BRAND AWARENESS ATTRIBUTES AND CUSTOMER REPEAT PATRONAGE OF SELECTED FAST FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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A B S T R A C T	K E Y W O R D S
The primary aim of this study was to establish a relationship between brand awareness and repeat patronage of selected fast food establishments in Rivers state. The study adopted the correlational research design of quasi-experimental and Convenience sampling was chosen based on the easy-access issues for researchers in gaining information from respondents. Structured questionnaire was used as an instrument where 120 respondents from the selected fast food establishments became the unit of analysis of the study. The data collection was analyzed by using Peasrson's product moment correlation with the aid of Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between brand recognition, brand recall and customer repeat patronage. The study there recommended that managers or owners of fast food outlets must be intentional in developing awareness programs or strategies that matches the sophistication of the patrons and also managers should seek proper research on how best to penetrate the consciousness of its patrons	Brand Awareness, Brand Recognition, Brand Recall, Purchaser Loyalty, Customer Repeat Patronage

Introduction

The quick food service sector is rapidly becoming the brand-new alternative for dining activities and the understanding of this has brought about its growth. This commercial enterprise is located in nearly every nook of the essential towns in Rivers state, hence the sturdy competition among quick food service managers who use every advertising skill available to them to strongly position their brand to fulfill the excessive demands from their clients. The multiplicity and identical products and services on offers have equally driven brand managers to competitively improve recognition and brand recall with the goal to gain a larger share of the marketplace. To achieve this, brand awareness is deployed as a strategic marketing practice to reap their corporate goal.

Creating brand consciousness or visibility is a completely big venture given the peculiarities and uncertainty of consumer conduct as the market is characterized with customers with expertise and maturity which had afforded managers new advertising and marketing situation because they have to meet up with sophisticated crop of customers.

Within the modern context of commercial environment as it relates to creating brand awareness, a product is core and most valuable asset of any organization. Brand awareness plays a huge role on how the product performs in the market of any industry (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015).

Creating brand awareness is an advertising and marketing attempt that enables organizations, in this situation fast food establishments to gain clients' interest to their offerings whilst growing and establishing consumer focus. The maximum essential in achieving brand's fulfillment is held with the aid of creating its advantageous image and making sure its recognizable.

The more a popularity a brand enjoys, the stronger it's acceptances by consuming populace. Whilst a consumer is glad with identifying with a brand, step by step she/he will become a loyal customer.

Brand awareness could also be described as the power of the corporate brand node, or in other phrases, hint in reminiscence (Ormeno, 2007). To enlighten extra, also means the potential of customers to understand, recognize or prefer the brand under any conditions.

That is additionally supported Ojasalo & Ojasalo (2010), when they determined brand awareness as a purchaser's capability to identify and do not forget the brand in all sorts of circumstances. In addition, Ormeno (2007), maintains that after the customers understand the brand name or brand elements, they must consider the organization in a certain industry or business.

Many studies (Karam, et al, 2015; Seturi, 2017 and Shahid et al, 2017) had been carried out within the domain of strategic marketing and such a lot of has considered branding as a whole procedure, simplest few research in particular inside the rapid food quarter of Rivers state have taken into consideration the function of brand awareness and how it impacts repeat patronage. This paper therefore, seeks to fill that knowledge hole by examining the role of brand awareness and customer repeat patronage of fast food establishments in Rivers state

Literature Overview

Inside the marketing discuss, brand awareness is described as the strength or an extent to which a brand consciously occupies a patron's mind (Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005); and it takes place as soon as there's an interface between the brand, wherein the consumer acknowledges or familiarize themselves with the brand. With that, awareness can result into brand recognition and to brand recall because brand awareness has a way of cognitively and affectionately influencing the the behavioral tendecnies towards the product and service on offer (Hakala, Svensson & Vincze, 2012).

According to Jin and Villegas (2007), they opined that brand awareness enables purchasers to distinguish among competing brands in the markets. Moreover, they asserted that branding through awareness creation focus is is essential is gaining brand equity.

