The Influence of After Sales Services on Marketing Performance in the Retail Sector in Botswana

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of after sales services is still novel in the retail sector. It is highly visible in the manufacturing industry. Retailers have to come up with various strategies on how to retain the loyal customer. Crothers (2014) speculated that for the past 10 years, there has been a positive shift away from product-focused sales and a growing emphasis on selling packaged solutions which include both the product and after-sale services. This is because with slowing product demand, growing competition, and shrinking profit margins companies started to find that selling the customer support, parts, maintenance, and upgrades that go along with their product generated a very good chunk of low-risk, high-margin business (Crothers 2014). After sales services are meant to keep the customer happy and satisfied with the organization. A satisfied customer is likely to remain loyal to a certain organization. After sales services are also essential as they provide an organization with competitive edge relative to its competitors (Kocic 2017). Kendre (2016) affirmed that after sales services help a retailer to make its customers believe in the brand and get embedded to the organization for a longer duration and these satisfied customers may bring in more individuals into the store hence more revenue to the organization. Krishnamurthi and Selvaraj (2017) avowed that provision of after sales services make loyal customers to buy additional products or services in the store. Tsegaye (2017) emphasized that provision of after sales services increases the level of profitability of an organization, however these after sales services should be of quality so to retain customers. Chen (2018) emphasized that poor after sale services can hinder a retailer to produce good customer satisfaction record hence impeding the growth. Providing after sales services also help a retailer avoid product return costs and public complaints (Chen 2018). Kendre (2016) alluded that after sales services plays a crucial role in strengthening the bond between the retailer and the customer.

Despite the importance of after sales services, it seems the retail sector in Botswana is not doing enough in terms of the provision of after sales services. Most retailers do not have the section or unit strictly responsible for the provision of after sales services. Chiguvi (2018) revealed that most retailers in Botswana do not provide their clients with free product support. They are just selling the products without giving enough information to the clients. Customer complaints are also on the rise in the retail sector. The researcher has also observed that most retailers have customer complaints boxes in most of their businesses. Most retailers in Botswana are also increasing their product mix and assortment. For example, they are now selling consumer durable products like washing machines, dishwashers, cooking stoves, refrigerators among other complex durable products. However, surprisingly they
are not giving follow-up services to customers. According to Mmegi Newspaper November (2018) it was reported that most sales staff in the retail shops in Botswana does not have good customer care skills hence providing poor after sales services to the customers. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the influence of after sales services on marketing performance at Sefalana holdings in Botswana.

LITERATURE REVIEW

After Sale Services

Most scholars of marketing have argued that after sales service is an emerging concept in every industry and organizations have to provide better after sale services to retain, satisfy and to make the customer loyal (Murali, Pugazhendhi, and Muralidharan, 2015). Falster, Hvolby, and Rolstadaas, (2018) posited that after sales service processes play an integral role in many companies and as products in the retail industry become more and more similar, provision of after sales services has become a core differentiator between partakers in the retail industry. Satisfying the customers with the services and products is the most important landmark of any growing business. Customers are the major resource of any business (Chiguvi, 2018). They are the main source for the success or failure of a venture. One of the best options to be adopted today by retailers is to provide excellent after sales services. After sales services also includes carrying out several activities to know if the customer is happy with the sale or not. Customers are the backbone of any business or organization. Hence, they shall always be provided with proper guidance and support to keep them happy and help them build a healthy relationship with the sellers. After sales service exists in order to make sure that all the expectations of the customers are being met properly (Chiguvi, 2018). Keeping the customers filled with serenity towards the organization proves out to be very helpful during the after sale services (Reuben, 2012).

Levitt (1983) posited that retailers of consumer goods in the retail industry cannot say that their active role finishes with the sale but somewhat must provide their customers with a set of after sales services, such as installation packages, technical advice for use, maintenance/repair, spare parts delivery, product upgrading, complaints box in the websites and follow ups. Choudhary, Akhter, Asif, Choudhry, Siddique and Mughal (2011) also avowed that satisfying the customer is one of the basic objectives of the organization. Chiguvi (2017) avowed that providing good after-sales service shows the company customers that you want to build a long-term relationship with them, earn their loyalty and keep their business. Many successful businesses use after sales service strategies to consolidate sales, build customer relationships and grow their profits. Providing after-sales service keeps company customers coming back to you and encourages them to refer the company business to others (Chiguvi, 2017). After-sales service includes what you do at the point of sale, including the customer service and selling techniques. It also includes how the company follow up after the customer has left, such as providing follow-up contact and effectively dealing with complaints. Ladokun, Adeyemo, and Ogunleye, (2013) defined after sales services as a continuous interaction between the service provider and the customer throughout the post-purchase product life cycle. After sales services are the activities occurring after the purchase of the product and devoted to support customer in the usage and disposal of the product (Cavalieri, Gaiardelli, and Lerace, 2007). However, Ruben (2012) viewed after sales services as the sum of all activities taking place after the purchase of a product. Ruben (2012) also pinpointed a vital idea that after sales service should be cost effective and timely in manner. This means that the retailers should not run after sales services just for the goodness that comes from it, but they should adhere to the costs they encounter in their everyday business activities. Pettinger (2017) also posited that after sales services denotes to the treatment of the customers in the outcome of a sale. The after sales services that can be provided to customers by retailers include follow ups with phone calls, warranties, installation of complex products, thanking the customer after purchase and product maintenance.

