Influence Of Relationship Marketing On Customer Patronage Of Fast Food Businesses In Anambra State

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the influence of relationship marketing on customer patronage of fast food businesses in Anambra State. The objectives among others are to examine the relationship between effective communication and customer patronage and to ascertain the relationship between trust and customer patronage. The populations of this study are consumers of fast food in Anambra State. Taking cognizance of the vast nature of the state, the population of this study was further narrowed down to Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha in Anambra state, Nigeria. In determining the sample size of consumers, the researcher used Bournely's formula since the population frame is infinite. 380 respondents were conveniently sampled for the study after a careful selection process made across the study area. Coded responses were subjected to data analysis using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 16.0 software to run the frequency and percentage as well as mean and standard deviation for the responses. Also the study made use of factors analysis. Multiple Linear Regressions (MLRs) was used to test the significance of the hypotheses formulated. The study reveals that there is positive and significant relationship between effective communication and customer patronage. There is positive and significant relationship between trust and customer patronage. Also, there is positive and significant relationship between commitment to service and customer patronage. It is recommended that since customer retention is at the core of relationship marketing, marketing managers should concentrate their attention on developing effective strategies for retaining their customers.

Keywords: Effective Communication, Trust, Commitment to Service and Customer Patronage

INTRODUCTION
A key objective of marketing firms is to increase their market share in a competitive environment. With the intensification of marketing competition among firms wishing to increase their market share, they adopt different marketing philosophies, strategies and techniques to increase market share. To achieve this, the organization aims to attract new customers and also retain existing ones through a process known as relationship marketing (Odion 2003). This form of marketing has the aim of building mutually satisfying long-term relationships with customers, suppliers, distributors and other marketing partners in order to satisfy and retain them. Kotler (2003) posits that relationship marketing evolved from direct response marketing in the 1960s and emerged in the 1980s when companies began to place emphasis on building long-term relationships with their customers in the belief and understanding that it is more profitable to keep and improve relationships with current customers than acquiring new ones. Thus, at the core of relationship marketing is the notion of customer attraction and customer retention (Smith and Cross, 2001). Early studies on long-term relationships between some companies and customers have shown that the cost of retaining existing customers is far below what it takes to attract new ones. The current conceptualization of relationship marketing emerged from organizational behavior and industrial marketing where interdependence between firms has been the foundation of successful business-to-business (B2B) alliances. In recent years, relationship marketing has gained popularity among academics and marketers. This popularity has been gained at the expense of traditional or transactional marketing which is based on primarily the management of the 4Ps (Levitt, 2005). Relationship marketing attempts to gain customer loyalty by focusing on building long-term relationships with customers, placing
importance on a customer’s life-time values to the company rather than the profit made in a single transaction. Furthermore, relationship marketing emphasizes share of customer rather than market share which is often a yardstick for success in transactional marketing (Lacobucci, 2000). As a result, customized offerings could be made to each customer, and in the process added value is created. Relationship marketing is fast being adopted in fast food marketing. Lyn, (2005) attributes this to the realization that it is cheaper to keep existing customers than acquire new ones and that normally the longer a relationship lasts the more profitable it is for the firm. Adoption of relationship marketing by fast food marketers is strongly informed by re-engineering in product offering which emphasizes the provision of a wide range of products or services to existing customers based on their wants. To attract and retain customers, which are at the core of relationship marketing, fast food firms adopt various strategies and techniques. Customers are normally attracted through competitively superior offerings and retained through satisfaction. After all, relationship marketing is all about creating relationships with customers. A firm can make huge profits without relationships as in exchange or traditional marketing. In relationship marketing, emphasis is on identifying and relating to the identified customers for continued or repeat business. Fast food firms strive to identify and create relationships with their customers. Perhaps, this is in realizing that the cost of retaining customers is lower than attracting them. Besides, it is more profitable to retain existing customers than to attract new ones. The repeat business occasioned by the established relationship is as a result of the marketers’ proactive efforts. Finding out how fast food firms create relationships with their identified customers for continued patronage and how viable and effective the adopted strategies are the objective of this study. The study aims to investigate the relationship marketing dimensions such as trust, commitment, promise fulfillment, communication, and customer satisfaction of fast-food companies have on customers’ loyalty and patronage.

