

Service quality and customer's loyalty in the pay-tv industry

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Abstract

The growing demand for Pay-tv services in Nigeria and the entry of new Pay-tv providers into the hitherto monopolistic country's Pay-tv market has intensified the competition in the market and might result in the market leader, DStv, losing some of its customers to these new entrants. This paper reported the empirical findings in respect with the association of service quality of DStv with customer loyalty towards the brand. A survey was conducted in three estates at Ikorodu, Lagos State, and 281 copies of validly completed questionnaire were obtained from the customers of DStv in these estates. The data were analysed using a multiple regression. The results revealed that service reliability and employees' empathy have a significant association with DStv's customer's loyalty for our data set. However, personnel responsiveness and assurance have no significant association with customer's loyalty towards DStv. It is concluded that service reliability and employees' empathy were significant in achieving customer's loyalty towards DStv. It is recommended that DStv should continue to sustain these two service quality dimensions, while improving on employees' responsiveness and assurance dimensions. The managerial implications and limitations of the findings are discussed.

Keywords: Customer loyalty, DStv, Marketing, Pay-tv and service quality

1. Introduction

In today's highly dynamic marketing environment, occasioned by changing customer needs, changing technologies, changing regulations and intense competition, winning companies, in different industries, are paying keen attention to service quality and customer loyalty. According to Pearson (1996), customer loyalty is the mindset of the customers who hold favourable attitudes towards a company, commit to repurchase the company's product/service, and recommend the product/service to others. Oliver (1999) described customer loyalty as a condition of strong involvement in the repurchase or reuse of a product or brand. Customer loyalty is the basis for competitive advantage and greatly affects organisation's performance (Rust et al., 2000). It is at least five times more costly to recruit a new customer than keep a current customer (Athanasopoulou, 2009; Stewart, 2002). Therefore, creating and maintaining customer loyalty in the competitive and changing marketing environment is rewarding for, and confers a competitive advantage on marketers.

In the marketing literature, customer loyalty is often treated as a dependent variable (i. e. as an outcome) (Adeleke & Aminu, 2012; Karunaratna, 2014; Narvanen et al., 2020; Ndubisi, 2005). Therefore, a number of independent variables have been employed in the marketing literature to explain the phenomenon of customer loyalty. These include customer satisfaction (Anderson, 1994; Faullant et al., 2008; Fornell, 1992), service quality (Adeleke & Aminu, 2012; Borgave, 2012; Nitin & Deshmukh, 2004; Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988), relationship marketing (Aminu, 2012; Leon et al., 2012; Ndubisi, 2005), trust (Ibanez et al., 2006) and perceived value (Auka, 2012; Khuong & Hiep, 2014; Tung, 2013). We used service quality, as an independent variable, to explain customer's loyalty in this research, focusing on the Pay-tv industry in Lagos State. Generally speaking, research on service quality in Pay-tv is scarce and specifically, no research on service quality and customer's loyalty in the context of Nigeria has been done, at least to our knowledge. This paper fills the gap in the literature.

Service has been defined in different ways. It is an intangible product involving a deed, a performance, or an effort that cannot be physically possessed or benefit that does not result in the customer owning anything (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). It is an action or a performance that is essentially intangible and does not result in ownership of anything (Kotler & Keller, 2015). It is an intangible activity performed by one party and received by another party. Because of the

intangibility of a service, its purchase and consumption do not result in ownership by the consumer, who merely feels or experiences the service (Aminu, 2022). The essential characteristic of services is their intangibility (Doyle, 1989). Service firms must offer a high service quality to attract and retain customers and this leads us to the concept of service quality (Aminu et al., 2018) and customer loyalty. According to Zeithaml et al. (1985), service quality is the customers' judgment about the overall impression of a product or service. Service quality is related to customers' perceptions and expectations of services (Lewis & Mitchell, 1990). Measuring service quality is difficult due to its intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability (Bateson, 1995; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Ziethaml et al., 1985). In spite of the difficulty of measuring service quality, Pakdili and Kurtulmusoglu (2014) suggested that measuring service quality provides service firms with intelligence that enables them to create a useful database.

