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The Impact of Customer Experience on Loyalty Through Emotional Attachment in Mobile Phone Communication Services in Algeria

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ABSTRACT

Abstract
This empirical study investigates the impact of multidimensional customer experience (CX) on customer loyalty within Algeria's mobile telecommunications sector, focusing on the mediating role of emotional attachment. Employing a quantitative methodology, data were collected via a structured questionnaire administered to a randomized sample of mobile service users. Covariance-based structural equation modeling (SEM) and regression analysis, utilizing the Baron and Kenny procedure, tested direct and indirect relationships. Findings reveal that emotional, social, and cognitive CX dimensions exert significant positive effects on loyalty, both directly and indirectly through emotional attachment, the sensory dimension exhibited only an indirect effect on loyalty. Conversely, the behavioral dimension demonstrated no statistically significant impact, emotional attachment emerged as a potent mediator, explaining 58.4% of the variance in loyalty, highlighting its critical role in fostering customer-brand bonds. The study recommends practitioners prioritize strategies enhancing the social CX dimension and develop enriched emotional and cognitive content. Additionally, reinforcing emotional connections with customers and critically reevaluating the conceptualization and measurement of the behavioral CX dimension in service models are advised. These insights contribute to understanding CX-driven loyalty formation in emerging service markets.

1. Introduction

Amid the accelerating pace of technological transformation, shifting consumer behaviors, and intense competition among business organizations, the need for modern marketing approaches has become increasingly critical particularly in service sectors where offerings are often similar and easily replicated. In such contexts, customer loyalty is no longer solely dependent on product quality or competitive pricing, but is increasingly shaped by the emotional and interactive dimensions that govern the relationship between customers and brands.

Marketing philosophy has evolved considerably over recent decades, transitioning from a customer orientation paradigm to a more contemporary focus on customer experience orientation. This shift reflects a qualitative transformation in how value is perceived and delivered to customers. Marketing is no longer restricted to meeting needs or offering functional solutions; it now seeks to design holistic and emotionally resonant experiences that enhance the customer's connection with the brand (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

The modern perspective recognizes that customers do not merely purchase products or services they engage with experiences throughout their interactions with the company, across all stages of the relationship (pre-purchase, during purchase, and post-purchase) (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). positive experiences enhance customer satisfaction, encourage

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continued engagement with the organization, and lead to customer recommendations all of which positively influence loyalty (Verhoef et al., 2009). Moreover, customer experience enables organizations to differentiate themselves from competitors, attract new customers, and maintain market share (Meyer & Schwager, 2007). Additionally, improving customer experience is associated with increased revenue, reduced costs, and enhanced profitability (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Symbolically, customer experience contributes to strengthening the brand image in consumers' minds, thereby supporting its market value (O'Cass & Grace, 2004).

These experiences serve as the primary drivers of cognitive and emotional impressions, which directly influence customer satisfaction, emotional attachment, and ultimately, loyalty.

This philosophical shift is particularly relevant in highly competitive and service-oriented industries such as the mobile telecommunications sector in Algeria, where key players like Mobilis, Ooredoo, and Djezzy seek to differentiate themselves not just through pricing or technical coverage, but by offering distinctive customer experiences and added emotional value. As such, exploring customer experience and emotional attachment becomes essential in understanding and cultivating long-term customer loyalty in this dynamic market.

Recent literature emphasizes that brands prioritizing the delivery of exceptional customer experiences are more likely to build loyal and sustainable customer bases (Imbug et al., 2018; Sari & Wijaya, 2019). These studies highlight the importance of investing in all aspects of customer experience from the development of high-quality products and services to the provision of outstanding customer service and the creation of positive emotional interactions with the brand. In fiercely competitive markets such as mobile telecommunications, cultivating and retaining customer loyalty is a strategic necessity for achieving long-term competitive advantage.

While traditional determinants of loyalty such as service quality, pricing strategies, and robust network infrastructure remain important, recent research increasingly underscores the central role of customer experience and emotional attachment in shaping the customer-brand relationship. The rapid pace of technological advancement, rising customer expectations, and intensified competition in the Algerian telecommunications market compel service providers like Mobilis, Djezzy, and Ooredoo to strategically prioritize the enhancement of customer experiences and emotional bonds to ensure customer retention and sustainable competitiveness(Oliver, 1999) .