Statement of Problem
The practice of relationship marketing faces certain constraints associated with the techniques adopted by firms. In the highly competitive fast food industry, these may relate to inappropriate marketing mix which is unable to attract and retain customers. First, the promotional mix may not be effective and so will fail to attract customers. Thus, ineffective advertising will fail to create sufficient awareness among members of the public about the existence of the fast food firm. This limits the level of awareness about the firm. Secondly, the place where the firm is located may not be accessible or attractive. Consequently, people may not be attracted so much to the place. Third, poor pricing policy often scares away customers instead of attracting them to patronize the firm. The firm will therefore lose its customers to competitors as a result of high prices. Fourth, customer satisfaction which is at the core of customer retention may not be achieved as a result of poor production policy. Lack of knowledge of what customers want will lead to wrong offerings which will leave customers dissatisfied. Fifth, poor customer services will also leave customers largely dissatisfied and may lead to customers patronizing competitors. Besides, inadequate incentives for existing customers make customer retention efforts ineffective. Finally, not knowing who the customers are and the cost of knowing them may make the relationship marketing strategies to fail. These factors militate against effective relationship marketing in fast food firms. Furthermore, the field of relationship marketing is a recent innovation in marketing literature, there are few in-depth studies in the area especially in developing economies like Nigeria. This study intends to fill this gap.

Objectives of the Study
The main objective of this study is to determine the influence of relationship marketing on customer patronage of fast food businesses in Anambra State. This is to be achieved by pursuing the following sub-objectives;
1. Examine the relationship between effective communication and customer patronage.
2.Ascertain the relationship between trust and customer patronage.
3. Determine the relationship between commitment to service and customer patronage.

Research Questions
The following questions will be addressed in this study;
1. What is the relationship between effective communication and customer patronage?
2. What is the relationship between trust and customer patronage?
3. What is the relationship between commitment to service and customer patronage?

Hypotheses
The following hypotheses are postulated for this study;
1. \( H_0 \): There is no relationship between effective communication and customer patronage
   \( H_1 \): There is relationship between effective communication and customer patronage.
2. \( H_0 \): There is no significant relationship between trust and customer patronage.
   \( H_1 \): There is significant relationship between trust and customer patronage.
3. \( H_0 \): There is no relationship between commitment to service and customer patronage.
   \( H_1 \): There is relationship between commitment to service and customer patronage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relationship Marketing
Relationship marketing is a business philosophy that developed out of the need for maintaining a base of current customers who are committed to the organisation. According to Berry (1995) it involves strengthening relationship with current customers and retaining them rather than acquiring new ones. The logic underlying relationship marketing is that customer relationship should be approached on a long-term basis such that customers acquired are retained (Dibb and Meadow, 2001). Shani and Chalasani (1992) assert that a long-term relationship with customers enables the firm to add value to its offerings. Accordingly, relationship marketing is an “integrated effort to identify, maintain and build networks with individual consumers and to strengthen continuously the network for the mutual benefit of both sides, through interactive, individualized and value-added contacts over a long period of time” (Shani and Chalasani, 1992). This definition buttressed the existence of interpersonal relationship built between exchange partners through continuous interactions. Such interaction between exchange partners is a necessary precondition for strengthening relational bonds between exchange partners and a predictor of long-term relationship (Kim, 2004). Customers’ expects a positive outcome in the form of value and convenience in their interpersonal relationship with service provider just as companies’ desire sustainable relationship. Thus, confirming Ndubuisi (2003) assertion that real sustainable business growth strategy is only achievable through a mutual and symbiotic relationship that guarantee clear understanding of the customers’ needs such that superior value is created and deliver. In other words relationships are achieved by mutual symbiosis and fulfillment of promises (Ndubuisi, 2003).