Kumar & Moller (2018) claim, brand awareness influences brand familiarity which motivates customers to undertake the brand products whilst new services or products is been brought. In keeping with Aaker, (1991) purchasers' selection are most instances based totally on their familiarity with the brand.
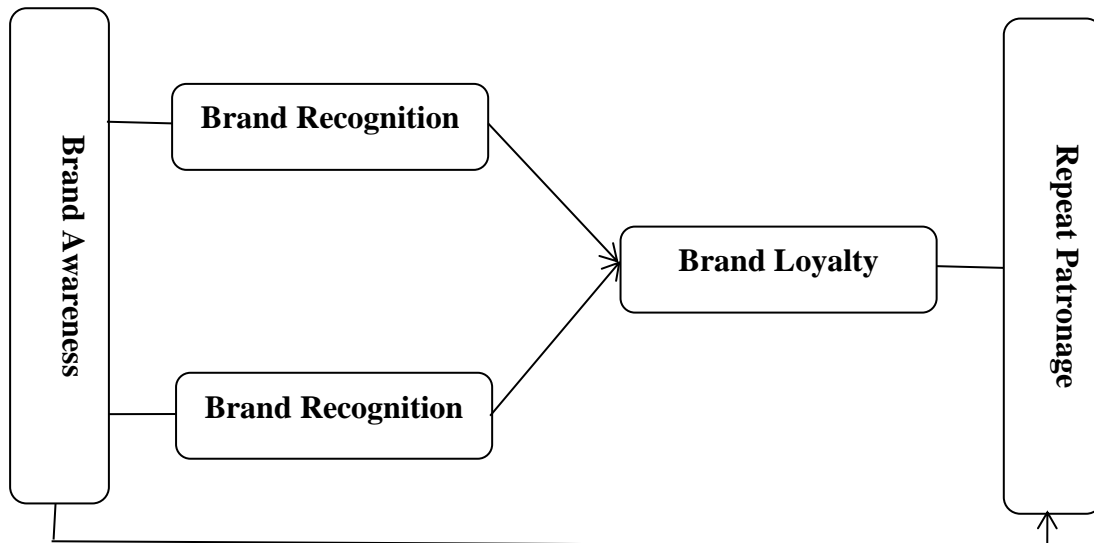
Brand Recognition

Brand recognition is how fast a consumer acknowledges and discriminates the brand whilst any of its elements is shown (Keller, 1993). Brand recognition is when the consumer is given a complete idea of the real advertisement to to see if it matches the patron description. Brand popularity is to verify earlier publicity to the brand whilst the brand is given a cue.

When the customers should decide between the the fast food they want to dine in, they may decide on the fast food service that they are most likely to fast foods they have heard about or have visited before. Thomas and Williams (2013) stated that brand recognition is extra than just a cue that impacts preferential desire; different to some previous research like Newell and Shanks (2004) showed that different cues may have a substantial effect on inferential preference in preference to reputation. Recognition is an emotional mission and relates to the proper hemisphere of the brain; the proper hemisphere of the brain refers to the emotional questioning (Krugman, 1977).

Hauser (2011) concluded that recognition is an critical element in making a decision, however it's also one of the cues which might be taken into consideration whilst the acquisition decision is made. The purchasers who own strong Brand reputation hold robust tendency to buy the brand (Biscaia et al., 2013, 2014; Lu et al., 2014) and purchase conduct (Ndlela & Chuchu, 2016). Primarily based on above arguments following speculation is proposed

Brand Recall

Brand recall refers to how properly a client recollects a brand while given a sure scenario (Prashar et al., 2012). Brand recall is the duplicate of a few targeted item/brand for which patron has per-understanding or revel in (Bagozzi & Sailk, 1983).

Brand recall is the mental reproduction of some goal item experienced or learned in advance (Bagozzi & Sailk 1983).

Brand recall is the patron capability to take into account a brand when some cues associated with the brand is given, requiring that customers correctly generate the brand from memory (Baumann, Hamin & Chong, 2015; Keller, 1993). The importance of reminiscence can not be ignored when we reflect on consideration on recalling a brand as memory elements help in retrieving the Brand and additionally

the opposite competing brands and thus creating a attention set for the client to make the final purchase (Nedungadi, 1990).

The brand that could create picture and personality rightly in the minds of the purchaser has a better risk of revoking recollection, and for various classes, brand recall is enough for producing income. In the current world, customers noticeably depend on their remembrance ability when creating a purchase selection because of the lack of time available to take in the opposite marketing efforts of the marketer (Prashar et al., 2012). Consistent with Nedugandi (1990), creating a visible brand through awareness programs or efforts is very essential for rrand retrieval. The brand retrieval refers to the potential of the customer to not forget the brand from the memory when creating a purchase choice. The brands which can be recalled without problems are favorably evaluated by the client (Labroo & Lee, 2006), and therefore have a high threat of being purchased.

Repeat Patronage

Repeat purchase refers to the behavior of a customer purchasing the same product or service multiple times from the same vendor. It is an essential aspect of customer loyalty and reflects the level of satisfaction and trust that customers have in a brand or product. According to research, repeat purchase is crucial for the profitability and long-term sustainability of a business (Gupta & Lehmann, 2020). In this essay, I will discuss the factors that influence repeat purchase behavior and its importance to businesses.

