

[Open Peer Review on Qeios](#)

# Relationship Marketing for Obtaining and Retaining Customers in Clothing Stores in Bento Gonçalves

Daniela Baggio, Vinicius Zanchet De Lima

**Funding:** No specific funding was received for this work.

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

## Abstract

The need for good relationship marketing at the current time, to obtain and retain customers in the midst of so much competition, motivated the development of this research. In this way, the relationship between seller and customer became extremely important for the stores to stand out in the market. The study of this subject will be very important for managers, owners and workers in the sector to study and implement this strategy in their stores and thus, gain even more customer loyalty. The objective of the research was to analyze whether clothing stores in Bento Gonçalves are using the Relationship Marketing strategy and its importance for customer loyalty in an increasingly competitive market. The results obtained through a quantitative survey of 80 respondents demonstrate that the clothing trade in Bento Gonçalves needs to invest more in the relationship with its customers, and also in marketing and loyalty strategies, so that they can achieve greater satisfaction and loyalty on the part of its consumers.

**Keywords:** Business; Relationship; Marketing; Loyalty.

## 1. Introduction

With globalization, companies needed to qualify even more to stand out among the competition, and a very important qualification factor was the relationship with their customers, both for loyalty and for obtaining them. Relationships with customers in the new era become essential, as for them to remain loyal depends on how the company/customer bond occurs. Those who offer greater satisfaction than the competition win. (VARGO, LUSCH, 2004).

Based on this need, Relationship Marketing emerged. According to Limeira, (DIAS, 2003, p.301) it is “a marketing strategy that aims to build a lasting relationship between customer and company, based on trust, collaboration, commitment, partnership, investments and mutual benefits, resulting in the optimization of return for the company and its customers”. In this way, by investing in Relationship Marketing, companies also acquire competitive advantages in the market.

At a time when technology comes first, with the promise of anything, anywhere, anytime, the customer now has information in a way never seen before. Technology is transforming the market and organizations need to be aligned with

these technological advances, focusing their entire process on the customer, knowing and meeting requirements are increasingly necessary factors. (MCKENNA, REGIS). The development of the media was extremely important for Marketing. TEDLOW (1996).

According to Vaz (2010), the internet is indispensable for both society and the organizational environment. Digital marketing worked as a tool that boosted several opportunities for organizations, such as operational strategies, communication and mainly in obtaining new customers, as well as in loyalty, ensuring customer satisfaction.

The objective of the research was to analyze whether clothing stores in Bento Gonçalves are using the Relationship Marketing strategy and its importance for customer loyalty in an increasingly competitive market.

To pursue the research objective, this article was divided into 5 topics: after the introduction, in topic 2, the theoretical framework will be presented, which provides a bibliographical review. In topic 3, the methodological aspects used to carry out the research will be addressed. In topic 4, the results achieved in the data analysis will be presented. And finally, in topic 5, the final considerations of the study carried out will be presented.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Marketing

In the 16th century, the market economy was developed, according to Bartels (1976), characterized by human behaviors, where both the buyer and the seller were important for economic and social practices.

With the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, the main objective was to produce at the lowest possible cost, as everything that was produced was consumed. (ROCK; CHRISTENSEN, 1999).

Observing the development of the economy, Ambler (2004:3) states:

*"Marketing has existed since the beginning of commerce, it just wasn't called that way. Merchants didn't simply buy and sell, they developed long-term relationships. They may not have been introspective about their business methods, but if they had not known how to satisfy their customers while making a profit for themselves, the trade would not have survived."*

It was in the 20th century that Marketing emerged as an area separate from the others, with the generalization of the economy, according to Chauvel (2001), this new system radically changed the relations between economy and society. Polanyi (1980) states that Marketing emerges at the moment when the market becomes self-regulated and no longer controlled by the social structure.

Bartels (1976) remembers that it was not only the economy that changed at that time, but also the creation of new products, income, opportunities for initiative and innovation,...

From this, Marketing also emerged as assistance to the sales area, stimulating sales with brochures, advertisements, among other forms of advertising.

Some authors such as Las Casas (2001) and Rocha and Christensen (1999) divide the development of Marketing into three eras. The first is the Era of Production, where the main objective was demand and then supply; the second is the Sales Era, characterized by excess supply, they began to use sales techniques, as companies accumulated a large quantity of products due to large production; and finally the Marketing Era, characterized by relationships with customers and consumer appreciation, producing products based on their desires and needs.

## 2.2. Digital Marketing

Digital Marketing borrowed from traditional Marketing, characterized by strategic, economic and social actions adjusted to the electronic medium, disseminating products and company work in a simple and quick way, and, in addition, providing the user with freedom to browse (Gomes and Reis, 2016).

According to Torres (2018), the birth of the internet provided instant access to information about products and services for the business world.

It is in the 21st century that the knowledge and information revolution is taking place, for UGARTE (2005), these changes affect the world of work, due to high competitiveness and the disappearance of some functions.

Today, the internet reaches all types of people, cultures, nations and socioeconomic profiles (TORRES, 2018). PEÇANHA (2014) states that more than 90% of purchasing processes begin with an online search.

According to Gomes and Reis (2016), one of the great advantages that digital marketing provides is interactivity, providing easy communication and establishing a relationship between the company and the customer. Also bringing the profitability and popularity of the organization as its main objective.

For Furlan and Marinho (2013), social networks are increasingly present in the business field, which seek to retain, attract and interact with their customers.

Digital media have started to help consumers in their decision-making, providing information that facilitates the choice process. Furthermore, the internet has enabled greater speed of transactions, reduced the distance between company and customer, and provided new channels for making purchases (CARO, 2010).

With the digital revolution, social networks are constantly growing, enhancing marketing tools through their direct and indirect interaction resources. It also transformed our concept of space, being able to be virtual and everywhere (KOTLER, 2010).

According to Caro (2010), it is from digital marketing that sensations of desire and even recognition of the problem will be formed, encouraging the individual to complete the purchase, thus becoming important for consumer decisions. It must also include post-sales behavior, creating and maintaining contact with this customer, which is relevant to retaining them.

## 2.3. Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

According to Limeira, 2003, Relationship Marketing is characterized as “a marketing strategy that aims to build a lasting relationship between customer and supplier, based on trust, collaboration, commitment, partnership, investments and mutual benefits”.

Lobo, 2002, explains that any organization needs to understand what CRM means, in order to, in addition to satisfying, exceed expectations, knowing the customer's point of view, resulting in long-term value.

Swift (2001) defines CRM as an “administrative tool for understanding and influencing customer behavior through meaningful communications with the aim of increasing customer retention, sales, loyalty and profitability.”

Analyzing CRM in the Brazilian market, Peppers (2003) pointed out that 52% of organizations did not have formal management of their customer relationships, however 76% of these organizations declared that they would implement it in the next few years.

