



**Client Engagement in Retail Banking: A Developing
Socio-Economic Perspective**

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Client engagement in retail banking: A developing socio-economic perspective

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Abstract

All businesses strive to retain their existing clients; however, few are implementing positive strategies that are directed towards client engagement, retention and satisfaction. Most companies tend to be organised solely for acquisition, whereby their publicity and sales programmes are designed to find and promote their products and services only to new clients. Even if companies do have client engagement strategies, these strategies are not continuously and effectively implemented. Research has shown that it is costlier to acquire new clients than to retain existing ones; as a result, it is more advisable to strike a dependable balance between acquisition and retention.

This study is aimed at developing a client engagement framework for ABSA retail banking (ARB), operating within a developing socio-economic context. This study emanated from the fact that ARB in South Africa seemed to have lost a significant percentage of existing clients to competitors. From the research it appeared that the marketing emphasis of such companies (retail banking competitors, First National Bank, Standard Bank, Capitec and Nedbank) predominantly focuses on customer acquisition rather than on client engagement and retention. The main assumption of this study is that the client engagement channels of the South African retail banks are not being effectively implemented. In addition, the organisations are not optimally utilising the database of existing clients to track customer experience over time after a sale has been concluded.

A qualitative approach with the use of interviews was used to gather data for this study. The target population included managers (Phase 1) and internal clients (Phase 2) from the ARB Group. Non-probability sampling was used with the purposive sampling technique to select a sample size. A sample of eight managers and twenty-eight internal clients participated in this study. The transcribed interviews were thematically analysed by using the NVivo 11, qualitative data analysis software. The data was coded into common nodes which formed the basis of the thematic constructs that emerged.

The findings confirmed that both customer acquisition and engagement strategies were in place within the ARB group of companies. However, client engagement appeared not to have been prioritised as much as client acquisition. This lack of attention towards client

engagement was largely attributed to the ineffective implementation of the existing client engagement framework of the company. Satisfaction was found to be more significant in retaining clients, as opposed to loyalty. In addition, most internal clients attributed their satisfaction to a combination of product features and after-sales services, and most internal clients stated that they would definitely continue to bank with ARB. This study will contribute to a broader and deeper understanding of client engagement, which includes the importance of utilising resources optimally for effective client engagement and the importance of training employees on all related aspects of service delivery and client engagement.

Key words: Customer satisfaction; client retention; customer relationship management; customer value proposition; client engagement strategies and client centricity.

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List of Acronyms

AGL	ARB Group limited
ANZ	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd
ARB	ABSA Retail Bank
ATM	Automated teller machine
CEM	Client Engagement Management
CRM	Client Relationship Management
CVP	Customer Value Proposition
FICA	Financial Intelligent Centre Act
FNB	First National Bank
FRD	Full Regulatory Deconsolidation
IT	Information Technology
JSE	Johannesburg Stock Exchange
NGO	Non-governmental Organisations
PLC	Public Limited Company
SA	South Africa
SMMES	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WOM	Word-of-mouth

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

In the current competitive business setting and economic environment, the preservation of an adequate client base appears to be important to the functioning of any business. Vives (2019) notes that businesses must ensure that they create a conducive environment so that their clients want to remain with the organisation. The foundation and success of a retail bank is its clients; however, one impediment to overcome is client preservation. Blankson, Ketron and Darmoe (2017) assert that regarding service delivery, current clients have greater expectations as they are more complex, involved, and knowledgeable. Due to the increase in competition for clients, there is a greater need to advance certain qualities within the retail banking sector. Such qualities include client centricity which can be founded on effective client engagement. For purposes of this study the understanding of Kumar and Pansari (2016), who describes client engagement as the mechanics of a client's value addition to the organisation, of which the contribution can be both direct or indirect, will be utilized.

An unmistakable element that can be easily changed with regard to the banking industry is the quality of service. This frequently ignored feature of banks can be the difference between success and failure. Mujinga (2019) mentions that 'service is survival, we are all contending for clients, and if we do not provide good service to them, they will go somewhere else'. Furthermore, clients are prepared to pay 10–15% extra for a product that is similar as long as they get treated correctly (McDonald and Wilson, 2016). Haripersad and Sookdeo (2018) mention that the global economy has changed, inevitably resulting in significant pressure on organisations.

Competition is on the rise, client satisfaction has increasingly developed into a nightmare because of the ever-changing and unpredictable client demands. Client satisfaction and retention drive profits, as it is far less expensive to retain existing clients than to acquire

new ones. However, it is also significant for a business to find out who the profitable clients are, as business cannot afford to waste marketing resources on trying to retain unprofitable clients (Magatef and Tomalieh, 2015).

The banking landscape has witnessed significant changes over the past decade as a result of increasing globalisation (Simatele, 2015). For South Africa (SA), this has meant an upsurge in the entry of foreign banks and, with this, an even more urgent requirement to convey services and products that surpass client expectations. For a bank to be able to satisfy its clients and deliver on its mandate, there is a need for a paradigm shift from being product-centric to being client-centric in their approach to business (Dubru, 2018; Pelletier, 2018).

Organisations such as banks need to ensure that they are unique and that they offer exclusive products and services (Eccles and Stroehle, 2018). In this regard, the voice of the client becomes critical in enabling the banking sectors to offer services and products that satisfy client requirements. In light of the above, this study is aimed at identifying potential strategies which an organisation in the retail banking sector, in this case ABSA Retail Bank (ARB), can adopt to improve client engagement and retention. This study will critically review strategies to increase client engagement within ARB Bank, and more specifically the Retail Bank in the group, as well as evaluate those strategies which the bank should continue to use or adopt to ensure continued success.

1.1.1 Defining client engagement

The concept of engagement has been in existence in the management literature for a very long time. In the last decade there has been significant growth in interest on the importance and vital role that engagement can play in marketing (Venkatesan, 2017). Client engagement is key to client relationship management (CRM), it is vital for the success of an organisation and if properly implemented can have a profoundly positive influence on client value creation (Zhang, Guo, Hu and Liu, 2017), and ultimately improve firm performance. According to Prentice and Loureiro (2018), client engagement is of

strategic importance because engaged clients actively take part in brand marketing by recommending brands to others or encouraging peers to buy products and services which improves the performance and success of an organisation.

Client engagement is an evolutionary concept and several definitions and descriptions of client engagement exist; however, they generally centre around client interaction, client participation, client satisfaction, client involvement, emotional connection with the brand, and quality client experience. Client engagement involves creating a platform that is conducive for clients to communicate their experience with the organisation (Gillis, Kivlighan and Russell, 2016). According to Zhang, Lu, Torres and Chen (2018), client or customer engagement can be understood as a business communication link that creates a relationship between clients and an organisation. Jaakkola and Aarikka-Stenroos (2019) postulate that client engagement is a process that enables a business to understand customer needs and build future strategies based on what the client requires or expects from the organisation.

Scholars such Carvalho and Fernandes (2018) believe that client engagement is an estimate or an attempt to fathom the magnitude of client interaction with the company. Client engagement is a platform where clients and the organisation co-create meaning (Oyner and Korelina, 2016). The vital element of co-creation which implies a fully participatory process is recognised by Piligrimiene, Dovaliene and Virvilaite (2015) who stipulated that client engagement can be understood as the strength of client participation and connection with the organisation's activities, brand, products and services. These definitions point out the importance of client engagement in the success of an organisation, they highlight that for an organisation to remain relevant and competitive it must fully understand the needs and wants of their client. For this to happen the organisation must fully interact with its clients and effective interaction entails engaging with the client.

Client engagement can also be understood as a multi-faceted notion encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions (Pansari and Kumar, 2017). It plays a significant pivotal role in CRM which is a prerequisite for client satisfaction, client loyalty and ultimately client retention (Whittle and Myrick, 2016). Clients are the mainstay of a business; they determine the success or failure of an organisation and this is mainly because they are usually the reason businesses exist in first place (Leih, Linden and Teece, 2015). This suggests that companies should be client centric and clients should be viewed as the heart and soul of a business. Increased competition has put a limelight on the importance of clients as the bloodstream of companies, thereby amplifying the focus on client engagement to ensure client loyalty and client retention (Vilkaite-Vaitone and Papsiene, 2016). This emphasises the ever-increasing importance of effective client management which entails client engagement for improved client retention and ultimately for sustainable business performance

1.2 Research context

Absa bank's history is very instrumental in revealing how the group has maintained its client base over the years. Absa bank was founded in 1998 through the merger of various retail bank service providers such as United, Allied, the Volkskas Group, and the Sage Group (Africa News, 2018). As a banking organisation, ARB has become one of the key players in the economic sector and holds a critical role in society today (ARB, 2017).

In May 2005, Barclays Bank of the United Kingdom (UK) bought a 56.4% stake in Absa, in order to expand to untapped markets globally. In the year 2013, the Group obtained the total issued share capital of Barclays Africa Limited and issued 129,540,636 Consideration Shares to Barclays Africa Group Holdings Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Barclays, which ultimately increased the shareholding of Barclays Bank Public Limited Company's (PLC) to 62.3% (ARB, 2017).

On 31 July 2013, the Consideration Shares were registered on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE). On 22 July 2013 the announcement of the change of name from 'Absa Group Limited' to 'Barclays Africa Group Limited' was made. On 2 August 2013 the name change became effective (ARB, 2017). While the Absa Group Limited is publicly registered on the JSE, the majority owner is Barclays Bank PLC. The share holdings were as follows: Barclays owns 56.4% shares, Allan Gray 6.7%, the PIC 4.8%, Old Mutual 3.3%, Investec 3.1%, Coronation 2.7%, Sanlam 2.3%, Stanlib 2.0%, Capital Group 1.9% and AXA Financial SA 1.8%. Barclays Bank is domiciled and incorporated in the UK. During the year 2016, Barclays PLC announced plans to decrease its stake in Barclays Africa because of global regulatory pressures.

Barclays PLC sold some of its shares in May 2016, resulting in its shareholding in Absa being reduced to 50.1%. The next sell-down saw Barclays PLC lose their controlling shareholder status, which implies a range of operational considerations. Through a series of transactions in July 2018, Barclays PLC reduced its interest in the issued share capital of Barclays Africa Group Limited from 62.3% in March 2016 to its current level of 14.9%. Absa worked closely with Barclays PLC to achieve full regulatory deconsolidation (FRD), which had been a key separation objective. This included engaging with key regulators, notably the Prudential Regulatory Authority in the UK, to understand the deliverables for deconsolidation. Absa Chief Executive Officer, Maria Ramos, announced on 20 July 2018 that the Prudential Regulatory Authority had granted Barclays PLC permission to fully deconsolidate what is now the Absa Group Limited (AGL).

Deconsolidation means that AGL and Barclays PLC are no longer regarded by Barclays PLC's regulators as one consolidated entity, but rather two independent companies. Deconsolidation is positive as it signals another step forward for AGL as a standalone bank, and it releases ARB from a number of regulatory reporting obligations through Barclays PLC. From the perspective of a colleague, deconsolidation triggers a different way of working with Barclays PLC, and there are a number of operational considerations that stem from the July 2018 announcement. These are being managed by Absa's

separation team who are liaising with the impacted areas across AGL. Absa Group Limited owns the following subsidiaries: ARB Card, ARB Home Loans, ARB Private Bank, ARB Vehicle and Asset Finance, Flexi-Banking Services, Retail Banking Services and Small Businesses (ARB, 2017).

Presently, Absa Group Limited is focusing more on client acquisition than client retention, since marketing promotions are firmly aimed at gaining new clients in the form of advertising over the social media, advertising in magazines, wide distribution of pamphlets, bill boards, television and industrial businesses that bank with ARB (Haripersad, and Sookdeo, 2018; Maharaj and Cowden, 2015). It is postulated that by altering the emphasis of the marketing strategy to focus on client acquisition, client engagement and client retention, ARB could become more profitable. Client acquisition has been hailed as the lifeblood of any company, benefiting the business no matter how small or large. Discovering potential clients who may not be aware of its products or services is crucial to building a successful company (Hawkins and Hoon, 2019). Client retention is finding competition in current competitive environments and companies can no longer afford to become content in their marketing efforts directed at existing clients, especially with the rising costs attributed to new client acquisition (Gupta, 2019; Lamb, Hair and McDaniel, 2018).

Over a short period of time the once 'small' Capitec Bank has demonstrated how to become one of the big five major banks within the South African banking industry (Capitec, 2016). Having surpassed both First National Bank (FNB) and Nedbank in the ratings regarding client numbers, in the year 2016 Capitec Bank was recognised as the third largest bank in SA (Capitec, 2016). Capitec stated that their results over a six-month period (ending August 2016) had seen an increase in its active clients to "7.9 million, up 1.2 million from the 6.7 million reported in 2015" (Capitec, 2017). This evolution was accredited to an increase in branches in major malls, robustness in exposing the brand and simplified banking that created value for money (Capitec, 2017). During the times of August 2016 when banks were facing economic challenges, Capitec signed on over half of

all its new clients (Financial Services Monitor Worldwide, 2016). Capitec's increase in their clientele placed the bank above Nedbank (which in June 2016 had 7.7 million clients), whilst FNB fell into fifth place (Financial Services Monitor Worldwide, 2016). In this regard it can be noted Capitec Bank and Tymebank approached the customers that were struggling to be approved for different products by ARB, whilst Discovery bank stepped in and claimed the lifestyle customers from ARB. The bank neglected some clients from certain socio-economic backgrounds and lost them to the other banks like Tymebank and Discovery Bank.

The *Financial Services Monitor Worldwide* (2016) notes that a contest to achieve client numbers, without a measure of client value, should not become the primary goal for companies. In this regard, FNB's business' focus shifted to quality of clients attracted and retained. ARB, whilst trading as Barclays Africa, documented in its provisional report for the year 2015 that in SA within the first six months there was an increase of new clients, which ultimately increased the bank clients to 9.4 million. However, at the end of the year 2016, this number was down to 8.9 million clients (Financial Services Monitor Worldwide, 2016). This might have been due the fact that ARB neglected some client segments and did not pay enough attention to the socio-economic dynamics of the local market. ARB neglected low-income clients who represent the majority of clients in SA in terms of numbers. Capitec bank and other emerging banks targeted the lower income level customers who were struggling to be approved for different products by ARB and other so-called major banks, thereby growing their customer base and taking some of ARB clients. Discovery bank also stepped in and claimed the lifestyle customers from ARB.

ARB might have also lost clients because the bank was struggling to satisfy their clients when compared to major banks (as measured by the recent ratings from the consumer satisfaction index). ARB has the lowest consumer satisfaction score among the five major banks in South Africa (BusinessTech, 2019), and when clients are dissatisfied, they are highly likely to be attracted to competitors.

Standard Bank does not broadcast its client numbers in provisional reports and does not reply to appeals for client numbers, however by the end of the year 2015 it recorded a clientele of 11.6 million which ensured a lead in the banking sector. The rankings, according to the SandP Global Agency, showed that the banking industry in SA for the year 2017 was destined for a major turnaround as Capitec was predicted to continue to disrupt the retail banking sector, specifically in the middle-income market (Businesstech, 2016). Having started as a micro-lender, Capitec later obtained a banking license that positioned the bank as a low-cost provider that made banking simpler, quicker and affordable to low-income customers (Financial Services Monitor Worldwide, 2016).

1.3 Background

Although it is postulated that ARB is more fixated on client acquisition, there are some client engagement strategies in place (Absa, 2018). ARB prides itself on using up-to-date technology systems such as Notify me, electronic account statements, cell phone banking, online banking and the latest assistive sophisticated cash accepting devices (Absa, 2018). ARB has also utilised technology to make access easy for clients who want to conduct banking transactions outside normal banking hours. In addition, ARB has advanced digital devices that allow its client base to be segmented in order to offer tailored services to specific groups of customers (ARB, 2018). Staff attitude and technology can also positively impact client satisfaction and loyalty (Kaura, Prasad and Sharma, 2014).

Empirical evidence provided by the Financial Intelligent Centre Act (FICA) advocates that the success in retaining clients often hinges on the following basic factors:

- i) Getting to know the clients by obtaining their contact numbers;
- ii) Keeping names and surname as stated in the identity book, up-date postal and physical address, and email address;
- iii) Fitting history from internal database;

- iv) Being aware of their current product utilisation within ARB;
- v) Understanding and collecting information regarding their individual attributes and needs; and
- vi) Using information such as educational qualifications, salary packages, lifestyle, age and religion to segment clients and prospects that are based on high, medium and low value.

Clients have voiced a need to work with companies that really value them, distinguish them by their names and purchasing preferences, consult with them as to their satisfaction with a purchased product, ask about their preferences regarding future products and services, and leverage inquiries within agreed service level agreements (Osterwalder, Pigneur, Bernarda and Smith, 2015). Ideally, all businesses can and should do all of this and more in order to exceed clients' expectations. Once client expectations are met, there is a high possibility of retaining the client due to satisfaction and delivery, which will in turn guarantee loyalty (Rustenburg and Steenbeek, 2019). Therefore, Aramburu and Pescador (2019) highlight that creating customer loyalty involves going above and beyond what clients expect.

ARB prides itself on placing clients at the epicentre of everything it does, getting service right, no matter what. One way of doing this is by listening to the most significant opinion in its business - the voice of its clients - who are there to tell ARB how to advance service in the branches to the benefit of clients. ARB allows its employees to post established service concepts on a facility called 'Pitch In' and share their opinions on how to advance service within the branch banking network. There are service tiers that are designed for branches to deliberate monthly. The stories give ARB the opportunity to attend to the voices of its clients.

1.3.1 A segmented approach to a specific market

According to Absa integrated report of 2018, using customised value proposition resolutions that speak to the precise requirements of a specific market or group of clients.

ARB wants to assure its importance on various strategic market groups:

- i. Banks try to establish lifelong relationships with the large market of youth. The South African government intends to make sure that 20% of the young population (namely between the ages of 18 and 25) will be enrolled for tertiary education yearly which ultimately means that the market of young people will continue to increase.
- ii. A long-term objective which is of strategic importance to the bank is to develop the 'entry-level' market segment. This category of clients is considered to be significant as it feeds into the main intermediate market of the bank. Market segmentation can also play a vital role in designing an effective client engagement strategy by ensuring that customers are managed effectively (Ahani, Nilashi, Ibrahim, Sanzogni and Weaven, 2019).
- iii. Due to the economic transformation and growth, a substantial growth was realised from the fundamental middle market group. ARB however noted that the financial sophistication of the middle market group may not be as well established as their loyal clients who have been with the bank for most of their lives. The outcome is that there has been an increase in the emphasis of financial education programmes across all divisions to make sure that clients react in a knowledgeable and responsible way on financial matters (Makhaya, and Nhundu, 2015).
- iv. Customer numbers have also increased from the basic middle market to the wealthy income market. These customers have robust association requirements that are propelled by life occurrences.

- v. A number of clients who are 55 years of age and older form a niche market. These clients have a range of diverse needs that need to be tailored not only from a product but also from a value-added viewpoint. Major sales are driven through the retail branch network. However, to ensure that the needs of the affluent clients are met, ARB is significantly investing in digital and other self-service channels to enable a client's convenience and cost-effective access (Absa, 2018).

ARB can focus on growing market share through these channels. The cradle to grave and the older generation are two niche markets that are well established. The young university entrants will be customers throughout their lives as the bank will grow up with them and be with them when they buy their first homes. On the other hand, the older generation already have the type of product they need and are the most loyal to the brand.

In the next sections the conceptual framework, the research problem and its context will be presented, as well as the aim and objectives of the study. The research alignment, research design and research methodology are discussed. Thereafter, the scope and limitations to the study will be specified.

1.4 Conceptual framework

Probing ontological discrepancies is a critical facet of the research process because it allows the researcher to discover how his/her views of human nature influence the tactic he/she deliberately adopts to expose social truths (Mason, 2017). The purpose of this study is to address the phenomenon of customer engagement from a socio-economic perspective with the intention of developing new knowledge that may assist ARB, and more specifically its Retail Bank customers. Brodie, Hollebeek and Conduit (2015) define client engagement as a phenomenon within a bigger system with patterns that need to be understood and appreciated if sustainable and positive business results are to be achieved.

Kurokawa, Schweber and Hughes (2017) also state that client management is an existing structure that is based on the intricacy and interrelatedness of individuals, culture, mindsets and actions and, as such, looking at customer management from an analytical and single view may inhibit organisations from grasping the dynamics of providing exceptional and individualised client experiences. Smircich (2017) postulates that it is vital for an organisation to cultivate a culture based on its values and Mone, London and Mone (2018) add that the culture then needs to be conveyed to employees as well as clients.

As per Leather (2013), three principles seem to be essential in the understanding of client engagement:

- i. Clients add financial value by bringing in assets that are available in profits;
- ii. In order to build a base of longstanding customers, any price that the business has to suffer can be seen as a future investment; and
- iii. It is imperative that the client experiences good management, which is vital for the long-term achievement of the business and its profitability.

To fully appreciate the above principles, a business needs to establish interrelatedness through all functions of the business that involve the client. This interrelatedness goes beyond simply linking operational areas and needs an in-depth incorporation of client experience throughout the life cycle of the client. The researcher also intends to advance a more comprehensive consideration of how this phenomenon is defined.

1.5 Problem statement

Clients are viewed as the most significant constituent in any organisation, and this includes the retail banking sector, and if there are no clients the bank has no reason to survive (Rustenburg and Steenbeek, 2019). The intense competition and rivalry that exists within the banking industry has resulted in the commercial poaching of clients between banks. This problem has escalated in the previous decade with the introduction of new

product offerings that have been tailor-made to suit each client's varying needs and lifestyle changes. This means that banks have identified the fact that the needs of each client are different and, as such, banks have grasped the importance of tending to the needs of each individual customer (Coetzee, 2018; Makhaya and Nhundu, 2015). According to Atiyah (2017), the client is at the epicentre of every business and henceforth the client plays a meaningful role in ensuring that a business is profitable and successful. This is a complete paradigm shift from a few decades ago when business seemed to place less emphasis on the significance of client management (Goyal and Srivastava, 2015).

By definition, engagement involves interaction and interaction can be understood as communication or direct involvement between, in this instance, the organisation and the clients (Zhang *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, consumer engagement cannot be spoken about without addressing the direct and significant influence of communication on client engagement. Effective client engagement requires developing a value proposition (Song *et al.*, 2016), and then formulating pathways to effectively communicate it to the clients. The developed value proposition needs to be effectively conveyed to clients in their preferred communication channels.

Furthermore, the entire organisation must be in a position to comprehend and communicate the value proposition and the customer engagement strategies (Ateba, Maredza, Ohei, Deka and Schutte, 2015). To succeed as a business, it is important to focus on clients, because they are the reason why the business exists in the first place and they resemble the bloodstream of the organisation. Companies that perform well are those that focus on their client base because this enables them to device products and services that are tailor made for their client base. It also places the company in a position to be able to identify, obtain, satisfy, and retain profitable clients (Agolla, Makara and Monametsi, 2018). Client engagement places customers at the heart of the organisation (Bryson, 2017) and treats them as the most valuable asset of the business. This means that companies must effectively interact with its client to keep up with their ever-

changing needs. Communication with the clients is therefore vital for the success of a business.

Organisations historically created goods and services that they retailed, and clients had little or no choice but to buy what the suppliers provided - a push approach or inside-out approach (Brown and Brown, 2014). In today's economy, organisations are being driven by clients who demand more and better, in order to compete globally and preserve their competitive advantage (Ripsam and Bouquet, 2016). As an outcome of the intense rivalry among businesses, client experience seems to have attained greater significance than before. With the introduction of multi-media and multi-channels, communication is no longer a one-way stream where organisations manage communication to the client. Gillis *et al.* (2016) claim that client engagement also involves creating a platform which is conducive for clients to communicate their experience with the organisation. Kurokawa, Schweber and Hughes (2017) add that without communication there is no client engagement. Clients are now in a place to give feedback to merchants and can effortlessly interconnect their experiences with similar brands, to other clients and to potential new clients (Prentice and Loureiro, 2018). Likewise, Brown, Jones and Wang (2016) suggest that because of these expansions and their connected complexity, client management can no longer be treated as 'business as usual'.

ARB, like any other retail bank, would like to preserve its prevailing client base and attract new clients through client engagement. To attain this end, there seems to be a need for ARB to improve its strategies for client retention, client engagement and client satisfaction. Research has indicated that it is five times more expensive to acquire new clients than to retain existing ones (Lancaster and Massingham, 2017). Consequently, it is of paramount importance for businesses to strike a sustainable balance between acquisition, engagement and retention. In light of this, there needs to be an alignment of the agility of an organisation's strategies with client engagement. In this context, organisations have an inadequate understanding of client knowledge as established within the client-specific contexts and there is limited prominence given to iterative dialogue to perfect and enhance ideas (Lancaster and Massingham, 2017).

Engaged clients are not just devoted, they also purchase supplementary products, and are the most reliable, dependable and effective transaction and communication channels currently accessible to marketers (Gupta, Pansari and Kumar, 2018). Given all the known facts related to client satisfaction and the limited information on what constitutes client retention (Lemon and Verhoef (2016), an investigation is warranted into what innovations should be adopted by ARB regarding client engagement in order to achieve client retention. With much competition in the banking industry, it is imperative for ARB Retail Bank to keep their current clientele satisfied with a vast range of client services so that clients remain loyal instead of 'jumping ship'.

1.6 Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to develop a comprehensive CEM framework. This study will use ARB as a case study to develop a conceptual CEM framework that can be applied to the South African retail banking sector. The CEM framework should present general guidance to the South African retail banking sector on conceivable ways to align their banks to be more client focused and improve client engagement to enhance client loyalty and retention.

1.7 Research objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- i. To critically review existing ARB client engagement strategies to determine if they are sufficient to ensure client retention;
- ii. Develop a client engagement framework for ARB that can be used in emerging economies;
- iii. To assess ARB's prevailing client engagement management strategies and their practical implementation; and

- iv. Define client engagement in different socioeconomic environments and contexts.

The research objectives in conjunction with the following research questions will assist the researcher to conduct this study.

1.8 Research questions

Client engagement has been identified as one of the important facets of business success (Swinscoe, 2018). It has also been noted that with the ever-changing client needs and expectations within a competitive business landscape, the phenomenon of managing client engagement has become essential to ensure sustainable business success (Buttle, and Maklan, 2019). As the importance of client engagement has become more significant, so also has its complexity and diversity, so much so that managing it effectively and holistically has become a challenge (van der Merwe, 2014). According to Richards and Hallberg (2015), research queries are modelled to comprehend the nature of actual circumstances. In this respect, the following research questions have been formulated for purposes of this study:

- I. How does ARB's existing client engagement model influence business performance and client retention?
- II. Are there discrepancies between theoretical client engagement management strategies and their practical implementation?
- III. Does client engagement differ with different socio-economic settings?
- IV. Is the concept of client engagement contexts specific?

The research questions will assist in further probing the client engagement strategies employed by the bank.

1.9 Research methodology

The research methodology to be utilised for this research study will be qualitative in nature since it aligns with the aim of the study which is to develop a conceptual CEM framework that can be applied to the South African retail banking sector using ARB as a case study. The study will analyse the responses of the participants by using a semi-structured schedule. The qualitative approach therefore concerns itself with discovering the 'what', 'how' or 'why' queries of an occurrence rather than 'how many' or 'how much', which are answered by quantitative methodologies (Tjora, 2018; Alase, 2017).

Qualitative research is concerned with the individuality of each precise situation and the focus is therefore on the superiority and complexity of gathered information (Azungah, 2018). This study will analyse strategies that ARB, and more specifically Retail Banking can use to determine their existing levels of client engagement and retention. This will be achieved by analysing data drawn from semi-structured schedules with internal clients and internal senior managers.

Research allows the researcher to inquire about phenomena holistically and not in isolation (Sultan, 2018). This is in line with the premise that if organisations need to address customer engagement issues, they should not only look at components of the phenomenon but should consider the phenomenon holistically as well. As is consistent with qualitative methodologies, knowledge is best gained by asking questions in a natural setting. During this process, the result of the research should ideally not be influenced by any preconceived assumptions that might limit it but should instead allow the truth to emerge.

1.10 Sampling

In qualitative investigations only a sample, namely a subcategory of inhabitants, is designated for any given study to determine the findings of the phenomena. The research objectives regulate which and how many elements of the population are selected (Etikan

and Bala, 2017). A non-probability purposive sampling technique will be used to select the participants for this study. This research will target internal clients and internal managers for data collection purposes.

At the literature review phase, the researcher will review several customer engagement frameworks. From the reviewed literature, the researcher will identify customer engagement frameworks that will be critically reviewed. The selected customer engagement frameworks will be based on their relevance to the research aim of this study. The decision to choose these frameworks will be based on the approaches that the authors adopted, the way they developed their themes, and their overall perspectives of the customer engagement phenomenon. The researcher will evaluate how each perspective could influence or contribute to the customer engagement phenomenon.

Furthermore, in addition to the selected customer engagement frameworks, the researcher will utilize semi-structured schedules to collect relevant data for this study. The target population will include internal managers from the ARB Group. Non-probability sampling will be used with the purposive sampling technique to select a sample size. Non-probability sampling should be ideal for this study because the researcher has a specific purpose, which is to understand the perspectives of the targeted sample on the subject matter which is client engagement. All participants will be 18 years or older and will have a basic understanding of English.

1.11 Data collection

The researcher will rely on the semi-structured interview schedule as the data collection tool for this study as is deemed suitable for this specific qualitative research journey. The purpose of collecting data through semi-structured interview schedules is to see the world through the eyes of the participants (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell and Walter, 2016).

Different data collection methods will be used to provide robust answers to the research questions. The data collection methods for this study will mainly be based on their alignment with the qualitative research methodology. The following data collection methods will be considered:

1.11.1 Documents review

The researcher will identify different client engagement frameworks from previous studies by other scholars and critically review them. This will be done to add depth to the study and to gather more detailed information concerning the aspects and constructs of client engagement. The decision to select the work of specific scholars will be based on the approaches that the authors used an establishing conceptual framework and their overall viewpoints on the client engagement phenomenon. The researcher will evaluate how each perspective may influence and contribute to the client engagement phenomenon.

1.11.2 Interviews

The main aim of qualitative interviews is to comprehend the world from the perspective of the respondent or participant. This allows the researcher to learn and gain insights by asking questions in natural settings and allow the truth to emerge without predetermined expectations that may influence the outcome of the research. A semi-structured interview schedule will be used to minimise bias, while at the same time achieving a measure of structure, openness, and flexibility. One-on-one semi-structured interviews will be conducted to obtain the required data for this study. This should allow for conversation with the participants to explore the participant's perspective, views, and attitude about the client engagement phenomenon. The questions in the semi-structured interview schedule will be compiled to assist the researcher in collecting data from the participants and to answer the research questions.

Buschle, Reiter and Bethmann (2020) suggest the following guidelines when developing questions that encourage participants to be obliging and yield a response that the researcher can use and interpret:

Table 1.1: Guidelines when developing questions that encourage participants (Buschle, Reiter and Bethmann, 2020)

i. The questions must be as concise as possible and only data that is essential to the research problem must be requested.
ii. The researcher must use unpretentious, and unambiguous language.
iii. Unwarranted conventions implicit in the questions must be eliminated.
iv. The questions must be expressed in ways that do not contribute clues about preferred or more anticipated responses.
v. The researcher must check the soundness or consistency of each question.
vii. The researcher must determine in advance how reactions will be coded.
viii. The respondents' concerns must be captured fairly.
ix. Instructions must be unambiguous.
x. A rationale must be specified for all items with unclear resolutions.
xi. The questionnaire must be simple and look professional.
xii. A pilot test must be undertaken to check if the probable reaction was accomplished before the questions are transferred to the actual sample.
xiii. The questions must be scrutinised carefully to ensure that they cover the researcher's requirements.

The above factors as indicated in Table 1.1 will be taken into consideration while formulating the questions for the semi-structured interview schedule.

1.12 Data analysis

Content analysis will be practiced for content related to this study. In this study, data will be obtained through interviews. For this study, data obtained from the interviews will be categorised, themed, and coded by using the NVivo 11 software package. Furthermore, noteworthy quotations from the transcripts will be used to highlight major themes.

1.12.1 Content analysis

Content analysis is a systematic tactic of qualitative data analysis that recognises and reviews message content (Kim, Jang, Kim and Wan, 2018). Content analysis will be used to analyse data gathered from a managers and customer to understand their perspectives on the strategies being employed by ARB to retain its customers. A coding scheme for the data will be applied as part of the chosen research methodology. To provide the validity and consistency of the coding, and the categorising of the data, a sample set of data will be coded, categorised, and tested. If the data passes the consistency test, all data will be coded, and conclusions will be formalised.

1.12.2 Quality of data

The dependability of a qualitative study is frequently interrogated by positivists, especially since their notions of validity and reliability cannot be dealt with in a similar manner in practical work (Lichtman, 2013). Symon, Cassell and Johnson (2018) propose four principles that should be deliberated by qualitative researchers in search of a reliable study as indicated in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Four principles that can improve reliability (Symon, Cassell and Johnson, 2018)

<p>Credibility</p>	<p>In addressing credibility, agents endeavour to show that a factual depiction of the occurrence under study is being presented. Credibility overlaps with transferability and trustworthiness (Macnee and McCabe, 2008). The researcher will ensure credibility by clearly linking the findings from this study with reality to demonstrate the authenticity of the study.</p>
<p>Transferability</p>	<p>To permit transferability, adequate features of the setting of the fieldwork should be provided to enable a reader to resolve whether the existing setting is the same in another condition that the researcher is accustomed to, and if the results can be justified to another similar study. This study will ensure transferability by describing the research context and settings including considerations and assumptions that will be key to the research. This will ensure that the results can be applicable to different situations, different times, or different populations.</p>
<p>Dependability</p>	<p>The assembly of the dependability principle is difficult in qualitative work, although researchers should at least strive to allow a future agent to be able to replicate the study. This study will ensure that the findings from this study can be depended on by outlining the procedures that will be followed in the study from the research design, methods to be used in data collection, data analysis approaches and ultimately the findings.</p>
<p>Conformability</p>	<p>To attain conformability, researchers must take steps to demonstrate that findings emerge from the data and not their own predispositions. This study will ensure conformability by outlining the steps that will be followed in the study.</p>

All these aspects add to the quality of data collected. When collected data is credible and transferable it is dependable, and it will conform to the phenomenon under study. When the quality of the data captured is verified, then the data can be used for the study and assist in establishing the significance of the study.

1.13 Significance of the study

As competition in the retail banking sector has become global and focused during the past few years, the retail banking sector cannot compete on price and products only. The increase in competition may further cause a deterioration in client allegiance, as additional options will become accessible to patrons. This study intends to look at strategies that ARB could adopt to compete in this competitive environment.

Great deal of emphasis will be on client engagement. The study intends to highlight the importance of finding out who the profitable clients are, so that ARB can find ways to engage them and retain them. This can be achieved through effective client engagement. This study will critically review existing ARB client engagement strategies to determine if they are sufficient to ensure client retention. The study will emphasise the implications of client satisfaction and service delivery in client engagement.

This study will also define client engagement in the context of the developing countries and develop a client engagement framework that is relevant to emerging economies using ARB as case study. The framework can be used as a general guideline for the retail banking industry in the developing world. This research may also benefit both employers and employees within the ARB Group, as well as all stakeholders within the retail banking sector, and may assist them to deliver on clients' expectations, drive continuous client engagement and improve client retention which will lead to better business performance.

1.14 Key terms

Specific terms relevant within the banking industry are summarised as indicated in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Key banking terminology in this study

Client engagement	This is considered as a behavioural manifestation towards the brand or firm that goes past transactions (Dolan, Conduit, Fahy and Goodman, 2016).
Client management	A business model that permits organisations to design and deliver an exclusive and distinctive client experience (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, 2016).
Client focused	Identifying the requests of clients and aligning products and services that meet those requirements, ensuring that the entire organisation, and not just frontline service staff who place its clients first (Brown and Brown, 2014).
Client Centricity	An eco-system and operating model that enables a business to provide and deliver a unique and distinctive customer experience (Dew, 2018; Chopra and Rajendran, 2017).
Client satisfaction	A measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or outstrip client expectations (Staffaroni, 2019).
Client loyalty	The tendency of a client to select one business or product over another for a particular need consistently and advocating for the product or service (Sarapaivanich and Patterson, 2015).
Client value	A client's apparent inclination for and evaluation of product traits, attribute performances, and consequences arising from the use that facilitate (or block) the achieving of customer's goals and purposes in those situations (Aliakbarlou, Wilkinson and Costello, 2018).

Client culture	Client culture exemplifies mutual standards across the entire business that interprets into behaviours in all tasks that are associated with and dedicated to creating superior client services in a profitable way. A consistent exceptional grander package is distributed across the entire value chain (Brown and Brown, 2014).
Business performance	Measures how effective the business is against its set targets and aims.
Socio-economic environment	Field of study that explores the social and economic traits to understand how the amalgamation of both influences something (Business Dictionary, 2018).
Developed economies	Countries or nations with higher measures of economic growth and security, high levels of gross domestic product (GDP), industrialisation and general standards of living (Kuepper, 2018).
Developing economies	Countries or lower-level established countries with lower living standards, and an under-developed industrialised base and lower human development index (IGI Global, 2018).

1.15 Limitations

The research will focus primarily on a detailed study of client engagement strategies within the Absa Retail Bank. Utilising a qualitative methodology may result on the one hand in rich data as gathered from participants, yet, on the other hand pose challenges to the researcher regarding her being subjectively involved, as she is employed as a senior employee of Absa Retail Bank. The fact that the study will only be done within ARB could also serve as a limitation as the views and experiences on client engagement within other retail banks will not be acknowledge as part of the study (this is as a result of time

limitations to the researcher and challenges related to intellectual property regarding client engagement strategies within different retail banks).

1.16 Conclusion

Clients are the lifeline of a business and determine the success or failure of an entity because they are the source of revenue and profits (Agrawal and Rahman, 2015). This implies that client satisfaction, client centricity, client experience, and client loyalty are aspects that should be at the heart of a business. Increased competition has placed a spotlight on the importance of clients as the bloodstream of companies, amplifying the focus on client interaction and client engagement that ensures client retention which is a prerequisite for a sustainable profitable business.

Competition amongst the retail banking sector is ferocious, and even though the entry requirements are excessive, many niche banks are competing in the South African market for clients, especially for the wealthy clients (PWC-banking, 2017). The unrelenting upsurge in competition makes it more problematic for banks to retain clients. These developments have reemphasised the importance of clients, as companies realise that they may lose business if they do not give enough attention to their clients. As a result, client retention has never been more important in the South African banking industry.

There is enormous diversity in the retail banks (PWC-banking, 2017) and for the banks to be able to deliver on client needs, it is first vital to acquire networks and then attend to the prospective client's requirements. Banks can achieve this through effective client engagement which can help them to understand their clients better thereby placing themselves in a position to develop products and services that satisfy client needs and requirements.

Understanding clients is even more challenging because the clients themselves are becoming more sophisticated and accustomed to what they want, hence raising service

delivery expectations (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Strategies that consider the multifaceted aspects of CRM including socio-economic aspects as well as the diverse features of client engagement, will be used to conduct a qualitative study to explore and design an understanding of client engagement within the South African retail banking sector using ARB as case study. An interpretative phenomenological approach will be utilised in this study with the aid of interviews to extract data from the participants. The literature reviewed for this study is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of empirical and theoretical studies on the subject under investigation. It is aimed at revealing the gap in knowledge that this study attempts to fill. While organisations have continuously attempted to hear the 'voice of the client', clients have habitually played an inactive role as recipients of the organisation's improved actions (Palominos, Quezada and Gonzalez, 2019).

This chapter includes a discussion on client engagement, client management, client experience, client interaction, client centricity, client retention, client satisfaction, agility, engagement and alignment. Client value proposition (CVP) and client behaviour will also be covered. This study examines the CRM discourse in an effort to outline some of the strategies that can be employed to enhance client engagement in retail banks, with a specific focus on developing economies in Africa. The concept of client management that rests on client engagement, is central to the objectives of this study and is explored in detail below.

2.2 Client engagement

The concept of engagement has been discovered in the organisational behaviour literature as a means to clarify organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour and has been subsequently used as one means by which to predict financial performance (Mbama and Ezepue, 2018). Palmatier, Kumar and Harmeling (2017) maintain that engagement has also been deliberated in the marketing literature where it is proposed that it may be used as a representation ratio of the asset of a company's client relationships, based on the level to which clients have formed both emotive and coherent

bonds with a brand. Client engagement is considered as a behavioural relationship toward the brand or firm that goes past dealings (Moliner, Monferrer-Tirado and Estrada-Guillén, 2018).

So, King, Sparks and Wang (2016) mention that client engagement is a multifaceted concept encompassing intellectual, emotional and interactive aspects and plays a dominant role in the course of developing long-term intimate relationships with mutual benefits for organisations and clients. Giannakis-Bompolis and Boutsouki (2014) add that client engagement is a culture, and technology and innovations are central to sustaining a customer engagement philosophy. Petriwskyj, Gibson and Webby (2018) assert that understanding clients is one of the building blocks of client engagement. According to Erkan (2015), clients want personalised experiences, and they want something exclusively tailor-made for them which can be achieved through client brand engagement.

Zhang *et al.* (2018) mention that client or customer engagement can be understood as a business communication link that creates a relationship between clients and an organisation. In other words, client engagement involves creating a platform for clients to interact with the organisation and share their experience (Zhang *et al.*, 2017). An involved client is an individual that is faithful to an organisation's brand and dynamically endorses their products and facilities to those they are in contact with (Bricci, Fragata and Antunes, 2016). Ramaswamy and Ozcan (2016) postulate that the concept of client brand engagement entails creating a platform for an organisation's client to interact with the brand as well as other clients. Wheeler (2017) mentions that branding is critical to client engagement since it sets out client expectations for interacting with the organisation. Branding is also therefore very important for client engagement since it allows the organisation's client and other clients to share their experiences with the brand, leading to brand growth and loyalty (Lee and Workman, 2015).

Pearson (2016) suggests that clients who feel valued and important are likely to refer other clients and they are highly likely to stay loyal, which is extremely desirable for business success. Engaged clients drive word-of-mouth marketing, which is said to be ten

times more effective in echoing with a goal audience than television or reproduction advertising (Islam and Rahman, 2016). Gallup's (2014) study reveals that fully engaged customers buy more products and services, are loyal to the organisation and are more profitable than average clients. Therefore, Alvarez-Milan, Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch (2018) assert that client engagement entails customer interaction values which involve transactional relationships between the organisation and the clients.

Customer engagement places customers at the forefront (Bryson, 2017) and treats them as the most valuable assets of the business. Companies try to advance the fit between their offerings and client needs by surveying clients and introducing information from leading-edge clients into the firm (Scott, 2016). Chu, Lien and Cao (2019) maintain that engaged clients provide priceless criticism, extend the organisation's relations and present less danger to the organisation as their commitment is to look for solutions and not to revert to hostile attitudes such as lawsuits.

Wiggins (2020) also suggests that there are significant strategic fundamentals that require planning prior to informing engaged clients. These fundamentals are found in the majority of businesses; their personal profits are well recorded and include CVP, brand and in-house culture factors, and client experience. A value system that strengthens the formulated strategy and pathways is needed and it has to be so ingrained and instilled into the entire organisation that it becomes an organisational culture (Smith 2016).

Gallup (2014) categorises clients "into three distinct groups: fully engaged, indifferent, and actively disengaged". Fully engaged clients are passionately connected and realistically devoted. Fully engaged clients will go the extra mile to trace a favoured amenity or product, and they will not take alternatives. True product diplomats are an organisation's most treasured and lucrative clients. Uninterested clients have a firm mindset and have the boldness to remain neutral towards an organisation's products or amenities. Actively disengaged clients are expressly disconnected from an organisation and its amenities or products. They will eagerly change brands. If changing is problematic or not possible, actively disengaged clients may become extremely antagonistic towards

the organisation. Whichever way, actively disengaged clients are passionate to reveal to others their impression of the organisation, thus connecting client engagement to critical business outcomes (Gallup, 2014).

Gallup's (2014) study indicates that fully engaged clients are more devoted and lucrative than regular clients in good economic times. So, King, Sparks and Wang (2016) mention that effort is required in building effective client engagement strategies. Itani, Kassar and Loureiro (2019) postulate that a carefully crafted client engagement strategy will lead to sustainable mutual relationships with the clients which will enhance client loyalty and client retention.

Throughout a diversity of businesses and target markets, including business-to-consumer and business-to-business, Gallup's (2014) investigation has steadily indicated a strong connection between client engagement and critical business outcomes. Some of the basic and most fundamental principles of client engagement include fostering relationships with clients (Pansari and Kumar, 2017), and facilitating platforms to share feedback and customer centricity (Chou, 2019). Song, Cadeaux and Yu (2016) claim that effective customer engagement and client centricity entails coming up with a value proposition and then devising pathways to effectively communicate it to the clients. When clients trust they are receiving more out of a business, they give extra to it. Clients who are fully engaged signify an average of a 23% premium with regard to portion of wallet, profitability, revenue and affiliation growth, in comparison with that of an average client (Carter, 2016).

Buttle and Maklan (2019) assert that effective client engagement demands that there exists mutual relationship between the organisation and the clients. According to Hardwick and Anderson (2019), client engagement is all about fostering intimate mutual associations with clients which entails that bank employees must ensure complete and full interaction with clients. Kline *et al.* (2018) add that client engagement measurement entails gauging or evaluating the magnitude of client satisfaction or the extent and effectiveness of client engagement.

Lam, Sleep, Hennig-Thurau, Sridhar and Saboo (2017) highlight that an organisation's employees are at the frontline of provisioning the required customer experience which means that they are important in ensuring that efforts and plans to improve client engagement succeed. Gad (2016) cautions that it does not matter how good a company's client engagement strategy is, customer experience basically comes down to the staff who deliver it to the clients. Govindarajo, Mohanachandran and Ramulu (2014) warn that poor or low employee engagement can cause client engagement to suffer. Further, unengaged employees are unmotivated and unhappy, and unhappy employees cannot provide satisfactory services.

However, dynamically disengaged clients represent a 13% drop in those same dealings. The three items that yield the engagement score, as per Gallup (2014), include:

- i. The corporation always delivers on what they promise;
- ii. I feel gratified to be a company client; and
- iii. The corporation is the ideal corporation for people like me.

In the merchandising banking sector, fully engaged clients add 37% more yearly income to their chief bank than clients who are completely uninvolved (Gallup, 2014). Completely involved banking clients also have numerous banking products that include, amongst others, cheque and savings accounts, mortgages and vehicle loans. In addition, completely involved clients have more advanced deposit balances in their accounts than clients who are less involved. For organisations that are thoughtful about engaging clients, merely evaluating client engagement is insufficient (Gallup, 2014). Leaders must make every effort to attain the results that are significant to their company.

Leaders should take note that client engagement should be moved to the centre of the organisation's development strategy by considering the balanced and emotional facets of their client relations. Leaders should concentrate on justifiable change management strategies and merging client and employee strategies for top performance. Nevertheless, measurement for target action must be practical. By steadily pursuing client engagement outcomes yearly and establishing the correct data-based involvements, businesses can

guarantee that they are exploiting their client relations and securing higher sales, growth, and profitability (Gallup, 2014).

However, it is never an easy task to keep clients engaged, and there are challenges. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) mention that client engagement requires in-depth research to get a better understanding of clients and client segments as not all clients are the same; they come from and belong to different socio-economic backgrounds. Sewchurran, Dekker and McDonogh (2019) suggest that paying less attention to client background information can be detrimental to business performance because it can lead to the inability to design a suitable engagement strategy, thereby resulting in the failure to design products and services for specific market segments.

2.2.1 Antecedents to client engagement

To create engaged clients, a business should have precision and, more significantly, orientation of the main elements that yield client engagement. This means that the intention of a business or what they contemplate (value proposition), what they allude to (brand advertising) and what they offer (value delivered and client experience) should be in perfect accord (Leckie, Nyadzayo and Johnson, 2016). The world is competitive, over-communicated and commoditised with cumulative media weakening, client control and consumer cynicism, thus producing engaged clients is even more critical. Therefore, every communication and each client collaboration should be completely influenced, heightened and considered as a chance to create engaged clients, and as such, all interactions must be dependable and must work together to accomplish the desired objective (Rampton, 2015).

2.2.2 Impediments to client engagement

External challenges to maintaining engaged clients are indicated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: External challenges to maintaining engaged clients

i. Increasing commoditisation
ii. Rapid product innovation cycles
iii. Increasing communication
iv. Traditional media dilution
v. Message fatigue
vii. Shortage of time
viii. Growing choice and rivalry
ix. Greater client regulation and contact with information
x. Increasing customer cynicism
xi. No place to hide as the Internet and social media are so pervasive that client experiences are published in real time (Beckers and van Doorn, 2015; Santoro, Ferraris, Giacosa and Giovando, 2018)

These external challenges prove to be among the top ten impediments of client engagement. Scholars such as (Wining, 2017; Alvesson and Robertson, 2016; Moreno-Munoz, Bellido-Outeirino, Siano and Gomez-Nieto, 2016; Goyal and Srivastava, 2015) have identified the following challenges to client engagement:

- i. Separate ownership of key elements: Within the business, the promotion of the brand is conducted through marketing, the operations element works through customer experience, in-house culture by human resources, and there is no integration.