The Nigeria's Pay-tv industry can be described as an oligopoly with a fewer number of operators and dominated by DStv and GOtv, the two South African brands operated by Multichoice. Other smaller players in the industry are StarTimes, TStv, Kwese TV and so on. While DStv offers premium services, the services of other operators are cheaper and more affordable. For example, some of the low budget digital TV providers - StarTimes and TStv - have introduced pay-per-view charges to implement a flexible pricing strategy and attract more price sensitive customers. The marketing activities of these operators are intensifying the competition in the digital TV market and may result in some of the DStv customers defecting to the low budget digital TV providers. Also, the growing demand for digital TV services in the country has deepened the competition in the market. A study affirmed this by indicating that the rising demand for the Pay-tv services has escalated the competition in the Pay-tv industry (Dawi, Jusoh, Nor, & Qureshi, 2016). Therefore, it becomes necessary for DStv to continue to improve its service quality to leverage its competitive advantage and build a community of loyal subscribers.

In the light of the increasing competition in the Nigeria's Pay-tv industry, this paper examines the extent to which DStv high service quality may prevent the loss of customers to the competitors and make them retain their loyalty towards the DStv brand. Generally, there is a dearth of research on service quality attributes in pay TV industry (Dawi et al., 2016). Scholars have

identified cellular and cable TV industries as two industries characterised by frequent customer defection (Kotler & Keller, 2012). It has been suggested that service quality reduces customer churns, helps companies achieve competitive advantage and generates loyalty (Ibanez et al., 2006; McMullan&Gilmore, 2008; Norazryana et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2004).

Service quality is operationalised in this paper by Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) constructs - reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The tangibles construct of the famous SERVQUAL's model was not covered in this paper, because the personnel, equipment and facilities of DStv are not visible to subscribers. Decoders and dishes are the only paraphernalia of the DStv equipment in subscribers' homes. Pay-tv subscribers rarely have a physical contact with the other two elements of tangible - personnel and facilities, and it will be difficult to fully measure it.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Perspectives on Customer's Loyalty

Customer's loyalty is repeating the purchase intention to some specific products or services in the future (Jones, Earl, & Sasser, 1995). It is the willingness of a customer to continue patronising a firm's goods and services over a long period of time and on a repeated and preferably exclusive basis, and voluntarily recommending the firm's products to friends and associates (Lovelock, 1996). In the context of a GSM market, loyalty referred to the length of time and the frequency with which customers stay and remain on a network (Adeleke & Aminu, 2012). Customer loyalty is the outcome of an organisation's efforts to create a benefit for customers, so that they will maintain and increasingly repeat business with the organisation (Anderson & Jacobsen, 2000). A loyal customer possibly purchases a product repeatedly, introduces new customers, provides references and generates a positive word of mouth for the organisation and its products (Oliver, 2010).

The foregoing discussion on customer's loyalty suggests that customer's loyalty is making customers perpetually doing business with the organization, because they perceive value from such a relationship. In the context of a digital TV service, a typical subscription-based service

and customer's loyalty is making a customer to remain subscribed to one digital television's bouquet or the other over an extended period of time, in spite of the competitors' marketing activities to lure the customer. Bord et al. (2002) explained that competitors can use financial incentives (lower prices or special promo deals) and extensive and persuasive promotion to motivate customers to switch to them. While majority of the new entrants into the Pay-tv market in Nigeria do not have the financial leverage to engage in extensive promotional campaigns, they often use lower prices to attract new customers, who have never subscribed to any Pay-tv service and to make current subscribers switch to them.

Previous studies have suggested that serving loyal customers is less costly to organisations than attracting new customers (Artun & Levin, 2015; Ndubisi, 2005; Pfeifer, 2005; Stavros & Westberg, 2009). Furthermore, developing and maintaining customer loyalty can help organisations to achieve and maintain competitive advantage (Rust et al., 2000; Wang & Yang, 2004; Wu & Ai, 2016), charge premium prices (Ganesh, Arnold, & Reynolds, 2000), reduce customer churns (Ibanez et al., 2006; McMullan & Gilmore, 2008), increase sales volume, market share and profitability (Dawkins & Reichheld, 1990; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Terblanche & Boshoff, 2010) and achieve growth and long term success (Andres, 2007; Fornell, 1992; Lucy et al., 2018; Reichheld, 1996). Customer's loyalty is evaluated by service quality dimensions in this paper.