The factors that influence repeat purchase behavior can be categorized into three groups: product-related, customer-related, and external factors. Product-related factors include product quality, brand reputation, packaging, and design. Research has shown that product quality is a crucial determinant of repeat purchase behavior (Grewal, Roggeveen, & Nordfält, 2017). Customers are more likely to repurchase a product if it meets their expectations and provides value for their money. Brand reputation also plays a significant role in repeat purchase behavior. Customers are more likely to repurchase from brands they trust and perceive as reliable (Grewal et al., 2017).

Customer-related factors include customer satisfaction, loyalty, and trust. Customer satisfaction refers to the degree of fulfillment that customers experience after purchasing a product or service. Research has shown that satisfied customers are more likely to repurchase from the same vendor (Gupta & Lehmann, 2020). Customer loyalty refers to the commitment of a customer to repurchase from a particular brand or vendor. Loyalty is built over time and can be strengthened through excellent customer service, personalized communication, and rewards programs (Gupta & Lehmann, 2020). Trust is also a crucial factor in repeat purchase behavior. Customers are more likely to repurchase from vendors they perceive as trustworthy and reliable.

External factors that influence repeat purchase behavior include competition, pricing, and environmental factors. Competition can affect the willingness of customers to repurchase from a particular brand or vendor. Pricing also plays a significant role in repeat purchase behavior. Customers are more likely to repurchase from vendors who offer competitive prices and value for their money. Environmental factors, such as economic conditions, social trends, and technological advancements, can also influence repeat purchase behavior.

Repeat purchase behavior is essential to the long-term profitability and sustainability of a business. Repeat customers are more profitable than new customers as they require less marketing and advertising expenses (Grewal et al., 2017). They also provide a steady source of revenue for the business, which is

crucial for its long-term sustainability. Repeat purchase behavior is also a reflection of customer loyalty and satisfaction, which can lead to positive word-of-mouth and referrals, thus attracting new customers (Gupta & Lehmann, 2020).

Repeat purchase behavior is a critical aspect of customer loyalty and satisfaction. The factors that influence repeat purchase behavior include product-related, customer-related, and external factors. Businesses must strive to provide high-quality products, excellent customer service, and competitive prices to encourage repeat purchase behavior. Repeat purchase behavior is also essential to the long-term profitability and sustainability of a business, making it a crucial aspect of marketing and customer relationship management.

Purchaser Loyalty

Customer loyalty refers to the extent to which a customer chooses to do repeat business with a particular organization, brand or product over time. It is a crucial factor in business success as it can directly impact revenue, profitability and market share (Bowen & Chen, 2020). Research has shown that loyal customers tend to spend more, refer others, and are less likely to switch to competitors (Reinartz & Kumar, 2019).

One of the key drivers of customer loyalty is customer satisfaction. A satisfied customer is more likely to become a loyal customer, while a dissatisfied customer is likely to switch to a competitor (Mittal & Kamakura, 2015). To achieve customer satisfaction, businesses need to meet or exceed customer expectations in terms of product quality, service, and overall experience. Additionally, businesses can also create emotional connections with customers through personalized experiences, loyalty programs and engagement on social media platforms (Vogel et al., 2020).

Another important factor in customer loyalty is trust. Customers who trust a brand are more likely to remain loyal to it (Luo et al., 2020). Trust is built through consistent delivery of quality products and services, transparency in business operations, and ethical behavior. Furthermore, businesses can foster trust by offering guarantees, providing reliable customer support, and demonstrating commitment to customer needs (Luo et al., 2020).

Finally, businesses can also leverage the power of brand loyalty to drive customer loyalty. Brand loyalty refers to the attachment and allegiance that customers feel towards a particular brand. Research has shown that customers who exhibit brand loyalty are more likely to remain loyal to the business over time (Lai et al., 2021). To build brand loyalty, businesses need to focus on creating a strong brand identity, communicating brand values effectively, and consistently delivering on brand promises (Lai et al., 2021).

Customer loyalty is a crucial aspect of business success, and is influenced by factors such as customer satisfaction, trust, and brand loyalty. To build customer loyalty, businesses need to focus on delivering quality products and services, building emotional connections with customers, fostering trust, and creating strong brand identities.