However, according to Feyo (2001) more than 60% of CRM implementations fail to achieve the objective. Showing us that there is a lack of understanding on the part of managers and administrators about the concepts of relationships and their basic principles.

To introduce Customer Relationship Management into the company, each employee must understand and experience new beliefs and values. Whiteley (1996) states that customer-focused organizations need to undergo a fundamental transformation in organizational culture, that is, a change in beliefs and values.

Peppers, 2003 cites the importance of focusing on the customer and efficient administration with knowledge of CRM to obtain an advantage in the market:

*“A company's real competitive advantage consists of having information about its customers that the competition does not have and being able to quickly transform this knowledge into action. Whoever manages to establish dominant relationships in their market wins.”*

## 3. Methodology

The research method used to develop the analysis is quantitative in nature, carried out through sixteen questions referring to the respondent's relationship with the clothing trade in Bento Gonçalves and three questions referring to the respondent's profile. The sample had 80 respondents.

According to Richardson (1989), “the quantitative method is characterized by the use of quantification, both in the modalities of collecting information and in the treatment of this through statistical techniques, from the simplest to the most complex”.

The study involves the importance of relationship marketing for customer loyalty and acquisition. To collect results, the statistical method was used for data analysis and processing.

## 4. Data Analysis

### 4.1. Sample Characterization

The survey was carried out online, with questions regarding satisfaction, loyalty, service and trust of each respondent in relation to the clothing trade in Bento Gonçalves.

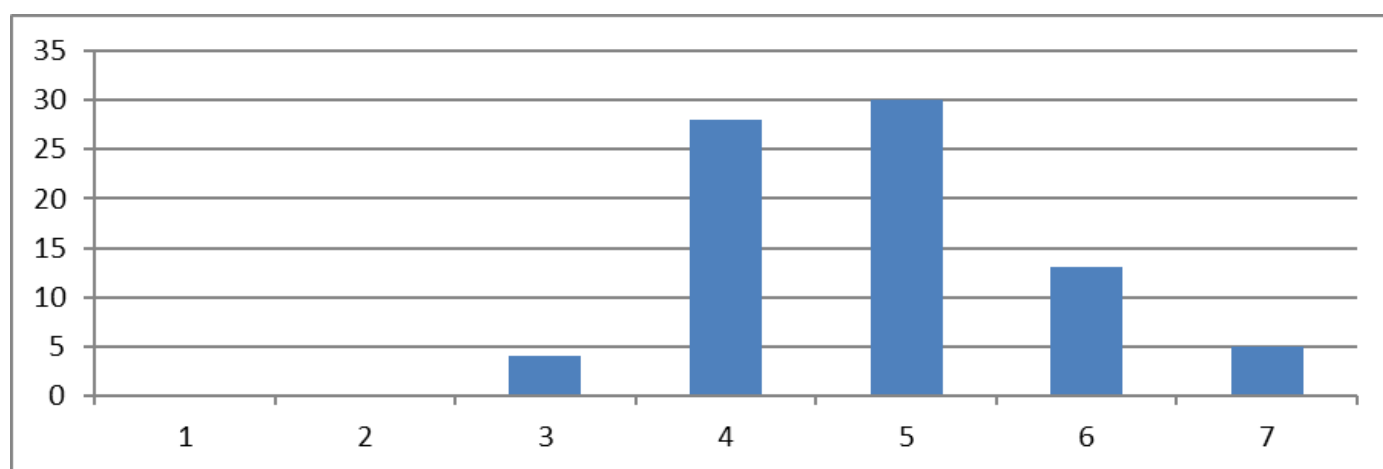
Regarding the gender of the respondents, there is a predominance of females (71.06%) over males (28.04%).

Regarding age, 37 responses were obtained from respondents between 18 and 25 years old, 23 responses from respondents between 26 and 35 years old and 20 responses from respondents between 36 and 48 years old.

An analysis of individual monthly income was carried out in minimum wages, with the options of “Up to R\$ 2,090.00 (2 salaries)” at its opposite ends, which received 37 responses and “More than 20,900.01 (more than 20 salaries)” , to which there was no respondent. The salary range from R\$ 2,090.01 to R\$ 3,135.00 (from 2 to 3 salaries), received 23 responses, from R\$ 3,135.01 to R\$ 5,225.00 (from 3 to 5 salaries)”, 12 questionnaires, and from R\$ 5,225.00 to R\$ 10,450.00 (from 5 to 10 salaries), responsible for 8 deliveries.

The questionnaire was designed with fields to be marked below each statement, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being completely disagree and 7 being completely agree. Therefore, in relation to satisfaction with the clothing trade in Bento Gonçalves, the following statements were answered:

*“I think it’s very good.”*

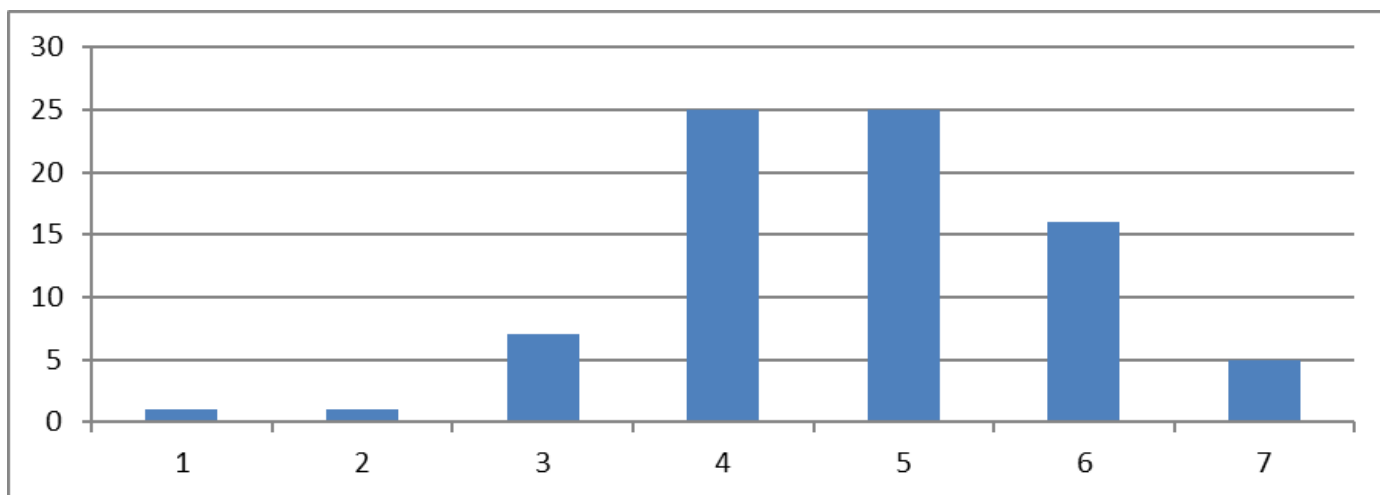


**Figure 1.** Clients satisfaction

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

The graph shows that 37.5% of respondents chose option 5, and shortly after 35% option 4, 16.3% chose option 6, 6.3% option 7, 5% option 3 and options 1 and 2 did not obtain any percentage, which represents that consumers partially agree with the research statement.

