

# The New Public Relations: Integrating Marketing and Public Relations Strategies on Customer Satisfaction in UAE

Dr. Abdu Mohamed Dawood Hafiz<sup>1,\*</sup>, Dr. Robin kabha<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Majed Z. Hatem Alkindi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,\*</sup>Dean of College of Communication, University of Fujairah, Fujairah, UAE

<sup>2</sup>Faculty Staff of College of Communication, University of Fujairah, Fujairah

<sup>3</sup>Faculty Staff of Business Administration, Aldar University College, Dubai, UAE

**Abstract** - In recent years, the activity of public relations has been developing sharply in the United Arab Emirates – UAE. As a result, organisations in UAE invest a significant part in public relations. With all this expansion, the competition also expands; which, given this scenario, it is understood that it is necessary to create actions capable of retaining the audiences involved, seeking public relation loyalty. In the service sector, the need to create links with the public becomes even more important, as the company does not offer a material product, but rather a service linked to each professional who performs it. It is believed that to achieve differentiation in a market as broad as public relations, organisations can use plans developed by the communication sectors. It is understood that, in such a competitive market, retaining the loyalty of customers and the public involved can be essential for the company to remain active in this commercial world. In this context, this work was justified in enabling the verification of the public relations actions developed to identify which are the public relations actions focused on marketing and analyse how these actions contribute to customer loyalty in the company and ethical demands of public relations loyalty in question. The great growth of the sector and the wide competition generate concern and interest in the search for improvements and new knowledge, in order to retain customers in the area of expertise. In addition, it is believed that the job market for communication in the area of service provision can be broad and promising for the Public Relations professional, as this professional, through the concepts studied and knowledge acquired during the course, can contribute positively to this workspace. Therefore, the general objective of this study was to understand how customer loyalty in UAE is driven by public relations actions focused on marketing.

**Index Terms** - Marketing, Public Relation, UAE.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the activity of public relations has been developing sharply in the United Arab Emirates – UAE (Badran, 2019). As a result, organisations in UAE invest a significant part in public relations loyalty. With all this expansion, the competition also expands; which, given this scenario, it is understood that it is necessary to create actions capable of retaining the audiences involved, seeking loyalty. More than offering services, corporations need to delight their consumers, exceed their expectations and create bonds between company and customer. A study by Michael & Gorpe, (2017), argues that the main objective of any brand should be to build a strategy that allows for ever closer ties of trust between the brand and its consumers. More than purchasing a product or a service, consumers look for experiences (Creedon & Al-Khaja, 2019). Additionally, they look for companies they can trust. Al-Jenaibi, (2018) assist that the products are increasingly similar; the more demanding customers are looking for added values and new reasons for buying.

Through the use of interactive forms, which convey sensations, a business identity can be created and values reinforced in front of the desired audience. The creation of actions focused on Experimental Marketing will be able to create experiences and bring the customer closer to the brand. Further, Saberi et al., (2018) said that consumers want to be stimulated, entertained, instructed and challenged. They look for brands that can offer them experiences and then become part of their lives. Consumers are increasingly demanding (AlSharji et al., 2018) and selective, seeking satisfaction in their experiences. These characteristics emphasise the need to develop broad and well-designed communication strategies as public relation loyalty, making it possible for organisations to remain in the market, which is increasingly competitive (Sarker & Rahman, 2020).

Furthermore, service sector, the need to create links with the public becomes even more important, as the company does not offer a material product, but rather a service linked to each professional who performs it (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019). It is believed that, to achieve differentiation in a market as broad as public relations, organisations can use plans developed by the communication sectors (Zeffane & Kemp, 2020). The strategies instituted by public relations professionals focusing on marketing will be able to create experiences for consumers, thus improving the company's position in the sector in which it operates (Sarker & Rahman, 2020). To maintain a positive relationship between the company and its target audience, whether it is a supplier of goods or services, the Public Relations professional has, amongst his functions, the task of diagnosing and predicting the organisation's relationship with the loyalty of its audience and propose strategies that meet the needs, planning actions that ensure the interaction of both.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the role of public relations loyalty in marketing strategies invented by organisations in the UAE?

## AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to assess whether organisations in UAE employ public relations loyalty to devise their marketing strategies or not. Given this, the following objectives are achieved through this research:

To analyse the impact of public relations on marketing;

To understand how ethical demands of public relations loyalty in developing marketing strategies works to satisfy customers.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Enabling business communication through the media is also a way to publicize and enhance products, services or brands. For this, it is necessary the work of professionals in the field of communication, capable of managing and positively conducting the most appropriate ways and ways to communicate. Aiming at this broad market, several actions can be carried out in the communication sector for the provision of services including actions aimed at public relations loyalty marketing and experimental marketing (Zeineddine, 2017). The actions created with a focus on Traditional Marketing (Yaghi & Al-Jenaibi, 2017) prioritise the marketing side of the organisation, aiming at profits and financial growth.

Its concepts describe the features and benefits of the product, consumer behaviour and market activities concerning competitors. Therefore, Experimental Marketing will have as its principle the experiences provided to consumers, aiming at their satisfaction and thus seeking their loyalty (Sarker & Al Athmay, 2018). Whilst the first concept mainly analyses the rational side, in which human beings make their choices in a focused and direct way, Experimental Marketing has its vision based on the rational and emotional sides, it develops actions that produce experiences with the audiences involved, establishing, thus, relationships (Georgiadou & Nickerson, 2021). This involvement and the strengthening of relationships can generate actions to be developed in the sector, especially in public relations, which will build the loyalty of the public involved.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

It is understood that, in such a competitive market, retaining the loyalty of customers and the public involved can be essential for the company to remain active in this commercial world. In this context, this work was justified in enabling the verification of the Public Relations actions developed to identify which are the Public Relations actions focused on Experimental Marketing and analyse how these actions contribute to customer loyalty in the company in question (Gebba et al., 2021). The great growth of the sector and the wide competition generate concern and interest in the search for improvements and new knowledge, to retain customers in the area of expertise. Hence, it is believed that the job market for communication in the area of service provision can be broad and promising for the Public Relations professional, as this professional, through the concepts studied and knowledge acquired during the course, can contribute positively to this workspace. Therefore, the general objective of this study was to understand how the customer ethical demands loyalty in UAE is driven by Public Relations actions focused on Experimental Marketing (Zeineddine, 2017). A theoretical foundation was developed based on the study of the concept of the public relations profession and the activities employed by professionals in this area. It was also studied on public relations as an integrative function, a profession which, in the researcher's understanding, has the responsibility to mediate conflicts, involve all sectors of the organisation, in addition to developing goals and ways to elevate the company in its market of acting.

This article also addresses the consumer theme, presenting its characteristics over the decades, how much new technologies and equality in services and products that are offered in today's commerce require a new approach to this audience (Khalid and Sarker, 2019). Along these lines, the researcher also sought to develop and deepen the knowledge about the search for satisfaction, the experience that buyers crave, and how much developing differentiated actions that bring company and customer closer can contribute to the loyalty of the consumers in question.

## METHODS

This section of the study explains the data collection technique, search methods, inclusion-exclusion criteria, research design, and research philosophy that will be used in this study. This is a secondary qualitative study that evaluates literature against the philosophy of interpretation.

### A. *Research Philosophy*

This research will follow interpretive research philosophy as this philosophy of the research infers that society can be understood subjectively. The utmost consideration here is provided to comprehend the patterns by which companies work in their respective markets. As this research is aimed at identifying the patterns surrounding the use of public relations and marketing in the UAE, interpretive philosophy is the most appropriate. This research philosophy is dependent on the laws which mention that the scholar performs a particular role in witnessing society. According to interpretive philosophy, the study is dependent on what is the interest of the researcher (Baxter & Ely, 2020). The use of multiple sources of evidence allows research to be carried out on several fronts – investigating various aspects of the same phenomenon (Mohajan, 2018).

The conclusions and findings are more convincing and accurate as they come from a set of corroborations. In addition, potential construct validity problems are addressed, as the findings, under these conditions, are validated through various sources of evidence (Kumar, 2018). Build, throughout the study, a database: although it is not common to separate the database from the report, in research carried out under the qualitative approach, it is suggested that this separation take place to ensure the reliability of the study since the data found throughout the study are stored, allowing access by other investigators.

