, there is a lack of a simple and overall framework to integrate the traditional customer relationship management (CRM) functionalities with the management and application of the customer-related knowledge, particularly in the context of retail branding decisions. While KM systems manage an organization’s knowledge through the process of creating, structuring, disseminating and applying knowledge to enhance brand performance and create value, traditional CRM have focused on the transactional exchanges to manage customer interactions. True CRM is possible only by integrating them with KM systems to create knowledge-enabled CRM processes that allow brands to evaluate key business measures such as customer satisfaction, customer profitability, or customer loyalty to support their business decisions.

**Problem Statement**

“How creation of customer knowledge relationship management affect the relationship between retail brands and store loyalty”.

**Objectives**

1. To figure out whether the creation of customer knowledge relationship management result increase in loyalty to RBs.
2. To what extent the relationship between RBs and store loyalty is moderated by customer knowledge relationship management.

**Research Significance**

This paper analyzes the influence of customer knowledge relationship management on RBs and store loyalty using three classic dimensions yet untapped in this context: satisfaction, loyalty and general attitude toward RBs. Also, it distinguishes between two different categories of RBs and analyzes, in general, the influence of RB attitude on each of these and how customer knowledge relationship management influence both type of RB’s. It is expected to give better insights into understanding the relationship established between a store and a consumer.
Research Questions

1. Is customer knowledge relationship management positively related to Retail Brand loyalty?
2. Is customer knowledge relationship management positively related to consumer store loyalty?
3. Is Retail Brand loyalty positively related to consumer store loyalty?
4. Does customer knowledge relationship management moderate the relationship between Retail Brand satisfaction and store loyalty?

Literature Review

Branding theory

In 1960 The American Marketing Association defined a brand as:

[...] a name, term, design, symbol that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers. The legal term for brand is trademark. A brand may identify one item, a family of items, or all items of that seller.

Notwithstanding the work to follow, there still remains little consensus on an overarching umbrella definition of the scope and the dimensional limitations of branding as a managerial term. This ambiguity may stem from the fundamental principle of branding, that is; to remain unique from competitors (Wood, 2000). Indeed, while an all-encompassing brand definition remains elusive in the literature; the only consensus is that there is no consensus (Brown, 1995; De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley, 1997, 1998; Wood, 2000; Heding et al., 2008, De Chernatony, 2009).

The seminal work of de Chernatony (1993a, b) and de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1997, 1998) captured the mental models of branding. Such early attempts, recognized the growing ambiguity of the brand concept and attempted to metaphorise the brand as an atomic concept with a central nucleus (the brand ideal) and molecular associations (de Chernatony 1993a, b). Further work by De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998) extended this atomic model of branding as a projective tool to incorporate a vortex model, in which the brand was defined as a holistic marketing construct consisting of a number of inter-related elements.

There has been further attempt to conceptualize the brand either through an analysis of the practical behavior of brand managers, the consumption patterns of consumers, or a review of branding theories. Most notable is the work of Louro and Cunha (2001) and Heding et al. (2008). First, Louro and Cunha (2001), in review of the literature devised a number of brand management “paradigms” based upon two dimensions; the centrality of the customer within the brand building process and the level of brand orientation with the corporate consciousness of the firm.
The more recent work of Heding et al. (2008), revised Louro and Cunha’s taxonomic approach through analysis of branding research, theory and practice and identified two additional brand management perspectives; the emotional and cultural approach.

Within the emotional approach, the brand construct is extended as a central tenant within brand communities, as a conveyor of an emotional brand story, and a basis for an intimate brand customer relationship. The cultural approach of branding on the other hand, takes into account the socio-cultural perspective of the brand construct, which is perceived as a cultural artifact, and particularly important given the elevated role of consumption within post modern society.

**Retail branding**

As a result of recent institutional changes in the retail landscape, including increased retailer power in distribution channels, heightened volatility in retail markets, and prolific international expansion of retail operations, retailers seek to establish specialized marketing functions within their organizations. As a result, retail branding as a key differential competitive component of retail marketing strategy, has received significant attention in the retail literature (Kent, 2003; Ailawadi and Keller, 2004; Burt and Davies, 2010).

Traditionally, branding within the field of retailing has been closely associated with private label brand produced by retailers (Burt and Davies, 2010), which enabled operating advantage for these firms in the form of superior profit margins, economies of scale, market segmentation and differentiation. Here, the products and services offered to define the retail brand, act as the core differentiator between the firm and competitors. As the role of private label brand development has become more strategically important, there has been increasing focus on mental models of the retail brand construct.