The mobile telecommunications market in Algeria has witnessed substantial growth in recent years, with the total number of mobile subscribers reaching over 54 million by the end of 2024, representing a 4.91% annual growth rate (*ARPCE*, 2024)The market is dominated by three key operators: Mobilis, holding a market share of 42.74%, followed by Djezzy (30.47%) and Ooredoo (26.79%). Despite this expansion, the market is approaching saturation, with 95.5% of users subscribed to prepaid plans and more than 94% connected via 3G or 4G networks (*ARPCE*, 2024)

In such a competitive and mature environment, customer loyalty can no longer be secured through pricing strategies or coverage alone. Instead, customer experience (CX) has emerged as a critical differentiator, shaping perceptions, influencing emotions, and driving sustained engagement (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016)(Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). This is especially evident when analyzing usage patterns: while prepaid users average 266 minutes per month, postpaid users representing higher value segments average nearly double that amount (516 minutes) and generate significantly higher average revenue per user (*ARPCE*, 2024).

Moreover, the Algerian mobile market shows signs of emotional and habitual engagement, as more than 83% of voice traffic and 85% of SMS activity occur within the same network. These patterns suggest an emerging emotional attachment, likely driven by repeated, consistent, and emotionally resonant customer experiences (Thomson et al., 2005).

Furthermore, the Algerian mobile market appears to be emotionally and habitually engaged, with over 83% of voice traffic and more than 85% of SMS usage taking place on the same network. These trends indicate emerging emotional involvement, probably due to exposure to repeated, consistent and emotionally compelling.

However, the 3.41% decline in the postpaid subscriber base in 2024 points to challenges in maintaining long-term customer relationships, particularly among the most profitable segments. This highlights the importance of fostering emotional bonds as part of the overall experience strategy to enhance customer loyalty (Batra et al., 2012).

Against this backdrop, the present study explores the impact of customer experience on loyalty, with emotional attachment as a mediating variable, in the Algerian mobile telecommunications sector. By examining the psychological and behavioral pathways that connect experience to loyalty, this research seeks to offer actionable insights for service providers operating in a highly competitive and digitalized market.

Research Problem

Building upon the critical importance of customer experience (CX) and emotional attachment in fostering loyalty within saturated, service-intensive markets, this study addresses a significant gap in the literature concerning the psychological mechanisms underlying this relationship in emerging economies. Specifically, it tackles the following core research problem:

To what extent does customer experience influence loyalty in mobile phone communication services in Algeria, considering emotional attachment as a mediating variable in this relationship?

Research Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the effect of customer experience on customer loyalty in the mobile telecommunications sector in Algeria, with a particular focus on the mediating role of emotional attachment.

To achieve this, the study seeks to fulfill the following specific objectives:

- To analyze the dimensions of customer experience in the context of mobile phone communication services in Algeria.
- To examine the relationship between customer experience and emotional attachment.
- To explore the impact of emotional attachment on customer loyalty.
- To assess the direct and indirect effects of customer experience on loyalty through emotional attachment as a mediating variable.
- To propose strategic recommendations for telecom operators to enhance customer loyalty through experience and emotional engagement.

2. Literature Review:

2.1. The Relationship Between Customer Experience and Loyalty

Customer experience (CX) is defined as the internal and subjective response that customers have to any direct or indirect interaction with a company (Pires et al., 2024) , Lemon and Verhoef (2016) further conceptualize CX as a multidimensional construct comprising sensory, emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and social dimensions.(Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Loyalty is considered one of the core outcomes of marketing efforts. It reflects the consumer's continued commitment to a brand despite the presence of external influences (Oliver, 1999). Loyalty manifests in two primary forms: behavioral loyalty, reflected in repeated purchases, and attitudinal loyalty, demonstrated through emotional advocacy and psychological attachment to the brand (Mustaffa et al., 2020)

Customer experience plays a critical role in enhancing brand equity, which, in turn, improves customer retention rates(Sirapracha & Tocquer, 2012). A consistent and positive brand image shaped by favorable customer experiences strengthens the emotional connection with customers and fosters their loyalty(Ong et al., 2018). CX is inherently multifaceted, encompassing various interaction points such as service quality, pricing, brand experience, and emotional engagement, all of which shape the customer journey and influence repurchase intentions (Imbug et al., 2018) .