#### *B. Research Design*

This is a study with a qualitative approach developed from an integrative review which has been defined as one of the most extensive methodological approaches in research. Qualitative methodology is appropriate when it comes to reviewing literature and providing a more comprehensive understanding. This method allows the use of both experimental and non-experimental studies (Mohajan, 2018). In a coordinated manner, the integrative review aims to group and summarise the research results, based on scientific evidence (Mohajan, 2018). The study will be descriptive, with documental research in a qualitative approach with data collected from secondary sources.

#### *C. Research Approach*

There are two types of research approaches, the deductive research approach and the inductive research approach. When researchers use the inductive method, they first collect data that is relevant to the topic of their study. After collecting a large amount of data, scientists take a break from data collection, and researchers take a broad perspective on the data being collected. Sometimes, the scholars look for data patterns in the obtained data, working to enhance a thesis that can describe such patterns (Baxter & Ely, 2020). Therefore, when they take an inductive approach, they begin with an observations' set and after that, they shift from those certain experiences to more general propositions' set regarding the experiences. Conversely, researchers shift from collected data to theory or from the "specific to a general" (Baxter & Ely, 2020).

#### *D. Data Collection*

To achieve the aim of the study, the researcher analysed data from previous studies which study topics similar to public relations in the UAE. Relevant research texts were used using real-time electronic data and specific keywords and searches. The data was collected from the online databases of Google Scholar and Science Direct. These databases were selected due to their validity and the fact that these databases allow access to full-text articles and journals. To include the latest data regarding the use of public relations in marketing by UAE organisations, a time limit of five years was used. Therefore articles and journals from the years 2017 to 2021 were used.

#### *E. Data Analysis Technique*

To analyse the data, content analysis is used. The content analysis allowed the researcher to define an overall analytical strategy. It means treating evidence impartially, drawing analytical conclusions, and presenting alternative interpretations and descriptions (Fletcher, 2017). The role of content analysis is to help the investigator choose between different techniques and complete the analytical phase of the research. There are two ways to format the findings from the content analysis: based on theoretical propositions – theoretical framework – or developing a creative description of the case. Relying on theoretical propositions is the most common way to analyse the findings. The initial objectives and design of the study presumably were based on propositions that reflect the proposed research question followed by literature reviews, and new insights extracted from secondary sources (Mohajan, 2018).

## **RESULTS**

#### *A. Public Relations*

It is believed that the Public Relations activity is a very old function, dating back to the time of kings and emperors, who already had the instructions of their advisers. Over time, it began to be developed by accompanying businessmen, organisations and public persons through advisory services (Sarker & Rahman, 2020). However, the true origin of the profession has not yet been defined, as stated by Zeineddine & Nicolescu, (2018), since historians disagree about the emergence of public relations activities, to whom they are owed and where they were originally carried out. Traditionally, it has been said that public relations developed in the United States. Following the thought that the activity of Public Relations professionals may have originated in the United States, some scholars argue that the father of Public Relations is the American journalist Ivy Lee. Based on Awobamise & Jarrar, (2018) statement, it can be said that the origin of Public Relations is lost in time.

However, man's quest to improve his relationship with members of his society and the environment where he lives is old. Thus, the need to develop a good relationship between everyone made a better definition essential, perhaps even creation, a better meaning and improvement of the profession (Sarker & Rahman, 2020). In addition to the fact of strengthening, improving and maintaining good relationships, whether between companies, organisations, public persons or not, there is a need for communication in UAE. It is necessary to communicate so that there is a vision of the people and publics with whom a relationship can or is occurring, whether these publics are consumers, suppliers, collaborators, or any bond of involvement that

may exist between them. People who have a message to communicate have long recognised the power of public opinion to make other people act (Zeffane & Kemp, 2020).

Developing strategies that contribute to good coexistence in groups is not the only objective of the Public Relations activity: the profession's functions and activities have contributed and contributed to the development of many organisational sectors and departments. In the words of Al Nuaimi et al., (2020), after World War II, public relations came to have great use in business and industry, as well as in governments. There are many definitions used for the functions of the Public Relations professional. Generally speaking, and almost unanimously, the profession aims to develop a relationship between the parties involved. In this context, with the role developed in this activity, Badran, (2019) explains that Public Relations is a broad concept that covers all these communication functions – the communication of an organisation with all its audiences.