A second perspective was identified in the retail literature by Ailawadi and Keller (2004, p. 332), which defined the retail brand as:

* [...] the goods and services of a retailer and differentiates them from those of competitors. A retailer's brand equity is exhibited in consumers responding more favorably to its marketing actions than they do to competing retailers (Keller, 2003). The image of the retailer in the minds of consumers is the basis of this brand equity.*

Competing retail brand perspectives have also emerged in the retail literature, which embrace the more complex combinations of tangible and intangible service, product, and organizational multi-sensory brand elements as a coherent brand strategy (Mitchell, 1999; Kent, 2003; Burt and Davies, 2010). From this perspective, the retail-er (that is the retail firm), becomes the brand (Bridson and Evans, 2004; Burt and Davies, 2010). This underlines the ability of retailers to produce superior brand reality as a result of the customer interface in comparison to manufacturers (Mitchell, 1999).
Retail firms also seek to build the retail brand construct to the level of customer relationship management activity, combining external marketing activity with store-based fulfillment of a brand promise. Such activity is also evident upstream by manufacturers who seek to capitalize on the benefits of stores as brand experiential spaces. Therefore, the retail brand can also be perceived as an emotional connection between customer and firm (Kozinets et al., 2002). Albeit, evolving in complexity, the retail brand construct is presented by Burt and Davies (2010) as retail offering components (product and service provision), the retailer's ability to add value through the retail store (retail image), and the higher echelons of the corporate perspective (customer relationships and firm identity).

Scholars agree that a better understanding is required, of how retailers become engendered with brand significance through retail brand management techniques is required, both from a consumer and practitioner perspective (Fernie et al., 1997; Moore et al., 2000; Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). The retail branding literature therefore provides a starting point, in a similar mode to the wider branding debate (De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley, 1997, 1998; Wood, 2000; Heding et al., 2008), to answering the central question posed at the outset of this paper “what is a retail brand?”

Recognizing that “retailer as brand is one of the most important trends in retailing” (Grewal et al., 2004), the Journal of Retailing devoted a special issue to the topics of Retail Brand and Customer Loyalty in 2004. The contributions to the issue indicate that “retail brand” has more than one interpretation. Two articles equated retail brand with private label merchandise (Sayman and Raju, 2004; Sprott and Shimp, 2004), while a major portion of an invited article by Ailawadi and Keller discussed the creation of retailer brand image per se. The latter orientation is in keeping with the purposes of this study. In that work, Ailawadi and Keller updated the earlier research by Lindquist (1974) and Mazursky and Jacoby (1986) on store image, and concluded that access, store atmosphere, price and promotion, cross-category product/service assortment, and within-category assortment were the most important determinants of retailer image. They also acknowledged that the absence of an explicit focus have left retail brand issues unresolved.

To the extent that retail “brand” and “image” have either the same or overlapping meaning, the literature related to the latter construct is pertinent. Matineau's (1958) seminal work suggested that image is related to “functional” factors like those identified by Ailawadi and Keller, but he also suggested that “psychological” attributes such as a sense of belonging are also important. Using a behaviorist approach, Kunkel and Berry (1969) argued that store image is the conceptualized or expected reinforcement associated with shopping at a specific store. Hirshman (1981) shifted the focus to cognitive learning, and defined store image as a “subjective phenomenon that results from the acquisition of knowledge about a store as it is perceived relative to other stores and in accordance with the consumer's unique cognitive framework.” Mazursky and Jacoby (1986) expanded upon Hirschman's approach, and offered a process-focused definition that considered store image to be:
a cognition and/or affect (or set of cognitions and/or affects) which is (are) inferred either from a set of ongoing perceptions and/or memory inputs attaching to the phenomenon and which represent(s) what the phenomenon signifies to the individual.

From the early 1990s on, customers' loyalty has come to be a key concept again associated with many others including satisfaction, commitment, trust, identification and the relationship with or attitude toward the brand. These researches have resulted in a more defensive marketing orientation. Often viewed as a paradigm change, this new approach rests on the overt intent to retain existing customers.