- ii. Created in isolation: There are times when the brand, culture and client tactics are created distinctly with no discussion or feedback from all the operational areas within the business.
- iii. Lack of consistent client experience: It must be noted that each division or operational area of the business must perform at its peak as there should be no inconsistency in the client experience.
- iv. Absence of combining client outcome or goal: Every operational area may have diverse dominant drivers: for example the division of marketing may be concentrating on effective client communication and competitive positioning; the department of sales may be concentrating on accomplishing their goals to drive sales and conversion; the operational function of the business may focus on ensuring effective business operations and client satisfaction; and human resources may be focusing on building a positive work environment that satisfies employees. While each division focuses in isolation to ensure that their goals and objectives are met, there is a need for a unifying client goal or outcome to deliver an integrated client experience.
- v. External agencies are also specialist in nature: Specialist consulting agencies are not capable of aligning all key essentials of a business: for example, the branding of a business will be supported by advertising agencies, the culture agencies concentrate on human resources, whilst the call centre and procedure consultants support the operations of the business.
- vi. Focus on satisfaction: Organisations focus on achieving client and staff satisfaction, and not achieving this may inhibit the attraction of involved clients. Satisfaction means meeting client and employee expectations. However, if an organisation does not set their aim to reach the highest possible level of client satisfaction, then the result will also be unprofitable and unsuccessful.

- vii. The connection between existing satisfaction procedures and financial metrics is delicate. Naturally, the belief is that it is logical to be good to the clients; nevertheless, distinctive client satisfaction measures do not offer strong associations to financial metrics. Scales and tactics are inconsistent throughout businesses as several practices and scales are used.
- viii. Lack of detailed client finances: A linked point is insufficient calculation around client finances and profitability. Classically, businesses have vigorous information on product profitability, however there is an absence of similar level of sturdiness with client finances.
- ix. Limited emphasis on strategic client feelings: Client experience intention is inclined to have constraints to physical components such as features, dependability, aptness, and feedback time. The emotive components, that is, what the consumer feels after a contact, is significantly overlooked.
- x. Lack of precision around what establishes a client experience: Organisations require a vibrant client experience report defining their exceptional strategic experience, which comprises physical components (what one delivers) and emotional components (how one wants the client to feel) to enable an exceptional client experience to be strategic, supervised and assessed.
- xi. There is a lack of the client's voice in the business: Client reviews are performed every four months or yearly, but they seldom permit the business to examine and act timeously.
- xii. Non-existence of staff engagement: This is a perilous aspect that is often overlooked yet engaged employees can either make or break the implementation of an organisation's strategy.

2.2.3 Moment of truth in client engagement

'Moment of truth' concentrates on the relations that are important to customers and on the technique frontline employees use to handle those first time or frequent contacts (Demangeot and Broderick, 2016). Miller (2017) believes that the moment of truth starts with all the employees and their ability to put clients at the centre of everything that they do. This contact comprises client attraction, awareness, discovery, cultivation, advocacy, purchase and use of a service. It should be measured by the separate experience during all points of contact against the individual's expectations. Leadership and culture of the organisation contribute to what happens to their clients, and leaders must establish this culture at all levels (Barnes and Kelleher, 2014). Solomon (2016) adds that the leadership of the company should create the right context within the organisation in order to enhance clients' experiences. According to Solomon (2016), the leadership of a company should create the right context within the organisation in order to enhance clients' experiences with service delivery and exceeding the client expectations will lead to delighted clients.

In recent years, established companies with widespread networks of frontline sales staff, and more so banks, retailers, airlines, and compulsory telecom providers, for example, have dedicated a great deal of money and determination to retaining their current clients (Mahapatra and Kumar, 2017). According to Wertz (2018), the costs of doing so tend to be much lower than those of acquiring new clients. The success of this strategy ultimately hinges on expanding the breadth and depth of client relationships, and on translating the resulting loyalty into higher sales of goods and services, as well as a healthier bottom line. Wertz (2018) believes that many businesses are falling short in this strategy. This prompts the need to explore strategies that drive client engagement.

2.2.4 Strategies to drive client engagement

With the upsurge of technological social media, clients are currently more knowledgeable. When designing a client engagement strategy, it is important to note that clients are fully engaged once their emotions are activated (Muzellec and O'Raghallaigh, 2018). Designing a client engagement strategy that underscores stimulating emotions such as happiness, excitement, feeling valued, and satisfaction will result in emotional engagement (Loureiro, Bilro and Japutra, 2019). The effective implementation of a client engagement strategy will benefit the organisation through an improved focus on the needs of clients, gathered via available communication platforms (Halvorsrud, Kvale and Følstad, 2016).

Due to the client remaining connected with current trends and being able to discover information whenever needed, it can be said that they now have the power to influence their own experience (Gallup, 2014). This trend has driven marketers to rethink how to get clients engaged. For a business to remain competitive, real-time, and personalised experiences need to get to clients as and when they need it.

Numerous technological methods are available to ensure client engagement, for example sales promotion through a mobile push notice that promotes a sale or an email that confirms an order. By endorsing applicable and steady interaction throughout the client experience, organisations have the chance to get involved with their customers whenever they want to (Gallup, 2014). The Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd (ANZ) is highlighted as an example of a company changing its marketing strategies to concentrate on its client needs (ANZ, 2019).

ANZ established its client experience on ease of use rather than the client dedicating all their time to banking (ANZ, 2019). ANZ created a 'goMoney' mobile app that has a robust analytical substance which permits clients to examine their accounts and transact by

paying bills or transferring money. The mobile app permits ANZ to quickly check if a consumer is performing an operation that is taking up too much time and can advise the consumer of a faster method of performing their transactions. ANZ learned that rather than involving themselves with the client, their concentration was on how the client could engage with the bank which would ultimately ensure client satisfaction.

The power of a client is growing, which means that businesses should re-evaluate their strategies to completely exceed client expectations instead of making client engagement another marketing campaign. In this regard, the researcher decided to lean heavily on the work conducted by McClafferty (2015) regarding projected strategies to drive client engagement. For example, frontline staff should be entrusted to resolve small issues and should be rewarded accordingly (a discretionary credit). When staff is permitted to deal with resolving client difficulties, it brings about higher client loyalty retention. McClafferty (2015) also believes that a 'wow' experience is ten times more notable and will encourage more recommendations than a typical experience.

McClafferty (2015) recommends that in order to turn a client experience around, the company should not put blame on a process or human error but should instead use the prospect to advance the client service. Clients favour honesty and transparency and they in turn respond with more patience than is anticipated. McClafferty (2015) shares his experience that instead of getting irritated with a frustrated and disruptive client, he explained that he was doing his best to help, upon which the client calmed down and apologised and thanked him for a job well done. In conclusion, he states that when a hard-won client leaves the company, the best preparation is to speak to the client directly to establish the motives for leaving. For example, an email is directed to a client who requests to cancel their service with the following distinctive content:

- i. Subject: Did we do something wrong?
- ii. Body: Hi [client name], we're sorry that you cancelled. Did we do anything wrong? Thanks for giving us a go. Dan and Alex.

The responses are actionable as they will help highlight blind spots and arrange areas of improvement in a business (McClafferty, 2015). Furthermore, this kind of engagement with clients will foster a new system of client management. Du Plessis and de Vries (2016) add that, at the very least, the organisation should carry out a survey to get a basic understanding of the customer segment, their requirements and expectations so as to enable the organisation to come up with a properly designed client engagement strategy. Noe and Kodwani (2018) advise that education and ongoing training of employees is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of a client engagement strategy.

2.2.5 Client engagement, organisation, and the socio-economic environment

Organisations exist to serve the clients (Broschak, 2015), and simultaneously make a profit and ensure that the business survives. It is therefore imperative to comprehend the socio-economics dynamics and how they influence client engagement. It is also important to look at how the client engagement concept is viewed in different contexts in different socio-economics environments. This section will look at the connection between client engagement and different socio-economic environments.

Many different definitions of organisations have been set forth however they have certain fundamentals or essential elements. According to (Bryson) 2018, an organisation is a social entity with a shared goal and is intertwined with and influenced by exogenous aspects of the environment within which it exists. Basically, an organisation infers configuring and combining activities, which implies, people collectively working together in co-dependency for a common goal (Bryson, 2018). The idea of interconnectedness means the existence of a social system. Scholars such as Edmondson (2018); Ahrne, Brunsson and Seidl (2016) and Nicolson (2015) postulate that organisations consist of:

- I. Goal-oriented arrangements - people with purpose;
- II. Psychosocial systems - people interacting in groups;
- III. Technological systems - people using knowledge and techniques; and

- IV. An integration of structured activities - people working together in patterned relationships.

There is a plethora of organisations such as, corporations, governments, non-governmental organisations, charities, not-for-profit corporations, partnerships, and many more, but for the purpose of this study, the researcher will consider client engagement from the perspective of corporations that exist for profit making such as banks, specifically ARB.

Based on the ideas of pure capitalism, organisations used to exist only for-profit maximisation with no regard to the socio-economic aspects of the environments they operated in. Glavas and Mish (2015) suggest that businesses exist not only for profit making but also to uphold the social, economic, environmental, and political system. Investors and other financiers these days also focus not only on financial performance, but also on the non-financial measures due to increased awareness on issues relating to the environment and the ethical conduct of enterprises (Kaya and TureGun, 2014).

This significant shift in investor perspective from the historical notion that businesses should focus only on shareholders' profit maximisation to the modern-day investor or financier who further looks into social, ethical and sustainability issues has somehow compelled businesses to view their entities as components of a larger socio-economic environment (Waddell, 2017). Sustainability whether in the context of the environment or in the context of sustained growth of clients and profitability can only be realized if an organisation has the capacity to retain clients (Schaltegger and Burritt, 2018). Client retention in turn necessitates client management initiatives such as client engagement.

Client engagement is a multidimensional concept that is complex, but if properly grasped and implemented it has the potential to significantly enhance business performance and value creation (Fernandes and Esteves, 2016). The fact that client engagement plays a central role in an organisation's endeavour to succeed, makes it imperative for this study to explore the socio-economic dynamics of client engagement and organisations.

Organisations regardless of their type or industry they operate in exist in different socio-economic environments. Jackson (2016) suggests that organisations are sub-systems of a bigger system which is the environment within which they operate and exist. These broader systems or environments are set up and located in various economies that can range from so called developed economies to developing economies and in between. This in turn makes it imperative that organisations pay more attention to environmental aspects.

In this study, the researcher will consider viewpoints on socio-economic development based on the 'Four World' principles (Lessem, 2001). The 'Four Worlds' is an allegory for cultural forms that can be found in the four corners of the world (Asma and Walid, 2018). Lessem (2001) advocates for a model for organisations that is based on the consideration of the four components: competitive, co-operative, rationale, and holistic. This model is based on the notion that organisation should try to balance these four elements by creating a business that is competitive, co-operative, rationale, and holistic. An organisation can achieve this by fully comprehending the 'four knowledge worlds", in other words, the organisation has to see things not from a materially-based factors of production view-point (land, labour, and capital), but from a knowledge-based perspective.

This model criticises the narrow and limited focus on western culture, which has seen organisations disregarding the advantages of other cultures. This is not ideal since other cultures have a lot to offer and an inclusive approach is likely to result in a balanced perspective that can make organisations flexible and capable of operating in different socio-economic environments. Such an approach will enable an organisation to come up with client engagement strategies that are suitable and flexible enough to be effective in different socio-economic environments. Integration of different cultures will present opportunities for organisations to adopt a more balanced business systems which factors in dissimilar cultures.

The 'Four Worlds' is a metaphor for Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern cultural types that can be found in society, economic, and political environments. The goal of the "Four Worlds" model is to encourage a contemporary perspective that cuts across cultural divides and thus inspire socio-economic, socio-political, and organisational transformation (Kuzior, Liakisheva, Denysiuk, Oliinyk and Honchar, 2020). It discourages development of a business completely based on commercial or technological perspective with little or no regard for cultural and socio-economic perspectives (Mohelska and Sokolova, 2018; Sewchurran *et al.* 2019). This model sheds light on how an organisation should approach its business strategies and the same approach can be applied to client engagement strategies where companies develop their client engagement strategies based on the "Four Worlds" perspective.

Table 2.2: The 'Four Worlds' (Lessem, 2001)

<p>Northern: Rational – Sustainable (effective organizational system)</p> <p>This 'World' provides internal networks and a configuration that conserves resources, to harness core competence and distribute resources evenly. Cultures in this 'World' have a need for effective systems, and therefore, accentuate sustainability more than competitiveness. Scandinavian countries, France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland are in this quadrant.</p>
<p>Eastern: Holistic – Chaordic (business ecosystems)</p> <p>Eastern-ness goes beyond boundaries and destroys them, between people, individuals, organizationally, or societal and the entire world. This 'World' promotes dissolution of the individual, corporate, or national ego through transcendent processes, rather than material structures, deleting boundaries between persona and institution, as well as self and other. It is about connections – massive changes in interconnectivity. It is</p>

<p>based on relationships and growth, growing from one another and things being inseparably interrelated. Economies in this 'World' are Japan, India, China, and Korea.</p>
<p>Western: Pragmatic – Competitive (individual freedom)</p> <p>This emerges out of the spirit of freedom. Pragmatism is linked to both individualism and realism. Cultures in this sphere are practically orientated, seeking to understand and control, and to secure competitive advantage through exploiting resources and opportunities.</p>
<p>Southern: Humanism – Co-operative business as community</p> <p>Southern-ness allows people to retain a living record of evolution through the stories told. Cultures in this 'World' are based on shared values in which individual ownership; claims to land and capital do not traditionally exist. The focus is on community specifically and society generally. Southern Africa economies are in this category.</p>

The 'Four Worlds' perspective contends that businesses should not rely solely on competitive, sustainable, or co-operative tactics. These aspects must be combined to create a balanced approach to improve effectiveness. This implies that businesses do not have to be completely be market oriented, but should also consider resources that are interlinked with the business operations such as human resources, natural resources and the environment within which the business operates (Fernando, Jabbour and Wah, 2019). Considering such perspectives changes the way an organisation views client management and client engagement, it influences how client engagement is developed, viewed, and delivered to different socio-economic environments.

All in all, it seems that client engagement is a phenomenon that exists within a broader system and developing it and delivering it effectively to improve client retention requires that organisation give significant attention to different socio-economic environments. Creating a client engagement strategy based on a deep understanding of the socio-

economic dynamics within the organisation's current and potential client base and the broader different socio-economic environments will place the company in a position to focus on specific different client needs which will likely improve the design and implementation of client engagement (Breidbach and Brodie, 2017). This may also place the organisation in a position to enhance customer satisfaction and improve client retention levels.

Client engagement by definition entails that an organisation can only intimately engage with clients if it fully understands the characteristics of the client, such as the specific socio-economic backgrounds of the clients and their needs and requirements (Sewchurran *et al.* 2019; Agarwal, Brem and Grottke, 2018). Realising the socio-economic dynamics of clients has the potential to assist the organisation to improve the way in which they manage clients according to their different needs and preferences (Lau, Gonzalez, Barnett, Kim, Saifan and Brookman-Fraze, 2018). Lack of understanding of clients' needs and requirements can result in a poor client engagement strategy emanating from the disregarding of unique aspects that define certain socio-economic groups.

Understanding of the different socio-economic backgrounds and environments should pave the way for client experience transformation through effective client engagement which could enable the organisation to develop a deeper comprehension of what the clients' value most (Beckford, 2019). This should enable the organisation to design a well-informed client engagement strategy based on the deeper understanding of their clients' needs. Moreover, it should allow the organisation to arm its employees with the right approach and inspire them to deliver on their promises.

If an organisation manages to understand socio-economic aspects of both its clients and the environment within which it operates, it will be able to effectively engage with its clients, which usually leads to customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and improved customer retention (Pansari and Kumar 2017). In the same vein, poor client engagement practices could be a testimony, at least to a certain extent, of poor understanding of the

different socio-economic backgrounds and environments. All of the above implies that understanding socio-economic backgrounds enables the organisation to design tailor-made products and services which will lead to clients that are satisfied and happy.

2.2.6 Summary of client engagement

In order for organisations to survive the aggressive competition, keeping clients satisfied and continuously increasing market share is of utmost importance (Amoako, 2019). This implies that client engagement and the ensuing relationships is imperative and determines to a greater extent the success or failure of a business. Nevertheless, even though organisations understand that they have to manage client efficiently through effective client engagement in order to ensure sustainable growth and enhance business performance, practical effective engagement with clients have proven to be complicated. The client engagement approaches that have been employed in some instances have failed to deliver desired outcomes of client satisfaction and client retention because of the multifaceted nature of client engagement and its relationship with socio-economic aspects.

It is evident that organisations need to comprehend the importance of client engagement to improve client satisfaction, client loyalty and client retention. Organisation have therefore been developing client engagement strategies with the aim of improving client satisfaction and ultimately client retention. The client engagement strategies and services offered in different socio-economic environments should differ because the customer belongs to different socio-economic backgrounds (Sewchurran *et al.* 2019). In a developed economy, clients are more urbane, complicated, demanding, and consequently the service levels are higher (Youssef, Johnston, AbdelHamid, Dakrory and Seddick, 2018). In the developing world, clients are generally modest and less demanding, and their level of complexity is relatively lower (Arikan, 2017). Even though differences exist, the fact remains that the client centricity approach must always be the focus

irrespective of the socio-economic environments. Clients still want to be engaged effectively and treated with respect during interactions. There are also effects of globalisation that organisations need to take into serious consideration and not disregard. Clients in some developing economies are quickly changing thereby developing and becoming more demanding (Ansong and Boateng, 2019).

2.3 Client management

Pansari and Kumar (2017) observe that the rationale behind engaged clients is that they play a pivotal role in viral marketing by providing referrals and/or recommendations for specific services. Some critical elements of engagement must involve connection, emotional involvement, and participation. Desai (2018) provides a theoretical lens through which one can investigate stakeholder engagement in different organisational situations. To this end, this study draws analytical insights from their work for the purposes of examining the extent of the impact of client engagement in the development of a client base for the ARB Group in SA.

Kranzbühler, Kleijnen, Morgan and Teerling (2018) maintain that client management research has evolved and has had a significant impact on the discipline of marketing. In an increasingly networked society where clients can interact easily with each other and organisations through social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, propose that customer engagement has become important in client management. Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2010) provide the following analogy: in the era of new media, managing customer relationships is like playing pinball. Companies serve up a 'marketing ball' (brands and brand-building messages) into a cacophonous environment, which is then diverted and often accelerated by new media 'bumpers', which change the offering's course in chaotic ways.

After the marketing ball is in play, marketing managers continue to guide it with the agile use of 'flippers', but the ball does not always go where it is intended to, and the slightest miscue can be amplified into a catastrophic crisis. What is emerging is that customers can co-create value and a competitive strategy and can collaborate in the firm's process (Farquhar, and Robson, 2017) and it is important that organisations leverage or use this to their full advantage (Gamble, Clinton and Díaz-Moriana, 2020

Hilton, Hajjhashemi, Henderson and Palmatier (2020) define client management as the manner in which an organisation brings into line its resources and deploys any set of business techniques, over and above sales and service, to acquire new customers, and to transform how existing clients relate to the company as buyers of its products and services. The definition of client management seems to have an in-depth connotation as opposed to one that merely defines client management as managing client relationships (Hilton, Hajjhashemi, Henderson and Palmatier, 2020).

Client management has also been defined as a phenomenon that incorporates all systems, processes and applications needed to manage the client relationship, namely client engagements (Salesforce, 2018). This definition is more elaborate than because it takes into account other aspects of the organisational system that are not normally directly associated with client management. Interestingly, Chopra and Rajendran (2017) defines client centricity as a method and functioning model that allows a business to plan and provide exceptional and outstanding client experiences. Ugoani (2019) mentions that good business performance and sustainable results hinge on client centricity. Customer centricity is ignored mainly because it does not bring immediate tangible benefits (Siggelkow and Terwiesch, 2019), which are usually only realised in the long term.

The design of a client engagement strategy allows an organisation to gain, maintain and establish targeted clients effectively to the advantage of staff, clients, and investors. Contemporary definition not only focuses on how the organisation and shareholders benefit, but takes into consideration the client, the employees, and other stakeholders, which is the same philosophy that is adopted scholars such as Ching'andu (2017).

Contemporary definitions maintain that client management consists of different components or constructs, such as CRM, account management, client service and client data management (Fernandes and Pinto, 2019). However, some organisations have unconsciously adopted and based their operations on one or more of these client management components or constructs. Successful client management entails a business model that revolves around the client: managing clients from the acquisition phase, through to retention, capable processes, systems and leadership (Van Tonder, and Petzer, 2018).

2.3.1 Client relationship management

Cuevas, Donaldson and Lemmens (2016) maintain that CRM characterises an organisation's style by establishing a full understanding about client actions and preferences, to ultimately develop programmes and plans that persuade clients to constantly improve their relations with the business. Most organisations concentrate on the bottom line or the financial side of the business; this in itself is not a problem if equal attention is given to client relationships (Stone, Woodcock, Ekinci, Aravopoulou and Parnell, 2019). Banks with a focus on retail banking who are not capable of reacting to a client's views will face a rapid loss to their competitors in their clientele and profitability. New technological methods are constantly changing the way businesses interact with their consumers, which ultimately brings about greater collaboration amongst the various functional areas of the business. Aissa and Thabit (2019) advise that the use of CRM has a direct effect on customer satisfaction; and client satisfaction has vital implications for the performance of a company due to its ability to improve client loyalty.

Client engagement has significant implications on the performance of a business because it has the potential to improve client satisfaction which leads to loyalty and client retention (Mbama and Ezepue, 2018). CRM has profound effects on client engagement, it can be used as a platform to effectively engage with clients. CRM allows the

organisation to manage and control its engagement with potential and current client base. At the heart of CRM is client information that can be analysed to improve business relationships with clients with the ultimate goal of client retention through effective engagement (Law and Chung, 2020).

CRM can aid the development of mutual relationships, effective engagements and useful interaction between a company and its clients (Iriqat and Daqar, 2017). It can be used as a comprehensive tactic that empowers the company to identify, attain, retain, and manage profitable clients through developing and maintaining sustainable relationships with those clients (Roberts-Lombard, 2020). CRM packages enables companies to track and record activities of clients' engagement with the organisation. Such packages enable efficient analysis of client data and provides company policy makers with a platform to devise client engagement strategies that are well informed and based on client needs (Formisano, Cavacece, Fedele, Tartaglione and Douglas, 2019).

Technological advancements have seen the development of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter which has created new advanced possibilities for CRM (Makudza, 2020). These platforms offer companies access to client information that enables companies to better comprehend the needs and wants of the clients. Furthermore, these platforms present golden opportunities for companies to monitor client activities and effectively engage with clients through social CRM. The paradigm of client engagement with social CRM include communication with clients, engaging in manging online client communities, and utilising mobile technology (Singh, Chakraborty, Biswas and Majumdar, 2020). All these constructs offer opportunities that can be exploited by companies to fully interact and engage with client.

Mukhopadhyay (2020) points out that some organisations are recognising that they need to work together with the client in order to build a close collaborative relationship. True client focus requires a business to move away from the traditional product-centric opinion

of clients to a thorough client-centric opinion of all properties, products, history, and relations with their clients. However, Goodman (2019) claims that companies only fully engage with clients before they buy their products because of their main focus which is to sell products and services to make quick returns. Ultimately only a multi-dimensional insight can enable organisations to recognise high-value clients and to determine the applicable action plans to solve client concerns and cross-sell other services.

A comprehensive transformation of client intelligence, business processes and policies are essential for a multi-dimensional insight into the client. Different authors define the term 'CRM' differently. However, the most critical elements of CRM include the value of the client, a holistic approach, and technology empowerment (Cuevas *et al.*, 2016). CRM is a comprehensive approach to creating, maintaining, and expanding client relationships (Al-Serhan, 2020). Responsibility of CRM rests with the entire organisation and not a single department. In this way, they suggest that CRM becomes a way of thinking about and dealing with client relationships - it becomes a strategy (Kumar and Misra, 2020).

According to Angelini, Ferretti, Ferrante and Graziani (2017), an organisational strategy that does not serve to create, maintain, or expand relationships with clients does not serve the organisation. If CRM is implemented effectively, it can serve as a benchmark for every strategy in an organisation. Cuevas *et al.* (2016) offer a definition of CRM that is similar to that of Wells and Foxall (2012). Cuevas *et al.* (2016) and Gupta (2019) describe CRM as a broad strategy and method of getting, retaining, and associating with selective clients to create greater value for the company and the clients.

Cuevas *et al.* (2016) state that CRM encompasses the integration of marketing, sales, client service and the supply-chain functions of the organisation to achieve greater efficiencies and effectiveness in delivering client value. The main purpose of CRM is to increase marketing productivity, which is achieved by growing marketing efficiency and by enhancing marketing effectiveness (Valmohammadi, 2017). An effective CRM allows the company to tailor make products and services for each client through gathering information across client interactions and processing it to uncover hidden trends that will

be used to customise products and services offered to that client. In CRM, marketing competency is attained because accommodating and combined processes help in the reduction of transaction expenses and overall growth expenses of the organisation (Alanzeh, Jawabreh, Al Mahmoud and Hamada, 2018).

Two significant practices of CRM consist of client business development and building partnerships with the most valuable clients that would lead to enhanced shared wealth creation (Markeeva, 2020). Zwakala, Steenkamp and Haydam (2017) maintain that forming value for clients by providing notable experiences is becoming a gradually employed strategy. Wiggins (2020) are of the view that the biggest challenge with client engagement in the creation of value for most companies is that it challenges the traditional. Although a product or a service may be slightly more expensive, the clients are, in the main, willing to invest in value added to the product or services (Fernandes and Pinto, 2019).

Mohammed, Rashid and Tahir (2017) take a completely different view of CRM. They see it as a technology that mediates between client management activities in all stages of a relationship - from client identification, client magnetism and client retention, to client expansion. The right systems and technology are a prerequisite for improved management of client engagement as well as to develop and enhance customer satisfaction (Cui and Wu, 2017). Considering the ever-changing and evolving market landscape, innovation and technology becomes a necessity for effective client engagement in order for the organisations to adapt to new ways of doing business and thereby staying relevant (La Rocca, Moscatelli, Perna and Snehota, 2016).

This is in agreement with the perspective offered by Gaur and Afaq (2020) that CRM enquiry can be organised along the client cycle, including acquisition, growth and retention strategies. Gaur and Afaq (2020) contend that early discovery and stoppage of client attrition can improve the total lifetime of the client base if efforts are focused on the retention of valuable clients. Salesforce (2019) defines CRM as methods, software and typically internet competences that will assist an organisation to manage client relations

in a structured method. They maintain that CRM is a tactic to maximise client value through segregating the management of client relationships (Salesforce, 2019). It is also well defined as an all-embracing tactic that seamlessly integrates deals, client service, marketing, field support and extra functions that have a direct influence on clients. CRM is a notion related to how an organisation can keep its most lucrative clients and at the same time decrease costs, while also increasing the standards of interactions to consequently maximise the revenues (Salesforce, 2019).

2.3.2 Benefits of a client relationship management system

A CRM system connects the contrasting client records that reside in operational legacy systems (Farhan, Abed and Ellatif, 2018). The full amalgamation of these systems and their associated business processes forms the basis for CRM. The aim of implementing a CRM system is often to allow companies to improve their client engagement which helps to maximise the profitability of every client relationship (Farhan *et al.*, 2018). Many retail bank providers divide clients to reinforce product-concentrated ideas, whilst a few divides their clients by the profitability potential of life stage happenings, which is a method that gives superior competitive advantage. Division by life phase happenings allows retail banks to sell to and reinforce clients throughout a lifelong engagement. When a retail bank understands the lifetime worth of a client's association then only can a proactive long-term association be managed. A financial forecast during client engagement is essential in yielding maximum income (Yoong and Lian, 2019).

By investing in CRM, the retail banks have witnessed an increase in operational effectiveness (Kotarba, 2016), partly emanating from the positive influence of CRM on client engagement. However, more must be done to transform the benefits of CRM into effective client engagement that improves client loyalty, client retention and ultimately income and profitability. In order to be successful, every department in the company needs to be involved in client engagement (Kamboj, Yadav and Rahman 2018). Teams

within every department in the company should work together and share information to ensure effective client engagement. This association needs to be combined with systematic intelligence to produce a comprehensive, personalised, multi-dimensional view of the client (Farhan *et al.*, 2018). As a result, retail banks can create effective strategies by offering a comprehensive client assessment to all stakeholders of the organisation who have suitable security approval. The client assessment leads to a number of strategic advantages such as:

- i. **Increased profitability:** Real client division is only achievable via a multi-dimensional client assessment. Organisations can grow their profits by 100% if they can maintain 5% of their valuable clients yearly. When banks use clients' profitability to make fee waiver choices, it helps to lower attrition from profitable clients (Tullman, 2016). To take these programmes to a level higher, retail banks must be proactive in reaching out to profitable clients before they think of joining a competitor.
- ii. **Decreased operational costs:** A large United States (US) insurance company has stated that 70% of its incoming calls come from insurance representatives who need information about its clients. This activity does not generate any income and CRM assists retail banks to decrease these activities by allowing representatives to retrieve client data via the Internet. In addition, cost centres can be adjusted into revenue centres. By the year 2003, over 80% of banks in the US established their call centres as substitute delivery network and income centres (O'Reilly, Ramirez and Stemmer, 2019).
- iii. **Enhanced client loyalty:** A large percentage of clients anticipate accessing and updating account records virtually. Internet self-service decreases support charges by decreasing call centre volume. It can enhance the client experience by offering relevant information that is easily accessible. When planned appropriately it can also lead to effectual cross-selling and improved client

intelligence. Banks have to provide a multi-dimensional view as clients want to view all their records when they need to (Farhan *et al.*, 2018).

- iv. Improved client satisfaction: Clients expect that every discussion be referenced against all previous interactions and networks, whether through telephone, fax or a web-based interaction. A client should be able to initiate contact with the organisation through one network, such as the Internet, and then complete the interaction through an alternative channel, such as the call centre, with effective transmission of information between the various essential technologies (Farhan *et al.*, 2018).
- v. Increased productivity: The absence of a multi-dimensional client view frequently leads to unwanted data records, incompatible evidence and inadequate service. Insurance clients, for example, are frequently requested to reiterate the same evidence to numerous different claims management employees. This expands the life of the open claim, multiplies functional expenses and helps promote the opinion that the insurance company is keen to gather premium fees from clients but are not as concerned with helping clients when a claim needs to be paid. This problem is present not only in insurance companies but filters even to retail banks, which ultimately leads to a decrease in productivity and client satisfaction (Farhan *et al.*, 2018).
- vi. Increased share of wallet: Retail banks must have a multi-dimensional view of each client in order to create effective strategies for accumulative share of wallet or capitalise on selling prospects. For example:

A hypothetical high value customer, Robert Smith, may have a cheque and credit card account with ARB but not an individual loan, overdraft facility, secured loan or investment account. To sell Mr Smith additional services, the retail bank needs a full view of his product possessions. This includes not only account possessions throughout the institution, but also what he has or is likely to have in other institutions. By incorporating demographic

profiling tools and third-party data into the CRM system, ARB can construct a perfect view of the typical possessions of a client in particular demographic segments. Such profiles provide an invaluable competitive superiority for gaining wallet share in the client base (Absa, 2018).

- vii. Increased household share: Wallet share relates to whole households. To sum up, organisations should appreciate the associations that clients form with their intermediaries, other clients and prospective clients. Due to the lack of a CRM system, a bank lost one of its most profitable private banking clients. The private banker's son was denied a vehicle and asset finance loan request due to his inadequate credit history (Farhan *et al.*, 2018).

The secret to creating a multi-dimensional view is by comprehending the total association the organisation has with the client base. A CRM resolution helps the organisation to be stress free and enables a reliable client tracking system no matter which interface the client chooses (Farhan *et al.*, 2018). The test for any CRM resolution is to recognise and serve the clients who generate shareholder value by enabling the organisation to analyse client data and formulate suitable client engagement strategies based on client needs. Having a united view of client profitability, acquisition costs, management costs and lifespan value could enable the organisation to make available valuable information to those who need to engage clients. There is no doubt that client-focused strategies are crucial to unlock client value and increase the retention of clients (Farhan *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, client retention has direct implications on a company's profits (Hawkins and Hoon, 2019).

Gaining 'wallet share' through effective marketing and cross-selling, together with an understanding of the drivers of client wealth, can only be accomplished via state-of-the-art CRM developments (Farhan *et al.*, 2018). Retail banks therefore have ample reasons to adopt an enterprise-wide CRM strategy. As the retail banks move from a transaction-centric to a client-centric commercial approach, leveraging client relationships successfully becomes more critical. The financial needs of clients change throughout their

lifetimes, providing incentives for retail banks to cultivate lifelong and profitable client relationships. A client's trustworthiness increases as the length and quality of the relationship grows (Farhan *et al.*, 2018). Hajiyan, Aminbeidokhti and Hemmatian (2017) outline that a company can enjoy significant benefits as a result of utilising a CRM system. Such benefits include greater business coherence, greater client contentment through the offering of a superior service and efficient segmentation of clients. Other improvements include lowering costs and better comprehension of sales and marketing information and a better picture of client requirements, beliefs, and insights in real time.

2.3.3 Challenges faced when implementing a client relationship management system

Goldenberg (2015) argues that even though there has been an increase in the penetration of CRM products and services, and although CRM itself has yielded some positive results, its implementation has proved to be challenging. Similarly, Thakral (2017) has argued that CRM is theoretically rigorous; however, its application has some disadvantages. Farhan *et al.* (2018), seem to agree with this, maintain that the challenges in the implementation of CRM originate from the fact that organisations interface with their clients through multi-channels and cross-functional teams that include people from different functional departments. This then brings complexity in managing clients. According to Payne and Frow (2013), the challenge for organisations is in the creation of an incorporated CRM platform that collects relevant data input at each client touch point and concurrently makes available knowledge productivity about the strategy and tactics appropriate to win client business and trustworthiness.

An integrated CRM platform can offer knowledge to frontline personnel that can support client management (Orenga-Roglá and Chalmeta, 2016). Gupta (2019) suggests that the reason why CRM strategies often fail is that companies are not equipped to act in a synchronised and participative way with their clients, opting rather to act on the basis of their particular intentions and not necessarily those of the clients. This is echoed by Baran

and Galka (2016) who maintain that even though CRM is focused and is dependent on technology, it will only yield improved results when supported by a corporate culture that is client focused, and without which organisations will prosper by merely trying to leverage technology.

Another challenge faced in the execution of a CRM system is the application of the 80/20 rule. Kebede (2017) suggest that the essence of client relationship is client selectivity, as the value of all clients is not equal. The 80/20 rule suggests that 20% of the clients generate 80% of the revenue and, as a result, organisations find it strategically important to allocate more resources to the clients who bring in additional revenue within the client segmentation and product differentiation programmes. However, though Zhang, Watson IV and Palmatier (2018) agree with the notion of the 80/20 rule, they also argue convincingly that there is no organisation that would abandon 80% of its clients because they do not bring in as much revenue as the 20%, for the simple reason that some clients might not be profitable but nevertheless make a positive contribution to the organisation.

Most CRM resolutions are not extensive in their approach and hence they are unable to offer well-rounded benefits. Organisations should know and understand what drives their individual client profitability. This coupled with an organisational structure that is flexible and adaptive, a well-developed CRM strategy aligned to other business strategies and which takes a holistic view, could benefit the organisation. To activate a complete CRM system in the banking industry, client experience must be explored to unearth more aspects to assist with the system to be implemented (Buttle, and Maklan, 2019; Iriqat and Daqar, 2017).

2.4 Client experience

According to Terblanche (2018), client experience is a blend of tangible and emotional factors clients experience when interacting with an organisation - what an organisation

actually delivers. It is the totality of all experiences or relations a client has with a company, both online and offline. With regard to the retail banking services division in SA, client experience means ease of engagement, which is of principal importance, where potential clients are engaged in their language of choice. Client expectations and experiences are continually changing, and recurrent checks on their satisfaction allow organisations to detect potential issues that may lie ahead and to alter their actions accordingly. Chheda, Duncan and Roggenhofer (2017) claim that if clients are satisfied and happy, they will buy more products and services and remain loyal to the organisation.

Sigala (2018) proposes that shaping clients' expectations involves harnessing client capability and managing personalised experiences and requires the collaboration of clients. Shaping prospects is not just about traditional one-way communication by managers or advertising but is about engaging current and probable clients in public debate, educating them, and being educated in return (Demangeot and Broderick, 2016). Martínez-Ruiz, Gómez-Suárez, Jiménez-Zarco and Izquierdo-Yusta (2018) suggest that clients' experience has formed the central objective in today's retailing settings, and retailers globally have welcomed the notion of client experience management, with most of the retailers integrating the notion into their mission statement. Organisations such as Dell focus on distributing the best customer experience in the markets the organisations serve, and Toyota's mission declaration is to increase profitable growth by providing the best client experience and dealer backing (Michelli, 2007). Foster (2018) asserts that a company such as Starbucks' success is centred on building a unique client experience for their clients.

It has become increasingly clear that client experience is a key factor in constructing brand loyalty, services and channels for organisations (Martínez-Ruiz *et al.*, 2018). Khader and Madhavi (2017) argue that the notion of client experience has gradually expanded attention over the last decade as an outcome of the highly lively and demanding market of the 21st century. Kotler *et al.* (2013) maintain that forming value for clients by providing notable experiences is becoming a gradually employed strategy. A number of

benefits to the organisation have been linked with customer experience: the creation of client satisfaction and loyalty (Hill and Alexander, 2017), influencing expectations (Seligman, 2012), instilling client confidence and supporting the brand (Kompella, 2014), and creating emotional bonds with clients (Neukrug, 2015).

D'Aveni (2010) suggests that the client experience notion offers a means to avoid the product trap by contributing an added tool that generates an advantage over competitors. Just like CRM, client experience has many meanings that the researcher will explore in the next section. Pasqualini (2019) outlines client experience as an 'experience economy'. Pasqualini (2019) presents experience as an economical contribution and a next step in the ladder of economic value. Economists typically lump experiences with services; however, Vogel (2014) claims that there is a distinct economic offering from experience which is as different from services as services are from possessions.

D'Aveni (2010) designates the experience as a fourth economic offering as he claims consumers indisputably desire experiences and he believed that more organisations are responding by overtly designing and endorsing these. D'Aveni (2010) has established that experiences have developed as the next step in what he calls the evolution of economic value. He also defines an experience as a real contribution such as a service, goods, or a commodity. In the service economy, many organisations cover experiences around their traditional offerings to trade them better. However, to realise the full advantage of experiences, they oppose the view that businesses must deliberately design engaging experiences that command a fee (Rozenes and Cohen, 2017). They also argue that if organisations do not want to be in a commoditised business, they must advance their offerings to the next stage of economic value.

The issue is when and how organisations can enter the emergent experience economy. Peppers and Rogers (2016) point out that an experience occurs when a company deliberately uses services as a point and goods as props to engage certain clients in a way that creates a striking event. While former economic offerings such as commodities, goods and services are external to the buyer, experiences are intrinsically personal,

prevailing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level. Thus, no two people can have the same experience because each experience originates from the contact between the staged event and the individual's state of mind (Peppers and Rogers, 2016). Conversely, Oertzen, Odekerken-Schröder Brax and Mager (2018) outline client experience as a personal clarification of the service process, and their interaction and contribution with it, through their journey or through a series of touch points, and how those things make the client feel. The experience and even the value are professed purely from the point of an individual client and is innately personal, existing only in the client's mind (Oertzen, Odekerken-Schröder Brax and Mager, 2018).

Peppers and Rogers (2016) state that what a client experiences during a service creates in the client many sentiments (powerful, subjective feelings and associated physiological states). The main ones are happiness, surprise, love, fear, anger, shame and sadness, and these feelings may range from, for example, discomfort to depression, or warm to intimate, or at ease to ecstatic. The client experience is a combination of the physical product or service and the emotions aroused before, during and after engaging with your organisation (Ponsignon, Durrieu and Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2017).

The benefits that clients acquire from utilising and experiencing the service incorporates their perception of how they have benefitted from the service that the company has offered. An additional outcome of the service from the perception of a client will be their awareness or lack of awareness of the assessment provided by the, the apparent importance of the service (Babin, Murray and Harris, 2017), and their overall satisfaction or disappointment (an emotion). These judgments - good, bad, or indifferent - will have results, such as the decision to repurchase or not, to endorse it to others, or to complain or not. These intents may or may not result in action (Babin *et al.*, 2017).

Carbone and Haeckel (1994) were the first authors to outline client experience as the "takeaway impression formed by people's encounters with products, services, and businesses - a perception impression produced when humans consolidate sensory

information.” Evans and Cothrel (2014) note that client experience starts from a set of collaborations between a consumer and a product, a business, or a segment of its organisation, which triggers a response. This experience is intensely private and suggests that client engagement occurs at diverse levels (rational, emotional, sensorial, physical, and spiritual). The assessment of the experience varies based on the client’s evaluation of their expectations and the incentives that come from interacting with the business, its products and services and its offering during the diverse instants of connection or touch points.

Central to this definition is the broad opinion towards a business, which is built on the amalgamation of diverse touch points with the business. These touch points can be anything from frequent minor clues that range from advertisements on television to friendly personnel. Loureiro and Sarmento (2018) refer to client experience as the experiences that come as a consequence of collaborations with the business, inclusive of brand and frontline staff. Their core belief is that the perception of client experience is driven by value for the organisation which must be the central point of their endeavours. Chi, Lisic, Myers, Pevzner and Seidel (2019) postulate that poor engagement can cause dissatisfaction which can lead to clients defecting to competitors.

Dale and Sheets (2019) further define client experience management as the planned approach to generating experience-based value propositions and affiliating resource collections that allow consumers to co-create value. The client experience practice includes pre- and post-service encounters, it deals with emotional as well as functional aspects of quality, and incorporates the client social context (Dale and Sheets 2019).

With regard to client experience, it is critical for management to be clear in their strategy for growth if they are to become profitable with their programmes. Marketing managers should have learnt from the past CRM investments, where there was an absence of a distinct documented strategy, standardisation of goals, and expansion of the needed dynamic abilities, that in turn led to a very high rate of failure (Mohammed, Rashid and Tahir, 2017). Similar to CRM, implementing customer experience seems complex because

it potentially covers an extended time frame, every client's touch point, and the emotional component as well as the functional results.

Unless firms have a clear scope for their programmes and articulate an achievable development plan for building their dynamic capabilities, there is every chance that managers will repeat the mistakes of previous process-led change management interventions in marketing (Cameron and Green, 2015). A massive, comprehensive client experience programme may not be possible for many companies as it is not readily accessible, and it is not unanimously desired. Fernandes and Pinto (2019) conclude that most of the organisations demarcated the three key challenges in controlling client experience including managing the 'holistic' and the vague nature of client experience.

Organisations are struggling to define what exactly constitutes client experience. Some describe it as the total amount of all collaborations between the consumer and the business. Different business functions seldom speak to each other, so companies end up with functionality splits between human resources, marketing, and operations; each focused on the performance of their own individual results rather than the context of the whole.

They also concluded that linking client experience to specific financial outcomes: There is no consistent vision about which measure is adequate to indicate the description of client experience. Additionally, client experience strategy, in most situations, is not successful in delivering 'hard evidence' between the client experience programme and monetary outcomes. In their research, participants indicated a causal chain between client experience and consequences, such as better client experiences, which ultimately lead to an increase in client loyalty and satisfaction.

They also suggested that the need to view a client experience strategy as a long-term commitment: To yield the desired outcomes, a long-term view has to be adopted when implementing a client experience strategy. However, this conflicts with the short-term views of shareholders and some stakeholders.

The above challenges are interdependent and thus should not be treated in isolation. The principal obstacles organisations have to overcome in order to build a consistent client experience strategy are: defining what it is, or what comprises client experience; revealing the effects of the client experience programme (connecting it to accomplishment); obtaining funds; and building a consistent strategy (Fernandes and Pinto, 2019). The principal difficulties in building and implementing a client experience strategy are built on the absence of a transparent definition of what comprises the client experience strategy and how to measure it.

One of the reasons why client experience is challenging is that most organisations do not approach client experience from a system thinking perspective (Buttle and Maklan, 2019). Client experience incorporates a complex set of relations among the employees of a business, business associates and clients, and it is this group of stakeholders' choices and actions that mutually establish the quality and individualities of all client relations. Clients have explicit requirements as they realise, assess, purchase, retrieve, utilise, and get support from a business's services and products. However, instead of viewing their tasks as matching the perspective of client journeys, the majority of employees and associates are fixed on merely the channel or purpose for which they are accountable. To make the matter more complex, senior management places the major burden for client experience on sales and call centre employees who are in the frontline of the business.

However, the employees who are behind the scenes can also have an equivalent or greater effect on client interactions. Many client experience initiatives are unsuccessful or do not meet their full potential due to the fact that both internal and external stakeholders do not see the relationship between their job and client relations. Sigala (2018) asserts that professionals in client experience need to join cross-functional teams to recognise all of the people, activities and choices that inspire the client experience. As with CRM, there is no single definition of client experience, which makes it harder to measure its effectiveness, and set specific objectives and purposes. The phenomenon in

itself is complex because it deals with human emotions and feelings, which are hard to measure and anticipate as they are very subjective in nature (Buttle and Maklan, 2019).

A business could employ some client strategies, hoping to trigger certain experiences for its audiences, but these strategies may fail to do so because experience is so personal. Because it cannot be defined and measured effectively, the researcher is of the opinion that, with time, organisations will quickly neglect client experience and focus on something that may be trendy. It must therefore be acknowledged that client experience is dynamic and is evolving, which makes it more complex to measure. However, it must be given a long-term view (Buttle and Maklan, 2019).

Chang (2018) also suggests that the client experience as the 'experience economy' will be the next step in creating economic value. The only way it can be achieved is when organisations use their services as stages and engage individuals in a way that creates memorable experiences. Subramaniam, Samdin, Ramachandran and Kunasekaran (2018) claim that Walt Disney has been successful in creating experiences that add economic value to the organisation. It is evident from previous studies that client experience has the potential to improve results substantially if it is well understood and implemented accordingly. Despite the lack of clarity, client experience remains a key strategic objective in many organisations and it prompts the organisation to interact with its clients in an effort to get to know and understand the type of products they would be interested in (Chang, 2018).

2.5 Client interaction

Gupta (2019) mentions that the best way to describe a client is that a client is an individual who utilises the output of work or is a user of a service or product. Earle (2019) claims that a client is an internal or external individual of an organisation, namely employees, directors, the public, other companies or government. A client is also an individual who

can be referred to as a potential buyer and is someone who purchases products or services from a business.

According to Tadajewski (2019) the word 'custom' means 'habit' which means that an individual who visits a store often to buy a service or product is in the habit of purchasing from that specific store. There is now a completely new breed of clients with high standards and expectations as they understand what great customer service looks like (Hyken, 2019). As competition increases, there is a need to devise creative and new ways of meeting the ever-increasing demands of the modern-day customer who is very sophisticated, knowledgeable, demands excellent products and services, and has alternatives.

On the other hand, a CRM system links the different departments of a retail bank or different organisations together (Itinfo, 2017). Making all the 'touch points' where clients interact with the retail bank or organisations as effective as possible could mean, for example, making information from sales available, client education and online banking, so that the client can be served quicker (Interaction Design Foundation, 2019). As explained by the Interaction Design Foundation (2019), the different touch points vary from one organisation to another, but they are defined as the various locations where the client can come into interaction with the organisation.

According to Kumar and Misra (2020), a key concern with CRM is to synchronise the various entry points in an organisation to offer a united message to the client at each touch point. The Interaction Design Foundation (2019) further notes that by identifying and operating with all the touch points, the aim is to perfect client experience at all touch points in an organisation. Within the retail bank there are many different types of touch points, including:

- i. Telephone banking;
- ii. Internet/online banking;
- iii. Personal direct sales;
- iv. Contact centres;

- v. E-mail correspondence;
- vi. Website's access;
- vii. Relationship bankers;
- viii. Service consultants;
- ix. Tellers;
- x. Client services clerks;
- xi. Home loan specialists;
- xii. Financial planners; and
- xiii. Car sales consultants.

For a CRM system to be effective, it must start by realising who the clients are and what their value could be over time (Rocha, Correia, Adeli, Reis and Costanzo, 2017). An organisation can deal with a client more efficiently and effectively once a clear understanding and the clients' worth is obtained. Also, in collaborating with the organisation through the 'touch points', the organisation should continue to obtain information on what a customer prefers as this information that can assist the organisation to further customise and continue to offer calculated value to the client (Rocha *et al.*, 2017). In order to devise and apply client satisfaction programmes, clients must be involved.

The collaboration between clients and service providers is a vital factor of perceived quality of service (Ribeiro and Prayag, 2019). Sometimes the interaction will be largely transactional in nature, but most common interactions will be within the context of an ongoing service relationship. Building effective and significant relationships can contribute significantly to client satisfaction, loyalty, retention, and improvement of performance. If a transaction is without client involvement, the provision of many services cannot occur, and the way in which clients participate in the delivery process can have an important implication for both client and service provider (Fasnacht, 2018).

When clients willingly take part in the processes of service delivery, they anticipate a superior quality of services for different reasons.

Firstly, when a client takes part, it means that the service provider clearly understands the client's wants and needs. Secondly, clients who take part may be cognisant of certain limitations of service providers with regard to what can be offered and what cannot. Consequently, such clients tend to have more realistic expectations about the quality of service offered and this may decrease the gap between expectations and performance. Finally, there is a possibility that when a client willingly participates in the offering of a service, it gives the company a chance to improve the productivity of their service (Sharma, 2018). Kappel (2017) suggests that if clients perceive that there will be a benefit from their relations with the company then they will willingly participate. Usually, the quality of the collaboration between the seller and consumer and the degree to which the client takes part in the relations has been recognised as potential antecedents of client gratification that is well based on client centricity.