A real patron loyalty can be referred to as when clients are each willing to these two elements, in any other case, it can most effective be called a spurious purchaser loyalty if simplest mind-set or conduct factors are located (Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996). Loyalty can also be separated from short time period loyalty and long-term loyalty. Brief time period loyalty isn't always a real patron loyalty because a long-term patron will no longer buy other manufacturers even though there is a higher desire (Jones & Sasser, 1995). Consumers with a robust commitment to a particular Brand will continuously search for any

advertising pastime associated with the Brand (Bandyopadhyay, Gupta, & Dube, 2005). Moreover, consumer loyalty can be measured in dimensions: affective loyalty and motion loyalty. Affective loyalty is a selected brand desire from accumulative delight to preceding the usage of experiences. However, affective loyalty just represents that a repurchase aim. It does now not mean that purchasers will take purchase motion. It's far very tough to mention that clients maintain consumer loyalty (Kan, 2002). Action loyalty suggests that customers now not most effective have choices to a particular brand but additionally perform purchase motion repetitively, and come to be action inertia (Kan, 2002, Lin, 2005).

In terms of a behavioral perspective, Aaker (1991) defined that brand loyalty should be measured through the quantity of brands purchased, percent of purchases, and future buy aim. Whilst a client is dependable, she or he continuously purchases the Brand, despite the fact that the Brand makes adjustments, which includes increasing price or changing product features (Aaker, 1991).

Brand Awareness and Repeat Patronage

Tandoh (2015) conducted a study on the impact of brand awareness on customer loyalty: The study was a case study of Sinapi Aba savings and loans Ghana limited. Data for the investigation was elementary i8n nature and 301 questionnaire was administered to participants The findings of the holds that, brand awareness practice is a very prominent feature in the repurchase intentions of savings and loans industry in Ghana

Khurram et al (2018) examined the influence of brand recall, brand recognition in understanding actual repurchase. The study examined the impact of the two properties of brand awareness, i.e., brand recall and brand recognition on actual repurchase of the consumers also testing the moderating effect of price consciousness in the relationship between brand recognition and actual purchase. Majority of the respondents for the study were female shoppers at the retail stores as they are the consumers as well as they play an active role in home budgets. Two separate studies were conducted, i.e., for brand recognition and brand recall, and the survey used 175 responses (125 for brand recognition and 50 for brand recall). The results revealed that brand recall and brand recognition have a positive relation to actual purchase.

Malik (2013) examined the importance of brand awareness and brand loyalty in assessing purchase intentions of consumer. The aim of this endeavor is to identify the effect of brand awareness and brand loyalty on purchase intention. Questionnaires were distributed to collect the responses from the employees in services sectors and conveniently available general public while descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to analyze the data and draw the conclusions. Brand Awareness and brand loyalty have strong positive association with purchase intention. Managers all over the world should strive to promote the brand awareness along with brand loyalty as both of them contribute towards positive purchase intentions

Alkhawaldeh (2017) evaluated the effect of brand awareness on brand loyalty: mediating role of brand commitment. Study empirically attempts to discuss this particular issue by examining the relationship between brand awareness and brand loyalty. Also, it seeks to investigate the mediation role of brand commitment in initial relationship to tackle the mixed results in the prior attempts. The data were collected from customers of Islamic bank brand in Mafraq Governorate in Jordan. PLS-SEM techniques were applied to a sample of 90 customers to test hypothesized relationships. The results revealed that brand awareness and brand commitment have a significant and positive relationship with brand loyalty.

In addition, brand commitment was found to be a mediator in the relationship between brand awareness and brand loyalty.

Shwastika and Keni (2021) examined the effect of brand awareness, social media marketing, perceived quality, hedonic motivation, and sales promotion towards consumers intention to purchase in fashion industry. This research was conducted to investigate the effect of brand awareness, social media marketing, perceived quality, hedonic shopping motivation, and sales promotion towards purchase intention on the fashion industry. Descriptive research was used and this study was included in a cross-sectional study where the data collection period was only carried out within a certain time. The questionnaire was distributed online using Google Form and every statement in the questionnaire is using five points Likert scale. The total sample was 154 respondents who live in Greater Jakarta, aged between 17-35 years old, and have purchased brand X products. Convenience sampling was used and all data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach. The results have shown that there is a positive significant relationship between brand awareness, perceived quality, and sals promotion on consumer purchase intention while social media marketing and hedonic shopping motivation insignificant on purchase intention.