*"What I receive from the clothing trade in Bento Gonçalves is exactly what I expected to receive".*

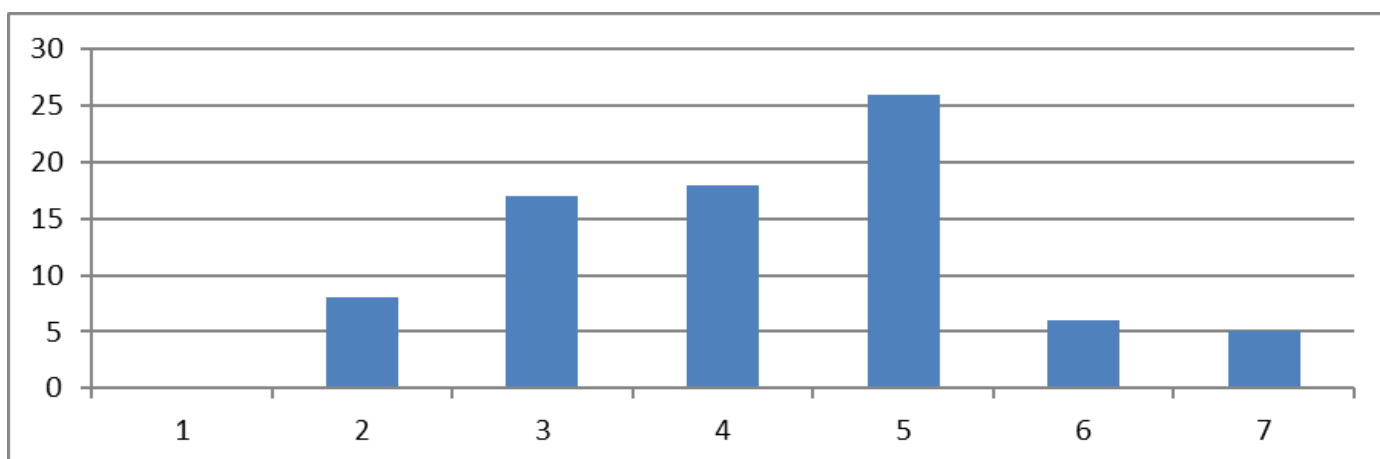


**Figure 2.** Clients satisfaction

Source: Prepared by the author.

The graph shows that options 4 and 5 had the same number of choices, with 31.3% each, 20% chose option 6, 8.8% option 3, 6.3% option 7 and options 1 and 2 had 1.3% each, so consumers also partially agree with the statement.

*"What I receive from this trade exceeds my expectations."*



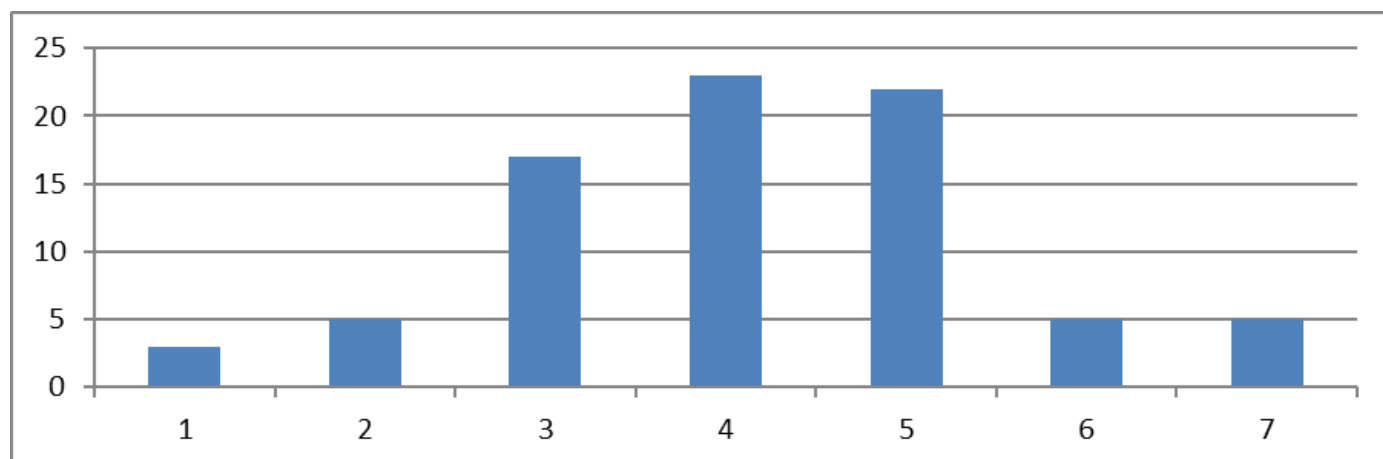
**Figure 3.** Clients satisfaction

Source: Prepared by the author.

The graph shows us that options 5, 4 and 3 prevailed in the question of expectations, with 32.5%, 22.5% and 21.3% of choices respectively.

Regarding the respondent's loyalty to this trade, the questionnaire began with the statement:

*"It really has good prices."*

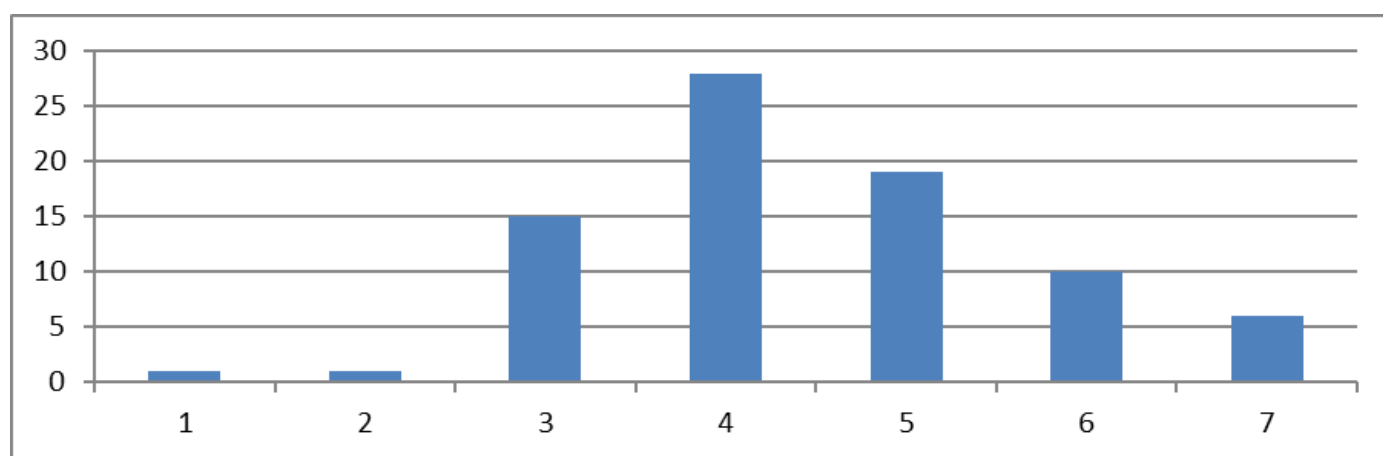


**Figure 4.** Customer loyalty

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

The graph shows that options 4, 5 and 3 were also those that obtained the greatest number of choices among respondents, with 28.7%, 27.5% and 21.3% respectively.

*"I really appreciate Bento's clothing trade."*

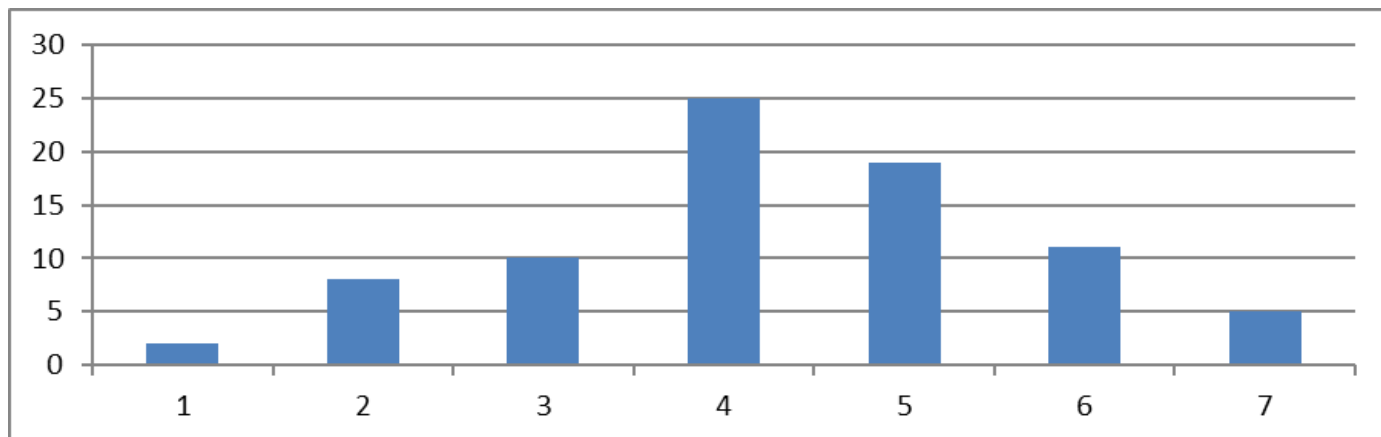


**Figure 5.** Customer loyalty

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

In this regard, it is clear that option 4 prevailed among the others, with 35% of respondents' choices.

*"I have a preference for Bento's clothing trade."*

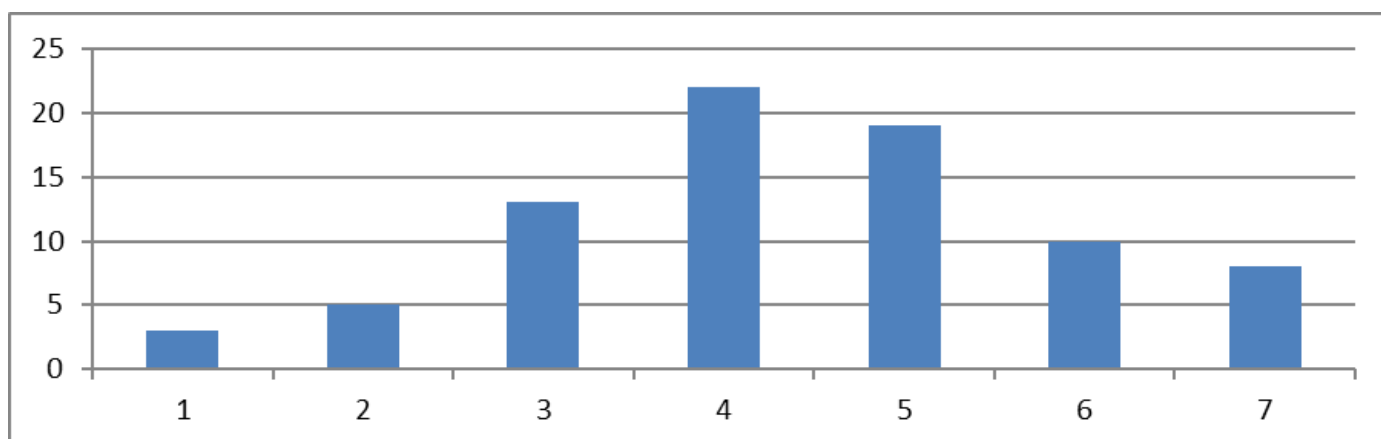


**Figure 6.** Customer loyalty

Source: Prepared by the author.

In terms of preference, option 4 also prevailed, with 31.3% of respondents' choices, after options 5 (23.85%) and 6 (13.8%).

*"I usually recommend clothing stores in Bento to my friends."*



**Figure 7.** Customer loyalty

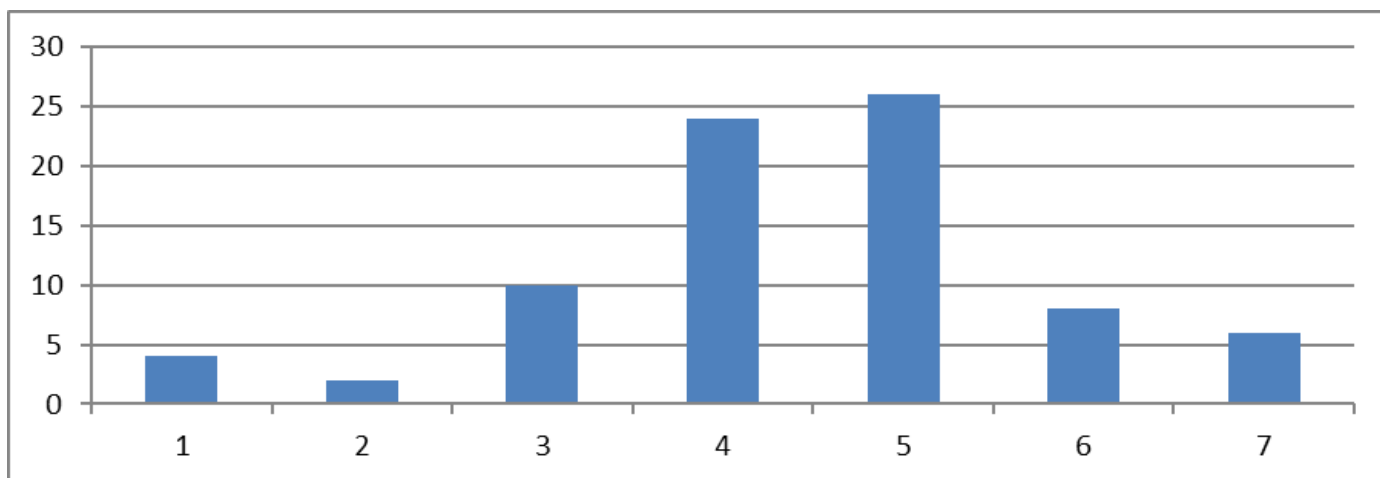
Source: Prepared by the author.

The graph shows us that the response was divided mainly between options 4, 5 and 3, with 27.5%, 23.8% and 16.3% respectively.

Regarding the service provided by the clothing trade in Bento Gonçalves:



*"In general, the clothing trade in Bento has good service."*

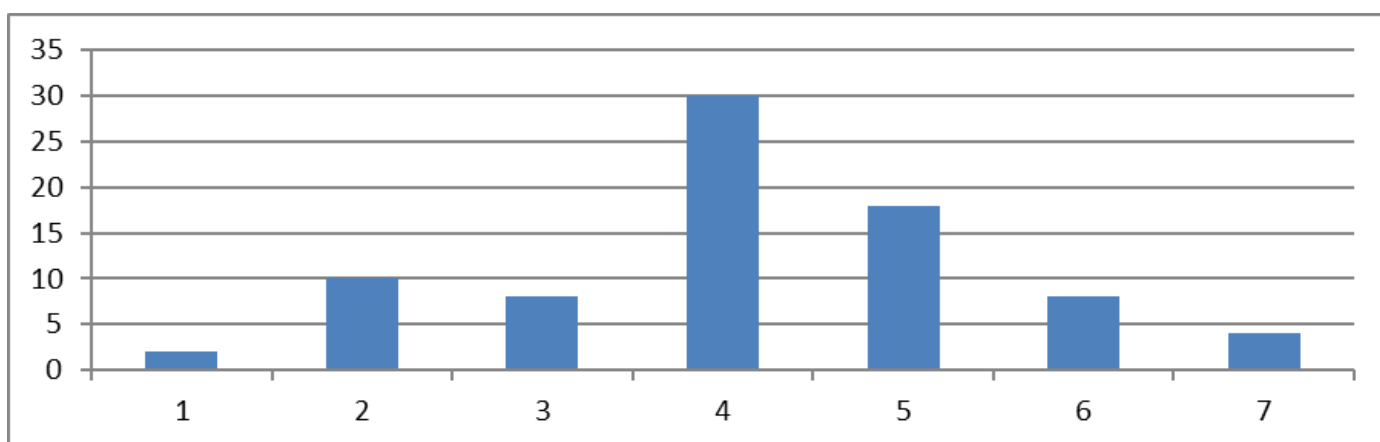


**Figure 8.** Commerce service

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

Analyzing the graph about the service, it is clear that the answers were mainly divided between options 5 (32.5%) and 4 (30%).

*"The clothing business in Bento tends to be concerned with creating a relationship with its customers."*

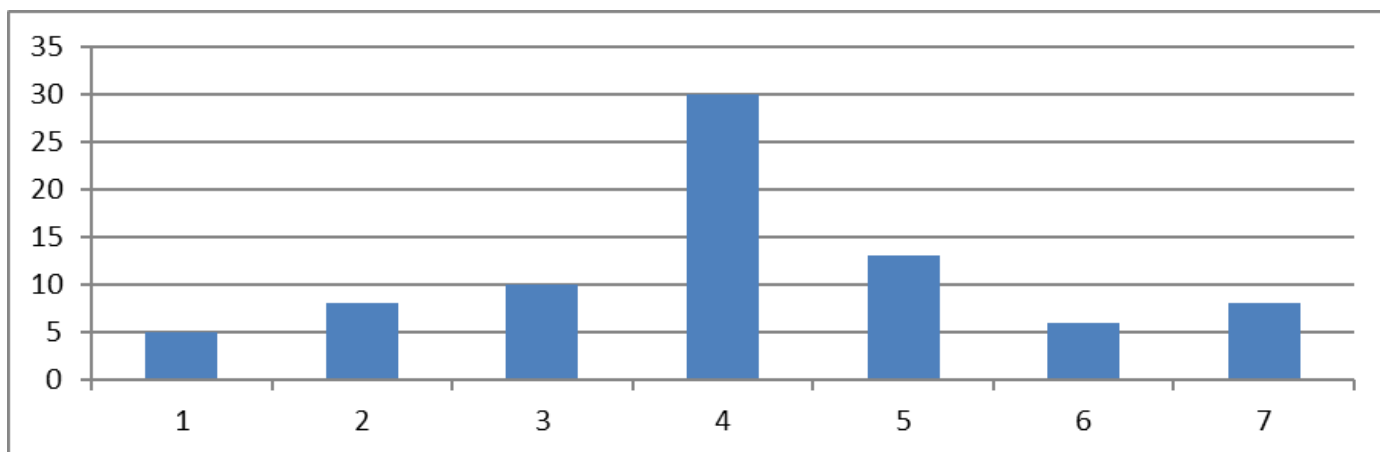


**Figure 9.** Relationship with customers

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

In terms of relationships with customers, option 4 prevailed among the others, with 37% of choices, after option 5 (22.2%).