Based on the principle that it is more cost-effective to retain one's customers than to capture new ones, and that consumer profitability over time is conditional on loyalty (Reichheld, 1993; Bolton and Drew, 1994), this process must lead to an overall improvement of the quality of relationships with customers. It is also a way of retaining the market share in an environment often glutted by a host of competitive offerings. Recently, this relationship marketing is contended to be critical in many sectors (Dawkins and Reichheld, 1990), and more specifically in services and distribution sectors (Berry and Gresham, 1986). As it is, retail stores have experienced numerous multi-loyalty and variety-seeking behaviors, making assortment and products key factors in building customer loyalty (East et al., 1995; Garton, 1995; Sirohi et al., 1998; Oderkerken-Schröder et al., 2001).

RBs are one of the features of store's offerings and must be capable of working for better differentiation of the store's assortment (Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003). They are also expected to work to better build customers' loyalty (Cortsjens and Lal, 2000; Dick et al., 1996). To achieve that, perceived quality of products based on external and internal attributes is usually advocated.

As it turns out, the quality of a product plays a crucial role in consumers' preference, their satisfaction and purchase/repurchase decision (Raju et al., 1990; Parasuraman et al., 1996). What's more, numerous research studies have correlated levels of consumer satisfaction and loyalty in a joint increase process (Bearden and Teel, 1983; Anderson and Sullivan, 1993).

Accordingly, we adopt a classic perspective of the relationship marketing literature which needs to be corroborated in this particular case of retail branding. We thus posit that a positive relationship between RB satisfaction and RB loyalty exists.

Knowledge Management

An established discipline since 1991, (Nonaka, 1991), KM includes courses taught in the fields of business administration, information systems, management, and library and information sciences (Alavi, M., and Leidner, D., 1999). More recently, other fields have started contributing to KM research; these include information and media, computer science, public health, and public policy.
The term knowledge management is often problematic as there is little consensus regarding its definition (Bhatt, 2001). Many authors avoid the term completely, rather preferring to focus on specific aspects of the topic such as knowledge, innovation or learning (Costello, 1996).

Furthermore others argue that knowledge management is closely related to concepts such as organizational learning, organizational memory. KM is described as a set of management activities that aim at designing and influencing processes of knowledge creation and integration. It includes the processes of sharing knowledge that has emerged as one of the most influential new organizational practices (Kautz, K., & Mahnke, V., 2003). KM comprises a range of strategies and practices used in an organization to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences. Such insights and experiences comprise knowledge, either embodied in individuals or embedded in organizational processes or practice.

Since its establishment, the KM discipline has been gradually moving towards academic maturity. First, there is a trend towards higher cooperation among academics; particularly, there has been a drop in single authored publications. Second, the role of practitioners has changed. Their contribution to academic research has been dramatically declining from 30% of overall contributions up to 2002, to only 10% by 2009 (Serenko, Alexander; Bontis, Nick; Booker, Lorne; Sadeddin, Khaled; Hardie, Timothy, 2010)

KM is a critical step to retailers for the following reasons: Firstly, it helps to address the issues related to developing, managing and maintaining the technical infrastructure that are required to hold and share knowledge. Secondly, it enhances brand performance by maximizing the use of information and knowledge as well as maintaining its learning capacity to remain innovative and competitive (Mau, 2005).

Innovation management includes the management of processes to strive for novel assignments through the combination and integration of different knowledge components. The ever increasing importance of knowledge in contemporary society calls for a shift in our thinking concerning innovation in business organizations and its technical innovation, product or process innovation, or strategic or organizational innovation. Consequently, it raises some questions on how organizations process knowledge and, most importantly, how they create new knowledge (Alwis, R. S., Hartmann, E., & Gemünden, H. G., 2004). KM is expected to have a positive impact on the organization that improves organizational effectiveness.

Customer Relationship Management

CRM is a generally recognized, widely-implemented strategy for managing and development a brand’s interactions with customers. It is a process designed to collect data associated with customers to enhance the relationship between an organization and its customers. This is can be achieved through developing process customer acquisition, customer retention, and customer expansion.
Furthermore, CRM has been defined as the strategy and the infrastructure for creating customer loyalty (Azani, C., & Khorramshahgol, R., 2005). Additionally, CRM has been considered as a complete strategy and procedure of acquiring, retaining, and partnering with selective customers to create superior value for the retail brands and the customer (Parvatiyar, A., & Sheth, N. J., 2001). The CRM is viewed as a process by which a company expands the customer information to improve loyalty and retain customers. Consequently, the objective of the CRM is to find, get, and retain customers (Choy, K. L., Lee, W. B., & Lo, V., 2003).