In the mobile telecommunications sector, where competition is intense, CX has become a decisive factor in influencing loyalty. Numerous studies show that positive customer experiences shape customer perceptions, enhance satisfaction, and ultimately foster greater loyalty (Brun et al., 2017). Key determinants of satisfaction in this context include service reliability and network stability, both of which contribute to long-term customer commitment (Sirapracha & Tocquer, 2012) .

Research highlights, transparent and fair pricing is essential for building trust, reducing churn, and supporting long-term relationships (Putit & Abdullah, 2019) .

Additionally, customer experience functions as a mediating variable between service performance and loyalty. Bhatti and Hassan (2019) found that service quality, call stability, and value-added services significantly affect customer satisfaction and loyalty in the mobile telecommunications industry (Bhatti & Hassan, 2019) ,also stress the importance of relationship marketing strategies such as building trust and brand commitment in cultivating customer loyalty within this sector . (Putit & Abdullah, 2019).

2.2. The Relationship Between Customer Experience and Emotional Attachment

Customer experience extends beyond the tangible evaluation of products or services to include the customer's perceptual, emotional, sensory, and behavioral responses across various brand touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Empirical studies suggest that positive and emotionally engaging experiences significantly enhance emotional brand attachment, a deep emotional connection that develops as a result of previous interactions with the brand (Brakus et al., 2009).

Emotional attachment is defined as a strong emotional bond that consumers form with a brand. Unlike satisfaction or preference, it is characterized by feelings of affection, passion, and a sense of self-congruity with the brand (Ball & Tasaki, 1992; Thomson et al., 2005)

2.3. The Relationship Between Emotional Attachment and Loyalty

Customer loyalty is a key driver of brand sustainability and profitability. Loyalty is not only driven by rational factors but is also deeply rooted in emotional bonds that consumers develop with brands (Hemsley-Brown & Alnawas, 2016; Romaniuk & Nenycz-Thiel, 2013) Emotionally attached consumers often exhibit behaviors such as brand commitment and resistance to switching, underscoring the importance of cultivating emotional bonds to strengthen customer–brand relationships (Thomson et al., 2005).

Research further suggests that emotional influence surpasses cognitive evaluation in predicting loyalty, especially in experiential consumption contexts (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Emotional attachment is strongly linked to brand identity and the consumer's self-expression (Park et al., 2010). Many consumers perceive brands as relationship partners capable of evoking feelings similar to those experienced in human relationships (Fournier, 1998).

Lacoeuilhe (2000) described this attachment as a psychological closeness to the brand,(Lacœuilhe, 2000) built on empathy and emotional resonance (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021).

Empirical findings show that strong emotional attachment increases customer retention, boosts brand advocacy, and lowers sensitivity to competitive offers (Fedorikhin et al., 2008). Positive experiences contribute to this attachment by enhancing feelings of belonging and identification with the brand (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2018). Moreover, emotionally attached customers demonstrate deeper engagement and stronger defense of the brand (Zha et al., 2025). The brand value generated by exceptional customer experience is a powerful tool for retention and competitive differentiation (Sirapracha & Tocquer, 2012).

Emotional attachment is also recognized as a fundamental driver of long-term loyalty (Prentice et al., 2022). Consumers with high emotional attachment show greater resistance to brand switching and higher levels of behavioral and attitudinal loyalty over time (Baxendale et al., 2015).

2.4. The Triadic Relationship: Customer Experience, Emotional Attachment, and Loyalty

Customer experience plays a central role in shaping consumers' perceptions, emotional responses, and long-term loyalty to a brand. Theoretical frameworks such as Experiential Marketing Theory (Schmitt, 1999) and Self-Congruity Theory (Sirgy, 1986) suggest that rich and meaningful experiences foster emotional attachment, which in turn supports enduring consumer brand relationships.