2.2 Service Quality and Customer's Loyalty

Service quality is the outcome of the evaluation process involving customer's comparison of his/her expectation with the perception of the service actually received (Gronroos, 1982). It is the discrepancy between consumers' perceptions of services offered by a particular firm and their expectations about firms offering such services (Parasuraman et al., 1985). It is the overall impression of the relative inferiority/superiority of an organisation and its service offerings (Bitner et al., 1990). It measures the degree to which the service delivery meets the customers' expectations (Yarimoglu, 2014). It depends on how much the service provider can consistently meet consumers' needs and desires (Zaid et al., 2020). Despite the importance of customer loyalty, some retail stores lack service quality (Dutsenwai et al., 2015).

Service quality reduces customer intention to switch to another brand (Quoquab et al., 2018) and increases revenue, reduces churn and helps a company achieve competitive advantage, and sustainable market growth through customer loyalty (Auka, 2012). Due to the increasing competitive pressure, it has become more important for Pay-tv service providers to determine customer values and demands. For this reason, Pay-tv service providers need to focus on service quality for competitive advantage and expansion of their market share (Norazryana et al., 2016) and generate customer loyalty. Technical quality outcomes such as video and audio quality are important characteristics to measure a good system quality delivery of Pay-tv service (Erman & Matthews, 2008). Chen and Kuo (2009) used the term “reception quality” to refer to white noise, screen quality and reception in bad weather of cable TV to measure technical quality service and stressed that this measure impacts customer perception of service quality significantly. Li and Zhang's (2016) study revealed that Pay-tv service quality, in terms of programme quality, tends to be limited.

There is consensus among the authors, researchers and scholars that service quality affects customer loyalty (Aminu & Adebayo, 2022; Boyd et al., 2002; Buzzell & Gale, 1987; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Eshiett & Eshiett, 2021; Kotler & Keller, 2015; Liao et al., 2009; McKecnie et al., 1985; Wieringa & Verhoef, 2007). Eshiett and Eshiett (2021) indicated that customer loyalty is a relationship driven concept that retail outlets must achieve by consistently delivering satisfaction to the consumer through quality service delivery. Generally, the service quality is operationalised in the service marketing literature by tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

2.2.1 Reliability and Customer's Loyalty

Parasuraman et al. (1988) described reliability as the ability to perform service dependably and accurately. A service is reliable when it is done properly and right from the start (Parasuraman Zeithaml, & Berry, 1994). A reliable service fills customer orders accurately, keeps records accurately, makes accurate quotes, generates accurate bills, and makes accurate calculation of commissions which keep the service promising to the customer (Yang & Fang, 2004). Past studies have suggested that service reliability creates customer's loyalty. Arasli et al. (2005) pointed out that reliability is not only related to but has the highest impact on customer loyalty. Stiakakis and Georgiadis (2009) also stated that reliability is a fundamental requirement for

creating superior customer loyalty over competitors in an industry. Further, Dawi et al. (2016) asserted that a reliable service enhances customer loyalty.

There is also a plethora of empirical evidence on the effect of service reliability on customer's loyalty in subscription-based industry. Measuring Pakistani mobile cellular customer satisfaction, the results of Butt and Run (2008) indicated that customers were highly sensitive towards the reliability of service provided and this resulted in positive customer satisfaction, which is an antecedent of customer's loyalty. Karunaratna (2014) conducted a study on the adequacy of SERVQUAL model in explaining customer loyalty in the Sri Lankan telecommunications industry. The study found that service reliability was positively correlated with customer loyalty. A study conducted by Iddrisu et al. (2015) in Accra, Ghana, on the impact of service quality on customer loyalty in the country's cellular industry found that reliability of the five GSM firms' services had a significant impact on subscribers' loyalty. In their research on service quality and attitudinal loyalty in two telecommunication companies in Oman, Belwal and Amireh (2018) found that reliability had a positive effect on attitudinal loyalty of telecom customers for the long-term profitability. Aminu et al. (2018) found that commuters' perception of Lagos BRT service quality was significantly low. Non-reliability of BRT services contributed largely to the perceived low service quality of Lagos BRT. From the foregoing, we hypothesised that:

H1: DStv service reliability is significantly associated with customer's loyalty

2.2.2 Responsiveness and Customer's Loyalty

Responsiveness is the degree to which service providers are willing to provide prompt service, help and assistance to customers (Parasuraman et al., 1988). It is timely and substantively in responding to inquiries and complaints (Malhotra et al., 2005). It is the willingness of employees to help customers and to provide prompt service. It is about how quick and attentive employees are in handling customer complaints, problems, questions and requests (Zeithamlet al., 2006). It is the ability of the employees of an organisation to solve customers' problems and provide prompt service (Gronroos, 2007). Meehan and Dawson (2002) explained that responsiveness is accurately and insightfully giving customers what they need or want and doing so more quickly than anyone else. Responsiveness, as a dimension of service quality, guarantees customer's

loyalty. Customers view responsiveness as a superior service quality dimension, resulting in loyalty to the organisations (Zeithaml et al., 1996).

There is a strong association between service responsiveness and customer loyalty (Chen & Kuo, 2009). Muthaly and Wing-To-Lo (2007) in their research on the effects of antecedents of service quality on customer loyalty in the Hong Kong mobile phone industry found a positive and significant relationship between employee's responsiveness and customer's loyalty. Mokhtar et al. (2011) carried out an empirical research work on the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the Malaysian telecommunications market. Their results showed that employee's responsiveness had a positive effect on customer's loyalty. The empirical study by Agyei and Kilika (2013) on the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty in the Kenyan telecommunications industry revealed that responsiveness of service providers had a significant and positive impact on customer loyalty. Khuong and Hiep (2014) undertook a study on the effects of customer satisfaction through perceived value and service quality of Saigon tourist cable television services in Vietnam. Their results did not show a significant relationship between employee responsiveness and customer's satisfaction. The finding of another study by Iddrisu et al. (2015) on the impact of service quality on customer loyalty in the cellular industry in Ghana revealed that the responsiveness of the personnel of the five GSM firms to subscribers did not significantly affect their loyalty to the service providers. Based on the prior review, the following hypothesis becomes pertinent:

H2: DStv employee's responsiveness is significantly associated with customer's loyalty.

2.2.3 Assurance and Customer's Loyalty

Assurance is the extent to which service providers are knowledgeable, courteous and able to inspire trust and confidence. (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Assurance includes qualities of the staff to create customer confidence as a professional, courtesy, customer respect, expertise and communication skills. Customers are more comfortable with employees that exhibit professionalism and capabilities (Parasuraman et al., 1988, 1994). It is of utmost importance in a service environment, where trust and confidence are supreme (Branssington & Pettit, 2000) and this clearly is also applicable to the Pay-tv service (Van Der Schewe et al., 2006). Due to less engagement of customers with the employees of Pay-tv organisations, the marketers need

one-to-one individual characteristics such as communications, credibility (trustworthiness) and understanding customers (Shin, 2007).

Assurance, like other service quality dimensions, can engender customer's loyalty. Saravanakumar and JothiJayakrishnan (2014) explained that assurance is particularly important for services that the customer perceives as involving high risk or about which they feel uncertain about their ability to evaluate outcomes. The effective management of this perceived and uncertainty outcome by the customer will make him become loyal to the service provider. The term assurance has been used as an indication or statement that inspires guarantee or a pledge from a service provider to the customer to enhance customer's loyalty to the firm. It can also mean freedom from doubt or uncertainty. Therefore, service quality assurances impact on excessive self-confidence and result in customer loyalty (Abdulrahman & AL-Otaibi, 2010).