Customer Patronage
The customer is as old as business. The sole purpose of every business is to “Create Customer” (Drucker, 1973 as cited in Ogwo & Igwe, 2012), adding more Drucker (1973) as cited in Ogwo& Igwe, 2012) opined that the only economic and social justification existence of any business existence is to create customer satisfaction. The importance of the customer and customer patronage is so germane. It includes financial and non financial dimensions. Various studies have been carried out on what influences or impacts on level of customer patronage. They include- firm’s capability, product or services attributes, economic situation, political forces, social and psychological factors, situational, competition, marketing mix programs (Schiffman & Kanuk 2009 as cited in Ogwo & Igwe, 2012; Kotler and Keller 2006). Experience shows that defining and measuring patronage is a difficult task. Attitude and actual usage patronages have been used as measures of customer patronages (Ogwo & Igwe 2012). Dick and Basu (1994) precisely suggested that favorable attitude and repeat purchase were prerequisites to defining patronage. Intention to use is defined as a specific desire to continue relationship with a service provider (Czepiel & Culmore, 1987 as cited in Ogwo & Igwe, 2012). In the literature, the framework for customer patronage has been discussed from an attitudinal, behavioral or an integrative approach (Kim, 2004). While customer patronage can be defined as a deeply held commitment to continue with the purchase of a preferred product, service or service provider consistently in the future even in the face of marketing efforts capable of causing defection and situational influences (Oliver, 1999); an attitudinal loyalty requires a mature psychological relationship, favoritism and
goodwill to a service or service firm (Kim, 2004; Craft 1999). According to Jones and Sasser (1995) it is the feeling of attachment or affection consumers hold towards a product, services or company's personnel. On the other hand, behavioral loyalty examines customer’s pattern of past purchases. Singh and Sirdeshmukh (2000) favoring the behavioral approach conceptualize loyalty as behavioral intention to maintain an ongoing relationship with a service provider. Typically, loyal customers are willing to pay a premium for a service or product and more understanding to service failure. However, customers’ loyalty can also be due to high switching barriers or lack of real alternatives or lock-ins. In this study, customer loyalty is conceptualized as continuing intention and psychological attachment to the service provider.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Means-End Chain Theory**

This is a very old theory that is everlastingly germane in describing consumer’s perception of the consumption or use of goods and services. It was developed by Jonathan Gutman for merchandized products (Zinas and Mahmud, 2011). It is a theory of consumer behaviour (Esmaeil, 2014). It aids the understanding of the association between product value and consumer behaviour (Manyiwa and Crawford, 2002). The theory stipulates that a consumer perceives the purchase, consumption or use of physical products and services as a means to an end. That is to say that his relationship with the products and services he encounters is not an end in itself. The end would definitely be the benefits derivable from the consumption or use of the product. Consumer purchases a product as a means of fulfilling an objective (Zanoli and Naspetti, 2002). A consumer buys a pair of shoes for protection, beauty, and prestige. Leao and Mello (2007) affirm that there are three hierarchical model levels of consumer relationship with products and services. These levels include perception of the attributes of the products (goods and services), consequences of the consumption or use products and personal value attached to the products. Mean-End Chain model affirms that consumers attach values to the products they buy. They submit that all purchase actions have consequences and that these consequences are directly related with product or services features. Products and services are purchased based on the expected ability to satisfy consumer needs and wants. Leao and Mello state that the nucleus of the Means-End Chain model is the consumer decision making process that appears in stages. This is because it is through these stages that a consumer purchases products and services which are means through which the end, which is satisfaction, is obtained. If the means are done right by purchasing performing and satisfying products and services, the consumer will be duly delighted. But if the means are not handled properly, the consumer will be dissatisfied. Furthermore, it is a model that encourages consumer-oriented marketing approach. It is a robust driver of quality products and services both in food and other industries (Costa, Dekker and Jongen, 2004). They establish that it helps in the buyer decision making process by acting as a motivation for the evaluation of product alternatives and final selection of needed product(s).