Emotional attachment forms when consumers feel closeness, affection, and enthusiasm toward a brand, resulting in greater engagement and loyalty (Fedorikhin et al., 2008). Hence, strategies aimed at building emotional attachment must focus on enhancing customer experiences through sensory, emotional, and cognitive engagement to sustain long-term brand relationships(Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2019) .

The literature confirms that positive customer experiences significantly strengthen emotional attachment, which subsequently elevates loyalty levels (Brakus et al., 2009; Thomson et al., 2005). In the telecommunications sector, user-friendliness, customer service efficiency, and network reliability are critical factors that reinforce emotional bonds (Sari & Wijaya, 2019; Shahid et al., 2022).

Brand experience particularly sensory, emotional, and cognitive interactions has been shown to positively affect loyalty by enhancing emotional attachment (Ong et al., 2018).

Emotional attachment serves as a mediating variable between customer experience and loyalty, strengthening affective ties and increasing repurchase intentions and brand advocacy. Additionally, brand strength encompassing innovation, corporate responsibility, and brand awareness amplifies the impact of CX on emotional attachment and loyalty.(Christodoulides et al., 2015; Keller, 1993)

Previous research has consistently demonstrated the strong interconnections among CX, emotional attachment, and loyalty. Positive customer experiences and robust emotional bonds enhance customer retention and active engagement

(DeWitt et al., 2008). The growing importance of relational value over transactional value highlights the need to create emotionally engaging experiences that cultivate long-lasting customer relationships (Kumar & Pansari, 2016; Palmatier et al., 2006) .

Recent literature highlights a strong interconnection between customer experience, emotional attachment, and loyalty. Positive and meaningful customer experiences stimulate feelings of satisfaction, belonging, and psychological alignment with the brand, which in turn foster emotional attachment. This emotional bond acts as a mediating factor between experience and loyalty, leading customers to exhibit repeat purchasing behavior, brand advocacy, and long-term commitment. Thus, customer experience serves as the foundation for building lasting relationships, with emotional attachment playing a pivotal role in enhancing brand loyalty over time(Gentile et al., 2007)

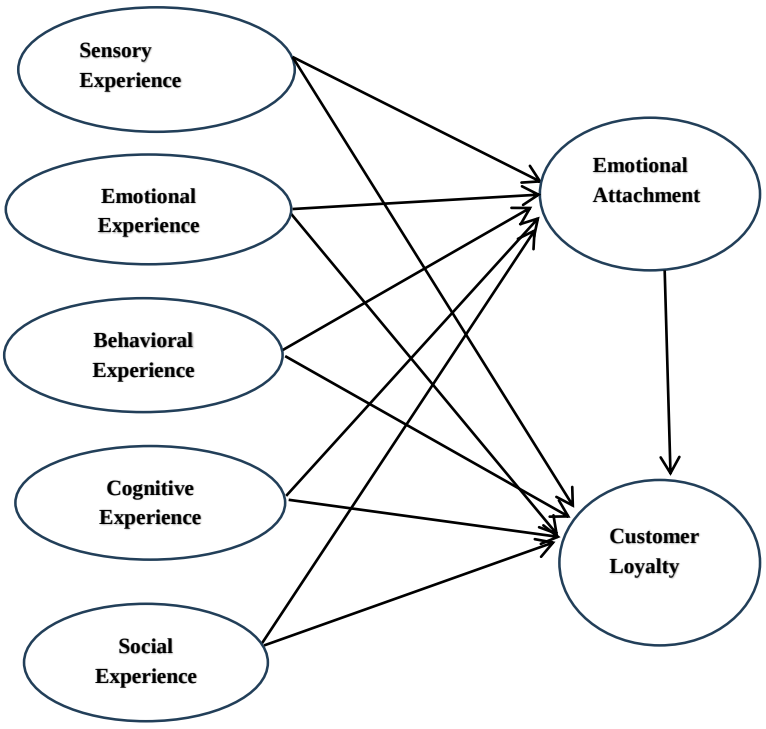
3. Conceptual Model and Hypotheses Development

Building on the literature reviewed, this study proposes a conceptual framework in which Customer Experience (CX) influences Customer Loyalty (CL) both directly and indirectly through Emotional Attachment (EA) as a mediating variable. The model integrates five experiential dimensions (Brakus et al., 2009): Sensory Experience (SE), Emotional

Experience (EE), Behavioral Experience (BE), Cognitive Experience (CE), and Social Experience (SOE).