2.5.1 Client Centricity

The notion of client centricity dates back centuries whereby it was observed that it is the client who governs what a business is, what it produces and whether it will thrive (Forbes, 2017). The client-centric view maintains that organisations should not be selling products, but should rather be fulfilling client needs (Palmatier, Moorman and Lee, 2019). Every organisation wants to be client centric but how this is achieved differs from one company to another. Customer centricity is important because it entails improving business performance through client satisfaction and retention (Buttle and Maklan, 2019), which in turn enables sustainable business performance in the long run.

The technique companies use to interact with their clients has changed irrevocably. Client centricity is about putting the client at the centre of the long-term vision of a company,

as well as the daily processes (such as the products/services offered, the way banks communicate, the channels being used) in order to strengthen the relationship with the client. Palmatier *et al.* (2019) suggest that organisations must evolve adequately to effectively leverage client-centric processes that add value and capabilities. Brown and Brown (2014) recommend that combination of all the departments in an organisation including all stakeholders is required to deliver effective client engagement. Trends do exist that can be implemented to achieve client centricity.

2.5.1.1 Trends that reinforce client centricity

Trends exist and Palmatier *et al.* (2019) have identified ways through which organisations can transform in order to effectively embrace client-centric principles. These include intensifying pressure to enhance the productivity of marketing; increasing the diversity in marketing; intensifying competition; challenging well-informed customers; and accelerating advances in technology.

New communication channels have provided organisations with unprecedented opportunities that, if tapped carefully, could provide a much-needed edge for dealing with increasingly empowered mobile clients in today's highly competitive environment (Cognizant 20-20 Insights, 2012). The emerging client touch points have also altered clients' expectations and purchasing behaviour (Cognizant 20-20 Insights, 2012). Clients expect companies to have a much better understanding of their needs as individuals, as well as a timelier appreciation of their specific needs. Customer experience transformation enables the organisation to get a deeper understanding of what the client's value most (Beckford, 2019). To satisfy this new breed of demanding and empowered clients, companies must have the correct processes and information available to deliver customised and targeted product and service offerings that keep the clients engaged and loyal. In the following section, product and client centricities are compared.

2.5.1.2 Client centricity versus product centricity

The basic philosophy of product centricity is around the selling of products to whoever will buy them, while that of customer centricity is around serving the customer. Palmatier *et al.* (2019) maintain that product centricity is transaction oriented, while client centricity is relationship oriented. Organisational focus in a product-centric approach is often internally focused, concentrating on new products and account development as well as market-share growth, while within a client-centric environment the organisation is externally focused and concentrates on client relationship development and profitability through client loyalty (Richardson, Kelley and James, 2015). There is an increasing awareness of the necessity to intensify the attention on client-related aspects such as client gratification, service, loyalty, and quality as perceived by the client (Richardson *et al.*, 2015). However, there appears to always be a challenge to this school of thought.

2.5.1.3 Impediments to client centricity

Barriers to client centricity have been identified and broadly defined by Palmatier *et al.* (2019) and Fader (2012) as:

Table 2.3: Barriers to client centricity (Palmatier *et al.*, 2019; Fader, 2012)

Organisational culture	Different levels and facets of culture may result in resistance to change and, as such, for organisations whose cultures do not facilitate the transformation to the client-centric view, the cultures stand in the way
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	of a more client-focused approach. Organisational cultures that place the client first have been found to be the most profitable.
Organisational structure	Product-centric structures organised around functional silos and defined by product categories stand in the way of achieving a client-centric approach. An ideal client-centric organisation indicates that the organisation has all its operational activities unified and aligned so that a high quality of value can be delivered to the client.
Organisational processes	Processes for developing and sustaining client relationships within organisations can be a hurdle to achieving client centricity. For an organisation to be client centric, it should have a strategy development process incorporating business and client strategies, a dual value creation process, a multichannel integration process encompassing all client touch points, a data management procedure that incorporates data gathering and evaluation functions, as well as a performance assessment procedure that links the organisation's activities to its performance.
Financial metrics	Financial metrics are critical to motivate every member of the staff to be more client centric, and to also assist organisations to gauge the monetary effects of their choices and to consider marketing expenses towards client centricity as savings.

However, Wodecki (2018) is of the view that the biggest challenge with client engagement in the creation of value for most companies is that it challenges the traditional roles of the firm and the consumer and then chooses client engagement. Merrilees, Miller and Yakimova (2017) add that client engagement entails changes, and any changes aimed at improving the company's customer experience by implementing the client engagement strategies will need to be communicated by management to employees so that everyone is on the same page.

2.6 Definition and importance of client retention

Client retention is an assessment of the product or service quality provided by a business that measures how reliable its clients are (Business Dictionary, 2017). Client retention statistics are typically articulated as a percentage of long-term clients, and they are important to a business since fulfilled, retained clients tend to spend more, cost less and make valuable referrals to new prospective clients. Simply put, it is the ability of a company to keep its current clients (Wright, 2014). Successful client retention commences with the initial contact that an organisation has with a client and carries on throughout the entire lifetime of the relationship. Therefore, client engagement, agility and alignment have received substantial attention in the historical decade.

Why is client retention so imperative? Client retention has become a crucial issue for organisations who desire to retain their clients in a profitable manner (Wright, 2014). The emphasis should be on client-relations and treating clients as if they were the most important people in the world (Ismagilova, Dwivedi and Slade, 2017). A company's ability to attract and retain new clients is not only related to its products or services, but intensely related to the way its current clients perceive it, and the reputation that it creates within the marketplace (Wright, 2014). Clients and businesses place a lot of value on additional service. Who does not appreciate a client service representative or a manager who shows interest in them during the sale process and the client life cycle? Although a product or a service may be slightly more expensive, the clients are, in the main, willing to invest in value added to the product or services (Rogers, 2011).

It is also important to note that client retention is susceptible to the behaviour and actions of competitors in the industry (Hawkins and Hoon, 2019). An organisation seldom exists alone in an industry, usually there are other several companies offering the same services under different brands and strategies thereby presenting competition. Usually, the company has to compete with other companies for clients. Increased competition has significant influence on client retention, if for example, competitors are doing a good job

and offering better services, an organisation might find itself failing to retain its clients (Nowotarska-Romaniak, 2020). The strategies of other companies in the same industry can therefore determine the levels of client retention that a company can attain.

2.6.1 Client retention and profitability

The importance of client retention was first quantified by the authors Reichheld and Sasser in the year 1990 (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). They revealed that profits in service industries, including credit card companies, increased in direct proportion to the length of a client's relationship. The purpose of a business is to create and hold onto a client. If a business creates and retains clients efficiently in a cost-effective manner, it will make a profit while continuing to survive and prosper with new business. If for any reason a business fails to attract or sustain a satisfactory number of clients, it will certainly experience losses which will result in the subsequent demise of the enterprise.

One of the advantages of retaining a client, according to Hawkins and Hoon (2019), is that client spending tends to accelerate over time. As clients become acquainted with the business, and what the company can do for them, they tend to put more trust and money into the value which the company makes available for them. According to Kennedy and Buck (2016), it is always more cost effective to retain clients than to win new ones, hence careful use of direct marketing can assist the complete promotional programme.

Blair (2019) shows that the greater profitability associated with client retention determinations are a result of several factors that occur when a relationship has been recognised with a client.

Table 2.4: Possible benefits recognising client relationship (Blair, 2019)

- | |
|--|
| <p>i. Regular clients tend to be less expensive to service because they are acquainted with the process, require less education, and are more reliable in their needs, requirements or order placements.</p> |
|--|

ii.	When client retention and trustworthiness is increased, the employees' jobs are made secure and easier. In turn, content and happy employees feed back into client contentment in a virtual cycle.
iii.	Long-term clients may initiate free word-of-mouth advertising and recommendations.
iv.	Dependable and contented clients are less likely to switch over to competitors, making market penetration for rivals difficult.
v.	The cost of acquiring new clients occurs only at the commencement of a relationship, hence the longer the relationship, the lower the amortized cost.
vi.	Account maintenance costs decline as a percentage of the total costs (a percentage of profits).
vii.	Long-term clients tend to be less inclined to switch, and also tend to be less price sensitive.
viii.	Long-term clients are more likely to buy ancillary products and high margin supplementary products (Toporek, 2013).

Rust and Huang (2014) mention that the retention of clients does not always result in the desired profitability and performance of the organisation. If it costs the company a lot to acquire the client, even if he or she stays for ten years, there is no sense in taking him or her as a client if the anticipated future profits will not be adequate to justify it. The available evidence suggests that the lifetime profitability relationship between clients and an organisation is encouraging. However, there is a possibility that it may not be if the cost of servicing the client becomes greater than the profit margin generated by the client. Long-term clients could have an inactive purchasing trend while they are being retained with the organisation, which means they are not profitable during those absent time periods. According to Ranjan (2017), it is imperative for an organisation to find out who its profitable clients are, as it should not spend funds on trying to retain clients that are not profitable. Not every client should be retained at all costs (Ranjan, 2017).

2.6.2 Association between client satisfaction and client retention

Companies that started with a client retention strategy might in the beginning assume that the retention rate is based predominantly on client satisfaction. However, some studies have shown that there is a very small correlation between client satisfaction and retention or prospect purchases (TechTarget, 2018). In one case, only 21% of contented clients of a retail bank said that they would not buy from a competitor but would support the company only because of loyalty. This fact is supported by Freeman (2013), who states that it is not enough to have only client satisfaction, but it is also imperative to create client loyalty. Client satisfaction scores can only measure the historical experience of the client, and do not indicate their intentions or potential level of loyalty. Therefore, there is an emphasis on creating client loyalty through the alignment of the organisation's processes to improve organisational agility.

2.6.3 Strategies to increase client retention

Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasise the significance of constructing client loyalty as a means to retain clients. Some of the strategies proposed include:

- i. Interacting with and paying attention to the client;
- ii. Producing superior products;
- iii. Obtaining the involvement of every person in planning and managing the client management and retention process by incorporating the 'voice' of the client to capture equally their specified and unspecified wants or desires;
- iv. Organising and constructing a database of information on specific client requests and needs;

- v. Wants;
- vi. Acquaintances;
- vii. Rate of recurrence of purchase and satisfaction; and
- viii. Making it simple for the client to contact suitable company personnel in order to direct their requests, observations and objections.

Research demonstrates that clients who are unhappy with the company and who can vent their frustration are least expected to abandon the organisation; thus, strengthening the company’s trustworthiness which should improve the company’s future revenues (Kotler and Keller, 2016). The concept of loyalty programmes has spread rapidly in a number of sectors. Irrespective of which loyalty model the company decides on, it is always essential to realise that a client’s value equally direct rewards, be it in the form of gifts, vouchers, points or rebates, and services received from an organisation.

Psychological investigations illustrate that rewards can be extremely motivating (Weiner, 2012). Loyalty programmes that base rewards on cumulative purchasing are an explicit endeavour to enhance retention. Such rewards tend to inspire repeat buying and thereby improve retention rates by providing incentives for clients to purchase more regularly and in larger volumes (Kaufmann and Panni, 2019). Some of the guidelines provided for client retention as indicated in Table 2.5 take account of the following (Beard, 2014):

Table 2.5: Guidelines for client retention (Beard, 2014)

i. Returning telephone calls punctually;
ii. Under-promising and over-delivering;
iii. Doing things for the client’s convenience, and not for the sake of the company, makes the difference;
iv. Giving back to the best clients. If the company runs a special price or product offer for first time clients, it is imperative to make certain that the existing clients are offered the same prospect;
v. Giving clients what they need, when they need it and how they need it;

vi. Requesting clients' input on improving products and services. The company will procure more business as clients develop a relationship with the company;
vii. Sending 'thank you' cards, birthday wishes and rewarding clients;
viii. Giving options and providing on time;
ix. Maintaining integrity. If confidence cannot be established at the very beginning, clients may start to consider competitors;
x. Displaying empathy. It is imperative to remember that the most important clients are the company's current ones. It is therefore imperative to stay in touch, and be available to effectively service their requirements and desires;
xi. Attending to client objections with sensitivity and effective complaint resolution;
xii. Upholding a client's products and services. For example, by generating business leads for its clients, a company will be ensured of having those clients for life;
xiii. Embracing brainstorming opportunities during staff meetings so that everyone can share their thoughts on client retention; and
xiv. Implementing best concepts and measure the results to decide which ideas work and which ones do not work.

Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2016) mention that in this competitive market when the price is too high it is easy to lose clients to competitors. Clients can be easily lost when they are not given a call back when promised or if the company merely offers a product of inferior quality. Christian (2018) advises that companies should invest in a CRM system that can track client relations and enable systemised business processes (workflow management) that will lead to an improved service quality.

2.6.4 Client acquisition and client retention

Numerous service suppliers now realise that the balance between client acquisition and retention is fundamental if they are to advance at the expense of their rivals. In order to strike the best balance between acquisition and retention, there is a need for a deliberate co-ordination of the two constructs. Acquisition and retention strategies make it compulsory for service providers to interconnect regularly and efficiently with their current and prospective future clients. These communications need to be cost-effective, appropriate, and unobtrusive to all the parties concerned, and have to provide a mixture for existing clients of servicing and up-selling while at the same time selling to potential clients (Kokemuller, 2017). Organisations could deliver world-class client services by taking account of the following (Kokemuller, 2017):

2.6.4.1 Attracting and retaining

Attracting and retaining clients is key to servicing them. Without clients, providing world-class service is a moot point. To attract clients, a world-class client service provider carefully studies clients and employees to determine where its employees could be failing its clients and/or where its services or products could be failing its clients, and to express ways to improve both situations. No matter what the industry, external influences such as technology, education or other factors may cause a client's needs to change over time. To retain clients, an astute world-class client service provider re-examines business plans and strategies that stay on top of changing needs. This practice will keep the company prepared for the client's altering needs.

2.6.4.2 Regular communication

Communication is one more way to service one's client. Whether a client comes to the company or the company needs to go to the client, each is of equivalent value. It should be of paramount importance to the organisation to reach out to clients.

2.6.4.3 Know the product

Whether this means knowing the most recent banking products or the cutting-edge banking products comprehensively, know what is happening within the industry. Know what is worthy and what is not, and do not assume that the client knows. Advising the

client for his or her benefit can save the company from inflated returns and loss of confidence. Accurate financial needs analyses should be conducted prior to the client making decisions. As the organisation constructs its relationship with clients over time, and it repeats the cycle of recruitment and retention with growing numbers of clients, it should constantly make every effort to become better at serving its clients' needs.

2.7 Client satisfaction

Irrespective of how hard companies may try, some clients will inevitably become inactive or drop out. The challenge therefore is to revitalise dissatisfied clients through win-back strategies. In the case of the bank there are many aspects that lead to clients being dissatisfied; for example, hidden expenses, high bank charges, and lack of transparency (Levy and Hino, 2016). It is often easier to re-attract ex-clients because their names and histories are known by the company, rather than to find new ones (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Blokdyk (2019) recommends the following guidelines for client retention: building an unbeatable bundle of products and services; giving client incentives to come back; displaying your gratitude to every client by being thoughtful and considerate; knowing the company's best clients and treating them the best of all; making it easier to buy from the company rather than the competitor; taking products and services straight to the clients; and becoming a client service champion.

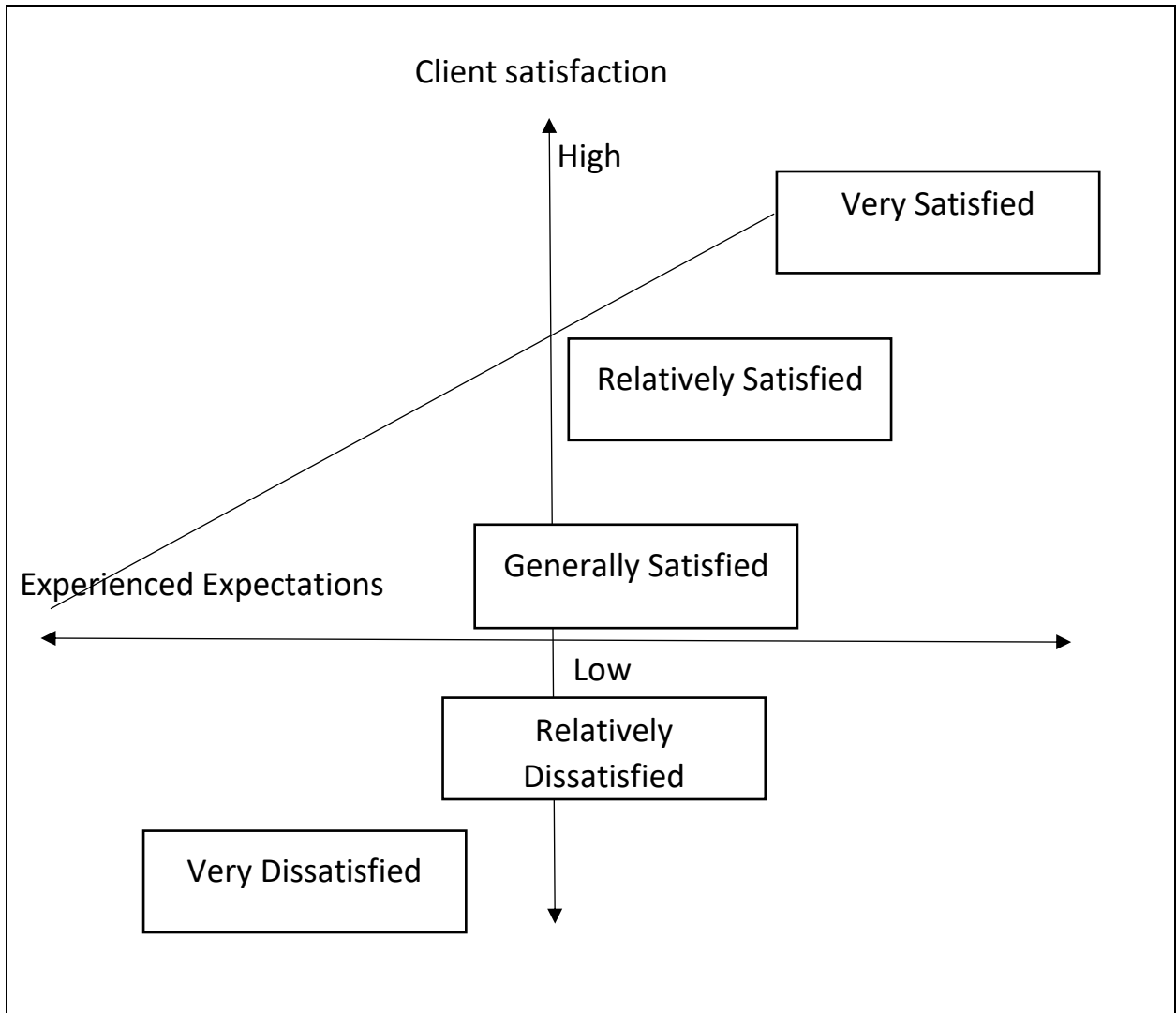


Figure 2.1: Customer satisfaction analysis model (Adapted from Tao, 2014)

Client satisfaction can be determined by the difference between client expectations and client perceptions (Kant and Jaiswal, 2017). CRM theory describes client satisfaction as: $\text{client satisfaction} = \text{actual expected services by the client} - \text{the actual services received by the client}$ (Atiyah, 2017). As shown in Figure 2.1 client satisfaction can be seen as being negatively associated to client expectations. When client experience is close to client expectations, client satisfaction is higher. However poor client experience comes with low client satisfaction.

Some of the ways of keeping clients satisfied and coming back for more take account of the following: acknowledging that the client is the most significant aspect of your business; keeping the emphasis on remarkable client service; making a point of remembering significant client dates such as birthdays; being aware of any specific special needs that your clients may have; making every effort to address client objections and anxieties promptly and courteously; and learning from inaccuracies and effecting procedures to avoid recurrences (Baldassarre, 2015). It is also imperative to think like a client and understand what is most significant to them when they are deciding which provider to use.

How a client service division handles criticism can make or break the company's retention of clients in the long run. Criticism, if handled well, may be a source of trustworthy clients (Ismagilova *et al.*, 2017). Wang, So and Sparks (2017) add that customer satisfaction and better service can also be enhanced through technology and innovation which will help the organisation to retain clients and maintain or improve its market share. García-Fernández, Gálvez-Ruíz, Fernández-Gavira, Vélez-Colón, Pitts and Bernal-García (2018) mention that service complications negatively affect clients' perceptions of service excellence and, according to Calvo-Porrall and Lévy-Mangin (2020), clients who are discontented with the resolution of their complications are twice as frustrated as those whose problems are resolved to their satisfaction.

2.7.1 Client service

Client service is an organisation's ability to supply their client's wants and needs. Client service is the delivery of service to clients before, for the period of, and after a procurement. It also means serving the client, and encompasses all encounters with the client, be it person to person, or indirect contact (namely dealing with criticism letters) (Fernandes and Pinto, 2019). Yet again, according to Petersen (2018), client service is the way in which a company identifies and meets a customer's needs through its interactions

with that individual. Consumer service can be shown in individual and interpersonal skills which include listening skills, language, communication skills, attitudes, telephone techniques, and gestures.

As noted by Bravo, Martínez and Pina (2019), quality and service have become crucial aspects of business that contribute to client satisfaction. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) have identified five gaps arising from the marketers' side:

GAP 1: The gap between management's perception of client expectations and a client's actual expectations.

GAP 2: The gap between management's perception of client expectations and how they are translated into service quality expectations.

GAP 3: The gap between the designed service quality specifications and its actual delivery by the organisation

GAP 4: The gap between service delivery by the organisation and how these services are communicated to the client

GAP 5: The gap between the service that was expected by clients and the perceived quality.

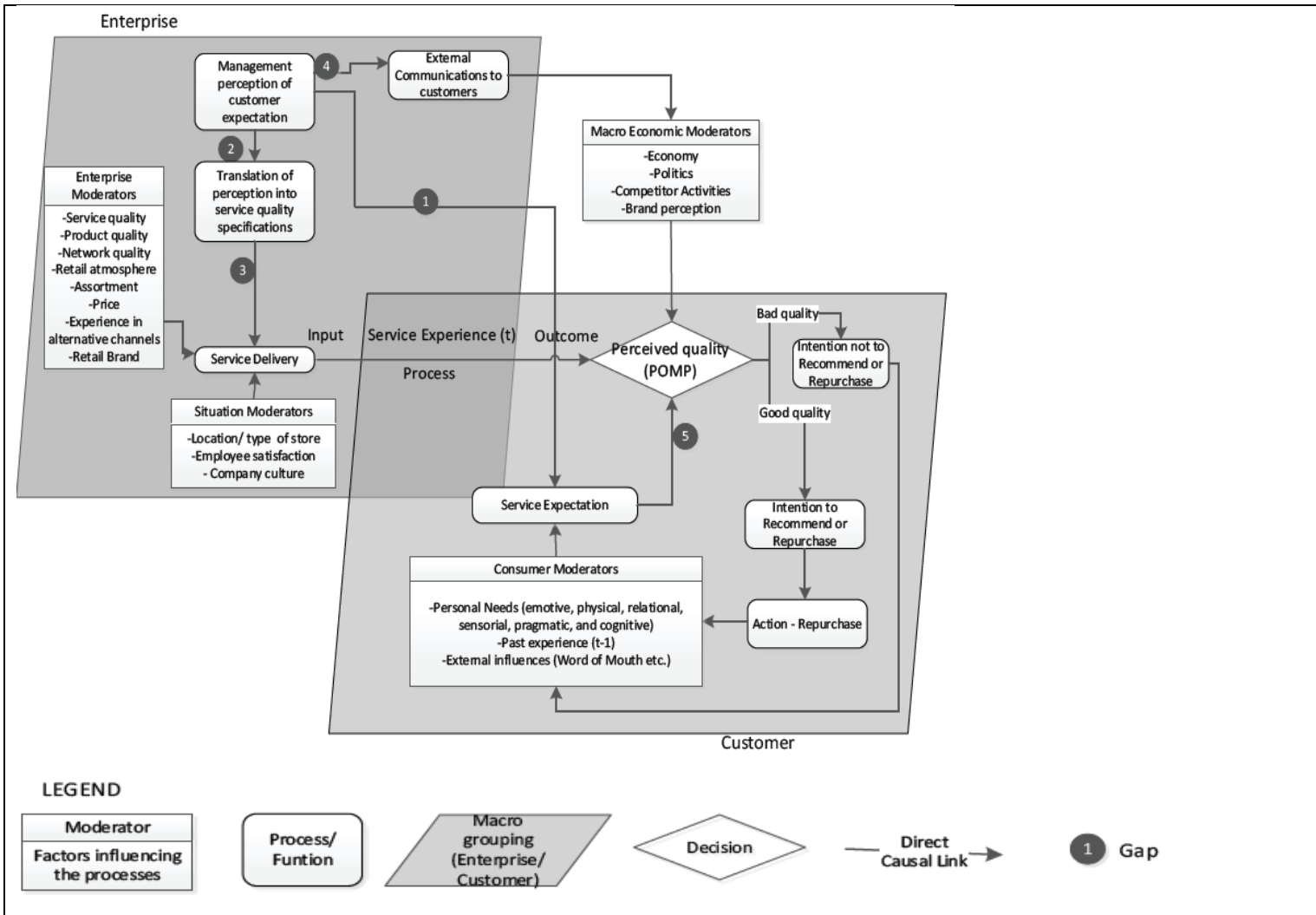


Figure 2.2: Gap model. Adapted from (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985; Du Plessis and De Vries, 2016)

The specific dimensions of service quality that apply across a service business are indicated in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Service quality dimensions

Reliability	Steadiness of performance and reliability. Numerous factors promoting reliability are crucial to overall success. Backup systems
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	and employees are employed to guarantee that an acceptable number of employees are available to complete the work.
Responsiveness	Preparedness and eagerness to deliver services. Managers, supervisors, and all employees must be encouraged to work under a 'spirit of service'. It is understood that clients would not need service if they never had difficulties.
Empathy	Empathy means caring, paying attention, and understanding of clients by the organisation (Bahadur, Aziz and Zulfiqar, 2018). The fundamentals of empathy emanate from the transmission of the feeling that the client is special and unique (Murray, Elms and Curran, 2019). In other words, the organisation must make sure that the clients feel that they are the priority and the principal reason why the organisation exist.
Assurance	Assurance can be understood as employees' courtesy, attitude, and personality as well as their ability to convey confidence and trust when they are interacting with clients (Izogo, 2017). Assurance entails keeping clients informed and paying attention to them at all times.
Tangibles	Physical evidence of service, reports and inspections. Clients must know what the organisation is doing for them. Tangible cannot be easily articulated, but they include what the client sees or hears which has the potential to stimulate or negatively affect their experience when they interact with the organisation.

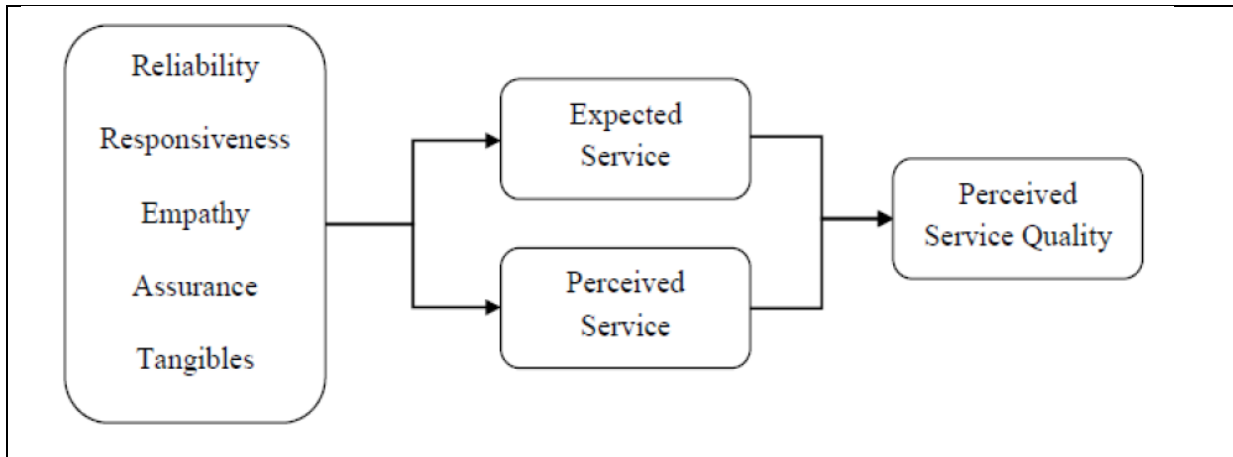


Figure 2.3: Dimensions of service quality. Adapted from Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1988)

Across businesses and markets, substantial changes in client prospects are putting new challenges on the client service function (Martínez-Ruiz *et al.*, 2018). McGovern (2016) states that while most companies think client service is essential, the majority also feel they are incapable of delivering the standard of service their clients expect. Good client service is to answer the client’s questions and to also be conversant about the product or service that the business offers. If one delivers the promised product or service as expected by the client, competently dealing with any queries such that the client is ultimately satisfied with their experiences, that is rated as good service (Peprah, 2015). Good client service is also about guaranteeing that the client receives the right product or service that is needed and not merely selling them more products or services than they require. Hult, Morgeson, Morgan, Mithas and Fornell (2017) add that clients must be able to communicate their views to the organisation, and they need to feel that their complaints are given the consideration they deserve.

2.7.2 Importance of service quality

Kowalik and Klimecka-Tatar (2018) state that service quality has been observed as an important matter in the banking sector. Since banking services are commonly

characterised by indistinguishable products, it has become essential for banks to make every effort to improve service quality if they want to differentiate themselves from their competitors. The significance of positive relationships between higher levels of the quality of service and enhanced monetary performance was established by Roth and van der Velde in the year 1991 (Pattanayak, Koilakuntla and Punyatoya, 2017).

Similarly, van Schaik and Barker (2016) suggest that enhancement in the quality of service is interrelated to the expansion of market share. In the current marketing literature, much emphasis is given to the issue of service quality as connected to clients' attitudes towards services and is concentrated on the relationship between client expectations of a service and the perceptions of the quality of delivery. This relationship, also known as perceived service quality, was first introduced by Grönroos in the year 1982 (Grönroos, 1982). Grönroos (1982) suggests that the perceived quality of a particular service is the outcome of an evaluation process since buyers compare the service that they expect with perceptions of the services they receive. Hence, he concludes that the quality of service is dependent on two variables: anticipated service and apparent service.

Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) consider that a client's assessment of overall service quality is determined by the gap between the expected and perceived service. Thus, the key to managing perceived service quality is to decrease this gap. Bravo, Martínez and Pina (2019) define the perception of service quality as the clients' evaluation of the complete excellence of the service received. Ukil (2016) posits that for client care programmes to be efficiently implemented, certain conditions must be fixed, completed, and accomplished. These are: total employee participation; care from top management; charting client needs and commitments; adherence to set principles; and ways of measuring the set objectives. Ukil (2016) suggests the entire staff of an organisation should be dedicated to the programme. In order to motivate staff to commit to the successful implementation of the programme, an in-house marketing method that would trade the value of the programme should be embraced by management.

2.7.3 Client Engagement support from top management

Critical to the implementation of a client programme is the obligation and support essential from top management. Promise and provision from top management can include, amongst others, internal training or enabling staff to go for training during normal working hours. Continuous education and training can be a robust driver for developing and moving an organisation towards a customer centred. The top management of an organisation have to set the tone on client engagement and have the authority to establish standards and the best practices for the company in as far as client engagement is concerned (Cortez and Johnston, 2020). The manager usually has the data and the necessary information available on client satisfaction rates and client retention rates which gives them a better view of the bigger picture on how a company is performing in terms of ~~an~~ client engagement. This underscores their vital role in ensuring that client engagement is being effectively implemented. If the team is found wanting in certain aspects of client engagement, it is the duty of management to take corrective actions to maintain and uphold standards set by the organisation.

It is also vital for management to practice what they preach when it comes to client engagement. The staff will more likely follow the standards set by their managers, if managers are not doing it right, it becomes extremely difficult for them to motivate the staff to efficiently engage with clients. Client engagement is a culture that must be developed and instilled into the organisation by top management so that the staff buy into the philosophy that client engagement is a culture. As a culture, client engagement requires commitment and support from management (Romans and Tobaben, 2016).

Management must establish their expectations in terms of client engagement and they must communicate these expectations to the staff so that everyone sings from the same hymn. A very good client engagement strategy can fail simply because of the lack of efficient and effective communication of the strategy to the rest of the team (Patterson, 2016). To ensure that the designed client engagement strategy is successful, top

management needs to make sure that everyone in the company understands what the company's overall client engagement goals and strategies are. Staff must understand what is expected of them by management in terms of achieving the goals of client engagement (Patterson, 2016). They need to comprehend where their efforts fit into the overall client engagement strategies. This emphasises efficient and effective communication of the strategy by the management to ensure that the staff is well informed.

2.7.4 Service Measurement

By measuring service quality, an organisation can determine whether the client service programme has been successful or not. The prerequisite for above average quality management of client care is vital in the company and it can be achieved by merging the satisfaction of client needs with the objectives of the company (Mitra, 2016; Fader, 2012; Blythe, 2013). The literature has revealed that customer service is a vital inspiring element in the success of most retail banks. However, those companies who do not take client service seriously cannot acquire the full benefits of success.

Lancaster (2018) mentions that in order to ensure an efficient implementation of client care programmes, it is imperative that conditions must be clear, complete and achievable. This includes a need for all staff to be involved, and the need for top management support; client requirements and obligations should be outlined, and there should be the rigorous following of a set principles, and ways of measuring the goals that have been set. Pan and Ha (2019) advise that banks should understand the importance of regular consultation services with invaluable clients who deal with one or more banks because changes in client awareness of interest rates inspire the loyalty or the switching behaviour of a client, especially if the client is aware of increases in loan interest rates.

According to the 2019 South African Consumer Satisfaction Index, Capitec customers are the most satisfied with the services they receive from their bank with a score of 84.9 (BusinessTech, 2019). FNB comes second with a score of 81.5, Standard Bank is second with a score of 79.3, Nedbank is fourth with a score 77.0 and ARB has the least satisfied customers with a consumer satisfaction score of 76.3 (BusinessTech, 2019). If these findings have to be taken at face value, it can be interpreted as evidence of ARB's poor levels of client engagement when compared to the other major banks.

Table 2.7: Consumer satisfaction score (BusinessTech, 2019)

Rank	Bank	Consumer satisfaction score
1	Capitec	84.9
2	FNB	81.5
3	Nedbank	79.3
4	Standard Bank	77.0
5	Absa Bank	76.3

According to BusinessTech (2019), a survey of 15 542 consumers was carried out where bank customers across various segments were asked how likely they were to recommend their current banks. Findings from this survey reflected customer satisfaction in the form of an index score. The results basically revealed how South African customers view their banks. Capitec had the highest recommendation score of 59.8% which is considered to be well above the industry average score of 34.7%. FNB came second with a recommendation score of 47.9% followed by Nedbank on 37.1% and Standard Bank on 28.6%. Absa was the lowest among the big five banks with a recommendation score of 21.9%, which is way below the industry average score (BusinessTech, 2019).

Table 2.8: Bank recommendation score (BusinessTech, 2019)

Rank	Bank	Recommendation score
1	Capitec	59.8
2	FNB	47.9
3	Nedbank	37.1

4	Standard Bank	28.6
5	Absa Bank	21.9

The findings from both the consumer satisfaction Index and the bank recommendation score suggest that Absa’s performance in terms of service management, CRM and client engagement need to be improved. Considering these findings, client retention is likely to suffer and in the long term this might affect the overall performance of the bank. Absa seems to be lagging behind other major banks in the industry on two very import aspects (consumer satisfaction and bank recommendation). It is crucial to point out that these aspects can be loosely used as proxies to client engagement. Poor client satisfaction can be viewed as a manifestation of the lack of effective client engagement, at least to a certain extend. In the same vein, if a larger proportion of a bank’s clients or any other organisation for that matter, is less likely to recommend their current bank/organisation to other clients, it’s a testimony that the bank/organisation is not properly engaging with its clients. Absa came last on the bank recommendation scores amongst the major five banks in the country which can suggest that the bank may need to revisit its client engagement strategies.

2.8 Client retention

The objective of any client retention strategy, according to Süphan (2015), should be to nurture long-standing relationships with clients through trust, approachability, customised services and dependability. Key to this strategy should be the ability to utilise experienced, intelligent client information to the advantage of the client, and to offer them smooth, excellence services. A planned client retention programme is something every reputable business should have in place, but it is unclear what a retention plan is and what it should do. Khoubian (2018) advises that before starting a retention

programme it is important to understand where the company currently stands regarding its retention record.

On average, ARB experienced a 15% client attrition rate per year up to 2012 (Absa, 2013). Each year there is a high likelihood that at least a quarter of ARB's clients will leave. Reasons for leaving may be because the client is no longer buying the company's product or service, or the client may be unhappy with the fee of the product and quality of the service expected (ARB, 2017). As a result, every company should have a thorough client retention plan in place.

2.9 Agility, engagement and alignment

Agility has been evolving as an important determinant of success in modern competitive banking milieus, where accomplishing sustained competitive advantages are said to be challenging and overwhelming (Holsapple and Li, 2008). Ziemba and Eisenhardt (2018) claim that currently clients are no longer consumers but prosumers. Proactive consumers ('prosumers') have a substantial authority to cause an impact. In order to excel, banks should further involve their clients in co-designing products (Deloitte, 2014a). Bringing high quality, distinguished client experiences will be vital in creating a growth in revenue. Placing clients in greater control of their transaction relationship with the banks enables the bank to make the price or product changes more appealing. Banks that better leverage data and analytics could be in a better position to meet client requirements and to provide a greater client experience, while at the same time strengthening their product relations with better cross-selling.

Banks should take client involvement to a higher level and have their clients as co-designers in the development of product, invention and marketing. This requires the organisation to arrange the customer information in order to align the needs of the clients with the strategies of the organisation (Deloitte, 2014a). In today's business environment,

leading organisations realise that transforming the client's experience of their organisation is fundamental to differentiation and remaining competitive.

A major challenge to improving the client experience is the growing variety of relevant information from new and different channels. Irrespective of the channels from which customer data is collated, or used for client interaction, the underlying information processes that support all client exchanges need to be aligned in order for client service to be consistent, accurate, and timely. Clients have come to expect better and faster access to information, more specifically the right information in the correct format at the correct time. It is more than the organisation's image that is impacted when clients get different answers to the same question at different touch points.

The ideal notion is that the organisation should be responsible for the service, and not the clients. Therefore, client touch points should be seen as an opportunity to add value and differentiate the organisation in the eyes of the client. How does an organisation facilitate the knowledge-sharing processes and client provision of the correct information at the right interval and in the precise format (Deloitte, 2014a)? IT is an important force driving the need for business agility and at the same time an essential capability, which can either hamper or support a firm's level of business agility.

The investment in technology as a change agent in the use and adoption of knowledge distribution processes has improved the critical use of client data. By investing in data and analytics across the banking value chain, banks are able to gain specific insight regarding their clients and products. These investments allow banks to have a greater understanding of their clients' requirements, refine client division methods, create more persuasive value propositions, and classify effective diverse strategies. Banks should continue to leverage new information and technology in order to create an environment in which innovation and client-centricity can succeed (Wade, 2018).

Research is important to ensure that segmentation is aligned to the strategy and CVP (Client Value Proposition) (Payne, Frow and Eggert, 2017). Clients are usually different and market segmentation can ensure effective client engagement because it defines the

characteristics of different market segments which helps the organisation to understand specific needs of clients in different market segment. According to Heinonen and Strandvik (2018), by fully understanding the unique needs of a certain market segment, the organisation can then design approaches to fully engage with the clients. It also assists the organisation in coming up with specific products and services that are specifically suitable for clients in a certain market segment.

Solomon (2015) discusses the benefits of better alignment of information in support of client commitment as follows:

- i. Improved client retention;
- ii. More productive client interactions;
- iii. Positive referrals to new clients; and
- iv. Better intelligence about what clients need and want.

Developing agility in the firm requires a three-pronged approach whereby the firm uses strategies, ecosystems and mindsets.

2.9.1 Agile strategies, ecosystems and mindsets

In a world that is dynamic, strategies that are agile enable a business to be continuously innovative. The strategies are explicitly planned to enhance flexibility and client reaction. Banks, for example, can produce better strategic agility by reacting to changing product networks, such as mobile payments, by restructuring decision processes and embracing new technologies (Deloitte, 2014b).

Agile ecosystems are operating models that combine internal and external networks and allow companies to adjust their operations effortlessly in order to meet the demands of clients or modify strategies as situations change. Constructing competences in the conventional branch network and essentially rethinking the cost structure of an organisation can also add to agile ecosystems. In view of cost pressures and with a

collective focus on cross-selling, banks are starting to turn around their branch arrangements. The deployment of kiosks and advanced ATMs to provide services at a reduced cost while systematising once-manual procedures in a way that can be reformed speedily and inexpensively as client requirements change, will further add to an agile ecosystem (Deloitte, 2014b).

2.9.2 Retail banking sector and socio-economic development

Retail banks are vital to economic growth and development (Zenith Economic Quarterly, 2015). Banking, savings and investment, insurance, debt and equity financing all aid private citizens to save money, safeguard against uncertainty, and build credit, while allowing companies to start up, reproduce, increase productivity, and compete in local and domestic markets. For the poor, these services diminish susceptibility and allow individuals to control the assets that are available to them in ways that make revenue and give them choices which ultimately creates paths out of poverty. The retail banking industry is the largest globally in terms of income, consisting of a broad variety of businesses which include, amongst others, merchant banks and credit card businesses.

These enormous banks have the expertise, reputation, and geographic reach to have substantial direct impacts and, through engagement and example, to change the way entire market's function. They have increasingly considered strategies to expand economic prospects through business models that serve underprivileged individuals and small and medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) as clients. They are also establishing ways to develop human and institutional competence and use their abilities and authority to model policy frameworks in the areas in which they function. Regardless of their ability, currently the impression of large commercial banks on increasing lucrative prospects has remained restricted in the developing world (Mdoe, 2020).

A vicious cycle of inadequate data, unsuitable products, insufficient infrastructure, and rigid regulatory environments have raised costs, and therefore prices are high and thus limit the number of possible clients appearing in the top tiers of the economic pyramid (Zenith Economic Quarterly, 2015). Although it has been established that client management plays a big role in any organisation, it is important to review how the phenomenon is perceived in small to medium organisations versus bigger organisations. To give context, it is a fact that SMMEs play a significant role in the different economies, whether developed or developing. In the UK, SMMEs employ 60% of private sector workers (Zenith Economic Quarterly, 2015). Some create a proportion of the UK private sector revenue that is virtually identical to that of the UK's large businesses.

Their attractiveness is further underlined by their tendency to be very loyal to their clients and clients remain loyal. The Vodafone Group (2011) also confirmed that SMMEs are the backbone of the European economy and a major source of commercial innovation and skills. More than 99% of all European industries are in fact SMMEs and provide two out of three of the private sector jobs and are accountable for half of Europe's economic efficiency (Sawaya and Bhero, 2018).

In Africa, available approximations suggest that SMMEs account for roughly 60% of the workforce and 25% of the industrial productivity in value terms. Compared to larger firms, they tend to use less capital per worker and have the capacity to use capital productively (Sawaya and Bhero, 2018). In a challenging economic environment, businesses - both large and small - must work smarter to survive. The need to manage costs and to exploit every single opportunity to sell and to serve their clients is very important. The ability to communicate effectively with clients, suppliers, and employees is an essential part of working smarter.

In the same report it was established that the success of SMMEs stems from their ability to offer client services - services tailor-made for their client, and with a high degree of flexibility and receptiveness, which huge organisations may not necessarily have. The

report also states a few factors (although there are many others) that are helping SMMEs to deliver a competitive advantage:

- i. The ability to provide instant response to telephone and email enquiries;
- ii. A reputation of distinction; and
- iii. Having a central point of interaction for clients.

Given the crucial role of retail banks in the challenging economic climate, an indifferent sector may be controlled or otherwise 'incentivised' by national governments into expanding its markets. Examples from some countries include, amongst many others:

- i. US Community Reinvestment Act: In the US, the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 is partly as a result of public inspection and pressure directed to large banks by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), established explicit targets for borrowing in underserved groups of the public.
- ii. South African Retail Banks Charter: Facing the likelihood of government regulations, South African retail banks worked with the public and government to improve and take on a set of ideologies that inspire the economic enablement of underserved groups of the public by setting targets and giving companies' ratings that are distinct and are grounded on their performance.
- iii. Community Reinvestment Legislation in Brazil: Amendments in the Brazilian government policy in the year 2003 required that retail banks offer streamlined, low-cost bank accounts for low-income individuals, and to set apart 2% of all demand deposits for microfinance operations that target small businesses.

By adopting proactive strategies to increase economic opportunity, individual retail banks and the retail banking sector in its entirety can minimise political debate and the possibility of government law, while simultaneously addressing serious business and societal issues. The socio-economic development amongst banks in Africa fosters an environment of growth. SA, as a developing country, has banks that are in a position to grow in the next century (Coetzee and Genukile, 2020). ARB needs to focus on the current

client base and take advantage of the different products that will add value to their current customers and then work on acquiring and poaching more clients using the very same tried and tested value adding products. These value adding products that are being presented by the bank are introduced as Client Value Proposition (CVP).

2.10 Client value proposition

Smith (2016) states that the CVP contains the experiences the client will have when acquiring or using a specific product or service. This concept is explained as the total worth of a client, including actual and probable value, both directly and indirectly (referral value such as promoting a company using one's influence on social media). In other words, it is the motive that makes clients buy from an organisation rather than from its competitors.

Yip and Bocken (2018) suggest that organisations should follow the following steps to create engaged customers:

Table 2.9: Possible steps to create engaged customers (Yip and Bocken, 2018)

i. Advance an exceptional value proposition grounded on strong client intuition;
ii. The value proposition should then be linked to clients steadily in its brand advertising;
iii. Ideally this promise is then distributed by employees that maintain and comprehend the strategy and know their individual character in making it a success; and
iv. This cultural basis results in the transfer of a calculated client experience that should not go against the guarantee made in an organisation's advertising.

2.11 Product and service offerings

The banking sector in SA can be best described as oligopolistic (Simatele, 2015). There are several established retail banks serving the various needs of investors, business and consumers (Fawthrop, 2019), but the highly concentrated banking sector is dominated by the so called five major banks, namely Absa, Capitec, FNB, Standard Bank and Nedbank (BusinessTech, 2019). Among the five major banks in SA, Capitec is the largest when it comes to the number of customers. Standard bank is the biggest in terms of income base, branch network and ATM network. Absa comes second in terms of branches and third behind FNB in terms of income. If we look at customer satisfaction, according to the 2019 South African Consumer Satisfaction Index, Capitec customers are the most satisfied with the services they receive from their bank. Absa has the least satisfied customers (BusinessTech, 2019).

The significant products for ARB retail bank comprise transactional, savings and investments, lending and insurance products. The product packages for each section are custom-made to meet the monetary wants of a specific income group or life stage, and include:

2.11.1 Transactional

A variety of current account products including Silver, Gold and Platinum in the central middle and prosperous retail market, as well as Flexi and Mzansi accounts for entry-level banking customers (Absa 2018).

2.11.2 Savings and investments

A variety of savings and investment possibilities, which includes Mega U, Target Save, Money Builder, Investment Advantage, ARB Club account, notice deposits and fixed deposits (Absa 2018).

2.11.3 Unsafe lending

Unsafe individual lending decisions that comprise overdrafts, personal loans, student loans and revolving loans (Absa 2018).

2.11.4 Special insurance solutions

ARB Flexi Funeral Plan, ARB Personal Accident and Hospital Plan, FlexiSure short-term insurance, Flexi Estate Protector (including Flexi Will) and credit life policies (Absa 2018). All these products and services are put together to ensure every life stage of a client is engaged and accommodated. From the transactional products to insurance solutions the services covered ensure that a client is taken care of from first engagement to loyalty and eventual profitable relationship. These products pave a way to monitor client behaviour.

2.12 Client behaviour

SERVQUAL can be understood as a multifaceted research instrument that aims to gauge and comprehend client expectations and perceptions of a company's services (Saini and Singh, 2018). This is done through the use of five dimensions that theoretically represents service quality. The bases of SERVQUAL are built on the notion that service quality can be viewed as the magnitude and degree to which clients' quality expectations before receiving the service are corroborated or contradicted by the actual perception of the service experience (Raza, Umer, Qureshi and Dahri, 2020). Although SERVQUAL has been examined in the context of banking, the implicit relations between the dimensions of service and the behaviour of consumer's intention have been inadequately researched in the banking industry (Choudhury, 2015). The comparative analysis of the relationship between the quality of service and the behaviour intentions of customers in private and public banking sectors reveal that to influence word-of-mouth (WOM), buying and

complaining behaviour, customer-orientation is the most essential component in the private banks.

However, reliability is the most essential component in the case of the public banks (Choudhury, 2015). It is important to analyse customer changing behaviour, which is of great importance in the retail banking industry, especially in times of financial disasters and in their continuing pressures of consolidation (Farah, 2016). Furthermore, research reveals that cultural values play a significant role in influencing a client's likelihood of changing the service provider.

Switching is not only impacted by an individual's approach regarding changing banking service providers, but also by the amalgamation circumstance at hand, the impact of other significant individuals, and whether the choice to switch is under an individual's control (Farah, 2016). The results in the findings by Farah (2016) indicate that the behaviour to switch within the banking industry is greatly determined by the client's culture and more specifically for clients who have a large account. While individualist clients tend to switch banks, collectivist clients are not willing to lose their relationships with the bank's employees. These specific features make them more or less likely to switch banks regardless of an amalgamation and its associated consequences (Farah, 2016).

