

THEMATIC ATMOSPHERICS WITHIN SMALL COFFEE SHOPS: A STUDY

By

Brittany Dobill

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Liberty University, School of Business

May, 2020

Abstract

Coffee shops represent a popular form of business in today's economy. Atmospherics represent a tool used within all types of businesses including coffee shops. Customer loyalty represents a key goal in marketing and business. Within this study, the researcher combined the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. This study consisted of a qualitative case study exploring the impact of atmospherics within coffee shops and customer loyalty. The researcher conducted several interviews and observations during the field study. The main themes that emerged from the field study are comfortable, unique not a franchise, and reoccurring customers. Within this writing, the researcher will outline the problem, research questions, the methods utilized within the study, the field study, and the findings. The researcher found that employees of coffee shops and customers of coffee shops desired atmospherics related to comfort and uniqueness.

Keywords: Atmospherics, coffee shops, customer loyalty, marketing, comfortable

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Acknowledgements

Throughout this journey, several people supported my dreams. First, I must acknowledge my husband and children. Dustin, without you, this dream would have never been possible. You supported my dreams and sacrificed for this journey. I cannot thank you enough. Cody, Carter, and Sadie, you guys are one of the biggest reasons for this process. You guys rallied behind me and supported me. I hope that you can see that anything is possible as long as you work hard! Dream with all your heart kids! My family is also another group that should be acknowledged. Thank you for your never-ending support. My parents taught me values that carry me throughout life and this project. To my sister, thank you for always being there for me. This project is dedicated to my husband, kids, parents, and sister. Several of my friends and colleagues also created a support system throughout this process. Thank you for the support and advice along the way. Many of my friends provided support and cheered me on. Many of my colleagues gave advice and supported me as well. Dr. Chis Huseman, thank you for completing this journey with me. Thank you for pushing me, providing feedback, and providing advice along the way. Dr. Colleen McLaughlin, thank you for your great feedback. Dr. Edward Moore, thank you for your feedback and leadership throughout this process. My support group at Liberty University provided not only feedback but guidance throughout the process. Several others supported me throughout this journey as well. Please know that I appreciate every one of you.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

This study detailed coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Within this section of the writing, the following information will be addressed: the background of the problem, the problem statement, the purpose statement, the nature of the study, the research questions, the conceptual framework, the definition of terms, the assumptions, limitations, delimitations, the significance of the study, and a review of academic literature.

Background of the Problem

Patrons frequent coffee shops on a regular basis. Sometimes, coffee shops use atmospherics as part of the coffee shop experience. However, not using atmospherics within coffee shops impacts customer loyalty (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). The problem to be addressed within this study is the reduction of customer loyalty by not using targeted atmospherics within small coffee shops in the Midwest. Customer loyalty represents a major focus in business operations and marketing (Han, Nguyen, Song, Chua, Lee, & Kim, 2018). Studies indicate that a reduction of customer loyalty occurs because of a reduction in atmospherics or experience (Han et al., 2018; Kühn & Bothma, 2018). Therefore, if atmospherics impact customer loyalty in coffee shops, this phenomenon should be explored and documented. This study represents a problem that can impact the future of businesses, marketing, and coffee shops. Therefore, this study represents ideas that could be significant for the future. The focus of the study will be an exploration of small coffee shops and the atmospheric techniques used to generate customer loyalty. Scholarly literature details coffee shops and the operations within coffee shops, the products that coffee shops sell, and the services that coffee shops offer (Bui, Nguyen, & Ngoc, 2017; Han et al., 2018; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Scholarly literature details overall atmospherics, the impact of atmospherics, and types of atmospherics (Kotler, 1973; Spence,

Puccinelli, Grewal, & Roggeveen, 2014). Scholarly literature details the definition of customer loyalty, types of customer loyalty, and how customer loyalty is achieved within business (Persson, 2013). However, little literature combines the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and the impact on customer loyalty. Literature indicates that atmospherics should be used to promote business success (Bui, Nguyen, & Ngoc, 2017; Han et al., 2018; Kotler, 1973; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015).

Coffee shops represent one essential element of this study. Coffee shops represent a business that is popular in today's economy (Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012). Many customers visit coffee shops (Wright, Zeltmann, & Griffin, 2017). Visitors of coffee shops enjoy products sold and the environment that surrounds coffee shops. Some visitors prefer a quick and convenient coffee, while others prefer to relax in the setting of a coffee shop. Coffee shops can be operated as small independently owned shops or large chains. For example, Starbucks operates in the economy with many locations (Haskova, 2015). Some coffee shops implement atmospherics, while other coffee shops do not implement atmospherics within operations. Coffee shops may implement atmospherics for many purposes. The focus of this study remained on small coffee shops located in the Midwest.

Atmospherics represent another essential element of this study. Businesses have utilized atmospherics for several years (Kotler, 1973). However, not all businesses utilize atmospherics as a marketing tool (Kotler, 1973). Atmospherics represent the atmosphere, décor, ambience, sounds, sights, colors, smells, and other elements surrounding a business or product (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2013). Examples of popular businesses that implement atmospherics are Rainforest Café and Bass Pro Shops. Any type of business can use atmospherics (Kotler, 1973). Hotels, theme parks, restaurants, malls, stores, coffee shops, and other businesses represent

examples of businesses that may utilize atmospherics. Atmospherics can play a role in the overall marketing plan for a business organization. Atmospherics can serve many purposes for business organizations (Grayson & McNeill, 2009). For example, atmospherics may or may not encourage a customer to purchase from a business. Atmospherics create an experience that leads to joy while shopping and atmospherics influence customer behavior (Bagdare, 2014).

Atmospherics may be one of the most significant and influencing aspects of business operations (Grayson & McNeill, 2009). Therefore, atmospherics can play a significant role for the business organization. This study focused on the impact that atmospherics have on customer loyalty within coffee shops.

Customer loyalty represents another important element of this study. Customer loyalty is when customers return to a business, pay more for products, continue to purchase, and do not stray from the particular business (Cossío-Silva, Revilla-Camacho, Vega-Vázquez, & Palacios-Florencio, 2016). Loyalty is a significant part of marketing but achieving loyalty can be very challenging (Han et al., 2018). Customer loyalty creates a significant competitive advantage for a business (Cossío-Silva, Revilla-Camacho, Vega-Vázquez, & Palacios-Florencio, 2016). Loyal customers become profitable customers (Persson, 2013). Customer loyalty offers many benefits to the business organization. This study focused on the impact that atmospherics have on customer loyalty in coffee shops.

The topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and the impact on customer loyalty represent the background of this study. Coffee shops represent the location of the study. Atmospherics and customer loyalty offer several benefits to a business organization. For example, atmospherics tend to create memories or experiences for the customer (Bagdare, 2014). This could potentially lead to customer purchases. Loyalty can create competitive advantages for the

business (Cossío-Silva, Revilla-Camacho, Vega-Vázquez, & Palacios-Florencio, 2016).

Therefore, the researcher of this study explored the impact of atmospherics on customer loyalty within small coffee shops in the Midwest. One study emphasizes that businesses must identify what type of atmospherics influence consumer behavior (Grayson & McNeill, 2009). Some businesses may identify that sounds impact the customer. Other businesses may identify that smells impact the customers. Sometimes a combination of atmospheric elements must be used to impact the customer. Therefore, businesses can identify what atmospheric techniques impact consumers to become loyal customers. Further, coffee shops can identify what atmospheric techniques impact consumers to become loyal customers. Also, coffee shops and businesses can realize that the lack of use of atmospherics may also impact the customer. The lack of atmospherics may lead to positive or negative consumption experiences and may impact customer loyalty. The objectives addressed within this study explored the lack of atmospherics and the impact on customer loyalty within small coffee shops. Current customers of coffee shops in the Midwest were used as participants in the study. Managers, employees, and owners of coffee shops were also be used as participants in this study.

Within this study, several questions pertaining to coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty were addressed. One study indicated that new marketing mix elements like atmospherics should be studied in future studies (Bui, Nguyen, & Ngoc, 2017). The same study indicated that all types of coffee shops should be studied (Bui, Nguyen, & Ngoc, 2017). For instance, small coffee shops and coffee shops in various locations, like the Midwest should be studied. The researcher explored information on how managers and owners of small coffee shops include atmospherics within the overall marketing plan to address customer loyalty. The researcher attempted to address information on specific atmospheric techniques used and the

impacts of atmospheric elements on customer loyalty. The researcher also tried to obtain information on how customers feel about atmospheric techniques. Current customers were chosen at random to participate in the interview process. Customers had the choice to participate or decline the interview process. The researcher attempted to explore information about how customer loyalty is evaluated. Atmospherics and customer loyalty may be based off of perceptions and unique situations. Therefore, a qualitative case study was used for this study.

Problem Statement

The general problem to be addressed is the reduction of customer loyalty when businesses in the coffee shop industry do not use atmospherics as part of overall marketing efforts (Bui, Nguyen, & Ngoc, 2017; Han et al., 2018; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Customers appreciate quality and the customer experience; therefore, the lack of atmospherics and customer experience reduces customer loyalty (Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Loyalty serves as one of the most challenging areas in the coffee shop industry (Han et al., 2018). Customer loyalty may be guided by customer experiences and responses (Han et al., 2018). Despite the current use of atmospheric techniques within business organizations, much of the previous research has not emphasized atmospherics from a marketing perspective (Bagdare, 2014; Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018; Kotler, 1973; Spence, Puccinelli, Grewal, & Roggeveen, 2014). Atmospherics within a business organization impacts the customer experience within business and marketing efforts (Bagdare, 2014; Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018). Several academic studies detail atmospherics within business (Kotler, 1973; Spence, Puccinelli, Grewal, & Roggeveen, 2014). Marketing efforts within all businesses and coffee shops are needed to attract customers (Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012). Utilizing atmospherics within coffee shops has not become a universal tool for all coffee shops (Han et al., 2018). Coffee shops emphasize

brand loyalty and the customer experience as part of their marketing plan (Han et al., 2018).

Atmospherics from a marketing and managerial perspective will serve as a focus of this study.

The specific problem to be addressed is the reduction of customer loyalty because of not using thematic atmospherics as a marketing tool within small coffee shops in the Midwest.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the relationship between customer loyalty and the use of thematic atmospherics as a marketing tool within small coffee shops in the Midwest. This study adds to the current literature and knowledge within the topics of marketing, coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. A qualitative case study was used to explore atmospherics within small coffee shops and the relationship of customer loyalty because of atmospherics. The emphasis of the study was to explore the effects of coffee shops using targeted atmospherics and the impact on customer loyalty. Targeted atmospherics can be defined as specific atmospherics designed to influence customers, profits, and customer loyalty. Enhancing customer loyalty through atmospherics within marketing strategies in coffee shops could lead to increased revenue (Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012). Customer loyalty improves with the experience of the customer (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). The study included examinations of previous literature, interviews, and observations. The problem was explored through a case study within several small coffee shops within the Midwest. Stakeholders from the coffee shops served as the participants of the study. Stakeholders were represented by customers of coffee shops, owners of coffee shops, management of coffee shops, marketers of coffee shops, and employees of coffee shops.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative case study was used in this study. Case studies often represent exploratory studies (Yin, 2014). Coffee shops offer unique and individualized situations that allow for an exploratory study. This section of the writing contains a discussion of the method, a discussion of the design, and the summary of the nature of the study. Two of the proposed coffee shops to be used in the case were in Centralia, Illinois, and Dowell, Illinois. Another option for a coffee shop was in Benton, Illinois. Other coffee shops to be observed and used in the study were coffee shops near St. Louis, Missouri. A coffee shop located in New Baden, Illinois was a proposed coffee shop. Also, a coffee shop located in O'Fallon, Illinois was an option for a potential coffee shop. The researcher needed to obtain and gain enough information to make the case study valuable. The point of obtaining enough information for saturation was desired. Observing at many coffee shops helped to gain enough information for a valid study. Also, using several participants at each location helped to gain enough information for a valid study. The researcher planned to initiate contact to gain approval for the study. If one or any of these coffee shops declined the study, the researcher had a few backup alternatives.

Discussion of Method

A qualitative study represented the chosen method for this study. The researcher attempts to explore and understand the individual situation within a qualitative study (Tufford & Newman, 2010). The researcher attempts to understand complex and unique environments within a qualitative study (Stake, 2010). A quantitative study was not chosen because this study carried a subjective and holistic nature. These specific characteristics fit a qualitative study; therefore, a qualitative study fits this study. Within quantitative research the researcher experiments with a systematic study exploring numbers or statistics (Watson, 2015). In

quantitative research the study aims to find linear relationships, logistic regression, or equation modeling (Creswell, 2014). A quantitative study was not chosen because this study explored a unique environment and linear relationships may have been difficult to obtain. A mixed methods study was not chosen because a mixed method study uses both qualitative and quantitative methods. This study used only qualitative characteristics. Because many coffee shops are unique, a qualitative study was used to explore and understand customer behavior due to marketing techniques and atmospherics within small coffee shops.

This paragraph contains a brief discussion on quantitative research and mixed methods research and why those methods were not chosen for this study. Quantitative research uses logistic regression, linear relationships, or equation modeling within quantitative research (Creswell, 2014). Hard numbers, variables and statistics are often analyzed within quantitative research. Experiments with many variables are often conducted within quantitative research (Creswell, 2014). This study used rich, and descriptive information that may not allow for logistic regression or equation modeling. Mixed methods research uses both types of studies. For example, a mixed methods study may use qualitative information and quantitative information. This study used only qualitative information.

Discussion of Design

A case study represents the chosen design of this study. Case studies explore in-depth, real life situations (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). Coffee shops represent in-depth, real life situations. Therefore, this study aligns well with the Seawright and Gerring (2008) statement regarding case studies. Information obtained was rich and on a case by case basis making a case study appropriate. Case studies represent complex social situations (Yin, 2014). Many coffee shops take advantage of complex, social situations. Case studies portray situational

environments (Stake, 2010). Most coffee shops take on a situational and unique role. A case within a case study represents a larger body of cases (Elman, Gerring, & Mahoney, 2016). The coffee shops chosen in this case study represented a larger body of coffee shops. Information obtained within this study represented coffee shops and the impact on customer loyalty because of atmospherics. The other qualitative designs were not chosen because this study fits well with a case study. Ethnographic studies attempt to define a shared culture (Goulding, 2005). Phenomenological studies attempt to explore complex issues that may not be obvious (Goulding, 2005). Grounded theory studies use qualitative measures to create and describe a new theory (Corbin, 2017). Narrative studies take on the storyteller role (Holley & Colyar, 2009). Every small coffee shop seems to use unique and individual characteristics; therefore, a case study fits well with the subject of this study.

The following paragraphs detail the types of qualitative studies that were not chosen for this study. Ethnographic studies represent one type of qualitative study. An ethnographic study was not chosen for this study. Goulding (2005) describes ethnographic studies as studies that describe a shared culture. Coffee shops often have a culture within the individual coffee shop, but the cultures are often unique. Ethnographic studies often represent shared patterns of a cultural group (Creswell, 2014). Coffee shops do not represent a cultural group. Therefore, an ethnographic study did not align with this study about coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty.

Phenomenological studies represent one type of qualitative study. A phenomenological study was not chosen for this study. Goulding (2005) emphasized that phenomenological studies try to explore extraordinarily complex issues. Creswell (2014) described phenomenological studies as studies that describe a lived experience. This study about coffee shops, atmospherics,

and customer loyalty does not describe a lived experience. Therefore, a phenomenological study did not provide a valuable fit with this study.

Grounded theory studies represent another type of qualitative study. A grounded theory study was not chosen for this study. Corbin (2017) described a grounded theory study as a study that uses qualitative methods to describe a theory or create a theory. Creswell (2014) described grounded theory studies as studies that derive a theory through qualitative measures particularly from views of participants of the study. This study about coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty did not derive a theory. Further, a grounded theory study did not align with this study.

Narrative studies represent another type of qualitative study. A narrative study was not chosen for this study. A narrative study tells a story, and the researcher acts as a storyteller (Holley & Colyar, 2009). Narrative studies explain a story in chronological order (Creswell, 2014). This study about coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty did not describe a story in chronological order. Therefore, a narrative study did not fit with this study.

Summary of Nature of the Study

A qualitative case study represents the chosen method and design for this study. Coffee shops often provide unique and holistic characteristics. Within a case study a researcher analyzes a case by collecting information (Creswell, 2014). The researcher analyzed several cases within coffee shops while detailing atmospherics and customer loyalty. Therefore, a qualitative case study represents the chosen design and method. Contained in this section is a discussion of the method, and a discussion of the design. The reason for choosing each method and each design was discussed in this section. Also, the reasons for not choosing the other methods and designs were discussed in this section.

Research Questions

RQ1. How do managers and owners of small coffee shops in the Midwest include atmospherics within the overall marketing plan to address customer loyalty?

RQ1a. What specific atmospheric techniques are used within small coffee shops in the Midwest?

RQ1b. How is the customer experience influenced by atmospherics within the marketing plan?

RQ2. How is customer loyalty impacted by atmospherics within small coffee shops in the Midwest?

RQ2a. How do customers feel about atmospherics within small coffee shops in the Midwest?

RQ2b. What specific techniques are used to evaluate customer loyalty from an atmospheric perspective?

RQ2c. How is customer loyalty impacted with a reduction of atmospherics?

RQ2d. What other elements impact customer loyalty in coffee shops?

Conceptual Framework

The main concepts and themes that this study focused on are small coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. The three concepts were combined so that the reader can focus on the impact of atmospherics and customer loyalty within small coffee shops. Existing knowledge does not combine these three concepts. Therefore, this study created new knowledge combining the three concepts of small coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Small coffee shops were defined as a small business organization that the main purpose of the organization is to serve and sell coffee and coffee beverages to patrons (Tumanan & Lansangan,

2012). Atmospherics were defined as the overall ambiance, design, cues, and sensorial elements within a business (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2013). Customer loyalty was defined as a customer's favorable behavior and attitude of repeat actions and purchases (Watson, Beck, Henderson, & Palmatier, 2015). The main emphasis of this study was from a customer's perspective seeking how patrons of small coffee shops view atmospherics to influence customer loyalty. This study addressed the research questions by exploring how small coffee shops use or do not use atmospherics to impact the idea of customer loyalty. Marketing includes topics in atmospherics, customer loyalty, and business. Coffee shops represent a business organization that uses marketing techniques. The study sought to explore if coffee shops use atmospherics within marketing to attract loyal customers. Anticipated outcomes within the study were that the lack of atmospherics within small coffee shops reduces the amount of customer loyalty. Atmospherics will be perceived and observed. Customer loyalty often becomes one of the most difficult tasks in the coffee shop industry (Han et al., 2018). One idea that was explained is that many small coffee shops operate in a situational and unique manner.

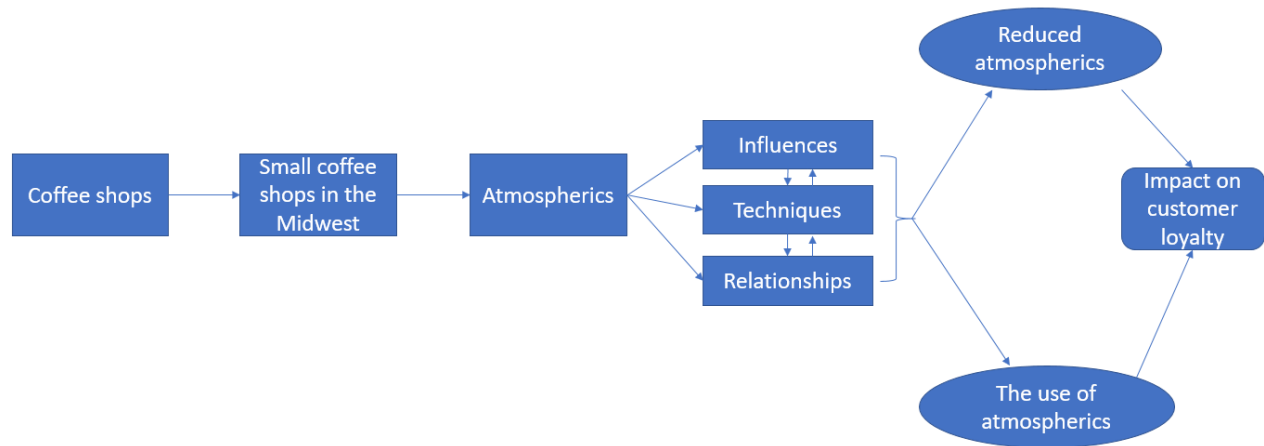


Figure 1. Relationships between concepts

Definition of Terms

Within this study, some terms needed to be defined. The following terms represented terms being defined.