Empirical research has established association of assurance and customer's loyalty. The research by Mokhtar et al. (2011) on the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the Malaysian telecommunications market found that assurance had a positive effect on customer's loyalty. The results of the research by Karunaratna (2014) carried out in Sri Lanka indicated that the assurance dimension of service quality had a positive correlation with customer's loyalty. Belwal and Amireh (2018) conducted a study on service quality and attitudinal loyalty in two major telecommunication companies in Oman and found that assurance positively affected attitudinal loyalty of telecom customers for the long-term profitability. From the afore-mentioned, we state that:

H3: DStv employee assurance is significantly associated with customer's loyalty.

2.2.4 Empathy and customer's Loyalty

Empathy is the degree to which the employees of service organisations provide individual and caring service to customers (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The essence of the dimension of empathy is to show customers through the services rendered that the customers are special, and their needs can be understood and fulfilled (Simarmata et al., 2018). Empathy is related to the employee's aptitude in understanding customer perspective and feelings during service interactions (Hwang & kim, 2016). Empathy is shown by the company staff that has friendly styles, approachable, caring, attention to their customers and especially, creating comfortableness for customers. The

thoughtfulness and willingness to serve by the employees will be appreciated by customers (Parasuraman et al., 1994). For better service quality, it is crucial for employees to recognise and deal with customer needs (Puccinelli et al., 2013). Customers are requiring and demanding better services and the goals of all service providers must be to make the customers feel special. This will lead to customer's perceptions exceeding their expectations and greater customer's loyalty. A personal, proactive approach, such as knowing guest history, issues and preferences is vital to impressing customers and increasing loyalty (Ojo, 2010).

Empirical research has shown that empathy, as a dimension of service quality, is positively associated with customer's loyalty. The research work of Agyei and Kilika (2013) on the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty in the Kenyan telecommunications industry suggested that the empathy construct of service quality had a significant and positive impact on customer loyalty. Karunaratna (2014) conducted a study on the adequacy of SERVQUAL model in explaining customer loyalty in the Sri Lankan telecommunications industry. The findings of the research showed that the empathy dimension of service quality was positively correlated with customer loyalty. The study of Belwal and Amireh (2018) on service quality and attitudinal loyalty in two major telecommunication companies in Oman revealed that empathy positively affected behavioural loyalty of telecom customers to avert customers' defection in the short-run. In contrast, Mokhtar et al.'s (2011) research on the effect of service quality on customer loyalty in the Malaysian telecommunications market found that empathy had a negative effect on customer loyalty. Iddrisu et al. (2015) undertook a study in Ghana on the impact of service quality on customer loyalty in the country's cellular industry. The finding of the study showed that the empathy of the cellular services providers in the five surveyed cellular firms had no significant impact on subscribers' loyalty. Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis:

H4: DStv's employee empathy is significantly associated with customer's loyalty.

3. Methods

The study's design was cross sectional, while the target population for the research was the customers of DStv at Ikorodu area of Lagos State. Service quality is an independent variable,

while customer's loyalty is a dependent variable. The main instrument of research was questionnaire adapted from Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) SERVQUAL scale. The scale was adapted to produce a 20-item scale of measurement for our survey. The instrument covered four of the five dimensions of the scale - reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Due to the peculiar nature of Pay-tv service, the final dimension, tangibles was excluded from the paper. Digital TV customers do not physically interact with the personnel, equipment and facilities of Pay-tv organisations. The only equipment Pay-tv provides to the customers are decoders and dishes. Each of the four constructs of the independent variables had five items. Customer's loyalty also had five items.

Reliability is measured by the following items:

1. DSTV provides services at the promised time.
2. DSTV provides prompt alerts about subscription details.
3. DSTV provides crystal clear picture and undisturbed audio.
4. DSTV does not always have a signal problem.
5. I can easily make monthly payment for DSTV.

Responsiveness is measured by the following:

1. DSTV makes it convenient for customer to change a package plan.
2. DSTV responds promptly to customers complaints or enquiries.
3. DSTV will tell customers exactly when services will be performed.
4. DSTV provides prompt services to customers.
5. DSTV is very quick in activating customer subscription.

Assurance is measured by:

1. DSTV employees are polite.
2. DSTV instills confidence in customers.

3. DSTV allows selection and subscription to my channels of interest.
4. I feel safe in dealing with DSTV.
5. DSTV employees are knowledgeable about their products.