The above definitions have shown that after sales services are the services provided to the customers after the sale of the product. However, a broader definition of after services as explained by Kotler (2015) shows that after sales services are selling strategies used by firms to strengthen customer loyalty and satisfaction. This view was also concurred by Kotler and Keller (2015) who avowed that effective after sales services are critical because they increase customer retention. Krishnamurthi and Selvaraj (2017) avowed that we live in the society where demands on business are so much greater than ever before that too cannot ever continue to exist without satisfied customer. Customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are much important in today’s retail world and it is considered that after sales services bring about higher customer satisfaction hence leading to customer loyalty at least in a long run (Krishnamurthi and Selvaraj, 2017). Rigopoulou, Chaniotakis, Lamperopoulos and Siomkos (2008) argued that after-sales services appear to be exceptionally significant to the overall product-mixture provided by retail companies since they affect the customers’ satisfaction. They further alluded that after-sales services play a critical role in relationship building, and as such they should be examined and evaluated attentively. Alexander, Vander-Ark, Dempsey and Dayal (2002) also mentioned that after sales service is very important for organization to retain customers for a long time and generate high profitable relationship with organization. An organization can achieve more than their turnover due to after sale service that they provide to customer during a life cycle of a product. Singh (2014) also argued that one of the most important approaches of converting satisfied customer to a loyal customer is provision of after sales services and presence of guarantee in production or services.

Loomba (1998) avowed that the main objective of after sales services is to keep the customer satisfied and loyal through trust, credibility and security provided by the organization, and building long lasting connections that contribute to increased positive market performance. Forooz and Rostami (2006) also confirmed that after sales services has several benefits to the organization which are competitive advantage, customer satisfaction, long-term customer
relationship, customer retention and loyalty, new product success and development. These benefits all contribute to a healthy marketing performance of a retail organization in the market. Egsson, Bayarsaikhan and Ly (2013) affirmed that if after sales services are not handled correctly, the firms risk to lose the customer. Toutant (2017) suggested that a retail organization can offer after sales services like maintaining communication with the customer and installation of complex products. Toutant (2017) further postulated that a retail organization can also offer warranties, free service and follow ups with a phone call.

## Installation

Tsegaye (2017) argued that for many technical products the first element of after sales support following the sale is installation. This is usually performed for complex or machinery product or where personnel from the manufacturing company or their representatives involve safety issues. Furthermore, Nivethika and Yoganathan (2015) alluded that installation is the most important aspect of after sales services as it influences the customer to be fully satisfied with the product they bought.

## User Training

The complexity of some type equipment necessitates that manufacturers provide good training for users. This after sales services technique is used in car retailing so to make customers familiar with what is in the vehicle (Tsegaye 2017).

## Maintenance and Repair

Maintenance and repair are an important element of product support and companies give maintenance and repair to products so they can achieve its maximum user life (Tsegaye, 2017).

### Online Support

Telephone calls advice on product is a major element of customer after sales support in many industries including retail industry (Tsegaye, 2017). Product experts give online consulting to customers to help them use products more or, sometimes to trace the cause of fault. Toutant (2017) suggested that retailers should maintain thorough communication by sending newsletters so to be informative. Nivethika and Yoganathan (2015) suggested that a company can provide online support through the use of telephones. Pettinger (2017) advised that a retailer can follow up a customer using phone calls to ask how the product is working out.

### Warranties

Warranties serve to promote the reliability and the quality of a product and it also acts as a protection tool because a customer has to take a product back when it is not performing whilst under warranty (Tsegaye, 2017). A product can be replaced, returned or repaired if it failed to meet its functions and the warranty should be clearly explicit in a written document (Haque 2017). Pettinger (2017) alluded that a warranty allows a good to be repaired or replaced if it breaks down within a certain period of time after it has been bought.