**Empirical Review**

Study conducted by Ndubisi (2007) confirms that there is a relationship between competence, communication and conflict handling with relationship quality. In addition, the further result also pointed out that there is a significant relationship between communication handling and the quality of the relational, relational perceived quality depends on the level of the bank's ability to handle conflict. Customers have good relationships with the bank when the bank can solve the conflicts in a timely and satisfactory. Research conducted by Bejou (1996) found that the orientation of conduct seller, the seller of expertise, the duration of the relationships, and orientation towards customers and sales will increase customer satisfaction and confidence, it is proving a link between the competence of the relationship quality (satisfaction and trust).

Arsil (2016) in their study on “using means-end chain analysis to reveal consumers’ motivation for buying local foods: An Exploratory Study”, discover that the model or chain is veritable indices to showcase the value consumers attach to buying local foods. They support Leao and Mellow and in their opinion conclude that consumers’ knowledge of a product aids him in evaluating the attributes, consequences of use of that product and personal value. It posits that, this chain had helped consumer in
making critical and rational decision that help them make relevant choices for their products. It is a roadmap to the drivers of consumer product choices. Obi-Nwosu (2013) investigated the influence of gender, socio-economic class and level of education on patronage of street foods in Anambra state. The study was conducted among 242 street food patrons in the major cities of the state. The results of the 3-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) show that gender, socio-economic class and level of education were not significant predictors of patronage of street foods therefore, there could be factors other than the socio-demographic factors that the street food patrons consider.

In a study conducted in Kumasi Ghana by Mensah, Aidoo and Teye (2013) which was aimed at analyzing the consumption of street food across various income groups. A combination of stratified, simple and systematic random sampling technique was used to select operational areas and respondents’ house respectively. The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that low income groups spent larger portion of their income on food. It was also found empirically that educational level and household size were significant at 1% with negative relationship with street food consumption while income was also significant at 5% with a negative relationship. Gender and time spent away from home also had a significant positive relationship with street food consumption at 1% level.

Khoutong, Abkarim, Othman and Bolong (2015) carried out a study in Thailand aimed at evaluating how consumers are concerned about the safety of street food and also to identify the consumers’ individual factors influencing consumer’s decision making process; to examine effects of each variables on stages of consumer’s decision making process from need recognition to purchasing; and post purchase evaluation. The structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses formulated with a sample size of 1,080 respondents. The study found out that all the stages of consumers’ decision making are significant to purchasing street food.

Khalek (2012) carried out a study among 250 young Muslim consumers in higher learning institutions in Khang Valley, Malaysia. The study aims to identify the attitude of young Muslim consumers toward Halal food outlets and to identify the relationship between trust and commitment towards the attitude of young consumers in choosing halal food outlets. It was discovered that trust have less significant influences compared to attitude and commitment of young consumers in choosing halal food outlets. However, this study does not consider the relationships between the three independent variables of the theory of planned behavior towards young consumers’ intention to choose halal food outlets.

Saeed, Javed and Lodhi (2013) conducted a study in Pakistan using 200 respondents using structural equation modeling (SEM) for data analysis. The result of the analysis revealed that promise fulfillment is a strong predictor of food patronage. Leao and Mello (2007) also reveal the amplified or modified version of the sequence by adding adjectives to the initial ACV to form six levels such as: attribute was amplified into concrete attribute (CA) and abstract attribute (AA); consequences amplified into functional consequences (FC) and psychological consequences (PC) and finally, value was amplified into instrumental values (IV) and terminal values (TV).