The price war and intense competition in the Indian banking industry have exposed banks to one of the major threats of switching. Consumers are now more price and service conscious in their financial services purchasing behaviour. They are more prone to change their banking behaviour as banking products and services between banks are nearly identical in nature (Trivedi, Birau, Tenea and Spulbar, 2019). The increase in utilisation of technology, liberalisation and deregulation introduced a revolutionised way of serving consumers. Previous business processes and the changing behaviour of consumers are being disrupted by technology. However, the essential features of banking, namely assurance and trust the public has in the organisation, does not change and has ultimately

presented many threats as well as opportunities for the banking sector (Vyas and Raitani, 2016).

According to Vyas and Raitani (2016), the factors as indicated Table 2.10 would influence client switching.

Table 2.10: Factors that can influence client switching (Vyas and Raitani 2016)

Service quality	Service quality has been described as the degree of difference between a consumer’s normative expectation for the service and their perceptions for service performance, and includes variables, namely bank hours that are convenient, easy accessibility to ATMs, bank services that are reliable, and the attitude of employees to deliver quality services.
Price	This involves a consumer’s perception with regards to the objectivity of the pricing policy of the bank. Especially in the banking industry, price has broader consequences as it involves not only bank charges but the interest repayments on loans and deposits.
Commitment of Customer	This concerns variables that measure customer behaviour which reveal a desire to uphold and maintain the valued relations with their current service provider. It is therefore imperative for banks to be knowledgeable about customer switching behaviour.
Reputation	This involves the image of the bank. It measures the honesty and economic stability of the company. Reputation is an indispensable, unique, challenging to duplicate and key asset to a company that desires to remain competitive.
	This concerns questions with regards to the impact of advertising content, the perception of the customer with regards to humour

Effective advertising competition	and words and its link with their choice to switch. Advertising has a major impact of the behaviour of a customer as it provides knowledge and guidance to assist them to make decisions when purchasing a product or service. Advertising also intensifies communication between the company and the clients.
Response to service failure	Elements that contribute to the response to service failure are linked to the promptness of the staff to resolve queries or to amend their mistakes with a speedy response time.
Customer satisfaction	This is made up of variables from the overall satisfaction of clients which is grounded on their bank experience. Satisfaction is a result of procurement and use, which is an outcome from purchasers comparing costs and rewards in relation to the expected consequences.
Involuntary switching	This integrates factors of unintentionally switching, namely when clients change jobs, move to another location or when branches get closed in their residential areas. These factors are not within the control of either the service providers or the customers.
Service products	These include aspects that relate to a variety of service products and need satisfaction. Due to the rapid increase in technology, businesses need to provide a variety of products in order to be successful and remain competitive.

Vyas and Raitani (2013) mention that drivers of behaviour switching do not work in isolation. It is the result of a negative service experience that may be associated with any of these aspects. Furthermore, executives of customer care should provide clients with current data with regard to services that have already been acquired. Most of the complaints by clients about their bank are that the bank does not notify them of concealed service charges.

In a study by Choudhury (2015), approximately 35% of the respondents indicated they are not informed of current information about services already purchased. Banks should increase their transparency with the clients which will ultimately aid in the reduction of clients leaving the bank. Hence, these aspects should be attended to so that the optimum benefits of client relations can be achieved. A high-quality 'financial consumer policy' should not only have the ability to grow client satisfaction with retail banks but should also develop security and faith in the public administration through visible procedures and accountability (Choudhury, 2015). Managers of retail banks must understand that it is imperative to have employees who can provide competent and dependable services towards customers, which are key aspects that are required to foster both culture and service excellence (Choudhury, 2015).

Due to the fact that service quality describes merely a portion of the difference in the loyalty of a customer, further research should be conducted to examine client and related aspects that may restrain the suggested relationship. Furthermore, an examination should be conducted on the tangible loyalty regarding the actual number of clients that undergo repeat purchases as a feature of attitudinal loyalty (Koutsathanassi *et al.*, 2017).

2.13 Client engagement conceptual frameworks

In the course of literature review, the researcher came across different client engagement frameworks and critically reviewed the contributions of Pansari and Kumar (2017), Alvarez-Milán, Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch (2018), and Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger (2016) in an effort to gather more detailed information concerning the aspects and constructs of client engagement. The decisions to select the work of these scholars were founded on the ways and approaches that these authors employed in developing their conceptual frameworks and their general perspectives on the client engagement phenomenon. The researcher evaluated how each framework may influence and contribute to the client engagement phenomenon.

2.13.1 The Pansari and Kumar (2017) client engagement conceptual framework

Through analysing and evaluating Pansari and Kumar (2017), the researcher identified key concepts which these scholars designated as vital in comprehending the client engagement phenomenon. It is important to indicate that Pansari and Kumar (2017) and other scholars under review are of the view that even though client engagement is key to the success of a business, organisations are still struggling when it comes to the effective implementation of client engagement. By realising this, Pansari and Kumar (2017), developed a framework for client engagement and discussed the concept of client engagement by identifying the key components of the client engagement including both direct and indirect contributions.

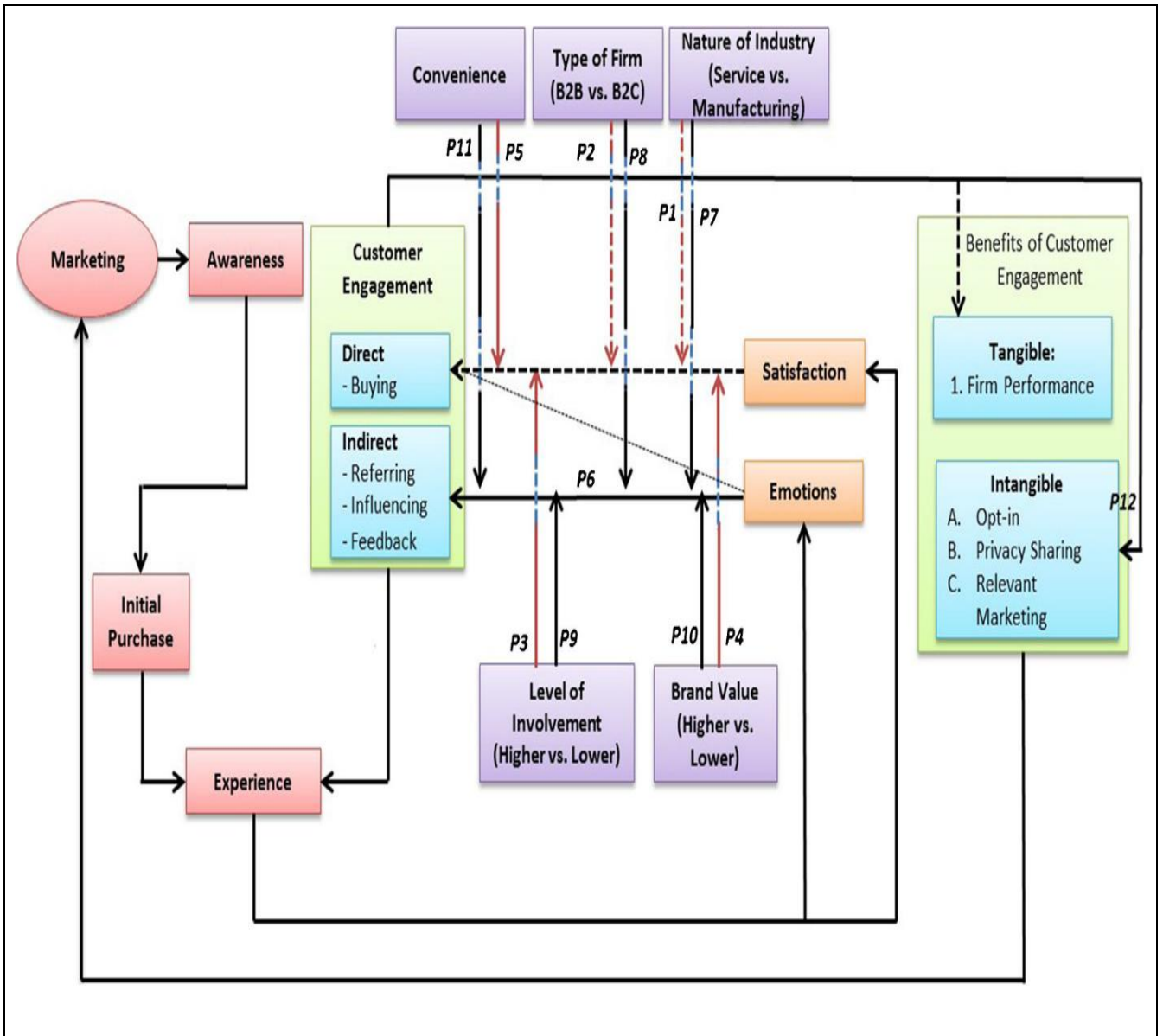


Figure 2.4: Client engagement conceptual framework. Adapted from Pansari and Kumar (2017)

2.13.2 Relevance of Pansari and Kumar’s contributions to this study

Pansari and Kumar (2017) highlight different features and constructs that can theoretically contribute and determine client engagement. These variables include emotions, holistic experience, brand value, satisfaction, involvement, convenience, and client contributions.

These scholars however did not consider the socio-economic context of client engagement. Furthermore, they did not clarify if the client engagement phenomenon is context specific.

The fact that they did not refer to or consider the socio-economic context and environment factors that might influence client engagement, lead the researcher to presume that Pansari and Kumar (2017) viewed the client engagement phenomenon as being similarly entrenched in a different socio-economic context. The important question then is, if client engagement is equally entrenched or not equally entrenched across different socio-economic environments, would it then produce different results in different socio-economic context that could improve successful client engagement leading to client retention.

One of the researcher's objectives centres around determining if socio-economic dynamics are associated with client engagement and if client engagement differ with different socio-economic settings. The researcher is interested in this question to determine that if different socio-economic settings were to be considered in implementing client engagement strategies, will this result in better outcomes in terms of client retention? The researcher finds it necessary to determine if socio-economic dynamics should play a significant role in designing, implementing, and delivering client engagement.

It is vital to acknowledge the important contribution of Pansari and Kumar (2017) on the art of managing client engagement and the conceptual framework for client engagement that they proposed. The key takings in the context of this study however are that Pansari and Kumar (2017) neglected to emphasise the fact that client engagement can be different in different socio-economic environments which can have significant effects on the successful implementation of client engagement strategies.

2.13.3 The Alvarez-Milán, Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch (2018) client engagement conceptual framework

Alvarez-Milán *et al.* (2018) explored client engagement as a firm-initiated resource. They used interviews with 41 managers and proposed a strategic client engagement framework with five dimensions.

As a result of analysing and evaluating Alvarez-Milán *et al.* (2018), the researcher identified key concepts which these scholars highlighted as vital in the understanding of the client engagement phenomenon. It is vital to point out that Alvarez-Milán *et al.* (2018) focused more on client engagement aspects that can be used in client engagement marketing.

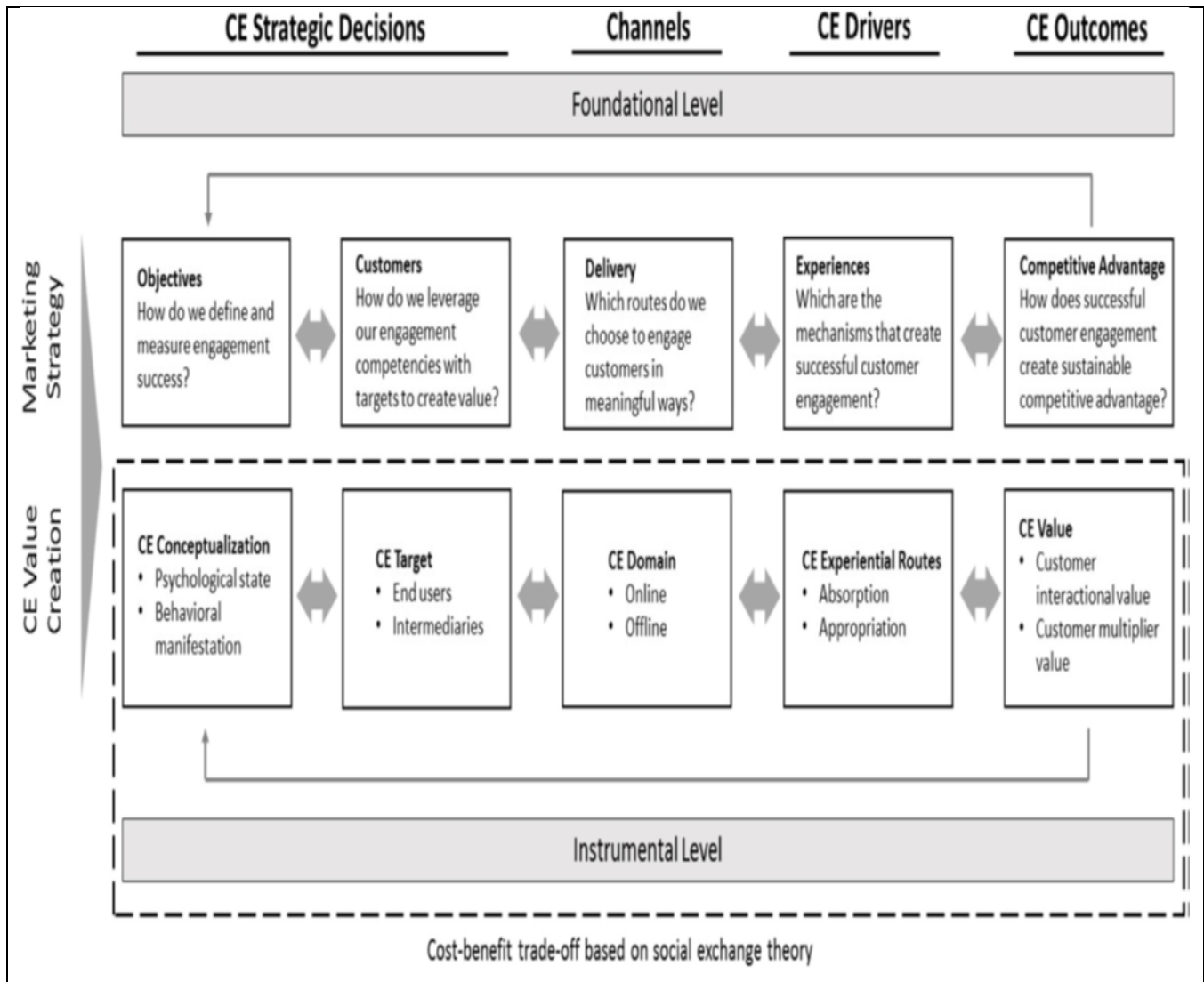


Figure 2.5: Client engagement conceptual framework. Adapted from (Alvarez-Milán, Felix, Rauschnabel and Hirsch, 2018)

2.13.4 Relevance of Alvarez-Milán, Felix, Rauschnabel and Hirsch’s contributions to this study

Just like Pansari and Kumar (2017), Alvarez-Milán *et al.* (2018) also acknowledge that organisations do understand the importance of client engagement, but issues arise when it comes to correctly designing, and effectively implement client engagement strategies. They postulated that managers need a clear plan and direction in creating client engagement-oriented companies. Drawing from the social exchange theory, Alvarez-Milán *et al.* (2018) explored client engagement as a firm-initiated resource and came up

with a multifaceted strategic client engagement framework. These scholars suggested an integrated approach to client engagement.

Unlike Pansari and Kumar (2017), Alvarez-Milán *et al.* (2018) recognised the potential influence of socio-economic aspects and the possible impact of different economic environments and different cultures on client engagement. Their work highlighted the influence of different socio-economic environments and different cultures and how they can affect the success of client engagement. According to their study the specific types of markets and industry have a significant influence on client engagement. They further pointed out that management styles in developing economies like Mexico, where they conducted their study tend to be authoritarian and top down which can affect client engagement strategies and their implementation (Alvarez-Milán *et al.*, 2018). The researcher shares these views on the effect of culture and different economies on client engagement design, implementation, and delivery. Diverse economic settings such as those that prevail either in developing economies or in the developed economies, call for different approaches on client engagement.

2.13.5 The Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger (2016) client engagement framework

The researcher also analysed and evaluated Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger's work on client engagement. The researcher identified central ideas which these scholars highlighted as vital in the understanding of the client engagement phenomenon. It is vital to point out Maslowska *et al.* (2016) focused more on the interconnectedness of various aspects such as clients brand experience, and brand consumption and their influence on client engagement.

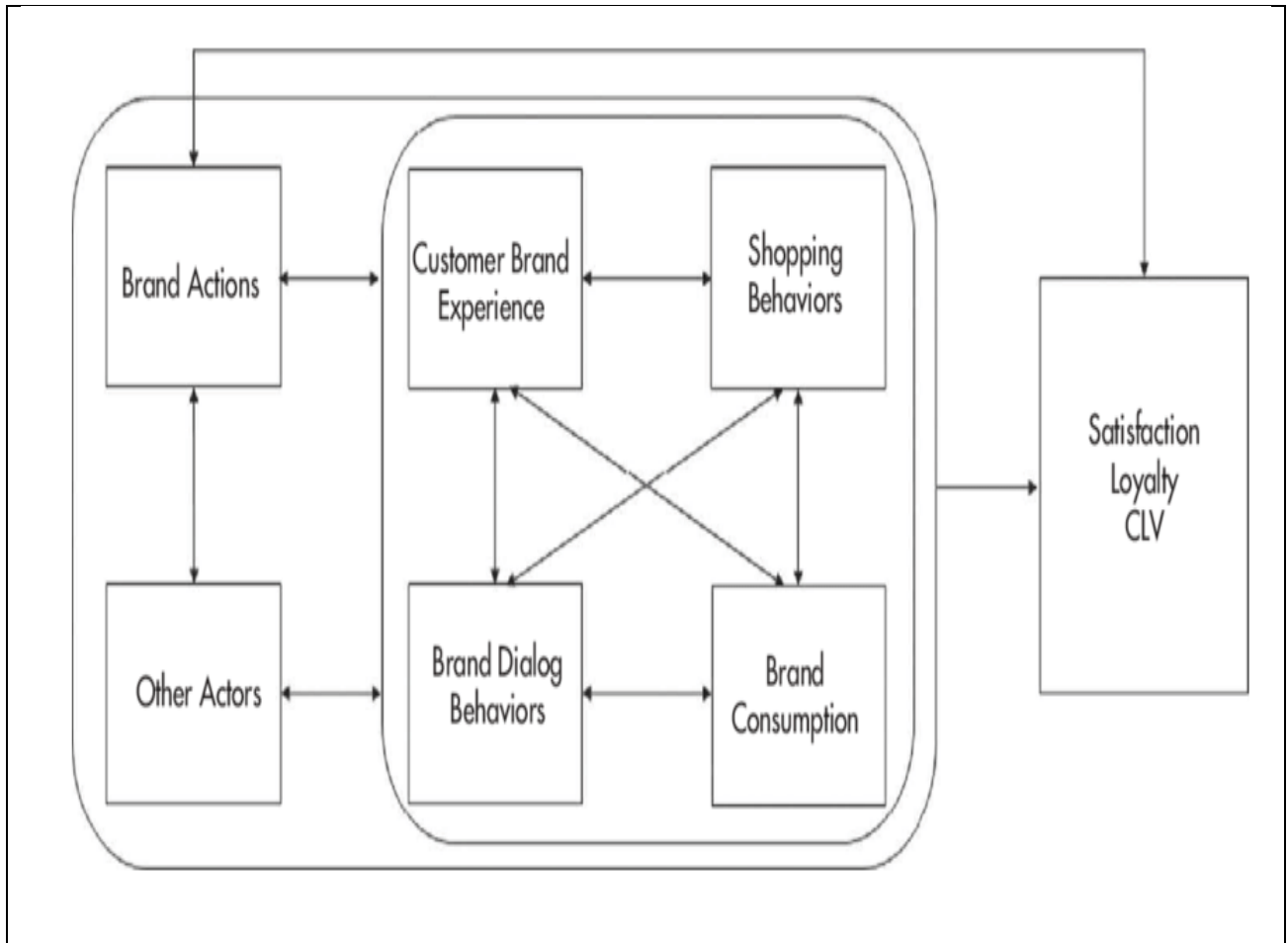


Figure 2.6: Customer engagement conceptual framework. Adapted from (Maslowska *et al.*, 2016).

Maslowska *et al.* (2016) proposed what they termed ‘customer engagement ecosystem’, a conceptual model that incorporates brand actions, other actors, clients brand experience, shopping behaviours, brand consumption and brand dialog behaviours. Their central thesis is that interactions between these elements are nonlinear and sensitive, implying that each action causes a reaction not only from the envisioned receivers of the message but the entire ecosystem (Maslowska *et al.*, 2016). They emphasise the fact that their framework reflects the interconnected characteristics of contemporary marketing environments.

This model postulates that there can be four components for client engagement, that is, customer brand experience, brand dialog behaviours, brand consumption and shopping

behaviours. Furthermore, they also suggest that there are two other classes of actors who participate in creating engagement which is the brand itself and other factors like other clients or the media (Maslowska *et al.*, 2016).

Maslowska *et al.* (2016) did not consider the socio-economic context of client engagement. Furthermore, they did not clarify if the client engagement phenomenon is context specific and the fact that they did not refer to or consider the socio-economic context and the possible effects of different environments, leaves the researcher no choice but to assume that they viewed the client engagement phenomenon as being equally entrenched in different socio-economic context. These scholars made interesting contributions to the definition of client engagement and emphasised on proper definition and clarity to improve the understanding which can result in proper design and implementation. However, in spite of their significant contributions, they overlooked the possible influence of a different context.

2.13.6 Summary of client engagement conceptual frameworks

The client engagement frameworks reviewed in this study all seem to be centred on the notion that companies will perform better if they truly place clients at the core of the business. They are all of the view that clients are central to the success of a business and good performance hinges on effective management of customers, which makes client engagement absolutely vital. The scholars also seem to highlight the fact that even though client engagement is key to the success of a business, organisations are still struggling to effectively implement it, and this realisation was the main reason why they developed these theoretical frameworks or models for client engagement. They went on and discussed the concepts of client engagement in an effort to offer insights on the client engagement phenomenon. The view of the frameworks also shares a common understanding that there is an important association between client engagement and positive business outcomes such as client satisfaction, brand loyalty and improved client

retention. They all suggest a direct relationship between client engagement and good business performance.

The key findings however are that except for Maslowska *et al.* (2016), other scholars neglected to emphasise the fact that client engagement can be viewed as a component within a bigger system and that different socio-economic environments require different approaches, and this can have significant effects on the successful implementation of the client engagement strategy to maximise client retention.

2.14 Conclusion

For organisations to survive in competitive environments, it is imperative to put in place strategies for keeping clients happy and facilitate the growth of market share. On the other hand, though organisations know they need to manage their clients effectively in order to grow their business and improve business performance, the management of the client has proven to be challenging and complex. The client engagement strategies that have been put into place in some cases have been unsuccessful in delivering outstanding service due to the complexity of the client management phenomenon

They are treated as 'trendy' and therefore organisations do not take a long-term view in implementing them to ensure that they gain in-depth understanding and insight of the subject matter. If the above difficulties could be managed, organisations may start to see some desperately needed improvement in the client management arena. It can also be concluded that the client management landscape has changed over the years due to client demands and high expectations. The social media and platforms have given clients an opportunity to voice their thoughts about products, services, and brands, and this has empowered them.

Organisations are, therefore, compelled to react (or be proactive) and offer what the clients want, when, and how they want it. The environment has changed, and there has

been a shift in how business is conducted: it has and is beginning to take an 'outside in' approach as opposed to an 'inside out' approach where the clients' views, demands, and wants are being positioned at the centre of business decisions. Globalisation and intense competition have had a ripple effect on how clients are and should be treated. The next chapter discusses the research design and methodology that was utilised by the researcher in collecting data for this research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research process encompasses obtaining scientific information by means of various objective methods and procedures (Repko and Szostak, 2020). Giesler and Thompson (2016) add that research is something that people embark on in order to find out things in a systematic way, thereby growing their knowledge. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017) adds that the research design comprises the total research process, whilst Dannels (2018) mentions that the purpose of research design is to offer a set of systematic measures that produces data that pertains to the improvement, alteration or increase of knowledge. Hence, the research design is the framework that makes available structure and gives particular strategies to complete research effectively. This chapter presents the methodology that was utilised to gather the required primary data for this research. The target population, sampling and the collection tool is also discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Research approach

This study used an interpretative phenomenological approach to address the research objectives and answer the outlined research questions. An interpretive phenomenological approach can be understood as an approach that aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the lived experience of a phenomenon through personal experiences and perceptions of the participants pertaining to certain objects or events (Tuffour, 2017).

3.2.1 Deductive and inductive thinking

Woiceshyn and Daellenbach (2018) state that in deductive research there is an inclination to move from theory to data (which includes theory, technique, data and results). However, in inductive research there is an inclination to move from data to theory (technique, data, results and theory). Patten (2016) states that in the deductive approach the researcher may have deduced a new theory by analysing and then combining ideas or facts from the existing theory in the hope of providing a better or more coherent framework than the theories that preceded it. According to Pasion (2016), deduction is the leading research methodology in the natural sciences, where rules form the root of explanation, enable the expectation of phenomena, calculate their existence and therefore allows them to be controlled. Collins (2018) mentions that deductive research has five consecutive stages as follows:

Table 3.1: Deductive research stages (Collins, 2018)

First stage	Determining a hypothesis from the theory
Second Stage	Stating the hypothesis in operational terms
Third stage	Analysing the operational hypothesis
Fourth stage	Investigating the exact result of the inquiry
Fifth stage	Adapting the theory, if necessary

The deductive process starts with an abstract conceptualisation and then goes on to testing through the application of theory. Within the inductive approach, the theory follows the data unlike the deductive approach. Tjora (2018) assert that learning is done by reflecting upon particular experiences and through formulation of abstract concepts and theories. Azungah (2018) claim that the modern justification for taking an inductive approach in the social sciences tends to revolve around two related arguments:

- i. The explanation of social phenomena grounded in observation and experience;
and

- ii. Critique of some of the philosophical assumptions embraced by positivism.

Table 3.2 presents the difference between deductive and inductive research approaches.

Table 3.2: Differences between deductive and inductive approaches to research
 (Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015; Gómez and Mouselli, 2018)

Deduction	Induction
Moving from theory to data	Moving from data to theory
Common with natural sciences	Common with social sciences
A highly structured approach	Flexible structure to permit changes
Explains causal relationships between variables	Understanding of meanings humans attach to events
Select samples of sufficient size to generalise conclusions	Less concern with the need to generalise

3.3 Research strategy

Research strategies refer to experiments, surveys, case studies, ethnography and action research, and a researcher may select a strategy, or a combination of strategies, suitable for his or her study (Saunders *et al.*, 2015). Gómez and Mouselli (2018) maintain that research strategy leads up to a general orientation in conducting commercial research; hence the research strategy can take the form of two distinctive approaches that are either quantitative or qualitative in nature or a combination of both. Punch and Oancea (2014) define research strategy as an overall plan that researchers employ to go about answering research questions. Saunders *et al.* (2015) go on to say that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods lies in the fact that the quantitative approach concentrates on the numeric (numbers) while the qualitative approach concentrates on non-numeric (words) data.

The aim of the study is to develop a comprehensive CEM framework. This study used ARB as a case study to develop a conceptual CEM framework that can be applied to the South African retail banking sector. The CEM framework should present general guidance to the South African retail banking sector on conceivable ways to align their banks to be more client focused and improve client engagement to enhance client loyalty and retention.

The objectives of this study are:

- I. To critically review existing ARB client engagement strategies to determine if they are sufficient to ensure client retention;
- II. Develop a client engagement framework for ARB that can be used in emerging economies;
- III. To assess ARB's prevailing client engagement management strategies and their practical implementation; and
- IV. Define client engagement in different socioeconomic environment and contexts.

The research objectives assisted in finding the real issues surrounding clients, as well as helping ARB to fully assess its current standpoint with regards to client engagement and ultimate satisfaction that would lead to the continuing loyalty.

3.4 Research design

If organisations want to address the client engagement challenges, the best way will likely entail recognising the various components that are related to and influence client engagement. Given this backdrop, the researcher used a qualitative approach as the mode of inquiry. Qualitative research approach allows the researcher to inquire about the client engagement phenomenon holistically and not as isolated or separate concept (Azungah, 2018). The approach allows the researcher to learn and gain insights by asking questions in natural settings and allows the truth to emerge without predetermined expectations that may influence the outcome of the research.

At the literature review phase, the researcher encountered a variety of customer engagement frameworks. From the review the researcher identified three client engagement frameworks and critically reviewed them. The selected customer engagement frameworks were based on the following authors' works: Pansari and Kumar (2017), Alvarez-Milán *et al.* (2018), and Maslowska *et al.* (2016). The decision to choose these frameworks was based on the approaches the authors adopted, the way they developed their themes, and their overall perspectives of the customer engagement phenomenon. The researcher sought to evaluate how each perspective could influence or contribute to the customer engagement phenomenon. The frameworks were referenced as documents which is a part of data collection.

To add value to the study, the researcher identified three client engagement frameworks and critically reviewed them. This was done to add depth to the study and to gather more detailed information concerning the aspects and constructs of client engagement. The decisions to select the work of these scholars enabled the researcher to explore the ways and approaches that these authors used in establishing their theoretical frameworks and models and their overall viewpoints on the client engagement phenomenon. The researcher evaluated how each perspective may influence and contribute to the client engagement phenomenon. Due to time constraints the researcher could only critically review the contributions of Pansari and Kumar (2017), Alvarez-Milán *et al.* (2018), and Maslowska *et al.* (2016) in an effort to gather more detailed information client engagement. The decisions to select the work of these scholars were founded on the ways and approaches that these authors employed in developing their theoretical frameworks on the client engagement phenomenon. The researcher evaluated how each perspective may influence and contribute to the client engagement phenomenon.

The practice of research design encompasses much more than philosophical assumptions and philosophical ideas and must be combined with broad approaches to research strategies and implemented with specific procedures and methods (Azungah, 2018).

Dannels (2018) contends that the research design is a plan which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used, and the data analysis to be completed.

Brinkmann (2018) states that a research philosophy is built around issues that surround the study conducted together with the nature of the questions that are being probed. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017) describe a research design as an intellectual imagery or an architectural impression of what the product of research is anticipated to look like. Tobi and Kampen (2018) maintain that a research design is the basic plan for a piece of research that includes four main ideas as indicated in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Research design plan (Tobi and Kampen, 2018)

The strategy	This is the overall game plan from the topic to be studied, the objectives of the study as well as the research questions that need to be answered, sampling, data collection and data analysis.
The conceptual framework	This entails the theoretical constructs that underpin the study.
Who or what is being studied?	Clarity on the phenomena being researched?
Tools and procedures	These are for use in the study to ensure that the research objectives are met

3.4.1 Modes of enquiry

A mode of enquiry is a plan that moves from the underlying metaphysical assumptions that would determine the participants in the research, the data collection methods and the analysis of the data (Maher, Hadfield, Hutchings and de Eyto, 2018). The chosen mode of enquiry is partially determined by the researcher’s assumptions, research skills and

research practices, and also impacts on how data is collected. The following six modes of enquiry have been noted by scholars such as (Callaghan, 2018; Creswell, 2012) and presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Modes of enquiry (Callaghan, 2018; Creswell 2012)

<p>Conceptual studies</p>	<p>These are studies that are based on secondary sources, and that critically engage with the understanding of notions and aim towards adding new knowledge to the existing body of knowledge and understanding.</p>
<p>Historical research</p>	<p>This is a systematic process of describing and interpreting the past based on information from selected sources as they relate to the phenomenon under study. Historical researchers tend to focus on the description (what happened) of events and their analysis (why it happened). Therefore, this research tends to be descriptive and attempts to construct a map of the past. In general, there are four types of historical confirmation that the researcher can use, namely, primary sources, secondary sources, running records, and recollections (oral history).</p>
<p>Action research</p>	<p>This research focuses on the collaborative and participative dimensions, and centres on a practical problem experienced by participants for which a practical solution is sought. Successful action research requires an understanding of the context and provides potential solutions to the problem(s). The researcher acts as a mediator to assist in planning and executing or implementing the solution to the problem.</p>
	<p>This is a systematic investigation into an event or a set of related events which aims to define and clarify the phenomenon of interest (Dawson, Hancock and Algozzine, 2015). The authors add that a case</p>

Case study research	study focuses on an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context where boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.
Ethnography	This has come to mean a description of a community or group that focuses on social systems and cultural heritage. Researchers who specialise in ethnography spend time studying people in their natural settings. The aim of ethnography research is to establish the culture from the sample by understanding the innate meanings of symbols, gestures, songs, sayings, displays and anything that would make meaningful sense with regard to the culture of the sample.
Grounded theory	Grounded theory is based on theory development and, unlike other research strategies, it strives to create theory that is supported by data that is systematically collected and analysed. Grounded theory claims to be inductive and not deductive. Data collection and theory generation are regarded as two parts of the same process (Atkinson and Delamont, 2010), and are deliberately merged to that initial data analysis so that it can be used to shape continuing data collection. This is intended to provide the researcher with opportunities for increasing the density and saturation or recurring categories, as well as for following up on unexpected findings.

For the purpose of this study, the mode of enquiry used for this study was grounded theory, as it allows the researcher to expand upon an explanation of a phenomenon by recognising the key elements of that phenomenon, and then categorising the relationships of those elements to the context and process of the study.

3.5 Research methodology

Research can either be positivist (quantitative) or phenomenological (qualitative) or a combination of the two (Saunders *et al.*, 2015). This research study employed a qualitative research methodology based primarily on constructivist perspectives (namely, the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed with the intent of developing a client engagement framework) and advocacy/participatory perspectives (that is, political, issue-oriented, collaborative or change oriented) (Callaghan, 2018).

In qualitative research, the focus is on understanding the research problem through detailed information about the subject matter and an essential aim of this approach is to have a complete and detailed description of the subject matter (Saunders *et al.*, 2015). Qualitative data consists of observations, descriptions, quotations and excerpts from data. Qualitative research methodologies place little significance on developing statistical samples, seeking statistical backing for hypotheses, or computing the size or scope of the phenomenon. Qualitative research focuses on describing and understanding phenomena in their natural environment or setting with the purpose of developing an awareness of the meaning given by the participants (Callaghan, 2018).

Qualitative researchers use a wide variety of techniques, including spoken words, movements, echoes, symbols, physical objects, photographic images and, to a lesser degree, numeric information to measure what they experience (Mason, 2017).

Researchers bridge ideas and data in an ongoing, interactive process (Tobi and Kampen, 2018). Furthermore, with a qualitative study, special focus is placed on the rich quality of the data and in-depth information collected, and not necessarily on the range or breadth of the data as presented in quantitative research. It is in this regard that a qualitative methodology has been chosen for this study to develop a framework for efficient customer engagement. Qualitative data sources include participant observations (usually

fieldwork), interviews and questionnaires, documents and texts, and the researcher's impressions and reactions (Repko and Szostak, 2020).

All research is based on the underlying assumptions about what constitutes 'valid' research and which research methods are appropriate for a particular reason and in a particular context. To understand what constitutes valid research, four questions are constantly being asked (Adams and van Manen 2017):

- i. What is truth or reality (ontology)?
- ii. What is the nature of phenomena (objects)?
- iii. How can we know (epistemology)?
- iv. What is the relationship between the knower and the known?

The study of the nature and form of reality (that which is or can be known) is called ontology (Adams and van Manen, 2017). Quantitative and qualitative researchers define ontology differently. Quantitative researchers (positivist) argue that there is one objective reality that is observed by an inquirer who has little, if any, impact on the object being observed. The ontological assumption of the positivist is that the social world is external to individual reasoning, and is a real world made up of hard, tangible, and relatively fixed phenomena (Adams and van Manen, 2017). This view argues that society is made up of structures, concepts, labels and relationships, and what makes the world function are natural laws and principles, which need to be discovered and proven through scientific methods (Adams and van Manen 2017). On the other hand, the qualitative (phenomenological) research paradigm focuses on the social construction of people's ideas and concepts. It concentrates on how people interact with others, their motives and relationships.

The paradigm assumes that reality consists of an individual's mental constructions of the objects she or he engages in or with, and that the engagement impacts on the observer and the situation being observed. Reality, as portrayed by qualitative researchers, therefore tends to follow the constructivist cue that reality is a social construction. It accepts that the researcher cannot be separated from the research, and it asserts that

research findings are created, rather than discovered, and therefore there is no objective phenomenon that exists independently of the researcher.

While ontological assumptions are about reality, epistemology concerns itself with how things can be known and how truths or facts or physical laws can be discovered and revealed. Epistemology considers how reality is viewed, the method for knowing the nature of reality, or how one comes to know reality. It assumes a relationship between the knower and the known (Alase, 2017). Positivists (quantitative) believe that knowledge can be revealed or discovered using scientific methods. The approach emphasises experimentation, observation, control, measurement, reliability and validity in the various processes of research (Alase, 2017).

Clients are the reason why organisations exist, and it has been established thus far that for businesses to be effective and keep on being competitive, they must know the needs and requirements of their clients. This places client engagement at the heart of doing business. The literature reviewed highlights the complexity of the concept of client engagement, the significance and the trials encountered in the implementation of CRM systems, as well as the intricacies of the notion of client experience.

An integral part of this research was to establish common trends within the client engagement context and to find historical information or knowledge that may influence the researcher's thinking and paradigm with regard to the strategies that can be used to improve client retention. It is because of the complexities surrounding the client engagement phenomenon that a qualitative design was used for this study (MacFarlane, Veach and LeRoy, 2014).

3.6 Target population

A target population can be referred to as a group of people, events or objects that share a collective characteristic and represent the entire or sum total of cases involved in a

research study (Jha, 2014). The target population for this study was the senior managers and internal clients who have an active portfolio and have purchased new products (namely home loans, vehicle finance, financial planning and opening a new account) in the last five years. The target population included internal managers (Phase 1) and internal clients (Phase 2) from the ARB Group. Non-probability sampling was used with the purposive sampling technique to select a sample size. Eight managers and twenty-eight internal clients participated in this study. The target population were expected to have in-depth understanding of client engagement strategies as well as strategies used by the retail banking sector to retain its clients.

3.7 Sampling strategy

A sample as defined by Kim, Jang, Kim and Wan (2018), is a subgroup of the target population. During the selection of this sample the researcher firstly established which group of individuals would be sampled, what number of the individuals is going to be included in the study and how the sample was chosen. The sample size determines the number of participants that would be involved in the enquiry. The selection of the sample is a critical step to the study as the sample size has a great impact on the quality and generalisation of the primary data collected. Large samples are known to be high in costs, however a small sample may produce inadequate data that may not be able to answer the research questions of a study.

Hammarberg, Kirkman and de Lacey (2016) mention that large samples offer more dependable outcomes. However, there is no need to sample the entire target population in order to obtain reliable data. Kim *et al.* (2018) claim that the two types of sampling practices are:

Table 3.5: Types of sampling (Kim *et al.*, 2018)

<p align="center">Probability or illustrative sampling</p>	<p>This transpires when components or a sample are chosen by chance. This implies that all the subunits of the target population have a known or non-zero possibility of being chosen, that is, all components have an equal possibility of being selected to participate in the study.</p>
<p align="center">Non-probability or judgment sampling</p>	<p>The subsets of the population have slight or no chance of being carefully chosen for the sample, in other words, elements of the population do not have an equal chance of being selected. This type of sampling depends on the individual judgment of researchers to select the sample.</p>

Probability sampling includes the following (Etikan and Bala, (2017):

Table 3.6: Probability sampling (Etikan and Bala, 2017):

<p align="center">Simple random</p>	<p>Every component of the target population has an equal possibility of being carefully chosen to participate in the study. A random number generator or table is used to draw a sample.</p>
<p align="center">Systematic</p>	<p>A component of the target population is carefully chosen at the beginning with a random start and following the sample fraction chooses every element.</p>
<p align="center">Stratified</p>	<p>This is when the target population is separated into sub-populations or levels.</p>
<p align="center">Cluster</p>	<p>A cluster is when the target population is separated into varied sub-groups.</p>

Non-probability sampling comprises (Etikan and Bala, 2017):

Table 3.7: Non-probability sampling (Etikan and Bala, 2017)

Convenience sampling	This is where the selected sample is readily accessible to participate in the study. The use of convenience sampling implies that the respondents are in the correct location and are at the correct time to participate in the study.
Purposive or judgment sampling	This is when respondents are selected according to the judgement of the researcher to participate in the study.
Quota sampling	The sample reflects the same proportion of individuals as the whole population with regard to a particular phenomenon.
Snowball sampling	This method is generally used when it is problematic to find members of the desired population for the research.

Non-probability purposive sampling was used for Phase 2 of this study, as the study sought to reach a clearly defined objective, and therefore the population that possesses the knowledge and information was deemed as acceptable participants. As only eight internal managers (Phase 1) agreed to participate, the researcher decided to engage an additional twenty-eight internal clients. These participants (Phase 2) jointly formed the sample for this study. The twenty-eight internal clients were selected as follows: five from the Absa Vehicle and Asset Finance division, three from Absa Short Term Insurance, two from Absa Long Term Insurance, five sales consultants from branches, two hosts at ARB branches, two receptionists, two ARB ATM custodians, two ARB bank tellers, two ARB customer services clerks, three ARB Home Loans consultants which made up a total of thirty-six that were selected to participate in this study. Hagaman and Wutich (2017) assert that sample sizes of twenty to forty interviews are required to achieve data saturation in a qualitative study.

3.8 Data collection tools

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) mention that a broad range of research instruments can be utilised to collect the primary data required for a study, namely surveys (questionnaires), interviews, focus groups and observations. The common data collection tools for a qualitative study are observations, interviews and focus groups. The semi-structured interview schedule was chosen as the research tool for this study.

In a semi-structured interview, the participants were requested to answer the questions according to the order as created in the interview guide whilst still allowing the participants freedom in the discussion as well as leaving room for probing where participants say something interesting that requires further elucidation. The interview guide questions were drafted and submitted to the researcher's academic supervisor as well as a subject matter expert within the customer service and customer engagement domains. The feedback received on the first draft resulted in adjustments being made to the instruments to align with the open and broad nature required for this study.

Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson and Kangasniemi (2016) mentions that in an interview the researcher is allowed to meet the participant face-to-face so that rich and in-depth data can be gathered to answer the research questions of the study which is not possible if a questionnaire is utilised. During an interview Dowling, Lloyd and Suchet-Pearson (2016) point out that a friendly environment is essential to ensure that participants participate effectively. Interviews for the internal customer interviews took place in Johannesburg at ARB head office and was approximately 40 minutes to an hour, however there were no fixed time restrictions. For managers: 2 interviews took place in Midrand, 2 in Pretoria, 1 Sunridge and 3 at ARB head office.

The semi-structured interview schedule is one of the most flexible and one of the most frequently used instruments to pull together primary data (O’Leary, 2014; Bell, Waters and eBooks Corporation, 2014). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a semi structured interview schedule can be understood as well-defined, pre-formulated written set of questions which respondents are expected to answer. As each individual in the selected sample was asked to answer the same set of questions forming part of the semi structured interview schedule.

3.9 Data collection method

One on one semi-structured interview schedules (in-depth) were employed to collect data in this study. Interview notes were taken in detail for quality and thoroughness. Probing was used to obtain the maximum amount of data and to verify information. The purpose of in-depth interviewing in this study was to assess client engagement in ARB for customers in a developing country. The researcher clarified and probed for additional responses when it seemed that participants did not understand the question. However, participants were requested to talk freely and to contribute as much comprehensive information as they want, in an attempt to obtain rich and concentrated qualitative data.

3.9.1 Phase 1: Senior managers

The questions below are based on the objectives and research focus of this study as well as on the relevant client engagement frameworks discussed in chapter 2. The clustering of questions designed for managers are discussed in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8: Clustering of questions designed for managers

Section 1: Demographics

Aimed to address the demographics of the participants of the study such as gender, age, monthly income, highest educational level.
Section 2: Client engagement strategy
The definition of client engagement strategy, and whether such a strategy exists, the benefits of implementing a client engagement strategy and reasons for not employing a client engagement strategy.
Section 3: Client experience
The success in acquiring new clients, engagement with new clients, tracking of client retention statistics, how to deliver on the promise of the unique value proposition of clients, the level of understanding of implementing a client strategy, communicating unique value propositions to clients and engagement with existing clients.
Section 4: Client relationship management
Whether a CRM is used, why a CRM software system is used, the benefits of integrating CRM data into the client retention strategy at the workplace and the usability of the information captured through the client relationship system at work.

3.9.2 Phase 2 Internal Clients

Table 3.9: Clustering of the questions designed for internal clients

Section 1: Demographics
Aiming to address the demographics of the participants of the study such as gender, age, monthly income, highest educational level, employment status and marital status.
Section 2: Client retention
Section 2 aims to assess aspects that relate to client retention such as aspects that differentiate one bank from another. General statements which may relate to services provided at a retail branch level, such as feeling secure while transacting in the branch,

receiving personal attention from branch employees, being treated fairly by the bank employees, the ability of the service consultant to complete the queries and requests on time, the ability of tellers to complete the queries and requests on time, the ability of the specialist to complete queries and requests on time, and the ability of the branch employees to deliver on what they had promised.

Section 3: Client satisfaction

The aim was to assess satisfaction level with questions relating to client satisfaction. Questions consisted of: feeling secure while transacting in the branch, updating clients on their query progress, receiving personal attention from branch employees, receiving a warm welcome at reception on arrival, being treated fairly by the bank employees, the ability of the service consultant to complete the queries on time, the ability of tellers to complete queries on time, the ability of the specialist to complete queries on time, and the ability of the branch employees to deliver on what they had promised.

Section 4: Client value proposition

Consists of questions that aim to assess how internal clients value the bank compared to other banks. Questions included: how satisfied clients are with the way they are treated as individuals, how content they are with the total service they get from their bank, how content they are with the effort their bank is expending, in dealing with them, how satisfied they are with the branch of their bank and suggestions for their bank to improve.

Section 5: Consumer behaviour

The section consisted of questions such as how long the respondents have been banking with their current bank/s, whether they make use of other banking institutions, why they are using other banking institutions, how likely they would be to recommend their bank to friends or family and why they would continue banking with their bank in the future.

3.10 Administration of the interview

The aim of the semi-structured interviews was to see the world through the eyes of the participants. Its purpose, within this research, was to obtain rich descriptive data that could assist the researcher to understand the participants' construction of knowledge and their social reality as it may relate to customer engagement. Semi-structured interviews were used to allow probing, while simultaneously achieving a measure of structure, openness and flexibility. Individual interviews were set up at a time that is convenient for the participant and took place in a private boardroom to avoid any interruptions.

3.11 Data analysis

Azungah (2018) state that data analysis refers to the “process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modelling data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision making”. They distinguish between data mining - “a particular data analysis technique that focuses on modelling and knowledge discovery for predictive rather than purely descriptive purposes”, and business intelligence, which “covers data analysis that relies heavily on aggregation, focusing on business information” (Azungah, 2018). Data analysis usually follows in the process.

3.11.1 Coding and category guidelines

Before an in-depth analysis of the data was carried out certain tasks were completed, such as double checking of interview notes and making sure the notes reflected what the participants said. Ahmed (2017) argues that the process of data analysis is complex, and moves to and from data and concepts, between explanation and understanding, and uses both inductive and deductive analysis. In this regard, constant comparative methods were

utilised to analyse data by allocating codes that mirror numerous categories and possession to units of data through categorising them into clusters of similar material or meaning. The number of categories was determined by the frequency as mentioned by participants, the audience for whom the study was conducted, and the uniqueness of the category.

It was imperative to recognise patterns and to categorise the data accordingly so that theory could be used to ground the findings. A researcher should be able to mention that under certain conditions, certain things happen, while under certain different conditions, different things occur. Once the data was linked to each major category, the research had the fundamentals of a theory.

3.11.2 Matrix coding queries

According to Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019), matrix coding queries are used to ask a wide range of questions about patterns in the data and gain access to the content that shows those patterns. For example, matrix coding queries were used to compare what different demographic groups have said about an experience, an attitude or an issue, compare terms used in different contexts and compare optimistic and destructive attitudes towards different themes.

The first step that was followed in the analysis of the data was the matrix coding of the transcripts using the Nvivo Pro 11 software system. The researcher first read through the transcripts carefully, line by line, searching for the main points raised by a participant (Stufflebeam and Zhang, 2017), assigning conceptual labels (codes) to those, and then produced a list of codes identified by each participant.

By using Nvivo Pro 11 software coding as this step, helped the researcher to focus on particular statements. Throughout this process, the researcher used constant comparison, revisiting the codes/nodes assigned to specific phenomena as she may come

across them again in the different transcripts, and then compared them for similarities and differences (Stufflebeam and Zhang, 2017). This allowed the researcher to group similar incidents under the same conceptual label, conveying underlying uniformities in the data (Glaser and Strauss, 2017). The researcher followed an inductive thematic analysis approach, whereby codes, or as Nvivo 11 Pro refers to these as 'nodes,' emerged from the data.

3.11.3 Thematic analysis of qualitative data

According to Castleberry and Nolen (2018), thematic analysis of qualitative data is used to identify themes or major ideas in a document or set of documents. It is a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories or codes for analysis. The themes in this study were allowed to emerge from the data to be collected from the interviews. This study utilised an inductive thematic approach. As such, no predetermined paradigm or theoretical framework was utilised to inform theme development. The transcripts were imported into NVivo Pro 11.

3.12 Quality of data

In any research study, the questions of quality, namely validity, reliability and generalisability should always be addressed and such discussions have a tendency to descend into a series of unnecessarily convoluted arguments which are not very useful, since each research study is derived from different epistemological and ontological paradigms (Azungah, 2018). Trustworthiness of research is an important methodological issue that ensures that the qualitative inquiry can stand up to scrutiny by others. For data to be generalisable it must be credible, transferable, dependable, and conform to set standards (Maher, Hadfield, Hutchings, and de Eyto, 2018).

