Designing a CRM Framework for on-line & off-line sports footwear retailers*

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Abstract— **The use of Customer Relationship Managers to foster customers loyalty has become one of the most common business strategies in the past years. However, CRM solutions do not fill the abundance of happily ever-after relationships that business needs, and each client's perception is different in the buying process. Therefore, the experience must be precise, in order to extend the loyalty period, of a customer as much as possible.**

One of the economic sectors in which CRM's have improved this experience is retailing, where the personalized attention to the customer is a key factor among others. However, brick and mortar experiences are not enough to be aware in how environmental changes could affect the industry trends in the long term. A base unified theoretical framework must be taken into consideration, in order to develop an adaptable model for constructing or implementing CRMs into companies. Thanks to this approximation, the information is complemented and the final outcome will increment the quality in any Marketing/Sales initiative.

The goal of this article is to explore the different factors grouped by three main domains within the impact of the service quality, from consumers perspective in both on-line and off-line retailing sector. Secondly, we plan to go a step forward and extract base guidelines about previous analysis for designing CRMs solutions focused on the loyalty of the customers for an specific retailing sector and its product: Sports Running Shoes.

Furthermore, we design and develop a structured survey and give it to a diverse group of users, with questions that evaluate the contrast an influence of service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in both on-line and off-line environments.

Keywords. CRM, Retailing, Framework, E-business.

I. INTRODUCTION

The present document mixes an epistemological way of research, and an inductive way from obtaining a classification of several primary sources of information, by identifying all possible relevant information related to which are the most prominent and most used qualifiers that a customer may take into consideration to select any retail company. In this analysis, their modality (on-line or off-line) is compared, and also how the resultant output of this research should be considered to state guidelines as principles in order to implement a CRM solution, in an specific sector industry.

From a holistic perspective, Service Quality is defined as a comparison between expectations of a given service and the level of performance that is achieved by doing this service [1]. In an extended definition related to high quality level, it has been identified as the achievement of customer needs by being competitive during an interaction that compels several environmental endogenous and exogenous factors.

These factors group themselves under the Parasuraman model [2] of service quality into five subdomains that interchangeably affect the quality of service causing a perceived standard delivery: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsibility, Assurance and Empathy. From our point of view these will be our service quality drivers.

Customer Satisfaction is a derived concept from the Consumers Behavioural Process, very strong influence association with service quality [8], [3], [4], [6], where a comparison from customer of a pre-purchased expectation and received performance perception [7], [5] is done.

In [10] the authors marked the differences between customer satisfaction and service quality constructs. The first is directly influenced by the intervention of variables of disconfirmation, and the second is more related to environmental variables. On the other hand, customers satisfaction is based on predictive expectation and quality service is an ideal expectation that is accepted as a standard under the general perspective [9].

Under the scope of several marketing literature, Customers Loyalty is defined as the result of the well performed interaction between a consistent and

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continuous experience perceived by an individual in matters of several assessment fronts (e.g., personal attention, included services in a singular purchase, etc.). Specifically, it is referred to the level of strength that an initiated relationship between actors could have with another organization or even a set of heterogeneous actors, and how their actions can rely on the nature of the existence of them and in the whole aspects of the entire paradigm.

Besides the current definitions of these three concepts, which in our study will be our spectrum of *domains*, it is important to add that with CRM systems, the aim of any organization is to develop an structured, adaptable and dynamic environment for customer support, that also feedback this model constantly, in order to create a continuous system of valuation that helps to fill the gaps by identifying specific points and details.

Independently from the general concept that includes the global evaluation of a firms service delivery system, the current effort will be focused on determine which common drivers are currently used under the industry experience and under an academic research could state a sustainable overall ecosystem between service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty under the general consumer buying process perspective of a narrowed economical sector.

A. Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty in On-line Retailing Environment

With the increased presence of Internet in the world, several off-line businesses have moved to appear also in an on-line environment. Therefore, they have incorporated new channels of communications and contact points with end users. Retailing is also not an exception and many companies have taken benefit by increasing customers satisfaction, enriching their customer experiences and gaining loyalty.

Service quality is a very important concept in on-line retailing, because it influences in customers feelings about brands. Moreover, it directly affects customer loyalty.

According to [9], on-line retailers should understand and analyse in depth how customers perceive the service quality, in terms of on-line systems quality. So no traditional drivers can be applied.

There are several dimensions in which on-line service quality can be measured. We will focus in this article in four dimensions, that we will state them from now as drivers: reliability/promptness, access (processing speed and aesthetic design), ease of use and attentiveness.

Minjoon Jun also stated that reliability/promptness refers to the ability to perform a promised service to a customer, accurately, dependably, promptly and timely. Considering this previous finding by this author we will join in a simple concept the new driver called *timeliness*, also based on [11] and the five quality dimensions the authors present.

The access driver refers to the ease of contact or use and information gathering that a customer can do from the on-line retailer. This driver is highly linked to the use of CRM tools, in order to be able to handle different queries and contacts from several channels of communications.

The ease of use dimension is directly related to the development and presentation of the on-line system. Retailers need to focus in presenting an easy-to-navigate web site to end-users, well organized and structured. The main purpose is to guide the user to her desired buy or consult.

Last but not least, the attentiveness is related to the supply of personalized services to each customer. Through this driver, a business can differentiate itself with other competitors in the same market.

Even though we will focus only in these four previously defined dimensions, it is important to highlight that other dimensions, like security and credibility, could be also relevant to the measurement of on-line service quality.

Based on the results of the study performed in [9], the different dimensions that describe an on-line retailing businesses service quality, highly influence the customers satisfaction level. Moreover, this study also demonstrated that personalization and individual attention are factors that customers are expecting with an eager condition.

In retailing industry, the on-line landscape allows a broad and direct contact with the customers, by providing a great provision of customer services and customized marketing techniques (one-to-one, mass customization, etc.).

Turban and King [12] corroborates this statement and expands it by expressing that one of the key actions for electronic commerce is to retrieve all information of potential customers in order to apply several techniques.

Talking about customers satisfaction, in [13] it is stated that new technology applications, like CRMs, must be tailored to multiple segments requirements, based in product categories, in order to be effective.

However, it is not enough to tailor a CRM into a

customers common segment. Some set of causes and effects must be applied in order to realize a better picture of the current customer satisfaction in a given service [14].

Finally, about customers loyalty, the effect that a personalized service could produce is directly related to the level on tracking customers behaviours and complementary information in an integrated database.

In another study, in [16] the authors reveal that an off-line brand could determine an inverse relationship to the perception of on-line perceived risk, affecting customer loyalty if the effects of on-line and on-line images are not controlled.