There are two major areas to consider in terms of strengthening the customer relationship management competencies i.e. customer relationship management function or competency upgrade, and supporting process competency development. The three phases in which CRM can help to support the relationship between a business and its customers are, to:

Acquire: a CRM can help a business in acquiring new customers through excellent contact management, direct marketing, selling and fulfillment.

Enhance: a web-enabled CRM combined with customer service tools offers customers excellent service from a team of trained and skilled sales and service specialists, which offers customers the convenience of one-stop shopping. (James A. O'Brien & George M. Marakas, 2009)

Retain: CRM software and databases enable a business to identify and reward its loyal customers and further develop its targeted marketing and relationship marketing initiatives.

The fundamentals of customer relationship management grew from demand on after-sales customer service. In addition, it is based on sales transactions and intensive data processing. With further influence of marketing and customer orientation principles, customer relationship management advances to adoption of value-added problem solving and customized services. However, the ultimate customer relationship management principle is to build customer loyalty and lifetime patronization.

**The Relationship between Knowledge Management and Customer Relationship Management**

KM is an approach that is used to capture, create, and apply knowledge to make the CRM process successful. Concerning this notion, KM has been considered as an expertise that is widely recognized as having a significant impact on brand performance (Goh, 2005). Furthermore, CRM and KM have been recently gaining wide interest in retail business environment (Gebert, H., Geib, M., Kolbe, L., & Riempp, G., 2002).

Both approaches focus on allocating resources to supportive business activities in order to gain competitive advantages despite the fact that both concepts are currently treating mostly as separate research areas.

Moreover, both KM and CRM are of prime significance for every business decision maker and Information Technology (IT) professionals. Consequently, the availability of large data on
customers due to new technology tools has created opportunities as well as challenges for retailers to leverage the data and gain a competitive advantage (Lin, Y., Su, H. Y., & Chien, S., 2006).

In addition, KM is essential for CRM because it can help the retail stores enhance their services, and respond rapidly to their customers’ need. Retailers need to enhance the processes with customers to identify relevant activity fields for KM to improve these processes. Additionally, customer knowledge and customer satisfaction are being very important for tracking the success of CRM applications (Mithas, S., Krishnan, M. S., & Fornell, C., 2005) From a theoretical perspective, it is important to determine whether the association of CRM applications with the improvement in customer satisfaction is mediated by an improvement in customer knowledge (Belbaly, N., Benbya, H., & Meissonier, R., 2007).

The new brand development projects require efficient strategies that are needed for creating a quick and better response to customers’ needs (Rowley, 2005). Moreover, the value of KM and CRM is recognized by many leading retailers (Walmart and Sears to name the few). KM is important for all kinds of business including retail branding because it can help the retailers improve their services and respond to their customers which, in turn, lead to customer satisfaction (Lin, Y., Su, H. Y., & Chien, S., 2006).

For the consideration of this paper, we can assume that customer relationship management is identified as the core competency and a major competitive advantage of a particular retailer. We are also attempting to introduce knowledge management concepts, systems, and tools into the retail business to augment their customer relationship management competency, as well as supporting processes or competencies in order to substantially improve retail brand competitiveness. And Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) as the optimization of the organizational and business processes that facilitates the creation, dissemination and utilization of customer knowledge in pursuit of organizational objectives (Bueren, A., Schierholz, R., Kolbe, L., & Brenner, W., 2005). Concerning this notion, it has been indicated that retail organizations need to focus on three sorts of knowledge in CRM processes (Bueren, A., Schierholz, R., Kolbe, L., & Brenner, W., 2005):

Firstly, organizations need to understand the requirements of customers in order to address them. This is referred to as knowledge about customers. Secondly, they need to collect information about the customers in their interaction with the retail brands which also requires knowledge for customers. Thirdly, customers possess knowledge about the products and services they use as well as about how they perceive the offerings they purchase. This knowledge from customers is valuable as it feeds the measures to improve products and services.

Integration of KM system and CRM system

In this regard, KM is important for CRM, helping retailers provide better service, enhance quality of brands, reduce cost and respond faster to their customers. However, the most
important challenge of managing knowledge in retail is capturing, developing and integrating knowledge to share among all organizational members.