*"Bento's clothing business has strategies to build customer loyalty."*

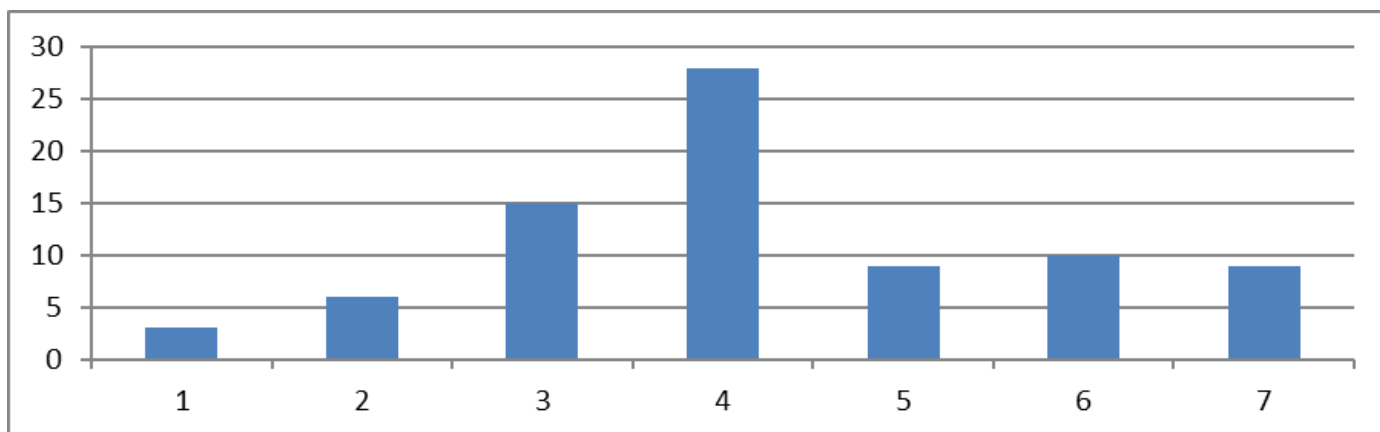


**Figure 10.** Relationship with customers

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

The graph shows that with a big difference, option 4 (partially agree) was the most chosen among respondents in terms of loyalty strategies, with 37% of choices, the next was option 5, with only 16%.

*"I realize that the clothing business in Bento cares and invests in marketing in general."*

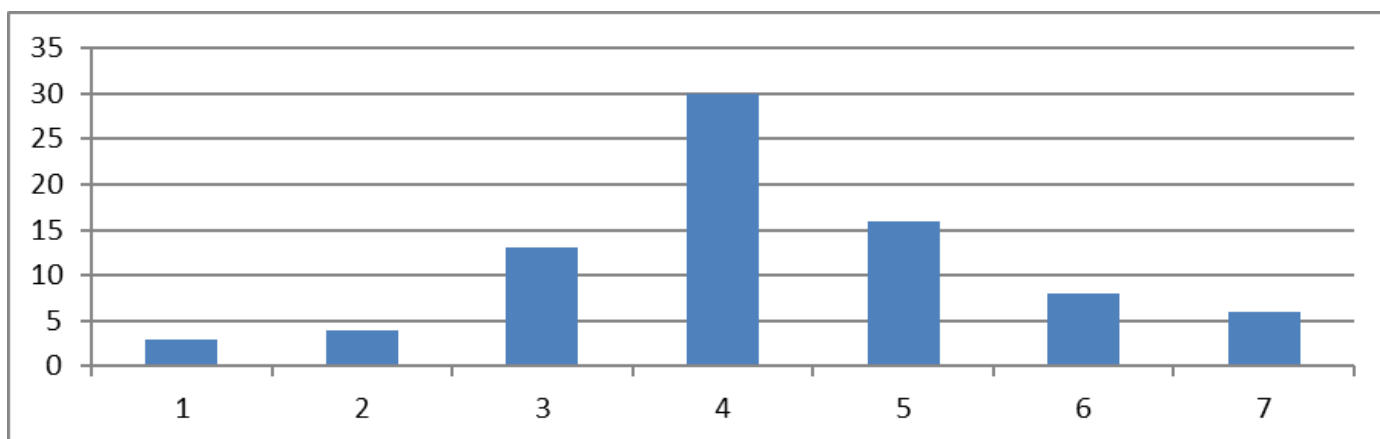


**Figure 11.** Relationship with customers

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

In the question about marketing, options 4 and 3 were the most chosen, with 35% and 18.8% of choices respectively.

*"The reputation of Bento's clothing trade is a motivating factor to remain in a relationship with a store in this trade."*



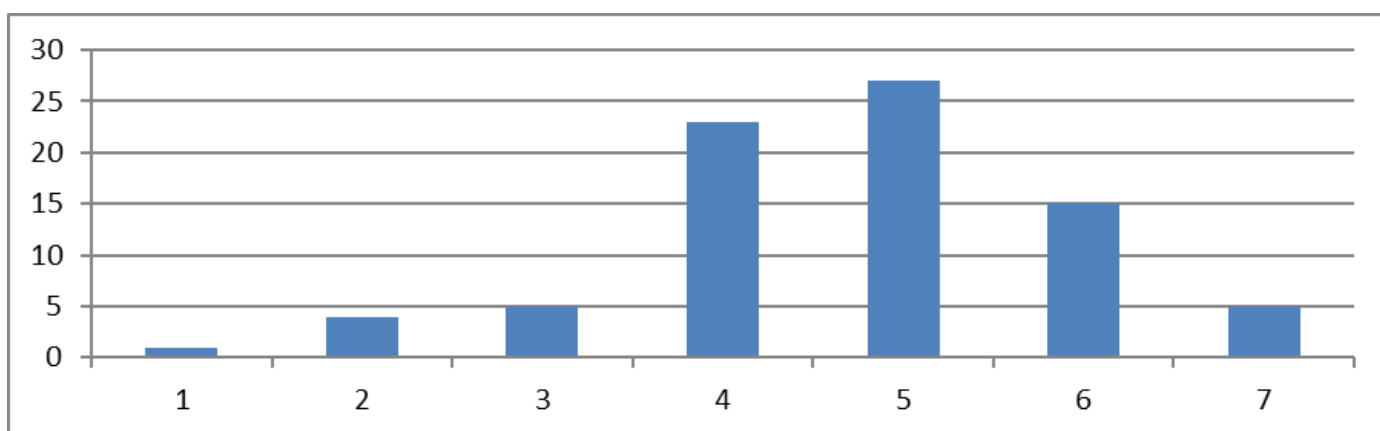
**Figure 12.** Relationship with commerce

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

In terms of reputation, option 4 also stood out among the others, with 37.5% of choices.

Analyzing the confidence of respondents in this trade, we obtained:

*"I always feel safe purchasing products from Bento's clothing store."*

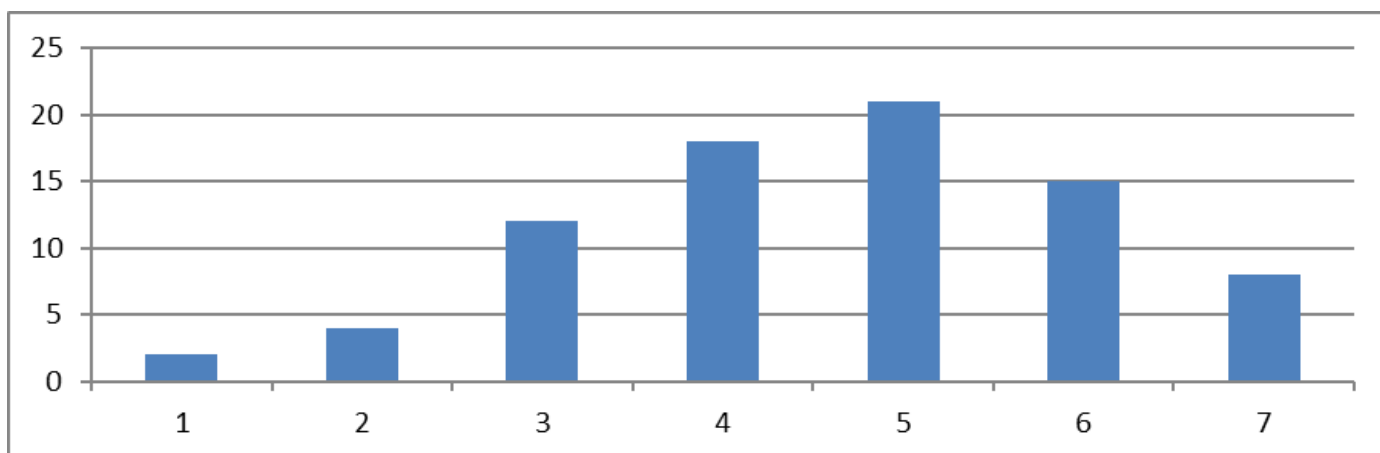


**Figure 13.** Confidence in commerce

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

Regarding security, option 5 was the most chosen with 33.8%, right after option 4 with 28.7%.

*"I try to do my shopping in clothing stores in Bento when they are recommended by someone."*

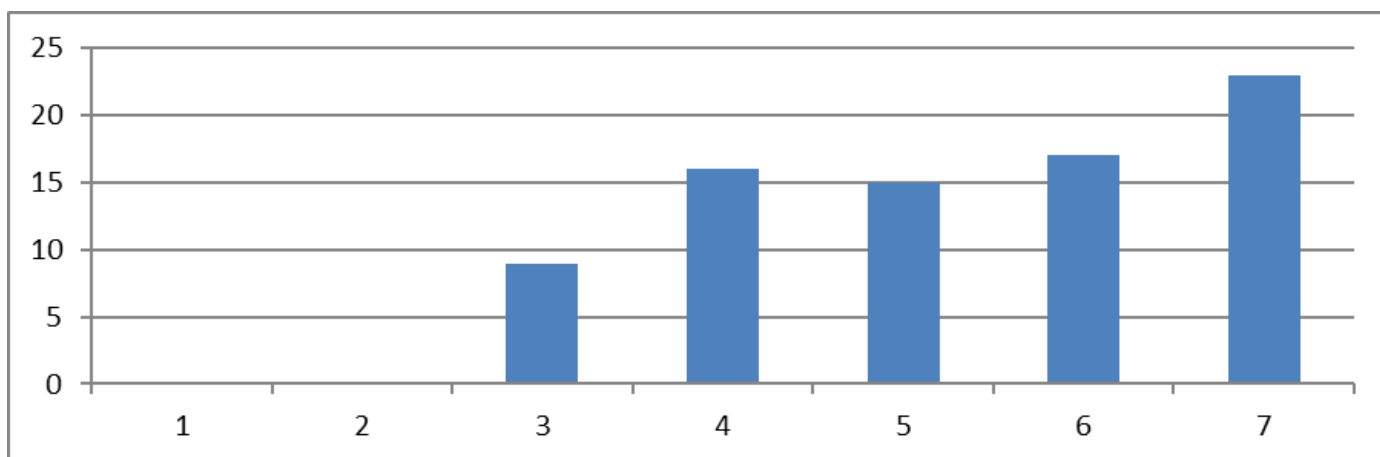


**Figure 14.** Confidence in commerce

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

Analyzing the recommendations, the responses were divided mainly between options 5 (26.3%), 4 (22.5%) and 6 (18.8%).

*"I try to buy my products in clothing stores in Bento that convey professionalism when making a purchase."*

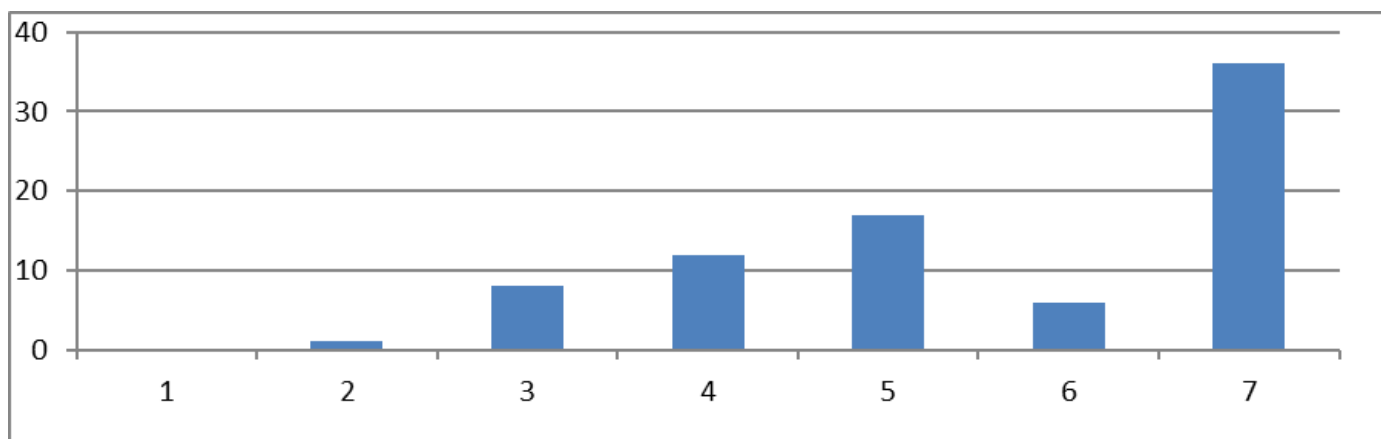


**Figure 15.** Professionalism

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

As you can see, consumers look for stores that convey professionalism, with option 7 being the most chosen, with 28.7% of choices, right after option 6 (21.3%).

*"I always try to buy from clothing stores in Bento that have communication available to answer questions and good service."*



**Figure 16.** Communication and service

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

Communication and good service are also essential, option 7 was the most chosen, with 45% of choices.

## 4.2. Results Presentation

Analyzing the data obtained from the research, it is clear that the clothing trade in Bento Gonçalves needs to improve in some areas, mainly with regard to marketing and relationships, such as gaining greater loyalty from its customers, and in this question, the majority of respondents chose option 4 in all questions, and from 1 to 7, it is a slightly low average.

The clothing business in Bento Gonçalves needs to significantly improve its relationship with customers, gain greater loyalty and trust, invest in marketing strategies, use tools to obtain and retain consumers, such as CRM, and also, loyalty programs, which can be points programs, rewards, discounts,...

Knowing each customer's profile and preferences makes the customer feel unique and valued, and is extremely important for them to acquire a lasting and reciprocal relationship with the company.

Presenting professionalism and having open communication are also points that, as shown in the research, are important when choosing the store to make the purchase.

In relation to overall satisfaction, the average response was option 5, which shows that even with the factors to be improved, from a bird's eye view the population is satisfied with this business in the city.

## 5. Final Considerations

As we can see throughout the article, marketing has been developing since the beginning of commerce, it has always existed, it was just not called that way. In the 20th century it began to be seen as an area separate from the others.

Realizing its importance for the sales area, digital Marketing and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) were created, thus new strategies for obtaining and retaining customers began to be used efficiently. However, many

companies still do not have this management tool.

The objective of the research was to analyze whether clothing stores in Bento Gonçalves are using the Relationship Marketing strategy and its importance for customer loyalty in an increasingly competitive market.

After carrying out the research, it was concluded that even with all the possibilities of carrying out marketing, Bento Gonçalves' commerce still needs to improve and invest more in strategies to obtain and retain its customers.

This way, it will be possible for businesses to gain the loyalty of their consumers, as analyzing the questionnaire is a point that also needs to be improved.

In this increasingly competitive market, it is important to search for potential customers through Marketing, the introduction of Customer Relationship Management, and also, investment in strategies to build customer loyalty, creating a lasting relationship, based on mutual benefits., with trust, collaboration, commitment and partnership.

As an indication for future research, it is recommended to further study the importance of Marketing, and carry out a survey with a greater number of respondents, to obtain increasingly faithful results.

## References

- AMBLER, T. The new dominant logic of Marketing: views of the elephant. London: Center for Marketing of London Business School, 2004. Working Paper, n. 04-903.
- BARTELS, R. The History of MarketingThought. Ohio, 1976.
- BRAMBILLA, Fábio; PEREIRA, Luciana; PEREIRA, Paula. Relationship Marketing: Definition and Applications. Ingepro – Innovation, Management and Production, v. 02, no. 12, 2010.
- CARO, A. Consumer Behavior and Online Purchasing: a multicultural analysis. Thesis (Postgraduate) - University of São Paulo, 2010.
- CASTRO, NS; BITTENCOURT, JA; KEYS, FAV; BARREIRO, JHLCD; REIS, C, V, S. The influence of digital marketing on consumer choice. Symposium on Excellence in Management and Technology, 2015.
- CHAUVEL, MA The History of MarketingThought and “The Great Transformation” of Polanyi: How To Reconcile Social and Economic Interests. In: BALAS CONFERENCE, 2001. San Diego, 2001.
- DIAS, Sergio. Marketing management. São Paulo: Saraiva, 2003.
- FEYO, MAN; ZENONE, LC CRM: Concepts and strategies, São Paulo: Atlas, p.86, 2001.
- FURLAN, B.; MARINHO, B. Corporate social networks. Instituto Develop IT: courses for digital training, 2013. Available at: [www.institutodesenvolveti.org](http://www.institutodesenvolveti.org).
- GOMES, CF; REIS, HM Digital marketing: websites x social networks in Brazil.
- FATEC Taquaritinga Technological Interface Magazine, P. 53-62, 2016.
- JÚNIOR, AG; SANTADE, HO; PIZZINATTO, NK; FARAH, OE; CRM – Concepts and Application Methods in Relationship Marketing. National Meeting of Production Engineering, 2004.

- KOTLER, P.; KELLER, KL Marketing Management. 12th Edition. São Paulo: Prentice Hall. 2010.
- LAS CASAS, AL Marketing: an introduction. Marketing: Concepts, Exercises and Cases. São Paulo: Editora Atlas, 2001.
- LIMEIRA, TMV; DIAS, SR Marketing Management. São Paulo: Saraiva, p.7/301, 2003.
- LOBO, A. Relationship Marketing. São Paulo, SSJ Seminars, 2002.
- McKenna, Regis. Successful Strategies for the Age of the Customer. Rio de Janeiro: Campus, 1992.
- PAVONI, G.; ROCHA, Q.; VENDRAME, F.; SARRACENI, J.; VENDRAME, MC Relationship Marketing. 2009.
- PEÇANHA, V. Digital Marketing: What is it, anyway? Content Marketing. December, 2014. Available at: < <http://marketingdeconteudo.com/marketing-digital/> >
- PEPPERS, D.; ROGERS, M. CRM gains strength in the country. HSM Management Magazine, n. 38, vol. 3, year 7, May/June, p.49-59, 2003.
- POLANYI, K. The Great Transformation: the origins of our time. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Campus, 1980.
- RICHARDSON, RJ Social research: methods and techniques. São Paulo: Atlas, 1989.
- ROCHA, A.; CHRISTENSEN, C. The concept of Marketing. Marketing: Theory and Practice in Brazil. São Paulo: Atlas, 1999.
- ROSA, RO; CASAGRANDA, YG; SPINELLI, FEThe importance of digital marketing using the influence of consumer behavior. Applied Technology Magazine, v. 6, no. 2, p. 28-39, 2017.
- SALIBY, P. Relationship marketing: the new marketing of the new competitive era. Management Technologies, v. 4, no. 3, p. 6-12, 1997.
- SANTOS, T.; LIMA, MVV; BRUNETTA, DF; FABRIS, C.; SELEME, A. The development of marketing: a historical perspective. USP management magazine, v. 16, no. 1, p. 89-102, 2009.
- SWIFT, R. CRM: Customer Relationship Management, the revolutionary Customer Relationship Marketing, Rio de Janeiro: Prentice Hall, p.3-4/12/331, 2001.
- TEDLOW, RS New and Improved: the Story of Mass Marketing in America. Harvard Business School Press, 1996.
- TORRES, C. The digital marketing bible. 2, ed. São Paulo: Novatec, 2018.
- UGARTE, MCD The utilitarian body: from the industrial revolution to the information revolution. International symposium civilizing process: Technology and civilization, 9, Ponta Grossa, 2005.
- VARGO, Stephen L.; LUSCH, Robert F. Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing. Journal of Marketing, v.68, p.1-17, 2004.
- VAZ, Conrado Adolpho: The 8Ps of Digital Marketing-Your Strategic Guide to Digital Marketing. Publisher: Novatec.
- WHITELEY, R. The company completely focused on the customer, Rio de Janeiro, Campus, 1996.