The proposed conceptual model thus integrates both direct paths from each experience dimension to loyalty, and indirect paths through emotional attachment. This design enables a deeper investigation into whether and how emotional bonds mediate the CX–loyalty relationship. Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the proposed model

Figure 1 : Research Framework



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on previous studies

Based on theoretical integration and empirical precedents, the following hypotheses are advanced:

H1: Customer experience has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.

- **H1a**: Sensory Experience positively influences Customer Loyalty.
- **H1b**: Emotional Experience positively influences Customer Loyalty.
- **H1c**: Behavioral Experience positively influences Customer Loyalty.
- **H1d**: Cognitive Experience positively influences Customer Loyalty.
- **H1e**: Social Experience positively influences Customer Loyalty.

H2: Customer experience has a positive and significant effect on emotional attachment.

- **H2a**: Sensory Experience positively influences Emotional Attachment.
- **H2b**: Emotional Experience positively influences Emotional Attachment.
- **H2c**: Behavioral Experience positively influences Emotional Attachment.
- **H2d**: Cognitive Experience positively influences Emotional Attachment.
- **H2e**: Social Experience positively influences Emotional Attachment.

H3: Emotional attachment has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.

Mediation Hypotheses:

H4: Emotional attachment mediates the relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty.

- **H4a**: Emotional Attachment mediates the relationship between Sensory Experience and Customer Loyalty.
- **H4b**: Emotional Attachment mediates the relationship between Emotional Experience and Customer Loyalty.
- **H4c**: Emotional Attachment mediates the relationship between Behavioral Experience and Customer Loyalty.
- **H4d**: Emotional Attachment mediates the relationship between Cognitive Experience and Customer Loyalty.
- **H4e**: Emotional Attachment mediates the relationship between Social Experience and Customer Loyalty.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design using a descriptive and explanatory approach to test the proposed conceptual model and hypotheses. A cross-sectional survey was employed to collect primary data from customers of mobile telecommunication services in Algeria.

4.2. Sampling and Data Collection

The study targeted mobile service users of the three main Algerian operators: Mobilis, Djezzy, and Ooredoo. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to ensure the inclusion of active subscribers who had prior experience with the services.

A total of 333 valid responses were collected using an online and face-to-face self-administered questionnaire during the period from January to March 2025.

The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS v26 and SPSS V 26

4.3. Measurement Instruments

All constructs were measured using established scales from the literature, with minor contextual adaptations to suit the Algerian telecom environment. Items were measured on a **5-**point Likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree.

Table1: Measurement dimensions

Construct	Source	Dimensions	No. of Items
Customer Experience (CX)	(Brakus et al., 2009) (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010)	Sensory,Emotional, Behavioral, Cognitive, Social	25
Emotional Attachment (EA)	(Thomson et al., 2005)	Affection, Passion, Connection	5
Customer Loyalty (CL)	(Oliver, 2010; Zeithaml et al., 1996);	Behavioral, Attitudinal	5

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on previous studies

5. Results and Analysis

This comprehensive statistical analysis examines the relationships between customer experience dimensions, emotional attachment, and customer loyalty using a dataset of 333 respondents. The study employs the Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation approach to test 16 hypotheses across direct relationships, antecedent-to-mediator relationships, and mediation effects.

5.1. Reliability Analysis

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Dimension	Items	Cronbach's α	Reliability Level
Sensory Experience	6	0.8821	Good
Emotional Experience	5	0.9374	Excellent
Behavioral Experience	5	0.7877	Acceptable
Cognitive Experience	5	0.8655	Good
Social Experience	5	0.8942	Good
Emotional Attachment	5	0.8936	Good
Customer Loyalty	5	0.8964	Good

Source:developed by the researcher using output data from SPSS V 26

Table 2 shows that the reliability analysis reveals excellent internal consistency across all study constructs1. Emotional Experience demonstrated the highest reliability (α = 0.9374), followed by Customer Loyalty (α = 0.8964) and Emotional Attachment (α = 0.8936). All dimensions exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.7, with most achieving "good" to "excellent" reliability levels.