**METHODODOLOGY**

The design of the study was survey. The descriptive survey design was used because it would allow the researcher to obtain factual information which was a fair representation of the respondents’ opinions on the subject studied. This research was conducted in Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha. The data collection sites were selected fast food outlets around Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha in Anambra State. The data for this research work was collected from primary sources. The populations of this study are customers of fast food outlets in Anambra State. Taking cognizance of the vast nature of the state, the population of this study was further narrowed down to Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha in Anambra state, Nigeria. The population frame is infinite. In determining the sample size of consumers, the researcher used Bournely’s formula since the population frame is infinite. Therefore the researcher conducted a pilot survey by selecting 100 respondents and presenting to them questions hinging on the influence of relationship marketing on customer patronage of fast food in Anambra State. q and p values obtained from their responses were recorded as 40 and 60 respectively. 380 respondents were sampled for the study after careful selection.
processes was made across the study area. Face content was used in validating the research questions. Cronbach’s Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the items used. Multiple Linear Regressions (MLRs) was used to test the significance of the hypotheses earlier formulated.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS
The data obtained for this study were presented using tables specifying relevant information on the amount of questionnaires distributed and retrieved from respondents.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Subscales
This section intends to reveal the pattern of responses of the respondents using descriptive statistical tool (mean score). The researcher utilized a five - point Likert scale to show the respondents' level of agreement with the questions asked in the questionnaire. Response choices ranges from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. A full presentation of the questionnaire data is contained in the appendix. The results of the analysis are discussed below:
The descriptive statistic outcome for reward package is presented below:

Table 1: showing the mean scores for communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet provides timely information</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet provides reliable information</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet provides the information if there is a new service</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet fulfill its promises</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet provides accurate information</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet provides information when there is a problem with my transaction</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Average 325 4.08


The descriptive analyses for communication sub-scale items from table 1 reveals that the means scores ranges from 3.27 to 4.67. This gave an average mean of 4.08 indicating that there is strong and positive relationship between effective communication and customer patronage.

Trust
The descriptive analysis of working conditions sub-scale items is presented below and reveals thus:

Table 2: showing the mean scores for trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet has sufficient knowledge about the services that I need</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet has sufficient knowledge about the stock market</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet advises me about how to invest my money</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet helps me to plan my investment</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fast food outlet provides the effective sales promotion</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fast food outlet makes customization of products to suit my needs</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Average 325 4.20


The findings from table 2 show that the mean score ranges from 3.53 to 4.57. This gives an average mean of 4.20 indicating that majority of the respondents strongly with the sub-scale items showing that there is strong and positive relationship between trust and customer patronage.

Commitment
The descriptive analysis of commitment sub-scale items is presented below:
Table 3: showing the mean scores for commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet tries to avoid a potential conflict</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet tries to resolve the resource conflicts that exist before they become a problem</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Marketing of the fast food outlet has the ability to openly discuss the solutions when problems arise</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fast food outlet I patronize provide reliable and satisfactory service</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fast food outlet I patronize is competent, honest, fair, responsible, helpful, and benevolent in service</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean Average</strong></td>
<td>325</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The descriptive analysis of commitment items as shown in table 3 reveals that the mean scores ranges from 4.13 to 4.77. On the average, the average mean score of 4.49 shows that majority of the respondents agreed with the questionnaire items. This indicates that there is strong and positive relationship between commitment to service and customer patronage.

Test of Hypotheses

The test of the research hypothesis earlier postulated in section one was subjected to testing using the linear regression model to determine its validity or otherwise. The decision rule for the hypothesis testing stated that if the p (probability) value calculated is greater than the critical level of significance which is been set at 0.05 (5%), the null hypothesis will then be accepted but if order wise, that p (probability) value of 0.000 is less than the critical value (0.000 < 0.05), this will call for the rejection of the stated null hypothesis in favour of the alternative given that there is a statistical significance (Gujarati & Porter, 2012) in the given parameter. The p (probability) is the least significant level at which a null hypothesis can be rejected. It is seen as the exact probability of committing a type one error.