Small- A small business can be defined as a company who employs five hundred or less employees depending on the industry that the company operates in (Small Business Administration: Definition of Size, 2019).

Atmospherics- Smells, sights, noises, sounds, decorations, character, and the overall experience describe components within atmospherics (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2013).

Midwest- The states in the middle of the United States of America. The states represented in the Midwest are Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota (Census Bureau: Maps, 2019).

Marketing tool- Any tool that helps generate a customer experience, memory, visit, or purchase.

The number of choices that customers face in today's economy are limitless; tools must be used to influence customer actions (Milman, 2013). Examples of marketing tools could be advertising, promotions, and many other tools.

Customer loyalty- The attitudes and behaviors that generate repeat visits, repeat purchases, and repeat actions from customers (Watson, Beck, Henderson, & Palmatier, 2015).

Targeted atmospherics- Specific atmospherics designed to influence customers, profits, and customer loyalty.

Experience- A holistic and sensory event that serves as a memory for a person (Yoon, 2013).

Shopping is now more than just purchasing a product, customers now participate in an experience (Yoon, 2013).

A small coffee shop was defined as one that is independently owned and employs less than fifty employees. This study narrowed the number of employees from smaller than 500 employees to smaller than 50 employees for small coffee shops. The purpose for narrowing the study to fifty or fewer employees was because small, independent coffee shops generally have less employees than fifty (Nair & Weber, 2017). The purpose of narrowing the study to independently owned coffee shops was that franchised coffee shops tend to have more employees than 50 overall. When discussing atmospherics different perceptions of atmospherics were noted within the study.

Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations

Within this section of the writing, the author presented assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. Assumptions serve as assumptions the researcher considers to be true but are not covered within the study. Limitations serve as weaknesses within the study. Delimitations serve

as the bounds of the study. Researchers should attempt to obtain high-quality research (Yin, 2014). Therefore, addressing assumptions, limitations, and delimitations allows research to be higher quality research (Yin, 2014).

Assumptions.

Assumptions existed in this study. The first assumption was that observations within the case study will reflect the actual case. Observations tend to be situational (Stake, 2010). The risk is that participants may act as if they are being observed. To mitigate this risk, many observations were taken. Another assumption was that participants within the study will be honest. This risk was mitigated by interviewing participants and verifying and triangulating the information obtained.

Limitations.

Limitations existed within this study. The first limitation was that the study was limited to the Midwest. Coffee shops observed represented the Midwest. Other coffee shops in other parts of the country and world may provide differing results (Bui, Nguyen, & Ngoc, 2017). This study was also limited by the time factor. The study took place in 2020. Future years may provide differing results. The researcher represented a key instrument within this study. Therefore, timing and place may have limited the researcher. The researcher planned to conduct a study within the Midwest. Traveling between coffee shops may have added time to the study since several coffee shops utilized required some drive time.

Delimitations.

This case study was bound by time and place. The location of the study was the Midwest. Specifically, coffee shops within the Midwest. Several coffee shops located in the Midwest served as the cases. The time of the study took place in 2020. Therefore, the case

study was bounded in the year 2020 and at coffee shops within the Midwest. The scope of the study was represented by marketing, customer loyalty, and atmospherics. Other elements of coffee shops were noted but did not serve as the focus for the study.

Significance

There is a significant gap in scholarly literature on the topic of small coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Numerous studies have been conducted on coffee shops (Han et al., 2018; Lean & Crozier, 2012; Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Several studies have been conducted on the topic of atmospherics (Bagdare, 2014; Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018; Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2013). Several studies have been conducted on customer loyalty (Cossío-Silva, Revilla-Camacho, Vega-Vázquez, & Palacios-Florencio, 2016; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015; Persson, 2013; Watson, Beck, Henderson, & Palmatier, 2015). However, little studies have been conducted that combine the topics of small coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. This study contributed to current literature within the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. This study added value to scholarly research by addressing the gap in literature. This study can impact several types of businesses, especially coffee shops. Entrepreneurs, business owners, coffee shop owners and management, and academics are types of individuals that this study may impact. Entrepreneurs, business owners, coffee shop owners and management, and academics can use this study to improve business operations within the areas of customer loyalty and atmospherics. This study was significant for several reasons. First, this study added to the current literature available. Second, this study identified ways atmospherics impact customer loyalty within coffee shops. Next, the study explored the distinct types of atmospherics that are used within the marketing plan of small coffee shops. Also, the

study explored how and why atmospherics are used in certain situations. Specifically, the study explored how and why coffee shops use or do not use atmospherics within business operations. Also, the study explored how and why atmospherics impact customer loyalty. The study contributed to the current literature on topics of small coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty.

Reduction of gaps.

Many academic studies contribute to the literature on the topics of coffee shops, customer loyalty, and atmospherics. Spence, Puccinelli, Grewal, & Roggeveen (2014) stress the importance of using atmospherics in a retail environment for influencing consumer behavior. Yuan, Chang, and Tzeng (2015) emphasize that coffee shops are an important part of today's economy. Watson, Beck, Henderson, and Palmatier (2015) stress the importance of customer loyalty as a key marketing goal. However, academic studies have not combined the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. The current study reduced this gap in the literature. Reducing and addressing the gap in literature add value to current academic literature. Adding to the literature on coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty can provide value to many stakeholders, especially owners, marketers, and management of coffee shops. As previously stated, stakeholders were represented by customers of coffee shops, owners of coffee shops, management of coffee shops, marketers of coffee shops, and employees of coffee shops.

Implications for Biblical integration.

First, this study demonstrates that all work is beneficial. "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10, The New King James Version). Every job represents a way to serve the Lord. Jobs in business, in marketing, in coffee shops, and other jobs provide a way to serve the Lord.

Next, this study provided new knowledge within marketing, the coffee shop industry, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. The new knowledge can lead to innovations and productivity. Being creative and productive represents the Lord's desires for the world. Last, providing an atmosphere for gathering and loving represents the Lord. Loving your neighbor represents another desire of the Lord. Coffee shops provide a gathering place for all types of people (Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012). This study can represent a way for coffee shops to understand how to provide a welcoming atmosphere for gathering. Another idea that this study may provide is that atmospherics are complex. The Lord made this world complex on purpose. Many of the details created by the Lord are intricate and delicate. The interconnection of details represents beauty created by the Lord. Atmospherics often contain intricate and interconnected details. Complex atmospherics may influence behavior. This study may provide some insight into the complexity of atmospherics and consumer behavior.

Relationship to field of study.

This study contains a relationship to marketing and all businesses that use marketing to improve business operations. Coffee shops are an example of a business. Therefore, coffee shops use marketing to improve business operations. Most businesses concentrate on improving customer loyalty (Watson, Beck, Henderson, & Palmatier, 2015). Therefore, coffee shops can be included in businesses that concentrate on improving customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is a major goal in marketing (Watson, Beck, Henderson, & Palmatier, 2015). Atmospherics should be used as a marketing tool (Kotler, 1973). Bagdare (2014) emphasizes the importance of creating a joyful experience for the customer so that the business organization can influence customer behavior. Atmospherics tend to create an experience for the customer. Creating an

experience for the customer falls under the field of marketing. Further, combining the topics of atmospherics, customer loyalty, and coffee shops contributes to the field of marketing.

Summary of the significance of the study

The case study on coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty displays significance for several reasons. First, there are significant gaps in the academic literature. This study reduced the gaps in current literature. Next, this study provided implications for Biblical integration. Last, this study had a relationship to the field of marketing. One study suggested future studies on customers' reactions to atmospherics (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013). Another study suggested further studies on customers' experiences within coffee shops (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). This study addressed these gaps in the literature. This study represented a significant study because of gaps in literature and the importance to the field of marketing. This study reduced gaps in literature. Also, future businesses and coffee shops can benefit from the study.

Summary of Chapter 1

Throughout this writing, an academic study was described and outlined. The study combined the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Throughout the first section the researcher described the problem statement, the purpose statement, the nature of the study, the research questions, the conceptual framework, the definition of terms, the limitations, the delimitations, the assumptions, and the significance. In the next section of the study, the researcher will describe the project.

A Review of Professional and Academic Literature Outline

Throughout business operations, managers and decision-makers often create plans for marketing. Within those marketing plans, atmospherics are often utilized to create some sort of value for the business organization. Coffee shops represent one type of business that can choose

to utilize atmospherics or not utilize atmospherics. Customer loyalty represents another element that stems from atmospherics. The three topics of atmospherics, coffee shops, and customer loyalty provide the main themes to be synthesized within this writing. The three themes within this literature review have many studies detailing the individual topics. First, several academic studies have been conducted on the topic of coffee shops (Filimonau, Krivcova, & Pettit, 2018; Haskova, 2015; Lean & Crozier, 2012; Nair & Weber, 2017). Second, numerous academic studies have been conducted on the topic of atmospherics (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018; Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013; Yoon, 2013). Lastly, several academic studies have been conducted on the topic of customer loyalty (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Niraj, Foster, Gupta, & Narasimhan, 2008; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003; Watson, Beck, Henderson, & Palmatier, 2015). However, little research has been conducted that combines the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and the impact on customer loyalty. Throughout this writing, the researcher planned to synthesize, summarize, and organize previous academic literature on the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and the impact that coffee shops and atmospherics have on customer loyalty. Within each main topic the researcher divided the topics into smaller topics that relate to this study.

Introduction of Literature Review

Customer loyalty, coffee shops, and atmospherics represent the main themes and topics within this literature review. Previous academic researchers conducted several studies on these individual topics. However, not much literature is available that combines the three topics. Coffee shops represent the first topic that was synthesized. Atmospherics represent the next topic that was synthesized. Customer loyalty represents the third topic that was synthesized. Information about these topics was arranged from a broad perspective to a narrow perspective.

The researcher began each section of the literature review with an overview of the main theme. After the overview in each topic, the researcher detailed narrowed information that related to the main topic and this study. Literature was synthesized and summarized on coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. A beginning thought for this literature review was that customers represent assets to any business, and returning visitors provide many benefits to the business organization (Sunghyup, 2009). This beginning thought represented the idea of customer loyalty. This literature review summarized the impact of loyal customers within coffee shops with the use or nonuse of atmospherics. In the last part of the literature review, the researcher integrated all three topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Before the conclusion of the literature review, the researcher introduced any themes and perceptions gained from the current scholarly literature.

Coffee Shops

This section of the literature review summarizes information about coffee shops. Coffee shops represent an example of a business organization. Numerous customers visit coffee shops on a regular basis (Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012). Coffee shops represent a place that most American's consider the third most important place behind home and work (Lee, Moon, & Song, 2018). The market for coffee shops represents a highly competitive and expanding industry (Wu, 2017). Therefore, current literature indicates that coffee shops are an extremely popular form of business that customers enjoy (Lee, Moon, & Song, 2018; Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012; Wu, 2017). The popularity of coffee shops has provided information for numerous authors to conduct studies on coffee shops (Filimonau, Krivcova, & Pettit, 2018; Jo & Purevsuren, 2013; Kellner, Townsend, Wilkinson, & Peetz, 2014; Kühn & Bothma, 2018; Lee, Moon, & Song, 2018; Wu, 2017). Within this section of the writing, the author synthesized and summarized

information from existing literature about coffee shops. This section of the writing contains an overview, information about operations in coffee shops, marketing techniques within coffee shops, and atmospherics within coffee shops. Diverse types of studies were summarized in this literature review. Some studies focus on coffee shops in general (Haskova, 2015; Morland, 2017; Wright, Zeltmann, & Griffin, 2017). Differing studies concentrate on operations within coffee shops (Nair & Weber, 2017; Wu, 2017; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Other studies focus on marketing or atmospheric elements within coffee shops (Han et al., 2018; Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016; Kühn & Bothma, 2018).

Overview.

Coffee shops represent a type of business organization. Literature emphasizes that this type of business organization represents an immensely popular type of business (Lee, Moon, & Song, 2018; Wu, 2017). Numerous authors have presented findings about coffee shops (Haskova, 2015; Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016; Morland, 2017; Nair & Weber, 2017; Wright, Zeltmann, & Griffin, 2017). Academic literature present similar and differing information about coffee shops. Within the coffee shop business, patrons visit and consume products at coffee shops. Coffee shops sell coffee products and other related products while providing a place for customers to visit. Specialty coffee drinks such as lattes, cappuccinos, and frozen beverages represent popular products sold by coffee shops (Han et al., 2018). One study indicates that specialized coffee products allows differentiation from competitors (Morland, 2017). Along with products sold, coffee shops can operate in different manners. Coffee shops can operate as a franchise like Starbucks or operate independently (Haskova, 2015; Nair & Weber, 2017). Literature indicates that customers visit coffee shops for numerous reasons (Han et al., 2018; Morland, 2017; Wright, Zeltmann, & Griffin, 2017). One study emphasized that the

consumption of coffee represents a reason customers visit coffee shops (Wright, Zeltmann, & Griffin, 2017). Customers may want a cup of coffee or a specialty coffee. Some studies emphasize the reason that customers visit coffee shops is to relax and lounge for social reasons within the coffee shop culture (Han et al., 2018; Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012; Wright, Zeltmann, & Griffin, 2017). For instance, college students may visit a coffee shop to study or socialize with friends. A similar study indicates that some people visit coffee shops to rest while others visit coffee shops to buy coffee products (Jo & Purevsuren, 2013). A differing study suggests that customers visit coffee shops for the health benefits that coffee provides (Lean & Crozier, 2012). A summary of the literature shows patrons visit coffee shops for numerous reasons and that coffee shops are a popular place for customers to visit (Han et al., 2018; Jo & Purevsuren, 2013; Lean & Crozier, 2012; Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012; Wright, Zeltmann, & Griffin, 2017). Also, coffee shops sell coffee, specialized coffee drinks, and other similar products or snacks (Han et al., 2018; Jo & Purevsuren, 2013; Lean & Crozier, 2012).

Operations in coffee shops.

As a business organization, a coffee shop must utilize several different business operations within the business. Several authors have documented information about business operations in coffee shops (Haskova, 2015; Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016; Nair & Weber, 2017; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Haskova (2015) discussed the operations in the franchise coffee chain of Starbucks. Other authors discussed the differences in operating in a franchise coffee chain opposed to operating an independently owned coffee shop (Kellner, Townsend, Wilkinson, & Peetz, 2014; Nair & Weber, 2017). Some studies introduce different tasks used within operations of coffee shops (Han et al., 2018; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Some of the different tasks within coffee shops operations are hiring activities, business activities, marketing

activities, and selling products for consumers that demand coffee products. For instance, one study indicated that coffee shops must concentrate on continuous improvement in quality throughout operations (Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Businesses can evaluate operations and quality on a continuous basis at any time. Continually adjusting to meet the needs of customers and make the business better remains a highly important task for coffee shops (Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Another task that coffee shops and businesses focus on is being competitive in the marketplace. Competition with other coffee shops remains a challenge for businesses in the coffee shop industry (Han et al., 2018). One study indicates that differentiating the coffee shop from competitors remains an incredibly important task in the coffee shop industry (Morland, 2017). For instance, coffee shops may differentiate from competitors by offering assorted products or creating better relationships with customers (Morland, 2017). A summary of the literature shows that coffee shops operate as a business organization and utilize several common business activities (Kellner, Townsend, Wilkinson, & Peetz, 2014; Morland, 2017; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Business activities include operating the business in general, continuous quality improvement, and remaining competitive in the marketplace. Marketing represents another important task that coffee shops utilize.

Marketing techniques within coffee shops.

Coffee shops can utilize several different marketing techniques to promote business. Several academic scholars have presented information about marketing techniques within coffee shops (Han et al., 2018; Kühn & Bothma, 2018; Lean & Crozier, 2012; Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012). One avenue for marketing within coffee shops is promoting the products that coffee shops sell (Han et al., 2018). Coffee shops can advertise the distinct types of specialized drinks that the coffee shop serves. One study emphasizes that specialized coffee

drinks can differentiate a coffee shop from the competitors (Morland, 2017). A differing study suggests that coffee shops promote ethical and fair trade as a marketing technique (Wright, Zeltmann, & Griffin, 2017). Another study notes that coffee shops promote the social benefits of frequenting coffee shops (Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012). A coffee shop represents a public place where customers can visit with other customers and relax. Some studies indicated that coffee shops promote the health benefits of consuming coffee (Lean & Crozier, 2012; Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012). Other areas within the coffee shop business can also be promoted. Further, coffee shops promote many elements to attract customers. Literature indicates that coffee shops promote products, ethical and fair trade, a place to relax and socialize, health benefits, and other elements (Han et al., 2018; Lean & Crozier, 2012; Morland, 2017; Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012; Wright, Zeltmann, & Griffin, 2017).

Atmosphere within coffee shops.

Generally, coffee shops or most businesses create or have an atmosphere within the business (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018). Sometimes, the atmosphere is intended, while other times the atmosphere is unintended. The intended atmosphere represents planned and intentional atmospherics. The unintended atmosphere represents unplanned atmospherics that develops unintentionally. This section of the writing will contain information regarding atmospheres within coffee shops. Both intended and unintended atmospheres will be discussed. Studies indicate that using the atmosphere as a tool within business can create many benefits for any business (Han et al., 2018; Kotler, 1973; Yoon, 2013). Therefore, coffee shops can choose to utilize or not utilize the atmosphere as a tool within this type of business.

Intended. Business organizations generally have some sort of intended atmosphere that the business creates (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018). The intended atmosphere includes part of a

business organization's planned strategic plan or marketing plan. Examples of atmospheric elements can be design, décor, overall ambience, and any elements that invoke the senses (Bagdare, 2014; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2013). For example, many businesses create décor and color schemes to complement the business. Coffee shops often utilize décor and color schemes to create an atmosphere for customers. Some scholarly authors presented findings on intended atmosphere within coffee shops (Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016; Kühn & Bothma, 2018). One study researched the use of intended background music on customers and if the customers purchased more because of background music in coffee shops (Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016). Another study found that the overall coffee shop experience created customer satisfaction among customers (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). Further, business organizations, including coffee shops, can intentionally create an atmosphere for benefits of the business organization. Some organizations use décor, some organizations use music, and some organizations use many other elements. However, the intended atmosphere must match the type of customer and must account for the differences in types of customers (Yildirim, Cagatay, & Hidayetoglu, 2015). Further, the intended atmosphere used within coffee shops can take on many forms and can complement the business (Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016; Kühn & Bothma, 2018; Yildirim, Cagatay, & Hidayetoglu, 2015).

Unintended. Business organizations generally create an atmosphere within the business (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018). However, sometimes an unintended atmosphere materializes. The same can be true for coffee shops. Unintended atmospheres materialize within coffee shops. A couple of studies reflect on unintended atmospheres within business (Kühn & Bothma, 2018; Yoon, 2013). Unintended atmospheres can stem from several sources. For example, customers bring in an atmosphere of their own. One study mentions that the social connectedness of the

customers creates an experience for patrons of a coffee shop (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). A similar study states that customers have become more active in the buying experience, especially when atmospherics are involved (Yoon, 2013). These studies emphasize that a business can develop an atmosphere that is unintentional because of the customers and the differences that the customers bring (Kühn & Bothma, 2018; Yoon, 2013). Further, businesses and coffee shops can create atmospheres that have intended and unintended outcomes.