Methodology

The main objective of this study was to determine the relationship between brand awareness and customer repeat patronage of selected fast food establishments in Rivers state. The study adopted the correlational research design of quasi-experimental. This design was adopted because it investigates the relationship between two variables without the researcher manipulating or controlling any of the variables. A correlation reflects the strength and direction of a relationship between two variables or more which can be positive or negative. Convenience sampling was chosen based on the easy-access issues for researchers in gaining information from respondents. Structured questionnaire was used as an instrument where 120 respondents who are patrons of these selected fast food establishments became the unit of analysis of this study. The data collection was analyzed by using Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 and Alpha Coefficient were calculated in order to test three main variables of this study. All statements were measured on a 4-point Likert scale anchored at 1(strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Ho1 There is no relationship between Brand Recognition and Customer Loyalty

Correlations		Brand Recognition	Customer Loyalty
Brand Recognition	Pearson Correlation	1	.279**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Destination Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.279**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

From the result above, Pearson Correlation Co-efficient is 0.279 while P. value (2-tailed) is 0.000. Since P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This implied that there is significant relationship between Brand Recognition and Customer Loyalty

The first hypothesis (Ho1) stated that there is no significant relationship between brand recognition and customer loyalty. This was tested at 5% significance level using Pearson correlation. The result from the analysis showed a p-value of 0.000 while the alpha value was 0.05. The result of the analysis showed a coefficient value of 0.279 with r^2 value which implies that 77% of customer loyalty can be determined through brand recognition while 23% can be attributed to other factors. With this information, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate was accepted which state that there is a relationship between brand recognition and customer loyalty. This findings is in line with the findings of Tandoh, (2015) who posited that brand awareness is effective when it can be easily recognized by the buying public and the consistency of the patrons will ultimately lead to an eventual loyalty. Likewise, this study also supports the findings of Khurram et al (2018) were it was revealed that brand recognition can lead to actual purchase and repeat purchase. The scholars having observed the behavioral tendencies of patrons asserted that people only patronize products or services they are familiar with hence, recognition will help tilt the public to become attached and loyal to such a familiar product or service

HO2 There is no Significant Relationship between Brand Recall and Customer Loyalty

Correlations		Brand Recall	Customer Loyalty
Brand Recall	Pearson Correlation	1	.293**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Customer loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.293**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

From the result above, Pearson Correlation Co-efficient is 0.293 while P. value (2-tailed) is 0.000. Since P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This implied that there is significant relationship between brand recall and customer loyalty The second hypothesis (Ho2) stated that there is no significant relationship between brand recall and customer loyalty. This was tested at 5% significance level using Pearson correlation. The result from the analysis showed a p-value of 0.000 while the alpha value was 0.05. The result of the analysis showed a coefficient value of 0.293 with r^2 value of 85% which implies that customer loyalty can be determined through brand recall while 15% can be attributed to other factors. With this information, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate was accepted which state that there is a relationship between brand recall and customer loyalty. This findings is in line with the findings of Alimen and Cerit (2009) who asserted that brand knowledge and ability to recall the brand under any circumstance can lead to loyalty. They went further to posit that its only brands that created the need awareness that has the

capacity to not just be recognized but occupy the patrons consciousness in that it becomes easy for them to recall the brand and still go for it. Furthermore, this study upheld the findings of Malik **e**t al (2013) which holds that brand awareness has the capacity to instigate repurchase intention and customer retention.

Practical Implication

In today's business world, especially business that operates within the service sector such as food and beverage operators who offer identical services as well as compete on the same front and have same target customer prospectus, brand awareness is a much needed marketing practice that should be innovatively, informatively and attractively designed to gain the attention of potential and existing brand patrons. Managers of these fast food establishments should upgrade their brand awareness programs and aggressively implement a well customer oriented and focused awareness strategies to improve patronage, solicit repeat visit, improve customer retention and good share of the market. This study helps fast food establishments operating in Rivers state to focus on the use of brand awareness as a marketing tool to increase brand recognition and recall which will help encourage patron's repeat patronage and customer loyalty.

Conclusion

Given the competitive nature within the fast food business sphere, the focus of many fast food establishment is now way beyond attaining customer satisfaction but now of creating a long term association between the patrons and the fast food organizations. To edge every other competitor, fast food operators must make sure that they release enough of their product and service information to their target market and must be convincing enough in their brand awareness creation to make sure that it captures their brand recognition and brand recall possibilities. The value of awareness in branding efforts cannot be taken lightly in the context of fast food establishments. The chief goal of creating brand awareness is to make the brand visible, recognizable and recall-able to the customers and to put the brand in a position were customer decision will favour them by having a fortified recall ultimately leading them towards the service purchase, repurchase and loyalty. The evidence of a successful brand awareness campaign is reflected through brand recall and recognition which have a strong positive impact on the actual purchase made by the consumer.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the study recommends that

i Managers or owners of fast food outlets must be intentional in developing awareness programs or strategies that matches the sophistication of the patrons

ii. Managers should seek proper research on how best to penetrate the consciousness of its patrons

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