Empathy is measured by:

1. Employees of DSTV listen carefully to my needs.
2. Employees of DSTV give me individual attention.
3. DSTV has operating hours that is convenient to me.
4. DSTV has its customers' best interest at heart.
5. DSTV employees understand the specific needs of their customers.

Finally, customer's loyalty is measured by:

1. I have strong relationship with DSTV and will not switch to competitor, even if I have problem with the service.
2. Over the past years, my loyalty to DSTV has grown due to the consistent level of service quality rendered.
3. I will recommend DSTV to someone who seeks my advice.
4. If DSTV is not available, it makes a great difference and I will not try an alternative.
5. Overall, I am happy with the DSTV services.

All the items in the scale were measured on a five-point Likert scale, 1 to 5. 1 represents Strongly Disagree; 2, Disagree; 3, Undecided; 4, Agree; and 5, Strongly Agree. We collected data from a valid sample of 281 customers of DSTV at three estates in Ikorodu - Federal Low-Cost Housing Estate, Alhaja Adenubi Estate and Jubilee Estate. The research instrument was pre-tested at Unity Estate, Ikorodu, with a valid sample of 40 respondents. We used Cronbach Alpha to test the internal consistency of the scale. The Cronbach coefficients for the

five constructs were high and are shown in table 2. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the four hypotheses of the paper.

4. Results

4.1 Analysis of respondents' Demographics

Table 1

Respondents' Demographics

Variables	Percentage	Variables	Percentage	Variables	Percentage
Gender:		Marital status:		Duration of usage:	
Male	56.6	Single	57.3	1-5 years	44.1
Female	43.4	Married	36.7	6-10 years	45.6
Total	100.0	Divorced	2.8	11 years & above	10.3
		Widow/Widower	3.2	Total	100.0
		Total	100.0		
Age bracket:		Educational qualifi:		Respondents' estate:	
Below 20 years	8.9	O'Level	5.7	Federal	38.1
21-30 years	53.0	ND/NCE	25.6	Low-Cost	35.2
31-40 years	20.6	HND/B.Sc./BA	52.7	Alhaja Adenubi	26.7
41-50 years	14.6	M.Sc./MA/MBA/M.	12.5	Jubilee	100.5
Above 50 years	2.8	Ed	3.6	Total	
Total	100.0	PhD	100.0		
		Total			

Table 1 gives details of the respondents' personal data. There were more male respondents, approximately 57%, than female respondents, 43% who participated in the survey. Over 73% of respondents fell into the age category of 21 years and 40 years, suggesting that majority of the respondents were young and apt for this study. As a corollary to the foregoing, 57% of respondents were single, while 37% were married. Approximately 53% of respondents held a first-degree qualification, while 23% held an ND qualification or its equivalence. This suggests that majority of respondents were educated well enough to understand the import of the survey. A majority of respondents, 56% said they had been customers of DStv for 6 years or above. This suggests that majority were in a vantage position to respond to DStv's service quality issues in the survey. Finally, 38% of respondents were residents of Federal Low-Cost Estate, 35% lived in Alhaja Adenubi Estate and the rest of 27% were residents of Jubilee Estate.

Table 2

Reliability Statistics for the Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised items	No of Items
.821	.851	5

Note. SPSS Output.

Table 2 shows Cronbach's Alpha sum for the total five constructs of the study - one dependent variable and four independent variables. The Alpha value for the entire scale was 0.851. This indicates a good internal consistency of the total constructs.

Table 3

Reliability Statistics for Items

	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Service reliability	5	.884

Employee responsiveness	5	.740
Employee assurance	5	.798
Employee empathy	5	.768

Table 3 shows Cronbach's Alpha for each of the five constructs of the study. Service reliability had the highest with 0.884, followed by employee assurance with 0.798. Others are: employee empathy with 0.768, employee responsiveness with 0.740 and customer loyalty with 0.740. Overall, all the items have a good internal consistency, suggesting that all items in the group actually measured each of the constructs. This is because all Cronbach Alpha values were in excess of a minimum value of 0.70 recommended by Cronbach (1951).

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

Table 4

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.693 ^a	.481	.473	1.630

Note. a. Predictors: (Constant), Service Empathy, Service Responsiveness, Service Reliability, Service Assurance.

Table 4 shows that the R square value was 0.481, which indicates that 48.1% of the variation in the dependent variable (customer loyalty) is explained by the study constructs, while 51.9% is explained by other factors not covered by the study. The result also shows that the correlation coefficient value (R) was 0.693, which indicates a strong relationship between the research variables.

Table 5*ANOVA^a*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	679.496	4	169.874	63.904	.000 ^b
	Residual	733.679	276	2.658		
	Total	1413.174	280			

Note. a. Dependent Variable: Customer's loyalty

b. Predictors: (Constant), Service reliability, employee's responsiveness, employee assurance, employee empathy.

The ANOVA results in table 5 shows that, at least, one of the four dimensions in the model statistically significantly explained service quality towards DStv, i.e. $F(4, 95) = 63.904$, $p < .0005$, indicating that the model is a good fit, explaining the effect of service quality on customer's loyalty.

Table 6*Coefficients^a*

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.225	.648		3.431	.001	.948	3.501
	Service Reliability	.212	.039	.264	5.393	.000	.134	.289
	Employee Responsiveness	-.105	.049	-.096	-2.147	.033	-.201	-.009
	Employee Assurance	.060	.061	.052	.981	.327	-.061	.181
	Employee Empathy	.521	.050	.534	10.331	.000	.422	.621

Note. Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty

Multiple regression results for service quality and customer's loyalty

In testing the four hypotheses stated in the study, the values of standardised beta (β) and t-test statistics level of significance (Sig.) for all the four service quality dimensions examined in the co-efficient table were used. As a rule, where $p < .05$, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. We accept the hypothesis, because it is statistically significant. H_1 : DStv's service reliability significantly affects customer's loyalty.

The result of hypothesis 1 indicates that service reliability is not statistically significant and has no significant effect on customer loyalty for the sample ($\beta = .264$, $p > .05$). Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. This suggests that DStv's service reliability has a significant and positive effect on customer's loyalty.

H_2 : DStv's employee responsiveness significantly affects customer's loyalty.

The result of hypothesis 2 indicates that employee responsiveness is statistically significant but has a negative effect on customer's loyalty for the sample ($\beta = -.096$, $p < .05$). Therefore, this hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that DStv's service responsiveness has no significant effect on customer's loyalty.

H_3 : DStv's employee assurance significantly affects customer's loyalty.

The result of hypothesis 3 indicates that service assurance is not statistically significant and has a positive effect on customer loyalty for the sample ($\beta = .052$, $p > .05$). Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. This suggests that DStv's employee assurance has a significant effect on customer's loyalty.

H₄: DStv's employee empathy significantly affects customer's loyalty.

The result of hypothesis 4 indicates that employee empathy is statistically significant and has a positive effect on customer loyalty for the sample ($\beta = .534$, $p > .05$). Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. This suggests that DStv's service empathy has a significant and positive effect on customer's loyalty.

4.3 Discussion

We examined the effect of service quality on customer loyalty in the Lagos Pay-tv industry. We tested four hypotheses, by conducting a multiple regression analysis, in line with the four of the five dimensions of service quality propounded by Parasuraman et al. (1988). Three of the hypotheses of the paper were supported, while the last one was not. The first hypothesis was supported by our dataset, suggesting that service quality of DStv is reliable and significantly and positively affects customer's loyalty towards DStv, the foremost and premium Pay-tv service in Nigeria. Service reliability has a β value of .264. This means service reliability makes a contribution of 26.4% towards DStv's customer's loyalty for our dataset. This finding is corroborated by the findings of similar studies on subscription-based services, mostly cellular services (Belwal & Amireh, 2018; Butt and Run, 2008; Iddrisu et al., 2015; Karunaratna, 2014). This result indicates that DStv service delivery is consistently and dependably delivered and of high quality. This partly explains why 57% of respondents said they have remained connected to DStv for an upward of six years and above. This is loyalty to the brand. According to Multichoice (2022), the DStv services include unrivalled sports action, the latest offerings, which include Nollywood, Riverwood, Bollywood, Hollywood, up-to-the-minute news coverage, compelling, and so on, all of which are delivered to viewers' homes on a daily basis.