Atmospherics

This section of the literature review synthesizes and summarizes information about atmospherics. Business organizations use atmospherics to attract and retain customers (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018; Kotler, 1973). Several authors have conducted studies on the topic of atmospherics (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2013; Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018; Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013; Yoon, 2013). Within this section of the writing, the author synthesized and summarized current scholarly literature about atmospherics. This section contains an overview of atmospherics, several types and examples of atmospherics, benefits of atmospherics, and provides information regarding atmospherics as a marketing technique. Academic literature present similar and differing information about atmospherics. Some studies detail an overview of atmospherics (Bagdare, 2014; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2013). Other differing studies focus on the individual elements and types of atmospherics (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016; Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018; Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013). Some studies focus on atmospherics as a marketing tool (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Milman, 2013).

Overview.

Numerous business organizations utilize atmospherics within business operations (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018; Gilboa, & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013). Distinct types of businesses

utilize atmospherics within operations. Retail stores, restaurants, coffee shops, hotels, and amusement parks represent examples of some types of businesses that utilize atmospherics. Many academic studies detail atmospherics in current literature (Gilboa, & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2013; Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013; Yoon, 2013). Atmospherics can be defined as the atmosphere a customer experiences in a business setting such as décor, ambiance, sights, smells, sounds, and other elements (Bagdare, 2014; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2013). Ambiance can be loud or soft, obvious, or not obvious (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018). Authors from one study called atmospherics a tool to use as a competitive advantage (Biswas, Szocs, Chacko, & Wansink, 2017). Businesses can utilize many atmospheric elements or businesses can utilize one or a few atmospheric elements. For instance, some businesses use only sound or music (Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016). Other businesses use sights and smell at the same time. One study introduces information about the atmosphere created by Disney at Epcot and how it impacts guests (Milman, 2013). Atmospherics can allow a customer to have an experience or memory (Bagdare, 2014; Gilboa, & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2013). One study focuses on the experience that customers have when they visit coffee shops (Nadiri, & Gunay, 2013). That memory or experience can then cause a repeat customer or satisfied customer (Nadiri, & Gunay, 2013). Further, a repeat customer can turn into a loyal customer (Watson, Beck, Henderson, & Palmatier, 2015). Overall, several businesses utilize atmospherics, and the use of atmospherics can impact the customer (Biswas, Szocs, Chacko, & Wansink, 2017; Gilboa, & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Milman, 2013; Nadiri, & Gunay, 2013).

Types of atmospherics

Several types of atmospherics exist (Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013). Different businesses use different atmospheric elements. Businesses may utilize several atmospheric elements at the

same time or businesses may utilize one or a few atmospheric elements at the same time, or atmospheric elements to use or not use. Atmospherics provide a distinctiveness within the marketing plan of the business organization (Alfakhri, Harness, Nicholson, & Harness, 2018). Within this section of the writing, distinct types of atmospheric elements will be described, summarized, and synthesized from current literature. Numerous academic authors describe different types of atmospheric elements (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016; Kampfer, Leischnig, Björn, & Spence, 2017; Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018; Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013). The atmospheric elements described will be sights, sounds, smells, touch, and a category for all other atmospheric elements.

Sights. Sights represent one of the types of atmospheric elements that businesses may use. Several academic authors emphasize the use of atmospheric sights (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018; Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013). Sights consist of several items. One study indicates that sights may be lighting, mirrors, decorations, and digital displays (Mafini & Dhurup, 2015). The lighting in a business organization represents a sight. One study indicates that lighting in a business organization may impact the customers and their decisions (Biswas et al., 2017). Business organizations can choose to have bright lighting, or dim lighting, or lighting that falls somewhere in between bright and dim. Image may represent another sight. For instance, décor can be considered a sight. Image can be represented in the form of decorations. Color schemes used to represent another example of a sight. One study emphasizes the use of warmth within atmospherics (Baek, Choo, & Lee, 2018). Using warmth in colors or materials impacts consumer behavior (Baek, Choo, & Lee, 2018). Other items may consist of a sight. The sights used within atmospherics should complement the business organization (Slatten, Mehmetoglu, Svensson, & Svaeri, 2009). One study highlighted the

importance of physical, sight attributes that created an experience or memory for the customer (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013). Another study described design factors as an important atmospheric element (Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013). One study found that design factors had the greatest impact on creating joy within the customer's experience (Slatten et al., 2009). Further, creating joy highly impacted customer loyalty (Slatten et al., 2009). Another study highlights that color schemes could impact customer tipping behavior (Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018). Further, sights represent an important element when using atmospherics within business and there are several different types of sight atmospherics (Baek, Choo, & Lee, 2018; Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Mafini & Dhurup, 2015; Slatten et al., 2009).

Sounds. Sounds represent another type of atmospheric element that businesses may use within business operations. Sounds can consist of several items. For example, background music or different types of noises represent types of sounds. Numerous studies examined at the impact of music playing in the background of a business organization or noises and sounds that occur in the business organization (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018; Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016; Michel, Baumann, & Gayer, 2017). Studies indicated that background music may impact the customer's behavior (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018; Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016; Michel, Baumann, & Gayer, 2017). One study highlighted that business owners and operators feel that in-store music influences customers in a positive manner (Michel, Baumann, & Gayer, 2017). A similar study mentions that sounds occurring in-store, on a website, on an advertisement impact consumer behavior (Lowe & Haws, 2017). Some studies found that the tone of the sound impacts the customer (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018; Lowe & Haws, 2017). A similar study indicates that if the music is disturbing or if the volume is too loud customers may react in a negative manner (Michel, Baumann, & Gayer, 2017). Therefore, business owners can pay

attention to the volume, tone, and other factors about the noises and sounds as to impact customers in a positive manner instead of a negative manner (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018; Lowe & Haws, 2017; Michel, Baumann, & Gayer, 2017). Further, sounds represent an essential element when using atmospherics within a business.

Smells. Smells represent another type of atmospheric element that businesses may use within business operations. Some authors relay information regarding smells as an atmospheric element within business operations (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Yildirim, Cagatay, & Hidayetoglu, 2015). For instance, one study found that scents influence the time that customers spend in a business organization (Yildirim, Cagatay, & Hidayetoglu, 2015). Scents can be good or bad scents. Smells can consist of several items. For example, most coffee shops smell like espresso beans when a patron first enters the shop. Another example of a smell used by businesses is when a real estate agent will bake cookies in a house before showing the house to potential buyers. The house then smells like baked cookies, and people may be able to imagine living in the house. One study indicated that aromas may enhance the shopping experience at shopping malls (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013). The opposite may also happen. If a place of business does not smell good, patrons may not return to that place of business. Further, smells represent a crucial element when using atmospherics within business. Also, smells can be good or bad so patrons may feel positively or negatively about the smell of a business organization (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Yildirim, Cagatay, & Hidayetoglu, 2015).

Touch. Touch may represent another example of an atmospheric element that businesses use within operations. Numerous authors discuss touch in scholarly literature (Hwang & Choi, 2019; Kampfner, Leischnig, Björn, & Spence, 2017; Milman, 2013; Riedel & Mulcahy, 2019). One study defines touch as a physical sensation that plays a significant role in consumer

behavior (Riedel & Mulcahy, 2019). Touch can consist of several items. For example, a business may have an interactive display that allows touch. A store may offer sample bedding, pillows, or carpeting to touch to get the feel of a product. One study focuses on the packaging of certain products (Kampfer et al., 2017). The authors of this study emphasize that touching a product or the packaging of a product represents a form of sensory marketing that influences the customer (Kampfer et al., 2017). A differing study indicates that the Disney theme park, Epcot, uses many areas of staged interactive displays to interact with guests (Milman, 2013). A similar study highlights that the use of touch through digital technology leads to increased customer satisfaction (Riedel & Mulcahy, 2019). Another study indicates that the use of technology or apps may influence customer behavior (Hwang & Choi, 2019). Using an app, packaging, an interactive display, or a computer within the business allows customers to use touch as an atmospheric element (Hwang & Choi, 2019; Kampfer et al., 2017; Riedel & Mulcahy, 2019). Further, touch represents an essential element when using atmospherics within business.

Other. Other elements may represent other examples of atmospherics that businesses use within operations. Other elements may consist of many other options in atmospherics. Businesses may use several elements of atmospherics at one time to create an experience for the customer. For instance, keeping the business clean and memorable. Theme parks try to keep the park clean and control the environment so that the customer is inspired (Sunghyup, 2009). Cleanliness of the business organization may also be considered a sight. Another study emphasizes that activities both on location and off location are examples of other atmospheric elements (Mafini & Dhurup, 2015). Therefore, other types of atmospherics can represent crucial elements within business operations.

Benefits of Using Atmospherics

Utilizing atmospherics within business provides benefits to the business organization (Baek, Choo, & Lee, 2018). Several scholarly authors discuss the benefits of using atmospherics within business (Baek, Choo, & Lee, 2018; Kim, Vogt, & Knutson, 2015; Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013; Riedel & Mulcahy, 2019). For instance, one study indicates that atmospherics can result in customer satisfaction (Riedel & Mulcahy, 2019). Other studies highlight that atmospherics can result in a better, more enjoyable shopping experience for the customer (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Kim, Vogt, & Knutson, 2015). An enjoyable shopping experience provides the customer with delight (Kim, Vogt, & Knutson, 2015). Another study emphasizes that atmospherics develop trust between the business and customer (Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013). Trust can lead to a relationship with the customer (Coelho & Henseler, 2012). Businesses may also obtain other benefits from utilizing atmospherics. Many of these benefits can lead to customer loyalty (Bowen & Chen McCain, 2015). Further, atmospherics can allow a business to earn several benefits including customer satisfaction, an enjoyable and delightful experience, trust, relationships with the customer, and customer loyalty (Baek, Choo, & Lee, 2018; Bowen & Chen McCain, 2015; Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Gilboa, & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Kim, Vogt, & Knutson, 2015; Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013; Riedel & Mulcahy, 2019).

Atmospherics as a Marketing Technique

Atmospherics may be utilized for several reasons within the business organization. One reason that business organizations use atmospherics is for marketing purposes (Alfakhri, Harness, Nicholson, & Harness, 2018). Strategy in marketing requires making decisions about the product, markets, resources, and marketing activities (Hult, Morgeson, Morgan, Mithas, & Fornell, 2017). One marketing activity or technique is atmospherics (Alfakhri et al., 2018). Kotler (1973) emphasized the importance of using atmospherics as a marketing tool. These

marketing tactics may create a memorable experience for the customer. The customer may turn into a repeat or loyal customer (Watson, Beck, Henderson, & Palmatier, 2015). One scholarly article stresses that experiences are related to consumption activities (Milman, 2013).

Atmospherics can also create experiences. Marketing research and textbooks introduce the idea that consumers want an experience or a staged memory within the consumption process (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Milman, 2013). Restaurants, hotels, and theme parks represent types of businesses that may use this experience or atmosphere to market to customers (Milman, 2013). Further, atmospherics may represent a useful way to market a product, service, or business organization (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013; Kotler, 1973; Milman, 2013).

Customer Loyalty

This section of the literature review contains information about customer loyalty. Business organizations strive for customer loyalty throughout business operations (Cossío-Silva, Revilla-Camacho, Vega-Vázquez, & Palacios-Florencio, 2016). Because of the significance of the goal of customer loyalty and the popularity of the topic, numerous scholarly authors have conducted studies on the topic of customer loyalty (Cossío-Silva et al., 2016; Jang, Kim, & Lee, 2015; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015; Niraj, Foster, Gupta, & Narasimhan, 2008; Persson, 2013). Academic literature present similar and differing information about customer loyalty. Some authors encourage customer satisfaction initiatives (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015; Niraj et al., 2008). Some authors encourage loyalty programs (Hwang & Choi, 2019; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). Other authors emphasize the importance of evaluation of customer loyalty (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003; Watson, Beck, Henderson, & Palmatier, 2015). The researcher summarized and synthesized the current literature regarding customer loyalty in this section of

the writing. This portion of the literature review contains an overview of customer loyalty, examples of marketing techniques for customer loyalty, and evaluating customer loyalty within the business.

Overview

Several authors present the definition of customer loyalty within current literature (Bowen & Chen McCain, 2015; Jang, Kim, & Lee, 2015; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). For example, customer loyalty is represented by customer commitment to a business, repeat purchases, or favorable attitudes (Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). Another scholarly article describes customer loyalty as a developmental process that evolves throughout the customer's purchasing process through several satisfying purchases and experiences (Bowen & Chen McCain, 2015). A differing article describes loyal customers as people who make repeat purchases, provide positive referrals, and commit to a specific company (Jang, Kim, & Lee, 2015). Commitment to a specific firm evolves through loyal customers (Bowen & Chen McCain, 2015). Other authors describe customer loyalty as a major goal for businesses, a huge intangible asset, and a competitive advantage (Cossío-Silva et al., 2016; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015; Watson, et al., 2015). Literature indicates that because businesses focus on the customer, customer loyalty represents an especially important part of operations (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). Some authors emphasize that building a relationship with a customer may allow loyalty to form (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015). One study indicates that knowing what customers think and why the customer thinks a certain way influences customer loyalty (Hult et al., 2017). Building a relationship with customers is one way to understand what customers think and why. Along with relationships building, referrals are another avenue to customer loyalty (Watson et

al., 2015). One study suggests that customer loyalty may increase through word of mouth marketing (Watson et al., 2015). Loyal customers that spread positive information for a business can lead to obtaining new, loyal customers. Loyal customers tell friends and family about positive experiences within business organizations (Jang, Kim, & Lee, 2015). Business organizations realize that each business is unique; therefore, loyalty techniques and measures may differ from business to business. Therefore, businesses evaluate loyalty and loyalty techniques (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003; Watson et al., 2015).

Marketing Techniques for Customer Loyalty

Businesses use several marketing techniques to achieve customer loyalty. For example, customer satisfaction initiatives and loyalty programs represent ways that businesses try to achieve customer loyalty. Businesses use other techniques to achieve customer loyalty as well. Within the current literature, building relationships with customers through satisfaction initiatives, loyalty programs, referrals, and other techniques represents a way to achieve loyalty (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015). Along with relationship building, another study stresses that businesses must spend marketing dollars to achieve customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Niraj et al., 2008). Allowing marketing dollars for things like relationship building, word of mouth marketing, and other marketing tactics may enhance loyalty. Businesses use word of mouth marketing to market a product or business. One academic study emphasizes that loyal customers spread positive information about the business to friends and family through word of mouth marketing (Watson et al., 2015). Therefore, friends and family of loyal customers could potentially become customers of the business and then loyal customers of the business. Referrals may provide one avenue for word of mouth marketing.

A referral program represents a specific type of marketing technique for gaining customer loyalty. Numerous academic authors emphasize the use of referral programs (Hwang & Choi, 2019; Jang, Kim, & Lee, 2015; Sciandra, 2019; Wirtz, Orsingher, & Cho, 2019). Programs that give incentives to customers to refer friends and family to a business represent the idea of a referral program (Wirtz, Orsingher, & Cho, 2019). One study highlights that referrals can take place online or offline (Wirtz, Orsingher, & Cho, 2019). This means that referrals can take place over the internet. Social media can play a vital role in this type of marketing technique (Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015). Referrals can also take place offline or in person. Positive reviews of a business provide an example of a referral. Spreading positive information about a business to other customers allows benefits to the business (Jang, Kim, & Lee, 2015). Customer loyalty provides one example of a benefit stemming from referrals and word of mouth marketing. Word of mouth marketing includes the idea of a referral. Because customers consider word of mouth marketing as a credible source of information, referrals heavily impact consumer behavior (Sciandra, 2019; Wirtz, Orsingher, & Cho, 2019). Some businesses offer rewards to customers that promote their business or send customers their way (Hwang & Choi, 2019; Sciandra, 2019). Rewards include monetary rewards, discounts, and other incentives (Sciandra, 2019).

Relationship building allows business organizations to get to know the customers that frequent the business organization (Song, Wang, & Han, 2019). Several studies discuss relationship building within current literature (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Jang, Kim, & Lee, 2015; Morland, 2017; Song, Wang, & Han, 2019; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003; Wu, 2017). One study mentions that providing respect to customers provides one way for firms to build relationships with customers (Song, Wang, & Han, 2019). One study found that

satisfaction and trust led to loyalty (Wu, 2017). Emotional bonds from customers allows customer loyalty to form (Song, Wang, & Han, 2019). Businesses can get to know their customers to form emotional bonds. Getting to know customers also allows businesses to make decisions from a customer standpoint. Businesses can use data from current customers to make business and marketing decisions. Technology may help in storing and analyzing data process (Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015). Emotional bonds may also provide ways for loyal customers to spread positive information regarding the business organization (Jang, Kim, & Lee, 2015). Another benefit from relationship building comes in the form of profitability for the firm (Niraj et al., 2008; Persson, 2013). Further, many benefits come from relationship-building including bonds with customers, referrals from customers, better decision-making abilities for the firm, profits, loyalty, and other benefits (Jang, Kim, & Lee, 2015; Niraj et al., 2008; Persson, 2013; Song, Wang, & Han, 2019; Wu, 2017). In summary, both relationship-building and referrals occur within customer satisfaction initiatives and loyalty programs.

Customer satisfaction initiatives. Customer satisfaction initiatives represent an avenue to customer loyalty (Kim, Vogt, & Knutson, 2015; Nadiri, & Gunay, 2013). One study indicates that while customer satisfaction can lead to customer loyalty, customer delight may also cause customer loyalty (Kim, Vogt, & Knutson, 2015). Businesses can find ways to create delight within their customer base. Creating delight could represent a type of customer satisfaction initiative. Another study emphasizes that customer satisfaction impacts customer loyalty and profitability (Nadiri, & Gunay, 2013). A similar study emphasizes that customer satisfaction drives profitability in the firm (Hult et al., 2017). One study indicates that marketing dollars must be spent to achieve customer satisfaction (Niraj et al., 2008). Therefore, businesses must allow marketing dollars to be budgeted for customer satisfaction purposes. One study indicates

that customization for the customer represents one way to create trust and satisfaction which can ultimately lead to customer loyalty (Coelho & Henseler, 2012). Customers are different and come from diverse backgrounds (Yildirim, Cagatay, & Hidayetoglu, 2015). Customization means that a business provides a unique experience or service to the individual customer. Customization represents a way to create a relationship with a customer (Coelho & Henseler, 2012). Creating a relationship with a customer can allow loyalty to form between a business and a customer.

Technological advances and the digital world allow business organizations certain advantages (Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015). Some authors discuss the use of technology in customer loyalty efforts (Ashtiani, Parsayan, Mohajerani, 2016; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015; Yang, Zheng, Zhao, & Gupta, 2017). This means that businesses can use technology and the digital world for many tasks, including customer satisfaction and loyalty initiatives. For instance, one study emphasizes the use of technology and social media to create satisfaction and loyalty with customers (Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015). Because of the digital world in which the world operates today, businesses must utilize technology and social media initiatives. A similar study mentions the use of social media to communicate with customers (Yang et al., 2017). Communication allows a company to be transparent and form relationships with customers. Virtual communication can lead to enhanced loyalty with customers (Yang et al., 2017). Technology can be used for customer satisfaction and can be used as an avenue for a loyalty program. Technology and the internet also help with viral marketing efforts (Ashtiani, Parsayan, Mohajerani, 2016). This study emphasizes the importance of gaining customer loyalty through viral marketing like email and online word of mouth marketing (Ashtiani, Parsayan, Mohajerani, 2016). Literature indicates that technology, social

media initiatives, and the internet can server as tools within the customer loyalty process for business organizations (Ashtiani, Parsayan, Mohajerani, 2016; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015; Yang et al., 2017). In summary, academic literature indicates that satisfaction initiatives can be creating a unique experience for the unique customer, creating a relationship with the customer, and the use of technology for loyalty efforts (Ashtiani, Parsayan, Mohajerani, 2016; Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Yang et al., 2017).