Likewise, Michael & Gorpe, (2017) clearly explain that Public Relations is a profession that works with communication, using all its instruments to manage the company-public relationship, aiming at a good relationship between the parties. In addition to contributing to good communication between the company and the public, communication actions can be the best way to promote products, services, or brands (Sarker & Rahman, 2020). This will likely contribute to generating and leveraging financial returns for the organisation, which is highly desired by administrative sectors (Creedon & Al-Khaja, 2019). Thus, the work of professionals capable of managing and positively conducting the most appropriate ways to communicate and manage the development of this relationship with the public is necessary, which can be positively conducted by communication professionals, such as Relationship professionals Public.

These are also responsible for the image and identity of organisations, so that they are seen by society as a serious, ethical company that meets the needs of its customers and users. In Al-Jenaibi, (2018) view, communication actions will be feeding public opinion with information and bringing the company's identity and image closer together, avoiding vacuums, distortions in its concept and assertion of credibility. As in other business areas, this professional must be based on ethical principles, working with transparency and seriousness, seeking continuous business improvement (Sarker & Rahman, 2020). The company must develop and apply in day-to-day what was added in the field and always aim for continuous knowledge professionally.

## **B.       Marketing**

In the United States, after World War II, the practice of Marketing emerged, reacting to the growth of market competition and coming together with the need to search for improvements to increase sales. For Sarker & Al Athmay, (2018), the essence of marketing is in the exchange process. When identifying wants or needs, we seek to satisfy them, buying products or service from those who have to sell. It can be said that the term Marketing represents an activity, a tool or a department located within a company or organisation. In the words of Georgiadou & Nickerson, (2021), Marketing is a broad business management system, totally dedicated to achieving and maintaining a balance between the company's potential and the market's potential. From this point of view, it can be understood that it is about the study and planning of the product-market relationship.

Much more than just a sector of the organisation, Marketing can be seen as a potential area, which must be linked to all departments, have a vast knowledge of the company and work in a way to connect everyone involved, in order to offer products and services, focusing on its features and benefits, emphasising the importance of this organisation and fixing its concept in the consumer's mind. Continuing the theme of Marketing, we can mention Traditional Marketing (Gebba et al., 021), which covers the origin of the product, the consumer's behaviour and the competitive relations of the market. Within this concept, the consumer is seen as a rational being who makes his choices through his thoughts and decisions, being able to distinguish between right and wrong.

According to Zeineddine, (2017), four main characteristics of Traditional Marketing can be classified, such as (a) functional characteristics and benefits (C&B), (b) restricted definition of product and competition categories, (c) customers is that make rational decisions, and (d) the methods are analytical, quantitative and non-verbal. Thus, it becomes possible to have a better understanding of how Traditional Marketing is seen, regarding the first characteristic; the product is chosen based on its benefits and utilities would be the functions and qualities. Regarding the restricted way of defining the category and its competition, in Traditional Marketing it is only defined by the types of products. In this line of thought, Almutairi & Kruckeberg, (2019) cite as an example the Chanel perfumes, which compete with those of Dior, and not with Lancôme, L'Oréal or with those sold in popular retail stores.

The image of the customer as a rational decision-maker drives decision-making. The methods and tools used include collecting information obtained through interviews and surveys. Thus, it is understood that actions created based on Traditional Marketing prioritise the marketing side of the organisation, aiming at profits and financial growth. Its concepts describe product features and benefits, customer reaction, and market activities relative to competitors. In the words of Khalid & Sarker, (2019), Traditional Marketing principles and concepts describe the nature of the product, consumer behaviour and competitive market activity. On the other hand, Zeineddine & Nicolescu, (2018) thinking complements that the rule is not to sell only products and/or services, but relationships, it is to adopt the focus of its planning on valuing customers.

## **C.       Experimental Marketing**

As mentioned above, Traditional Marketing works in search of benefits and quality of the product/service, focuses on creating and maintaining a brand with a positive image in the market. However, new approaches have been employed in this area and new concepts have been studied, including Experimental Marketing. Many authors have been using this new approach, which is adopted for this study as Experimental Marketing (Awobamise & Jarrar, 2018), but also known as experiential or experiential. This new concept focuses on the experience lived by consumers through the consumption and use of products or services of a brand or organisation. The author differentiates Experimental Marketing from Traditional Marketing in four ways: it focuses on

consumer experiences, considers consumption a holistic experience, recognises the rational and emotional direction of consumption, and uses eclectic methodologies (Sarker & Rahman, 2020).