Also, the findings revealed that the responsiveness dimension has no significant effect on customer's loyalty towards the DStv brand. The construct has a β value of -.096. This means employee responsiveness makes a contribution of -9.6% towards DStv's customer's loyalty in Nigeria. This finding is consistent with the findings of Khuong and Hiep (2014) and Iddrisu et al. (2015), but inconsistent with the findings of the other studies (Agyei & Kilika, 2012; Mokhtar et al., 2011; Muthaly & Wing-To-Lo, 2007). The result suggests that DStv's contact personnel are

considered to be non-responsive, not providing prompt services, help and assistance to customers. This result may be due to the nature of the Pay-tv service, which does not require customers to have a regular physical contact with service providers. As long as DStv service quality is perceived to be reliable, many customers may not have a reason to engage service personnel either physically or on phone. Furthermore, Multichoice has developed an interactive mobile application for DStv customers to quickly and effectively resolve their problems.

In addition, the findings of the survey show that service assurance significantly affects customer's loyalty towards DStv services. The dimension has a β value of .052. This means it makes a contribution of 5.2% towards DStv's customer's loyalty for our dataset. The result is supported by previous findings (Belwal & Amireh, 2018; Karunaratna, 2014; Mokhtar et al., 2011). This result suggests that DStv inspires customers' trust and confidence (Parasuraman et al., 1988) whenever customers contact them physically or via phones. However, the finding may also be explained by the nature of DStv services, which does not involve a high level of risk and uncertainty. According to the finding of a study, assurance is particularly important for services that the customer perceives as involving a high risk or about which they feel uncertain about their ability to evaluate outcomes (Saravanakumar & JothiJayakrishnan, 2014). Examples of these include surgical services, automotive services and engineering services, which require greater expertise.

Finally, the regression analysis indicates that empathy is statistically significant and has a positive effect on customer's loyalty towards DStv for the sample ($\beta = .534$, $p < .05$). The β value of .534 makes this dimension the largest contributor, contributing 53.4% towards DStv's customer's loyalty. The result is corroborated by the findings of past studies (Aweda Belwal & Amireh, 2018; Karunaratna, 2014; Mokhtar et al., 2011). The result suggests that DStv provides an individual and caring service to customers (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and makes them feel special (Simarmata et al., 2018).

5. Conclusion and Implications

The Pay-tv industry in Nigeria was dominated by one of the South African foremost brands, DStv. However, the market has witnessed entry of new players, increasing the competition in the market. This paper examined the effect of service quality on customer loyalty towards DStv. The paper covers four of the Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) five service quality dimensions - reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The tangible dimension was omitted due to the lack of regular physical contacts with the personnel, equipment and facilities of DStv. The multiple regression analysis indicates that three of the four hypotheses were supported by our dataset, while the last one was not supported. Service reliability and empathy are assurance are significant in creating customer's loyalty towards DStv, while employee responsiveness is not significant in creating customer's loyalty towards DStv. Review of extant literature in this paper suggests that research on service quality and customer's loyalty in Nigeria's Pay-tv industry is very scarce. To our knowledge, no study has investigated the effect of service quality on customer's loyalty towards any Pay-tv provider in Nigeria. This paper has contributed to knowledge by filling this gap in the marketing literature. Therefore, future researchers would explore the findings of this research greatly.

The findings of this research also have implications for the marketing managers in DStv and other Pay-tv organisations in Nigeria and other countries. The research provides an insight on the effect of service quality on customer's loyalty towards DStv. This evidence would help marketing managers in DStv to continue to focus strategies on the dimensions of service quality to continue to retain customer's loyalty. Furthermore, it is believed that measuring service quality provides service firms with intelligence that enables organisations to create a useful database (Pakdili & Kurtulmusoglu, 2014). Therefore, DStv and other Pay-tv operators would benefit from the insights generated by continuously measuring service quality and its impact on customer's loyalty. The findings of the study have limited generalisation, because of its small sample size and the number of Pay-tv organisations involved. Future research should address these limitations by increasing the sample size and covering more Pay-tv service providers in the country.

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