3.12.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the presentation of the constructs of the social world under study (Hammarberg *et al.*, 2016). While the credibility in quantitative research depends on instrument construction, in qualitative research 'the researcher is the instrument'. The uniformity of data was achieved when the steps of the research process are substantiated through examination of items such as raw data, data reduction products, and process notes (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). The researcher adopted a set of activities to improve the credibility of the research. The researcher ensured credibility by clearly linking the findings of this study with reality to demonstrate the authenticity of the study.

3.12.2 Transferability

The researcher is accountable for providing data sets and descriptions that is rich enough so that other researchers can be able to make judgments about the transferability of the findings to different settings and contexts (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). Ultimately, the outcomes of a qualitative research should be comprehended within the setting of the specific characteristics of the company, and maybe in the geographical location where the fieldwork took place. In order to evaluate the degree to which the results may be valid for individuals in another situation, related projects that employ the same methods should be performed in other surroundings. This study ensured transferability by describing the research context and settings including considerations and assumptions that were key to the research. This ensured that the results can be applicable to different situations, different times, or different populations.

3.12.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the coherence of the internal process and the way the researcher accounts for changing environments in the phenomena (Cormack, Postăvaru and Basten, 2018). Dependability, in qualitative research, closely corresponds to the notion of 'reliability' in quantitative research (Cormack, Postăvaru and Basten, 2018). Dependability was accomplished through the use of intersecting methods such as individual interviews (data triangulation). To ensure dependability, the process in this study was described in detail, which enabled future researchers to repeat the study. This study also ensured that the findings from this study can be depended on by clearly outlining the procedures and steps that were followed in the study from the research design, methods to be used in data collection, data analysis approaches and ultimately the findings. The researcher also double checked her notes to ensure that a true reflection of what the participants said were presented in the findings. To enable this, the research report needed to be developed by means of a meticulous comprehension of the processes and their effectiveness. Therefore, the text included and be focussed on:

- i. The research design and its execution, relating what was intended and implemented on a strategic level;
- ii. The operational aspect of gathering data, attending to the details of how the fieldwork was conducted; and
- iii. A reflective appraisal of the project, assessing the effectiveness of the process of investigation undertaken.

Thus, the research design is viewed as a prototype model. Such in-depth exposure should also allow the reader to gauge the extent to which proper research practices have been followed during this research study. Dependability was determined by checking the consistency of the study processes.

3.12.4 Conformability

Conformability refers to the extent to which others who read or review the research outcomes can confirm the characteristics of the data, as suggested by the researcher (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). In this study, steps were taken to ensure as far as possible that the research's outcomes are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than characteristics and preferences of the researcher.

Furthermore, Castleberry and Nolen (2018) state that the role of triangulation in encouraging conformability should be emphasised in the context to reduce the effect of researcher bias. To this end, beliefs underpinning decisions made and methods embraced were acknowledged within the research report, the reasons for favouring one approach when others could have been taken were highlighted, and weaknesses in the techniques actually employed was acknowledged. In terms of results, preliminary themes that ultimately do not originate from the data was also be discussed. An audit of the research process and related findings was be carried out to establish conformability and dependability.

Conformability was determined by checking the internal coherence of the research product, namely the data, the findings, the interpretations, and the recommendations. The materials utilised included raw data, field notes, theoretical notes, coding manuals and process notes.

3.13 Ethical considerations

Ethics are the customs or standards of behaviour that guide moral standards about the behaviour and relationship with other individuals (Arifin, 2018). The ethics of the research design have crucial implications for the negotiation of right of entry to clients and branches and the gathering of data. The researcher obtained consent and permission from ARB to conduct this research at their premises. Authorisation to conduct this study

was obtained from the ARB Regional Executive: Gauteng South Region (Appendix C). In terms of privacy and confidentiality during the field work particularly during the interview the researcher communicated confidentiality aspects of the research. To ensure confidentiality the researcher informed the participants that they were not required to provide their names during interviews and that their responses will remain anonymous. When it came to informed consent, the participants were informed on the nature and context of the research, they were made aware that the interviews will be done on voluntary bases and they had the right to choose not to take part. To ensure the confidentiality of data studied, a confidentiality agreement between the researcher and each respondent was signed. All the participants were informed of the need for their informed consent for this study (Appendix D). Participants were also informed that if they find any questions uncomfortable, they were free to decline to answer them. Participants were also informed that they could stop the interview anytime they wish to.

3.14 Profile of internal managers and internal clients

The researcher interviewed eight banking managers: two branch managers from the Midrand area in Gauteng (SA), two operations consultants from the Pretoria area in Gauteng (SA), one private banker in the Sunridge area in Gauteng (SA), and the other three were interviewed at ARB head office, Johannesburg area in Gauteng (SA). The internal client interviews took place in Gauteng South. Interview notes were taken in detail for quality and thoroughness of capturing the correct information. Probing was used to obtain the maximum amount of data and to verify information. The purpose of semi - structured interviewing in this study was to understand the client engagement strategy/strategies as proposed within retail banking in SA and to appreciate the socio-economic context surrounding such perspective. Participants were encouraged to talk freely and to contribute as much comprehensive information towards the research project as they deemed necessary.

Each interview lasted between an hour and an hour and a half, depending on the participants' willingness to openly share their experiences with the researcher. The same questions were posed to all participants in an attempt to reduce bias within the study (Dowling, Lloyd and Suchet-Pearson, 2016) and to enable the researcher to code the data in a meaningful way (Creswell, 2014). The researcher maintained the interview as far as possible, and the participants were allowed to talk as freely as possible and contribute as much information as possible. Some of the participants became open when they had to share the challenges that they had to face in retail banking when purchasing some of the products and the services offered to them. The researcher took manual notes and occasionally the researcher had to request participants for some time while finishing off part of the writing. All interviewees were thanked for their participation in this study.

3.14.1 Demographics

The eight managers who participated in the study consisted of five females and three males. There was one Black male, one Indian male, one Coloured male and five White females and their ages ranged between thirty-six and fifty years old. Their qualifications ranged from a BCom. degree to an MBA qualification.

The internal clients who participated in this study consisted of twenty females and eight males. There were nineteen Blacks, three Whites and six Indians. Twenty-three of the participants were between the ages of 25 and 49 years, four were older than 50 years of age, and one was younger than 25 years. Their qualifications included either a Matriculation Certificate or a Bachelor's degree qualification.

The following strategies (Table 3.10) were implemented to ensure consistency, thoroughness and credibility throughout the research:

Table 3.10: Steps taken to ensure credibility

Data triangulation: Different sources of information were used. Data from both managers and internal clients were collected to answer the research questions of this study.
The qualifications, experience and background of the researcher: The integrity of the researcher is particularly significant when conducting qualitative research as this is the individual who plays the major role in the collection of data and its analysis.
Prolonged and varied experience Considerable time was spent in the field collecting and analysing data.
Repeated debriefing sessions between the researcher and her supervisors were conducted.

Objectivity was upheld all the way through the research. All ethical considerations were followed with the participants in that every member in the sample was over 18 years of age, had the right to recuse themselves from the research if they wished to do so and no names were used during the write up of this study.

3.15 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research design and research methodology of this study. The differences between qualitative and quantitative methodologies have been explained and the justification for the use of a qualitative research approach was provided. Issues of validity and reliability and ethical considerations during the study have also been dealt with. The research tool to collect data was an interview with structured questions that assisted the researcher in obtaining the desired information to answer the research questions formulated for this study. The next chapter reports on the findings derived from the study.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 outlined the research design and methodology for this study. This study adopted a qualitative research methodology, based on a grounded theory mode of enquiry supported by an interpretative phenomenological approach. The researcher used ARB as the organisation under study by interviewing the bank's managers and internal clients. This chapter therefore serves as a significant continuation of Chapter 3 in that it will provide a detailed account of the findings.

How were the notes that were taken during the interviews prepared for NVivo coding? A concise overview of how NVivo11 works would have been helpful. Please note that according to help-nv11quinternational.com it states that text analytics is a complex process and manual coding is always going to be more accurate.

4.2 Concepts, categories and themes from managers and client interviews

Open codes were then labelled and recorded, and subsequently grouped according to similarities for further analysis. Only recurring and related concepts were selected for further analysis. This was followed by categorising the relevant concepts. The researcher followed a step-by-step process which ultimately resulted in the formulation of emerging themes. The process can be summarised as follows:

- i. Concepts were identified during open coding (for detailed information see Appendix H).
- ii. From the concepts, categories were identified (for detailed information see Appendix I).
- iii. The identification of emerging themes followed, resulting in the following eight emerging themes: Client understanding; Client engagement design; Client

engagement measurement; Client engagement strategy; Client engagement implementation; Organisational design and readiness; Client engagement culture; and Systems innovation and technology (for detailed information see Appendix J).

4.3.1 Concepts, categories and emerging themes derived from managers and client interviews

To ensure anonymity, Table 4.1 indicates that each manager was allocated a number ranging from 1 to 8. Managers are represented as M1 to M8 and clients are represented as C1 to C28.

Table 4.1: Codes identified from managers and internal clients’ interviews

Concepts	Codes Managers	Codes Clients	Respondents		Categories	Themes
			Managers	Clients		
Client interaction journey	A1		M1, M2, M8		Client interaction vision	Client understanding
Outlining the strategy	B1		M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8			
Defining value proposition	C1		M4, M5, M7, M8			
Value delivery pathways	C2				Focusing on what clients want	
Service and products requirements	D1	D1	M2, M4, M7, M8	C1, C3, C5, C6, C11, C14, C15, C18, C22, C25, C27, C28		
Understanding client needs	A2	A2	M3, M5, M6, M7, M8	C1, C3, C8, C14, C21, C25, C26		
Understanding client requirements	A3	A3	M2, M3, M4, M8	C3, C14, C21, C25		
Understanding client expectations	A4	A4	M2, M4, M8	C9, C12, C11, C24		
Consultation with clients		E1		C22, C13, C16		
Learning client preferences	A5		M1, M7, M8			
Research on client preferences	A6		M1, M7, M8		Research to understand clients’ needs	
Defining client needs	A7		M6, M1			
Research and development	F1		M7			

Defining client categories	G1		M1, M4, M7		Segmentation of clients to improve understanding of different clients		
Segmenting clients	G2		M1, M4, M7				
Different socio-economic needs	I1	I1	M4, M7	C18, C8, C27, C28			
Specialised packages to suit different market segmentation	I2	I2	M1, M4, M7	C18, C8, C27, C28			
Need analysis proposition model clarity	C3		M6, M7		Communicating the strategy		
Clear communication using the preferred method	J1		M1, M4, M7, M8				
Communicating the value proposition with employees	J2		M1, M4, M7, M8				
Communicate the value that meets the customer's needs	J3		M1, M4, M7, M8				
Developing products that satisfy different classes of clients		G3		C1, C3, C5, C8 C15, C18, C22, C27, C28, C25	Strategy for different client segments		Client engagement design
Understanding of socio-economic dynamics	I3	I3	M4, M7	C18, C8, C27, C28			
Link between strategy and socio-economic dynamics	I4		M1, M4, M7				
Reputation, brand and marketing alignment to client engagement	K1		M2, M6, M7		Designing engagement strategy		
Service and products	D2	D2	M2, M4, M7, M8	C25, C1, C3, C5, C15,			
Strategy on getting closer to clients	L1		M2, M4, M7				

Engagement vision and strategy	M1		M3, M4, M8			
Organisational culture	N1		M1, M8			
Contact, communication and feedback	J4	J4	M3, M4, M5, M7	C1, C3, C4, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10, C11, C12, C13, C14, C16		
Technology and systems	O1	O1	M3, M4, M5, M7	C1, C4, C6, C20, C22, C24, C23	Systems design for effective client engagement	
CRM	P1		M3, M4, M6, M7			
Assessment of customer satisfaction levels	Q1		M6, M4, M1		Client engagement standards	Client engagement measurement
Track interactions, provide feedback and make improvements	R1		M4, M5			
Proactive not reactive		S1		C10, C26		
Improve engagement, communication and feedback		J5		C3, C4, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10, C11, C12, C13		
Clear and measurable strategy aligned to business performance with a value proposition	U1		M3, M4, M5, M7		Client engagement measurement metrics	
System support	O3		M1, M4, M5, M8			
Link demographic and strategy	V1		M1, M4, M7			
Customer expectations	A8		M2, M4, M8			
Communication, feedback and updating		J6		C9, C10, C11, C12, C13		

Translating brand and strategy into activities that consistently target customer	K2		M2, M4, M6, M7		Putting clients first	Client engagement implementation
Client perceived value, not business perceived client value		W1		C2, C5, C6		
Planning around satisfying clients		Q2		C1, C2, C11		
Systems and technology centred around client needs	O4		M3, M4, M5, M7			
Communicate value proposition and implementation	C4	C4	M1, M4, M7, M8	C9, C10, C11, C12, C13	Customer engagement implementation	
Clarity of vision, values and strategy execution	M2		M1, M2, M4			
Deliver on promise	X1	X1	M3, M4, M5, M7, M8	C2, C3, C4, C6, C8, C14, C16, C20, C23		
Efficient interaction and engagement	Y1	Y1	M1, M2, M4, M5, M8	C1, C2, C5, C6, C9, C25		
Personalised attention		AA1		C6, C9, C10, C12, C13, C16, C17, C18, C20, C26		
Secure and private		AB1		C2, C3, C11, C13, C16, C18, C19, C23, C25		
Timeous request completion	AC	AC	M1, M3, M4, M5	C1, C3, C4, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10, C11, C12, C13, C14		

Updates on query progress and resolution		AD1		C3, C6, C10, C16, C18, C19, C20, C24			
Customer engagement execution	Y2		M1, M2, M4, M5, M8				
Systems and technology changes	O5		M3, M4, M5, M7		Implementation of technology system changes		
System support	O6	O6	M3, M4, M5, M7	C1, C4, C6, C20, C22, C24, C23			
Tailored innovative solutions and meet different needs		O7		C4, C18, C8, C27, C28			
Organisational client engagement culture	Y5		M1, M2, M4, M5, M8		Organisational preparedness	Organisational design and readiness	
Client engagement strategy must be managed closely in order to increase client retention	Y6		M4, M5, M6				
Reputation, brand and marketing configuration	K3	K3	M1, M2, M3, M4, M6, M7	C2, C14, C20, C21			
Staff should be capable, competent and efficient		AI1		C1, C2, C4, C9, C11, C18, C23, C26			
Knowledgeable and motivated employees		AI2		C1, C7, C10, C13, C24, C28			
Clarity of roles in the engagement process	Y6		M4, M5, M6, M8				
Upgraded systems		O8		C1, C4, C6, C20, C22, C24, C23	Technology and systems to enable effective engagement		
Modern technology		O9		C1, C4, C6, C20, C22, C24, C23			

Organisational functions alignment	AJ1		M2, M4, M5, M6, M8		Importance of roles and functions	
Defined functions and roles in client engagement strategy	AJ2		M4, M5, M6, M8			
Going back to basics		AK1		C3, C5, C6, C7, C10, C11, C22	Engaging with existing clients	Client engagement strategy
Appreciating clients	AL1	AL1	M1, M2, M3, M4, M7	C8, C9, C10, C11, C21, C22, C23		
Offer them new suitable products	AM1	AM1	M2, M4, M7, M8	C25, C1, C3, C5, C15, C22		
Identify potential needs while engaging customers	Y7		M3, M5, M6, M7, M8			
Efficient staff and service		AI3		C1, C2, C3, C5, C7, C6, C9, C10, C11, C12, C15, C16 C18, C23, C28	Client services	
Exceptional customer services		AN1		C1, C2, C3, C5, C7, C6, C9, C10, C11, C12, C15, C16, C18, C19, C23, C24, C25, C26, C27 C28		
Improve engagement strategy	Y8		M3, M5, M6, M7, M8			
Personalised service		AN2		C10, C11, C12, C15, C16, C18, C19, C23, C24, C25, C26, C27 C28		

Professional appearance and behaviour		AI4		C7, C8, C11, C15, C19	Client satisfaction
Improve products and services		D2		C25, C1, C3, C5, C15, C22	
High level of professionalism and knowledge by staff		AI5		C1, C7, C10, C13, C24, C28	
Meet needs		AO1		C1, C2, C3, C5, C7, C6, C9, C10, C11, C12, C15, C16	
Respect and value for clients and treat them fairly		AL2		C3, C10, C16, C18, C26	
Feeling valued		AL3		C2, C5 C6	
Communication and feedback		J9		C9, C10, C11, C12, C13	
Effective, competent		AI6		C1, C7, C10, C13, C24,	
Good attitude		AI7		C2, C4, C6, C23	
Knowledgeable		AI8		C1, C7, C10, C13, C24, C28	
Personalised service and human element		AN3		C10, C11, C12, C15, C16, C18, C19, C23, C24, C25, C26, C27	
Keep employees and customers informed	AP1		M3, M4, M8		
Improved satisfaction, retention and attraction	Q2			C7, C6, C9, C10, C11, C12, C15, C16, C18, C19, C23, C24	
Face-to-face engagement		Y9		C3, C9, C16	

Efficient interaction		AQ1		C1, C2, C5, C6, C9, C25	Client interaction	
Consistency		AR1		C2, C5, C9, C10, C12, C15, C16, C19, C26		
Willingness to assist		AS1		C4, C6, C7, C8, C16, C19, C23, C25,		
Personal greetings		AN4		C1, C3, C5, C10, C13, C18, C27, C28		
Technologically on par		O10		C1, C4, C6, C20, C22, C24, C23		
Online banking		Z1		C3, C6, C7, C11, C18, C22		
Transparency and agreed conditions		AS1		C10, C16, C17, C19, C24, C26,		
Visible security		AT1		C2, C3, C4, C5, C7, C8, C9, C10, C13, C21, C22, C25		
High level of professionalism		AI6		C1, C7, C10, C13, C24, C28	Client centric philosophy	Client engagement culture
Client-centric attitude		AH3		C2, C4, C6, C23		
Knowledge by staff		AI9		C1, C7, C10, C13, C24, C28		
Constant positive experience for clients		AO1		C2, C5, C9, C10, C12, C16, C18, C19, C23, C24, C25, C26, C27		

Communicate client engagement strategy	Y10	Y10	M3, M5, M6, M7, M8	C9, C10, C11, C12, C13	Employee's engagement	
Staff should be fully engaged	Y11			C7, C10, C13, C24, C28		
Breaking down silos		AP1	M8, M11, M19, M25			
Personal employees' accountability		AU1				
Teamwork	AV1	AV1	M1, M2, M4, M6, M7, M8	C9, C10, C11, C12, C21		
Communication of expectations	J10		M1, M4, M7, M8			
It is very important to keep employees informed	A16		M3, M4, M8			
Employees buy in	A17		M3, M4, M8			
Leadership trust	AG3		M1, M3, M4, M6			
Online banking		Z2		C3, C6, C7, C11, C18, C22	Online banking	Systems innovation and technology
Availability of online banking all the time with less down time		Z3		C3, C6, C7, C11, C18, C22		
Advances in digital banking		Z4		C4, C6, C20, C22, C24, C23		
Cell phone banking		Z5		C3, C6, C7, C11, C18, C22		
Facilitate and utilise CRM	P2		M3, M4, M6, M7		CRM	
Centralised client relationship management system	P3		M3, M4, M6, M7			
Education and training on CRM	P4		M3, M4, M6, M7			
Staff to engage clients regarding new technology	O11	O11	M3, M4, M5, M7	C3, C6, C7, C11, C18, C22	Innovation and technology	

Technology, must stay relevant and innovative		O12		C1, C4, C6, C20, C22, C24, C23		
Improved technology and innovation		O13		C1, C4, C6, C20, C22, C24, C23		
Technological requirements	O14		M3, M4, M5, M7			
Technology to sustain customer culture and meet customer expectations		O15		C1, C4, C6, C20, C22, C24, C23		
Well-defined complaint system		O16		C3, C6, C10, C16, C18, C19, C20, C24		
Adapting to innovations		O17		C3, C6, C20, C22, C24, C23		

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed overview of the fieldwork of the study resulting in the formulation of specific concepts, categories and emerging themes. All the responses were captured and tabulated in open codes. Open codes were then labelled and clustered into categories. Only recurring categories were utilised to inform the emergence of themes. The total number of concepts were 125, resulting 25 categories and giving rise to the emergence of 8 themes. In the next chapter aspects regarding the emerging themes will be discussed in more detail.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to develop a CEM framework for retail banking in a developing socio-economic context. The themes derived from the interviews and from the reviewed literature were subsequently used to construct a conceptual CEM framework for ARB in SA. The intent of constructing such a framework is to provide guidance to client engagement practitioners within a South African retail banking context on conceivable ways to align their organisations to be more client-centric which may lead to improved client engagement, improved client satisfaction and ultimately increased client loyalty and retention levels.

This chapter presents the perceptions of respondents to the various client service attributes, highlighting their experiences and their suggested ways of improving client engagement offerings. Manager and client experiences, feedback and proposed service improvement strategies, as reflected in the eight emerging themes, are presented and discussed in line with existing literature.

5.2 Themes emerging from manager and client interviews

This study used Interpretative phenomenological approach to identify concepts, which were categorised and from which emerging themes were derived.

- i. Concepts were identified from interviews (see Appendix H).
- ii. From the concepts, categories were identified (see Appendix I).
- iii. Then the categories were grouped into emerging themes (see Appendix J).

The eight emerging themes are: Client understanding; Client engagement design; Client engagement strategy; Client engagement measurement; Client engagement implementation; Organisational design and readiness; Client engagement culture; and Systems innovation and technology

5.3 Themes

Theme 1: Client understanding

According to Lemon and Verhoef (2016), client engagement requires in-depth research to get a better understanding of clients and client segments. Not all clients are the same; they come from and belong to different socio-economic backgrounds. It is therefore important that an organisation understands that clients in most cases are very different. Understanding clients is one of the building blocks of client engagement (Petriwskyj *et al.*, 2018). In fact, it is one of the initial processes of building a client engagement strategy. This therefore means that gathering comprehensive information and understanding of socio-economic dynamics is of paramount importance, as stated by the following respondents:

Manager 1: "The bank must understand different classes of clients within the context of culture, social and economic impact".

Manager 1: "Lack of socio-economic information leads to inability to design fitting solutions for individual clients".

Manager 6: "Socio-economic dynamic differs according to geography and is divided into low, middle, high income clients".

Client 27: "Service, pricing that suits my personal income".

Client 28: "Service, products, fees structures that suit my personal income".

Creating a client engagement strategy will benefit from an understanding of the socio-economic dynamics within the organisation's current and potential client base. This may

put the organisation in a position to enhance customer satisfaction and improve client retention levels. Client engagement by definition entails that an organisation can only intimately engage with clients if it fully understands the characteristics of the client such as the specific backgrounds of the clients and their needs and requirements. Understanding the socio-economic dynamics of clients could also assist the organisation to improve the way in which they manage clients according to their different needs and preferences. Lack of understanding of clients' needs and requirements can result in a poor client engagement strategy emanating from the neglect of clients from certain socio-economic groups.

Client understanding should pave the way for client experience transformation which could enable the organisation to develop a deeper comprehension of what the client's value most (Beckford, 2019). This should place the organisation in a position to design a well-informed client engagement strategy based on the deeper understanding of their clients' needs. Furthermore, it should allow the organisation to arm its employees with the right strategy and inspire them to deliver on their promises.

Client interaction is also important as clients need to feel important and cared for. Positive client interactions can help a business improve client satisfaction, client recovery, employee motivation, and the general operation procedures within a company (Agolla, Makara and Monametsi, 2018). A well formulated client interaction vision or strategy will assist in setting the tone for client interaction and engagement for the entire organisation. It is vital to point out that the strategy on its own cannot achieve the desired outcomes. The strategy must be communicated to the entire organisation so that everyone understands the vision. Effective communication of the vision also helps in ensuring that all employees know exactly what is expected of them and they will also know where they fit in during the implementation of the strategy.

If an organisation manages to understand its clients, it will be able to provide excellent customer experiences, which usually lead to customer satisfaction. In the same vein, poor customer engagement practices could be a testimony, at least to a certain extent, of poor

client understanding. All of the above implies that client understanding enables the organisation to design tailor-made products and services which will lead to clients that are satisfied and happy. Happy and contented clients buy more products and services and remain loyal to the organisation, as stated by the following respondents:

Manager 2: "Information about customers and their behaviour can add value to product design".

Manager 5: "The business needs to know what customer needs are and then communicate the value that meets the customers' needs".

Manager 4: "Also identify potential customer needs while engaging customers".

Manager 8: "Knowing your products and understanding customer needs makes it easy to attract new customers".

Client 4: "Important. By being recognised by personal banker and understanding their financial needs with ease".

Client 3: "Understanding of clients enables one to manage customer engagements".

Theme 2: Client engagement design

When designing a client engagement strategy, it is important to note that clients are fully engaged once their emotions are activated (Venkatesan, 2017). This implies that client engagement strategy design must focus on stimulating emotions that will influence client actions and attract clients to a company's products and services. This will also ensure retention and loyalty to the organisation. Designing a client engagement strategy that underscores stimulating emotions such as happiness, excitement, feeling valued and satisfaction will result in emotional engagement (Loureiro *et al.*, 2019). Triggering these emotions will result in clients recommending other clients, clients coming back for more and ultimately loyalty, as confirmed by the following statements made by participants:

Manager 1: "Improve services provided to clients and making them feel valued".

Manager 4: "Happy customers are the lifeblood of any organisational strategy".

Client 7: "The bank must focus on keeping the current clientele happy and more business will be generated if they do so".

According to Harmeling, Moffett and Palmatier (2018), branding is vital in client engagement design; brands interact with clients, they create relationships and connections with clients. Clients want personalised experiences, and they want something exclusively tailor-made for them which can be achieved through client brand engagement (Erkan, 2015). Brands enable the organisation to pay attention to clients' feedback which enables the organisation to improve services and products. The following comments made by some of the respondents in this study confirmed this:

Manager 2: "Service, products, and brand reputation differentiate one bank from another".

Manager 3: "I have learned that the brand name means a lot".

Manager 6: "Branding differentiates one bank from another".

Client 20: "A trusted brand differentiates one bank from another".

Wheeler (2017) added that branding is therefore very important for client engagement since it sets out client expectations for interacting with the organisation. Organisations such as banks can benefit from implementing client brand engagement strategies to improve the interaction between the bank's brand and the clients. Ramaswamy and Ozcan (2016) postulate that the concept of client brand engagement entails creating a platform for an organisation's client to interact with the brand as well as other clients. This allows the organisation's client and other clients to share their experiences with the brand, leading to brand growth and loyalty (Lee and Workman, 2015).

According to Agolla, Makara and Monametsi (2018), the global economy has changed, inevitably resulting in significant pressure on organisations. Competition is on the rise, client satisfaction has increasingly developed into a nightmare because of the ever-

changing and unpredictable client demands. Organisations have to be more proactive because product life cycles are becoming shorter all the time. Therefore, if organisations (banks in this case) want to gain a competitive advantage over other banks, focusing on products and services alone is not going to be enough. More effort is required in building effective client engagement strategies (So *et al.*, 2016). A carefully crafted client engagement strategy will lead to sustainable mutual relationships with the clients which will enhance client loyalty and client retention (Itani *et al.*, 2019). Technology and globalisation have also altered how business is done, products and services can be easily replicated and there are no geographical limits. Therefore, to remain competitive, organisations must concentrate on designing client engagement strategies that are client centric.

Client engagement also relies on the systems available to support its effective implementation. Systems must be designed to align with the formulated client engagement strategy, so that they complement the strategy (Kosiba, Boateng, Amartey, Boakye and Hinson, 2018). Systems such as CRM and client data base management systems are absolutely vital for the successful implementation of client engagement strategy (Dewnarain, Ramkissoo and Mavondo, 2019). For example, a central client data base management system can significantly assist in client information gathering. This information can then be analysed to better understand client preferences and other important client dynamics.

Market segmentation can also play a vital role in designing an effective client engagement strategy by ensuring that customers are managed effectively (Ahani *et al.*, 2019). Defining market segments is an important building block for designing an effective client engagement strategy. According to du Plessis and de Vries (2016), at the very least the organisation has to carry out a survey to get a basic understanding of the customer segment, their requirements and expectations so as to enable the organisation to come up with a properly designed client engagement strategy.

Finally, the research is important to ensure that the customer segmentation is aligned to the strategy and client value proposition (Payne *et al.*, 2017). Clients are usually different and market segmentation can ensure effective client engagement because it defines the characteristics of different market segments which should assist the organisation to understand specific needs of clients in different market segments. According to Heinonen and Strandvik (2018), by fully understanding the unique needs of a certain market segment, the organisation can then design approaches to fully engage with the clients. It also assists the organisation in coming up with specific products and services that are specifically suited for clients in a certain market segment.

This study revealed that the current client engagement strategy was not properly designed, resulting in the provision of products and services that are not in line with the needs and requirements of specific market segments. Manager 5 explained this aspect as follows:

Manager 5: "For me all I am see is a confused bank that gives the competitors more power to take over the market segment that is being neglected. For example, people earning low salaries are not taken serious by the big 4 banks. Capitec went and developed a strategy to cater for that market segment, design value proposition that suit that market such as home loans below R500k, personal loans from R2000 and Capitec is maximising its profit from this market segment".

This poorly designed client engagement strategy has resulted in employees adopting a negative approach when interacting with clients from certain socio-economic segments. In this regard Client 18 and Client 7 added:

Client 18: "Salaries - if you are low salary income earner generally staff do not respect you, mistreat you, that is why low-income earners struggle and end up moving accounts to other banks".

Client 7: "Some bank employees judge you at appearance based on appearance and income".

These sentiments demonstrate that the respondent believes the bank's current client engagement strategy is poorly designed because it does not comprehend the socio-economic dynamics of different clients. Sewchurran *et al.* (2019) suggest that paying less attention to client background information can be detrimental to business performance because it can lead to the inability to design a suitable engagement strategy, thereby resulting in the failure to design products and services for specific market segments. These views were also expressed by Manager 4 who stated:

“Yes, lack of socio-economic information leads to inability to design fitting solutions for individual clients”.

Theme 3: Client engagement measurement

Client engagement measurement entails gauging or evaluating the magnitude of client satisfaction or the extent and effectiveness of client engagement (Kline *et al.*, 2018). It basically answers the following questions: How engaged are our clients? How loyal are our clients to the company? Are we successfully interacting with our clients? Client engagement measurement is important because it provides an overview of how engaged and loyal clients are likely to be. Iriqat and Daqar (2017) also add that it highlights urgent issues and areas that need improvement which allows a company to prioritise activities that are needed to enhance client satisfaction. Poor engagement can cause dissatisfaction which can lead to clients defecting to competitors (Chi *et al.*, 2019). Client engagement measurements will uncover such problems, giving the company a chance to improve client satisfaction and avoid an exodus of clients.

According to Pansari and Kumar (2017), client engagement measurements can include indicators and metrics that reveal how the business is performing such as service accessibility, number of client complaints, number of escalations, user frequency, query resolution turnaround time, and client feedback. Respondents in this study revealed that

feedback and query resolution turnaround time are some of the aspects that they consider of vital importance:

Client 1: "Personally service, technology, culture, ability of staff to provide feedback or progress of the query to clients".

Client 2: "I think it is very important to be updated of the progress of my query, whether resolved, pending, I need to know what is happening. But my bank always fails me, I am yet to receive feedback without fighting with any staff member".

Client 3: "Very important, clients need to know that their queries are attended to and to be given regular feedbacks and be able to discuss these this feedback with private banker or relevant section. Banks make it difficult to obtain feedback unless if you know someone in that division only then your query is catered for".

Client 8: "Again very important; and it is quite fulfilling when your query is dealt with professionally to your level of satisfaction".

Client 13: "Yes, it is important to be kept informed".

Client 16: "Yes, let clients be informed of the steps as I believe feedback is very important to me".

Client 26: "Feedback is always important when handling queries".

Another client engagement measurement aspect identified in this study includes employee engagement. Poor or low employee engagement can cause client engagement to suffer. Unengaged employees are unmotivated and unhappy (Govindarajo *et al.*, 2014) and unhappy employees cannot provide satisfactory services. Employees are at the frontline and the interactions they have with clients will either improve or destroy the company's brand, as indicated by the following respondents:

Client 6: "I can easily smell the culture of a branch, staff that are well engaged and looked after delivers more".

Manager 4: "Happy customers are the lifeblood of any organisational strategy. It is very important for frontline to be equipped on how to deal with customers, listening with an understanding and deliver on customer promise. In that case word of mouth becomes the medium of getting the right messages out there and in return get more customers in the bank. If employees grasp the concept of strategy, the bank will win in all the dealings".

Manager 1: "It is only through engagement that the company can see growth. Although the consultant felt that leadership focus on strategy on high level not cascading it down to everyone on the ground. Most leaders concentrate on sales acquisition, not explaining how does acquisition fit into the overall business strategy".

Theme 4: Client engagement strategy

Client engagement is a multifaceted concept encompassing intellectual, emotional and interactive aspects and plays a dominant role in the course of developing long-term intimate relationships with mutual benefits for organisations and clients (Venkatesan, 2017). Client or customer engagement can be understood as a business communication link that creates a relationship between clients and an organisation (Zhang *et al.*, 2018). This has been echoed by some of the respondents interviewed in this study who said:

Manager 2: "Customer engagement strategy is really about moving beyond selling to the customer to building sustainable relationship throughout the customer journey within the organisation".

Manager 5: "Customer engagement strategy must be seen as an ongoing business communication that connect any company to its customers and stakeholders. The more the bank engages, the more customers feel the sense of belongingness. While communicating to customers we also need to consider an element of feedback where it is required. Provide feedback to customers even on matters

pending, updates on progress of their query, communication is key to strategy implementation. Most customers do not like surprises on pricing and this comes across many times when listening to the voice of the customer. Communicating effectively is key to implementation of proper business strategy”.

Manager 6: “Customer engagement strategy is all about trust, satisfaction, loyalty, retention, engaging, communicating, interacting, and ensuring that consumer behaviour is improved at all times. There has to be clear communication on every change that takes place in the banking arena”.

In other words, client engagement involves creating a platform for clients to interact with the organisation and share their experience (Zhang *et al.*, 2017). If there is no engagement, then there is no interaction or communication with the client, which means that clients have no voice, and the organisation has no way of understanding client needs. This is supported by the response from Manager 1 who said:

“I think customer engagement strategy is about encouraging the voice of the customer to interact with us as a business, to create a culture of sharing what is working well and what is not working well”.

Client engagement enables an organisation to effectively manage its clients and thereby ensure client retention. Gallup’s (2014) study revealed that fully engaged customers buy more products and services, are loyal to the organisation, and they are more profitable than average clients. This means that if banks like ARB are to increase their client retention rates, they need to come up with strategies that ensure full and intimate engagement with their clients.

Effective customer engagement and client centricity entails coming up with a value proposition (Song *et al.*, 2016), and then devising pathways to effectively communicate it to the clients. The formulated value proposition needs to be effectively conveyed to clients in their preferred communication channels. Needless to say, the entire organisation must be aligned and work towards a common value proposition. A value

system that strengthens the formulated strategy and pathways is needed and it has to be ingrained and instilled into the entire organisation so much so that it becomes an organisational culture (van der Merwe, 2014).

Furthermore, organisations need to ensure that the value proposition is coherent and eloquent to ensure that the proposition brings the desired outcomes in so far as customer satisfaction is concerned. Additionally, the organisation also has to make sure that the value proposition is aligned and framed in such a way that it resonates with the brand promise (Goldring, 2017).

Ensuring the provision of a great client experience is also a vital component in a client engagement strategy. In other words, effective customer engagement and good customer experience assumes a positive association. Holding all other things constant, customer engagement is typically a result of good customer service or customer experience transformation. Customer experience transformation enables the organisation to get a deeper understanding of what the client's value most (Beckford, 2019). This puts the organisation in a position to design a well-informed client engagement strategy based on a deeper understanding of clients' needs. Furthermore, it allows the organisation to arm its employees with the right strategy and inspire them to deliver.

If an organisation manages to provide excellent customer experience, it usually leads to effective customer engagements. In the same vein, poor customer engagement is a testimony, at least to a certain extent, of poor customer experience. All this implies that customer experience transformation leads to exceptional customer service which means clients will be satisfied and happy (Chheda *et al.*, 2017) and, as previously explained, happy clients buy more products and services and remain loyal to the organisation.

Communication in business can never be overemphasised; client engagement and client centricity as concepts emphasise interaction with customers through different communication methods. According to Kurokawa *et al.* (2017), without communication there is no client engagement. Organisations such as banks have different value

propositions, and such propositions have to be communicated effectively to both external and internal stakeholders. To ensure effective client engagement, companies have to be in a position to efficiently communicate their unique value propositions to the clients.

Client engagement also involves creating a platform that is conducive for clients to communicate their experience with the organisation (Gillis *et al.*, 2016). This enables a business to understand customer needs and build future strategies based on what the client requires or expects from the organisation. These sentiments were shared by one manager who said:

Manager 4: "Business needs to know what customer needs are and then communicate the value that meets the customer's needs".

Internal communication among employees is also very vital as employees must be able to share and communicate any information on customer engagement and customer satisfaction. Client engagement entails changes, and any changes aimed at improving the company's customer experience by implementing the client engagement strategies will need to be communicated by management to employees so that everyone is on the same page (Merrilees *et al.*, 2017). Manager 3 concurred:

"Customer engagement strategy is about unpacking the company objectives, break it down to the level of understanding to all employees on different level. Every employee has an understanding of their objectives and how they link to the overall business strategy and how to deliver to customers and make customers prosper for their future".

Theme 5: Client engagement implementation

Client engagement places customers at the forefront (Bryson, 2017) and treats them as the most valuable asset of the business. The effective implementation of a client engagement strategy will benefit the organisation through an improved focus on the needs of clients, gathered via available communication platforms (Kumar, 2018). A

response from one of the managers who took part in this study indicated that implementing a client engagement strategy benefits ARB by keeping customers updated on new products and services, improving products and services currently offered by ARB, improving customer retention and creating a business culture. Some of the responses from the participants, when asked about the benefits of implementing a client engagement strategy, include the following:

Manager 3: "Yes, there are lots of benefits as my organisation is keeping customers updated throughout the interaction process, keeping record of customer history and customer behaviour to enable future engagements with clients".

Manager 8: "To improve on the service that is currently being offered and to allow the opportunity to sell more to the client. I would think the strategy is adding on lots of benefits".

Manager 4: "Allows the bank to accurately measure, adjust, execute plans to increase profit margins. Strategy is playing a significant role".

Manager 5: "Improve net promoter score, create customer recognition to increase referrals, customer retention and generate more revenue and also align it to reward programs within the bank. I agree that there are benefits to having strategy in the organisation".

Manager 6: "Customers are made aware of new business value offering relevant to them and allow opportunity for upgrades. These are the greatest benefits of having strategy in the organisation".

Manager 8: "It creates business culture for an organisation".

These views emphasise the importance of implementing a client engagement strategy to foster a client-centric approach for organisations such as banks. They highlight some of the underlying principles and benefits of client engagement. Smircich (2017) postulates that it is vital for an organisation to cultivate a culture based on its values; and Mone *et al.* (2018) add that the culture then needs to be conveyed to employees as well as clients.

All this can be facilitated by implementing a client engagement strategy. Customer referrals can also be enhanced by a client engagement strategy; engaged clients are usually satisfied and happy, and happy clients are more likely to refer other potential clients to the organisation, thereby broadening the clientele and increasing revenues.

One of the objectives of this study was to understand the current client engagement strategy and how such can be implemented.

According to clients who participated in this study, implementing a client engagement strategy should entail the following:

Client 5: "Every client needs to feel valued and I personally feel that will make me become a repeat customer".

Client 16: "Very important to receive personal attention at all times. I kind of feel at home and engage more".

Client 26: "I love to be acknowledged, given friendly service all the time".

Some of the basic and most fundamental principles of client engagement include fostering relationships with clients (Pansari and Kumar, 2017), and facilitating platforms to share feedback and promote customer centricity (Chou, 2019). According to Buttle and Maklan (2019), effective client engagement demands that there exists a mutual relationship between the organisation and the clients. Hult *et al.* (2017) add that clients must be able to communicate their views to the organisation, and they need to feel that their complaints are given the consideration they deserve. In this regard, Manager 5 concurred as follows:

"Communication is key to strategy implementation. Most customers do not like surprises on pricing and this comes across many times when listening to the voice of the customer. Communicating effectively is key to implementation of proper business strategy".

Monitoring and control are also very important, particularly in the implementation phase of the client engagement strategy. Monitoring and control encompass comparing actual performance with planned performance and taking suitable corrective actions that will yield the desired outcomes as planned (Venkatesan, 2017). Monitoring and control in client engagement implementation centres on measuring formulated client engagement performance targets against actual performance. It also includes continuous assessment of the client engagement performance to identify preventative or corrective actions if needed (Kumar, 2018). The main benefits of monitoring and control is that it keeps the client engagement vision on track and the information and experience gathered can be used to make informed decision and future references. It is therefore essential that client engagement strategies are regularly monitored to ensure effective implementation of the client engagement vision which will ideally result in improved client retention.

Theme 6: Organisational design and readiness

The organisation has to ensure that it is prepared and ready to implement the client engagement strategy. Education and ongoing training of employees is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of a client engagement strategy (Noe and Kodwani, 2018). Education and training can be understood as the development of skills to manage the ever-changing client needs. Client engagement focused training must be standardised and rapidly implemented within the organisation to convey a consistent message and as a result yield consistent and reliable behaviour (Dewnarain *et al.*, 2019).

Education and training comprise several components, such as the understanding of clients, comprehending their specific needs and behaviours, clients learning about products and services, or employees learning new skills (Djaya and Sumirat, 2019). Continuous education and training can be a robust driver for developing and moving an organisation towards a customer-centred approach (Venkatesan, 2017). Constant training, coaching and mentoring is very important for client engagement which in turn enhances business success. Noe and Kodwani (2018) add that education and ongoing

training of employees is a prerequisite for successful implementation of a client engagement strategy.

An organisation's employees are at the frontline of providing the required customer experiences (Lam *et al.*, 2017). This means that they are important in ensuring that the implementation of the client engagement strategy succeeds. In fact, they determine the chances of success or failure of an organisation's implementation of a client engagement strategy. Good customer services from bank staff will result in improved levels of client satisfaction which in turn will lead to customer loyalty. Findings have shown that employee behaviour will have a positive impact on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Kaura *et al.*, 2014). The views below suggest that the bank lacks required readiness to effectively implement the client engagement strategy because of an organisational structure and culture that does not encourage a smooth dissemination of the different dimensions of the engagement strategy between management and other employees at the frontline:

Manager 2: The lower-level staff has a lot of input towards the strategy as they are the ones that have lots of interaction with the clients”.

Manager 3: “I still feel that leadership undermines the input from the junior staff members. Very seldom that leadership listen to lower-level staff. Lower-level staff have more exposure as they meet different types of clients that are multibank”.

It does not matter how good a company's client engagement strategy is, successful implementation and improved customer experience basically comes down to the staff who deliver it to the clients (Gad, 2016). Organisations need to ensure that the whole organisation is ready to effectively implement the client engagement strategy by making sure that employees possess enough knowledge, show enthusiasm, professionalism, and competence, among other attributes, that promote customer satisfaction. This ensures that employees do not harm the organisation's reputation and in the process damage client loyalty and compromise customer retention. Respondents who took part in this study concurred with these sentiments based on the following statements:

Manager 5: "I think the most important aspect is customer service experience".

Client 25: "Visible security and level of professionalism and knowledge by staff to ensure trust".

Client 4: "Clients must be treated with high level of professionalism and willingness to assist".

Client 1: "Again very important and it is quite fulfilling when your query is dealt with professionally to your level of satisfaction".

This highlights the importance of staff or employees' readiness and shows that the manner in which employees behave and interact with clients is central to effective client engagement implementation, which leads to customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and improved customer retention. Organisations should therefore strive to make sure that their employees are trained, educated, inspired and ready to deliver on the frontline to ensure client satisfaction and business success.

Theme 7: Client engagement culture

Smircich (2017) postulates that it is vital for an organisation to cultivate a culture based on its values; and Mone *et al.* (2018) add that the culture then needs to be conveyed to employees as well as clients. Good business performance and sustainable results hinge on a client-centric organisational culture (Ugoani, 2019). It is of paramount importance that everyone in the organisation understands what a customer-centric culture means to ensure successful implementation of a client engagement strategy. Most organisations do not fully understand the role and importance of customer centricity in a company's client engagement strategy. An organisational culture based on client centricity has to be cultivated in the organisation and has to be instilled into all employees, including low level employees, since in most cases they are the ones who interact directly with clients. Such an approach will ensure a true customer-centric client engagement culture in the organisation.

Most organisations concentrate on the bottom line or the financial side of the business; this in itself is not a problem if equal attention is given to client relationships (Stone *et al.*, 2019). Customer centricity is not considered important because it does not bring immediate tangible benefits (Siggelkow and Terwiesch, 2019), which are usually realised in the long run. Companies only fully engage with clients before they buy their products because of their predominant focus on selling products and services to make quick returns (Goodman, 2019). These sentiments were echoed by two respondent who said:

Client 1: "I do not recall the bank contacting me after I bought the products. Once the account is opened and activated, that is the end of the relationship".

Client 4: "The staff should engage when interacting with client and create some good business relationship".

Such a short-term approach which lacks focus on customer centricity can be detrimental in the long run because it does not encourage customer retention. Respondents revealed some of the organisational culture aspects that they think will enhance effective client engagement.

Manager 1: "I think strategy is about encouraging the voice of the customer to interact with us as a business, to create a culture of sharing what is working well and what is not working well".

Manager 8: "Client engagement creates business culture for an organisation".

Client 6: "I can easily smell the culture of a branch, staff that are well engaged and looked after delivers more".

Client 26: "Feedback is always important when handling queries".

Manager 6: "It is Important to be treated with special attention and to be recognised and be called by name. I always want to be recognised by anyone I engage with".

Client 9: "Feedback must be given at all times".

Client 15: "To implement new system to assist people serving clients every day".

Client 12: "Need to keep employees informed about client engagement".

A client engagement culture is all about fostering intimate mutual associations with clients (Hardwick and Anderson, 2019), which entails that bank employees must fully interact with clients. Full engagement means that bank staff should ensure that the interaction is mutual and that clients are afforded a platform to share their views and experiences with the bank. These views were shared by one manager when asked how they were engaging with existing clients:

Manager 2: "Building a mutually beneficial relationship with your existing customers".

Client engagement involves small but important things such as greeting clients when they walk into the bank. This has the effect of making clients feel valued and appreciated. Pearson (2016) suggests that clients who feel valued and important are likely to talk to other clients and they are highly likely to stay loyal, which is highly desirable for business success. Face-to-face interaction with a client was highlighted as one way of effectively engaging with clients, along with digital media and newspapers. Due to the different classes and preferences of clients, a culture of back-to-basics approach such as wholeheartedly appreciating and thanking clients for doing business with the bank was also highlighted as an important way of enhancing effective engagement with clients.

Theme 8: Systems innovation and technology

We are living in an ever-changing world; client needs are evolving every day and technology and innovation is needed to keep up with change. The right systems and technology are a prerequisite for improved management of client engagement as well as to develop and enhance customer satisfaction (Cui and Wu, 2017). Clients need specific technology and infrastructure to interface with a brand, and the same is true for bank

employees who also need technology for client engagement through different communication channels such as online platforms.

Considering the ever-changing and evolving market landscape, innovation and technology becomes a necessity for effective client engagement in order for the organisations to adapt to new ways of doing business, thereby staying relevant (La Rocca *et al.*, 2016). Some of the sentiments from the respondents are listed below:

Manager 7: "The new generation enjoys the online banking platforms that allows them the opportunity to bank anywhere anytime within their comfort space 24/7. The bank must have the flexibility to adapt to new ways of doing business in the world of technology platforms".

Manager 4: "Systems in place provides comprehensive analysis of customer retention".

Manager 5: "Attending to the customer complaints management system allows the bank to address and retain existing customers".

Manager 6: "I use the system because it makes my work life easy. Enables the bank to get customer feedback regarding the experience during interaction".

Manager 8: "Customer engagement strategy is about listening to what the customers are telling us, thorough online comments, their voice, interaction and most importantly via complaints system".

Client 1: "Service, effectiveness, technology, ability to transact 24/7".

Client 4: "All I need is service, products, technology innovation, seamless service and availability of online banking all the time with less down time".

Client 7: "Service, products, advances in digital banking. I am digitally savvy all I need is an available online banking platform or a backup of cell phone banking if online banking goes offline".

Client engagement is a culture and technology, and innovations are central to sustaining a customer engagement philosophy (Giannakis-Bompolis and Boutsouki, 2014). For a business to survive it has to continuously offer new improved and better products. Developing new services or products can be facilitated by innovations and technology to ensure sustainable survival. Wang *et al.* (2017) add that customer satisfaction and better service can also be enhanced through technology and innovation and this will help the organisation to retain clients and maintain or improve its market share. Client 23 said:

“Service, technology, staff attitude matter most for me”.

CRM systems could play a significant role in client engagement. CRM can be understood as a way to manage an organisation’s dealings with its existing and potential clients (Buttle and Maklan, 2019). Client engagement by definition centres on the association or relationship between a company and clients. This means that CRM is absolutely vital for effective client engagement, which in turn is also important for the success of a business. The use of CRM has a direct effect on customer satisfaction, and client satisfaction has vital implications for the performance of a company due to its ability to improve client loyalty (Aissa and Thabit, 2019). The benefits of using CRM are numerous and include better client relationships, client understanding, reduced client complaints, better management of queries, and improved efficiency among a plethora of other benefits. In this study most of the managers interviewed revealed that they think CRM benefits ARB in the following ways:

Manager 1: “Improve services provided to clients by making them feel valued, for me data provide facts and makes it easy to make informed business decisions”.