Interpretations of the Multiple Regression Tables

The table 5 shows the model summary of the regression analysis. The table showed a correlation coefficient(R) of .845 which is a positive, strong correlation. The R square tells how much of the variance in the independent variables is explained by the model. The value is .714 expressed as a percentage (multiply by 100, by shifting the decimal point two places to the right); this means that our measurement model explains 71.4% of the variance in the dependent variable (consumer patronage). This is quite a respectable result (particularly when compare to some of the results that are reported in the literature review). Adjusted R square value provides a better estimate of the true population value. The value is .708 which indicates that the numbers of independent variables and the sample size of this study are large enough for a study of this magnitude.

Table 5: Multiple Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Summary</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Durbin-Watson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.845</td>
<td>.714</td>
<td>.708</td>
<td>4.12029</td>
<td>2.027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: customer patronage
b. Predictors: (Constant), communication, trust, commitment, promise fulfillment, customer satisfaction
b. Dependent Variable: Patronage

Table 5 reveals the analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the regression analysis. ANOVA value assesses the statistical influence of the result. This tests the null hypotheses that multiple R in the population equals0 i.e. p<0.5 (Muijs, 2004; Pallant, 2007). The ANOVA in this study is 113.0735 which is statistically significant at 0.00; this implies that the research model is a good-fit. Also, because the p-value is less than 0.05, the model is significant.
In the coefficient tables (Table 6) the collinearity statistics column shows the tolerance and the Variance inflation Factor (VIF) of the regression. Tolerance is an indicator of how much of the variability of the specified independent variable is not explained by the other independent variables in the regression model. Values less than 0.1 indicates that the multiple correlation with other variables is high, suggesting the possibility of multicollinearity. In this study, two independent variables have tolerance slightly higher than 0.1 which is very negligible since others have tolerance values higher than 0.1. Also, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of the regression model shows that two independent variables have VIF value slight above 10 which is also negligible.

**Hypothesis 1**

$H_0$: There is no relationship between effective communication and customer patronage.

$H_1$: There is relationship between effective communication and customer patronage.

Table 7: Regression analysis for communication and customer patronage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>1.151</td>
<td>.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>4.701</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The regression analysis result in Table 7 indicates that customer patronage exhibited a significant positive relationship with communication ($t = 4.701$, $p = .000 < 0.05$). The smaller the value of significance ($p$-value) and the larger the $t$-value, the greater the contribution of that predictor. Based on the decision rule, we accept $H_1$ and reject $H_0$ which states that there is significant positive relationship between effective communication and customer patronage.

**Hypothesis 2**

$H_0$: There is no significant relationship between trust and customer patronage.

$H_1$: There is significant relationship between trust and customer patronage.

Table 8: Regression analysis for trust and customer patronage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>1.151</td>
<td>.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>-.810</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.906</td>
<td>7.407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The regression analysis result in Table 8 above indicates that customer patronage exhibited a significant positive relationship with trust ($\beta = .906$, $P < 0.05$). From the magnitude of the $t$-values ($t = 7.407$, $p = .000 < 0.05$), we can see that trust has strong effect on customer patronage. The smaller the value of significance ($p$-value) and the larger the $t$-value, the greater the contribution of that predictor. Based on the decision rule, we reject $H_0$ and accept $H_1$ which states that there is significant positive relationship between effective communication and customer patronage.

**Hypothesis 3**

$H_0$: There is no relationship between commitment to service and customer patronage.

$H_1$: There is relationship between commitment to service and customer patronage.
The regression analysis result in Table 9 above indicates that customer patronage exhibited a significant positive relationship with commitment \((\beta = .948, t = 6.912, p = .000 < 0.05)\). Table 4.16 shows that the exact level of significance \((0.000)\) is less than the probability of committing a type one error \((0.05)\). From the magnitude of the t-values \((t = 6.912, p = .000 < 0.05)\), we can see that commitment has a strong effect on customer patronage. Also, the Beta value for commitment \((.948)\) indicates that commitment had the strongest on customer patronage. There is the need therefore to reject the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between commitment and customer patronage.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This study provided empirical support for the five hypotheses earlier stated. Communication, trust, commitment, promise fulfillment and customer satisfaction were all found to predict customer patronage of fast food in Anambra State. Communication was found to be statistically significant in our study. This is in consistence with the findings of Cook (2000), Al-Nahdi (2008); Spence and Townsend (2006); Mitchel and Ring (2010), Rezai, et al. (2011) and Aviti, et al. (n.d). However, the findings of Seo, Lee and Nam (2011) contradict our result when they found out that communication did not have statistically significant influence on customer patronage. Also, the findings of Urban, Zverinova and Scasny (2012); Khalek (2012) and Rezai et al. (2011) were in contrast with our finding when they found out that communication is the best predictor of customer patronage. While in our study, it was found out that communication is the fourth best predictor of customer patronage.

For trust, our findings show that it was statistically significant. This is in support of the findings of Al-Nahdi (2008), Alam and Sayuti (2011); Seo, Lee and Nam (2011), Cook (2000), Avitia et al (2015) and Spence and Townsend (2006). Also, our study found out that trust has less significant influence on customer patronage compare to commitment. This finding is consistent with the findings of Khalek, 2012 and Omar, et al. (2012). Commitment was also found to be statistically significant in our study. This is supported by the findings of Al-Nahdi (2008), Alam and Sayti (2008); Seo, Lee and Nam (2011). More so, the result of our study reveals that trust is the strongest predictor of customer patronage; this is supported by the result of Khalek, (2012); Omar, et al., (2012); Spence and Townsend (2006) and Cook (2000). However, this is in contrast with the findings of Rezaiet al. (2011) and Urban, Zverinova and Scasny (2012).

Furthermore, promise fulfillment was found to be statistically significant. This finding is in line with the findings of Haghighi, et al. (2012), Sifan et al. (2013). Also, Saeed, et al. (2013) found out that promise fulfillment is the strongest predictor of customer patronage. This finding is not consistent with our finding because commitment was found to be the best predictor of customer patronage. Also, customer satisfaction was found to be statistically significant and was the third best predictor of customer patronage in Anambra State. This is in support with the findings of Mensalu et al. (2013) and Awa, et al. (2010).

**Summary of Findings**

1. There is positive and significant relationship between effective communication and customer patronage.
2. There is positive and significant relationship between trust and customer patronage.
3. There is positive and significant relationship between commitment to service and customer patronage.
CONCLUSION
Creating relationships with customers is very vital for marketing firms that desire to retain and maintain their customers for a long-time. Customer retention is therefore at the core of relationship marketing. Fast food ventures create relationships with their customers to a large extent. This is facilitated by the use of effective incentive and relationship marketing techniques adopted by the ventures which enhance customer retention and profit ability of the ventures. The relationship marketing has created customer bond or brand loyalty to a large extent. This is as a result of satisfactory services and effective customer care which make customers willing to continue with the relationship. The overall effectiveness of the relationship marketing techniques is enormous.

RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Since customer retention is at the core of relationship marketing, marketing managers should concentrate their attention on developing effective strategies for retaining their customers. To this end, a well packaged incentive and motivational programmers should be developed.
2. No customer will be willing to continue in a long-term relationship with a firm if he does not desire adequate satisfaction from the firm’s offerings. Therefore, marketers should ensure that customers are always satisfied by offering them high quality products, and giving adequate attention to their needs.
3. To be able to offer customers what they need in a satisfactory manner, marketers should constantly carry out marketing research and use their findings for product planning and development. Marketing concept application is indispensable in this regard. Customers should be offered what they want satisfactorily if they must be retained.

REFERENCES


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