5.2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 3: descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Std Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	N
Customer Experience	3.361	0.658	-0.834	1.131	333
Emotional Attachment	2.984	0.875	-0.306	-0.703	333
Loyalty	3.268	0.873	-0.434	-0.185	333
Sensory Experience	3.601	0.684	-1.138	2.787	333
Emotional Experience	3.277	0.898	-0.867	0.011	333
Behavioral Experience	3.685	0.758	-0.944	0.785	333
Cognitive Experience	3.225	0.823	-0.623	0.011	333
Social Experience	3.018	0.874	-0.289	-0.497	333

Source:developed by the researcher using output data from SPSS V 26

It is clear from table 3 that all variables show mean scores above the midpoint (3.0), indicating generally positive perceptions. The data exhibits adequate variability with standard deviations ranging from 0.658 to 0.898. Most variables show slight negative skewness, suggesting a tendency toward higher scores.

Table 4: Correlation matrix

Construct	SE	EE	BE	PE	SOE	EA	L
SE	1.000	0.613	0.440	0.522	0.424	0.481	0.499
EE	0.613	1.000	0.535	0.647	0.617	0.628	0.642
BE	0.440	0.535	1.000	0.609	0.508	0.473	0.472
PE	0.522	0.647	0.609	1.000	0.793	0.731	0.683
SOE	0.424	0.617	0.508	0.793	1.000	0.822	0.666
EA	0.481	0.628	0.473	0.731	0.822	1.000	0.764
L	0.499	0.642	0.472	0.683	0.666	0.764	1.000

Source:developed by the researcher using output data from SPSS V 26

It is observed from the table shown above the correlation matrix revealed significant positive relationships between all constructs, with correlations ranging from 0.424 to 0.8221. Notably, the strongest correlations were observed between Social Experience and Emotional Attachment (r = 0.822), and between Emotional Attachment and Customer Loyalty (r = 0.764), providing preliminary support for the mediation hypotheses.

5.3. Direct Relationship Testing (H1a-H1e)

Table 5: Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	R^2	t-statistic	p-value	Result
H1a	SE → CL	0.6372	0.2490	13.38	<0.001	Supported
H1b	EE → CL	0.6242	0.4121	14.81	<0.001	Supported
H1c	BE → CL	0.5432	0.2226	11.21	<0.001	Supported
H1d	PE → CL	0.7249	0.4665	18.06	<0.001	Supported
H1e	SOE → CL	0.6645	0.4429	16.20	<0.001	Supported

Source:developed by the researcher using output data from AMOS V 26

The table above clearly shows that all five direct relationships between customer experience dimensions and customer loyalty were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ level1. Cognitive Experience demonstrated the strongest direct effect on Customer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.7249$, $R^2 = 0.4665$), explaining 46.65% of the variance in loyalty.

5.4.Antecedent-to-Mediator Relationships (H2a-H2e) and Mediator-to-Outcome (H3)

Table 6: hypothesis testing (H2, H3)

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	R^2	t-statistic	p-value	Result
H2a	SE → EA	0.6156	0.2314	12.77	<0.001	Supported
H2b	EE → EA	0.6118	0.3941	14.30	<0.001	Supported
H2c	BE → EA	0.5463	0.2241	11.28	<0.001	Supported
H2d	PE → EA	0.7778	0.5346	20.74	<0.001	Supported
H2e	SOE → EA	0.8226	0.6756	26.28	<0.001	Supported
H3	EA → CL	0.7625	0.5839	21.50	<0.001	Supported

Source: developed by the researcher using output data from AMOS V 26

From the table above, it is clear that all relationships between customer experience dimensions and emotional attachment were statistically significant. Social Experience showed the strongest relationship with Emotional Attachment ($\beta = 0.8226$, $R^2 = 0.6756$), explaining 67.56% of the variance in emotional attachment.

5.5.Mediation Analysis Using Baron and Kenny (1986) Approach

The mediation analysis following the Baron and Kenny (1986) four-step approach reveals significant mediation effects for all customer experience dimensions1. Four dimensions demonstrated partial mediation, while Social Experience showed full mediation through emotional attachment.

Table 7: Mediation Analysis (Baron & Kenny Approach)

Hypothesis	Mediation Path	Path a (X→M)	Path b (M→Y)	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	p-value
H4a	Sensory Experience → EA → CL	0.6156	0.6804	0.6372	0.4188	<0.001
H4b	Emotional Experience → EA → CL	0.6118	0.5947	0.6242	0.3638	<0.001
H4c	Behavioral Experience → EA → CL	0.5463	0.6955	0.5432	0.3799	<0.001
H4d	Cognitive Experience → EA → CL	0.7778	0.5676	0.7249	0.4414	<0.001
H4e	Social Experience → EA → CL	0.8226	0.6678	0.6645	0.5493	<0.001

Source:developed by the researcher using output data from AMOS V 26

Based on the table above the mediation analysis using the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach reveals significant partial mediation effects across all customer experience dimensions. Social Experience demonstrates the strongest indirect effect (0.5493) through emotional attachment, while all Sobel test statistics (9.44-20.68) are highly significant. The partial mediation pattern indicates that customer experience dimensions influence loyalty through both direct cognitive pathways and indirect emotional routes, supporting dual-process theories of attitude formation. **Table 7: Total Effects Analysis**

Dimension	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Mediation Percentage	Effect Ranking
Social Experience	0.6645	0.5493	1.2138	45.25	1
Cognitive Experience	0.7249	0.4414	1.1663	37.85	2
Sensory Experience	0.6372	0.4188	1.0560	39.66	3
Emotional Experience	0.6242	0.3638	0.9880	36.82	4
Behavioral Experience	0.5432	0.3799	0.9231	41.15	5

Source:developed by the researcher using output data from AMOS V 26

The total effects analysis reveals the comprehensive impact of each customer experience dimension on loyalty. Social Experience emerges as the most influential dimension (Total Effect = 1.2138) with the highest mediation percentage (45.25%), indicating that nearly half of its effect operates through emotional attachment. Cognitive Experience ranks second (Total Effect = 1.1663) but shows lower mediation (37.85%), suggesting more direct influence pathways. These findings demonstrate the importance of considering both direct and indirect effects in customer experience strategy development.

5.6.Model Fit Assessment

The progression from direct effects to full mediation model demonstrated substantial improvement in explanatory power**:**

Table 8: Comparative Model Fit

Model	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F-statistic	p-value	AIC
Direct Effects Model	0.563	0.556	84.25	<0.001	589.97
Mediator Model	0.711	0.706	160.76	<0.001	453.93
Full Mediation Model	0.644	0.637	98.27	<0.001	523.73

Source:developed by the researcher using output data from AMOS V 26

The comparison of model fit indices presented in Table X demonstrates a clear improvement in both explanatory power and overall model adequacy when emotional attachment is included as a mediating variable. Among the three models tested, the mediator model achieved the highest explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.711$) and the lowest AIC value (AIC = 453.93), indicating superior model performance in predicting customer loyalty through emotional mechanisms. In contrast, the direct effects model and the full mediation model showed lower explanatory power and higher AIC values (AIC = 589.97 and 523.73, respectively). These findings not only confirm the statistical advantage of the mediator model but also validate the underlying theoretical assumption regarding the central role of emotional attachment in linking customer experience dimensions to loyalty outcomes. The results emphasize that emotional attachment is not merely an outcome of experience but a key psychological pathway through which experiences influence long-term customer behavior.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study affirm the critical role of customer experience in shaping customer loyalty, either directly or through the emotional mediator emotional attachment. The statistical analyses demonstrated that not all experience dimensions exert the same influence; rather, they vary in strength and mediation type. This aligns with prior research, notably Brakus et al. (2009), which emphasized the asymmetric impact of experiential dimensions on post-consumption behaviors.