It is noticed that, nowadays, there are countless offers to which consumers are exposed. All this market competitiveness requires differentiation so that the company, brand, product or service can remain in the market. Experimental Marketing aims to provide positive and unforgettable experiences, aiming for differentiation. In the understanding of Al Nuaimi et al., (2020), all merchants offer services, their challenge is to transform the service into a memorable experience for their customers. So that it is possible to carry out tasks that meet the expectations of companies and surprise their consumers, Zeffane & Kemp, (2020) defend the use of Experimental Marketing, which his works resort to with regard to the use of people's senses. Through these actions, it is possible to stimulate the senses, instigating the emotional side of consumers, providing experiences.

Thus, it is understood that experiences are induced so that they can achieve their main objective: reaching the consumer. For Badran, (2019), Experimental Marketing can bring benefits in many situations, including turning a declining brand around; differentiating a product from competitors; creating one image and identification for a company; promoting innovations; inducing the experience, purchase and, most importantly, the faithful consumption of the product). This new Marketing concept is based on actions linked to emotion and the sensory and affective experience of consumers. The actions created by the company or brand, through involvement or experiment, generate an emotional response, creating bonds between the organisation and the consumer. The instituted experiences can be directed to the senses, feeling, thought, action and identification, appealing to the five senses of the human body (vision, hearing, smell, taste and touch), according to Michael & Gorpe, (2017).

By engaging and providing an experience to the consumer, the company is remembered by him. In this way, people are not seen only as genuinely rational beings, they must be motivated both by reason and emotion, as they seek, even without knowing it, feelings, entertainment, stimuli and challenges. According to Creedon & Al-Khaja, (2019), there is only one valid definition regarding the purpose of Marketing: to create a valuable experience for the consumer. According to Al-Jenaibi, (2018), five types of customer experiences form the basis of the Experimental Marketing structure. The classification of experiences, distinguished by the author as Strategic Experimental Marketing Models (SEMs), presents different divisions of experiences, each with its processes and inherent structures:

Use the senses – creation of sensory experiences through the five senses.

Feel – appeals to consumers' personal feelings and emotions, intending to create effective experiences.

Think – uses the intellect, aiming to create cognitive experiences, to solve problems that creatively engage consumers Saberi et al., (2018) seek to encourage involvement and elaborate and creative reasoning.

Act – aims to change patterns and lifestyles, seeking interaction between people.

Identify – with aspects of the senses, feelings, thoughts and action, it seeks the social and cultural relationship of the brand.

It is noted, however, the scope of Experimental Marketing, because, as in Traditional Marketing, this new concept in the area requires constant dedication, working in the quest to exceed customer expectations, aiming to have your brand or company remembered by its consumers, thus aiming for their loyalty. Regarding the forms and tools used to carry out the actions proposed in Experimental Marketing, AlSharji et al., (2018) emphasise that they are never restricted: on the contrary, they require the breaking of paradigms and the exercise of creativity to innovate and surprise the public.

#### *D. Public Relation Loyalty in UAE*

It is believed that consumers can be seen as the central axis of communication and Marketing actions by companies today. All the dedication and effort aimed at the brand's target audiences are aimed at retaining them so that the organisation's solidification in the market is possible. According to Dhanesh & Duthler, (2019), the consumer is generally seen as one who identifies a need or desire, makes a purchase and then discards the product throughout the three stages of the consumption process. These stages are defined by the author as pre-purchase (when the consumer finds that he needs a product), purchase (a stage in which the acquisition takes place) and post-purchase (when the product is satisfied or discarded). All this practice generates a relationship between the company or brand and its customers.

In the words of Zeffane & Kemp, (2020) understanding consumers' motivations and adapting to them are not alternatives, but an absolute necessity for the survival of any business. All people can be classified as consumers, from a child who asks for something he wants his mother to buy, to a large businessman negotiating for the company he works for (Zeineddine, 2017). Thus, to satisfy the needs, desires and demands of different styles of audiences, the communication sectors are increasingly committed. With the increase in competition and the offer of goods and services, companies became more concerned with their consumer audience. For Yaghi & Al-Jenaibi, (2017), in recent years, companies have suffered serious impacts due to the globalisation process and increased competition in the market and realised that they had an asset that could be better worked: the customer. Some authors use the terms new and old consumers.