Loyalty programs. Several business organizations utilize loyalty programs as an avenue for customer loyalty. Loyalty programs serve several purposes. Loyalty programs encourage loyal customers, and more purchases from customers (Hwang & Choi, 2019). Loyalty programs also often provide rewards to customers that participate (Hwang & Choi, 2019). Another purpose for loyalty programs is helping businesses with customer relationship management and aid in keeping the customer loyal (Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). Among the benefits and purposes of loyalty programs, profitability can also be enhanced. One study found that implementing a customer satisfaction program or loyalty program increased customer profitability (Niraj et al., 2008). Therefore, businesses can consider implementing some type of loyalty or satisfaction program to increase customer loyalty and profitability. Another study looked at the use of games within loyalty programs to encourage loyalty (Hwang & Choi, 2019). This allows customers to participate in an interactive game within a loyalty program. Recently, Starbucks implemented a Bingo game within their loyalty program in hopes of adding the element of fun to a loyalty program to encourage more loyal customers and repeat purchases (Hwang & Choi, 2019). A similar study indicates that activities for customers to participate in keep customers loyal (Mafini & Dhurup, 2015). Therefore, loyalty programs can include games, activities, interactive activities, or other elements within loyalty programs. Games and activities

introduce the element of fun to the purchasing process. Increased purchases, loyal customers, customer relationship management, and profitability are some of the benefits that loyalty programs can bring to a business organization (Hwang & Choi, 2019; Niraj et al., 2008; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). Also, another factor to consider when addressing customer loyalty is the evaluation of customer loyalty within a business.

Evaluating Customer Loyalty

Business organizations can evaluate customer loyalty (Watson et al., 2015). Some businesses strive to obtain high levels of customer loyalty. To obtain high levels of customer loyalty, evaluation measures can be taken. Some businesses rely on customer satisfaction initiatives, while other organizations rely on customer loyalty programs or other measures. Some business organizations choose to evaluate customer loyalty from a combination of loyalty or satisfaction initiatives. One study measures loyalty from a customer profitability standpoint (Persson, 2013). A similar study looked at customer satisfaction programs and loyalty programs from a customer profitability standpoint (Niraj et al., 2008). Differing studies evaluated customer loyalty from loyalty programs and satisfaction programs that create customer relationships with the business (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). Another study uses social media to evaluate loyalty initiatives for the business organization (Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015). Using social media allows a straightforward way to track customer activity. A similar study suggests using technology and analytics to measure customer loyalty (Watson et al., 2015). Another similar study indicates that technology platforms allow businesses to track many things including customers reactions to the atmosphere within a business (Boboccea, Spiridon, Petrescu, Gheorghe, & Purcarea, 2016). Technology and analytics provide visual results through reports and data for many areas of

business including customer loyalty. Reports and data regarding customer loyalty allow business organizations to make strategic decisions. Business organizations can use other measures to evaluate customer loyalty. Therefore, current literature indicates that business organizations can use several different individual methods or combinations of evaluation methods (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015; Niraj et al., 2008; Persson, 2013; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003; Watson et al., 2015). Some studies highlight measuring profitability from customer loyalty standpoints (Niraj et al., 2008; Persson, 2013). Other studies emphasize the use of technology to track loyalty patterns (Boboccea et al., 2016; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015; Watson et al., 2015).

Coffee Shops, Atmospherics, and Customer Loyalty

This section of the literature review contains information combining coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Coffee shops represent a type of business organization. Customer loyalty represents an important part of business operations and marketing. Coffee shops can choose to utilize or not utilize atmospherics within business operations. For instance, one study combines coffee shops and customer loyalty (Kim, Kim, & Holland, 2018). However, that study does not mention atmospherics. Another study combines atmospherics, marketing, and customer loyalty (Hatzithomas, Gkorezis, Zotou, & Tsourvakas, 2018). However, that study does not mention coffee shops. Therefore, the three topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty can be combined to create a scholarly study. This study looked at the impact of customer loyalty from atmospherics within coffee shops. Within this section of the literature review, many scholarly articles will be addressed (Hatzithomas et al., 2018; Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016; Kim, Kim, & Holland, 2018; Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018; Yildirim, Cagatay, & Hidayetoglu, 2015; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). This section of the literature review contains

an overview of the topics, a discussion of atmospherics for customer loyalty within coffee shops, techniques used to create atmospherics for customer loyalty in coffee shops, a discussion on reduced customer loyalty because of minimal atmospheric elements, and a discussion on customer loyalty because of atmospheric elements. The information provided is a summary and synthesis of current literature relating to the three topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty.

Overview

Combining the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty can be achieved in business operations. Businesses achieve customer loyalty through several business elements. For instance, one study indicates that customer loyalty is increased with continuous improvement of service quality within coffee shops (Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Service quality represents one element of business operations that allows customer loyalty. Each business provides service to customers (Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Customers enjoy high quality service (Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Further, businesses such as coffee shops must continually evaluate the service quality within operations. Another study emphasized that coffee shops must continually change and innovate to reach customers and their changing needs (Kim, Kim, & Holland, 2018). This represents an area in business similar to service quality. Along with evaluating service quality, continually changing to meet the needs of customers remains a business goal (Kim, Kim, & Holland, 2018; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). This could mean changing the atmospherics to meet customer needs. Another study indicates that coffee shops achieve customer loyalty through the experience and atmospherics (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). Therefore, combining atmospherics within a coffee shop marketing plan may lead to increased customer loyalty. One thought to consider is that some atmospheric elements may discourage

some customers, while other atmospheric elements may provide positive impacts on customers and loyalty. For example, if a place of business has a poor smell, then this may discourage customers (Yildirim, Cagatay, & Hidayetoglu, 2015). Positive and negative impacts may reflect the differences in customers.

In the world, there are many diverse types of people. Further, each person may perceive situations differently. Therefore, the difference in perceptions and people may impact atmospherics, coffee shops, and customer loyalty. Demographic variables, especially age, in customers impact perceptions, shopping behaviors, and time spent in business organizations (Yildirim, Cagatay, & Hidayetoglu, 2015). This study emphasizes that customers prefer color, lighting, background noise, scents, and cleanliness in shopping experiences (Yildirim, Cagatay, & Hidayetoglu, 2015). Coffee shop owners can pay attention to all atmospheric elements, while also paying attention to demographic variables of their customers. Some patrons prefer loud music and bright colors, while other patrons prefer soft music and soft colors. Using the appropriate amount of atmospherics and paying attention to differences in customers may provide benefits for a coffee shop (Kühn & Bothma, 2018; Yildirim, Cagatay, & Hidayetoglu, 2015).

Along with differences in customers, differences in businesses and types of businesses exist (Small Business Administration: Definition of Size, 2019). Also, differences in types and sizes of coffee shops exist (Bui, Nguyen, & Ngoc, 2017). Some coffee shops operate independently while other operate as franchises (Haskova, 2015; Kellner, Townsend, Wilkinson, & Peetz, 2014; Nair & Weber, 2017). Some coffee shops market their products, while other market other benefits such as health benefits or ethical trade practices (Morland, 2017; Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012; Wright, Zeltmann, & Griffin, 2017). Further, businesses use marketing,

atmospherics, and customer loyalty in different manners. For instance, coffee shops, hotels, restaurants, malls, theme parks, and other businesses use atmospherics (Milman, 2013; Sunghyup, 2009). However, each type of business will use atmospherics in a different manner. Some businesses emphasize sights as an atmospheric element, while others emphasize sounds as an atmospheric element (Lowe & Haws, 2017; Mafini & Dhurup, 2015; Michel, Baumann, & Gayer, 2017). Businesses also use customer loyalty techniques in different manners. Some businesses use loyalty programs, while other businesses use relationship building techniques (Niraj et al., 2008; Song, Wang, & Han, 2019). In summary, differences in types of businesses and differences in the operations and marketing tactics of businesses can be considered when combining coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. One study emphasizes that each technique used within business must complement the actual business (Slatten et al., 2009).

Atmospherics for Customer Loyalty within Coffee Shops

Many elements create customer loyalty within business organizations (Watson et al., 2015). Customer relationships and trust provide examples of ways businesses can create loyalty with customers. One study looks at trust with customers from atmospheric elements (Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013). Some other studies indicate that customer loyalty is formed from trust and relationships with the customer (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015). Another study highlights that atmospherics improves word of mouth marketing (Hatzithomas et al., 2018). A similar study concludes that atmospherics improve word of mouth marketing, customer repeat visits, and customer loyalty (Alfakhri et al., 2018). Word of mouth marketing then provides trust with future customers from positive information relayed from current customers (Hatzithomas et al., 2018). Further, coffee shops can utilize atmospherics and customer loyalty techniques within operations. Lunardo and Mbengue (2013) indicate that

atmospherics may create trust with customers, but atmospherics must be used with caution because atmospherics may appear manipulative toward the customer.

Cautious use of atmospherics can be utilized within business operations. Creating trust means that the customer must not feel manipulated. Further, coffee shops can create trust and relationships with atmospherics. However, atmospherics must be used with caution. Using cautious atmospherics comes with knowing what your customers want or desire. One study indicates that managers should know what their customers want and why (Bowen & Chen McCain, 2015). Customers change, so coffee shops should evaluate from within and change if necessary (Kim, Kim, & Holland, 2018; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). This could mean changing up the atmospheric scheme.

Another way that atmospherics can be used is within loyalty programs to create customer loyalty. For example, gamification can be included as an atmospheric element within a loyalty program (Hwang & Choi, 2019). For instance, a coffee shop may use an app with a game within a loyalty program. This atmospheric element includes interactivity and touch. Other authors agree that loyalty programs may create loyalty as well (Niraj et al., 2008; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). Referrals provide another example of a loyalty program or customer satisfaction initiative. Referrals provide businesses word of mouth marketing from satisfied customers (Wirtz, Orsingher, & Cho, 2019). Further, coffee shops can include referrals as loyalty initiatives. A coffee shop could combine an atmospheric element, like touch, gamification, and a referral program to develop a customer loyalty initiative.

One academic study indicates that creating customer delight leads to customer loyalty (Kim, Vogt, & Knutson, 2015). An emotion containing pleasure represents the idea of customer delight (Kim, Vogt, & Knutson, 2015). Atmospherics represent one avenue that can create

delight for customers. Creating an experience or emotion fusing sights, smells, and other elements represent the idea of atmospherics (Bagdare, 2014; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2013). Further, coffee shops may utilize atmospherics to create delight for customer loyalty purposes. One study emphasizes that creating trust through experiences and quality leads to loyalty (Wu, 2017). In summary, creating trust and relationships, evaluating changes and customer needs, using loyalty programs, and creating customer delight may be ways to utilize atmospherics for customer loyalty within coffee shops (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Hwang & Choi, 2019; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015; Kim, Kim, & Holland, 2018; Kim, Vogt, & Knutson, 2015; Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013; Niraj et al., 2008; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015).

Techniques Used to Create Atmospherics for Customer Loyalty in Coffee Shops

Some businesses utilize several atmospheric elements or some business use one or a couple atmospheric elements. A few authors provide several types of atmospheric elements used within businesses or coffee shops (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018; Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016; Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018). Several diverse types of atmospheric elements exist. Music provides one example of an atmospheric element. One study emphasizes the use of background music in coffee shops (Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016). The background music represents sound as an atmospheric element. These authors found that background music used made customers stay longer in the coffee shops and purchase more products (Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016). A similar study found that background music in other types of businesses made customers stay longer and purchase more (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018). Further, background music as an atmospheric element allows customers to purchase products and remain in places of business like a coffee shop. A differing study looked at color, specifically gold, as an atmospheric element (Lee,

Noble, & Biswas, 2018). Color and sights are considered atmospheric elements. This study looked at restaurants using the color gold to influence tipping behavior (Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018). The study found that using the color of gold increased tipping behavior from patrons (Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018). Tipping behavior may or may not show customer loyalty patterns. Other atmospheric elements like smell and touch may also be used to influence consumer behavior. One author encourages businesses to use interactivity within gaming to create customer loyalty (Hwang & Choi, 2019). Further, many types of atmospheric elements may influence customers and customer behavior (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018; Hwang & Choi, 2019; Jeon, Park, & Yi, 2016; Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018).

Increased Customer Loyalty because of Atmospheric Elements

Customer loyalty within coffee shops represents an important goal for business operations (Cossío-Silva, Revilla-Camacho, Vega-Vázquez, & Palacios-Florencio, 2016; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015; Watson et al., 2015). A few of studies emphasize the importance of customer loyalty within coffee shops (Han et al., 2018; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015; Kühn, S., & Bothma, 2018). Coffee shops represent a popular form of business that needs to include an analysis of customer loyalty within the marketing plan (Han et al., 2018; Lee, Moon, & Song, 2018). Some factors that influence loyalty is arousal, experience, and pleasure (Han et al., 2018). Arousal, experience, and pleasure represent goals of atmospheric elements. Atmospheric elements include sights, sounds, touch, smells, and other elements. Bagdare (2014) mentions that atmospherics are décor, color, ambience, and other elements. Atmospherics often create a memory for the customer. Kühn and Bothma (2018) found that creating a memory with things like atmospherics enhance customer loyalty; however, creating a memory with atmospherics may present a challenge for coffee shop managers. Along with

creating an experience or memory, creating joy within customers may also occur with the use of atmospherics. One study found that the joy created with atmospherics led to enhanced customer loyalty (Slatten et al., 2009). One study found that customers appreciate differentiated designs, and the differentiated designs enhanced loyalty (Alfakhri et al., 2018). A similar study found that the better atmospheres led to more customer satisfaction (Lee, Moon, & Song, 2018). One study found that better experiences led to more customer satisfaction which could lead to loyalty (Nadiri, & Gunay, 2013). Further, literature indicates that using atmospheric elements within coffee shops can increase customer loyalty (Han et al., 2018; Kühn, S., & Bothma, 2018; Nadiri, & Gunay, 2013; Slatten et al., 2009).

Reduced Customer Loyalty because of Minimal Atmospheric Elements

Business owners and managers concentrate on profit, costs, and many other elements of the business (Persson, 2013; Snow, 2019). Paying attention to other areas within business operations may prevent concentration on some other business tasks (Snow, 2019). Sometimes, atmospherics are not used or are used in a minimal manner. Kühn and Bothma (2018) found that experience, atmosphere, service quality, food quality, and social connectedness contributes to increased customer loyalty within coffee shops. Sometimes, managers do not know how to allocate resources to appropriate atmospherics (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). Further, some businesses and coffee shops use reduced or no atmospherics within operations. Because atmospherics play a role in customer loyalty, if atmospherics are not used, customer loyalty may decline. Customers enjoy being engaged with the business which leads to loyalty (Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015). Another study indicates that customers enjoy being delighted within the shopping experience (Kim, Vogt, & Knutson, 2015). Atmospherics can allow engagement and delight with customers. Not using atmospherics can reduce the engagement process,

ultimately reducing customer loyalty. In summary, literature indicates that sometimes managers or business leaders concentrate on some business tasks while other tasks may be reduced (Kühn & Bothma, 2018; Persson, 2013; Snow, 2019).

Potential Themes and Perceptions

Potential themes and perceptions can be taken from current literature regarding coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. One theme that authors address is that there are many elements to business operations, and careful consideration of each task represents an important goal within business (Kühn & Bothma, 2018; Persson, 2013; Snow, 2019; Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Accounting, management, marketing, and other tasks provide examples of business tasks or activities that businesses use within operations. Another theme that is consistent throughout the academic literature is that relationship building represents an avenue to customer loyalty (Coelho & Henseler, 2012; Jang, Kim, & Lee, 2015; Morland, 2017; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003). Atmospherics and creating an experience for the customer represent examples of ways to build relationships with customers. An additional theme taken from the literature is that atmospherics represent a particularly important part of business operations (Grayson & McNeill, 2009; Kotler, 1973). Several benefits occur because of the use of atmospherics within business organizations. Customer satisfaction, trust, enjoyable experiences by the customer, and customer loyalty represent examples of types of benefits stemming from atmospherics. One study indicated that while atmospherics are important, atmospherics must also be used with caution as to not over manipulate the customers (Lunardo & Mbengue, 2013). This study brings about another theme taken from the literature; that is atmospherics must be used with caution. Therefore, careful consideration of targeted atmospherics for customer loyalty must be taken. Using atmospherics or using the right amount

of atmospherics can create a challenge for management (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). Another theme taken from current literature is that atmospherics improve customer loyalty within coffee shops. Also, the lack of atmospherics reduces customer loyalty within coffee shops. Another theme taken from the literature is that each business is unique and must find the appropriate avenue to customer loyalty. Further, each coffee shop is unique and must find the appropriate avenue to customer loyalty (Kim, Kim, & Holland, 2018). Therefore, coffee shops must use the appropriate atmospheric techniques to generate customer loyalty. Different coffee shops are unique and individualized (Bui, Nguyen, & Ngoc, 2017). Just as each business is unique, customers also have differences and different perceptions (Yildirim, Cagatay, & Hidayetoglu, 2015). Further, coffee shops find the individualized strategies to improve customer loyalty within each individualized coffee shop.

Conclusion of the Literature Review

The coffee shop industry represents a competitive industry where decision-makers must continually create new strategies to keep loyal customers and remain competitive (Jang, Kim, & Lee, 2015). Within this literature review, the researcher synthesized and summarized current literature on the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Each individual topic was summarized, followed by a combination and synthesis of all three topics. Potential themes and perceptions were addressed. Themes addressed within this literature review were that there are many elements to business operations, that relationship building creates customer loyalty within business, that atmospherics are important in business operations, atmospherics can lead to loyalty, reduced atmospherics can lead to reduced loyalty, each business or coffee shop is unique and must utilize the appropriate atmospheric techniques to achieve loyalty, customers have differences and different perceptions, and targeted and cautious atmospherics must be used

to create customer loyalty. Authors from one study suggested that future studies should look at coffee shops and customer loyalty in various locations and look at different sizes of coffee shops (Bui, Nguyen, & Ngoc, 2017).

This literature review contained information combining the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Coffee shops represent a significantly popular form of business (Lee, Moon, & Song, 2018; Wu, 2017). The portion of the literature review about coffee shops contained an overview of coffee shops, a discussion regarding operations in coffee shops, marketing techniques used by coffee shops, and a discussion about both the intended and unintended atmosphere within coffee shops. Atmospherics help with marketing efforts within the business organization (Hatzithomas et al., 2018; Kotler, 1973). The portion of the literature review about atmospherics contained an overview of atmospherics, a discussion of several types of atmospherics, a discussion about the benefits of atmospherics, and a discussion about using atmospherics as a marketing technique. Customer loyalty represents an important business goal (Cossío-Silva et al., 2016; Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015; Watson et al., 2015). The portion of the literature review about customer loyalty contained an overview of customer loyalty, a discussion about marketing techniques for obtaining customer loyalty including loyalty programs and customer satisfaction initiative, and a discussion regarding evaluation of customer loyalty within the firm. The last portion of the literature review combined and organized information about the three main themes. That portion contained an overview, a discussion about atmospherics for customer loyalty within coffee shops, a discussion about atmospheric techniques used to achieve customer loyalty within coffee shops, and a discussion about both an increase and decrease in loyalty because of increased or decreased atmospherics.