### Provision of Information

Tsegaye (2017) posited that customers may require information about products and services, availability, delivery dates, and prices. They may require information on progress, e.g. what is happening with their order or fault. A retailer can provide information in their websites and social media pages.

### Service Delivery

Delivery is the setting up by the service provider, of all the components required for the operation and maintenance of a service as defined in the service specification and to be used by the customers (Tsegaye, 2017).

### Customer Complaints Handling

Complaint is the result of an organization’s service failures that occurs for many reasons (Tsegaye, 2017). Any type of service failures bring about negative feelings and responses from customers and complaining customers need quick responses. Thus, if an organization welcomes and encourages complaints, it must be prepared to act on them quickly hence a retail organization can have suggestion boxes in their premises so to help them address service failures (Tsegaye, 2017).

### Refund or Redress

Any product which is in a bad condition must be exchanged immediately by the salespeople (Haque 2017). Salespeople should listen to the customer’s grievances and provide solutions so to create a delighted customer.

### Mailing List Inclusion

Pineda (2019) emphasized that a retail organization should regularly send customers electronic mails so to keep the

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**Table 1. Techniques of after sales services offered in the retail sector**

| Author               | After sales services techniques                                      |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nivethika and Yoganathan (2015) | • On time delivery  
|                      | • Installation  
|                      | • Warranties  
|                      | • Maintenance and repair  
|                      | • Customer complaints handling  
|                      | • Spare parts services  
|                      | • Online services support (telephones)  |
| Tsegaye (2017)      | • Installation  
|                      | • User training  
|                      | • Maintenance and repair  
|                      | • Online support  
|                      | • Customer complaints handling  
|                      | • Spare parts supply  |
| Toutant (2017)      | • Thanking the customer after the purchase  
|                      | • Contacting the customer after 1 to 2 weeks  
|                      | • Communication  |
| Pettinger (2017)    | • Warranties  
|                      | • Free services  
|                      | • Advice  
|                      | • Phone call follow ups  |
| Pineda (2019)       | • Mailing list inclusion  
|                      | • Loyalty programmes  |
| Haque (2017)        | • Refund or redress  
|                      | • Warranties  |

*Source: Chiguvi and Modirwa (2020)*
relationship between the retailer and the customer. These emails can be about available discounts, new products and other special offers.

**Loyalty Programs**

Pineda (2019) further avowed that a customer loyalty program is another type of after sales services in retailing as it enhances the relationship between the customer and the retailer. It offers privileges, discounts and special offers so to foster loyalty through reward cars or membership reward cards.

**Thanking the Customer after the Purchase**

Toutant (2017) posited that after the purchase, a customer deserves 'thank you' either through automated mail or attaching such to the invoice. This makes customer experience exciting and that the retailer acknowledges their business.

**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

Customer satisfaction is a pivotal issue in the triumph of any retailing organization (Tsegaye 2017). It is recognized as is the key to survival in the market and the source of competitive edge for business entities. Tsegaye (2017) further posited that customer satisfaction is the customer’s feeling of being content or discontent which is a result of comparing perceptions and expectations. Sheehan (2018) alluded that in today’s competitive and dynamic world, every business entity tries by all means to maximize profits through customer satisfaction. Sormunen (2017) also postulated that when customers are not fully satisfied, they switch to competitors. Nicacio (2018) avowed that customer satisfaction is the key factor to know the customer expectation about a certain product. Customer satisfaction is the total percentage of customers using a certain product and feeling its quality and hence making the customer happy and satisfied. Maharjan and Khadka (2017) defined customer satisfaction as a general valuation based on the total procurement and consumption experience with the good or service over time.

**CUSTOMER LOYALTY**

Maharjan et al., (2017) avowed that the expenses of acquiring a new customer are high than to retain a loyal one. Masoudinezhad (2017) defined loyalty as dedication to rebuild and re-patronize a preferred product or service in the future. Customer loyalty is the degree at which a customer depicts repeat purchase behaviour to a retail setup. Maharjan et al., (2017) divided customer loyalty into 5 aspects being behavioural, intentional and emotional loyalty. Behavioural loyalty is defined as repeat purchases and intentional loyalty as possible buying intention and emotional loyalty is when a customer feels a brand correlates to their value, ideas and passion (Maharjan and Khadka, 2017).

**CUSTOMER RETENTION**

Sye Chee (2017) affirmed that customer retention covers all the programmes and steps that retail organizations employ to decrease the amount of customer turnover towards competing products. Galetto (2015) affirmed that customer retention involves all activities that a retailer does to reduce number of customer defections and the goal of customer retention is to help retailers to retain as much customers as possible. Galetto (2015) advised that customer retention starts with the first contact a customer has with the retailer and continues throughout the lifetime of the relationship. Galetto (2015) avowed that customer retention is advantageous as it is a quick way to increase revenue and it is often faster and effective to retain a customer as it is seven times less than acquiring a new customer. Customer retention also is beneficial to the retailer as it is more efficient to market products to existing customers who have already shown interest in the brand of the retailer than to spend in marketing products to new customers who are not even aware of the offerings. Galetto (2015) suggested strategies that can help a retailer retain its customers by recruiting employees who have experience in particular fields so to gain customer loyalty; avoiding transactional marketing but rather foster customer relationships and also foster mutual trust; using a proactive approach to customer service by implementing anticipatory service that can help eliminate problems before they occur; using social media platforms to build relationships like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter and let customers share experiences with the retailer and personalizing services in order to improve customer experience so to strengthen customer bond with the retailer’s brand. Nicacio (2018) avowed that customer retention is the retailer’s ability to attract and maintain repeat customers. Customer retention does not only help a retailer to understand how positive customer experience is but also to meet customer expectations (Nicacio 2018). Nicacio (2018) further affirmed that customer retention is far much effective than customer acquisition and also customer retention is used to help to gauge the health of the retailer’s customer relationships. Nicacio (2018) also posited various strategies that a retailer can use to retain its customers like implementing personalization by tracking customer’s purchase history and sync it with a loyalty program; providing loyalty programs and also to provide deeper insights into the retailer’s customers so to stay in their top mind. Nicacio (2018) avowed that a retailer should nurture relationships through offering after sales services. This aspect increases customer loyalty and repeat purchases.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Causal research was used to determine the cause and effect relationship between after sales services (independent variable) and marketing performance (dependent variable). Bhat (2019) postulated that causal research design seeks to point out the cause and effect of a situation where the effect caused by the independent variable on the dependent variable is observed. In this case the design will point out the effect caused by after sales services on customer satisfaction,
Table 2. Cranbach Alpha Results for Each Marketing Performance Indicator

| Marketing Performance Indicator(s) | Cronbach’s Alpha | No: of constructs |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Customer Satisfaction             | 0.783            | 10                |
| Customer Loyalty                  | 0.771            | 6                 |
| Customer Retention                | 0.806            | 6                 |

Source: SPSS Version 21

Table 3. Perceptions of customers towards the need for after sales services at Sefalana Holdings

| FREQUENCIES | I dislike it | I can tolerate | I’m neutral | I expect it | I like it | TOTAL |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| Online telephone service           | -             | 1              | 3           | 3           | 95        | 100   |
| Warranty                                   | -             | 3              | 2           | -           | 95        | 100   |
| Inspection                                | -             | 2              | 3           | 3           | 92        | 100   |
| Installation                              | -             | 1              | 10          | 13          | 76        | 100   |
| Complaints handling                      | -             | -              | 2           | 1           | 97        | 100   |
| Maintenance                               | -             | -              | 8           | 11          | 81        | 100   |

Source: Raw primary data

Results in Table 3 revealed that, on average above 90% of the customers at Sefalana Holdings need after sales services. They need online telephone services, warranty, inspection, installation, complaints handling and maintenance. The results in Table 3 also revealed that 97 of the respondents of Sefalana Holdings customers like to have complaints handling as an after sales service. The results in Table 3 also indicated that 95 respondents like it if Sefalana Holdings has warranties for their products’ offerings. While 93 respondents like Sefalana Holdings to have online telephone services as an after

Table 4. Showing regression analysis table for customer satisfaction

| Model Summary | Model | R       | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
|               | 1     | .107*  | .011     | .001              | 10.62101                   |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Aftersales services

Table 5. Showing hypothesis test results on customer satisfaction

| Coefficientsa | Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|--------------|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---|-----|
|              |       | B                           | Std. Error                | Beta|     |
| (Constant)   | 1     | 18.294                      | 11.467                    | 1.595| .14 |
| Aftersales services | .421 | .396 | .107 | 1.064 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

Reliability of the Instrument

For testing reliability of this study, Cronbach’s coefficient Alpha measurement was used. This test was employed to quantify the reliability of the items in the measurement tool. The Cronbach Alpha test results of the constructs of the study are shown in Table 2. This study used a cut off of 0.7 for Cronbach’s Coefficient as per Nunnally (1978). The use 0.7 as the cut off follows precedence from previous studies (Hair, 1998; Cheung, 2014; Chiguvi, 2018). The study results in Table 2 shows and confirmed that the study instrument used in this study was reliable and suitable for data collection since all the study results were above 0.700.