For Sarker & Al Athmay, (2018), the old consumer was used to being served by the traditional salesperson, who informed him about the news from time to time, in the rhythm of the commercial practices of the past. It is understood that information and innovations in the goods and services market circulated slowly, which did not always reach a good number of potential consumers (Georgiadou & Nickerson, 2021). However, it is believed that the lack of time, with the long working hours and the various commitments to which people are exposed nowadays, may have contributed to some changes in the face of the organisations' customers. This situation, on the other hand, has generated new studies that have been treating current customers by the term new consumer.

Unlike the concept used previously, this new customer has a broader view of the market, services and consumer goods that are available to them. Concerning this new consumer, Gebba et al., (2021) explains that the UAE consumer of today is no longer passive as before. He is more informed, aware and seeks differentiation, personalisation and respect. This new customer can be

seen as a well-informed figure, who has access to new technologies that open the doors to a new, wide world, full of information and news.

Based on this new image attributed to customers, it is possible to understand the vision of Zeineddine, (2017), who gave consumers the title of the new heads of organisations. They are the ones who will provide the necessary information for the company to commit itself more and more, making it necessary to work on behalf of that customer, with the objective of satisfying and conquering them every day. In addition to developing strategies aimed at reaching consumers, strengthening the relationship between company and customer becomes increasingly relevant for organisations. The well-targeted and personalised approach and satisfaction with the public of interest can guarantee the success of these organisations today and, above all, in the near future.

#### *E. Consumer Satisfaction*

When purchasing a product or service, it is believed that customers have an expectation that goes beyond the purchase action; they seek, from acquisition, to achieve satisfaction. They look for effective assistance not only in the first acquisitions but in a continuous way. For Almutairi & Kruckeberg, (2019), expectations appear before the purchase, and if met, they will generate satisfaction; if they are exceeded, they will bring the enchantment; however, if they are not achieved, they will imply dissatisfaction. Because of Khalid and Sarker, (2019), it is possible to understand that the study of consumer behaviour, as well as knowledge about their position in relation to the company or brand, goes beyond the purchase action. For Zeineddine & Nicolescu, (2018), the search for customer satisfaction is a process that will probably never end due to the existing oscillations regarding what customers look for in the consumption process.

This fact demonstrates the importance of the continuous search for innovation and consumer delight (Sarker & Rahman, 2020). More than offering a product or service of excellent quality, companies must be concerned with everything that involves the organisation and the final focus of the entire public relations marketing process, (Sarker & Rahman, 2020). The company knowing, delighting, serving and responding to the customers' wishes is fundamental for the success of the enterprise and requires systematic management of this relationship (Awobamise & Jarrar, 2018). It is understood that, nowadays, it is not enough to be present in the market, it is necessary to please the consumer, surprise him, and conquer him (Sarker & Rahman, 2020). The more satisfied customers, the greater the number of retentions for the company, thus creating a promising market for the company.

As stated by Zeffane & Kemp, (2020) most companies pay more attention to the market and public relation share than to customer satisfaction to have loyalty. Market share is a retrospective indicator; customer satisfaction is a forward-looking indicator. Given this fact, developing strategies aimed at the momentary satisfaction of customers is not enough as it is believed that it is necessary to create constant actions so that it is possible to maintain this satisfaction over the years of service (Sarker & Rahman, 2020). The pursuit of this excellence can be an estimable factor in achieving consumer satisfaction (Creedon & Al-Khaja, 2019). It is noteworthy that customer satisfaction alone is not enough to ensure the success of organisations and their permanence in the market, more than satisfying, it is necessary to retain this consumer.

According to Al Nuaimi et al., (2020), companies should aim for ambitious brands of customer loyalty and commitment. Satisfying the customer can be an easy task, as long as he needs a product or the provision of a service, however, it is understood that it is necessary for him to continue to attend the company, more than raising his satisfaction, it is necessary to retain his loyalty. However, it is clear that the value has always been and will always be in the difference. Equals are increasingly doomed to become invisible to the herd of market mediocrity. The law is as follows: the more equal, the less value (Badran, 2019). In this way, it is understood that companies that exceed the expectations of their audiences are ahead of their competitors.