In summary, current literature indicates a few points. First, business organizations use marketing as a tool to gain and retain customers (Milman, 2013). Next, atmospherics represent a form of marketing tool (Hatzithomas et al., 2018; Kotler, 1973). Next, atmospherics can be utilized or not utilized within coffee shops (Han et al., 2018). Further, coffee shops can utilize or not utilize atmospherics as a marketing tool for customer loyalty (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). While organizing and summarizing this information, this writing contained an introduction to the literature review, information on coffee shops, information on atmospherics, information on customer loyalty, information combining coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty, themes and perceptions from the literature, and the conclusion of the literature review. In conclusion, commitment from loyal customers represents an important part of business (Bowen & Chen McCain, 2015). Further, using atmospherics within business and coffee shops to achieve commitment or customer loyalty remains a business and marketing objective (Bowen & Chen McCain, 2015; Kotler, 1973; Kühn & Bothma, 2018).

Section 2: The Project

Overall, section two describes the project and how the researcher accomplished the many tasks in the project. This section of the study includes many elements. First, the purpose statement is addressed as it was in section one. The next elements within section two are the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, the population and sampling, and data collection information. Data collection includes instruments, data collection techniques, data organization techniques, and a summary of data collection. Next in section two, the researcher addressed the data analysis process. Within the data analysis process, the researcher addressed the coding process. The last part of section two includes information about reliability and validity of the study. This study includes a qualitative case study. The entire process of a

research study must contain quality work and ethical standards (Holbrook, Dally, Avery, Lovat, & Fairbairn, 2017; Twining, Heller, Nussbaum, & Tsai, 2017). This section of the study addresses how the study ensured quality work was obtained and ethical standards were met. All these elements summarize the study on coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand the relationship between customer loyalty and the use of thematic atmospherics as a marketing tool within small coffee shops in the Midwest. This study will add to the current literature and knowledge within the topics of marketing, coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. A qualitative case study was used to explore atmospherics within small coffee shops and the relationship of customer loyalty because of atmospherics. The emphasis of the study was to explore the effects of coffee shops using targeted atmospherics and the impact on customer loyalty. Targeted atmospherics can be defined as specific atmospherics designed to influence customers, profits, and customer loyalty. Enhancing customer loyalty through atmospherics within marketing strategies in coffee shops could lead to increased revenue (Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012). Customer loyalty improves with the experience of the customer (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). The study includes examinations of previous literature, interviews, and observations. The problem was explored through a case study within several small coffee shops within the Midwest. Stakeholders from the coffee shops served as the participants of the study. Stakeholders were represented by customers of coffee shops, owners of coffee shops, management of coffee shops, marketers of coffee shops, and employees of coffee shops.

Role of the Researcher

Within this study, the researcher took on many roles. This study was qualitative in nature. Therefore, the information is unique, rich, complex, descriptive and reflect an individual situation (Stake, 2010; Tufford & Newman, 2010). The researcher used the information gathered and presented the study in a qualitative case study. Another role of the researcher was to identify and contact the appropriate participants for the study. The researcher obtained permission from coffee shop owners before any information was obtained. The owners had to grant permission for the study to be conducted. The researcher explained the overall study and the purpose of the study. Once permission was granted, the researcher gained permission from participants of the study. Participants could be customers, employees, management, and owners of coffee shops. If coffee shop owners or participants had questions regarding the study, the researcher answered any questions. The researcher remained a neutral party while interacting with participants and analyzing the data and literature used. Researchers must remain neutral parties while reading and writing scholarly literature (Shaw & Le Roux, 2017). The researcher conducted several interviews and observations. The interviews were on the topic of atmospherics within coffee shops and the impacts that atmospherics have on customer loyalty. The observations occurred at coffee shops located in the Midwest. The researcher collected data and information. Quality represents a critical concern within research (Twining, Heller, Nussbaum, & Tsai, 2017). The researcher attempted to collect enough information to create a valuable and quality study. Scholarly literature was used throughout the study and in the literature review. The researcher analyzed and summarized all information and data collected. The researcher ensured that the information collected was reliable and validated. Keeping evidence allows a study to remain valid (Yin, 2014). Ensuring that evidence is kept represents one way that this study remained

valid. Reliability within a case study means that the study is repeatable and consistent (Yin, 2014). Part of the study included researching and observing several coffee shops. This represented a measure taken to ensure reliability within the study.

Participants

Gaining participants, working with participants, and taking measures to protect the participants represented tasks regarding the participants of this study. Participants included current coffee shop customers, owners, employees, marketers, and managers of coffee shops. The first step included gaining participants to use within the study. The researcher planned to initiate contact with the participants with an in-person meeting. Introducing and summarizing the study to the participants represented one method of gaining permission to participate in the study. If permission was granted, forming a relationship with the participants represented the next step. The researcher explained the possibility of unexpected consequences from the study. For example, participants may provide opinions that are negative in nature. The researcher explained that honesty and confidentiality represented priorities within the study. If participants did not wish to participate in the study after the researcher explained the possibility of unintended consequences, the participants were not forced to participate. The researcher attempted to eliminate any bias in the study. Also, guarding the participants represented a major part of this study. The study design incorporated confidentiality and ensuring that no confidentiality breaches occur remains an important part of academic studies (Holbrook et al., 2017). Also, including ethical procedures throughout the entire process represented a critical component within the study. Researchers are expected to act within ethical boundaries when conducting academic research, especially with human participants (Holbrook et al., 2017). The researcher treated participants in a fair, honest, and respectful manner. The research process

included keeping documentation of every encounter with participants. Keeping records of all evidence represents part of an ethical and valid study (Yin, 2014).

Research Method and Design

A qualitative case study represents the chosen research method and design for this study. This portion of the writing contains a discussion of the chosen method. This portion will also contain a discussion of the chosen design. Also, this portion of the writing contains a summary of the research method and design. This current study reflects the impact on customer loyalty that atmospherics have in coffee shops. Coffee shops bring about unique environments with a unique set of customers. Therefore, the qualitative case study aligns with the purpose of this study because of the unique and complex situations that each coffee shop brings. Qualitative studies use words to describe unique themes and settings (Creswell, 2014). Case studies investigate real-world situations (Yin, 2014). Coffee shops provide real-world situations.

Discussion of method. A qualitative study represents the method for this study about coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Qualitative research provides valuable, close-up, and in-depth information (Van Rijnssoever, 2017). Qualitative research takes on a descriptive, non-numerical, and interpretive manner (Twining et al., 2017). This study about coffee shops took on a descriptive and interpretive nature. Qualitative studies require an interpretive approach to the information obtained (Twining et al., 2017). The information obtained regarding atmospherics and customer loyalty was rich and descriptive. This study also required quality interpretations of the information collected, since many coffee shops differ from other coffee shops. The researcher ensured quality interpretations through significant research efforts, validation, and reliability measures. Qualitative studies expand on and explain real-life situations (Isaacs, 2016). Another author indicates that qualitative studies contain narratives of

real-life situations (Gammelgaard, 2017). This study contained explorations of a real-life setting within coffee shops. The study used qualitative measures to obtain and describe real-life settings. Further, this qualitative study provided beneficial and quality information for the marketing industry, the coffee shop industry, and other academic and industrial areas.

Discussion of design. A case study represents the design of this study about coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Case studies induce explorations of unknown phenomenon (Gammelgaard, 2017). The current study explored coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Explorations took place on the impact of customer loyalty with the use and nonuse of atmospherics at coffee shops. The study contained several locations, or cases. The locations served as sites to observe, explore, and understand the impact of customer loyalty with the use or nonuse of atmospherics. Information was gathered from each case. Case studies stem from unique, real-life situations (Gammelgaard, 2017). Every coffee shop provides unique, real-life situations. Therefore, this study required several observations of multiple unique coffee shops. The study contained several locations to ensure that the study provided valid information. The case study took place in the Midwest. Case studies involve the researcher as a major component of the case study process (Campbell, 2015). The researcher conducted several observations, and interviews at coffee shops within this study. Further, the researcher played a significant role in this qualitative case study. Also, case studies take on “how” and “why” type questions (Yin, 2014). The research questions of this study take on “how or why” questions. The following two questions provide the main research questions for this case study. How do managers and owners of small coffee shops in the Midwest include atmospherics within the overall marketing plan to address customer loyalty? How is customer loyalty impacted by atmospherics within small coffee shops in the Midwest? Several other subquestions stem from

these main case study research questions. In summary, using a case study for this study aligns with the type of study and the purpose of this study.

Summary of research method and design. This study included a qualitative case study. The nature of the problem of the study and purpose of the study align well with a qualitative case study. Because many coffee shops provide unique and individualized information, case study research can gain descriptive information. Also, the use or nonuse of atmospherics may be unique and individualized to each business. Case studies reflect real-life situations (Gammelgaard, 2017). Information obtained throughout this study stemmed from real-life situations. Also, a good qualitative, case study will reflect valid and useful information (Gammelgaard, 2017). Valid and useful information was collected throughout this study. This study can add to the current literature on the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. In summary, using the qualitative method and the case study design allow an informative and valid study.

Population and Sampling

The population and sample of a study represent important components of an academic study (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). Data and theoretical saturation can guide the qualitative study in terms of population and sampling (Boddy, 2016). This section contains a discussion of the population, the sampling, and a summary of the population and sampling. This section includes the sampling method and sample size. Also, this section of the writing describes the eligibility criteria for study participants. This section also includes the relevance of the characteristics of the selected sample.

Discussion of Population

Scholarly studies should include a population that provides information about the study (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). The researcher must identify information about the study from the population and sample of a study (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). The Midwest represented the location of the study. Therefore, the Midwest represented a parameter of the population for this study. More specifically, customers and managers of coffee shops located in the Midwest represented the population of the study. The impact that atmospherics within coffee shops has on customer loyalty represented the main topic of this study. This study aimed to describe atmospherics and the role that atmospherics play within coffee shops. The sample consisted of the overall population of coffee shops and patrons of coffee shops in the Midwest.

Discussion of Sampling

Using a sample that provides an appropriate representation of the population represented a goal of the study about coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Showing an appropriate representation of a population remains an important goal of qualitative research (Boddy, 2016). The current study included a case study that used multiple coffee shops and participants as part of the sample of the study. One interview or one case location may not allow enough information in a study to present reliable results; therefore, more than one interview or location is advised to achieve saturation (Boddy, 2016). Saturation occurs when no added information or patterns appear (Van Rijnsoever, 2017). Keeping this point in mind, the researcher used multiple case locations, multiple observations, and multiple interviews within the general population of the study. The study used several participants so that enough information was obtained to provide valid results. Saturation remained the goal of the study. Saturation may

guide the sample size during the study (Boddy, 2016). One study indicates that a sample size that falls between 20 and 30 will provide valuable information, but the ultimate decision should be based on saturation from the researcher (Van Rijnsouwer, 2017). Therefore, this study aimed to use several locations and at least an estimate of 30 participants generated in a purposefully. If saturation did not occur, then the researcher would seek more participants. Researchers should continuously evaluate the sample size throughout a qualitative study (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). Therefore, the researcher of this study evaluated the sample size continuously. The researcher collected enough information to reach the point that no additional information could provide additional insight into the study.

A purposeful sample represented the sampling method. Because the study took place at coffee shops located in the Midwest, seeking out a purposeful sample to the type of business remained to be a major goal. Selecting participants to gain in-depth and rich information from about a specific topic represents the goal of a purposeful sample (Benoot, Hannes, Bilsen, 2016). Purposeful samples help guide researchers in finding sufficient cases to explore the topic in consideration (Benoot, Hannes, Bilsen, 2016). Current customers and managers of coffee shops describe the participants of the study. The researcher determined eligibility for participants from specific case locations. Participants should visit, frequent coffee shops, or be involved within the coffee shop. In other words, current customers and managers of coffee shops could provide information for this study. Being a current customer provided relevance to this study because this study explored customer loyalty due to the use or nonuse of atmospherics within coffee shops.

Summary of Population and Sampling

This section of the writing describes the population and sampling for this study about coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. The population for the study included customers and managers of coffee shops in the Midwest. A purposeful sample that provided enough information for a valuable study represented the type of sample used. Gaining enough information to provide a valuable study represented a key goal for the sampling process. Several coffee shop locations and participants at coffee shops represented the sample for this study. Current customers and managers from coffee shops represented an eligibility factor within this study. Information in a qualitative case study should guide the researcher in choosing the sample and number of cases (Yin, 2014). Therefore, the researcher collected information to gain saturation.

Data Collection

This section of the writing describes the data collection process for this study. This section includes a discussion on instruments used in the study, data collection techniques, data organization techniques, and a summary of the data collection process. Qualitative studies include ways to explore and understand the context, and data collection measures remain to be a key priority within the research process (Kegler, Raskind, Comeau, Griffith, Cooper, & Shelton, 2019). Throughout this section of the writing, the researcher outlines the data collection process so that if another researcher were to replicate the study, then another researcher could easily accomplish that task.

Instruments

This study used several instruments in the data collection process. The researcher represented a major instrument used in this study. The researcher observed and took in several pieces of information throughout the study. The researcher utilized interviews within the data

collection process. Interviews provide strong insight into participants' views, opinions, experiences, and perceptions (Peters & Halcomb, 2015). The researcher made several observations at coffee shops in the Midwest. Current scholarly literature also served as an instrument for the data collection process. The researcher utilized previous literature as part of the overall study, and the researcher organized and synthesized current literature within the literature review. The researcher remained neutral, honest, nonbiased, and ethical throughout the entire study.

Data Collection Techniques

This study involved several data collection techniques. Interviews served as one data collection technique. The study utilized recordings of the interviews. Technology can aid research techniques, especially in the interviewing process (Peters & Halcomb, 2015).

Observations served as another data collection technique. If permission was granted from the coffee shops, the researcher took pictures of the locations. Atmospherics represented a major theme within this study. Therefore, pictures of the coffee shops provided examples of atmospherics used or not used. The use of current literature served as another data collection technique. The following paragraphs detail each of the data collection techniques.

Interviewing participants provided a major data collection technique. Although interviewing requires a large amount of work, interviews provide valuable insight within and for qualitative studies (Peters & Halcomb, 2015). The researcher interviewed several participants to gain enough information to allow a valuable study. Interviews took place in a face to face manner. The study utilized a semi-structured interview process. Open-ended questions and probing questions represented the types of interview questions that were utilized. The interview questions aligned with the research questions for this study. Each participant group received

identical interview questions for the particular group. Current customers represented one participant group. Managers, employees, and owners represented the other participant group. The following questions represented the interview questions. The appendix for this study includes the complete interview guide including the interview questions. Interviews represent one of the most popular data collection techniques, with many of the interviews utilizing interview guides (Kegler et al., 2019).

Interview Questions for the Customer of the Coffee Shop

1. How often do you visit this coffee shop?
2. Is this the only coffee shop that you visit? Explain the reasons for visiting this coffee shop or other coffee shops?
3. What is the typical experience like when you visit this coffee shop?
4. What types of decorations, sounds, or other experience-based items do you notice?
5. Do any parts of the atmosphere within the coffee shop impact your reasons for visiting this coffee shop? If so, what are the items that impact your reasons for visiting this coffee shop?
6. How do you feel about the atmosphere in this coffee shop? Provide specific examples.
7. If these sights, sounds, and other items were eliminated from the coffee shop, would you still visit the coffee shop? Why or why not? Would you visit as much as you currently do?

Interview Questions for the Manager, Owner, or Employee within the Coffee Shop

1. Does the coffee shop include atmospherics within the marketing plan? If so, how are they included?

2. What type of overall experience does the coffee shop hope to provide for its customers?
3. What types of atmospherics does the coffee shop utilize?
4. How are you hoping that the atmospherics used impact the customer?
5. How do the atmospherics actually impact the customer?
6. In terms of customer loyalty, what techniques does the coffee shop use to obtain loyalty?
7. How does the coffee shop measure customer loyalty?
8. Are there any specific ways that atmospherics influence customer loyalty, if so, what are they?

Observations at coffee shops in the Midwest provided another major data collection technique. Observations provide valuable data within research studies (Jain, Edgar, Bothe, Newman, Wilson, Bint, Brown, Alexander, & Harris, 2015). The researcher observed the real-life settings of the coffee shops. The researcher took extensive notes in each observation. The researcher also took pictures of the coffee shops. Therefore, the pictures provide showcases and artifacts of the atmospherics used or not used within each location. After observations took place, reflections, and interpretations of the observation occurred. Documentation of the reflections and interpretations occurred. The researcher utilized a reflective journal to record any reflections and interpretations.

The use of previous literature also provided another major data collection technique. Previous academic literature can allow a framework or guide within academic studies (Kegler et al., 2019). This study used insight from previous academic works to align with this study and

provide a framework for this study. Previous scholarly literature within the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty served as guides for this current study.

Data Organization Techniques

This study involved several data organization techniques. The researcher kept any tangible data collected in a locked and fireproof safe. The researcher stored all virtual information in a couple of places. Flash drives, email, and virtual storage systems represented storage places for virtual information. Storing virtual information in separate places allowed information to be saved in different locations in case of information loss. Storing data in safe locations represented a priority for this study. Storing data collected can allow information to be stored and retrieved in an easy manner (Johnson, Dunlap, & Benoit, 2010). Also, personal information and confidentiality within data collected remained a major priority.

The researcher organized data into categories or themes. The researcher utilized the coding process as a data organization technique. Coding takes large amounts of information and categorizes the information by word, paragraph, page, or category (Skjott Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). The coding process segments data into organized units (Skjott Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Coding allows easier access to data, reduces amounts of data, and increases the quality of the findings (Skjott Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Coding served as a valuable tool within this qualitative research process. The researcher started with the research questions. The research questions provided a starting point for the coding process. The researcher also noted any themes that stemmed from the data collected. The coding process guided the analysis phase of this study. The researcher also used coding as a reliability and validity tool to ensure the information collected reflected valid and reliable information.

Summary of Data Collection

Gaining an understanding of the situation and experiences represents a goal of the data collection process (Jain et al., 2015). The researcher attempted to gain an understanding of the real-life experience within a coffee shop regarding atmospherics and customer loyalty. The researcher represented a key instrument in this study. This study utilized interviews, observations, and current literature as data collection techniques. The organization of data included storing the data with measures taken to protect data safety and organizing data into categories.

Data Analysis

This section of the writing will detail the data analysis process within this study. The coding process represents a major portion of the data analysis process for this qualitative case study. Coding helps to organize and unravel substantial amounts of data collected (Stoffelen, 2019). Analyzing and interpreting collected data represents a major priority for this study. Obtaining enough information so that no new themes appear represents a key goal. If another researcher were to replicate this study, the data analysis process should allow the same results or comparable results.

Coding Process

The coding process consists of reading through collected information, creating an overview, finding categorical themes, comparing and analyzing themes, and including the post-coding process which contains summaries, analysis, concluding remarks, identifying key results, and finding gaps in the information (Stoffelen, 2019). This process represented an intensive process. Essentially, all the information gained from data collection techniques must be organized and coded to pull important insight into the study. Interviews, observations, and

previous scholarly literature included data collection techniques that the researcher coded in this study. Assigning codes and analyzing data gained from interviews represent key measures in the data analysis process (Guetterman, Chang, DeJonckheere, Basu, Scruggs, & Vydiswaran, 2018). Each interview or observation included several details. The researcher undertook the data analysis process in stages. Qualitative researchers analyze the information as it is collected (Creswell, 2014). The researcher of this study analyzed each piece of individual data as it was obtained. Each piece of data either generated or fit into a code. As more information was collected, the researcher analyzed and coded the information. The researcher compared previous data collected with new data collected. The researcher focused on relevant information collected. All data was kept, however, the information that applied to the current study appeared as major points of the study. This study included the entire coding process from the reading of data to identifying themes to the post-coding process. The coding process included interpretations of the information and codes. The researcher utilized Nvivo software to help with the coding process.