Two measurement flows into customers loyalty domain can be considered: behavioural and attitudinal. The last one is related to current loyalty state and word of mouth dynamics over time with the customer's own trust circle, and, on the other hand, the first one is related to the customers willingness to be immersed in loyalty behaviour after perceiving an aggregated and unique value that a company is providing in the entire experience.

B. Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty in Off-line Retailing Environment

Off-line retailing has some similarities and differences regarding on-line retailing, in terms of service quality, customer loyalty and customer satisfaction. They complement each other, even if both retailing models use different methodologies to attract customers and make sales. In the end, they are designed to achieve the same goal.

Some examples can be found in the advertising environment. First, it is vital to capture brand awareness from traditional off-line media, synthesizing the advantages of both traditional and digital media. Second, advertisers spend a sizeable portion of their budgets on promoting their products/services both on-line and off-line. What is often missing in these initiatives is a coordinated plan to integrate their on-line presence to help drive off-line activities and sales.

Having the definition of service quality from the on-line retailing perspective in mind, in [18] it is stated that the perceived off-line service quality positively affects perceived on-line service quality, even if they have different KPIs or dimensions. We suggest the following, as dimensions of the off-line service quality as several other authors do: tangibles, reliability, responsibility, assurance and empathy.

According to [15], the consumer buying decision process includes five stages: (1) problem/need recognition, (2) information search, (3) evaluation of alternatives, (4) purchase and (5) post-purchase evaluation. The retailer must support these stages in order to keep consumers satisfied and build loyalty. But the question raises in what level and which of these are most influential to ensure a better probability of loyalty. Specifically for our study 4 drivers are identified: Availability and Alternatives from a off-line modality perspective, and for the on - line modality perspective: Content / Format and Accuracy

Thus, the retailer/supplier should be aware of the characteristics, preferences, needs, wishes and behaviours of each consumer separately on a continuous basis.

Customer Satisfaction is also connected in some way with the on - line experience of the customer. As is stated in [17], [18], firm reputation and customer off-line satisfaction affects and can even predict customers on - line satisfaction with the same retailer.

In off-line retailing, customer satisfaction has often been considered as a previous state of having store satisfaction. In terms of [8], it can be defined as the outcome of the subjective evaluation that the chosen physical alternative has met or exceed customers expectations. In this model, the authors identify two types of store satisfaction: manifest satisfaction and latent satisfaction as antecedents to store loyalty.

On one hand, manifest satisfaction is directly and unequivocally related to store loyalty. Manifest store satisfaction consists in an explicit evaluation of the store, which in a positive case it leads to store commitment. Therefore, it is has a positive relation with store satisfaction.

On the other hand, latent satisfaction (see also [20]), is the mere acceptance of the store, which it does not necessarily lead to a future commitment. Nevertheless, it may also be positively related to store loyalty, but in a less strong way than manifest satisfaction.

In terms of on-line retailing, customer loyalty can be defined as the trust and commitment as key mediating variables to link relationships in retailing and store loyalty [21]. In person-to-firm relationships in retailing, a number of authors suggest that commitment exists as loyalty to the store.

This loyalty has been operationalized and measured in many different ways [29]. Perhaps the two most common are behavioural measures of proportion of purchase and purchase intention. Moreover, some frameworks have been also constructed, which consider the

antecedents of attitude and drivers which may mediate the attitude/behaviour relationship.

II. Current Research

This section illustrates the hypothesis conformed by the previous identification and definitions of domains and drivers that are the most relevant for the aim of the current study. Moreover, these hypothesis will be based on comments and findings in previous studies and articles, and the objectives will be orientated to paths not yet explored. It is also fair to state that the sector definition for this research is sports footwear retailing in Barcelona. Our first hypothesis, under this background, is related to the reliability and responsiveness regardless the personal attention that in a store a customer may perceive, and how this affects in general to the customer satisfaction:

- H1: Reliability and Responsiveness are stronger drivers than Empathy from the customer satisfaction point of view

A research performed in [24] found that the combination of certain elements of the retail mix (for our perspective referred to the driver of Tangibles) in a particular form could constitute the retail format adequate for acquire a good level of customer retention. In another research performed in [28], it is suggested that the increasing of customers retention could be maximized if the employee orientations (empathy) were focused to be more active in current purchase of the customers. We will assume then, that a combination of this two drivers, will lead to a powerful framework in order to improve customers loyalty. In this sense the next hypothesis comes as:

- H2: From Service Quality perspective, Empathy and Tangibility are the strongest drivers from the customer retention point of view

Moreover, there is a strong relationship between store satisfaction and store loyalty throughout the merchandise factor that, in our meanings will be partitioned in equivalent notations as the availability and variety drivers [27]. Which also leads us to our third hypothesis:

- H3: From Customer Satisfaction landscape, the availability and variety of products are the stronger drivers from the customer retention point of view.

In [25], the authors define a framework for differentiate digital attributes between the comparison of on-line and off-line media and stated that at the end, the physical inspection will always determine appeal of non-digital attributes. Based on this premise, in [30] it is also included the idea of the advantages from the Internet access platform and the capacity for conveying information of several digital attributes. Therefore, and in order to produce a significant output we will enforce the combination of the drivers from the on - line and service quality domain, that are: ease of use, aesthetic design and processing speed. Moreover, the security driver under service quality and perspective of customer satisfaction has minimum statically relevant associations in general [9], but contrasting with [23], it is considered that internet security and privacy are the most important drivers when assessing on-line systems quality, we will test this consideration by establishing that:

- H4: Nowadays, in Service Quality, Security driver is the most important one to provide customer satisfaction

In any case, this research will try to identify in which sense a combination of drivers of the Service Quality domain can influence into the two main assessment drivers of the Customer Loyalty domain: word-of-mouth and the willingness to continue purchasing, and also which is more influenced by the mix of an on - line space where the ease of use, aesthetic design and the response speed is adequate. Leading us to:

- H5: The combination of the drivers: ease of use, aesthetic design and processing speed will ensure a stronger level of word of mouth rather than continue purchasing.

The study performed in [27] also found a positive relationship from site satisfaction to site loyalty in three main drivers related to ease of use, usefulness and enjoyment. For our identified drivers in Customer Satisfaction domain: Content, accuracy and format are the equivalent under previous perspective, but still missing drivers like ease of use and timeliness that must be analysed, so it is assumed that both will bring higher influence in customer retention domain. Moreover, in [9] a strong positive relationship between reliable/prompt responses and access into customer satisfaction is presented. In our study, the equivalence notation for these two drivers are timeliness and ease

of use (the latter referred to the access driver to the acquired information once learning curve was minimized from the first attempt of customer to use a website). So, the objective is to find how these two drivers from customer satisfaction point of view may influence into customers loyalty domain compared with the others stated in this domain. Saying that:

- H6: The Ease of Access and Timeliness ensures in a stronger level the retention of customers

III. Methodology

The research methods that were used to extract conclusions from the population could be split in two parts:

Firstly, an structured on-line survey has been constructed, based on the analysis and categorization of several and different frameworks and empirical research from several points of view. This previous research resulted into a proposed primary domain context system. The implementation of this elicitation technique was applied to an specific sector of retailing.

This survey has helped us to gather some empiric information based on how these domains and their drivers are influencing each other. It will also corroborate the proposed hypothesis based on the service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty domains. The output of the contrast between on-line and off-line modalities in retailing is also considered in this analysis.

On the other hand, it is also very important to know the opinion from the retailer's professionals and experts in CRM. In this case, we have contacted an expert and asked him the proposed hypothesis.

The objective of these two approaches is to detect the contrasts and the gaps between the retailer's customers and the retailer's professionals. In the design of a CRM's framework, these gaps are going to determine the best decisions related to the Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty domains.

IV. Results

This section will show the presentation of the raw results of the data collected through the on-line survey during the months of May and June of 2015. It also shows the results of an interview done to a specialist in the area of consulting and marketing.

A. Survey development

The survey consisted of 18 questions of single choice answers that measured the level of satisfaction or motivation (very / somehow / not at all) of the user in relation to each question. The distribution of the questions was as follows:

- 3 questions that measure how 'Service Quality' affects 'Customer Satisfaction' in an off-line environment.
- 3 questions that measure how 'Service Quality' affects 'Customer Satisfaction' in an on-line environment.
- 4 questions that measure how 'Service Quality' affects 'Customer Loyalty' in an off-line environment.
- 3 questions that measure how 'Service Quality' affects 'Customer Loyalty' in an on-line environment.
- 3 questions that measure how 'Customer Satisfaction' affects 'Customer Loyalty' in an off-line environment.
- 2 questions that measure how 'Customer Satisfaction' affects 'Customer Loyalty' in an on-line environment.

1) Sample characteristics: A total of 109 people filled the survey. This people are both men and women around the ages of 20 to 35 years old from the following countries: Spain, Venezuela and Ecuador.

2) Data Collected: Tables I, II and III show the results for each question, on how 'Service Quality' affects 'Customer Satisfaction' in an off-line environment. This three question's results are used to evaluate the acceptance or rejection of H1.

TABLE I
QUESTION 1

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not satisfied at all	6	5.5
1 - Somehow satisfied	45	41.3
2 - Very satisfied	58	53.2
TOTAL	109	100

TABLE II
QUESTION 2

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not satisfied at all	4	3.7
1 - Somehow satisfied	30	27.5
2 - Very satisfied	75	68.8
TOTAL	109	100

TABLE III

QUESTION 3

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not satisfied at all	7	6.5
1 - Somehow satisfied	31	28.4
2 - Very satisfied	71	65.1
TOTAL	109	100

Tables IV, V, VI and VII show the results for each question, on how 'Service Quality' affects 'Customer Loyalty' in an off-line environment. This four question's results are used to evaluate the acceptance or rejection of H2.

TABLE IV

QUESTION 4

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not motivated at all	8	7.3
1 - Somehow motivated	35	32.1
2 - Very motivated	66	60.6
TOTAL	109	100

TABLE V

QUESTION 5

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not motivated at all	4	3.6
1 - Somehow motivated	38	34.9
2 - Very motivated	67	61.5
TOTAL	109	100

TABLE VI

QUESTION 6

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not motivated at all	6	5.5
1 - Somehow motivated	58	53.2
2 - Very motivated	45	41.3
TOTAL	109	100

TABLE VII

QUESTION 7

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not motivated at all	8	7.4
1 - Somehow motivated	41	37.6
2 - Very motivated	60	55
TOTAL	109	100

Tables VIII, IX and X show the results for each question, on how 'Customer Satisfaction' affects 'Customer Loyalty' in an off-line environment. This three question's results are used to evaluate the acceptance or rejection of H3.

TABLE VIII

QUESTION 8

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not motivated at all	8	7.4
1 - Somehow motivated	42	38.5
2 - Very motivated	59	54.1
TOTAL	109	100

TABLE IX

QUESTION 9

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not motivated at all	9	8.3
1 - Somehow motivated	36	33
2 - Very motivated	64	58.7
TOTAL	109	100

TABLE X

QUESTION 10

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not motivated at all	10	9.2
1 - Somehow motivated	43	39.4
2 - Very motivated	56	51.4
TOTAL	109	100

Tables XI, XII and XIII show the results for each question, on how 'Service Quality' affects 'Customer Satisfaction' in an on-line environment. This three question's results are used to evaluate the acceptance or rejection of H4.

TABLE XI

QUESTION 11

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not satisfied at all	1	1
1 - Somehow satisfied	28	25.9
2 - Very satisfied	79	73.1
TOTAL	109	100

TABLE XII

QUESTION 12

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not satisfied at all	4	3.7
1 - Somehow satisfied	19	17.8
2 - Very satisfied	84	78.5
TOTAL	109	100

TABLE XIII
QUESTION 13

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not satisfied at all	7	6.4
1 - Somehow satisfied	27	24.8
2 - Very satisfied	75	68.8
TOTAL	109	100

Tables XIV, XV and XVI show the results for each question, on how 'Service Quality' affects 'Customer Loyalty' in an on-line environment. This three question's results are used to evaluate the acceptance or rejection of H5.

TABLE XIV
QUESTION 14

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not motivated at all	7	6.4
1 - Somehow motivated	35	32.1
2 - Very motivated	67	61.5
TOTAL	109	100

TABLE XV
QUESTION 15

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not motivated at all	3	2.7
1 - Somehow motivated	28	25.7
2 - Very motivated	78	71.6
TOTAL	109	100

TABLE XVI
QUESTION 16

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not motivated at all	5	4.6
1 - Somehow motivated	33	30.3
2 - Very motivated	71	65.1
TOTAL	109	100

Tables XVII and XVIII show the results for each question, on how 'Customer Satisfaction' affects 'Customer Loyalty' in an on-line environment. This two question's results are used to evaluate the acceptance or rejection of H6.

TABLE XVII
QUESTION 17

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not motivated at all	4	3.7
1 - Somehow motivated	40	36.7
2 - Very motivated	65	59.6
TOTAL	109	100

TABLE XVIII
QUESTION 18

Answer	# of answers	% of answers
0 - Not motivated at all	4	3.6
1 - Somehow motivated	26	23.9
2 - Very motivated	79	72.5
TOTAL	109	100

B. Interview development

The interview consisted of 6 questions each asking for a specific order of the drivers defined for 'Service Quality' and 'Customer Satisfaction', based on the level of influence on 'Customer Satisfaction' and 'Customer Loyalty' in general. The distribution of the questions was as follows:

- 1 question that asks for a ranking of 'Service Quality' drivers, based on the level of influence on 'Customer Satisfaction' in an off-line environment.
- 1 question that asks for a ranking of 'Service Quality' drivers, based on the level of influence on 'Customer Satisfaction' in an on-line environment.
- 1 question that asks for a ranking of 'Service Quality' drivers, based on the level of influence on 'Customer Loyalty' in an off-line environment.
- 1 question that asks for a ranking of 'Service Quality' drivers, based on the level of influence on 'Customer Loyalty' in an on-line environment.
- 1 question that asks for a ranking of 'Customer Satisfaction' drivers, based on the level of influence on 'Customer Loyalty' in an off-line environment.
- 1 question that asks for a ranking of 'Customer Satisfaction' drivers, based on the level of influence on 'Customer Loyalty' in an on-line environment.

1) Interview Profile: The interview was performed to Pepe Zapata, a partner and consultant at a company called "Teknecultura", whose main focus is to advice and support cultural organizations in the optimization of their marketing and communication strategies, which involves the implementation and use of CRM's. Pepe has a vast trajectory in the area of marketing, communication and brand management, and this has made him a perfect candidate for our interview, providing great value with his experience and knowledge in the area of our research.

2) Data Collected: Tables XIX, XX, XXI, XXII, XXIII and XXIV show the general results of our interview.

TABLE XIX

RANKING OF 'SERVICE QUALITY' DRIVERS BASED ON THEIR INFLUENCE IN 'CUSTOMER SATISFACTION' IN AN OFF-LINE ENVIRONMENT

Ranking	Driver
1	Reliability and Responsibility
2	Assurance and Empathy
3	Tangibility

TABLE XX

RANKING OF 'SERVICE QUALITY' DRIVERS BASED ON THEIR INFLUENCE IN 'CUSTOMER LOYALTY' IN AN OFF-LINE ENVIRONMENT

Ranking	Driver
1	Assurance and Empathy
2	Reliability and Responsibility
3	Tangibility

TABLE XXI

RANKING OF 'CUSTOMER SATISFACTION' DRIVERS BASED ON THEIR INFLUENCE IN 'CUSTOMER LOYALTY' IN AN OFF-LINE ENVIRONMENT

Ranking	Driver
1	Availability of the product / service
2	Ease of access
3	Service substitutes

TABLE XXII

RANKING OF 'SERVICE QUALITY' DRIVERS BASED ON THEIR INFLUENCE IN 'CUSTOMER SATISFACTION' IN AN ON-LINE ENVIRONMENT

Ranking	Driver
1	Ease of use
2	Processing speed and Security
3	Aesthetic design

TABLE XXIII

RANKING OF CONSEQUENCES OF 'CUSTOMER LOYALTY', BASED ON HOW 'SERVICE QUALITY' DRIVERS: 'EASE OF USE', 'AESTHETIC DESIGN' AND 'PROCESSING SPEED AND SECURITY' INFLUENCE 'CUSTOMER LOYALTY' IN AN ON-LINE ENVIRONMENT

Ranking	Driver
1	Ensure a high level of word of mouth of the brand
2	Ensure customers continue purchasing and try new products / services.

TABLE XXIV

RANKING OF 'CUSTOMER SATISFACTION' DRIVERS BASED ON THEIR INFLUENCE IN 'CUSTOMER LOYALTY' IN AN ON-LINE ENVIRONMENT

Ranking	Driver
1	Ease of access and Timeliness
2	Accuracy of the information
3	Content and format

V. DISCUSSION

This section will expose the interpretation of the results from the study and will corroborate or not the validity of the aforementioned hypothesis. This discussion is focused on the influences from different drivers regarding the analysed domains (Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty).

All the mentioned hypothesis are suggested to be accepted or rejected by analysing the sample of answers obtained by the published survey and also considering the opinions extracted from the expert's interview.

A. Analysis for the off-line environment

The main goal of this analysis is to compare the opinions between the surveyed users and the interviewed expert. From this information, some conclusions are extracted in each one of the previously exposed hypothesis. We remember that each hypothesis comes from the relation of specific drivers between the Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty domains.

The first hypothesis that has been presented consists in detecting which are the main influences of Service Quality on the Customer Satisfaction. Concretely, it is supposed that reliability and responsiveness of the retailer store influences more than the empathy that employees can offer to the customer.

In this case, the conclusion extracted from the survey results (concretely, Questions 1-3) is that this hypothesis is *accepted*. A great part of the customers answered in their surveys that they were mostly satisfied by having trustworthy in the company, rather than the kindness of treatment and empathy of the employees towards the customer.

Moreover, to reinforce this idea, our interviewee exposed that the first thing that customers need is reliability and responsiveness of the service, followed by the guarantee that the service is acceptable. Finally, the physical aspect does affect in a lower level the customer in order to be satisfied.

There is an interesting change of opinion when Service Quality is analysed regarding Customer Loyalty. In

this case, the hypothesis supposed that drivers such as Empathy and Tangibility, in terms of Service Quality, are the strongest ones to improve the retention of the customer in the retailing service.

Analysing the different answers obtained by Questions 4-7 in the survey, it is suggested that Reliability and Responsiveness are more important in order to assure the loyalty of a customer towards the service. This suggests that we clearly should *reject* this hypothesis.

However, if we consider the comments from the interviewee, his conclusions are slightly different. He means that drivers such as guarantee of the product (assurance driver) and the empathy of the employees affects more in the long-term at the retention of the customer. So, in this case, with his input we *reject partially* this hypothesis and consider that in general all drivers in this domain are has little differentiation for influencing level for acquiring customer loyalty in the long term. What it is really clear is that the physical aspect of the store influences at a low level the Customer Loyalty, but the tangible portion related to the product itself is a must before retaining a customer.With this premise, is clear that customer is searching for an experience far away from the physical aspect, but dealing with another drivers more focused on the service offering. This is known in overall, as *Customer Basics* based on Kano model [31] that any CRM strategy must provide as default and is part from the *Customer's Journey* process [32] and the Service Quality framework [2].

Finally, the relation between Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty is also considered in this study. Concretely, it has been supposed that the availability of the product and the variety of them in the store have got the highest way to the customer in terms of retention.

Having a look at the results thrown by the survey in Questions 8-10, this hypothesis is automatically *accepted*. A significant percentage of users would feel motivated to continue their relationship with the retailer if the product is always available and there is enough variety or even substitutes in the store.

On the other hand, the conclusions mentioned by the interviewee are partially opposite. From his point of view, the availability of the product is considered as a basic element in any purchasing process. Afterwards, the ease of access is also very important, in terms of having processes as agile as possible. Finally, the variety of the product is considered as a secondary topic regarding these two domains. Therefore, due to this conclusions we consider that this hypothesis is *partially accepted*, as both customers and an expert agree on the availability of the product as the strongest factor to retain a customer, but disagree in the importance of the other drivers.

To sum up the commentaries done in this section, the tendency is that there is an agreement in accepting or declining the proposed hypothesis by the sample and the expert, apart from factors that can vary depending on the point of view of a professional expert and the customers' experiences.

B. Analysis for the on-line environment

In the case of an on-line environment, a similar analysis is performed for the hypothesis supposed and asked to the sample, with the survey, and to the expert with the interview. Anyway, the relations between domains are identical as in the off-line environment regarding the associations of every driver.

The first case is the relation between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction. Concretely, it is supposed that the Security of the on-line environment is the most important driver to consider in terms of satisfying the customer, in comparison with the aesthetic design or the ease of use, among others.

The results extracted from asking the sample (Questions 11-13) show that this hypothesis is fully *rejected*. Customers consider that other factors like processing speed and usability influence more in their future satisfaction as customers.

On the other hand, the opinion from the expert throws a similar point of view as the sample. He remarks the ease of use as the most important driver to guarantee the Customer Satisfaction. This is also very related to the processing speed and response of the retailer's website. Moreover, the environment must be as secure as possible.

In the analysis of the hypothesis a wide gap between users' opinions and the expert's opinion has been detected, regarding to security. As the IT experts and consultants are every day more aware that security is one of the most important aspects to deal with in terms of on-line services, most of the users have not still the conscience to detect this topic as essential in their on-line lives.

Dealing now with the relation between Service Quality and Customer Loyalty, the main suggestion was to analyse the combination of the aesthetic design, processing speed and usability to improve the word-of-mouth of the customers of the on-line retailer rather than enforcing the customer to keep purchasing.

The sample of users surveyed (Questions 14-16) indicated that they these drivers are more likely to invite the user to perform new purchases in the retailer's website. Therefore, this hypothesis can be considered as *rejected*. Moreover, other drivers such as security are also considered as more suitable to retain the user rather than converting them in a tool of communication and branding for the retailer.

The analysis of the expert is, in this case, also similar to the sample's answers. He considers as the main goal the adjustment of the customer's frequency of purchases through the retailer's website. Afterwards, a secondary issue could be to share this purchasing experience with other potential customers.

Finally, regarding the influences of Customer Satisfaction in the retention of customers, it is suggested that drivers such as the facility of access and timeliness are key points to improve loyalty.

From the sample's answers (Questions 17-18) it can be concluded that these drivers are the strongest ones in order to influence customers' retention towards the on-line retailer, rather than the accuracy of the information or the website's format. Therefore, this hypothesis is *accepted*.

In this case, the expert's opinion is quite similar as the users' one. He considers the usability and timeliness as the most essential drivers that affect the loyalty of the customer towards the retailer, followed by the accuracy of the information. Finally, he considers that the physical format and content of the website is completely secondary.

These opinions are in the line as it is also stated in [9], where such drivers as reliability and response promptness (which conform the *timeliness* driver) are considered as the strongest ones by defining a high customers satisfaction (and subsequent retention).

To sum up, in terms of on-line retailing, there are some coincidences in considering the different hypothesis as accepted or rejected. However, it is remarkable that the topic of security has a disparity of opinions that have both the expert and the surveyed sample.

VI. FRAMEWORK'S DESIGN FOR A CRM

Due to the analysed results, the following conceptual framework is presented:

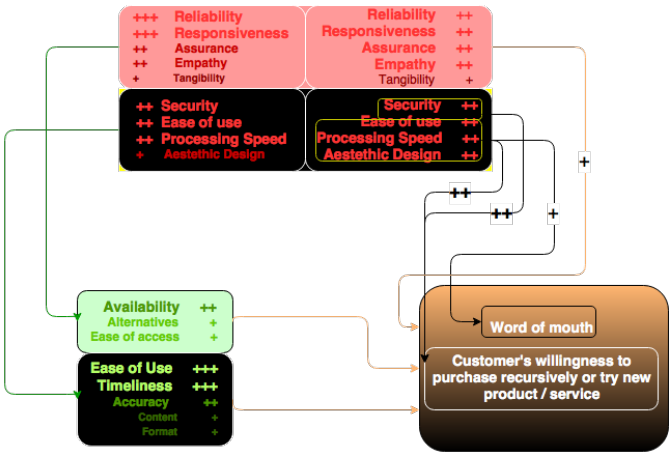

Fig. 1. A Conceptual Framework for CRM Design

In Figure 1, all the relationships mapped come from the reviewed literature along with the support of the analysis and contrast made between the gathered information from both the survey and interview.

This proposed framework is a first approach for a future analysis of how actual features of current market CRM's tools are covering this drivers, which we've discovered with our research, are the most important ones to ensure customer retention.

The figure is also showing us certain not explicit information that can be highlighted. From the point of view of a IT system solution the data management and transactional operations must be performed in a consistent and reliable way in order to be capable to handle the level of information that a retailer company should perform. So a versatile distributed system component is mandatory. On one hand, it is suggested that the drivers that will ensure a optimum customer retention are reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and availability; these drivers are reduced to the ability of any company to be aware of its critical business processes, that deliver value to their customers by being agile in product or service delivering. This is achieved by fully automatizing, streamlining and orchestrating business processes but always under a strategic planned aim.

This last premise complement itself by achieving an informed user, inside the organization by comprehensive auditing and reporting of the current operations of a company and the entire business process landscape beneath them. So the entire schema feedbacks itself.

On the other hand, gathering information from a set of customers is not enough; another approach should be by making information accessible, faster, accurate, and consistent to the customers. In this case, we are

dealing with drivers like ease of use, processing speed and aesthetic design that will have a higher level of influence in customer's loyalty perception as our research demonstrate. Minor influence level is related to content, accuracy and format because a single client will just consider this by default in many of the on-line channels or off-line channels

Security Driver is an another research topic, because the scope is so abroad from the internal perspective of the company information and also from the perspective of the customer data that is collected in several ways, but that is not aware in many cases.

The entire framework must be considered to develop IT solutions that consider the omni-channel tendency as part of every organization strategy. So no straight lines are complete under the perspective of this model.

We observe also that word of mouth is slightly influenced by some of the drivers, but no relevant relations activates it. Advocacy tendency is today's emergent marketing strategies in order to maximize customer's loyalty and this is based on the word of mouth driver.

In overall, within this conceptual picture given, we tend to provide a base of guidelines that must be considered when creating in-house project or adaptations from any vendor's solution, in order to implement a successful CRM strategy (that are summed in this three domains Service Quality + Customer Satisfaction + Customer Loyalty) on any type of retailing organization.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

As a first conclusion we can say that we confirm the results from previous researches such as [9] and [21] that state that the level of Service Quality perceived by the customer, is directly proportional to his level of satisfaction and loyalty to the brand, see figures 2 and 3. And in a similar way, the level of satisfaction of a customer is directly proportional to his level loyalty and retention, see figure 4.

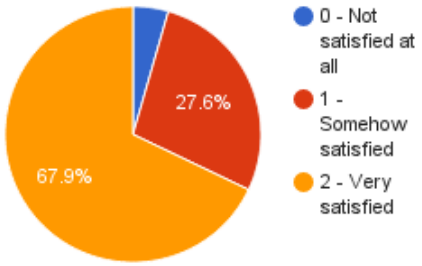

Fig. 2. Service Quality influences Customer Satisfaction

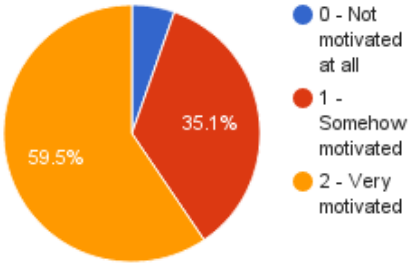

Fig. 3. Service Quality influences Customer Loyalty

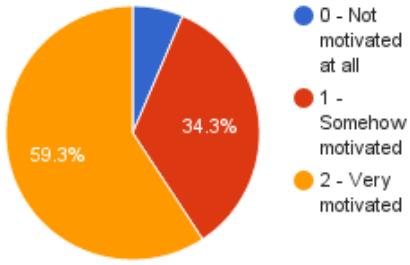

Fig. 4. Customer Satisfaction influences Customer Loyalty

As a consequence of these results it can be suggested that retailer companies should focus their attention in providing a high level of service quality in the services and products that they sell, since it's the main "trigger" in the relationship between domains, to increase Customer Loyalty in the long run, which is

the ultimate goal, since Service Quality has a direct and indirect effect in on it through this drivers. They should also focus on customer satisfaction perspective, but according to [9] this is viewed as a cumulative evaluation and a direct consequence of the perceived service quality of the customer.

From our study we can also conclude that a high level of *Reliability* and *Responsiveness* from the retailer can ensure a high level of Customer Satisfaction in an off-line environment. On the other hand, when measuring what drivers of Service Quality affect more Customer Loyalty, this same two drivers were chosen to be the most important for the people that answered our survey followed by *Empathy*, but from an expert's point of view, our interviewee stated that for assuring customer retention, *Empathy* was the most important driver to focus on, followed by *Reliability* and *Responsiveness*. In both cases, from the survey and the interview results, there is no doubt that *Tangibles* is the least important driver to focus on, to ensure a high level of Customer Loyalty.

In the measurement of the influence of Customer Satisfaction in Customer Loyalty in an off-line environment, from both the customer's and expert's point of view, *Availability* is an important factor to take into account, but there is a slight difference between this two sample results, in relation to *Variety* and *Ease of access* drivers. For customers, *Variety* is more important than *Ease of access* and our interviewee stated the opposite. As a consequence there should be further research to clear this difference out and see the justifications of each preference to make a solid conclusion.

In the case of an on-line environment, for customers, the Service Quality driver *Processing speed* was the most important to achieve a greater Customer Satisfaction, followed by the driver *Ease of use*, which was the expert's first choice, as the highest influencer in Customer Satisfaction.

Also from the Service Quality perspective, backed up by both customers of the survey and the interviewee's results, all of the on-line drivers clearly affect the Customer Loyalty but are more effective on making customers continue purchasing rather that being advocates of the brand.

Regarding Customer Satisfaction in an on-line environment, *Ease of access* and *Timeliness* were selected by both respondents and interviewee as the strongest drivers that contribute to build the loyalty of a customer.

There is no doubt from existing research as well as from ours, that Service Quality is the area that drives most of the attention in the discussion of techniques to keep the customer happy and loyal. Service Quality has a strong impact on business performance, lower costs, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and profitability of any business.

VIII. FUTURE RESEARCH

There are some limitations in this study. One major limitation is in the size of the sample. The reader may need to interpret the results of the study with caution, particularly with respect to the generalization of research findings to sports footwear as a whole. It may be the cause that a higher sample could vary the percentages of some questions' results.

Two main axioms identified for further investigation are: First, the driver from the Customer Loyalty domain, word of mouth and how can it be influenced by other drivers not considered in this proposed framework. Several techniques and examples that comes from the *showrooming* philosophy could be considered for a possible and exhaustive analysis.Second, security is an entire topic that can be part of the customer landscape or even from the information system itself and a entire study of this driver and the influences and relationships inside a company is strongly recommended.

Future research should also make a general extension of this research. Taking into account that the presented results are a starting point or first draft of drivers that should be mapped to CRM features or in order to ensure the success of it. Future studies should focus on implementing this mapping by corroborating the proposed framework. The main goal is to test if the resulting CRM's for sports footwear fulfil the recommendations made in article, to afterwards measure the success of implementing and using the CRM for retailers in both on-line and off-line environments.

APPENDIX

In this section the overall analysis of the survey will be showed in detail.

Figures 5, 6 and 7 show the results of the questions of the survey that measure how 'Service Quality' affects 'Customer Satisfaction' in an off-line environment.

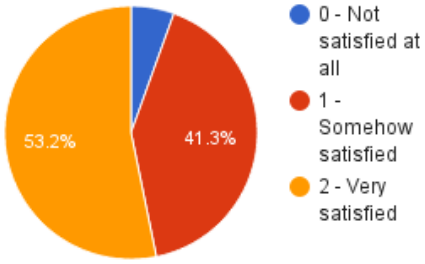

Fig. 5. Q1: In what extent does being treated with empathy by the store staff influences your satisfaction?

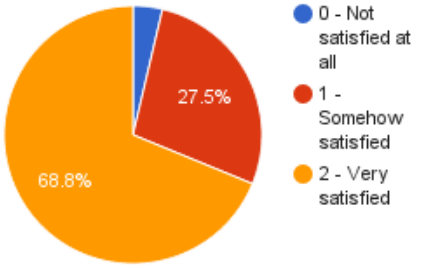

Fig. 6. Q2: How having good product guarantees influences your satisfaction after visiting the store?

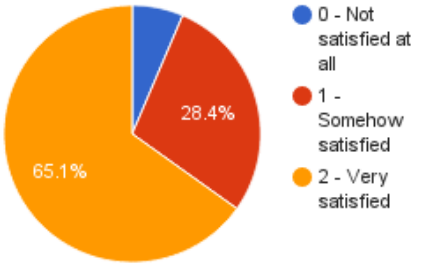

Fig. 7. Q3: In what extent, the feeling that the brand is reliable and trustworthy influences your satisfaction?

Figures 8, 9 and 10 show the results of the questions of the survey that measure how 'Service Quality' affects 'Customer Satisfaction' in an on-line environment.

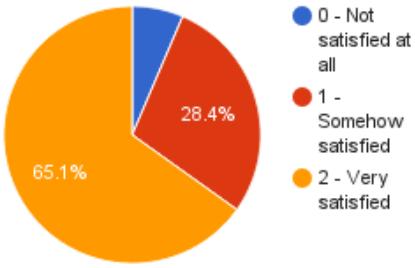

Fig. 8. Q4: If you are able to navigate smoothly and easily through the web page, in what level would you feel satisfied?

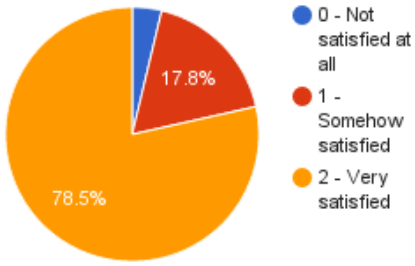

Fig. 9. Q5: If you get a fast response of the web page, in what level would you feel satisfied?

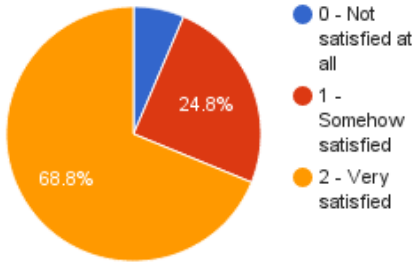

Fig. 10. Q6: Having a detailed payment process, terms and conditions, privacy and policies well defined in the web page makes you feel secure, in what level would you feel satisfied?

Figures 11, 12, 13 and 14 show the results of the questions of the survey that measure how 'Service Quality' affects 'Customer Loyalty' in an off-line environment.

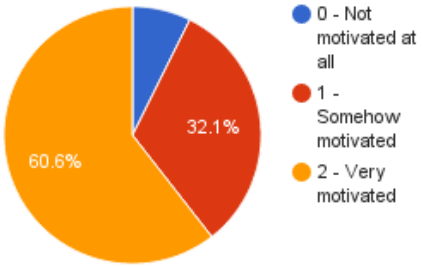

Fig. 11. Q7: In case the personnel has a helpful attitude towards you, and makes you feel trustworthy, in what level of motivation would you promote this experience or continue purchasing from the same

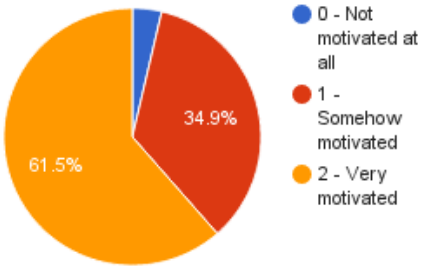

Fig. 12. Q8: If the service is accomplished in an effective way in the physical store, in what level are you willing to recommend this experience to your friends and/or make a new purchase?

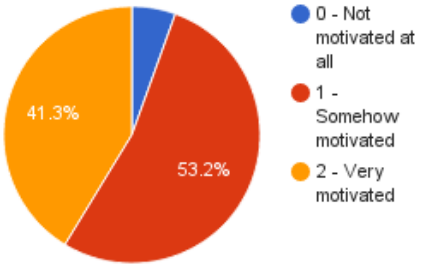

Fig. 13. Q9: If the general appearance in the physical store is adequate, in what level of motivation are you willing to recommend this experience to your friends and/or try a new brand service or product?

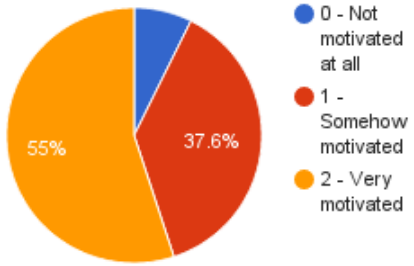

Fig. 14. Q10: In case, you notice a higher level of interest in the personal attention, in what level of motivation are you willing to recommend it to your friends, continue purchasing and try a brand new product or service?

Figures 15, 16 and 17 show the results of the questions of the survey that measure how 'Service Quality' affects 'Customer Loyalty' in an on-line environment.

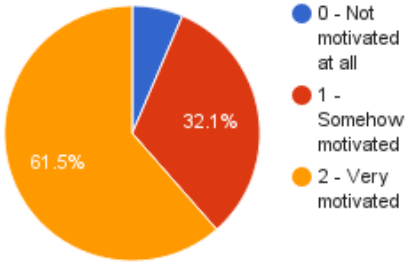

Fig. 15. Q11: If you feel the web page is attractive and easy to use, in what level would you feel motivated to recommend it to your friends?

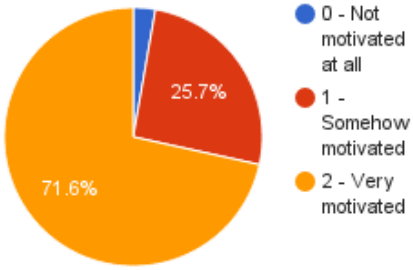

Fig. 16. Q12: If you feel the web page is attractive and easy to use, in what level would you feel motivated to continue purchasing on-line?

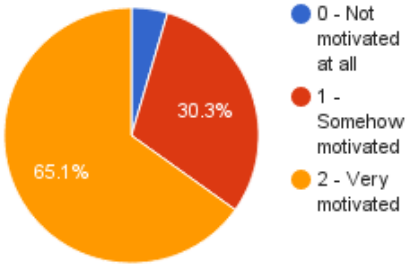

Fig. 17. Q13: If having a detailed payment process, terms and conditions, privacy and policies well defined in the web page makes you feel secure, in what level of motivation are you willing to continue purchasing?

Figures 18, 19 and 20 show the results of the questions of the survey that measure how 'Customer Satisfaction' affects 'Customer Loyalty' in an off-line environment.

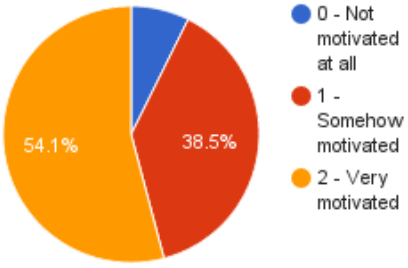

Fig. 18. Q14: Based on the availability of the services and products provided by retailer, would you feel motivated to recommend your experience to your friends or continue purchasing in the store?

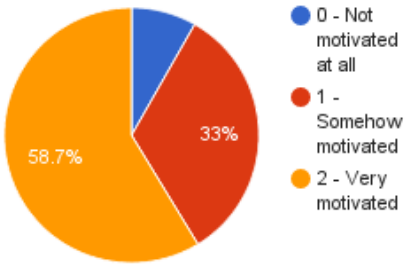

Fig. 19. Q15: Taking into account the variety of products that the retailer provides in the store, would you feel motivated to recommend your experience to your friends or continue purchasing in the store?

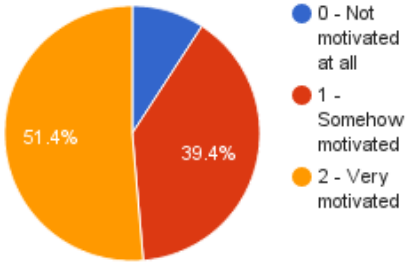

Fig. 20. Q16: If the store is easy to locate and walk around, would you feel motivated to recommend your experience to your friends or continue purchasing in the store?

Figures 21 and 22 show the results of the questions of the survey that measure how 'Customer Satisfaction' affects 'Customer Loyalty' in an on-line environment.

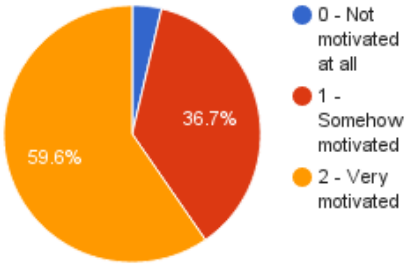

Fig. 21. Q17: When you precisely find what you are looking for in a web page, would you feel motivated to recommend your experience to your friends or continue purchasing in the store?

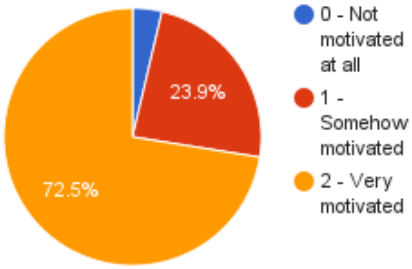

Fig. 22. Q18: After buying a product, if the response time from the provider to deliver the product is adequate, would you feel motivated to recommend your experience to your friends or continue purchasing in the store?

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Survey about sports footware on-line & off-line retailing

Off-line Retailing

Service Quality vs. Customer Satisfaction

1. **In what extent does being treated with empathy by the store staff influences your satisfaction?**
   - ○ Not satisfied at all.
   - ○ Somehow satisfied.
   - ○ Very satisfied.
2. **How having good product guarantees influences your satisfaction after visiting the store?**
   - ○ Not satisfied at all.
   - ○ Somehow satisfied.
   - ○ Very satisfied.
3. **In what extent, the feeling that the brand is reliable and trustworthy influences your satisfaction?**
   - ○ Not satisfied at all.
   - ○ Somehow satisfied.
   - ○ Very satisfied.

Service Quality vs. Customer Loyalty

4. **If the service is accomplished in an effective way in the physical store, in what level are you willing to recommend this experience to your friends and/or make a new purchase?**
   - ○ Not motivated at all.
   - ○ Somehow motivated.
   - ○ Very motivated.
5. **If the general appearance in the physical store is adequate, in what level of motivation are you willing to recommend this experience to your friends and/or try a new brand service or product?**
   - ○ Not motivated at all.
   - ○ Somehow motivated.
   - ○ Very motivated.
6. **In case the personnel has a helpful attitude towards you, and makes you feel trustworthy, in what level of motivation would you promote this experience or continue purchasing from the same retailer?**
   - ○ Not motivated at all.
   - ○ Somehow motivated.
   - ○ Very motivated.
7. **In case, you notice a higher level of interest in the personal attention, in what level of motivation are you willing to recommend it to your friends, continue purchasing and try a brand new product or service?**
   - ○ Not motivated at all.
   - ○ Somehow motivated.
   - ○ Very motivated.

Customer Satisfaction vs. Customer Loyalty

8. **Based on the availability of the services and products provided by retailer, would you feel motivated to recommend your experience to your friends or continue purchasing in the store?**
   - ○ Not satisfied at all.
   - ○ Somehow satisfied.
   - ○ Very satisfied.
9. **Taking into account the variety of products that the retailer provides in the store, would you feel motivated to recommend your experience to your friends or continue purchasing in the store?**
   - ○ Not satisfied at all.
   - ○ Somehow satisfied.
   - ○ Very satisfied.
10. **If the store is easy to locate and walk around, would you feel motivated to recommend your experience to your friends or continue purchasing in the store?**
    - ○ Not satisfied at all.
    - ○ Somehow satisfied.
    - ○ Very satisfied.

On-line Retailing

Service Qualty vs. Customer Satisfaction

11. **If you are able to navigate smoothly and easily through the web page, in what level would you feel satisfied?**
    - ○ Not satisfied at all.
    - ○ Somehow satisfied.
    - ○ Very satisfied.
12. **If you get a fast response of the webpage, in what level would you feel satisfied?**
    - ○ Not satisfied at all.
    - ○ Somehow satisfied.
    - ○ Very satisfied.
13. **Having a detailed payment process, terms and conditions, privacy and policies well defined in the webpage makes you feel secure, in what level would you feel satisfied?**
    - ○ Not satisfied at all.
    - ○ Somehow satisfied.
    - ○ Very satisfied.

Service Quality vs. Customer Loyalty

14. **If you feel the webpage is attractive and easy to use, in what level would you feel motivated to recommend it to your friends?**
    - ○ Not motivated at all.
    - ○ Somehow motivated.
    - ○ Very motivated.
15. **If you feel the webpage is attractive and easy to use, in what level would you feel motivated to continue purchasing online?**
    - ○ Not motivated at all.
    - ○ Somehow motivated.
    - ○ Very motivated.

16. **If having a detailed payment process, terms and conditions, privacy and policies well defined in the webpage makes you feel secure, in what level of motivation are you willing to continue purchasing?.**
    - ○ Not motivated at all.
    - ○ Somehow motivated.
    - ○ Very motivated.

Customer Satisfaction vs. Customer Loyalty

17. **When you precisely find what you are looking for in a web page, would you feel motivated to recommend your experience to your friends or continue purchasing in the store?**
    - ○ Not motivated at all.
    - ○ Somehow motivated.
    - ○ Very motivated.
18. **After buying a product, if the response time from the provider to deliver the product is adequate, would you feel motivated to recommend your experience to your friends or continue purchasing in the store?**
    - ○ Not motivated at all.
    - ○ Somehow motivated.
    - ○ Very motivated.