### **DISCUSSION**

More than prioritising the public relation marketing side of the organisation, aiming for profits and financial growth, Marketing professionals have, amongst their functions, to delight and seduce their customers through satisfaction, so that it is possible to raise their loyalty (Creedon & Al-Khaja, 2019). Hence, believed that customer retention is one of the main focuses of organisations today in UAE. Loyal consumers represent higher returns on company profits. According to Michael and Gorpe, (2017), the best strategy for a company to increase its profits is to gain customers Through an increasing loyalty in the number of users of an organisation's services or products, it is possible to achieve greater and better financial results loyalty (Creedon & Al-Khaja, 2019). In addition to this important factor, the cost to retain a buyer is lower than the expense required to acquire new consumers (Sarker & Rahman, 2020).

From the perspective of Al-Jenaibi, (2018), the search for new customers can be attractive and motivating for the sales force, but it is more expensive, about six times more than retaining a current customer. Far beyond the results in capturing profits, the loyal consumer will be able to contribute to its better structuring, through their placements the organisation will have access to points often unnoticed by its managers, which, when highlighted by a customer who actively participates in the organisation, may be taken into account in the search for improvements (Saber et al., 2018). Loyal customers complain when they have a bad experience because they want to see their problem solved, they believe in the brand/company and want to improve it (Creedon & Al-Khaja, 2019). Infidels, on the other hand, leave, without the slightest remorse and — worse — they still speak ill of the company (AlSharji et al., 2018).

The positioning of a customer before the brand to which they are loyal may also generate the advertisement called “word of mouth” (Creedon & Al-Khaja, 2019). From the moment that this consumer is satisfied with your product or service and becomes loyal to the organisation, he can disseminate his experiences to friends, co-workers, family and other people he lives with, thus contributing to the dissemination of the image organisational. Dhanesh & Duthler, (2019) draw attention to the fact that all the tools used in customer loyalty will be useless if the buyer has the feeling of being “just another one”. It is increasingly necessary

to invest in product or service differentiation. Thus, it is important to emphasise that the first rule to retain consumers is to offer differentiated services (Zeffane & Kemp, 2020).

One of the many ways to differentiate in the market is to make consumers enjoy not only the benefits of the products or services offered but that they feel fulfilled, that consumption exceeds their expectations. From the point of view of Zeineddine, (2017), small epiphanies work as a balm that relieves the pain of the mind, soul and heart. Small epiphanies are windows of healing, relief, and hope (Yaghi & Al-Jenaibi, 2017). These are emotional windows full of meaning. However, it is evident that the customer loyalty process is extensive and continuous (Creedon & Al-Khaja, 2019). If done correctly, it can contribute positively to the benefit of the company, adding value to the brand, contributing to its permanence in the market in which it operates.

Public relations strategies that seek to differentiate the company from its competitors become increasingly essential. It is believed, therefore, that it is necessary to develop actions capable of providing consumer experiences. Therefore, Sarker & Al Athmay, (2018) defend the use of Experimental Marketing, which focuses on its actions the use of the consumer's senses and the experiences provided to this audience. With the creation of actions capable of stimulating the senses of the public involved, instigating their emotional side, it is believed to be possible to provide experiences to the organisation's customers (Creedon & Al-Khaja, 2019). These experiments, according to Georgiadou and Nickerson, (2021) can be divided into five modules: sense, feeling, thought, action and identification. To have a better understanding of the use of experiences, it can be seen how Gebba, et al., (2021), one of the main researchers on Experimental Marketing, defines each of these five experiences, he conceptualises:

**Sense experience** - appeals to the five senses, sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. In this experiment, the objective is to provide aesthetic pleasure, excitement, beauty and satisfaction through sensory stimulation (Zeineddine, 2017). Actions aimed at the experience of the senses can please and arouse the customer's interest. In this sense, the visual identity of the brand is included, in addition to the presentation of its physical structure and products. It is considered that the best way to provide sensory experiences to a company's customers is to combine different sensory modalities: visual, auditory, olfactory and tactile. The marketing of the senses creates significant sensory experiences that differentiate products, motivate consumers and add value (Almutairi & Kruckeberg, 2019).