Summary of Data Analysis

Researchers can accomplish data analysis in many ways; several researchers utilize the coding process (Stoffelen, 2019). Researchers should read the data collected, identify codes, and interpret and develop findings (Guetterman et al., 2018). This section of the writing described the data analysis process which includes coding. Information obtained within coffee shops about atmospherics and customer loyalty provided the study with information to be organized, coded, and analyzed. After the analysis and coding process, the researcher organized the information into a report.

Reliability and Validity

Throughout this study, the researcher took measures to ensure reliability and validity. This section of the writing details the reliability and validity measures taken throughout the study about coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Validity represents accuracy and reliability represents consistency (Creswell, 2014). A researcher should actively attempt to utilize measures to ensure reliability and validity (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the researcher in this study actively attempted to utilize reliability and validity measures.

Reliability

This study contained some reliability measures. Reliability and consistency represented vital parts of this study. Reliability means that a researcher has taken measures to ensure care and consistency throughout the research process (Cypress, 2017). The researcher took measures to record every part of the research process. The researcher described observations and findings accurately. The researcher described findings in a richly and descriptively. Describing findings in a meaningful and rich manner allows consistency measures to be taken (Collingridge & Gantt, 2019). The researcher attempted to replicate the results by doing multiple observations. Reliability means that consistent results are gained through multiple or repeated measures (Cypress, 2017).

Validity

This study contained some validity measures. Accuracy remained to be a critical goal for this study. First, the researcher included triangulation throughout the study. Triangulation means that different data sources are utilized to ensure accuracy and justification (Creswell, 2014). The researcher compared numerous scholarly articles throughout the study. Also, observations and interviews were utilized in the triangulation process. After interviews and

observations occurred, the researcher utilized follow-up interviews and observations. The researcher attempted to minimize all bias from the study. However, if any bias occurred, the researcher noted the bias in the findings. One study suggests applying careful consideration to the details of the study as a validity measure (Collingridge & Gantt, 2019). Using effective interviewing and observation techniques reflect content validity (Collingridge & Gantt, 2019). Interviews and observations represented data collection techniques that were utilized throughout this study. Further, the researcher attempted to use effective observation and interviewing techniques to achieve content validity. Consistency in the interview process represented one way the researcher ensured reliability. The interviewer utilized an interview guide. The researcher paid attention to details designing the study, throughout the study, and writing the results of the study. Also, saturation represented a goal for this study. The researcher continued to collect information until saturation occurred.

Summary of Reliability and Validity

This section of the writing describes the measures that the researcher took to ensure reliability and validity throughout the study. Validity and research represent vital parts of qualitative research and ensuring reliability and validity through rigor can lead to quality research studies (Cypress, 2017). In summary, the researcher attempted to use descriptive recording, replicate findings through repeated data gathering techniques, triangulation, saturation, paid attention to details, and tried to minimize all bias from the study.

Transition and Summary of Section 2

Throughout this section of the writing, the researcher described measures to be taken throughout the research process. Researchers should carefully identify techniques and measures to be used throughout the research process (Collingridge & Gantt, 2019). These main points of

this section include the purpose of the study, the role of the researcher, the participants of the study, the research method and design, the population and sampling of the study, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and reliability and validity measures. The next section of this writing includes the actual research field study and the findings from the study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Throughout this section of the writing, the researcher addresses the actual field study on coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. The researcher conducted the study at coffee shops in the Midwest. Each patron that visits a coffee shop may experience different levels of atmospherics during the visit (Spence & Carvalho, 2020). This section of the study details the actual field study and themes, perceptions, and findings from the study. Further, this section contains an overview of the study, anticipated themes, and perceptions, the presentation of findings including any themes that emerge, applications to professional practice, recommendations for actions, recommendations for further study, reflections, and the conclusion of the writing.

Overview of the Study

This study consisted of a qualitative case study about the topics of atmospherics, coffee shops, and customer loyalty. The purpose of this study was to understand the relationship between customer loyalty and the use of thematic atmospherics as a marketing tool within small coffee shops in the Midwest. Coffee represents a highly popular drink consumed daily with several types of coffee shops emerging throughout our current culture (Spence & Carvalho, 2020). This study consisted of an exploratory study utilizing interviews, observations, and scholarly literature. The following questions provide the overarching research questions represented in the study. How do managers and owners of small coffee shops in the Midwest

include atmospherics within the overall marketing plan to address customer loyalty? How is customer loyalty impacted by atmospherics within small coffee shops in the Midwest? Each research question had sub-questions to allow for a narrower view of each topic. The researcher visited several coffee shops located in the Midwest and interviewed several participants. Within the presentation of findings, the researcher will address each observation site and the themes that emerged from the field study. The presentation of findings will also address the research questions along with quotes from participants of the study. Three themes emerged from the field study including comfortable, unique not a franchise, and reoccurring customers.

Anticipated Themes and Perceptions

Going into this study, the researcher held some perceptions and anticipated themes. First, each coffee shop represents its individual and unique nature. Each coffee shop consists of an individual store that may differ from other coffee shops. Franchised stores maintain control over certain functions within the business especially in operations and marketing (Kellner, Townsend, Wilkinson, & Peetz, 2014). Unlike franchised stores, small, individual coffee shops will create different spaces and can be unique. Second, patrons will have several reasons for visiting coffee shops. Several variables reflect the reasons for coffee consumption (Spence & Carvalho, 2020). For instance, some may visit coffee shops to meet with friends, while others may visit just for the coffee. One reason for visiting a coffee shop may be for the atmosphere experienced. This atmosphere represents a major factor within this study.

Presentation of Findings

Coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty represent the main concepts addressed throughout this study. Customers enjoy atmospherics along with product purchases when visiting business organizations (Grayson & McNeill, 2009). This section of writing includes the

presentation of findings for the field study on coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. The researcher will include a description of each coffee shop observed. Also, the interview participant groups are outlined. This section of the writing also describes the themes that emerged from the study and how the themes relate to the research questions. This section of writing also includes several quotes from participants. Last, this section of the writing includes a summary of the findings.

Observations

This portion of the writing describes the site observations conducted within this study. The researcher visited five coffee shops located in the Midwest. The researcher visited each location a few times during the field study. The first visit to each location was to explain the study and obtain permission to conduct the study. The second visit to each location represented the actual observation. The researcher spent time at each location in the natural setting. The next visit represented a follow-up visit to verify that observations were accurate. Each observation visit consisted of the researcher taking notes and collecting pictures of the location. Pictures from each site visit are included in the appendix of this study. Pictures and multiple visits allowed triangulation measures. Also, visiting several distinct locations allowed data saturation to occur. Also listed in the appendix is the observation protocol document used to guide the observations. Following the site visit, the researcher typed and organized the observation notes. Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen (2013) describe atmospheric elements as the smells, sights, noises, sounds, decorations, character, and the overall experience of an establishment. Therefore, observations in the field study included the overall experience, sounds, smells, sights, decorations, and other elements. Next, each location will be described along with each of the atmospheric elements observed.

Site 1. The first site visit consisted of a small coffee shop with an overall farmhouse, coffee, and religious feel. The small coffee shop was decorated in farmhouse style furnishings and decorations. For instance, a long farmhouse table provided a place for customers to sit, eat, drink and visit. Also included in the decoration scheme were several signs displaying coffee themes and several signs displaying religious verses and religious sayings. For instance, one sign was decorated with coffee beans in the shape of a coffee cup and heart along with the words “My cup runneth over” (Psalm 23:5). Another sign said, “All I need is a little bit of coffee, and a whole lot of Jesus”. The coffee shop was clean and not cluttered. The walls were painted in soft colors with a splash of colorful painted flowers on the wall and a couch containing matching painted colorful flowers. Most walls were soft orange and yellow. One wall was painted a light gray. Overall, the shop was bright. Lighting impacts the overall experience of the customer (Biswas, Szocs, Chacko, & Wansink, 2017). The bright lighting and colors seemed to open a small space. The size of the building was approximately eight feet wide by twenty feet long. Several tables, chairs, bar stools, and a couch allowed patrons to sit in the coffee shop. The coffee shop resided on the corner of a side street and a busy state highway. The coffee shop operates a drive-through window to take advantage of the heavy highway traffic. Most of the patrons that visited the shop were drive-through patrons. Seven parking spaces were available for patrons on one side of the building. Additional parking could be obtained on the other side of the building. The coffee shop did have a small restroom located in the back of the building. The restroom was not decorated in any specific manner. Wi-Fi was provided to customers. Along with Wi-Fi, security cameras were visible.

Several sounds, smells, and decorations were utilized within this specific coffee shop. For instance, aroma may influence a customer’s consumption behavior within a store setting

(Spence, & Carvalho, 2020). This coffee shop did not have any specific smells other than a hint of sweetness occasionally. Several sounds accompanied the small coffee shop. Coffee related sounds filled most of the sounds. The coffee related sounds included milk steaming, coffee grinding, coffee making, and a blender. In the background, the buzz of a refrigerator could be heard. Also, in the background was a television playing the local news station. When a car arrived in the drive through, a ding from a bell occurred. Talking in the background happened regularly from both employees and patrons visiting the shop. The sound of occasional water running from employees cleaning dishes and ice scooping occurred. Several decorations adorned the coffee shop. Pictures and signs hung on the walls. Chalkboard menus provided guests with choices for coffee flavorings. In one corner, a tree decorated in winter burlap and a snowman's head as a tree topper provided a decoration that matched the season. Under the tree there was a silver metal bucket with games that patrons could play. The coffee shop also had magazines that patrons could look at. Two green plants provided another decorative accent. White Christmas icicle lights hung from the main ordering counter. Behind the ordering counter was a wooden shelf which held coffee flavor syrups. The bottom of the ordering counter housed corrugated metal to match the farmhouse décor. The counter also housed a glass case that had muffins, cookies, and other sweets for purchase.

Site 2. The second site visit consisted of a coffee shop with an overall industrial, urban, railroad feel. The theme within this coffee shop was immensely emphasized. The overall railroad theme utilized matched the town's rich history with railroads. The town represented a major railroad hub in the 1800s and early to middle 1900s (Britannica: A History, 2020). The entire interior of the coffee shop was decorated with railroad artifacts. For instance, railroad gates, lights, and crossing signs adorned the walls. Even the restrooms included railroad décor.

The color scheme included dark grays and blacks with red and yellow accents to match the railroad theme. The shop utilized red and yellow stripes on the concrete floors and even on the tabletops to complement the railroad theme. The espresso machines were yellow matching the color scheme. One wall utilized the old brick interior of the building. The coffee shop was dimly to moderately lit, which provided a darker atmosphere in terms of lighting. In the front of the shop, floor to ceiling windows provided the exterior wall. Along the top of the windows the words “Eat, Drink, Relax” were written. The interior of the shop was large. The size was approximately 25-foot-wide by 45-foot-long. The ceilings were approximately 16 feet high. The large and open size of the coffee shop provided a warehouse type feel. The shop is in an old brick building on a busy main road of the town. The road is a non-highway with moderate traffic flow. Approximately ten parking spaces were available along the side of the road. This coffee shop did not have a drive through option. Wi-fi was available to customers. Security cameras were visible. The coffee shop kept busy with a steady flow of several customers. In comparison with the other site visits this coffee shop included the most overall targeted atmospherics.

Several sounds, smells, and decorations were utilized within this specific coffee shop. Coffee with an occasional gust of sweetness represented the overarching smells within this coffee shop. Loud music represented the main sound within this coffee shop. A high music volume enhances excitement (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018). The music style playing throughout the building was represented by a mixture of rock, alternative, pop, and eighties music. Background music will differ in coffee shops portraying trendy shops as compared to homely coffee shops (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). Coffee related sounds that included milk steaming and coffee scooping also emerged. Additionally, a beeping occurred occasionally. This beeping originated from an oven cooking food. Background talking among employees and

patrons represented a consistent sound. Many of the patrons were visiting with other patrons located throughout the building. Further, customers were communicating with not only their immediate table mates but also with other customers. A community like atmosphere seemed to emerge. This coffee shop included several decorations and visual sites that matched an overall urban railroad theme. Railroad crossing signs, gates, and lights were utilized. Caution and danger signs were utilized. The decorations included a small section of fencing along one wall, a clock in a cage, and a small section of lockers on one wall. The counter included corrugated metal with wood outlines. The coffee syrup flavors were situated on the ordering counter and a counter against the back wall of the ordering station. A shelf behind the ordering counter housed a miniature railroad crossing sign and the mannequin head of a man with a beard wearing an old railroad hat. The menus were digital television screens. Some of the drink and sandwich names on the menu boards matched the railroad theme. Another section of the building provided a sitting area with couches and chairs. This area reminded the researcher of an old parlor. The wallpaper was black and white patterned, and the floor was carpeted in a checkered pattern. The area included an old chandelier for lighting.

Site 3. The third site visit consisted of a coffee shop with an urban, and eclectic overall feel. This coffee shop reminded the researcher of a coffee shop that one may see on television. A mix of several different eclectic items were used throughout the shop. Also, the coffee shop decorated for the current season and holiday. Hanging from the ceiling were several silver sparkle snowflakes because of the winter season. One shelf housed several valentine's decorations on it. One academic study found that color impacted a patron's overall experience (Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018). The wall colors were made up of burnt orange, brown, crème, and soft maroon. The lighting within this coffee shop seemed to be dark because of the colors

utilized, but some areas were brightened because of overhead lights and stained-glass wall sconces. The size of this coffee shop was approximately eight foot by eight foot with an additional room available that was also approximately the same dimensions. The size provided a small and compact space. This coffee shop was located within in a strip mall on a moderately busy street within a large town. There were only a few patrons that visited the shop. One of the patrons brought a dog in. The employees welcomed the patron and the dog. Approximately 30 shared parking spaces were available to patrons. The restrooms were shared with another store within the strip mall. The store utilized visible security cameras.

Several sounds, smells, and decorations were utilized within this specific coffee shop. The shop smelled clean. A fresh linen or citrus type smell filled the air, possibly from an air freshener. Homely type coffee shops may want to allure customers with the scent of coffee roasting (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). Soft jazz music represented the main sound throughout the coffee shop. The music did not include any words. Other than the soft music, the shop was quiet. Coffee related sounds also filled the location. For instance, the researcher heard coffee making, and milk steaming. Background talking occurred. An occasional dinging occurred when the entrance door opened. Black tables matched the coffee shop's darker atmosphere. An ingrained flat coffee cup design was included on the tabletops. A smooth brown, orangish concrete floor added to the dark atmosphere. Decorations ranged from winter, seasonal décor, to random eclectic items. For instance, a small brown wood cross adorned one wall. Two black clocks were hung on the walls. One wall was painted in a mural. The mural appeared to be of the countryside. A couch holding pillows for sitting purposes was housed along the same wall as the mural. A Marilyn Monroe sign with the store's name on it hung on one wall. Other signs included a wood sign with dark coffee on it and an espresso sign. Old brown cabinets with

drawers housed some coffee pumps. The business license was displayed above the coffee pumps. Several green plants were located throughout the coffee shop. Games, magazines, and books were available for patrons to utilize. Chalkboards with colorful chalk provided the menus. The coffee flavor syrups were housed on a wood shelf behind the ordering counter. The ordering counter was colored in soft maroon. The ordering counter also housed a clear case with sweets available for purchase. The coffee shop included an additional room that provided a brighter space. A long dining table and a few smaller tables were included in the additional room.

Site 4. The fourth site visit consisted of a coffee shop with a quaint and homey overall feel that included several mismatched and unique decorative items. The coffee shop included several decorative items, but the items did not align with any specific theme. Marketers can use color to create a personality (Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018). Most of the shop was painted in light green paint. Some walls had old brick peeking through the paint for decorative purposes. One wall of the shop included a rich dark green, maroon, and navy curtain. The front of the shop had large windows that were almost floor to ceiling. Along the bottom of the window the words “coffee, pastries, breakfast, deli, paninis, soups, salad” were written. The shop was organized into three distinct areas. The front had dining tables available. The middle was the ordering area with a small shop across from the ordering area. The back held more dining tables and some decorative paintings. The shop was lit in a medium manner. Further, the shop was not too bright but also not too dark. Approximately 40 feet long by 15 feet wide represented the size of the long coffee shop. The ceilings were approximately twelve feet high. The building had a large warehouse type feel because of the old building it was located in. The coffee shop was located on the corner of a square in a town on a moderately busy highway. Parking was available to patrons along the square. Approximately five shared spaces were available for parking. Patrons

could utilize additional parking along the square, but those parking spaces would require a small walk. The building did offer a restroom in the back. The restroom matched the mismatched décor as it housed a section of old wooden picket fencing in the restroom. Only a few patrons visited the coffee shop in the morning. However, several patrons visited the coffee shop during the lunch hour.

Several sounds, smells, and decorations were utilized within this specific coffee shop. Customers take more than just a product from retail experiences; customers often enjoy atmospheric elements (Grayson & McNeill, 2009). The overall smell of the coffee shop consisted of a sweet smell and of soup cooking. Sounds included coffee making, milk steaming, and coffee cups and plates clanging together. A refrigerator buzzed in the background. Background talking from employees and customers sounded throughout the coffee shop. A business phone rang during one point in the observation. Decorations within the coffee shop took on a mismatched nature. A very noticeable set of decorations were coffee mugs hanging from a shelf that wound through the building near the ceiling. Each coffee mug was unique. Behind the ordering counter hung two maps. One map displayed the United States of America. The other map displayed the world. Pins were placed on the maps. Each pin spot represented where each coffee mug came from. In the back of the building, old wood doors housed paintings from local artists. A stuffed bumblebee hung from the ceiling in one area. The bumblebee represented the name of the coffee shop. Another sign represented the name of the coffee shop. The sign said: “The local hive café best food in town, buzz on in”. One wall housed a bookshelf that had books available to read. Tablecloths decorated each dining table. The tablecloths did not match throughout the building. Some tablecloths had coffee décor on them, others had sunflowers, and others had blue and white patterns on them. An old black ladder was propped

against the back wall of the building. Behind the ordering counter a metal shelf displayed the coffee flavor syrups. A chalkboard menu hung on the wall behind the ordering counter. The ordering counter consisted of corrugated metal. The ordering counter also had a clear case with sweets available to purchase.

Site 5. The fifth site visit consisted of a coffee shop with an overall compact, comfortable, and homey type feel with coffee decorative accents. The coffee shop was housed in an actual old house turned into a coffee shop. The walls were painted light yellow with bright red borders. The outside porch was painted bright red. The purpose of the painted porch was to complement the name of the coffee shop. Further, the main color scheme within the coffee shop was yellow highlighted with red. Bright lights illuminated the coffee shop. Because of the bright lighting and the bright yellow walls, the coffee shop was very bright. The shop was located on a busy state highway running through a small town. The entire space was made up of approximately 20 foot by 20 foot. The space was divided into two rooms. One room was utilized for ordering purposes. The other room was utilized for dining, sitting, and visiting. The size of the rooms made for a very compact space. Four parking spaces were available in front of the coffee shop along the side of the highway. Additional parking was available in the back of the house. The restroom walls matched the paint in the main portion of the coffee shop, but the restroom did not include any other decorations. Wi-fi was available to patrons. Two visible signs advertised the availability of Wi-fi along with the password for Wi-fi. In today's world, Wi-fi represents an expectation from customers (Moreira, Fortes, & Santiago, 2017).