DATA FINDINGS

customer loyalty and customer retention at Sefalana Holdings. The targeted population of this study was the customers of Sefalana from its three branches in Gaborone (Sefalana Mogoditshane, Sefalana Block 3 and Sefalana Broadhurst). The researchers used the stratified random sampling. The method gave the researchers a fair equal representation of the sample. Rao Software Sample size calculator was used to compute the sample size of the study. The sample size was calculated at 90% confidence interval with a 10% margin of error. Therefore, the sample size for this study was 96 which the researchers rounded off to 100 respondents. This study employed structured questionnaire. A structured questionnaire saves the respondents’ time as it is easy to fill in. SPSS version 21 was employed to analyze the data and Microsoft Excel to generate relevant tables and charts.

The results in Table 3 depicted that 92 respondents like inspection and 87 respondents like maintenance to be one of the after sales services provided at Sefalana Holdings. The study shows that majority of the respondents need after sales services at Sefalana Holdings.

This study finding is not similar to the study findings by Nivethika and Yoganathan (2015) and Tssegaye (2017) who all confirmed that there is a strong positive relationship between after sales services and customer satisfaction. The study findings by Gupta and Dhillon (2015) also found out that after sales services effectively influence customer satisfaction. This gap might be caused by the fact that Sefalana Holdings does not perform its after sales services properly at the moment. This
conformation shows that Sefalana Holdings need to improve its after sales services in order to increase customer satisfaction. This means that it seems there is something wrong that is not done properly with regard to after sales services at Sefalana Holdings. Therefore hypothesis one is weakly positively supported in this study.

**H1: After sales services has got an influence on customer satisfaction at Sefalana Holdings in Botswana**

Table 6 revealed that after sales services is less significantly positively linked with customer loyalty at Sefalana Holdings in Botswana. This shows that after sales services is not significantly interrelated to customer loyalty (β = 0.148, t-value = 1.478 and p-value = 0.000).

Correlation value (r = 0.148, p-value = 0.000) in Tables 6 and 7 indicated that after sales services is less significantly positively connected to customer loyalty at Sefalana Holdings in Botswana. This means Sefalana Holdings in Botswana need to improve on after sales services in order to increase customer loyalty. This result infers that after sales services is not effectively utilized. The study results are not in line with study findings by Alrubaiie and Al-Nazer (2010) and Ahmad (2015) who affirmed that there is a significant positive relationship between after sales relationship marketing and customer loyalty. Therefore, hypothesis two is weakly supported in this study.

**H2: After sales services has got an influence on customer loyalty at Sefalana Holdings in Botswana**

Table 8 revealed that there is a weak positive link between after sales services and customer retention at Sefalana Holdings in Botswana. This depicts that after sales services is not significantly positively interrelated to customer retention (β = 0.083, t-value = 0.821 and p-value = 0.000).

Correlation value (r = 0.083, p-value = 0.000) revealed that there is a very weak positive relationship between after sales services and customer retention at Sefalana Holdings in Botswana. This verifies that after sales services at Sefalana Holdings are not given so much attention so to enhance customer experience and expectations. Wagoki, Okello and Soimo (2015) acknowledged that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between relationship marketing and customer retention. The results therefore are not in line with the study findings of Wagoki et al., (2015). Sefalana Holdings should deploy other measures to influence customer retention as after sales services do not significantly impact customer retention. Therefore, third hypothesis was weakly supported in this study.

**H3: After sales services has got an influence on customer retention a Sefalana Holdings in Botswana**

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study has shown that after sales services has got a weak positive influence on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and very weak positive relationship on customer retention at Sefalana Holdings in Botswana. This means that customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and customer retention are caused by other factors considerably than after sales services. This means that Sefalana Holdings should concentrate on other factors that can enhance their customers’ satisfaction and factors that can make them loyal so to easily retain them. This will help the company to improve its marketing performance. To improve after sales services customers recommended that Sefalana Holdings should train the front line employees on better customer services standards. Customers stressed that the employees of Sefalana Holdings do not give them individualized attention during their shopping experiences. Customers also recommended that Sefalana Holdings should make their suggestion boxes more visible at their stores so that customers can drop off their suggestions on how to improve their shopping experience.

Customers stressed that the after sales services provided at Sefalana Holdings do not meet their expectations hence they are not satisfied. Therefore, Sefalana Holdings should provide relevant after sales services that will meet the expectations of customers. The company should create more referrals by providing the best customer experience in their stores. A customer who had the best experience is easy to turn into a loyal customer and he or she will spread the positive word about the store. Most customers are adamant that they will continue to buy from Sefalana Holdings therefore it is recommended that the management should create more loyalty programs that will help retain customers.
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