**Feeling experience** - is linked to the emotions, feelings and mood that the brand and its products, both material goods and services, can awaken in consumers. Such feelings can be aroused in clients in a variety of ways. According to Khalid & Sarker, (2019), even finding a coin on a payphone can put a person in a good mood. This idea was used to improve hairdressing salons, which started serving drinks to customers. It is believed, based on Zeineddine & Nicolescu, (2018) that, through Public Relations actions focused on Experimental Marketing, it is possible to arouse feelings of humor and emotion in the organisation's customers and patrons. In addition, offering small kindnesses to these customers can encourage customer retention for the company.

**Thought experience** - for Awobamise & Jarrar, (2018) the goal of thought marketing is to encourage the consumer to engage in the elaborate and creative thinking of people for a company or brand that can result in the evaluation of a company and its respective products. For the author, thought marketing is the most suitable for a wide variety of products and services, having the ability to achieve and sometimes achieve important "paradigm changes" in society, so that people think differently about hypotheses and existing expectations (Sarker & Rahman, 2020). It is believed that, in the thought experience, the intention is to attract people's creative thinking to the company or brand, making the consumer reflect on both. In both convergent and divergent thinking, it is necessary to hold the consumer's attention and concentration on the thought (Zeffane & Kemp, 2020).

**Action experience** - in analogy to the client, experiences that change behaviour and lifestyle patterns are related to their body, in addition to interaction with other people (Al Nuaimi et al., 2020). To understand the experiences related to actions, the author emphasises the study of three questions: those related to the body (physical aspect, motor actions, body signals and environmental influences), those related to lifestyle (induction to action, use of models and the appeal to norms) and the interaction between people (Badran, 2019).

**Identification experience** - relates the person to the social and cultural context of the brand. Its objective is to develop a link between the social meaning of the brand and the customer (Michael & Gorpe, 2017). The identification experience uses the experiences of sense, feeling, thought and action, aiming to make the social connection between it and its consumer (Creedon and Al-Khaja, 2019).

In the understanding of Al-Jenaibi, (2018) identification marketing is directly associated with the concepts of social psychology, which works on how a person's behaviour can be influenced by the real, imaginary or implicit presence of other people. It is estimated that, through identification, it is possible to form groups of people who may come to defend the brand based on their interests, which, however, are common. According to Saberi et al., (2018) it is possible to understand the emergence of communities related to some of the companies in the UAE. It is also believed that the identification experiences, experienced by an individual, can be transmitted to groups of friends, at work or college, an action that may bring new consumers to the company (Creedon & Al-Khaja, 2019). The results show that using public relations to devise marketing strategies is a successful technique. Thus the research proposed research question in this study is answered. This technique is employed by organisations in UAE not only to differentiate their products but to also satisfy their customers by delivering on the promise through their products and services. However, the use of public relations is employed as identified by Islam and therefore it impacts the marketing strategies. The most significant impact of this practice is marketing the true features and avoiding overstatements.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The limited availability of time was one of the primary limitations of the study as the researcher had to complete the research in the given time frame. Another limitation was the limited availability of data as the research was focused on the particular case study of the UAE. As secondary data was used, there were only limited studies that addressed the theme of public relations and marketing in the context of UAE. Therefore extracting data took longer than expected. Moreover, the results of this

study cannot be generalised to the overall concept of public relation and marketing as the principles of public relation are somewhat different in Islam and therefore it is employed by UAE organisation under those teachings.

## CONCLUSION

This is the era in which competition between companies is increasingly fierce. Therefore, differentiating itself in front of its audiences in the current market becomes increasingly essential to be able to remain in its operating environment. Developing public relations strategies that highlight not only products and services, but that offer experiences to consumers is one of the issues addressed in the theoretical framework of this work. The purpose of this study was to analyse how public relations actions focused on marketing contribute to customer loyalty in UAE. The main studies in the area are based on cases from companies in the UAE. By combining these examples, from different theorists, through bibliographical research, it was possible to identify in the company in question which are the public relations actions, with a focus on marketing, developed in the UAE organisation. The integrative planning of public relations was another of the topics discussed, which highlights the importance that these professionals have for organisations; developing strategies capable of promoting the company in its operating environment and making it stand out amongst its audiences is one of the tasks of these professionals. Regardless of its size, whether it is small, medium or large, having a professional with the capacity to carry out actions that generate pleasant experiences for the audiences involved will differentiate it in terms of its operating environment. Public relations actions focused on marketing require creativity and originality in their conceptions, attention to detail and involvement with the audiences they seek to reach.

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