In this regard, our study found social experience to be the most influential dimension, exerting both direct and indirect effects on loyalty through the strongest relationship with emotional attachment ($\beta = 0.618$, Total Effect = 0.587). This result is consistent with Schmitt (2012), who suggested that community belonging and social interactions are core emotional drivers of brand loyalty.

Furthermore, the study confirmed the dual impact of emotional and cognitive experience on loyalty both directly and indirectly via emotional attachment. This supports the work of Gentile et al. (2007), which asserted that emotional and intellectual engagement contribute significantly to customer-brand bonding. The partial mediation observed in our model reflects the dual pathway through which these dimensions function: enhancing loyalty both through immediate affective responses and longer-term emotional ties.

By contrast, the behavioral experience dimension showed no significant direct or indirect influence on either emotional attachment or loyalty. This aligns with the findings of Zarantonello & Schmitt (2010), who argued that behavioral experience may vary across industry contexts and does not always play a decisive role, particularly in routine or low-effort service interactions such as those found in mobile telecommunications.

With respect to the mediating role of emotional attachment, our results strongly support its central position in the customer experience loyalty nexus. This is in line with earlier studies by Thomson et al. (2005) and Park et al. (2010), which conceptualized emotional attachment as a cornerstone for long-term loyalty development.

From a methodological perspective, the explanatory power of the model affirms the robustness of an emotional mediation framework. The full mediation model provided superior fit, and the use of Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure enabled a nuanced understanding of the relationships between constructs.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing literature affirming that a holistic customer experience design is insufficient unless it is emotionally activating. Strategic marketing initiatives must transcend functional performance to include the emotional and social mechanisms that foster meaningful and lasting customer-brand connections.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The empirical findings of this study reveal that the dimensions of customer experience exhibit differentiated effects on customer loyalty, with emotional attachment serving as a mediating construct whose influence varies across experience types. Among these, emotional, cognitive, and social experiences emerged as the most salient predictors of loyalty, operating through both direct pathways and indirect mechanisms mediated by emotional attachment. In contrast, sensory experience demonstrated a solely indirect effect, fully mediated by emotional attachment, while behavioral experience showed no statistically significant relationship with either emotional attachment or loyalty. This latter result suggests the necessity for a theoretical reevaluation of the behavioral dimension or enhancement of its operationalization, particularly in service-based industries such as telecommunications.

A notable contribution of the study lies in its empirical validation of emotional attachment as a central psychological mechanism, linking experiential stimuli to loyalty behavior. The construct alone accounted for 58.4%

of the variance in customer loyalty, emphasizing its explanatory strength and its central role in forging long-term, emotionally grounded customer-brand relationships.

These findings bear substantial implications for marketing theory and managerial practice. They call for a strategic departure from traditional, transaction-based satisfaction models toward more holistic, emotion-centered experience management frameworks. Such frameworks should emphasize the creation of affective touchpoints and emotionally resonant experiences that transcend mere functional performance.

In light of these insights, the following strategic recommendations are proposed:

- Prioritize the enhancement of social experiences by developing interactive environments such as brand communities, peer engagement platforms, and co-creation opportunities that strengthen emotional bonding among customers.
- Design emotionally and cognitively rich experiences, incorporating storytelling, symbolic value, and personalized content to stimulate both affective involvement and reflective engagement.
- Integrate emotional attachment as a core strategic objective within customer experience initiatives, ensuring that experiential design intentionally fosters emotional ties and not only transactional efficiency.
- Reconceptualize the behavioral dimension of customer experience within service contexts, aligning it more closely with meaningful, observable behaviors that reflect customer participation, advocacy, and brand interaction.
- Adopt comprehensive performance metrics that assess both tangible (functional) outcomes and intangible (emotional) impacts of experience strategies, thereby enabling a more accurate and multidimensional evaluation of customer experience effectiveness.

Furthermore, the study offers valuable directions for future research, suggesting the application of longitudinal designs to examine the evolution of emotional attachment over time. It also encourages the inclusion of moderating variables—such as customer typology, relationship duration, or service type as well as the testing of alternative mediating constructs, such as trust, satisfaction, and brand identification, to broaden the theoretical framework and enhance its predictive robustness.

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