Manager 3: “Will assist the bank to work on its weaknesses and improve on day to day running of a business”.

Manager 5: “Benefited the bank by taking customer feedback and putting corrective action. Measuring pool to determine whether the bank will succeed in helping and retaining customers”.

Manager 8: “It helps to check and understand clients’ needs and identify better products to convince the clients”.

Indeed, CRM can improve the quality of services rendered to clients by identifying their unique needs, as indicated by Manager 8. An effective CRM allows the company to tailor-make products and services for each client through gathering information across client interactions and processing it to uncover hidden trends that will be used to customise products and services offered to those client(s) (Buttle, and Maklan, 2019).

5.4 The client engagement framework

Based on the findings from this study, there seem to be gaps that exist between the prevailing theoretical client engagement management (CEM) strategies and the practical implementation thereof. From the research, most of the managers exhibited a good understanding of client engagement and CEM strategies. However, the interviews with internal clients revealed that most clients feel that the bank is not fully engaging with clients. Some managers also acknowledged the lack of consistency in the implementation of the prevailing theoretical CEM strategies.

Figure 5.1 presents an overview of the draft client engagement management framework. The aim of the study was to develop a CEM framework for retail banks within a developing socio-economic context, using ARB as a case study. Using themes identified in this study, a conceptual CEM framework was developed. The purpose of the CEM framework is to provide general guidance to practitioners in the retail banking sector on possible ways to align their organisations to be more client centric which should lead to improved client engagement, improved client satisfaction and ultimately improved client loyalty and retention.

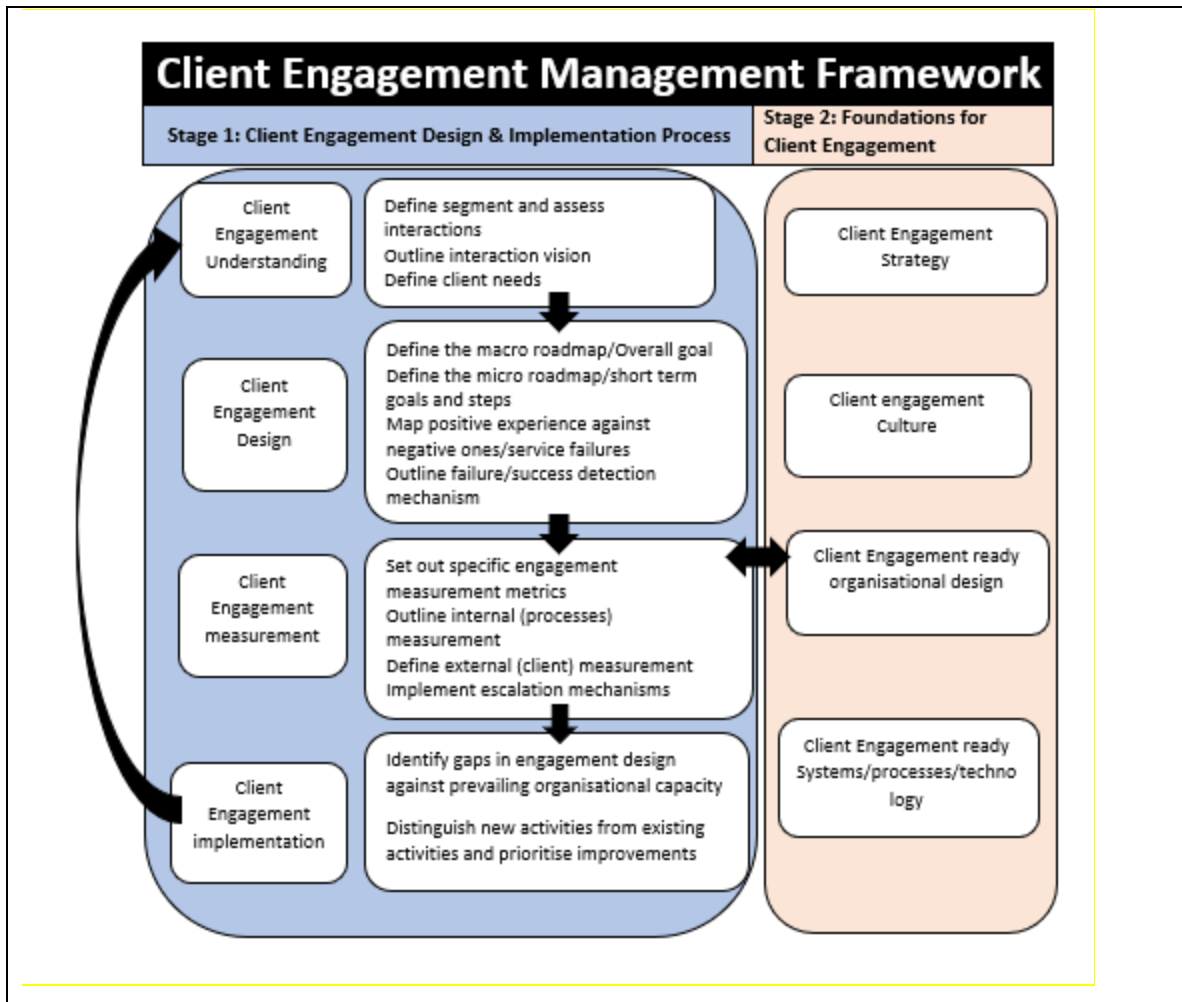


Figure 5.1: Client Engagement Management Framework for a retail bank

The CEM framework can be understood as a mechanism that embodies the discipline, methodology, and processes employed to comprehensively manage clients across all touch points, interactions and transactions with the organisation’s products, services or brand throughout their life cycle (Arıkan, 2017). Basically, a CEM framework pronounces on and outlines how organisations define, manage and deliver client engagement.

For purposes of this study the eight emerging themes can be divided into two domains:

- i. Stage 1: Client engagement design and implementation procedures

- ii. Stage 2: Required foundations to ensure organisational readiness to support the client engagement process.

Stage 1 (Figure 5.1) is the client engagement design and implementation procedures which consist of four phases. These phases are chronological and iterative at the same time since client needs, requirements and expectations are seldom constant, they change all the time. The bank needs to regularly reach out to clients through their preferred communication channels to ensure that the bank's strategies are still aligned to deliver on the ever-changing client expectations. The curved arrow illustrates this point.

The foundations for implementing a CEM framework consist of five building blocks that are required for the bank's readiness in support of the client engagement process. These foundations are not sequential, but the double-sided arrows illustrate the interdependency between the implementation procedures and the foundation blocks.

This section provides more details of the CEM framework by describing the specific activities, suggested tools and desired results that are projected for each implementation or each foundation phase.

Table 5.1 shows the client engagement management framework stage 1: Client engagement implementation. Table 5.2 shows the client engagement management framework stage 2: Foundations for client engagement.

5.5 Client engagement management framework details

Table 5.1 reflects the client engagement design and implementation process which consists of four phases: Client understanding; Client engagement design; Client engagement measurement; Client engagement implementation. Client understanding or client engagement understanding entails research to get a deeper understanding of the defined client segments. The client engagement design phase involves outlining the engagement vision, defining moments of truths and outlining success/failure detection

mechanisms. The client engagement measurement phase is all about formulating client engagement metrics, indicators and KPIs to enable the organisation to measure success/failure of engagement. The client engagement implementation phase includes identifying shortcomings and gaps between the client engagement strategy and prevailing conditions so as to improve client engagement.

The bank needs to regularly engage with clients through their preferred communication channels and get feedback. This ensures that the banks use the gathered information from client feedback and make sure that strategies and plans are still aligned to deliver on the ever-changing client expectations.

Table 5.1: Client Engagement Implementation for a retail bank

Client Engagement Implementation			
Phase	Activities	Tools	Desired results
1. Client Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define segment and assess client requirements Outline interaction vision Define client needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research The client drawing board Value proposition canvas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined customer segments, prioritised for maximising benefit. Understanding of customer needs and expectations.
2. Client Engagement Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline a definitive engagement strategy Client journey mapping Set SMART goals for every engagement channel Set out holistic engagement pathways Outline failure/success detection mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process mapping Interaction plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly outlined roadmap for a customer segment. Defined vision for a particular customer segment. Identified moments of truth Identified failure points, and resolutions Defined failure/success detection mechanisms.
3. Client Engagement measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define quality standards Outline internal (processes) measurement Define external (client) measurement Implement escalation mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific engagement metrics KPIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A process dashboard measuring all the vital customer processes and moments of truth. Feedback mechanisms to monitor customer feedback constantly. Defined alternatives on key performance processes Client engagement indicators
4. Client Engagement implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify gaps in engagement design against prevailing organisational capacity Distinguish new activities from existing activities and prioritise improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shortcomings identified from the failure/success analysis Ranking matrix Action research focus groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlined initiatives for improving client engagement. Streamlined list of initiatives, derived from the impact on client satisfaction and or client dissatisfaction. A mobilised, multi-functional working team with power to implement client engagement initiatives.

Table 5.2: Foundations for Client Engagement for a retail bank

Foundations for Client Engagement		
Foundations	Activities	Desired Results
1. Define Client Engagement strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline the client interaction vision Outline the client engagement strategy for client segments (based on information collected from client understanding) Communicate the strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clearly outlined client vision and strategy A strategy understood and accepted across the organisation
2. Implement a Client Engagement culture measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement client engagement focused training Implement an appraisal mechanism Implement performance management KPIs linked to client engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A workforce that fully understands the client engagement strategy A workforce that understand how their roles affect client engagement A workforce that is motivated and inspired by the client engagement strategy
3. Align organisational functions to Client segments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement an organisational structure that is streamlined to the end-to-end client segment Ensure alignment of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) across functions Align internal processes to client segment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An organisational structure that reinforces the main customer processes A structure that eliminates silos and breakages in the client chain
4. Implement processes and systems aligned to Client engagement strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a client engagement-centric technology strategy Integrate the new technology requirements of clients into the strategy Create client data analysis capacity Create consistent client engagement standards to be used for system and process design initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined technology and data handling strategy that aligns with the client engagement strategy A central system that keeps data for all customer transactions Capacity and skills to implement client analytics and forecasting Standards that are flexible enough to be used to manage transformation to any systems, processes, technology, or data infrastructure

Table 5.2 presents the foundations or building blocks (Stage 2) of the CEM framework. The foundations for implementing a CEM framework consist of five building blocks that are required for the bank’s readiness in support of the client engagement process. The bank as an organisation has to be prepared for the implementation of the CEM framework. Firstly, client engagement has to be defined in the context of the organisation. A clear client engagement strategy and vision must be outlined, communicated and understood by the entire organisation to ensure that everyone is on the same page. Leadership buy-in will go a long way in determining whether the strategy is successfully implemented or not.

It is therefore of paramount importance that leaders of the organisation (for example company executives) are convinced and committed to the successful implementation of the strategy. Client engagement focused training is also needed so that employees fully comprehend their roles in the successful implementation of the strategy. Organisational functions need to be fine-tuned and aligned with the strategy. The ideal situation is an organisational structure that complements and reinforces the client engagement strategy. The bank's systems and processes also need to be aligned with the client engagement strategy. The company's technology must be upgraded or refocused to support the strategy; in other words, the creation of a client engagement-centric technology is required. It is important to note that these foundations are not sequential but interdependent between the implementation procedures and the foundation blocks.

5.6 Requirements and fundamentals

Stage 1 requirements of the CEM Framework

The bank employees involved must have a basic preliminary comprehension of client segments for the implementation of CEM framework (stage 1). The client engagement phase entails in-depth research which requires a well-defined, dedicated and equipped client research team. It is a prerequisite that the organisation conducts research to gather information on clients' needs and expectations in order to fully understand client segments.

Stage 2 requirements of the CEM Framework

The organisational foundations are outlined in the CEM framework specified as requirements or preconditions for organisational readiness to reinforce the client engagement implementation process (CEM framework stage 1). Banks in the retail banking sector in SA differ in size and capacities which has implications for the strength

of their foundations required to implement the CEM framework. However, banks in the South African retail sector have foundations that are capable of supporting the implementation of the CEM framework at least to a certain extent.

5.7 Conclusion

CEM is increasingly becoming a focal area for many organisations, including banks. However, literature review and the current study have revealed that there are gaps that exist between prevailing theoretical CEM strategies and their practical implementation. In the quest to develop a comprehensive CEM approach, this study (using ARB as a case study) developed a conceptual CEM framework that can be applied to the South African retail banking sector. The CEM framework presents general guidance to the South African retail banking sector on conceivable ways to align their banks to be more client focused and improve client engagement to enhance client loyalty and retention.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter consolidates the findings of the study by discussing the implications and possible ways of bridging the gap between the CVP for client engagement and retention and the expectations of the clients. The researcher brings together the customers' ideas of differentiation, preferences, dissatisfaction, CEM, loyalty and how managers are confronting them, to ascertain if there is an alignment between client strategies, their implementation and client expectations.

CEM seems to be a tactical focal area within organisations, especially within the banking industry. However, there seems to be a gap existing between current theoretical CEM approaches and their practical implementation (Du Plessis and De Vries, 2016). This has been confirmed by findings from this study which also revealed a chasm between theoretical client engagement strategies and the implementation of such strategies (within a specific banking context). Therefore, the research questions that needed to be answered focused on the organisation's current client engagement strategies, how those are being implemented and how those can be enhanced to improve client retention.

The key findings from the study suggest that ARB has prevailing CEM strategies, however the implementation of the strategies seems to have limitations. The current CEM efforts are not coordinated in a single comprehensive and holistic approach. The most notable obstacles to effective CEM implementation include a lack of coordination in the current CEM implementation across the bank, a lack of understanding of what client engagement is, and a knowledge gap on how to operationalise client engagement and harness the results to improve client retention. In pursuit of a comprehensive CEM strategy, this study developed a draft conceptual CEM framework based on inductive thematic analysis using ARB as a case study.

The researcher will now reflect on the research questions as outlined in this study.

6.2 Research Questions

6.2.1 Research question 1: How does ARB's existing client engagement model influence business performance and client retention?

Findings from this research suggest that ARB's prevailing client engagement strategy is not intelligently designed. The client engagement strategy shows a lack of proper understanding of different socio-economic backgrounds in SA. This was revealed by the findings when several respondents alluded to the fact that clients from certain socio-economic categories have been neglected by the bank which resulted in the bank losing current and potential clients. This notion is also supported by findings from BusinessTech (2019) which indicated that ARB performed worse than all of the so-called major banks in SA when it came to client satisfaction and bank recommendation from current clients. The findings from both the consumer satisfaction index and the bank recommendation score suggest that the bank needs to revisit its client engagement strategies. This shows that ARB's existing client engagement strategy is not helping to improve the bank's performance.

Comprehending the socio-economic dynamics of clients has the potential to assist the organisation to improve the way in which they manage clients according to their different needs and preferences which are defined by their socio-economic backgrounds. Lack of understanding of clients' needs by ARB has resulted in a poor client engagement strategy emanating from the disregarding of unique aspects that define certain socio-economic groups. As a result, some competitors have exploited these deficiencies and designed client engagement strategies that cater for the neglected clients. All in all, ARB's client engagement strategy appears to be lacking as demonstrated by poor performance in client satisfaction and the loss of clients from certain market segments to competitors.

6.2.2 Research question 2: Are there discrepancies between theoretical client engagement management strategies and their practical implementation?

Findings from this study also suggest that the importance of clients as the bloodstream of any organisation is well understood, and most of the work of scholars reviewed in this study show that the central role of client engagement is generally well comprehended. Issues arise when it comes to ensuring the design of an appropriate client engagement strategy that suits the contexts and different economic environments. Even if an appropriate client engagement strategy is designed, the biggest challenge emanates from the effective implementation and delivery of client engagement in the face of diverse socio-economic contexts.

Based on the findings from this study, there seem to be gaps that exist between the prevailing theoretical CEM strategies and the practical implementation thereof. From the research, most of the managers exhibited a good understanding of client engagement and CEM strategies. However, the interviews with internal clients revealed that most clients feel that the bank is not fully engaging with clients. Some managers also acknowledged the lack of consistency in the implementation of the prevailing theoretical CEM strategies.

Findings from this study seem to point at two important issues, first, ARB's client engagement strategy seem to be lacking as evidenced by the loss of clients from certain market segments from specific socio-economic backgrounds. Secondly, the prevailing client engagement strategy is not being properly implemented, there seems to be discrepancies that exist between the theoretical client engagement strategies and their practical implementation.

6.2.3 Research question 3: Does client engagement differ with different socio-economic settings?

The question was based on the notion that if client engagement was not equally ingrained in different socio-economic settings, it may explain why there are challenges for organisations when it comes to the implementing of client engagement and sustaining it for client retention. Moreover, it may also imply that trying to implement a client engagement framework founded on a different socio-economic environment for a different economy or different context may not bring about the required results in another setting.

In this research it can be concluded that the importance of clients to the success of businesses is understood and the correlation between client engagement and client retention is comprehended. However, the influence of socio-economic dynamics on client engagement and client retention is not fully understood. Findings revealed that ARB has been neglecting clients from certain socio-economic backgrounds thereby losing potential clients to competitors.

The bank has services that cater for clients; however, there seems to be a lack significant and sustainable engagements with some market segments. The bank has overlooked some market segments such as the low-income group. The clients of ARB have been poached by other banks as these banks cater for the neglected market segments. In this regard the following can be noted with regards to other banks: Capitec bank approached the low-level customers that were struggling to be approved for different products by ARB, whilst Discovery bank stepped in and claimed the lifestyle customers from ARB.

Understanding the socio-economic dynamics of clients could have enabled ARB to improve the way in which they manage clients according to their different needs and preferences. Lack of understanding of clients' needs and requirements resulted in a poor

client engagement strategy emanating from the neglect of clients from certain socio-economic groups.

6.2.4 Research question 4: Is the concept of client engagement contexts specific?

The researcher reviewed various literature on client engagement phenomenon. The literature revealed that client engagement frameworks can be adopted and implemented in different contexts and environment with some alteration to suit specific conditions.

With regards to this study, it can be concluded that the basic principles of client engagement are generally the same across the different contexts. It can be suggested that the following aspects are similar in different contexts: The basic client engagement philosophies prevail across different contexts. For example, all clients expect an organisation to engage with them irrespective of the different socio-economic environments that they might come from;

There is a connection between client engagement and client retention regardless of the context; and businesses exist to satisfy clients as the bloodstream of the business and for sustainable business performance through client retention.

Nevertheless, what differs is how client engagement is delivered to different people in different contexts and environments. The difference of how client engagement is implemented and delivered is founded on client expectations, cultural differences, and the magnitude of client complexity in different environments. This implies that service providers have to create client engagement strategies founded on a deep understanding of the different environments and backgrounds of the organisation's current and potential client base. The integrated thinking that considers the broader different economic environments will put the company in a position to focus on specific needs for different clients which will likely improve the design and implementation of client

engagement. This will also put the organisation in a position to enhance customer satisfaction and improve client retention levels.

Client engagement by definition entails that an organisation can only intimately engage with clients if it fully understands the characteristics of the clients from different environments and economic contexts. Comprehending the different economic environments and backgrounds has the potential to assist the organisation to improve the way in which it goes about implementing client engagement. Lack of understanding of clients' needs and requirements can result in a poor client engagement strategy emanating from the disregarding of unique aspects that define certain economic environments. It is also important for the organisation to understand that different approaches are needed for different contexts. The organisation needs to consider the different economic environments and backgrounds to gain insights that will influence client engagement design and delivery which determines client satisfaction and ultimately client retention. The researcher is of the opinion that client engagement is complex and context specific with no universal approach.

6.3 Recommendations

The draft framework developed as a result of this study (see Figure 5.1) should be tested in ARB branches and centres throughout SA, as well as in other developing countries in which ARB operates. This is essential to test the relevance and robustness of the framework, and to test its usability to acquire data for future analysis and use, which should ensure that ARB is always a step ahead with respect to knowing the needs of its customers. Client engagement should also be explored further to identify appropriate improvements to the framework in order to continuously revise the framework and keep it relevant.

The following recommendations have been formalised as a result of this research study:

6.3.1 Client engagement differs in different socio-economic environments

The client engagement strategies and services offered in different socio-economic environments should differ because customers from different socio-economic backgrounds are seldom similar. For example, it can be postulated that in developed economies, clients are more urbane, complicated, and demanding consequently the services levels are higher (Gupta, Pansari and Kumar, 2018). In the same vein, we can also hypothesise that in the developing world, clients are generally modest and less demanding, and their level of complexity is relatively lower (Goyal, and Srivastava, 2015). This implies that client engagement approaches need to be flexible and context specific to achieve desired outcomes such as client retention. Even though such differences exist, the bottom line is that the client centricity approach must always be the focus irrespective of the socio-economic environments. Generally, clients want to be engaged effectively and given special treatment during interactions.

6.3.2 An appropriate client engagement framework

Literature review and findings from this study seem to suggest that the role of client engagement in client retention is generally well comprehended. Problems arise when it comes to designing an appropriate client engagement for different socio-economic contexts and different economic environments. Even if an appropriate client engagement strategy is designed, proper and effective implementation and delivery of client engagement still presents significant problems. The researcher therefore recommends a holistic client engagement framework that underscores the importance of proper implementation. As such, a client engagement framework that emphasises not only the

designing phase of the strategy but is also very important and is often a neglected phase of implementation was developed in this study.

It also important to emphasise that the client engagement framework has to be tailor made for the developing world since most of the client engagement frameworks seems to be based on the developed economies which may pose more challenges when it comes to context and applicability. Socio-economic aspects can never be overemphasized, design and implementation of client engagement frameworks has to be done with serious considerations of different segments of clients from different socio-economic backgrounds in mind.

6.3.3 Improving employee engagements

Employee engagements can be improved by assisting employees to know each other's strengths and maximising them; encouraging internal and external mentorship, and other departmental mentorship while supporting collaboration in a true meaningful way, promoting networking and ensuring that employees use it to maximum benefit. Furthermore, keep employees updated with everything that is happening within the organisation and ask for their ideas through a suggestion box, especially for employees who are afraid to speak. Foster the culture of learning, development and providing open feedback without fear of victimisation. Allow the employees the opportunity to celebrate each colleague's achievement, which will ultimately promote the culture of open atmosphere and open sharing.

6.3.4 Considering the development of a centralised customer engagement system

This includes a centralised system which will facilitate CRM and therefore help to overcome the silo mentality. Improvements to the current system will be more of a 'one-

stop-shop' instead of sending customers from pillar to post and creating dissatisfaction and frustration. The banking industry is constantly evolving, with more products and services being offered. In order for employees to operate seamlessly when serving their clients, employees must be in a position to access all information needed in order to be fully supported in their product offering decision. This is critical in improving the employee experience.

6.3.5 Technology improvements

The bank needs to upgrade to technology that is faster and more agile. Improvements in technology would assist the bank with specific services that the bank can offer, technology that is geared up to improve operational efficiencies, and move quickly into mobile banking, WhatsApp banking, online/internet banking, digital banking and virtual banking. Engage with IT specialists to ensure that the bank has current technologies that meet the needs of clients.

6.3.6 Training and retraining of staff

The bank needs to ensure that all staff in the branch are trained and retrained on an ongoing basis so that the level of service is more consistent. Training will also ensure that staff become knowledgeable and hence valued by clients. Use of customer surveys can assist management to be alerted as to areas in which staff require training or retraining.

6.3.7 Investing more time in understanding client needs and socio-demographic composition

The private bank and wealth client are managed through relationship. There must be relationship executives allocated to this type of a market segment in order to meet their needs. In this case the relationship executive can meet the clients in the comfort of their

homes or work and maintain a complete level of experience. While an entry level customer would be happy to visit a branch for a simple query, the core middle market and retail affluent market would prefer a faster and more agile technology to bank in the comfort of their home or wherever they find themselves. All customer needs must be tailor-made to suit each market segment, including the demographic composition.

If the bank can dedicate some time to the above-mentioned aspects, it stands a chance of reclaiming some of its clients back from the competitors. Some of ARB's ex-clients who have been with the bank for many years and have left over small matters could be won back if the recommendations are implemented.

6.3.8 Recommendations for future research

Further research should be conducted to generalise the usability of the framework for other banks, and to expand its usability to other financial services institutions such as insurance organisations. Such research should initially focus on institutions in developing countries, but the scope can later be widened to include institutions in developed countries as well.

Further research can also focus on socioeconomic environment aspects including demographics characteristics such age, gender, education level and incomes of participants. The research can then look at how such socioeconomic backgrounds influence client engagement.

6.4 Limitations of the study

The researcher focussed primarily on the ARB, with the focus on Retail Banking group in SA and therefore the study was limited to only a sample of managers within the organisation. At the same time a number of the prospective participants indicated that

they did not have the time to participate in the study, hence their knowledge was withheld which could have added more value to this study.

Socioeconomic environment in this study was focused on banking clients which may be viewed as a narrow definition that overlooks other aspects of socioeconomic environment.

The study was only carried out in Gauteng and South Africa due to time and financial constraints. This presents limitation in as far as using the findings from this study to infer on the larger population of the developing economies.

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Appendix A: Letter to Participants

Date: 01 Feb 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

Client Engagement in Retail Banking: A Developing Socio-Economic Perspective

My name is Reginah Masete, I am presently busy completing my PhD in the Management of Technology and Innovation at Da Vinci. The study focus of my research is to critically review client engagement in Absa Retail Banking from a developing socio-economic perspective.

I would appreciate your assistance in this study. The outcome of the study will be used for academic purposes only and nothing will be published in the public domain without the explicit consent of participants.

Please note that your interview response will be treated as confidential.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Kind Regards / Vriendelike Groete

Reginah Masete | Provincial Head Operations– Gauteng South | Barclays Africa | Retail and Business Banking (RBB)

Mobile: 082 417 3719 | Office (011) 772 7823 | Email Address:

reginah.masete@absa.co.za

Provincial Head Office | 15 Alice Lane | Sandton | Barclays South Campus Ground Floor |

2146: www.absa.co.za

Appendix B: Managers' Interview Schedule

PhD MOTI

(Management of Technology and Innovation)

Reginah Masete

Introduction

My name is Reginah Masete; I am currently completing my PhD in the Management of Technology and Innovation at Da Vinci. The study focus of my research is to critically review client engagement in Absa Retail Banking from a developing socio-economic perspective.

I would appreciate your assistance in this study. The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and no personal responses will be published without the explicit consent of the participants.

Please note that your interview response will be treated as confidential.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Research Topic

Client Engagement in Retail Banking: A Developing Socio-Economic Perspective

Name:

Position:

Contact details:

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Gender

	Mark this box
Male	
Female	

2. Race

	Mark this box
Black	
White	
Indian	
Coloured	
Other	

3. What is your current age?

	Mark this box
18 - 24 years	
25 - 34 years	
35 - 49 years	
Older than 50 years	
Do not want to disclose	

4. Personal monthly income before any deductions. Please indicate within which of the following brackets you fall.

	Mark this box
R 10 000 per month	
Between R 10 000 and R 20 000 per month	
Between R 20 000 and R 40 000 per month	
More than R 40 000 per month	
Do not want to disclose	

5. What is your highest level of education?

	Mark this box
Certificate	
Higher certificate	
Advanced higher certificate	
Diploma	
Higher Diploma	
Bachelor's Degree	
Honours' Degree	
Higher degree (Master's / Doctorate)	

6. What is your marital status?

	Mark this box
Single - Never married	
Single – Divorced	
Single – Widowed	
Living together as partners	
Married	
Do not want to disclose	

Section 2: Customer engagement strategy

7. How do you define a Customer Engagement Strategy?

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.....

.....

8. Do you currently have a customer engagement strategy?

	Mark this box
Yes	
No	

9. If Yes to question 8 - what are the benefits of implementing the customer engagement strategy?

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.....
.....

10. If No to question 8 - why do you not make use of a customer engagement strategy?

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.....
.....

11. In your opinion, what are aspects that may differentiate one bank from another bank?

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.....

12. Are the aspects mentioned in question 11 part of the existing customer retention strategy of your workplace? Yes/No

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.....
.....

13. If Yes to question 12 - is the current customer engagement strategy effective in increasing customer retention at your workplace? Why do you think this is the case? Please explain.

.....

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.....

Section 3: Client Experience

14. Explain how successful you have been with the following:

14.1 Acquiring new customers

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.....
.....

14.2 Engaging with new customers

.....
.....
.....

14.3 Tracking customer retention statistics

.....
.....
.....

14.4 Delivering on the promise of the unique value proposition of customers

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.....
.....
14.5 What is your understanding of implementing a customer strategy?

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.....
.....

14.6 Communicating the unique value proposition to the customers

.....
.....
.....

14.7 Engaging with existing customers

.....
.....
.....

Section 4: Customer relationship management

15. Do you make use of a Customer Relationship Management System (CRM)?

	Mark this box
Yes	
No	

16. If No to question 16 - why do you not make use of a CRM software system?

.....
.....
.....

17. If Yes to question 16 - what are the benefits of implementing a CRM system for customer experience?

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.....

18. Explain/describe the benefits of integrating CRM data into the customer retention strategy at the workplace.

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19. Explain/describe the usability of the information captured through the CRM system at work.

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20. Explain/describe your understanding of the socio-economic dynamic within your business area or branch.

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21. Explain/describe how your business strategy links to the socio-economic dynamic in your business area or branch.

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.....

22. Do you believe that the understanding of the socio-economic dynamic affects how your current bank manages customer engagement? Explain your response.

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.....

Thank you for your time in participating in this study

Appendix C: Internal Clients' Interview Schedule

PhD MOTI

(Management of Technology and Innovation)

Reginah Masete

Introduction

My name is Reginah Masete; I am currently busy completing my PhD in the Management of Technology and Innovation at Da Vinci. The study focus of my research is to critically review client engagement in Absa Retail Banking from a developing socio-economic perspective.

I would appreciate your assistance in this study. The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and no personal responses will be published without the explicit consent of the participants.

Please note that your interview response will be treated as confidential.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Research Topic

Client Engagement in Retail Banking: A Developing Socio-Economic Perspective

Section 1: Demographics

1. Gender

	Mark this box
Male	
Female	

2. Race

	Mark this box
Black	
White	
Indian	
Coloured	
Other	

3. What is your current age?

	Mark this box
18 - 24 years	
25 - 34 years	
35 - 49 years	
Older than 50 years	
Do not want to disclose	

4. Personal monthly income before any deductions. Please indicate within which of the following brackets you fall.

	Mark this box
R 10 000 per month	
Between R 10 000 and R 20 000 per month	
Between R 20 000 and R 40 000 per month	
More than R 40 000 per month	
Do not want to disclose	

5. What is your highest level of education?

	Mark this box
Certificate	
Higher certificate	
Advanced higher certificate	
Diploma	
Higher Diploma	
Bachelor's Degree	
Honours Degree	
Higher degree (Master's / Doctorate)	

6. What is your marital status?

	Mark this box
Single - Never married	
Single - Divorced	
Single - Widowed	
Living together as partners	
Married	
Do not want to disclose	

Section 2: Client retention

7. In your opinion, what are aspects that may differentiate one bank from another?

.....

.....

.....

8. Explain/describe the following statements that relate to services provided at a retail branch level:

8.1 Feeling secure while transacting in a branch.

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8.2 Updating clients with query progress.

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8.3 Receiving personal attention from branch employees.

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8.4 Receiving a warm welcome at reception on arrival.

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8.5 Being treated fairly by the bank employees.

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8.6 The ability of the service consultant to complete the queries/request on time.

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8.7 The ability of the tellers to complete the queries/requests on time.

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8.8 The ability of the specialists to complete the queries and requests on time. (Home loans consultant, short term insurance broker, long term insurance broker, vehicle and asset finance specialist)

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8.9 The ability of branch employees to deliver on what they had promised.

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Section 3: Client satisfaction

9. In your opinion, what are the aspects that would make you most loyal to your bank?

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.....

10. I would like you to think about all the service experiences you have had with your bank and then describe how satisfied you were.

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.....

11. If you have a need to elaborate on any of the aspects indicated in question 10 regarding satisfaction with your bank, please do so by providing an explanation.

.....

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.....

12. Explain/describe what your current bank should stop doing:

.....

.....

.....

Section 4: Consumer Behaviour

13. How long have you been banking with your current bank?

	Add answer in this box
Years	

14. Do you make use of other banking institutions besides your current bank?

	Mark this box
Yes	
No	

15. Explain your answer to question 14.

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.....

16. Explain the following:

16.1 Would you recommend your bank to friends or family?

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.....

.....

16.2 Would you continue banking with your bank in the future?

.....

.....

.....

17. Explain your answer as indicated in questions 16.1 and 16.2.

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your time

Appendix D: Letter of Request to Conduct the Study

13 May 2014

TO: Regional Executive: Gauteng South

RE: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH AT ABSA RETAIL BANKING

I, Reginah Masete, Student Number PhD 5986 am currently studying towards a Degree at Da Vinci Institute in Modderfontein Kempton Park. I am completing the research component of my studies. My chosen research entails collecting data on customer engagement and retention strategies within ABSA Group Limited.

My Topic

“Developing strategies for client engagement in retail banking for consumers in a developing country”

I therefore request permission to undertake my research at ARB.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated and I look forward to your positive correspondence. Upon completion of the study, I will provide ARB with a bound copy of the full research report.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Reginah Masete

PhD Student: Da Vinci Institute

(083 477 550/082 417 3719)

Approved by: Roanleigh Thambiran

Regional Executive

Gauteng South

Appendix E: Permission to Conduct the Study

Date: 14 August 2015

TO: Regional Executive-Gauteng South

RE: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH AT ABSA RETAIL BANKING

I, Reginah Masete, Student Number PhD 5986 I am currently studying towards a Degree at Da Vinci Institute in Modderfontein Kempton Park. I am currently doing the research component of my studies. My chosen research entails collecting data on strategies for customer engagement within ABSA Group Ltd

My Topic

"Developing a Strategy for Customer Engagement in Retail Banks: A Developmental Perspective"

I therefore request permission to undertake my research in ABSA

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated and I look forward to your positive correspondence. Upon completion of the study, I will provide ABSA with a bound copy of the full research report.

Thank you

Yours Sincerely



Reginah Masete

PhD Student: Da Vinci Institute

(083 477 5507/082 417 3719)



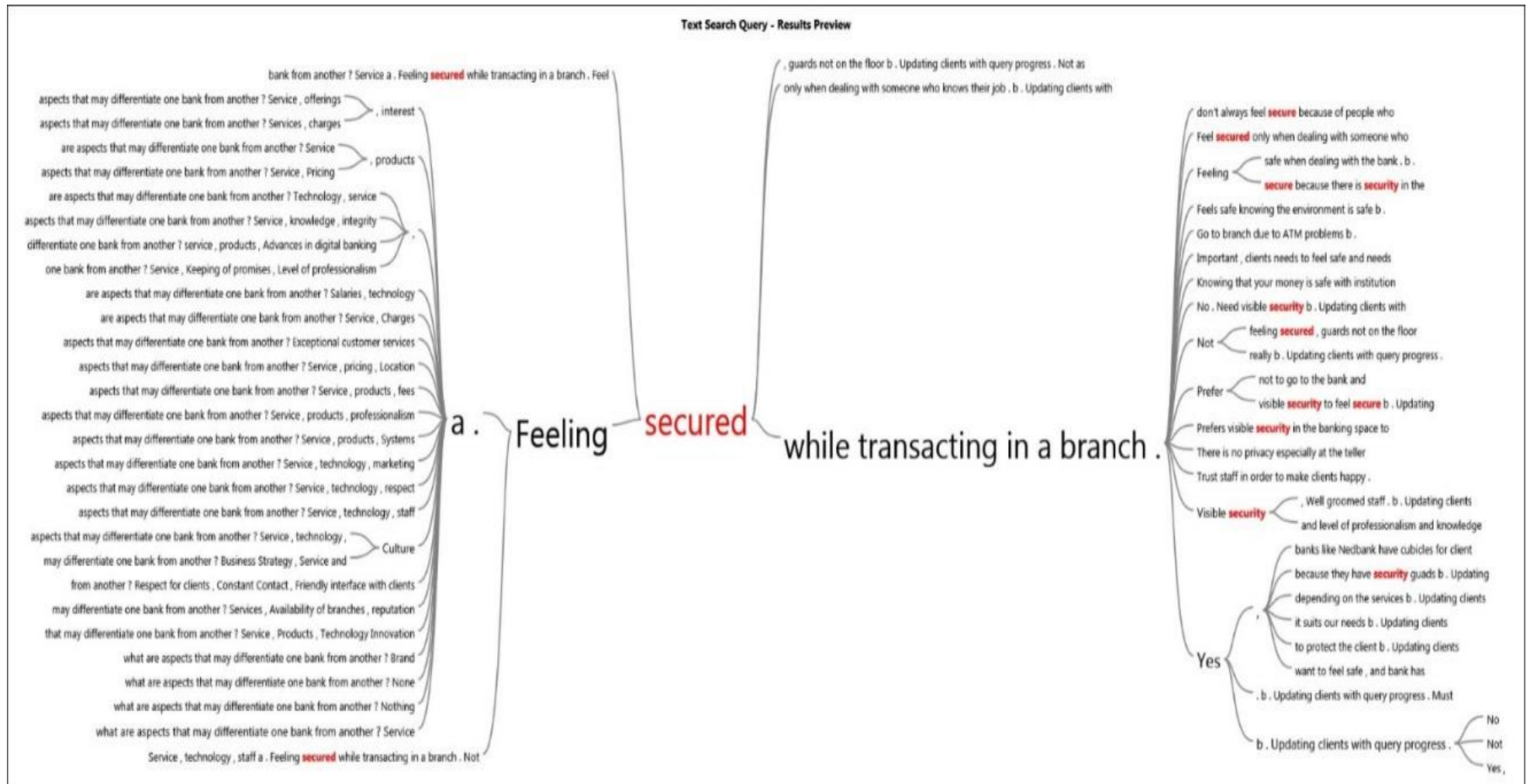
Approved by: Roanleigh Thambiran

Regional Executive: Gauteng South

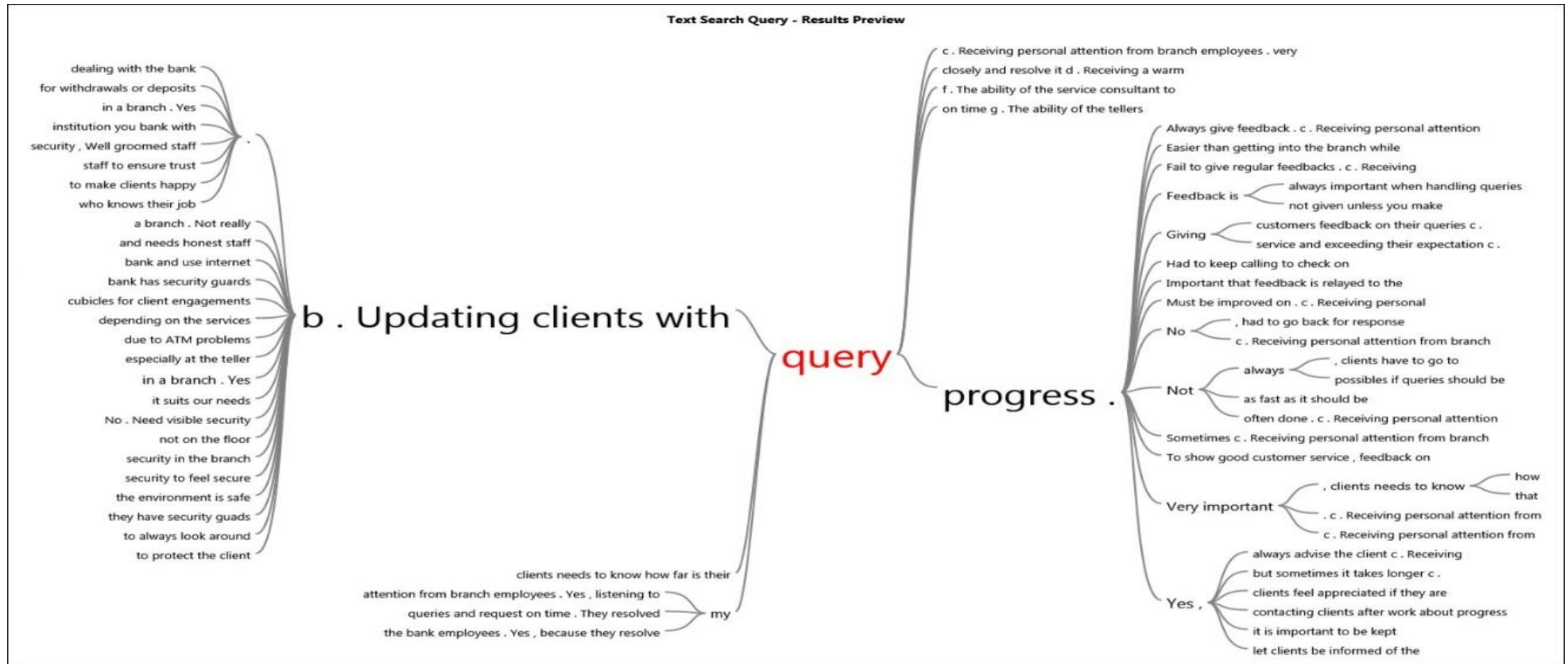
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Appendix F: Word Trees

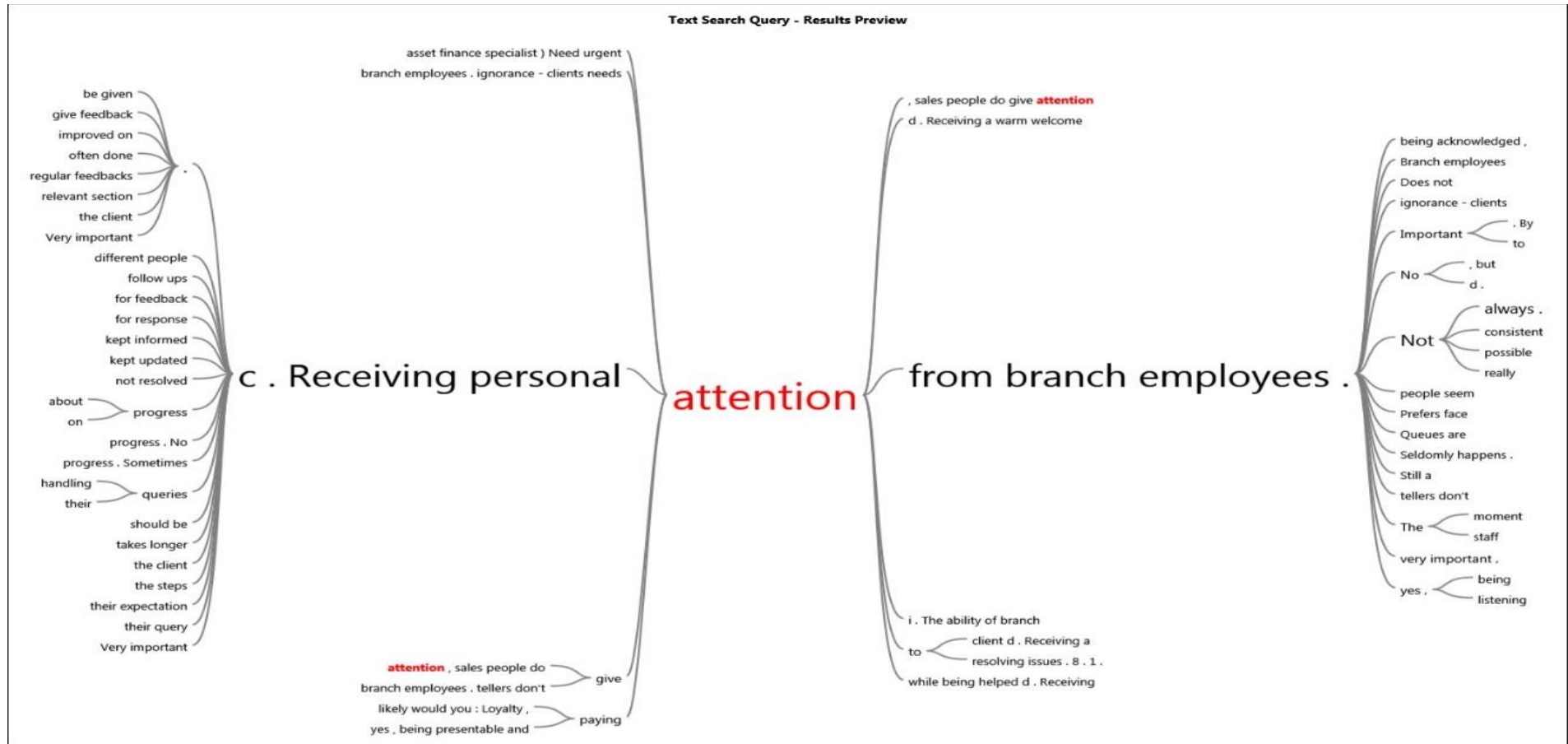
Feeling secured while transacting in the bank



Updating clients with query progress



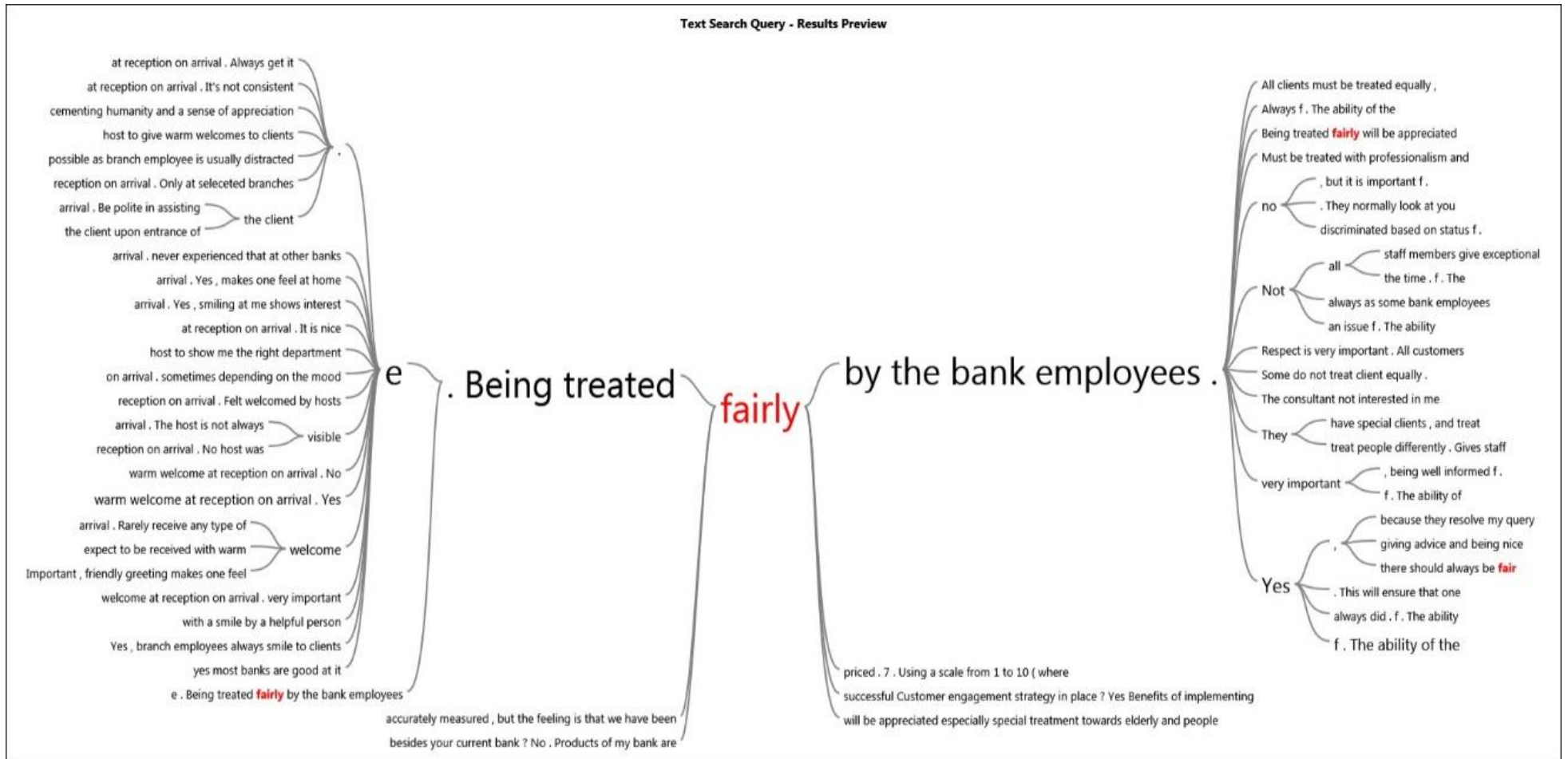
Receiving personal attention from branch employees



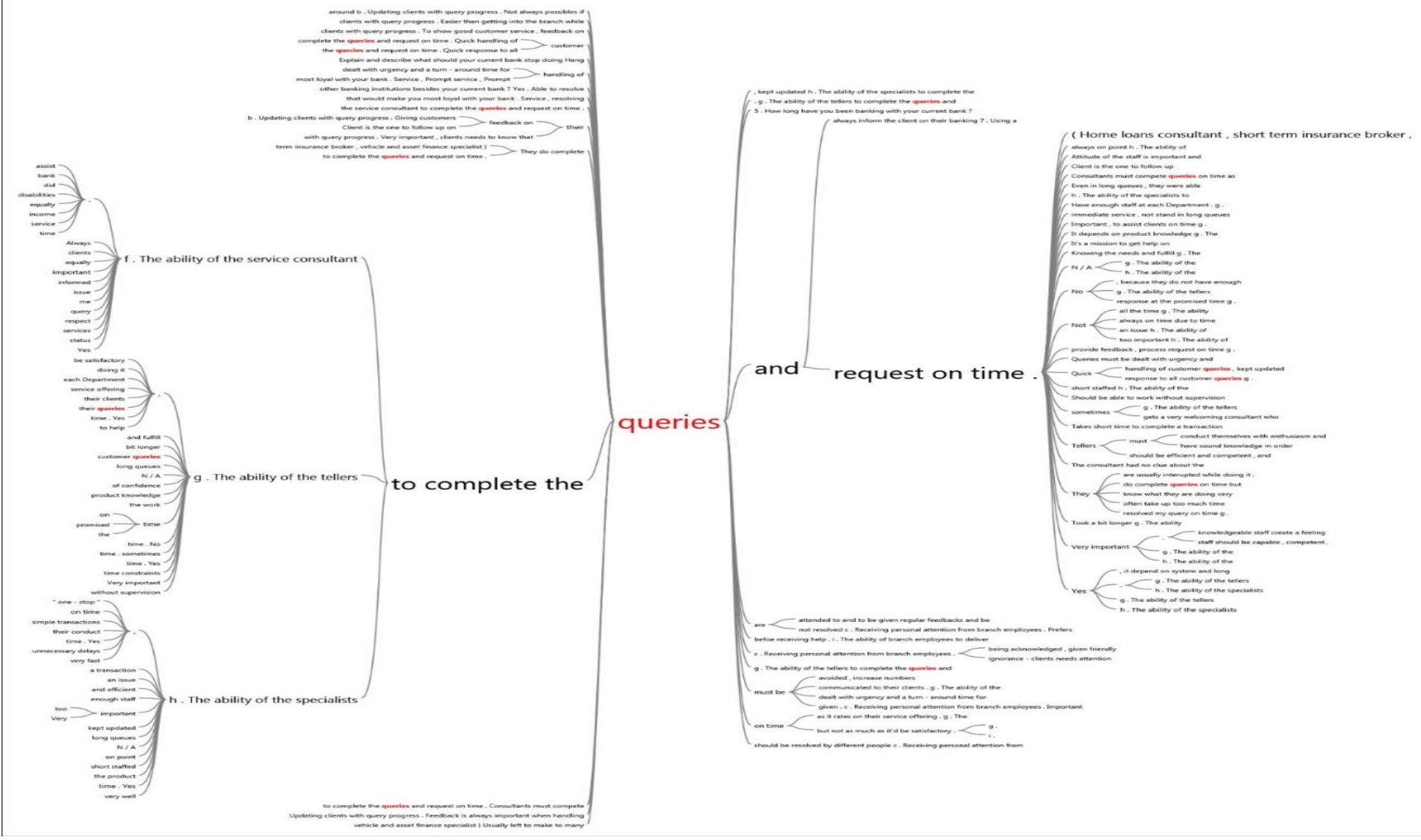
Receiving a warm welcome at reception on arrival



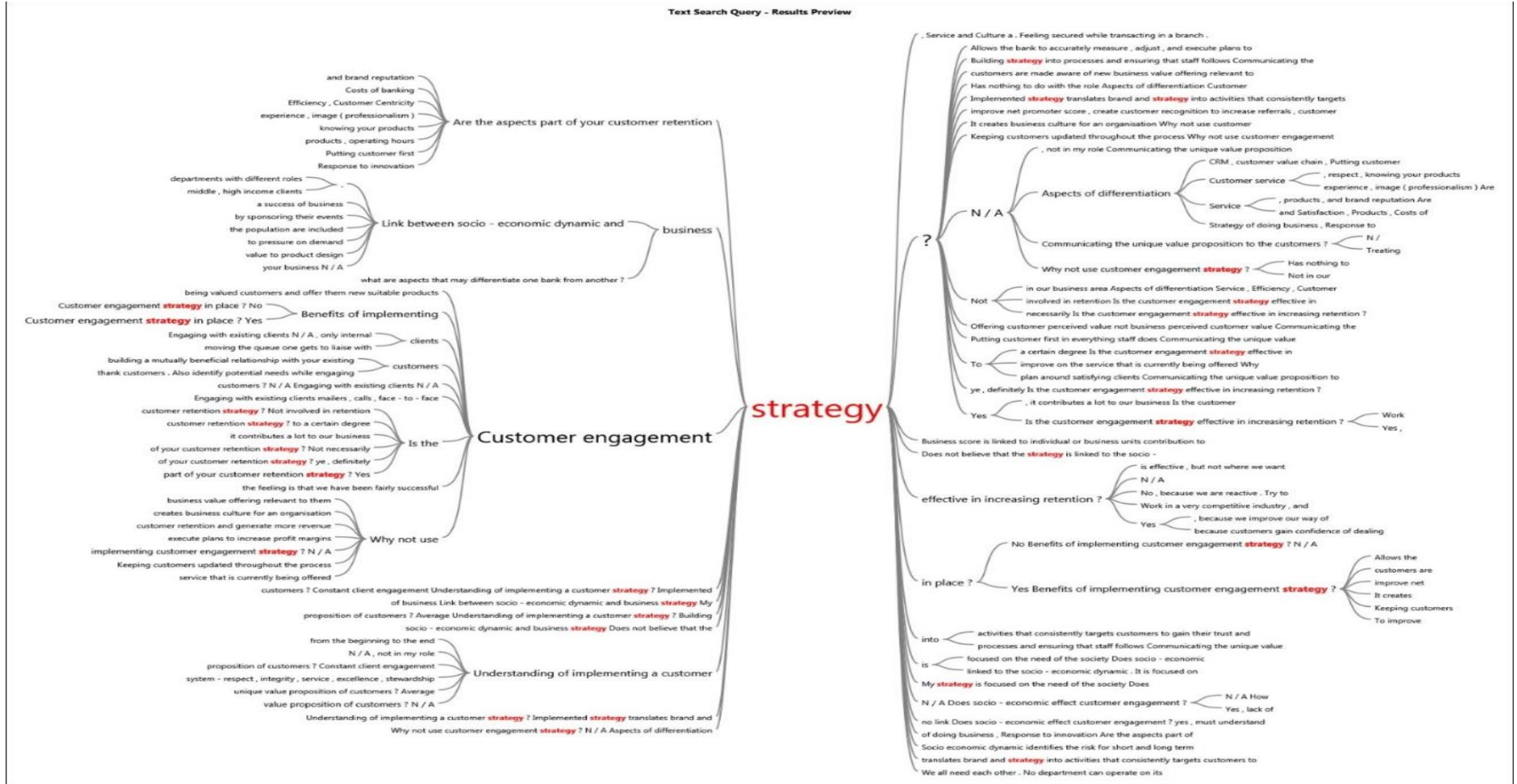
Being treated fairly by the bank employees



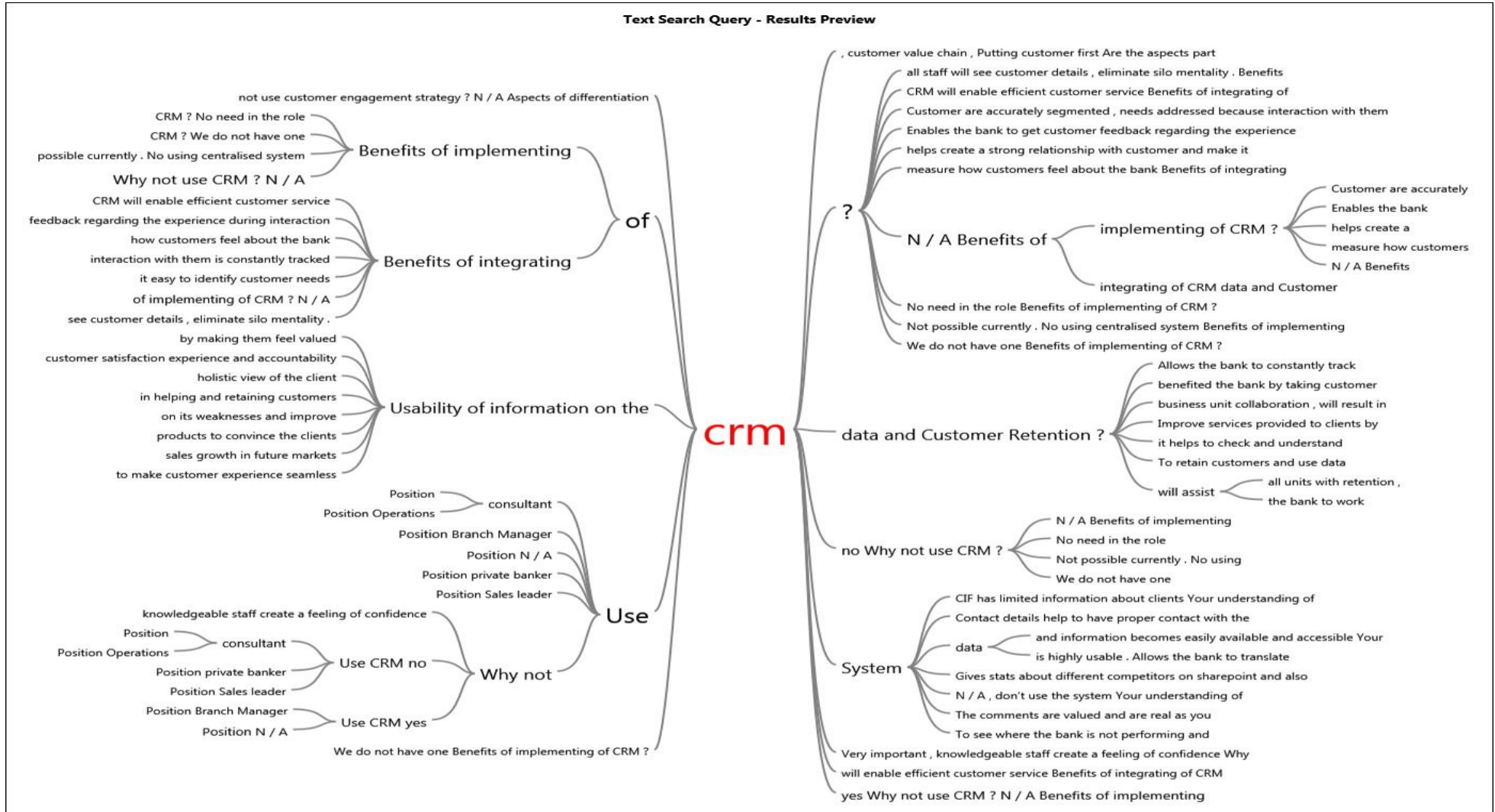
The ability of the tellers to complete the queries and requests on time



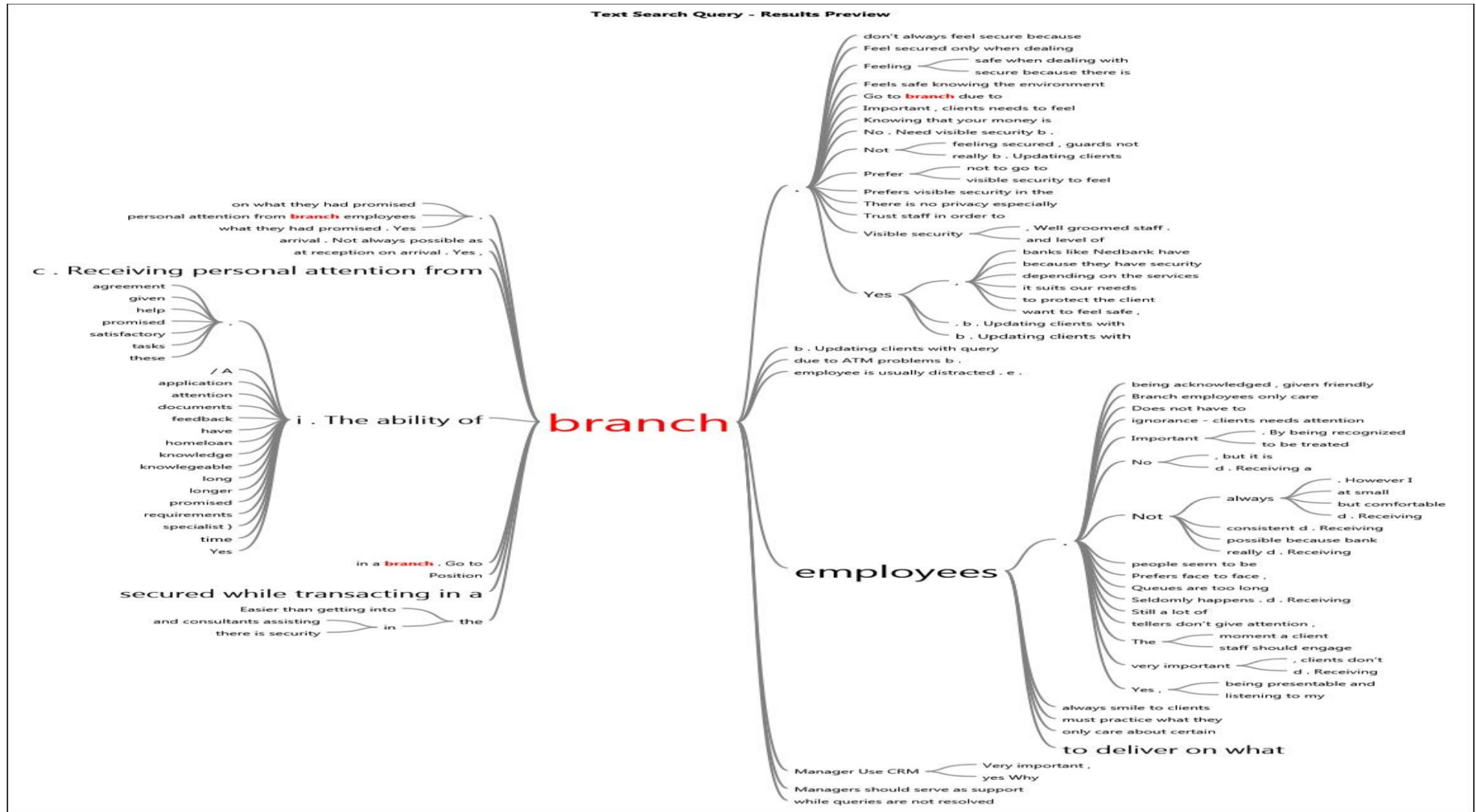
Customer engagement strategy



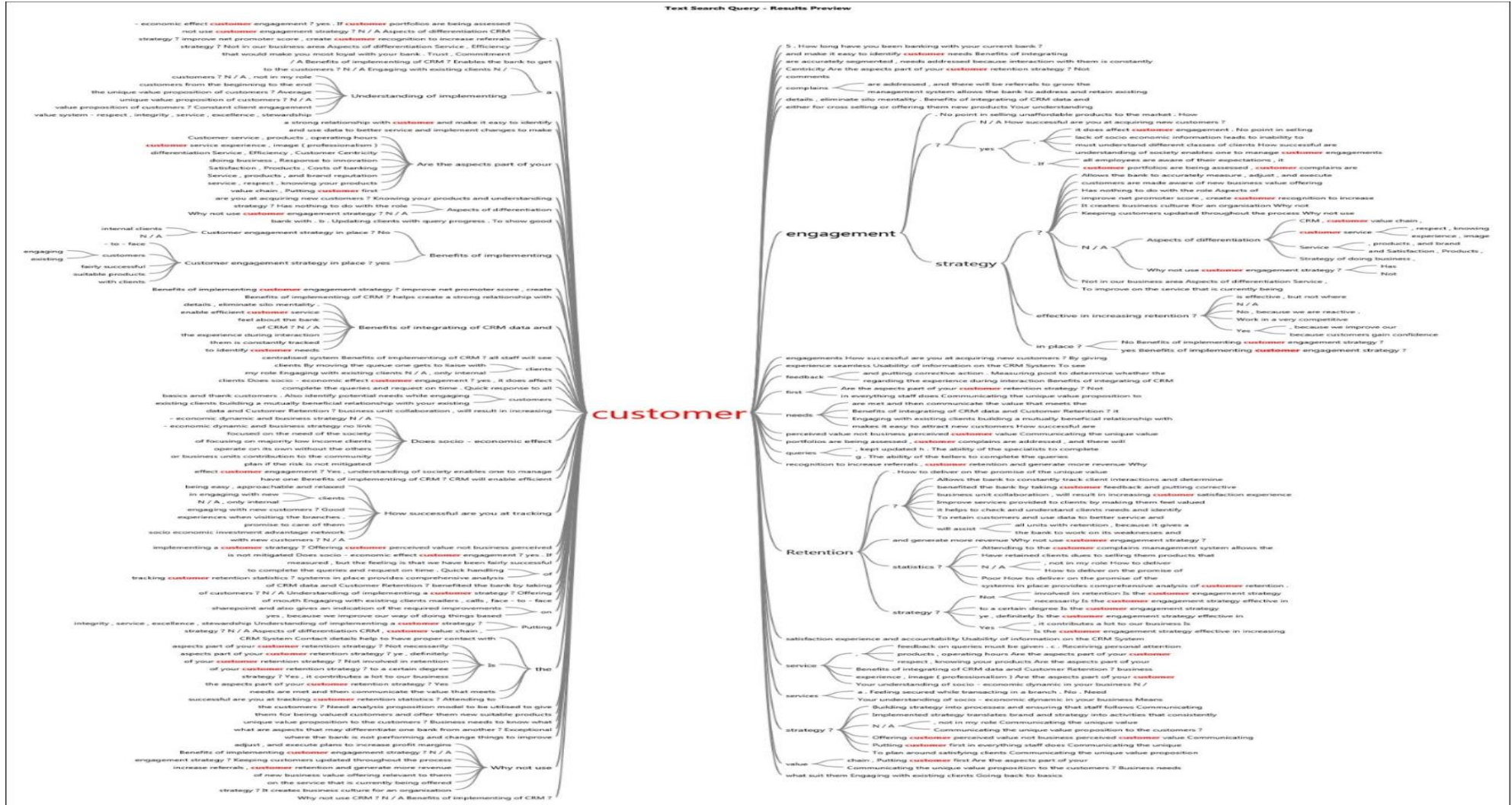
Customer relationship management (CRM)

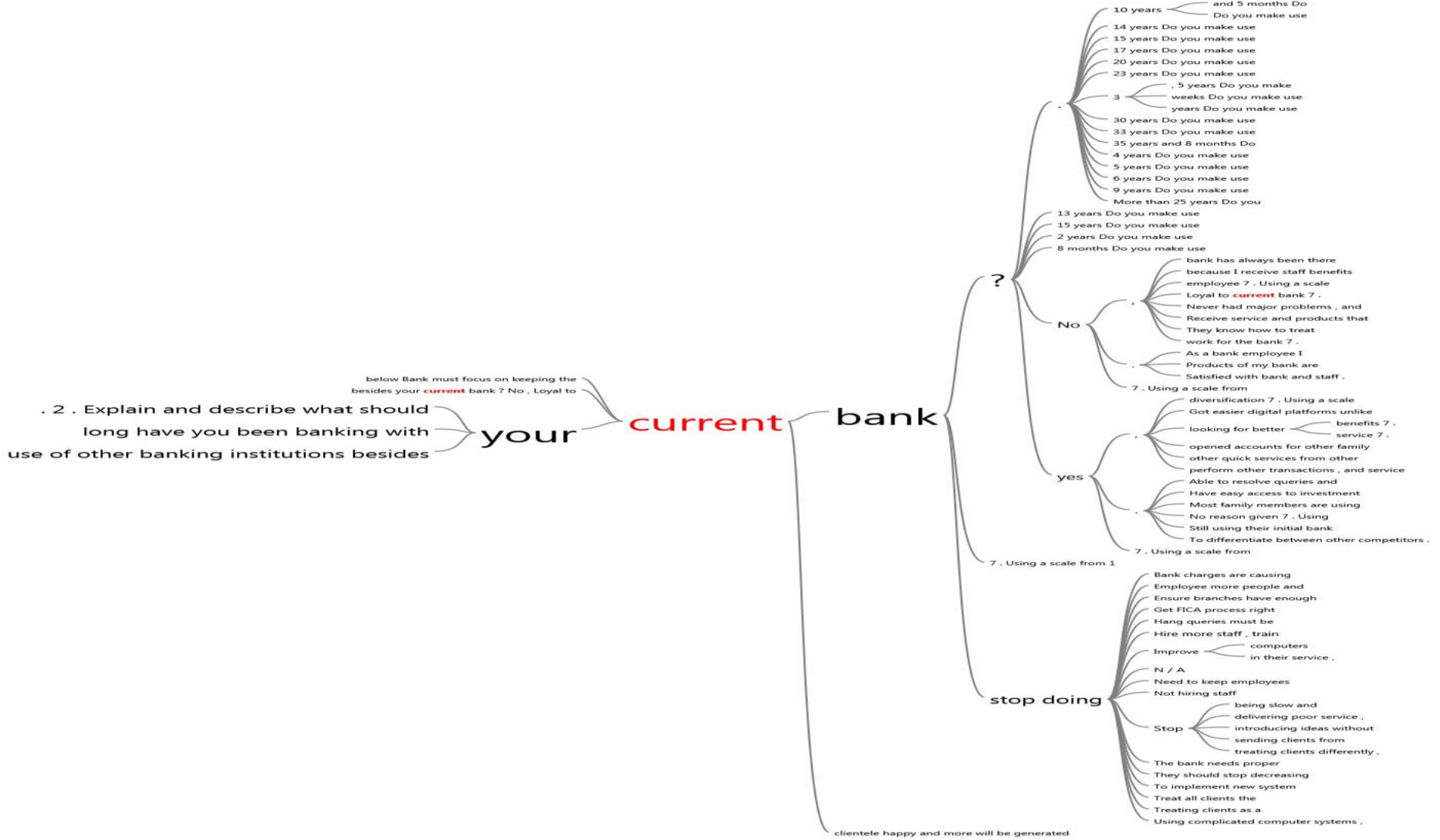


The branch

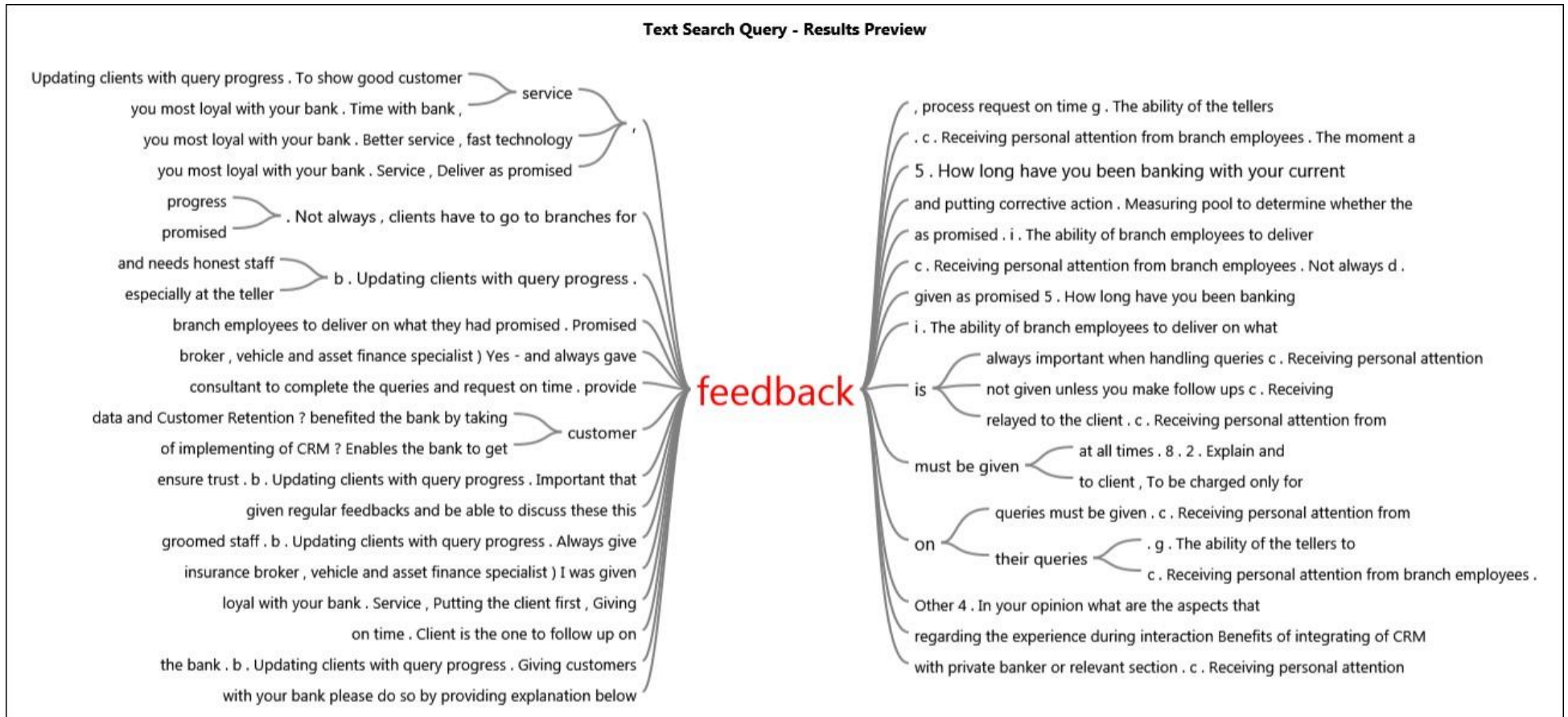


The customer

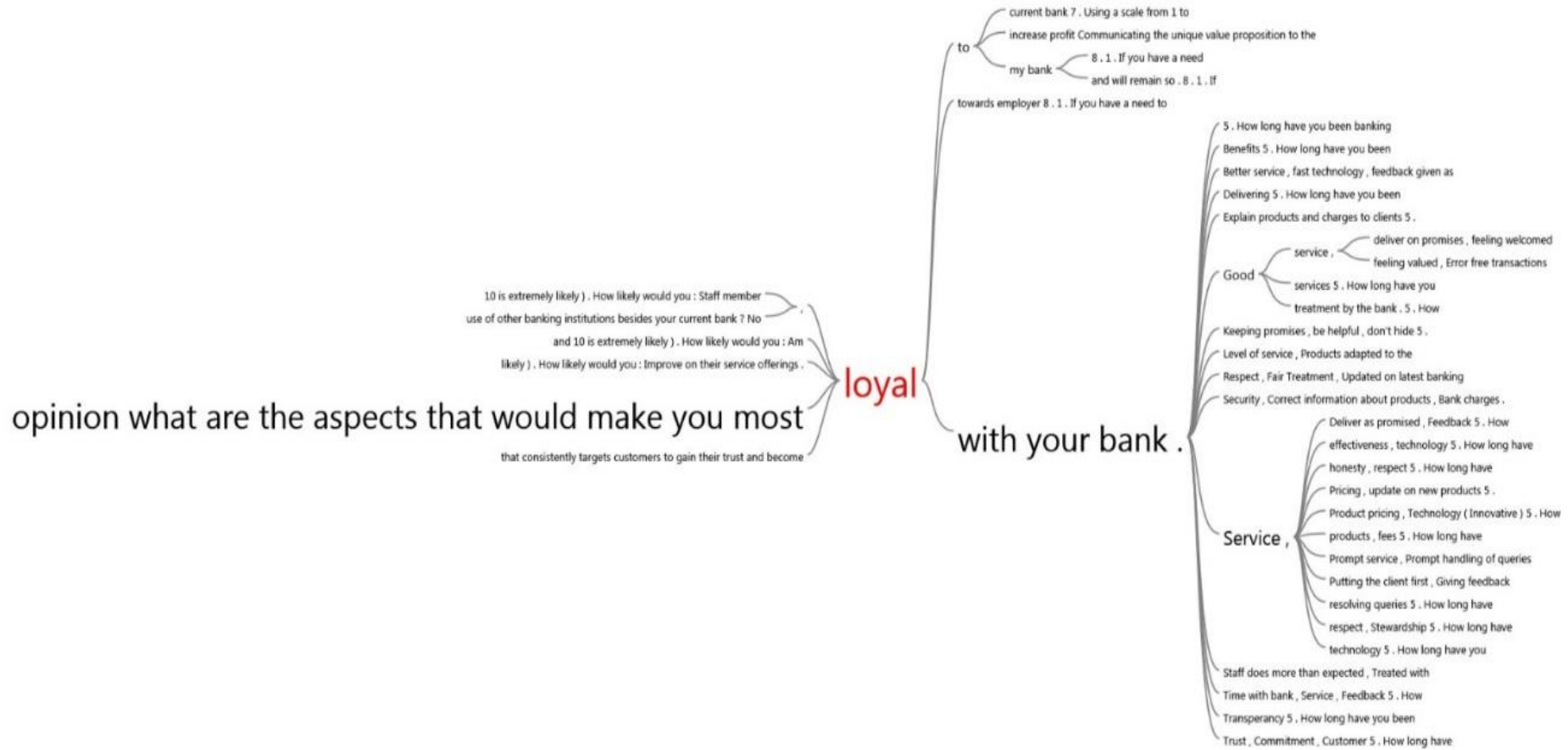




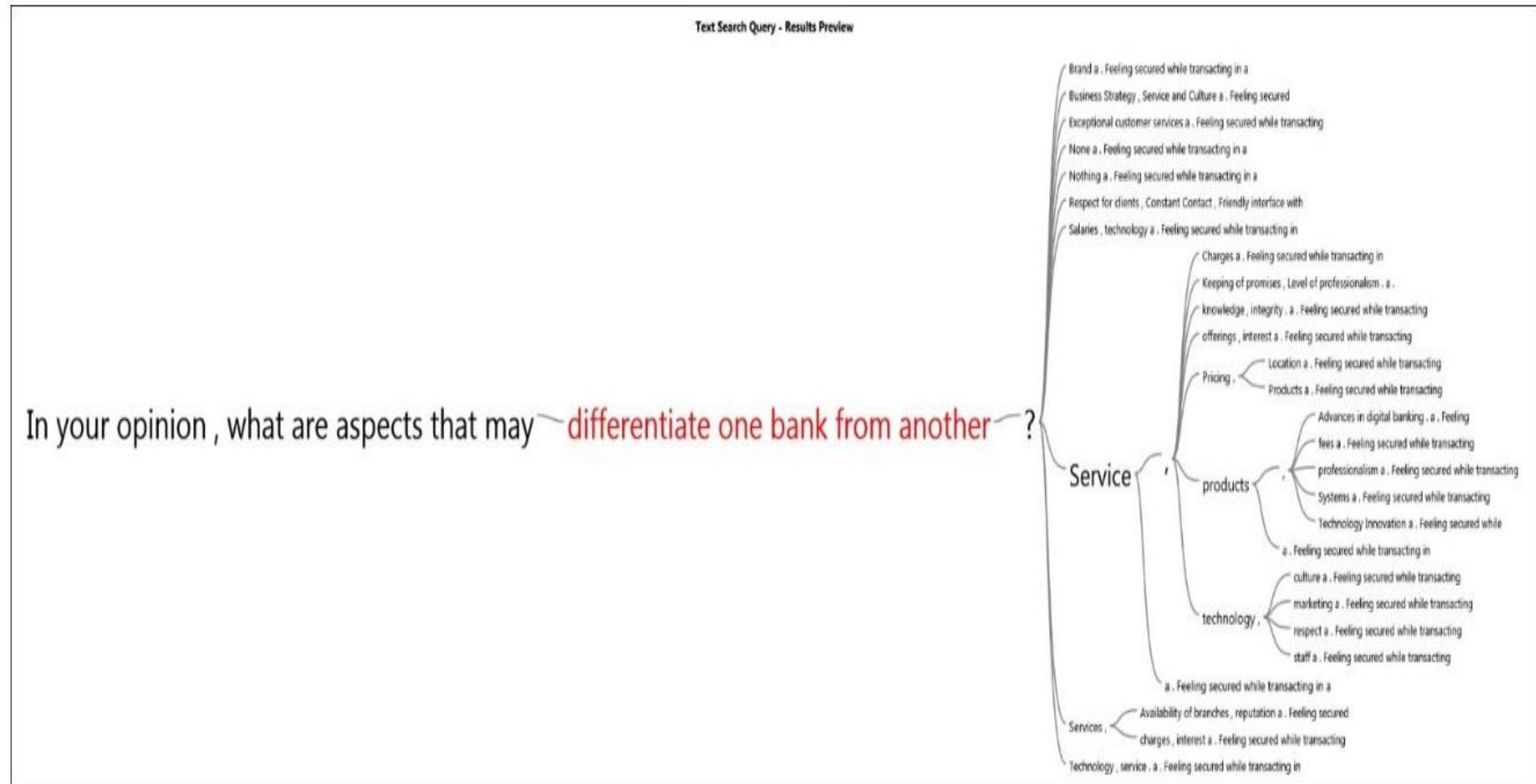
Feedback



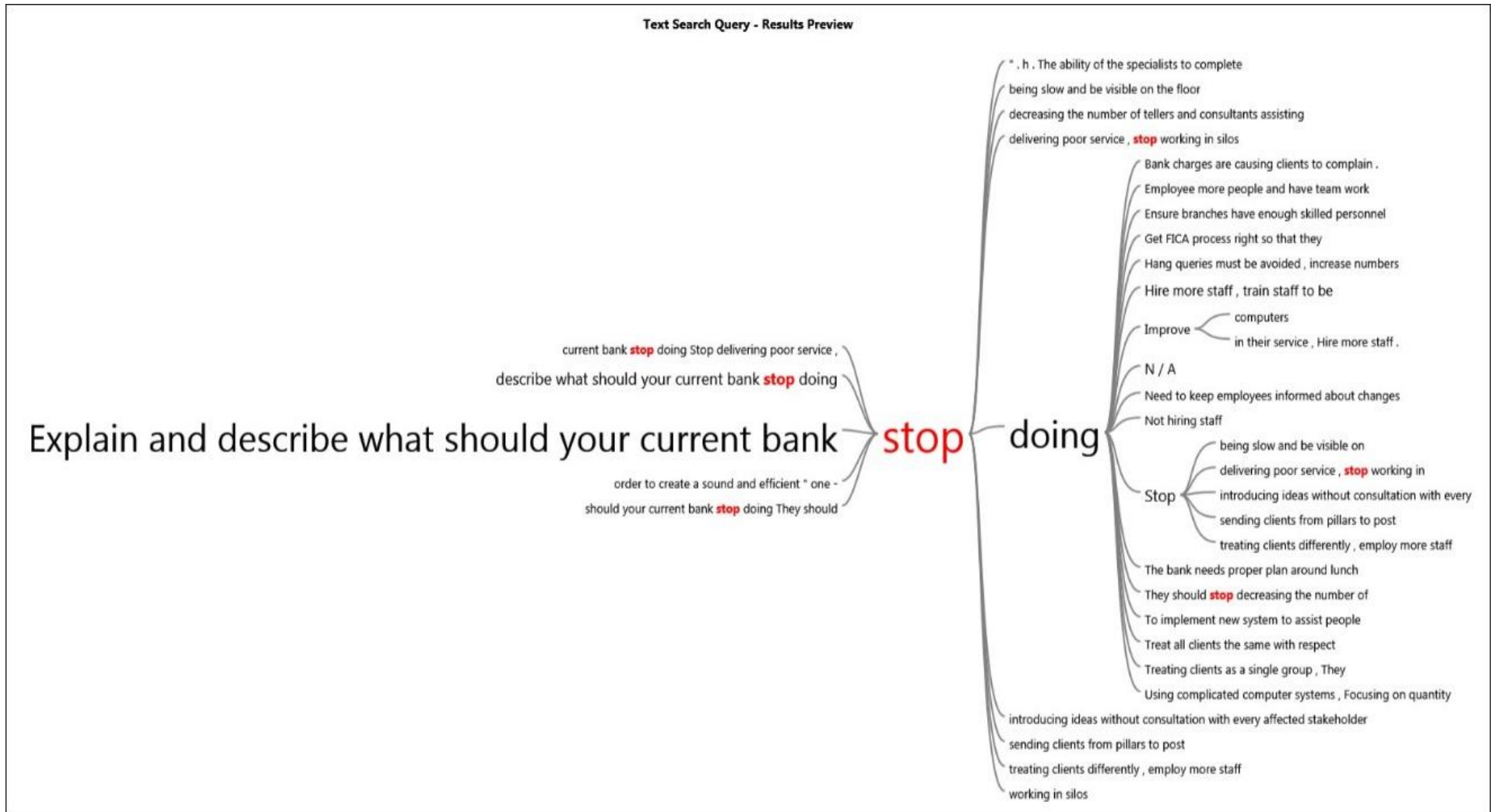
Loyalty to your bank



Differentiate one bank from another



What should the current bank stop doing?



ability of the service consultant
The ability of the specialists
The ability of the tellers

complete the queries and request on time . provide feedback , process

to complete the queries and request on time .

(Home loans consultant , short term insurance broker , long

always on point h . The ability of the
Attitude of the staff is important and show
Client is the one to follow up on
Consultants must complete queries on time as it
Even in long queues , they were able to
h . The ability of the specialists to complete
Have enough staff at each Department . g . The
immediate service , not stand in long queues h .
Important , to assist clients on time g . The
It depends on product knowledge g . The ability
It's a mission to get help on time .
Knowing the needs and fulfill g . The ability
N / A g . The ability of the tellers
h . The ability of the specialists
No because they do not have enough staff
g . The ability of the tellers to
response at the promised time g . The
Not all the time g . The ability of
always on time due to time constraints
an issue h . The ability of the
too important h . The ability of the
provide feedback , process request on time g . The
Queries must be dealt with urgency and a
Quick handling of customer queries , kept updated h .
response to all customer queries g . The
short staffed h . The ability of the specialists
Should be able to work without supervision g .
sometimes g . The ability of the tellers to
gets a very welcoming consultant who knows
Takes short time to complete a transaction h .
Tellers must conduct themselves with enthusiasm and show
have sound knowledge in order to
should be efficient and competent , and issues
The consultant had no clue about the product
They are usually interrupted while doing it . g .
do complete queries on time but not
know what they are doing very well
often take up too much time even
resolved my query on time g . The
Took a bit longer g . The ability of
Very important knowledgeable staff create a feeling of
staff should be capable , competent , and
g . The ability of the tellers
h . The ability of the specialists
Yes , it depend on system and long queues
g . The ability of the tellers to
h . The ability of the specialists to
g . The ability of the tellers to
h . The ability of the specialists to
g . The ability of the tellers to complete

Appendix G: Categories derived from the Interviews

Respect for clients
Friendly interface with clients
Knowledge and integrity
Business strategy, service culture
Technology service
Visibility of security inside the branch especially when making large deposits or large withdrawals
Knowing that your money is safe with the institution you bank with
Failure to give feedback
To be well recognised by your personal banker and understanding full financial need analysis with ease
Staff should engage when interacting with clients
Will appreciate a warm welcome with some sense of appreciation
No privacy at the tellers
Feedback not given unless you follow up on your own
Technology not as fast and reliable as it should be
Tellers do not focus as much as sales consultants
Specialist should be knowledgeable and competent
The monopoly by big banks in SA will always make it difficult for the clients to cast their nets wide in classifying the best service level in banking industry
Branches should have skilled personnel
Elderly and disabled people must be treated with special care, this will ensure that they remain loyal to the bank
Over-promising what cannot be done
Staff should work with minimal supervision
Not all staff give exceptional service, too many inconsistencies
No sense of urgency
Bank hosts not visible on the floor
Some branches offer exceptional service while some branches offer bad service
No competitive rates on investment offering

Pricing of other products not competitive
FICA process not right, the bank losing customers
Bank charges cause customer complaints
Staff focusing on quantity as opposed to quality
Have systems that do not inconvenience customers
The queues are very long over month end; prefers online banking and other digital platforms
Clients being sent from pillar to post, no central query resolution desk
Consultants always in a hurry to assist the next client
Some consultants are very inexperienced and frustrating
ATMs full of cash, unable to make a deposit; sometimes no money, unable to make withdrawals
Clients not treated equally
Banks must use seamless systems that every client can use
When transacting in the branch, service always get interrupted easily
The bank must focus on keeping its current clients happy to prevent them from moving to the competitors
Employees passionate about their jobs
Not easy to receive a call from the bank for updates or feedback
Attitude of staff is important, show willingness to help and passion for their jobs
Some of the staff do not know their own banking products
Some banking employees judge you based on appearance and your income
Have enough staff in every department
Too many policies and procedures that inconvenience clients
Train all staff so that they can be multi-skilled
Stop delivering poor service, departments to stop working in silos
Put customer at the centre of everything; manage customer expectations from the time they walk into branches to the time they leave and have a follow-up call
System takes long to finalise an application, effective and efficient systems to be redeployed
Customers generally feel that they are not managed effectively
Some of the staff still have personal conversations in front of clients

Banks do not always disclose full product and pricing information to customers
Branch employees care about certain group of clients
It is a struggle to get help on time in the bank
The bank needs proper plan around lunch planning, breaks, leave plan and study leave; sometimes you walk into a bank and find that most staff are on leave at the same time
The entire organisation must be committed to serve a client
Customer centricity will achieve customer retention
Customer loyalty will achieve customer satisfaction, profitability and sustainability
Work experience, business acumen influences understanding of customer value
Customers in developed economies are concerned with safety and environmental issues in addition to products and services
How service is delivered in different economies may differ
Customer feedback, evaluations, are more relevant to business performance
Cultural dynamics should be considered when creating a customer-centric model
Education and training are required for all employees on customer management and customer management tools

Table 1: Categories derived from the interviews

Appendix H: Emerging Themes

Clients prefer visible security in the banking space so that they can feel secure when handling money for both withdrawals and deposits
Clients prefer high levels of professionalism and knowledge by staff to ensure trust
Clients want to know that their money is safe with the institution they bank with
Visible security, well groomed
Feeling secure when dealing with someone that knows their job
Clients want to be recognised by the personal banker, and understanding their financial needs analysis with ease; personal greetings would also be appreciated
Staff should fully engage when interacting with clients
The moment the client walks into the bank, there must be someone to greet and direct the customer

It is very important to be kept informed
Clients require exceptional customer services
Respect for clients, constant contact and friendly interface
Clients do not want to feel like a number; they want to feel valued
Clients want to be treated equally and with respect
Clients need to interact with knowledgeable staff that creates a feeling of confidence
Staff should be capable, competent and efficient
Clients need to know that their queries are attended to and to be given regular feedback and be able to discuss their feedback in private, not in an open plan office
Elderly and disabled clients want to be treated as special
Queries must be dealt with some sense of urgency and there must be a proper turnaround time for handling of all queries and constant communication back to the client
Staff should always show willingness to assist
Staff must conduct themselves with a high level of enthusiasm and show some life and energy
Technology, stay relevant and innovative
Branding means a lot to clients; branches should be upgraded in order for the banks to stay relevant
Clients are different; there must always be specialised packages to suit different market segments
Branch managers should serve as support mechanisms for their subordinates and ensure that proper follow-ups are conducted for the purpose of customer satisfaction
Staff must provide feedback to clients as promised; clients to be charged only for the products and services that were discussed and agreed with the client
Staff to engage clients regarding new technology, services, and product pricing
Clients' interest should be put first in every dealing with the financial services
Clients are always looking for competitive pricing, especially on investments products
Loyalty, paying attention to resolving issues
Every client wants to be treated with special attention

Consistency still remains a challenge; sometimes clients are treated well, sometimes they are not treated well
Some clients still prefer face-to-face engagement
Some great ideas and great campaigns are introduced without consultation with relevant stakeholders and proper staff training
Some staff are very loyal to their employer
Customer engagement strategy must be managed closely in order to increase client retention. Financial institutions must manage their current client base not only when they made a decision to close accounts. Be proactive as opposed to reactive
Lack of socio-economic information leads to inability to design fitting solutions for different market segments
Financial institution can communicate its value proposition successfully via different mediums of communication. Business needs to know their clients' needs and build a mutual relationship
Education, training, knowledge enable customer excellence
For exceptional service to be successful, it requires collaboration from different departments and constant communication
Technology is of utmost importance to sustain customer culture and meet customer expectations
Ongoing training is required
There is a strong correlation between strategy, customer centricity and business performance
Customer transformation means exceptional customer service and great customer experience have been achieved
Customers must be managed as valuable economic assets to improve business results/performance
Organisational process, policy and procedures should support a customer culture
Competition has become high and customers are more demanding
Global markets have become dynamic as 'customer' has taken a broader definition
Customers may be managed effectively through market segmentation, well defined complaint system and a centralised relationship management system that links all banking divisions into one

Segmentation must be aligned to the strategy and organisational customer value proposition
Customer centricity is creative, innovative and changes the way of thinking in order to achieve sustainable results
CRM is critical for the success of any organisation
Organisations need a better understanding of socio-economic dynamics in their businesses
Better understanding of socio-economic dynamics assists organisations in developing products that satisfy different classes of clients
There must be a link between strategy and socio-economic dynamics; managers require more intervention

Appendix I: Nodes Derived from the Interviews

Nodes	Sources	References (The number of times the node has been coded)
Aspects of differentiation	0	0
Access and operating hours	3	3
Affordability, interest rates and charges	7	8
Contact and communication	1	1
Follow-through on promises	1	1
Organisational culture	2	2
Professionalism	3	3
Reputation, brand and marketing	5	5
Service and products	29	32
Soft skills	4	5
Staff and competence	1	1
Strategy	2	2
Technology and systems	10	10
Client preferences	0	0
Affordability and pricing	6	6
Convenience	1	1
Efficient staff and service	6	8
Client-centric approach	5	5
Meets needs	1	1
Respect, and value for clients and treating them fairly	4	9
Contact, communication and feedback	6	11
Effective, competent and capable	7	9
Good attitude	3	4
Knowledgeable	7	9
Managerial support	1	1
Personalised service and human element	6	11
Professional appearance and behaviour	3	5

Service and ability aligned	1	1
Experienced no difficulties	2	2
Sustainability	1	1
Technologically on par	4	4
Transparency and agreed conditions	1	1
Visible security	3	3
Factors causing dissatisfaction	0	0
Hidden or high charges	3	3
Inadequate security and privacy	5	5
No CRM	0	0
No customer engagement strategy	2	2
Reactive not proactive	1	1
No holistic picture	1	1
No system supportive of such	1	1
Poor customer attraction and retention	2	3
Poor unique value proposition	1	1
No link between demographic and strategy	1	1
Poor client service	13	30
Inconsistent	7	8
Poor and untimely query resolution	10	14
Poor communication, feedback and updating	11	15
Poor delivery on promises	1	1
Poor knowledge	2	2
Poor personal attention	15	16
Poor receipt upon entry	9	9
Staff shortage	3	4
Unfair treatment	8	9
Poor system efficacy	11	17
Poor technological standing	1	1
Factors securing loyalty	2	2
Affordability and good interest rates	4	4
Benefits	2	3

Communication, feedback and transparency	9	9
Duration with bank	2	3
Effectiveness	2	2
Good treatment of customers	4	4
Deliver on promises	5	5
Feeling valued	2	2
Query resolution	5	5
Respect and fairness	4	5
Security	2	2
Service and products	18	23
Accuracy	1	1
Staff member	2	2
Technology	5	5
Important and observed service characteristics	0	0
Communicate value proposition	2	2
Deliver on promises	10	11
Fair treatment	17	18
Personalised attention	10	11
Secure and private	19	19
Timeous request completion	17	32
Updates on query progress and resolution	17	23
Customer engagement strategy	5	10
Warm reception	18	19
Reasons for utilising another bank	0	0
Better products and services offered elsewhere	5	6
Differentiation	2	2
Diversification	1	1
Family and friends bank elsewhere	2	2
Technologically advanced	1	1
Recommendations	0	0
Improve products and services	0	0
Improve products	1	1

Tailored solutions	4	5
Improve service	4	5
Avoid hang queries	1	1
Deliver on promises	1	1
Facilitate and utilise CRM	3	4
Competitor analysis	1	1
Creates value	2	2
Holistic picture and better demographic understanding	5	11
Tailor solutions and meet needs	6	11
Improve engagement strategy	1	1
Prevents operating in silos, improves satisfaction and retention and attraction	3	4
Track interactions, provide feedback and make improvements	6	16
Improve efficiency and processes	2	2
Improve engagement, communication and feedback	7	9
Improve attraction and retention	1	1
Improve visibility	2	2
Improved treatment of customers	3	3
Disposition towards customers	1	1
Informative	1	1
Keep employees and customers informed	2	2
More personalised attention	1	1
Physical - branch and staffing - improvements	0	0
Improve technology and innovation	2	2
More ownership and involvement of staff	1	1
Motivate, recognise and reward good employees	1	2
System improvements	5	5
Upgrade branches	1	1
Upscale staff at branches	11	12
Inclusivity	1	1
Visibly observable security	2	2

Work more on retention	1	1
Work on branding	1	1

Appendix J: Challenges Identified from Managers' Interviews

- There is no customer engagement strategy
- Most do not use CRM
- No centralised system to do so

Because they do not have a holistic view or understanding of customers, they cannot tailor solutions. If you look at the factors that are meaningful to and improve loyalty, tailored solutions are key; so, there is a need to be able to understand customers in their entirety, and with this holistic knowledge, tailor solutions - provided of course that you know about the possible solutions. This will circumvent the tendency of customers to look for better service and products elsewhere. Create value, create the sense of personalised attention and "not just another number". These are all vital when looking at the factors that are meaningful to customers, improve their loyalty, and are hallmarks of differentiation.

Poor customer attraction and retention - which means they are reactive, not proactive in retention efforts.