Stimuli related to the senses impact the buying process (Moreira, Fortes, & Santiago, 2017). Several sounds, smells, and decorations were utilized within this specific coffee shop. The shop radiated a sweet and warm smell. Patrons could also smell lunch cooking. Coffee

sounds such as espresso being emptied could be heard. Background talking rang throughout the entire coffee shop. Another sound that the researcher noticed was cars driving by. The proximity to the highway allowed the sounds of cars driving by to be heard readily. Soft music played throughout the coffee shop. Doors creaked when they were opened and closed. The doors creaking reminded the researcher that this coffee shop was an old home. At one point during the observations, a fire alarm sounded because of the cooking ovens. The decorations throughout the coffee shop were decorated with a coffee theme. Old brown coffee burlap sacks hung on the wall and served as curtains. Some of the dining chairs had coffee fabric cushions. A chalkboard decorated the ordering room. "Love is in the air and it smells like coffee" was written on the chalkboard in colorful chalk. "Connect, community, and café" decorated one wall with scrabble letters. The tables were painted black. Some tables had painted red checker boards painted into the center of the table. Peg games decorated every table. Each table also included a small vase with a fresh flower in it. In the dining room area, there was a couch and four black chairs available to relax upon. Next to the couch and sitting area was a red bookshelf full of books for patrons to look at. A tissue box sat on the small table near the couch area. The ordering room utilized chalkboard menus and whiteboard menus. The coffee syrup flavors and machines set back behind the counter area in a separate kitchen area. The ordering counter was made up of brown wood. Several light brown crates sat in front of the ordering counter. The crates held snack type items for sale. The items included things like gummy bears, dried fruit, and chocolate covered espresso beans. The ordering counter also housed a clear case that held pastries for sale. The ordering room had a large silver fork and silver spoon as a decorative piece on the wall. Several flyers adorned the counter and walls within the coffee shop. These were advertising type flyers for local community events.

Interview Participant Groups

Participant groups within this study were divided into two groups to gain enough information regarding customer loyalty from a managers and customers' standpoint. The first group of participants included owners, managers, and employees of coffee shops. Employee participants will represent the name of this group. The second group of participants included current customers of coffee shops. Customer participants will represent the name of this group. The names of each participant will remain confidential. The researcher will use a pseudonym when quoting the participants. Within the themes of this writing, the researcher will clarify the participant group type being discussed. The letters CP will represent a customer participant. The letters EP will represent an employee participant. The interview guide utilized during interviews is located as an appendix to this writing. Within the interview guide, the reader can view the questions addressed to each participant group. Audio recording each interview allowed a triangulation measure. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. After the transcription process, the research replayed the interview to ensure accuracy. Several interviews and observation sites are recommended to achieve data saturation (Boddy, 2016). The researcher conducted several interviews to ensure data saturation occurred. After several interviews and observations, no new themes emerged. The following sections describe the themes that emerged within the study.

Theme 1-Comfortable. A major theme that emerged while conducting the field study was comfort. Both the employee participant group and the customer participant group placed comfort as a high priority. Further, being comfortable as a customer or providing a comfortable space was a goal within the atmosphere. Several words were used to describe comfortable. Words such as comfortable, cozy, homey, and warm were used as synonyms to describe the

comfort factors in the atmosphere. Although each coffee shop provides a unique atmosphere, a commonality was comfort. Coffee shop employees wanted their customers to be comfortable. Also, customers wanted to be comfortable when visiting a coffee shop. Therefore, the comfort factor represents part of the atmospheric experience. Sights, sounds, smells, and other items represent items that contribute to the comfort experience. Some factors that contributed to comfort within coffee shops were the colors painted on the walls, sounds, the furniture, and the overall experience. For instance, soft music or quiet music may induce relaxation or comfort (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018). Some coffee shop employees intentionally designed the space to be comfortable, while other coffee shops had a comfortable experience emerge naturally in an unintended manner. Some customer participants noted that if the comfort was taken away, then they would not return. Further, this illustrates the point that if some atmospheric elements especially those that contribute to comfort were reduced, customer loyalty may decrease.

The following quotes will reflect answers from the employee participant group about the comfort experience within the coffee shop. Unforgettable experiences allow businesses to have beneficial opportunities (Moreira, Fortes, & Santiago, 2017). Coffee shops can provide a comfortable atmosphere that creates an unforgettable experience. When asked how employees are hoping that the atmosphere impacts the customer, EP 1 responded,

We want them to feel like they're at home and they're welcome to come back. And that we are happy to have them. And you know they are what makes this place, without them we are nothing, so we want the atmosphere to make them feel like they're comfortable and relaxed and welcome to stay as long as they want.

EP 3 answered the same question with,

Um, I'm hoping that when the customer enters, they are elated and excited. And I'm going to say overwhelmed because you do not want your customers to be underwhelmed so I want overwhelmed as in wow this is amazing. We want the wow factor. So that when they leave, they tell everyone else they know to come here. They have their weddings here; they have their birthday parties here. It's a very home environment. It's called "company name" coffee room because it's like a room in your house. Literally, the owners live upstairs.

One study found that loud or fast music enhanced excitement within customers (Biswas, Lund, & Szocs, 2018). This illustrates the point that EP 3 was trying to make. When asked if the coffee shop included atmospherics within the marketing plan, EP 6 explained,

So, like do we think about that as far as our marketing? Yeah, I think so for sure. Cause you want it to be a cozy place, welcoming, pretty things but you know a comfortable place. You want to relax, you want to sit here and study or you know, so we do kind of have both. We offer that type of room over there where you can have meetings and over here it's just it's homey.

EP 6 also explained,

Experience um, we do get time to talk with our customers, get to know them. And so, I think it is a comfortable place for them to come, you know they know us. We often times, they know that we know what they are getting. So, we can kind of be ready for them. So, and then I think this is a little escape, I think. We have people who will sit here and sit on that couch for a long time and relax or and sometimes even taking a nap.

When asked what type of overall experience the coffee shop was hoping to provide for the customers, EP 7 responded with, "Well, happy, comfortable, good food. We want people to feel

like they are at home”. In summary, coffee shop employees wanted customers to feel comfortable. The employees either tried to create a comfortable atmosphere with sounds, sights, tastes, or experiences, or a comfortable atmosphere naturally emerged. Lighting, scents, temperatures, and pleasing sounds represent atmospheric elements that can make an experience comfortable or pleasant (Moreira, Fortes, & Santiago, 2017).

The following quotes will reflect answers from the customer participant group about the comfort experience within the coffee shop. When asked how a participant felt about the atmosphere within this coffee shop CP10 said, “I like it. Very relaxed and comfortable”. CP 1 said “I know the owner so very friendly like very casual very comfortable” when asked what the typical experience was like when visiting the coffee shop. CP 8 answered the same question with, “Uh, everybody comes in just very nice and it’s a very calming chill atmosphere”. CP 12 responded to the same question with,

Peaceful, uh she plays great music, a lot of times she’ll have Italian opera on. Uh, I have my kind of reserved spot here. I’ve gotten to know a lot of the regular customers that come in. I’ve sort of befriended a number of people, the regulars as well. I just think the environment’s very conducive, peaceful.

One study found that music was positively related to pleasure (Roschk, Loureiro, & Breitsohl, 2017). When asked what type of decorations, sounds, or other experience-based items you notice when you visit the coffee shop, CP 3 answered,

Oh, they have a really good couple of comfortable chairs and if you’re going to work there, I mean it’s really quiet. And so, I could just go in there, there’s times I’ve had the place to myself and I can work there and there’s never an issue. It’s comfortable, so like if you walk in you go past the table the desk where you order the coffee there’s a couple

of chairs there and a couch and the chair if you're facing the chair it's the one on the left, it's really comfortable. I like it.

Further, along with the overall atmosphere, comfortable furniture adds to the comfort factor.

Another participant, CP 4, answered the same question with,

When I go inside it's only whenever I'm with a friend, and we're going there just to visit, and it gives us a little place to hang out. But I would say similar to like when you're in college and you've got like the library or some little cozy spot. Um, it's you go in there and it's just cute inside, so it seems like it's a fun place just to hang out and visit. Um, it's quiet usually and um the decorations inside are like you know all coffee related fun sayings and things like that. So, it's a very welcoming type of at home feel, I guess.

When asked if these sights, sounds, experience-based items, smells and decorations were eliminated from the coffee shop, would you still visit the coffee shop? CP 3 also mentioned that,

Yeah, if they took the chair and they didn't make it the way that it is like if I couldn't put my iPad down somewhere and type or if I couldn't sit in a comfortable chair absolutely I wouldn't go.

One customer, CP 15, mentioned that "Um, It's just cozy and welcoming. And we enjoy being here" when asked if any parts of the atmosphere impacted the reasons for visiting the coffee shop. CP 15 also mentioned that "I like the atmosphere; I like the music they play. I like being made to feel like I belong here". One study found that comfort positively impacts the business experience, especially in a retail environment (Ainsworth & Foster, 2017). Overall, customers enjoyed a comfortable atmosphere. The comfort mentioned by participants came from furniture, the music, the decorations, the overall experience, and other elements.

Theme 2-Unique not a franchise. Another theme that emerged from the field study about coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty was that small, individual coffee shops provided a unique atmosphere. Further, the atmosphere was unique and not like a franchise. Participants mentioned several different franchised coffee shops. Small coffee shops were even compared to some fast-food type restaurants. Franchisors exhibit much control over the franchised business, therefore, making it difficult for franchised businesses to make certain choices about marketing or business operations (Kellner, Townsend, Wilkinson, & Peetz, 2014). Employees of small coffee shops developed unique atmospheres. Further, employees of small coffee shops had the freedom to create unique coffee shops. Some of the employees created a unique and purposeful atmosphere. Other employees did not intend for the unique atmosphere to happen; the unique type of atmosphere emerged naturally. Customer participants mentioned that they appreciated the unique atmosphere of small coffee shops.

The following quotes will reflect answers from the employee participant group about the unique and not a franchise atmosphere within the small coffee shop. The following quote provides an example of very targeted atmospherics. When asked if atmospherics were included in the marketing plan EP 9 responded,

Um so when we started developing the concept behind the (company name) um one of the key components was what's the esthetic what's the atmosphere going to be? Um a lot of the time, especially in this area people aren't familiar with what coffee shops really are. And their experience has been Starbucks, or it's been super uh modern, urban um more metropolitan type areas where they're experiencing this. So we decided that it was important that we take into account that we are in small town Illinois and more hospitable German communities and so when we were creating the atmosphere here it was how do

we make it feel like home, how do we make it comfortable, how do we make it something that's familiar for our customer base and the community that we are located in um introducing new foods, new drinks, new ideas as far as food goes, but keeping the atmosphere very familiar very comfortable, very much what they were already used to. So, it was certainly part of our um marketing plan our business plan; it was really a driving force even behind um a lot of the other purchases and partnerships that we made as well. So, I would definitely say yes.

EP 9 also explained that they have control over the atmosphere and the atmospherics used and can alter the atmosphere, unlike a chain.

Um the music that we choose it just kind of depends on the day. If it's rainy outside, we might be playing some 80s rock. You just never even know. Some days we're playing show tunes. You know, um a lot of it's just really dependent on who is working and the um mood that they are in, and so it's kind of an evolving sort of thing as far as the music component goes. Um and it's fun because you get the different people coming in some people are like "oh man I love this song" and some people are going "I don't even know this song" and then the next day, the same people come in and it's like flip-flopped. So, you know we um definitely um don't have a lot of um rules as far as that goes. But we definitely try to keep music playing. Um as far as the smells I mean you are gonna smell coffee and you are gonna smell food. Those are things that we don't really um take into account necessarily just because we know mainly coffee and cooking food. So, whatever is on the menu that day, that's you know what it's gonna be.

Having control over the atmosphere, specifically music can lead to pleasure within the customer (Roschk, Loureiro, & Breitsohl, 2017). The following quote provides an example of a coffee

shop where the atmosphere developed in a more naturally. When asked what types of atmospherics the coffee shop utilizes, EP 7 relayed,

Just um really it uses the employees and the chaos of everything. Like everything is different, like it's organized because I'm crazy but there is an organized chaos. Like the tables are all different, the tablecloths are different so it's kind of like a mismatched chaos that's fun. So, chaos and comfortable are the two words I'm looking for.

The following quotes will reflect answers from the customer participant group about the unique and not a franchise atmosphere within the small coffee shop. For example, CP 3 liked the quiet atmosphere provided by the small coffee shop as opposed to Panera. CP 3 said,

Like I like to sit at Panera but the problem I have with Panera is if I sit at Panera, I've gotta have headphones in because if I don't have headphones in, it's just too loud. This one you can sit in; you don't have to do anything. You don't have to plug your ears because it's gonna be nice and comfortable and quiet. Even when there are people in there, there's not a lot of noise in there.

CP 4 mentioned the taste of the coffee as compared to a McDonalds when asked if any parts of the atmosphere impacted the reasons to visit the small coffee shop. CP 4 said, "if it were a McDonalds and it had coffee that tasted the same, I'm not sure that I would stop if it were a fast food place". When asked why the participant visited the coffee shop CP 7 said "Uh, it's local, uh it's where the local coffee shop, it's like Starbucks, it's not Starbucks but it's got a special twist so". This customer also visits Starbucks on occasion but appreciated the atmosphere that this small coffee shop provided. When asked what types of decorations, sounds, or other experience-based items the participant notices, CP 12 said,

Just the general mood. I think is comfortable. Uh, it's not a cookie-cutter place like a Starbucks or. I guess as a man you don't take in the decorations like normal. I brought her that clock on the wall that says great coffee. I saw that and said the owner needs that for her shop. Nothing specific. Just the overall impacts.

In summary, customers and employees seemed to appreciate that small coffee shops could create a unique atmosphere. Each coffee shop or coffee house provides its own unique characteristics (Ting & Thurasamy, 2016). This point was illustrated from the quotes regarding the sounds, especially the quietness, as well as the taste of the products.

Theme 3-Reoccurring customers. Another emergent theme from the field study is customer loyalty. Coffee shop owners frame loyal customers as reoccurring customers. One academic study noted that experience quality represents one reason that customers' revisit (Ting, Lau, Cheah, Yacob, Memon, & Lau, 2018). In the interview process, not one coffee shop had a formal loyal customer tracking system. A couple of the shops had loyalty punch cards but did not formally use the cards to track loyalty. One coffee shop utilized a point of sale system to track some of the customers but not all the customers. All the coffee shops relayed that they just know who the reoccurring customers are. Within this section, the researcher will describe loyal customers from a coffee shop employee's viewpoint and reasons that customers stated for continued patronage to the small coffee shops.

The following quotes reflect answers from the employee participant group about customer loyalty. When asked what techniques the coffee shop uses to obtain loyalty, EP 4 answered,

Um, well we try to get names, use names, and recognize our regular customers. We don't have a loyalty card yet we're working on a system for buy 10, get 1 free. Something

along those lines. We haven't got that worked out yet, but um we definitely value our customers that are repeat customers and I think we try to show that with you know the way we greet them and the way we talk to them and try to interact with them so that they know we value them being a repeat customer. It makes them want to be a repeat customer.

Frequency of visits can illustrate customer loyalty (Ting et al., 2018). When asked how do you measure customer loyalty, EP 2 stated, "hmm, well I think those that come every day because we have those that come just once a week that live out of town and things like that. I guess reoccurring". EP 3 answered the same question by stating,

Word of mouth and then our customers "our guests" coming back. Sales obviously being the bottom line so if you're making the money if you're making them smile and they are coming back, and they are inviting other people to come back then you know you're doing a great job.

EP 6 responded to the same question with,

Um, boy how do we. I really think we see a lot of that on social media too. We just um the people that are followers, the people that do are consistently here placing special orders you know and then calling in for their lunch. Calling ahead. Um I think we just see it; you just see the same people coming in and we're ready for them. So, it's kind of, I think it's nice and easy to see in a smaller business like this, just more relationship with customers.

This employee mentioned social media as a way to connect with repeat customers. Also, this employee relayed that in smaller business employees can form relationships with customers and know when they are returning customers. EP 7 provided a similar response,

Uh, we remember people which in a small town, like I came from St. Louis so this is a lot different, so I think I notice it more. But we again we want them to feel included so that their part of something cause then they want to come back. We make sure we have good food, good service which that will bring ya back.

EP 7 also stated that they do not measure loyalty,

We don't, I guess if they come back, they are loyal. We don't have like a loyalty program or we have talked about it, but it's such a small town with as many repeat customers as we have, we just haven't.

When asked if atmospherics impact customer loyalty EP 9 provided this response,

Well, I definitely think that having this more friendly environment impacts customer loyalty would make them want to come back more. Rather than a place that's like doesn't have as like friendly staff or anything. And that like a more comfortable environment. And a lot of people also come to help support the community too. So, I think that also creates loyal customers because they wanna keep supporting them, they'll come here and buy stuff.

EP 9 also mentioned,

I think customer loyalty definitely depends upon the amount of times they come in. Because you can buy a lot of stuff but if they keep coming back, I think that's what proves loyalty more than buying lots of stuff.

EP 10 explained that the atmosphere in their coffee shop could impact customer loyalty in positive and negative ways.

Um, you know I think, it's funny, because I think that's a two-folded question. Um yes, yes and no. I mean. I'll start with the no I mean we're so limited in our seating that

sometimes people are like “umm you know maybe we’ll go” like that they know it’s lunchtime. They might bypass us to go somewhere that has more seating. Because we get busy at lunch. Um so I mean like sometimes it’s detriment. Like in our case it’s quaint and cozy. Quaint and cozy is not great when you have a huge lunch rush um because you can only fit so many rear ends in seats. Um but alternatively, we have a lot of people return because of just the entire atmosphere that we have here.

The following quotes will reflect answers from the customer participant group about customer loyalty. When asked how often she visited this coffee shop, CP 10 stated: “Um, I’ve been coming here for 15 years”. CP 10 mentioned that “I like the boutiquey feel” when asked if any parts of the atmosphere impact reasons for visiting the coffee shop. Facility conditions and service quality influence a customer’s reason to revisit a coffee shop (Ting, Lau, Cheah, Yacob, Memon, & Lau, 2018). When asked what the typical experience was like at the coffee shop CP 13 responded with “Good, good, good, um I get a sandwich and I leave usually. I get a coffee and I leave. Good, they tend to know my first name there sometimes”. CP 15 answered the same question with,

When I come in this one, I’m greeted, everybody knows me by name. Um, this is our table every Tuesday. Uh we all order and pay as we come in; we get here early and then when we’re ready we just say we’re ready and they bring out all of our food.

In summary, the previous quotes illustrate that employees feel that repeat customers represent loyal customers. Employees within small coffee shops can notice repeat customers because of the small nature of the coffee shops. Also, the previous quotes illustrate that customers felt that the customer/employee relationship impacted reasons for visiting a coffee shop regularly.

Another customer participant said that she enjoyed the feel of the atmosphere and that influenced her reasons for visiting.

Relationship of Themes to Research Questions

The themes that emerged within this study align with the research questions and relationships between the themes and the research questions emerged. This section of the writing will contain each research question and each sub-question. Under each research question, the researcher will address how the themes relate to the specific question. The themes and their relationships also relate to the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework listed the three main concepts of this study as coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. Each of the themes that emerged related heavily to each one of the main concepts. Also, the conceptual framework diagram shows how the concepts relate to each other. The themes that emerged, comfortable, unique not a franchise, and customer loyalty, provided similar relationships to atmospherics, customer loyalty, and coffee shops. The following question represents the first research question.

- RQ1. How do managers and owners of small coffee shops in the Midwest include atmospherics within the overall marketing plan to address customer loyalty?