Organizations are forced to compete on the basis of knowledge. In this knowledge-based era, organizations can expand and sustain competitive advantage through initiation of accurately developed KM processes (Alryalat H., & Alhawari S., 2008). There are four phases involved in the KM process model in order to employ the knowledge in the organization. These are the phases that begin with acquiring and storing the knowledge into the KM system, followed by disseminating and using of knowledge among the communities.

Acquiring Knowledge: Acquisition of knowledge in a collaboration environment uses elements adopted from Arthur Andersen and APQC (1996), which involve sequential steps that should be taken in order to make sure that the knowledge could be acquired from the right people, time and place. It is suggested as follows:

a. Identify Knowledge (Determine sources and type of knowledge).
b. Collect Knowledge (Gather and transform knowledge according to the specifications)
c. Adapt Knowledge (Categorize the knowledge)
d. Organize Knowledge (Prepare and map knowledge into the specific requirements.)
e. Store Knowledge (Keep and index the knowledge dynamically)

Customer Knowledge Relationship Management process includes three phases:

1. Customer Knowledge Acquisition,
2. Customer Knowledge Retention,
3. Customer Knowledge Expansion

**Gap Identification**

Few authors have, in fact, dealt directly with own brands by addressing consumer loyalty (Steenkamp and Dekimpe, 1997; Cortsjens and Lal, 2000; Ailawadi et al., 2001; de Wulf et al., 2005). Consumer loyalty in the context of retailing is a complex issue. The use of KM and CRM to create customer knowledge management in retail branding is rare.

The integration of knowledge management and customer relationship management must be looked at in several crucial areas of retail brands. One, the review exercise of the strategic planning process must include knowledge audit and knowledge map that would act as a reference in development of knowledge management to support customer relationship management. This includes people (individual competency), process (structural capital and intangible assets), technology (IT), and content (explicit knowledge). Two, the various knowledge management sub-systems must be evaluated and then applied when appropriate to the customer relationship management system in the effort to upgrade to level three of customer relationship management. Three, as part of the support for the integration of knowledge management system and customer relationship management system, the
supporting processes of customer relationship management must also be strengthened or upgraded in order for the entire system to be effective. Four, knowledge-based customer relationship management is knowledge intensive and highly dependent on talented human resource that is sales staff at retail store. Hence one of the crucial supporting functions of the integration is competency development, and this function is usually charged to the responsibility of human resource management. Five, retail brands must be monitored for performance against expectation or goal for any newly implemented system. Hence, the retailers must also redesign the performance management system that includes various metrics to fit the new strategic implementation. This paper tries to address all these crucial issues in the context of retail branding.

Hypotheses

H1. Customer Knowledge Relationship Management is positively related to Retail Brand loyalty.

H2. Customer Knowledge Relationship Management is positively related to consumer store loyalty.

H3. Retail Brand loyalty is positively related to consumer store loyalty.

H4. Customer Knowledge Relationship Management will mediate the relationship between Retail Brand loyalty and store loyalty.
Model: 1

Conceptual model of direct, mediated and moderated effects
Model: 2

Knowledge Management

Customer Relationship Management

Customer Knowledge Relationship Management

Retail Brand Loyalty

Retail Brand Satisfaction

Retail Store Loyalty
**Research Methodology**

*Research Strategy*

The central premise of the research is to find out the relationships among the variables of interests. For this purpose, literature review and hypothesis are developed and will be tested after the data collection and then conclusion will be taken out from the results; therefore the thesis uses deductive approach. The research would be conducted in Lahore. Five modern retail stores and five traditional retail stores would be taken and the sample of customers would be drawn from each of the selected retail stores to fill the questionnaires.

*Target Population*

All the customers of retail stores in Lahore are the population of this study. The consumers of the selected retail stores will devise the sampling frame for this research.

*Sample Size and Sampling Scheme*

As we are measuring the impact of CKRM (Customer Knowledge Relation Management) on retail store loyalty of different retail stores, the customers of modern and traditional retail stores will serve as cluster for our study.

Using simple random sampling (SRS) technique, 5 modern retail and 5 traditional stores will be selected. Customers available in these stores will be surveyed at different points of time using mall-intercept survey technique. A self-administered questionnaire will be developed to measure and social science MS students will be hired, as they have experience in mall-intercept technique. 50 questionnaires per retail store will be filled making it a sample of 500 respondents, which is sufficiently large for this type of study (Hair et al).

*Statistical Techniques:*

For data analysis and reliability, the following statistical tools will be applied:

- Inter-item Reliability
- Cronbach’s alpha
- Regression analysis
References