- There is a customer engagement strategy which helps to keep customers updated; but evidence of failure to consistently do so means that perhaps this needs to be reviewed.
- It is a problem that they have not linked the demographic data to the strategy - it should help to focus and refine the strategy.

Appendix K: Feedback from Interview with Internal Clients

Section 2	
7. In your opinion, what are aspects that may differentiate one bank from another?	
P1	Personally service, technology, culture, ability of staff to provide feedback or progress of the query to clients. I think most importantly the behaviour displayed by the staff members
P2	Honestly, services; availability of branches, reputation, staff attitude. For me all I need is service, the rest can be dealt with
P3	Respect for clients, constant contact, friendly interface with clients
P4	All I need is service, products, technology innovation, seamless service and availability of online banking all the time with less down time
P5	Service, knowledge, integrity and knowing what is expected. I prefer dealing with someone that values clients, regardless
P6	Business strategy, service and culture. I can easily smell the culture of branch, staff that are well looked after deliver more
P7	Service, products, advances in digital banking. I am digitally savvy; all I need is an available online banking platform or a backup of cell phone banking if online banking goes offline
P8	Technology, service and availability of the technology
P9	Exceptional customer services
P10	Service, keeping of promises, level of professionalism.
P11	Service, staying professional in all dealings with clients
P12	Service, reasonable charges
P13	Service, suitable products sold to me, not the product that suits the sales consultant
P14	Service, technology, marketing
P15	Services, charges, interest, while selling to consider the banking charges, interest rates and offer the best suitable product
P16	Great customer experience willingly given
P17	Service, offerings, best interest rate on investment product
P18	Salaries - if you are low salary income earner generally staff do not respect you, mistreat you, that is why low-income earners struggle and end up moving accounts to other banks
P19	Willingness to assist clients. I feel service in the banks is so inconsistent whether you are internal or external client it does not really matter
P20	Service, products, systems
P21	Trusted brand
P22	Service, products, professionalism
P23	Service, technology, staff attitude matter most for me
P24	Service, being given various options to facilitate banking at client's convenience
P25	Service, technology, respect
P26	Service, technology, respect
P27	Service, pricing that suits my personal income, products
P28	Service, products, fees structures that suit my personal income
8. Explain/describe the following statements that relate to services provided at a retail branch level:	

8.1 Feeling secured while transacting in a branch	
P1	Prefer not to go to the bank and use internet banking; if stranded go to the branch but use their internal internet corner to transact
P2	Prefer visible security to feel secure. Some of the security guards really go all out, way better than the actual banking staff
P3	Prefers visible security in the banking space to feel secure when handling money for withdrawals or deposits
P4	Visible security and level of professionalism and knowledge by staff to ensure trust
P5	Feeling of security that no one is looking after your deposits or withdrawals
P6	Knowing that your money is safe with institution you bank with
P7	Depositing money into a trusted source, I need to always have some sense of security especially when one is dealing with my money
P8	Visible security at all times as my money means everything, no matter how little it can be. Well-groomed staff
P9	Need visible security at all times especially if I need to deposit physical cash or make a large amount of withdrawals
P10	Trust staff in order to make clients happy, ensure my personal security by giving appropriate advice
P11	Feel secured only when dealing with someone who knows their job
P12	There is no privacy especially at the teller; this really worries me. I know of some of the clients that made withdrawals and they were followed by fraudsters. Their money was taken unexpectedly, but lucky they were not killed. Bad experience
P13	Yes, security suits my needs as a client as it creates some level of comfort and trust
P14	Large withdrawals must be done in private space; I really feel uncomfortable
P15	Feeling secured at all times
P16	Go to branch due to ATM problems; sometimes ATM does not dispense cash or even take deposits. One is forced to transact inside the branch
P17	Yes, depending on the services I need on that day. I feel secured as the branch staff always share early alerts
P18	Don't always feel secure because of people who seem to always look around
P19	Not really because you don't know who is in the queue monitoring what you do
P20	Yes, I need to feel protected all the time without any second thought
P21	Yes, because they have security guards
P22	Yes, want to feel safe, and bank has security guards
P23	Not feeling secured, guards not on the floor because they spend most of the time assisting at the ATMs
P24	Yes, banks like Nedbank have cubicles for client engagements
P25	Feeling secure because there is security in the branch
P26	Important, clients need to feel safe and need honest staff
P27	Feels safe knowing the environment is safe
P28	Feeling safe when dealing with the bank

8.2 Updating clients with query progress

P1	Uhhhhhh I think it is very important to be updated of the progress of my query, whether resolved, pending, I need to know what is happening. But my bank always fails me; I am yet to receive feedback without fighting with any staff member
P2	Very important, I need to know how far is my query to enable me to make decisions
P3	Very important - clients need to know that their queries are attended to and to be given regular feedbacks and be able to discuss this feedback with private banker or relevant section. Banks make it difficult to obtain feedback unless if you know someone in that division only then your query is catered for
P4	It is important that feedback is relayed to me. I need to know my status quo all the time with less struggle
P5	It is very important to be updated with progress of my query at all times. It is very fulfilling for the bank to call and provide an update, but again this is not consistent
P6	Hmmmmm feedback must be provided to demonstrate good customer service; feedback on queries must be given at all times. It shows caring behaviour
P7	Must be improved on because I don't remember receiving any feedback before making noise or publishing my bank on social media. Then you get labelled as being negative
P8	I am lucky to have received feedback although I hear strange stories from my colleagues
P9	Very important that I receive feedback. I have to always make noise before receiving any feedback; the bank may make an effort to call clients back - either internal or external. Feedback matters the most
P10	Truly speaking I am yet to receive regular feedback
P11	Not often done. Feedback is the greatest weakness that I have observed across all departments
P12	Feedback is not given unless you make follow ups. I remember when I applied for my home loan, I had to call every hour to check the progress because I was in a panic mode. I was made to feel guilty as I called many times. No one understood my sense of urgency to know the status of my application
P13	Yes, it is important to be kept informed. I struggled when I applied for a personal loan; I had emergency buying that I needed to do but the bank took forever. When I received feedback, the goods were already sold
P14	Not always - you literally have to go to branches for feedback which is very exhausting
P15	Yes, but sometimes it takes longer
P16	I received my feedback at ease as if the consultant knew I have been walking into branches
P17	Yes, let clients be informed of the steps as I believe feedback is very important to me
P18	Not always possible if queries should be resolved by different people. If the query is handed to another person, they do not provide background, you have to always start your story from the beginning
P19	Sometimes, unless you go into the bank and start performing or escalating to the highest person in charge
P20	Yes, always advise the client although feedback is just something else
P21	Yes, contacting clients after work about progress. I was actually shocked when I received update from the bank after hours

P22	Yes, clients feel appreciated if they are kept updated and I really appreciated every call received from the bank
P23	Received feedback but not as fast as it should be
P24	No, had to go back for response
P25	Giving service and exceeding their expectations
P26	Feedback is always important when handling queries
P27	Had to keep calling to check on progress
P28	Giving customers feedback on their queries
8.3 Receiving personal attention from branch employees	
P1	For me the service does not have to be personal but staff must be efficient
P2	Very important - I don't want to feel like just a number. At least someone must acknowledge me by name or with a smile rather
P3	Important. By being recognised by personal banker and understanding their financial needs with ease. And personal greetings will also be appreciated
P4	The staff should engage when interacting with client and kind of create some good business relationship
P5	Every client needs to feel valued and I personally feel that will make me become a repeat customer
P6	It is Important to be treated with special attention and taken recognition of and be called by name. I always want to be recognised by anyone I engage with
P7	Not always. However, I know that this is not possible all the time
P8	The moment a client walks in there is a person to greet and redirect you. This is a well done to the bank
P9	Still a lot of work to be done because attention is received by those who are known or visit the branch more often
P10	Not possible because bank employees spend time chatting to one another. I literally walked into the bank; staff were chatting to one another. I only received attention once I interrupted
P11	Seldom happens and I just don't care, all I need it to be serviced and walk out. I rely heavily on online banking
P12	Not consistent and I really don't care as I go to the branch to collect my card as opposed to making friendship
P13	Personal attention not important for me, but it is important
P14	Not always and all I need is to be serviced
P15	Not always; look, I need to be serviced at that moment and walk away
P16	Prefers face to face, and being recognised and lucky whenever I visit the branches I am treated well, received with respect and given personal attention
P17	Very important to receive personal attention at all times. I kind of feel at home and engage more
P18	People seem to be always busy with something else, so when you demand attention, it feels like you are forcing them to assist you
P19	Not always at small business but whenever I walk into branches and they really treat me with respect
P20	Yes, being presentable and paying attention to client
P21	Yes, listening to my query closely and resolve it means a lot to me

P22	Branch employees only care about certain group of clients, I really don't know whether it is because they bank with them daily, but as long as they attend to my need it's okay
P23	Not really- sometimes the staff members fail to even nod their heads or acknowledge clients in some way
P24	Queues are too long and consultants are always in a hurry to assist other clients. Very seldom I would say I received personal attention
P25	Not always; but comfortable with them as what matters to me is service, like getting my card or whatever I need
P26	I feel bank staff ignore clients. As for me, I need attention throughout
P27	Generally, tellers don't give attention. All they do is take your money and process. I observed sales people do give attention because they want you to come back again, sell you more products and give them referrals
P28	I love to be acknowledged, given friendly service all the time
8.4 Receiving a warm welcome at reception on arrival	
P1	It is nice and it feels good when you are well received. What surprises me is that when you walk into Pretoria branches you are welcomed with a big smile, but township branches operate differently
P2	Important; a friendly greeting makes one feel welcome and I think that is sufficient for me
P3	I always appreciate to receive a warm welcome as this cement humanity and a sense of appreciation
P4	I prefer to receive a warm welcome by staff, but again be friendly, courteous, preferably approach the client upon entrance of the client which would make a huge difference
P5	Not consistent across different branches and I found it very difficult to comment
P6	Well, it is very important for the bank to have a host to give warm welcomes to clients
P7	Not always possible as branch employee is usually distracted by other employees or other customers
P8	A warm welcome is important; all staff need to do is to be polite when assisting the clients
P9	It's not consistent. Sometimes the host or floor manager not even visible
P10	I always receive a warm welcome by my bank
P11	I receive a warm welcome honestly only at selected branches
P12	I receive a warm welcome based or depending on the mood of the employee. Very difficult one
P13	Yes, most banks are good at it
P14	The host is not always visible and this is very concerning especially for the elderly customers who need direction all the times
P15	Host must always be visible on the floor
P16	Yes, a warm welcome makes one feel at home
P17	Its kind of looks like we are forcing banks to treat us well
P18	Never experienced that at other banks
P19	Yes, sometimes you cannot even see a staff member at all
P20	Yes, branch employees always smile to clients from my personal observation; I guess it's because I use one bank most of the time

P21	Yes, smiling at me shows interest; that's all I need while transacting in the bank
P22	Rarely receive any type of welcome but my banking is channelled via online banking
P23	No, host was visible whenever I walked into a branch
P24	No, had no host to show me the right department, I was directed from pillar to post until I raised my voice
P25	I am yet to see someone that would make me feel welcome
P26	Clients expect to be received with a warm welcome always, not occasionally
P27	Felt welcomed by hosts, no complaints
P28	Greeted with a smile by a helpful person
8.5 Being treated fairly by the bank employees	
P1	I personally take this serious as this will determine my personal satisfaction as a client
P2	Well, all clients must be treated equally, with respect
P3	Being treated fairly will be appreciated especially special treatment towards elderly and people with disabilities
P4	Must be treated with high level of professionalism and willingness to assist. It must be well demonstrated
P5	Yes, every client deserves better treatment regardless of the type of account they hold
P6	Yes. This will ensure that one remains with the bank
P7	Not always as some bank employees judge you at appearance based on appearance and income
P8	Some do not treat clients equally
P9	Not all the time; I always see staff members treating other clients badly, not even listening actively to solution the client
P10	Yes, I am always treated fairly
P11	No. They normally look at you first as to how they should treat you or give you service
P12	Yes, but not all clients are treated the same, there is a lot of inconsistencies
P13	No, but it is important for every client to be treated fairly
P14	Yeah, it kind of depends on the mood of the person you are dealing with on that day
P15	Hmmm fair treatment for me is all about give me what I want and walk away
P16	Yes, there should always be fair treatment of clients, but it is never consistent
P17	Very important, being well informed and treated with fairness. Again, it varies from branch to branch, by location as well. Some locations are taken serious such as Sandton, Menlyn etc, others are being looked down on
P18	Not an issue because all I need is service with no personal attachment
P19	Yes, I have always been treated fairly
P20	Yes, giving advice and being nice always is another way of showing fairness and the branch that I visited always displays this
P21	Yes, because they resolve my query as and when I needed it
P22	They have special clients, and treat most as if they are not important, this is very frustrating to clients
P23	Not all staff members give exceptional service
P24	The consultant was not interested in me, you can see it by the body language

P25	Always treated fairly but still a lot can be done by the bank officials. If they know your title everyone will fight to assist you. Again, this displays an element of unfairness
P26	Respect is very important. All customers deserve to be treated equally
P27	They treat people differently. Give some staff better service, some staff treated badly because of levels
P28	No, discriminated based on status
8.6 The ability of the service consultant to complete the queries/request on time	
P1	Again, very important; and it is quite fulfilling when your query is dealt with professionally to your level of satisfaction
P2	Very important, knowledgeable staff create a feeling of confidence
P3	Queries must be dealt with urgency, and a turn-around time for handling of queries must be communicated to their clients
P4	Attitude of the staff is important and show willingness to help
P5	No, very seldom client query is prioritised unless you follow up and shout or threaten people
P6	Consultants must complete queries on time as it rates on their service offering
P7	They do complete queries on time but not as much as it'd be satisfactory
P8	Have enough staff at each Department
P9	Client is the one to follow up on feedback on their queries
P10	Yes, when a query is presented, it means there is a certain level of dissatisfaction, the quicker queries are resolved the better. And also, to be kept updated with the progress of the query, either resolved or not
P11	I picked up the specialists are usually interrupted while engaging with the client which can be very upsetting
P12	It depends on product knowledge; I picked up that staff will assist but sell the product they feel most comfortable with
P13	Not all the time but I think specialists are easy to deal with as opposed to the normal consultants
P14	Yes, it is very important to be kept updated with the progress of the query, the consultants make an effort
P15	Yes, feedback is critical as it forms part of the retention strategy; the specialists kept me engaged when I applied for my home loan
P16	Specialist should be able to work without supervision cause as a customer I put more trust on them. The meantime they start asking lots of questions my trust is compromised
P17	Important, to assist clients on time, but I think specialists are overworked as they hardly returned any of my calls when I was in a process of buying my car. I had to go directly to the dealer
P18	Not always on time, no explanation given as to why
P19	Feedback is critical in all circumstances
P20	Yes, it depends on system and long queues
P21	They resolved my query on time
P22	Sometimes gets a very welcoming consultant who knows the work
P23	Sometimes most organisations fail because it is easy for the employees to give positive feedback. When the feedback is negative, very seldom you would receive a phone call because most staff cannot handle difficult conversations

P24	No response at the promised time
P25	Knowing the needs and fulfil, but still no feedback provided on time
P26	Quick response to all customer queries is known but I found the specialists to be very reactive
P27	Took a bit longer but received an update
P28	Provide feedback, process request on time and this can be very frustrating especially if one needs to make certain decisions but based on feedback pending
8.7 The ability of the tellers to complete the queries/requests on time	
P1	Very important and it is critical to credit the correct receiver and avoid the trouble of going back to the bank to correct the transaction. I never had to go back to any branch to correct the transaction, all was done well the first time
P2	The teller I engaged with was capable, competent, and efficient. Transaction was processed immediately
P3	Tellers should be efficient and competent, and issues that are complex should be sent to relevant people in order to refrain from stress and unnecessary delays. I had a very positive experience
P4	The tellers I engaged with conduct themselves with enthusiasm and show energy in their conduct
P5	Clients expect speedy service, efficient with room for zero errors. It was easy to process my transaction
P6	Tellers must have sound knowledge in order to create a sound and efficient "one-stop". They are young and vibrant; I just loved the attitude
P7	The teller processed my transaction successfully and on time
P8	The correct account was credited; no issues with the tellers
P9	Very important to avoid any frustrations, but lately the tellers will send you to the ATM instead of assisting you. It saves cost but I was not ready to use the ATM
P10	Even in long queues, they were able to assist very fast
P11	They often take up too much time even for simple transactions
P12	They know what they are doing very well
P13	Always fast and efficient. Although month end can be a problem with long queues around lunch hours
P14	Yes, as long as there is a teller manager managing the queues, the queues move fast and complete all transactions on time
P15	Tellers takes their time when processing transactions
P16	Tellers always resolve queries faster
P17	No issues at all, fast and efficient service
P18	Not an issue as I have an option of using the ATM or online banking
P19	Short staffed and cause delays
P20	Yes, it depends on system and long queues
P21	No, because they do not have enough staff
P22	It's a mission to get help on time
P23	Always on point
P24	The consultant had no clue about the product
P25	Yes, all my teller queries resolved on time
P26	Quick handling of customer queries, kept updated
P27	Takes short time to complete a transaction
P28	Immediate service, not stand in long queues

8.8 The ability of the specialists to complete the queries and request on time. (Home loans consultant, short term insurance broker, long term insurance broker, vehicle and asset finance specialist)	
P1	For me knowledge is power; this is the only way to enable fast service
P2	Specialist should be competent and knowledgeable all the time, that's my expectation
P3	Yes. They must have relevant tools and knowledge of their specified and respective tasks
P4	Regular updates at the promised time should be given. I was updated with all queries and requests timeously
P5	Yes, specialists are highly skilled, very efficient as they are driving sales to reach their targets and ensure continuous relationship
P6	Staff must be adequately equipped and knowledgeable to handle all queries and I was impressed with my financial advisor
P7	They do complete queries on time, but not as much as should be. Satisfactory because I had to make few calls for follow up
P8	Specialists are very good because their main role is to drive retention, mostly receive courtesy calls regarding any additional product or service required. All specialists that I have engaged with met my expectations as a client
P9	Always out of service level agreement, unless you go on social media, Hello Peter, Twitter, Facebook or CEO line, no one ever provided feedback
P10	I was given feedback as promised
P11	I found it very difficult to receive prompt assistance by specialist
P12	Highly experienced and I received attention that I needed
P13	Highly reliable and exceeded my expectation
P14	Takes long to finalise one application due to system challenges
P15	It can take a bit longer depending on the type of product, ease of access
P16	Never had challenges with any specialist, easy to do business with
P17	They helped me on time
P18	Not always on time as promised
P19	Process too long, I feel the bank system fails the specialists
P20	Not quick for me, because it requires more supporting documents which delayed
P21	Yes, when they processed my home loan
P22	Some consultants do not inform clients of the requirements; the bank should have qualifying criteria for each product well stipulated so that as a customer I bring all opening documents at once. You have to visit the branch more than once before you get assistance
P23	My application was declined, and I was still engaged on the outcome. Prefers the specialist
P24	Specialists always know what they are doing; source of referrals is quicker
P25	Yes - and always provided feedback
P26	Need urgent attention as some come across incompetent and disappointing
P27	I took short time with no waiting time
P28	Get responses in shortest possible time
8.9 The ability of branch employees to deliver on what they had promised	

P1	For me the staff over-promise, especially when they see you in the branch; once you leave the branch it is very difficult to hear from them
P2	Majority of the time staff do not deliver on their promise unless you follow up and become an irritation
P3	It is such a good feeling to realise that Branch Managers serve as support mechanisms for their subordinates and ensure that proper follow-ups are conducted to resolve all client queries and deliver on the client promises
P4	Staff do not deliver on what was promised; the worst-case scenario is when you receive statement and there are charges and products that were not agreed upon during sales intervention. Communication is key regardless
P5	Yes, although you get feedback only when you do your own personal follow up
P6	Yes. Branch employees must practice what they preach. I had a terrible experience where I requested an employee to close my account, 2 months later I received a statement that I am overdrawn by R500. This impacted my Transunion credit rating because a bank staff did not fulfil my request. Very annoying
P7	They have delivered on my promise although my facility was unsuccessful, I still appreciated that someone called me back.
P8	No response until I made an effort to call back; no answer and had to go back to the branch. I requested my credit card to be closed, it was never done, it attracted unnecessary charges that I had to pay. Purely because an employee failed to carry my instruction. Very frustrating
P9	Not easy to get feedback unless you become an irritation
P10	Yes, although the good service is not consistent; some branches are exceptional while some are very bad
P11	I always have to follow up for any requests
P12	Shortage of staff delays processes because they do not deliver on their promise and use staff shortage as an excuse
P13	Yes, it was very easy to get feedback with no struggle
P14	Not always, clients have to go to branches for feedback. Double trip at my cost as a client plus expensive parking
P15	Yes, but very inconsistent and at some stage is very disappointing as if you're dealing with factory employee
P16	Important but we are living in a world of so much of don't care attitude. That is why most of the clients are multi-banked, and I am one of them
P17	Yes, they kind of deliver when they realise what type of a person they are dealing with. It is very draining, but sometimes it has to be done
P18	Not always done on time
P19	Sometimes
P20	it depends because some are not committed
P21	Yes, motor insurance delivered as promised because I could not drive away my car without car insurance. It was done quick and easy
P22	Very few know how to give great service
P23	They delivered on my promise because I took down the name of the person, I was dealing with
P24	There was no response as promised
P25	Kept promise and on time
P26	Kept their promises and I was quite excited

P27	Do not disclose full information to clients until your house burns, you claim and you are told you are not covered for certain things. Very sad
P28	I always engaged with competent staff
Section 3	
9. In your opinion what are the aspects that would make you most loyal to your bank?	
P1	Service, effectiveness, technology, ability to transact 24/7
P2	Good service, feeling valued, error free transactions (effectiveness)
P3	Respect, fair treatment, updated on latest banking technologies that can save time; having access to personal banker
P4	Service, product pricing, technology (innovative)
P5	Service, prompt service, prompt handling of queries
P6	Good treatment by the bank
P7	Level of service, products adapted to the needs of the client, competitive pricing rates and interest on investments
P8	Security, correct information about products, bank charges
P9	Seamless service with knowledgeable staff
P10	Staff does more than expected, treated with respect and equal
P11	Time with bank, service, feedback
P12	Transparency, especially on insurance products
P13	Explain products and charges to clients
P14	Service, technology
P15	Service, resolving queries
P16	Benefits, features, reasonable pricing and fast technology
P17	Good service, deliver on promises, feeling welcomed
P18	Good services
P19	Keeping promises, be helpful, don't hide
P20	Trust, commitment, Customer
P21	Delivering
P22	Service, respect, stewardship
P23	Better service, fast technology, feedback given as promised
P24	Service, deliver as promised, feedback
P25	Service, putting the client first, giving feedback
P26	Service, honesty, respect
P27	Service, pricing, update on new products
P28	Service, products, fees
10. I would like you to think about all the service experiences you have had with your bank and then describe your satisfaction with the following statements (missing information see the questionnaire on Appendix C that I sent)	
P1	Very happy with my current bank although some products are declined but the competitor will approve, your current bank will respond by saying maximum exposure then the competitor approves
P2	Service very bad, had to move to competitors. No feedback, staff not interested, very unprofessional
P3	Overall good service experience
P4	Very seldom I go into the bank as I rely on online application

P5	Technology is the solution
P6	Very happy with the service, staff are friendly
P7	Happy, staff have the willingness to assist all the time
P8	Inconsistent
P9	Happy, although month end, I hate visiting the bank
P10	Great service received
P11	Good service
P12	Happy with my bank, been banking with the same for many years, there has been bad and good days, but happy
P13	Good service
P14	Bad service, will not recommend anyone
P15	Not consistent
P16	Some days good, some days bad
P17	Very bad, a lot to be done
P18	Good service
P19	Good service, depending on the branch
P20	Great service received
P21	Not sure as service is dependable on the mood of the staff
P22	Good service
P23	Service was very bad
P24	Poor service
P25	Great service from all touch points
P26	Not sure
P27	Pathetic service
P28	Great service overall
11. If you have a need to elaborate on any of the aspects indicated in question 10 regarding satisfaction with your bank, please do so by providing an explanation:	
P1	Work to be done on proper onboarding of clients with all banking products issued to ensure retention
P2	Staff not knowledgeable, referring to other staff and that was very time consuming
P3	The monopoly by big banks in SA will always make it difficult for clients to cast their nets wide in classifying the best service level in banking industry
P4	Knowledge gap depicted, but my reliance is on the banking APP
P5	Happy cause my reliance is based on my banking APP or internet banking; if all offline prefers cell phone banking
P6	Bank is sustainable, convenient and adapting to innovation
P7	Bank must focus on keeping the current clientele happy and more will be generated if they do so
P8	Staff must be properly trained before they start working on the floor
P9	Feedback must be given at all times
P10	They must do more products and services to improve
P11	Satisfied with service received
P12	Pricing is cheap
P13	Satisfied
P14	Banks should innovate around digital services
P15	Satisfied because ARB offers service and explanations to their product offering

P16	Bank charges
P17	Very satisfied
P18	Moderately satisfied
P19	Satisfied
P20	The bank uses good system
P21	Service professionalism
P22	Need to work as team, need inspiration, need motivation
P23	Best bank, but must employee qualified staff
P24	Not satisfied at all with my bank, not meeting my expectation
P25	Good service received, hence banking with the bank for over 10 years
P26	Service is never right the first time
P27	Good service overall with my bank
P28	Unsatisfied
12. Explain/describe what your current bank should stop doing	
P1	Ensure branches have enough skilled personnel
P2	Hang queries must be avoided, increase numbers
P3	Treating clients as a single group. They should provide specialized packages to first time bankers also
P4	Improve in their service, hire more staff
P5	The only thing that frustrates me is hidden charges
P6	They should stop decreasing the number of tellers and consultants assisting in the branch
P7	Using complicated computer systems; focusing on quantity more than quality; create policies and procedures that do not inconvenience clients.
P8	Bank charges are causing clients to complain
P9	Get FICA process right so that they don't lose customers
P10	Treat all clients the same, with respect all the time
P11	Fine print on the banking forms to be explained in detail before signing for any product
P12	Hire more staff
P13	Need to keep employees informed about changes
P14	Stop sending clients from pillar to post
P15	Employ more people and have team work
P16	To implement new system to assist people serving clients every day
P17	Stop being slow and be visible on the floor
P18	Giving customers excuses
P19	Stop sending customers from pillar to post, resolve queries without using other departments as an excuse. Clients not interested in internal politics
P20	The bank needs proper plan around lunch breaks and leave
P21	Not hiring staff
P22	Stop introducing ideas without consultation with every affected stakeholder
P23	Hire more staff, train staff to be multi-skilled
P24	Hire more staff
P25	Stop passing the buck but take full accountability
P26	Improve computers systems
P27	Stop treating clients differently, employ more staff

P28	Stop delivering poor service, stop working in silos
Section 4	
13. How long have you been banking with your current bank?	
P1	More than 25 years
P2	30 years
P3	35 years and 8 months
P4	10 years and 5 months
P5	10 years
P6	15 years
P7	8 months
P8	15 years
P9	13 years
P10	2 years
P11	13 years
P12	5 years
P13	9 years
P14	9 years
P15	10 years
P16	6 years
P17	3 years
P18	33 years
P19	20 years
P20	3 weeks
P21	14 years
P22	3,5 years
P23	6 years
P24	17 years
P25	4 years
P26	23 years
P27	4 years
P28	17 years
14. Do you make use of other banking institutions besides your current bank?	
P1	No
P2	Yes
P3	Yes
P4	No
P5	No
P6	Yes
P7	Yes
P8	No
P9	Yes
P10	Yes
P11	Yes
P12	Yes
P13	Yes

P14	Yes
P15	Yes
P16	Yes
P17	Yes
P18	No
P19	No
P20	No
P21	No
P22	No
P23	No
P24	Yes
P25	No
P26	No
P27	Yes
P28	No

15. Explain your answer for question 13

P1	Never had major problems, and also work for ARB
P2	Diversification
P3	Stay with my current bank purely because of loyalty
P4	Products of my bank are fairly priced
P5	As a bank employee I receive preferential rates on products
P6	Able to resolve queries and always inform the client on their banking
P7	Still using their initial bank account
P8	Satisfied with bank and staff
P9	To differentiate between other competitors
P10	Most family members are using other banks
P11	Have easy access to investment accounts with other banks
P12	Looking for better service
P13	Lazy to move debit orders
P14	Opened accounts for other family members
P15	Perform other transactions, and service comparison
P16	Got easier digital platforms unlike other banks
P17	Other quick services from other banks
P18	I'm an employee
P19	Work for the bank
P20	Loyal to current bank
P21	They know how to treat their clients
P22	Lazy to make changes of banking details
P23	Bank has always been there for me
P24	SARS use my account for e-filing, making changes will cost me a fortune
P25	Receive service and products that meet my needs
P26	Because I receive staff benefits
P27	Looking for better benefits
P28	My first bank account was opened here, have no choice due to debit orders

16. Explain the following:

16.1 Would you recommend your bank to friends or family?	
P1	Yes
P2	Yes
P3	Yes
P4	Yes
P5	Yes
P6	Yes
P7	Yes
P8	Not sure
P9	No
P10	Yes
P11	No
P12	No
P13	No
P14	Yes
P15	No
P16	Yes
P17	Yes
P18	No
P19	Yes
P20	Yes
P21	Yes
P22	Yes
P23	Yes
P24	Yes
P25	Yes
P26	Yes
P27	Yes
P28	Yes
16.2 Would you continue banking with your bank in the future	
P1	It will depend on circumstances; if they continue with great service offerings then I will have no reason to move to competitors
P2	Yes, but there has to be consistency across all branches
P3	My bank provides exceptional service
P4	I am happy with my bank
P5	Yes, I cannot afford to move my debit orders now
P6	Yes
P7	Yes
P8	Not certain
P9	No
P10	Yes
P11	No
P12	No
P13	No
P14	Yes
P15	No

P16	Yes
P17	Yes
P18	No
P19	Yes
P20	Yes
P21	Yes
P22	Yes
P23	Yes
P24	Yes
P25	Yes
P26	Yes
P27	Yes
P28	Yes
17. Explain your answer as indicated in questions 16.1 and 16.2	
P1	Branches needs upgrading but have competent people
P2	Only certain branches, others are so bad
P3	Well established bank in the country; fair treatment by bank
P4	Improve on their service offerings. Loyal to my bank and will remain so
P5	My bank's offering the service required, no issues
P6	Feel worth and valued by the bank
P7	Level of service seems higher. It will also depend on future experience and product enhancements
P8	It will depend on how well I am being serviced
P9	It is very difficult to receive seamless service, unless you know what levers to pull
P10	Excellent service. Clients are put at the centre
P11	Until the bank improves on loyalty; paying attention to resolving issues
P12	Until the bank offers reasonable or cheaper rate
P13	No, I have just lost interest
P14	Service, technology
P15	I won't change because of long queues, waiting times at other banks, when you get to the staff still, they don't apologise, they look disinterested
P16	Never had any problems with the bank
P17	Yes, my bank is reliable, and I trust their products
P18	Technology is the biggest challenge, employee
P19	Am loyal to my bank and I am in love with the brand
P20	Excellence and service
P21	Service
P22	Service is not so bad; they need motivation and reward for their help
P23	family bank, always help when in need
P24	Bank fees are reasonable
P25	I understand and feel comfortable with my bank
P26	Staff benefits will make me stay but the service is really not that consistent
P27	The pricing and products offered
P28	Staff member, loyal towards employer

Appendix L: Managers' interview feedback

Section 2	
7. How do you define a Customer Engagement Strategy?	
P1	I think strategy is about encouraging the voice of the customer to interact with us as a business, to create a culture of sharing what is working well and what is not working well. It is only through engagement that the company can see growth. Although the consultant felt that leadership focus on strategy on high level not cascading it down to everyone on the ground, most leaders concentrate on sales acquisition, not explaining how does acquisition fit into the overall business strategy. Customers raise their voice, but majority of the time their voices are not heard properly. Companies think or assume they are listening to the voice of the customer but I find it very difficult. I guess that is why we have so much competitors entering the financial industry.
P2	Customer engagement strategy is about understanding what is the company intending to achieve, how and within which timelines. The strategy in the business is well articulate as the main aim is to double growth and increase profitable customer base. With that being said, there is high revenue products that must be sold by acquiring new clients, sell to the clients, cross sell other products, refer clients to other departments, collaborate with other department to sell as many products as possible. This in return enhances the customer relationship and fosters the base for customer awareness and loyalty. Customer engagement is really about moving beyond selling to the customer to building sustainable relationship throughout the customer journey within the organisation. There are customers that have been loyal and banking with ARB for over 40 years, that what we mean by customer journey. The branch manager in this case was very optimistic engaging about strategy with positive attitude.
P3	Customer engagement strategy is about unpacking the company objectives, break it down to the level of understanding to all employees on different levels. Every employee has an understanding of their objectives and how they link to the overall business strategy and how to deliver to customers and make customers prosper for their future. In this case the bank strategy is to sell customer account, cross sell other products, sell to tier families, friends and everyone in the community. Once sales have taken place, listen to the voice of the customer, what are the additional needs, ensure that all clients are retained without leaving a room to engage with the competitors for other products. All new features, benefits, updates on technology, updates on products, pricing help the bank to increase its revenue. The bank always states that customer is in the centre of everything we do.
P4	Happy customers are the lifeblood of any organisational strategy. It is very important for frontline to be equipped on how to deal with customers, listening with an understanding and deliver on customer promise. In that case word of mouth becomes the medium of getting the right messages out there and in return get more customers in the bank. If employees grasp the concept of strategy the bank will win in all the dealings.

P5	Customer enjoyment strategy must be seen as an ongoing business communication that connects any company to its customers and stakeholders. The more the bank engages, the more customers feel the sense of belongingness. While communicating to customers we also need to consider an element of feedback where it is required. Provide feedback to customers even on matters pending, updates on progress of their query; communication is key to strategy implementation. Most customers do not like surprises on pricing and this comes across many times when listening to the voice of the customer. Communicating effectively is key to implementation of proper business strategy.
P6	Customer engagement strategy is all about trust, satisfaction, loyalty, retention, engaging, communicating, interacting and ensure that consumer behaviour is improved at all times. There has to be clear communication on every change that takes place in the banking arena.
P7	Customer engagement strategy is about the ability to move customers from traditional way of banking to virtual channels with the right contingency plan in place to circumvent fraud, be it white collar fraud, syndicates activities etc. The new generation enjoys the online banking platforms that allows them the opportunity to bank anywhere anytime within their comfort space 24/7. The bank must have the flexibility to adapt to new ways of doing business in the world of technology platforms such as twitter, hello peter etc. customer experience should be a priority regardless of the market segment that is being serviced.
P8	Customer engagement strategy is about listening to what the customers are telling us, through online comments, their voice, interaction and most importantly via complaints system.

8. Do you currently have a customer engagement strategy?

P1	No
P2	Yes
P3	Yes
P4	Yes
P5	Yes
P6	Yes
P7	No
P8	Yes

9. If Yes to question 8 - what are the benefits in implementing the customer engagement strategy?

P1	Not really applicable cause whether the strategy is there or not it really works for certain leaders but not the others. I feel I have lost confidence in this organisation at the moment.
P2	Yes, there is a lot of benefits as my organisation is keeping customers updated throughout the interaction process, keeping records of customer history and customer behaviour to enable future engagements with clients.
P3	To improve on the service that is currently being offered and to allow the opportunity to sell more to the client. I would think the strategy is adding on lots of benefits.
P4	Allows the bank to accurately measure, adjust, execute plans to increase profit margins. Strategy is playing a significant role.

P5	Improve net promoter score, create customer recognition to increase referrals, customer retention and generate more revenue and also align it to reward programmes within the bank. I agree that there are benefits of having a strategy in the organisation.
P6	Customers are made aware of new business value offerings relevant to them and allow opportunity for upgrades. These are the greatest benefits of having strategy in the organisation.
P7	I personally do not see value with or without the strategy.
P8	It creates business culture for an organisation.
10. If No to question 8 - why do you not make use of a customer engagement strategy?	
P1	No, clients are declined some of the banking facilities such as home loans, I feel the bank is very short sighted. The bank is supposed to approve home loans, cars more than personal loans. For me I think the bank strategy again is not that clear.
P2	N/A
P3	N/A
P4	N/A
P5	N/A
P6	N/A
P7	For me all I am seeing is a confused bank that gives the competitors more power to take over the market segment that is being neglected. For example, people earning low salaries are not taken serious by the big 4 banks. Capitec went and developed a strategy to cater for that market segment, design value proposition that suit that market such as home loans below R500k, personal loans from R2000 and Capitec is maximising its profit from this market segment.
P8	N/A
11. In your opinion, what are aspects that may differentiate one bank from another bank?	
P1	Service, efficiency, customer centricity, pricing, the level of interaction, the manner in which staff deal with my query.
P2	Hmmm let me think (pause) ... Service, products, and brand reputation, ease of access, well positioned.
P3	Strategy of doing business, response to innovation and adapting easily to online platforms.
P4	Service and satisfaction, products, costs of banking, being taken care off by staff.
P5	I think the most important is customer service experience, image (professionalism), latest systems, available internet banking all the time.
P6	CRM, customer value chain, putting customer first, branding, products, different investment rates.
P7	Customer service, products, flexible operating hours.
P8	Customer service, respect, knowing your products, easy to provide suitable solution.
12. Are the aspects mentioned in question 11 part of the existing customer retention strategy of your workplace?	
P1	Some are, some are not, some are there but the bank not really focusing on what they are supposed to do from the top.

P2	I think to a certain degree because I feel that top management engage the lower level less, and things that improve the bank are actually taking place at the lowest level. The lower-level staff has a lot of input towards the strategy as they are the ones that have lots of interaction with the clients.
P3	Yes, but I still feel that leadership undermines the input from the junior staff members. Very seldom that leadership listens to lower-level staff. Lower-level staff have more exposure as they meet different types of clients that are multibank.
P4	Yes, but what matters is how the strategy is unpacked on all levels. It does not help if senior managers understand strategy but they are not able to filter it to the level of understanding by any junior staff member. Senior formulate the strategy, but junior staff does the implementation. Staff need to implement what they understand and the reasons behind what they implement. Senior leadership not taking serious cognisance of the junior staff members.
P5	Yes, definitely, although a lot still needs to be done by organisations hence competition will never go away.
P6	Yes, although many staff do not understand the key differentiators.
P7	Yes, but I strongly believe that my bank can have strategy sessions every quarter to remind staff on the importance of strategy. Many staff hear the word strategy, but they don't know that pricing, branding, customer service, cost etc., forms part of the strategy. There are many variables that are connected to make up a differentiated strategy.
P8	Yes, it contributes a lot to our business, including revenue and growth.
13. If Yes to question 12 - is the current customer engagement strategy effective in increasing customer retention at your workplace? Why do you think this is the case? Please explain	
P1	Yes, every staff member is engaged in the strategy and the ultimate end results.
P2	No, because we are reactive. Try to retain customers after they have made up their mind. When the client has already decided to leave the bank, only then does the bank act seriously. A very reactive approach as opposed to monitoring behaviour while the customer still banks with us.
P3	Yes, because we improve our way of doing things based on customer comments.
P4	Yes, it helps highlighting areas of improvement within the business.
P5	Is effective, but not where we want it to be, a lot still needs to be done.
P6	Yes, but retention and loyalty still remain the biggest challenge due to high rate of declined products, where some of the customers are forced to bank with other banks for the sake of acquiring the products in need.
P7	Work in a very competitive industry, and all players try to undo the other. There is no consistency in our organisation.
P8	Yes, because customers gain confidence in dealing with the bank.
Section 3	
14. Explain how successful you have been for the following:	
14.1 Acquiring new customers	
P1	Able to acquire but struggle to retain; sometimes customers tell you straightaway that your bank is expensive and decline the product there and then.

P2	Not easy to acquire on certain product lines due to unhealthy credit record, low income earning and this makes it difficult. While our competitors are waiting on all the clients, we decline products, they offer them high value products or they offer them at least something instead of declining completely.
P3	By giving and explaining product features that excite customers. Solutioning per customer needs. I have learned that the brand name means a lot.
P4	Business has been successful in acquiring new clients, previous customer experience set up customer expectations about the branch.
P5	Did not meet the target but acquired new clients. As much as we acquired new clients, there is not after sales engagements which makes it difficult for me to bank with one bank. I will always bank with the other banks regardless of my position in the bank.
P6	By building collaborations with other internal business units. However, most team members don't understand the benefits of collaboration; instead, staff work on outshining each other instead of working as a team.
P7	Not really successful because lots of clients move accounts to competitors because of service failures in general.
P8	Knowing your products and understanding customer needs makes it easy to attract new customers.

14.2 Engaging with new customers

P1	Clients well engaged upon opening accounts, once that is done, minimal interaction that results into dissatisfaction. I do not recall the bank contacting me after I bought the products. Once the account is opened and activated, that is the end of the relationship.
P2	Good, but a lot can be done. The only time I say the bank engaged me is via sms or email. The physical contact is neglected; even if you walk into a branch you are seen as a number instead of a client.
P3	By being easy, approachable and relaxed. Honestly, I found the bank not to care about customers anymore.
P4	Yes, been successful in engaging with new clients; due to service failure they leave to competitors. I feel my bank has let me down as I always beg for feedback regardless of how small my query can be, there is no sense of urgency at all.
P5	The new IPSOS system allows customers to share their experiences when visiting the branches. Customers raise their voice but still not heard due to reactive measures in managing customer complaints.
P6	Mainly through internal collaborations and can be done more effectively through socio-economic investment advantage network. Trust me, my own bank does not even have a full view of the products I have with them. It is very disappointing as all departments are operating in silos.
P7	Reactive approach because I only receive calls when I lodged a complaint.
P8	Customer education is important to me but sometimes when you ask more question to understand the product better it kind of feels like you are forcing staff to talk or you just receive a strange feeling.

14.3 Tracking customer retention statistics

P1	Very reactive approach; there is no system that is tailor-made to monitor customer behaviour.
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P2	Poor, because the bank can only retain you when you decide to move your account. My expectation is for the bank to monitor the behaviour and start analysing before I even opt to move to competitors.
P3	The bank sold me products that suit my needs and affordability. They have really made it difficult for me to move my accounts to the competitors.
P4	Systems in place provide comprehensive analysis of customer retention. As soon my loan is decreased the bank calls me for an increase or an alternative product.
P5	Attending to the customer complaints management system allows the bank to address and retain existing customers.
P6	Reactive approach because I only receive calls when I lodged a complaint.
P7	Reactive approach, the bank only starts caring when you scream and yell at them. The only time I received prompt response was when I went on hello peter.com
P8	Reactive approach; I am yet to receive a curtesy call from any bank just to check if I need any additional products.
14.4 How to deliver on the promise of the unique value proposition of customers	
P1	By providing end to end solution, the bank must sell me all products in order to keep me in their books.
P2	Constant communication. I have never struggled with my bank; I get what I want when I need it.
P3	My bank engages with me from the beginning to the end, they sell and create awareness of the future products, but when you visit the branches, the knowledge gap is huge and scary.
P4	Constant client engagement is what I need, but it does not happen all the time.
P5	By adhering to the value system - respect, integrity, service, excellence, stewardship.
P6	Customer education is important to me; but sometimes when you ask more questions to understand the product better it kind of feels like you are forcing staff to talk or you just receive a strange feeling.
P7	Creating customer awareness for me works out the best. You cannot deliver on your proposition with less engagement.
P8	Advertising, send sms, email flyers and other advertising methods, but there must be thorough homework done on the system. There have been instances where I received an sms that I have been preapproved for a certain product, I went into the branch excited only to realise my facility declined. Messages sent must be genuine.
14.5 What is your understanding of implementing a customer strategy?	
P1	Making it live by communicating clearly.
P2	Building strategy into processes and ensuring that staff follows.
P3	To plan around satisfying clients.
P4	Implemented strategy translates brand and strategy into activities that consistently target customers to gain their trust and become loyal to increase profit.
P5	Putting customer first in everything staff does.
P6	Offering customer-perceived value, not business-perceived customer value.
P7	Being closer to customer needs.
P8	Putting customers first, easy and seamless.

14.6 Communicating the unique value proposition to the customers	
P1	Via sms, emails, flyers, TV advertisements, word of mouth.
P2	Marketing, word of mouth.
P3	Presenting product features that appeal to clients.
P4	We all use communication methods available in media, so we have been successful.
P5	Need analysis proposition model to be utilised to give customer what suits them.
P6	Business needs to know what customer needs are met and then communicate the value that meets the customer's needs.
P7	Via preferred method to the client.
P8	Clear communication using the preferred method.
14.7 Engaging with existing customers	
P1	Via their preferred method of communication as indicated in the marketing consent.
P2	Mailers, calls, face-to-face
P3	By being visible on the floor as a bank host for the queue, one gets to liaise with clients.
P4	Though it can't be accurately measured, but the feeling is that we have been fairly successful.
P5	Going back to basics and thank customers. Also identify potential needs while engaging customers.
P6	Building a mutually beneficial relationship with your existing customers.
P7	Back to the basics
P8	Interesting because you simply need to thank them for being valued customers and offer them new suitable products.
Section 4	
15. Do you make use of a Customer Relationship Management System (CRM)?	
P1	Yes
P2	No
P3	Yes
P4	Yes
P5	Yes
P6	No
P7	No
P8	Yes
16. If No to question 15 - why do you not make use of a CRM software system?	
P1	I make use of the system.
P2	No, it does not really add value because ITC is the determining factor for all credit related products. Credit managers decline the products regardless of how well you write the motivation on behalf of the client.
P3	I make use of the system.
P4	I make use of the system.
P5	I make use of the system.
P6	I really don't see the benefits.

P7	If products are declined, there is nothing I can do. Why do I ever bother using the software that does not add value?
P8	I make use of the system.
17. If Yes to question 15 - what are the benefits of implementing CRM system for customer experience?	
P1	Yes, must understand different classes of clients and segment them accordingly in order to obtain the correct results. Positive results yielded always.
P2	I really don't see any benefits.
P3	Measure how customers feel about the bank in totality. It provides you with a full view of customer before making a call or a decision relating to a product.
P4	Customers are accurately segmented, needs addressed because interaction with them is constantly tracked.
P5	I use the system because it makes my work life easy. Enables the bank to get customer feedback regarding the experience during interaction.
P6	Very seldom I would even use the system.
P7	I don't use the system.
P8	Helps create a strong relationship with customer and makes it easy to identify customer needs.
18. Explain/describe the benefits of integrating CRM data into a customer retention strategy at the workplace	
P1	Improve services provided to clients by making them feel valued. For me data provides facts and makes it easy to make informed business decisions.
P2	Maybe the benefits are enjoyed by senior managers.
P3	Will assist the bank to work on its weaknesses and improve on day to day running of a business.
P4	Allows the bank to constantly track client interactions and determine sales growth in future markets.
P5	Benefited the bank by taking customer feedback and putting corrective action. Measuring pool to determine whether the bank will succeed in helping and retaining customers.
P6	No benefits to me.
P7	None, as I do not really use the system.
P8	It helps to check and understand clients' needs and identify better products to convince the clients.
19. Explain/describe the usability of the information captured through the CRM system at work	
P1	The information works as a guide when making decisions about a client.
P2	Not relevant to my department.
P3	The comments are valued and are real as you can work on them to make improvements. CRM captures the current lifestyle of a client as opposed to only history.
P4	Data is highly usable. Allows the bank to translate all data since its information age.
P5	Gives stats about different competitors on share point and also gives an indication of the required improvements on customer services.
P6	None for me.

P7	Not for me.
P8	Contact details help to have proper contact with the customer either for cross selling or offering them new products.
20. Explain/describe your understanding of the socio-economic dynamic within your business area or branch	
P1	All sectors of the population are included.
P2	Information about customers and their behaviour can add value to product design.
P3	Based in a township and need to collaborate with society to make a success of business.
P4	Socio-economic dynamic differs according to geography and is divided into low, middle, high income clients.
P5	Means economic risk identified when natural resources are scarce and vulnerabilities highly increase due to pressure on demand.
P6	Going back to the community by sponsoring their events.
P7	All sectors of the community.
P8	Departmental roles. We have different departments with different roles.
21. Explain/describe how your business strategy links to the socio-economic dynamic in your business area or branch	
P1	There is a direct link, but it is very concerning when the bank loses customers of the new millennium but retains the old market segment. For me there has to be a good balance between the age group and all other relevant segments.
P2	There is a direct correlation, although a lot still needs to be done, truly speaking.
P3	My strategy is focused on the need of the society.
P4	Does not believe that the strategy is linked to the socio-economic dynamic. It is focused on middle to high income clients instead of focusing on the majority low-income clients.
P5	Socio economic dynamic identifies the risk for short- and long-term plan and it influences the plan if the risk is not mitigated.
P6	Business score is linked to individual or business units' contribution to the community.
P7	There is a link but a lot can be done, there is still room for improvement.
P8	We all need each other. No department can operate on its own without the others.
22. Do you believe that the understanding of socio-economic dynamic affects how your current bank manages customer engagement? Explain your response.	
P1	Yes, must understand different classes of clients within the context of culture, social and economic impact.
P2	Yes, lack of socio-economic information leads to inability to design fitting solutions for individual clients.
P3	Yes, understanding of society enables one to manage customer engagements.
P4	Yes, it does affect customer engagement. No point in selling unaffordable products to the market.
P5	Yes. If customer portfolios are being assessed, customer complaints are addressed, and there will be referrals to grow the book.
P6	Unsure because leadership drives the agendas that suits them most.
P7	I personally refuse, if there was a link no customer will struggle whatsoever.

P8	Yes. If all employees are aware of their expectations, it makes it easy to serve customers.
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