The first research question relates to atmospherics and how managers, owners, and employees of small coffee shops in the Midwest include atmospherics within their business. This question specifically relates to the theme of comfort and the theme of unique, not a franchise. Each coffee shop visited did utilize some type of atmospheric element or multiple atmospheric elements. For instance, some coffee shops had different color schemes. Marketers can use color to create an image (Lee, Noble, & Biswas, 2018). Color choices can provide a comfortable setting. Providing a comfortable atmosphere can lead to positive benefits to business organizations

(Ainsworth & Foster, 2017). Some coffee shops that the researcher visited purposefully used targeted atmospherics while other coffee shops that the researcher visited had unintentional atmospherics that developed. Employees of the coffee shops visited relayed that many types of atmospherics were utilized. Wall paint colors, decorations, sounds, smells, furniture, and the overall experience represent atmospherics utilized within the coffee shops. Each of these atmospheric elements can contribute to comfort within the coffee shop. Comfort or comfortable represents one theme that emerged throughout this study. Employees of coffee shops tried to create a comfortable environment with the use of many atmospheric elements. For instance, EP 3 stated,

Um, we also pull in all of our guests that come in and stay with us. So anytime we are marketing we're thinking about what are they doing, how can they feel, what can they smell, we really focus on the five senses. So, what do they see, what do they feel what they taste, what do they touch, what can they hear, sounds. That's a really big use of marketing sense for this coffee room.

Another theme that emerged throughout the study was that small coffee shops are unique not a franchise. Both the employee participant group and the customer participant group explained that small coffee shops presented a unique atmosphere unlike a franchise. This theme relates to this research question in that atmospheric techniques used within small coffee shops are often different than franchise-type coffee shops or restaurants. This theme also has a relationship to comfort. If the unique atmosphere within a coffee shop is comfortable, then customers felt a connection with the coffee shop. One employee participant explained that being small allows for unique choices regarding how the coffee shop operates. This employee participant stated that the

shop was family-owned and understands the importance of making the space child friendly. For instance, EP 2 stated,

Yes, atmosphere is probably a really big part of the marketing, so we want it to be light and fun. Not dark, most coffee shops are darker but because we're family-owned, and we have small children we try to make it more family and fun and then come in it's not going to be real quiet. That's who we are.

The first sub-question asks about what specific atmospheric techniques are used within small coffee shops. This specific question was answered through interviews with the employee participant group.

- RQ1a. What specific atmospheric techniques are used within small coffee shops in the Midwest?

This sub-question relates to both the comfortable theme and the unique not a franchise theme. The atmospherics used within the coffee shops visited were geared towards making customers comfortable and creating a unique space for customers. The following quote shows how atmospherics used in one coffee shop relates to the comfortable theme. EP 4 said,

Um, of course music uh, always smells so good. We have I think our lighting in here is very cozy so it's a warm feel. Um yeah, whatever would make it feel cozy I don't know. It's kind of eclectic in here.

The next quote shows how atmospherics used in another coffee shop relate to both the comfortable and unique theme. EP 7 said,

Just um really it uses the employees and the chaos of everything. Like everything is different, like it's organized because I'm crazy but there is an organized chaos. Like the

tables are all different the tablecloths are different so it's kind of like a mismatched chaos that's fun. So, chaos and comfortable are the two words I'm looking for.

The second sub-question relates to all three themes that emerged within the study. This question asks how customer experience is influenced by atmospherics.

- RQ1b. How is the customer experience influenced by atmospherics within the marketing plan?

Comfort, unique not a franchise, and reoccurring customers relate to this sub-question. First, customers stated that comfort was a key factor when visiting a coffee shop. Comfort creates a positive retail experience (Ainsworth & Foster, 2017). For instance, CP 5 said "Um, I feel like it's just spacious, I guess. Like a lot of the tables are really big, and I don't know and it's comfortable like if I just want to sit on the couch with friends". Second, the unique atmosphere seemed to bring customers in. CP 7 said, "Uh, it's local, uh it's where the local coffee shop, it's like Starbucks, it's not Starbucks but it's got a special twist so". CP 18 also noticed "the unique décor" in one of the coffee shops. Third, customers talked about customer loyalty when asked about the atmospherics. One customer provided a negative for a cozy and small atmosphere when asked if any parts of the atmosphere impacted reasons for visiting. CP 19 stated, "I would say yes in the fact of it's busy, usually I have to leave because there is no place to sit".

The second research question relates to customer loyalty to atmospherics used in small coffee shops. This specific question talks about the impact on customer loyalty because of atmospherics. One study noted that atmospherics enhance a customer's experience (Roschk, Loureiro, & Breitsohl, 2017).

- RQ2. How is customer loyalty impacted by atmospherics within small coffee shops in the Midwest?

This question relates largely to the theme of reoccurring customers, but it also relates to a comfortable and unique atmosphere. Employee participants felt that customers returned for a comfortable and unique experience. Ainsworth and Foster (2017) noted that comfort in the retail experience can allow benefits to the business organization. Customer participants returned for several reasons, but one of the reasons was a unique and comfortable experience. The discussion of each sub-question will include a quote or quotes to illustrate the relationships between atmospherics and customer loyalty.

The first sub-question relates to how customer feelings toward atmospherics. This can relate to the themes of reoccurring customers, comfortable, and unique not a franchise.

- RQ2a. How do customers feel about atmospherics within small coffee shops in the Midwest?

Atmospherics enhances the customers' experience (Roschk, Loureiro, & Breitsohl, 2017). Most customer participants felt that atmospherics enhanced customer loyalty. For instance, CP 1 said that "If there was competition, I would visit the one decorated with coffee décor not a plain coffee shop or not one like a school cafeteria". CP 4 said, "Um, now if I walked in there, and I felt like it was dirty, or um ran by somebody that who it didn't look like that they cared about coffee. I don't know as if I would stop".

The second sub-question inquires about techniques used to evaluate customer loyalty. This largely relates to the theme of reoccurring customers.

- RQ2b. What specific techniques are used to evaluate customer loyalty from an atmospheric perspective?

For this research sub-question, the employee participant group provided insight. Customer loyalty emerges through a process, and one of the factors of that process is the return of a

customer (Bowen & Chen McCain, 2015). Most employee participants stated that they did not have a formal customer loyalty program. A couple of coffee shops utilized punch cards, while one coffee shop utilized a point of sale system. However, these were formal programs that tracked all loyal customers. Most employee participants noted that being a small coffee shop allowed them to know who the reoccurring customers are. For instance, when asked how the coffee shop measured customer loyalty EP 7 said,

We don't, I guess if they come back, they are loyal. We don't I don't have like a loyalty program or we have talked about it but it's such a small town with as many repeat customers as we have, we just haven't.

The third sub-question was designed to inquire about customer loyalty if atmospherics were reduced. This sub-question relates to the themes of comfortable and reoccurring customers.

- RQ2c. How is customer loyalty impacted with a reduction of atmospherics?

Several customer participants mentioned that they may not visit if atmospherics were reduced, especially if the atmospheric elements related to comfort were reduced. CP 8 stated, "Uh, probably not because it would be kind of boring" when asked if the participant would still visit if the atmospherics were eliminated. When asked the same question CP 7 said, "Uh, I don't know. I don't know if I would or not, I kinda like how it is. It's just, it's just nice to come in here the way it is. I couldn't imagine it any other way". Another participant stated that the experience would be different but would possibly still visit the coffee shop. CP 20 said, "I don't know what to say about that. It would totally be different wouldn't it. We are so used to relying on, on relying on those senses um. Probably would". CP 3 specifically mentioned comfort being eliminated by saying,

Yeah, if they took the chair and they didn't make it the way that it is like if I couldn't put my iPad down somewhere and type or if I couldn't sit in a comfortable chair absolutely I wouldn't go.

Other participants stated that they would return to the coffee shop for other reasons. These reasons will be addressed with the fourth sub-question.

The fourth sub-question addresses other elements that impact customer loyalty. This sub-question largely relates to reoccurring customers.

- RQ2d. What other elements impact customer loyalty in coffee shops?

Some customer participants stated that they visit for some other reasons than just the atmosphere within small coffee shops. Customers visit business organizations for several reasons (Grayson & McNeill, 2009). One reason to visit a coffee shop from a customer was the taste of the coffee.

CP 2 stated, "It's good coffee so I'll go back". Product quality and the taste of the coffee product represent some reasons why coffee shops are popular (Ting & Thurasamy, 2016).

Another customer enjoyed the relationship with the owner. CP 4 stated, "Probably, uh quality of coffee uh and friendship with the owner. It wouldn't keep me from coming if she quit playing music" when asked if the atmospherics were eliminated would the participant still visit the shop.

Another participant enjoyed visiting with friends. CP 16 said "As long as my friends were coming, yes. It's the people I come for". Coffee shops offer a place for people to meet and gather (Ting et al., 2018). From the beginning, the researcher expected that there would be several reasons that customers visit coffee shops, not just atmospherics. Therefore, this sub-question allowed for other elements to be mentioned within the writing.

Summary of Findings

Several informative pieces of information emerged from the field study. The themes that emerged from the study were comfort, uniqueness, and reoccurring customers. Customers desire pleasant and comfortable experiences when visiting coffee shops which impact revisit intentions (Ting & Thurasamy, 2016). The field study showed that some employee participants utilized very targeted and purposeful atmospherics, while other employees did not use targeted atmospherics within their coffee shops. Those that did not use targeted atmospherics did have an atmosphere that developed unintentionally. The observations demonstrated that each coffee shop had a unique atmosphere. One coffee shop was bright with coffee and spiritual decorations. One coffee shop was loud with a very apparent and purposeful railroad theme. Another coffee shop was darker and used eclectic decorations. Another coffee shop provided a mismatched but quaint atmosphere. The last coffee shop utilized the small and compact home type atmosphere because it was housed in an old house. The problem addressed in this writing was that a decreased atmospheric element would decrease customer loyalty within small coffee shops in the Midwest. Several participants made statements to support this problem. Other participants made statements that did not necessarily support this problem. However, the researcher realized that there are several reasons why patrons visit coffee shops. Atmospherics in business tends to enhance the relationship with current customers (Moreira, Fortes, & Santiago, 2017). After analysis of the field study and the literature, atmospherics enhance customer loyalty within small coffee shops in the Midwest, and a reduction of atmospheric elements change the entire coffee shop and further would change some aspects of customer loyalty.

Applications to Professional Practice

The themes that emerged from the field study were comfort, unique and not a franchise, and reoccurring customers. From this study, readers can apply some applications to professional

practice. Each business develops some type of atmosphere whether intentionally or unintentionally. Therefore, businesses can focus on targeted atmospherics to complement the business. In terms of atmospherics, businesses can ensure that comfort and uniqueness are included in business operations and marketing objectives. Both customers of coffee shops and employees of coffee shops emphasized comfort and uniqueness as elements of atmospherics that influenced reasons to visit. Customers stated that if comfort were reduced, the customers may not visit the coffee shops as often. Comfort and uniqueness can be utilized through many types of atmospheric elements. For example, soft music may create a comfortable atmosphere for customers. Other atmospheric elements may also create a comfortable and unique atmosphere for customers. Coffee shops can ensure that the coffee shop provides a comfortable and unique place for customers to visit. By providing a comfortable and unique space, coffee shops may see enhanced customer loyalty or reoccurring customers. Further, all businesses, not just coffee shops, can strive to provide a unique and comfortable atmosphere for customers. The surroundings and the seating within a business organization influence the comfort levels of customers (Pijls, Galetzka, Groen, & Pruyn, 2019). For example, hotels, restaurants, retail shops, and other businesses can provide a comfortable and unique atmosphere. Hospitality and service type businesses can focus on providing comfort to customers through the surroundings and available seating (Pijls et al., 2019). Coffee shops can utilize this advice by creating a comfortable overall experience and making comfortable seating available. Restaurants, hotels, and other businesses can follow the same advice. Leisure businesses and sporting events represent other examples of businesses that may benefit from increased uniqueness and increased comfort. One study indicated that creating an optimal physical environment and treating customers well in the sporting and travel industry can lead to customer satisfaction (Ahrholdt,

Gudergan, & Ringle, 2017). From a business and marketing standpoint, using atmospherics to enhance customer loyalty may prove beneficial. From a biblical standpoint, the Lord made all things unique but interconnected. Each coffee shop and each business represent unique businesses. Therefore, creating a unique place and a comfortable place may enhance customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction may lead to customer loyalty (Ahrholdt, Gudergan, & Ringle, 2017). Further, including comfort and uniqueness within the marketing plan of businesses could lead to satisfaction which could lead to loyalty. Further, customer loyalty could lead to profits within the business. Loyal customers can lead to profitable customers (Persson, 2013).

Recommendations for Action

Coffee shops and businesses can apply some recommendations for action stemming from this study. These recommendations come directly from this field study and apply to the themes generated. First, coffee shops and business organizations should ensure that comfort and uniqueness is part of the overall atmosphere provided to customers. Steps to include comfort and uniqueness within the atmosphere include evaluating and auditing each atmospheric element. For instance, evaluating each sound, sight, smell, and other elements to ensure that comfort and uniqueness are part of every element. If there is room to improve or add comfort or uniqueness to the element, then the business organization should make those improvements. After evaluating and making improvements, businesses can obtain feedback from customers. The feedback can then provide additional improvements to the overall customer experience. Further, this process is constant and continuous. Continuous improvement and innovation with a focus on the customer can lead to improved customer loyalty (Yuan, Chang, & Tzeng, 2015). Coffee shops and other businesses can strive to continually improve.

The results of this study can impact several areas of business and scholarly audiences. First, coffee shops can use the results of this study to improve operations and attempt to enhance customer loyalty within operations. Next, other businesses can use the results of this study to improve atmospheric elements and enhance customer loyalty. Also, the results of this study can add to the scholarly literature on the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. The audiences mentioned above can read this study and apply the recommendations for action to their place of business. One principal factor to keep in mind is that each business represents a unique operation. Each business uses a different and unique way of doing things in operations and management (Afsharian, Ahn, & Harms, 2019). Therefore, individual businesses should apply the actions to fit and complement the individual business and the individual business model.

Recommendations for Further Study

Following this study, the researcher proposes some suggestions for further study. First, this study took place in the Midwest. Other studies may examine coffee shops in other areas of the United States of America or other areas of the world. These suggested studies could seek to find out if results are similar to the results obtained in this study focused on the Midwest. Other coffee shops in other parts of the country and world may provide differing results (Bui, Nguyen, & Ngoc, 2017). Second, results from the observations and interviews within the field study showed that the coffee shops from the study did not utilize a formal customer loyalty program. Achieving customer loyalty provides a challenge for most businesses (Han et al., 2018). Both qualitative and quantitative future studies could explore the impact of utilizing formal customer loyalty programs within coffee shops. For instance, a formal customer loyalty tracking program

may prove beneficial for coffee shops. Further, if found to provide benefits to coffee shops, customer loyalty programs could improve future business operations within coffee shops.

Reflections

Throughout this research process, many experiences occurred. The overall process of writing the dissertation required some adjustments. The process required the researcher to write, submit, and then wait for feedback or approval of the tasks. Sometimes this process occurred very quickly, while other times this process occurred more slowly. However, the researcher realized that to create a solid foundation for the study, this process was appropriate. The researcher enjoyed the field study. Being able to visit coffee shops and do interviews and observations allowed the researcher to apply real-world situations to scholarly literature. The process of the dissertation was a journey filled with many emotions. At times, the researcher felt overwhelmed and frustrated, while other times the researcher felt joy and accomplishment. Overall, the process created a challenge for the researcher. Throughout the journey, the Lord was there for support. “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9, The New International Version). Also, throughout the journey the researcher’s family was there for support. Several others played a supporting role throughout the journey such as the researcher’s chair, friends, colleagues, classmates, and others.

The researcher held ideas of what the results would entail from the field study. The results were similar to the expected results. However, some of the themes that emerged were unexpected. For instance, the theme of comfort appeared on every site visit. This theme represents a logical theme but was not anticipated by the researcher. This theme created an interesting component to the study on atmospherics, coffee shops, and customer loyalty.

Throughout the entire process, the researcher attempted to eliminate all bias. The researcher remained a neutral party. Most of the findings in the study aligned with the expected results. However, in the presentation of findings, the researcher described some of the participant's opinions that did not support the idea of atmospherics creating at least some customer loyalty in coffee shops. Discussing these findings allowed the researcher to be transparent with all results discovered. Presenting evidence that does not align with the study allows a real-life story to be told and credibility of the researcher to be created (Creswell, 2014).

Summary and Conclusions

This qualitative case study explored the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. The specific problem addressed was the reduction of customer loyalty because of not using thematic atmospherics as a marketing tool within small coffee shops in the Midwest. Scholarly literature was included, analyzed, and interpreted throughout this writing. The field study included observations at five coffee shops located in the Midwest. The field study also included several interviews with participants that were either customers or employees of the coffee shops. The main themes that emerged from the field study were comfortable, unique not a franchise, and reoccurring customers. Participants from the field study noted that being comfortable and having a place that was unique as part of the coffee shop atmosphere enhanced their customer loyalty. Some customer participants concluded that if comfort was reduced, then their loyalty to the coffee shop may be reduced. Some customer participants noted that they visited coffee shops for several reasons, not just for the atmosphere. Customers visit coffee shops and drink coffee for several reasons; some of the variables that influence coffee consumption are the taste of coffee, and the experience within the coffee shop (Spence, & Carvalho, 2020). Employees of coffee shops felt that customers that returned defined a loyal

customer. Employees felt that providing a unique and comfortable space enhanced customer loyalty. Memorable experiences may lead to customer loyalty within coffee shops (Kühn & Bothma, 2018). This study reduced the gap in the literature by combining the topics of coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty into one academic study. In summary, atmospherics within small coffee shops enhance customer loyalty, and a reduction in atmospheric elements may change customer loyalty of small coffee shops located in the Midwest.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

This interview will consist of an interviewer and stakeholders of coffee shops. The interview will attempt to obtain information about coffee shops, atmospherics, and customer loyalty. The definition of atmospherics is represented by the smells, sights, noises, sounds, decorations, character, and the overall experience of a business (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2013). Information obtained in this interview will be kept confidential. The interviewer will ask the following questions to two groups of participants: the customers and the employees, managers, and owners of coffee shops. The questions align with the research questions and problem statement of this study.

Interview questions for the customer of the coffee shop

- How often do you visit this coffee shop?
- Is this the only coffee shop that you visit? Explain reasons for visiting this coffee shop or other coffee shops?
- What is the typical experience like when you visit this coffee shop?
- What types of decorations, sounds, or other experience-based items do you notice?
- Do any parts of the atmosphere within the coffee shop impact your reasons for visiting this coffee shop? If so, what are the items that impact your reasons for visiting this coffee shop?
- How do you feel about the atmosphere in this coffee shop? Provide specific examples.

- If these sights, sounds, and other items were eliminated from the coffee shop, would you still visit the coffee shop? Why or why not? Would you visit as much as you currently do?

Interview questions for the manager, owner, or employee within the coffee shop

- Does the coffee shop include atmospherics within the marketing plan? If so, how are they included?
- What type of overall experience does the coffee shop hope to provide for its customers?
- What types of atmospherics does the coffee shop utilize?
- How are you hoping that the atmospherics used impact the customer?
- How do the atmospherics actually impact the customer?
- In terms of customer loyalty, what techniques does the coffee shop use to obtain loyalty?
- How does the coffee shop measure customer loyalty?
- Are there any specific ways that atmospherics influence customer loyalty, if so what are they?

Closing Statement

Thank you for taking time to interview and participate in this study.

Appendix B: Observation Protocol

Observation Protocol
Thematic Atmospherics within Small Coffee Shops: A Study
Brittany Dobil
Liberty University
School of Business

This document provides a place to take notes during the observation process.

The following items will be observed within this study:

Coffee shops and the surroundings within coffee shops.

The atmospheric elements included or not included in coffee shops. This includes sights, sounds, smells, and other atmospheric elements.

Any interactions taking place within the coffee shop.

Observer's name:

Observation date:

Observation start time:

Observation finish time:

Observation overall notes:

Describe all atmospheric elements encountered:

Appendix C: Field Site Pictures

Site 1:





Site 2:





Site 3:





Site 4:





Site 5:



