

THE INFLUENCE OF EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING ON CUSTOMER PATRONAGE OF SELECTED COSMETICS SHOPS IN ASABA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of experiential marketing on customer patronage of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from 60 respondents across 15 cosmetics shops through structured questionnaires measured on a four-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation. The findings revealed that brand activation, event marketing, and social sharing each had a positive and significant relationship with customer patronage. Brand activation enhanced customer engagement through memorable experiences, while event marketing improved patronage by offering interactive activities such as product demonstrations and beauty workshops. Social sharing also significantly influenced patronage, as customers relied on reviews, influencer endorsements, and user-generated content in their purchasing decisions. The study concludes that experiential marketing is an effective strategy for increasing customer patronage in the cosmetics industry and recommends that shops adopt interactive marketing events and leverage social media engagement to sustain customer loyalty.

Keywords: Experiential Marketing, Customer Patronage, Brand Activation, Event Marketing, Social Sharing

INTRODUCTION

The cosmetics industry has witnessed rapid growth in recent years, with businesses leveraging various marketing strategies to capture consumer attention and enhance sales. One such strategy is experimental marketing, which focuses on creating memorable, interactive, and immersive experiences for consumers to forge emotional connections with a brand. However, despite the increasing popularity and widespread use of experimental marketing, there is a limited understanding of how these marketing strategies specifically influence customer patronage in the context of the cosmetics sector, particularly in Asaba. The cosmetics shops in Asaba, a growing city with a diverse population, are increasingly adopting experimental marketing techniques such as in-store events, live demonstrations, product trials, and sensory experiences to enhance their brand appeal. However, while these efforts are often promoted as effective tools to improve customer loyalty, boost sales, and differentiate products, empirical evidence regarding their impact on customer patronage remains scarce. Despite the shift to increase experiential marketing to reach out to customers, there has been little research to evaluate the actual impact to businesses. This has created a knowledge gap on quantifying the impact to businesses (Annetta, 2015). Experiential marketing relies on creating an emotional connection with customers and is thus important to develop intuitive emotive measures that can be used to measure the impact of experiential marketing (Srivastava, 2008).

According to Aronne and Reis (2009), in the local markets there has also been little research to identify any correlation between increasing spend on experiential marketing and increase in brand perception. Most companies rely on a common measure that is the utilization of return on investment on the cost used to implement experiential marketing activities (Smilansky, 2009). According to Srivastava (2008), the costs associated with creating an experience for the customers are significantly

higher than those associated with traditional marketing. In Spite of the associated costs, the question on why a firm should continue to spend on this type of marketing is an important question that needs to be addressed fully to allow for development of clear strategies to grow and retain customers. In Asaba, a major city in Delta State, Nigeria, the cosmetic retail market is highly competitive, with numerous local and international brands vying for market share. Many cosmetic shops have adopted experimental marketing strategies, such as in-store events, product demonstrations, and personalized customer experiences, hoping to differentiate themselves from competitors. Many cosmetic shops in Asaba face challenges in effectively implementing experimental marketing techniques due to financial constraints, lack of expertise, or inadequate customer feedback mechanisms. This research explores the barriers to successful implementation and how they can be overcome. The primary objective of experimental marketing is to boost customer engagement, but the degree to which it affects customer patronage (repeat visits, frequency of purchase, and brand loyalty) in cosmetic shops remains unclear. This study aims to bridge these gaps by investigating how experimental marketing techniques influence the customer patronage of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba, providing valuable insights that could inform future marketing strategies in this sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework

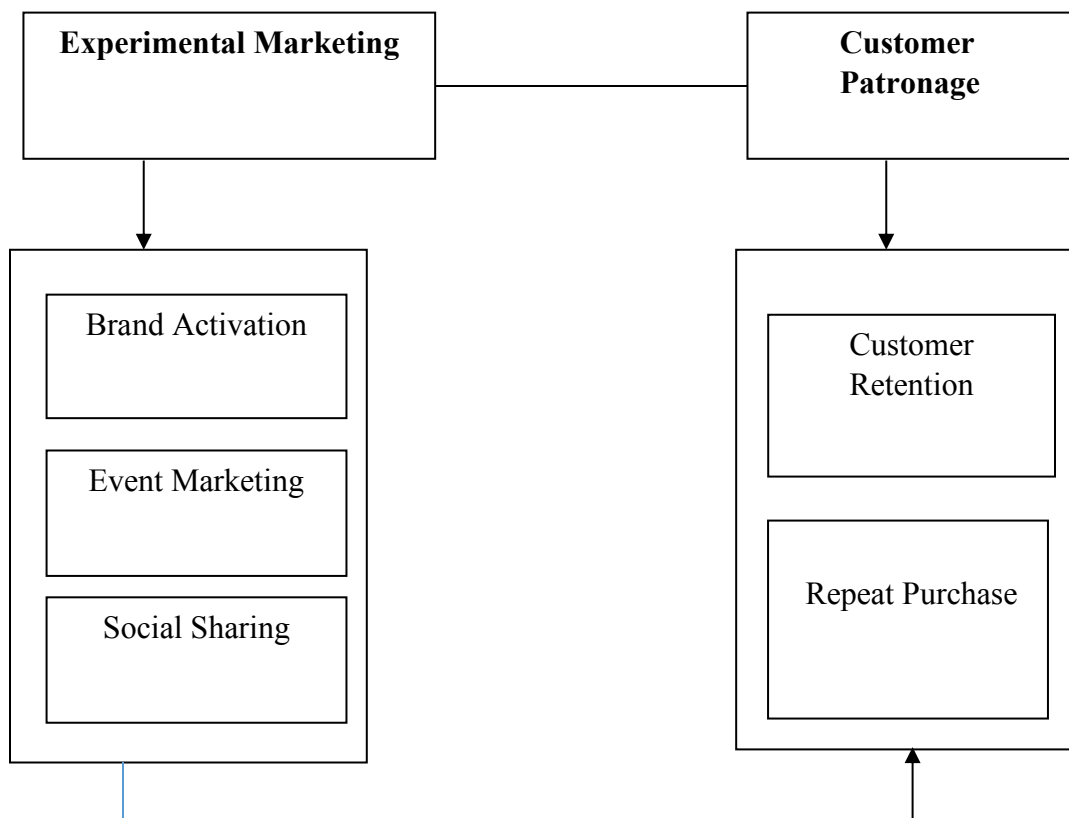


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework of Experimental Marketing and Customer Patronage of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba

Source: Dimensions adapted by Morton, J. (2016, May 27). *Experiential Marketing*. Retrieved from www.marketing-made-simple.com

Measures adapted by Adiele, K & Opara, C. (2017). Analysis of corporate identity on customer patronage of banks in Nigeria. *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 3(4), 1809-1818

Concept of Experimental Marketing

The concept of experiential marketing has evolved significantly over the years, driven by changes in consumer behavior, technological advancements, and the shifting landscape of marketing channels. While traditional forms of marketing have focused primarily on delivering messages to consumers through mass media channels such as television, radio, and print, experiential marketing takes a more personalized and interactive approach to engage consumers on a deeper level. One of the earliest examples of experiential marketing can be traced back to the 19th century, when P.T. Barnum organized elaborate circus performances that captivated audiences with a combination of spectacle, entertainment, and novelty (Gilmore & Pine, 2021). These immersive experiences allowed consumers to interact with brands in a more tangible and memorable way, laying the groundwork for the modern practice of experiential marketing. In the late 20th century, the rise of digital technology and social media platforms revolutionized the way brands engage with consumers, giving rise to new opportunities for experiential marketing. Brands began leveraging digital platforms to create virtual experiences that complemented their offline initiatives, allowing them to reach wider audiences and extend the reach of their experiential campaigns (Schmitt, 2019).

Today, experiential marketing has become an integral part of many brands' marketing strategies, with companies investing heavily in creating immersive brand experiences that resonate with consumers on a personal level. From pop-up shops and interactive installations to virtual reality experiences and branded events, experiential marketing continues to evolve as brands seek innovative ways to connect with their target audiences in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Essentially, experiential marketing represents a paradigm shift in the way brands engage with consumers, moving away from traditional forms of marketing towards more immersive and interactive experiences. By creating memorable and meaningful brand experiences, experiential marketing allows brands to forge deeper connections with their target audiences and differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace.

Dimensions of Experimental Marketing

Experiential marketing can be defined as a strategic marketing approach that aims to connect consumers with brands through firsthand experiences that evoke emotions, foster engagement, and drive desired behaviors. According to Schmitt (2021), experiential marketing is all about creating meaningful interactions between consumers and brands that go beyond mere product attributes and features. It involves designing experiences that resonate with consumers' values, aspirations, and lifestyles, thereby forging deep and lasting connections between brands and their target audiences.

Brand Activation

Brand activation is defined as a marketing relation created between brand and consumers in a way that consumers understand the brand in a better way and consider it as a part of their lives. Brand activation is the process of activating the customers by joining the all-available sources of the communication in a creative manner. Brand activation in its simplest form is a road show where company's personnel take a brand to the people so that they can experience the brand. It is known as experiential marketing and is a popular method for creating experiences with the brand for the

consumers. It works brilliantly for FMCGs (Mujuru, 2017). Brand activation focuses on the core of marketing and initiates purchasing process. An effective brand activation results in brand awareness, brand knowledge, liking and ultimately purchase and repurchase of brand. The brand activation is the simplest form of communication which brings instant results. The means of communications are changing day by day and emerging ways of communications like official websites, email, sponsoring, incentive system and outdoor advertising etc. are being introduced. These various new ways of communications are also applied during the process of activation of the brand. Here the meaning of activation is to create the interest, trial and loyalty.

Event Marketing

In emerging market, to survive from hyper competition, companies need to find and invest in new and innovative media. Here, event marketing emerges as a new mode of marketing communication which could grab the attention of customers (Tafesse, 2019). However, companies are still unclear about the role of event marketing, and are not in a position to measure the effectiveness of an event marketing program (Martensen, & Jensen, 2017). As Johnson (2018) suggests in his study, event marketing is best suited for products or services which cannot be experienced at any other point (cell phone & automotive brands). The FMCG, automobile, credit card and mobile device industries have conducted studies related to the event marketing perspective (Johnson, 2018), and these studies postulate that the above-mentioned industries should practice event marketing in order to bring their core brand messages across to their customer groups. Event marketing is fast emerging as a promotional catalyst when compared to traditional marketing communication tools (Tafesse, 2019) which Increasing corporate disillusionment with traditional media due to increased clutter, escalating costs and reduced efficiency has created opportunities for event marketing. Event marketing allows a company to break through the advertising clutter, and target an audience by enhancing or creating an image through an association with a particular event, while reinforcing the product or service, and thus driving sales (Gupta, 2018).

Event Marketing can be defined as "A communication tool whose purpose is to disseminate a company's marketing messages by involving the target group in an experiential activity" (Drengner & Jahn, 2018). Today, marketing strategy and tactics have changed dramatically, where companies use new platforms in order to promote the brand and product offerings to customers. Event marketing is one of the new tools that come under this platform (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Jackson (2021) suggests that events are a tactical means of achieving relationship management. When considering how discrete events can build relationships with their stakeholders, Braggs (2016) suggests that marketers should use events as a means of enhancing. The most important characteristic of event marketing is the high involvement of consumers with the activity (Krishen, & Latour, 2019).

Social Sharing

In recent years, the internet has significantly advanced, introducing new avenues for businesses to connect with their target audience. Notably, the rise of social media platforms has played pivotal roles in reshaping communication and marketing strategies. This research explores the profound impact of social media marketing (SMM) on customer patronage, specifically focusing on Nigeria botting company in Lagos State, Nigeria. The availability of the internet has granted individuals access to various social media platforms, from email to Twitter and Facebook, enabling interaction without the constraints of physical meetings (Ukonu, 2022). Social media is defined as internet-based applications facilitating the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Shresth, & Singh., 2023), social

media has become an integral part of contemporary society, influencing consumer behavior in multifaceted ways.

SMM, is a form of Internet marketing, leverages social media platforms to achieve marketing communication and branding goals. Beyond its branding objectives, social media provides consumers with a platform to compare products and services, considering factors such as price, quality, features, services, and usability (Shresth, & Singh., 2023). This ability to make informed comparisons shapes consumer purchasing decisions. Consumer purchase behavior is intricately linked to brand knowledge and orientation. A strong brand image, coupled with awareness and loyalty, positively influences customer patronage (Nizar & Janathanan, 2018). In the modern era, technology, particularly the internet, plays a pivotal role in daily life, influencing various aspects (De Mooij, 2019; Sami & Irfan, 2018). The internet, as a crucial part of technology, provides a space for communication and advertising, allowing companies to reach a broad audience and increase their market share (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

The concept of Consumer Patronage (CCP)

Consumer patronage refers to the act of consistently selecting and supporting a particular business or brand over others, thereby demonstrating loyalty and trust (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 2018). It involves an ongoing relationship that extends beyond the mere act of purchasing, encompassing factors such as repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and a willingness to pay premium prices for preferred brands (Krishna, 2016). Key elements of consumer patronage include trust, satisfaction, perceived value, and emotional attachment. Trust is the foundation of patronage, as consumers must have confidence in a business's ability to consistently deliver on its promises. Satisfaction stems from positive experiences and meeting or exceeding consumer expectations. Perceived value reflects the consumer's perception that the benefits received from a particular brand outweigh the costs. Emotional attachment arises when consumers develop an affinity for a brand due to personal experiences or shared values.

Consumer patronage is crucial for businesses in today's competitive marketplace. Establishing a loyal customer base reduces marketing costs, as loyal customers are more likely to repurchase without the need for extensive advertising or promotions. Research shows that acquiring new customers can be five to twenty-five times more expensive than retaining existing ones (Kumar, 2018). Moreover, loyal customers who engage in positive word-of-mouth promotion become brand advocates, influencing potential new customers and expanding the business's reach (Reichheld, & Hopton, 2020). By fostering customer loyalty, businesses can tap into a valuable source of free marketing and increase their customer base through referrals. Consumer patronage also contributes to the sustainability of businesses. Loyal customers provide a stable revenue stream, reducing fluctuations in sales and providing a buffer against market uncertainties. Additionally, patronage helps businesses withstand competition, as loyal customers are less likely to switch to competing brands solely based on price considerations (Jones, & Weun, 2019). To cultivate consumer patronage, businesses can adopt various strategies. Firstly, providing exceptional customer service is crucial. By prioritizing customer needs, promptly addressing concerns, and going the extra mile, businesses can enhance customer satisfaction and build trust (Gronroos, 2020). Moreover, personalized experiences and customized offerings can create emotional connections with consumers, fostering loyalty and patronage (Schmitt, 2019).

Measures of Customer Patronage

Consumer patronage can be measured by various factors such as the quality of the product or service rendered to customers, as well as the level of awareness and promotion these products receive. One can succeed in the competitive market only after understanding the complex consumer patronage. An understanding of the consumer enables a marketer to take marketing decisions which are compatible with its consumer needs. From study there are various major classes of consumer patronage determinants and expectations, namely socioeconomic, psychological, political, geographical, and demographic and Product & Technology. Further classification of product or service under main categories will enable car manufacturers to align their strategies in concurrence to customer preference. Successful businesses understand how to leverage the different factors that influence consumer patronage to effectively market their products and maximize sales. Further Studies show that there are generally four main factors that play a role in the consumer's patronage. The factors include cultural factors, social factors, personal factors and psychological factors (Blackwell et al., 2001). Again, for the sake of convenience, this research work adopted its measures of consumer patronage for effective analysis from the three factors that affect buyer patronage according to (Adiele, Grend. & Eirim. 2015), as they are more specific. Two out of the three factors were chosen namely: customer retention and sales volume.

Customer Retention

Customer retention refers to the ability of a company to retain its existing customers over a given period. Research consistently highlights the financial benefits associated with customer retention. According to a study by Bain & Company, increasing customer retention rates by just 5% can result in a 25% to 95% increase in profits (Ferguson, 2021). Furthermore, it is estimated that acquiring a new customer costs five to twenty-five times more than retaining an existing one (Reichheld, 2021). These statistics underscore the significance of customer retention in driving sustainable business growth. Customer retention is closely linked to brand loyalty. Loyal customers are more likely to repurchase products or services, recommend them to others, and exhibit resistance to competitive offerings (Nguyen et al., 2022). Brands that successfully cultivate strong relationships with customers enjoy higher customer satisfaction, leading to positive word-of-mouth, repeat purchases, and reduced customer churn rates (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). By investing in customer retention strategies, businesses can establish themselves as trusted brands and gain a competitive edge in the market. Tailoring the customer experience is crucial for fostering long-term relationships. By collecting and analyzing customer data, businesses can understand individual preferences, anticipate needs, and provide personalized offers or recommendations (Kumar & Reinartz, 2018). Customer retention is a fundamental driver of long-term business success. By prioritizing personalization, enhancing customer experience, building strong relationships, and leveraging technology and data analytics, companies can nurture customer loyalty and achieve sustainable growth. In an era where competition is fierce, businesses that invest in retaining existing customers are more likely to thrive. Therefore, organizations must recognize the value of customer retention and implement effective strategies to cultivate enduring relationships with their customer base Ferguson, (2021).

Repeat Purchase

Repeat Purchase also known as Repurchase or Replacement Sale is when consumer purchases the same brand that replaces the previous purchase which is already consumed. To increase repeat purchase, there is need to pay more attention to customers than competition, and then repeat

purchases can be garnered. Either as salesperson or a corporate organization, repeat sales are necessary to make profits (Fiiwe, & Obasiabara, 2023). According to Porter (2017), repeat purchase is the purchase by a consumer of same-brand or product as bought on a previous occasion. A repeat purchase is an indicator of a degree of customer loyalty to a brand. It is also an opportunity for marketers to establish longterm customer relationships. Ehrenberg (2020) opined that repeat- buying is any situation where a person buys the item in question more than once. It is one aspect of the way in which consumers buy fast - moving goods.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) was developed by Ajzen in 1988. Theory explains and tries to predict certain behaviors and decisions. According to the TPB, a complex set of attitudinal, subjective, and perceived behavioral control variables, influences behavioral intention. The theory further indicates that observed behavior is a result of intentions, but cognitive of perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2006). Behavioral beliefs show that acceptable and unacceptable attitudes can trigger a behavior. Normative beliefs on the other hand shows pressure from a specific social class or subjective norms, perceived behavioural control result from perceived restrictions and controls. The attitude consumers have, the influence on subjective norms and their perception towards a behavior to a large extent influences their consumption and purchase decisions. The theory of planned behavior discussed above is relevant to the current study because it highlights the chain of events that precede consumer patronage behavior and offer specific guidance on the factors that likely influence such behavior. It indicates that consumer patronage behavior is preceded by mindsets and objectives that are formed prior to a customer's behavior.

The Theory of Buyer Behavior

The theory of buyer behavior was developed as an improvement of the first consumer decision-model in 1969 by Howard and Sheth. It has input variables which refer to the external] environmental factors that the consumer is exposed to, and is derived from a range of sources including brands, quality, price, distinctive, availability and service. The symbolic are; quality, price, distinctive, availability, service, social status and environment. Du Plessis et al., (1991) suggest that the brands and products are the actual elements the consumers confront and are referred to as the significant stimuli, while representations of products and brands is the symbolic stimuli done by advertising and affects the consumer directly. Social stimuli are mainly derived from the influence of peers, age group, family and other groups one can relate to. Mostly consumers get to internalize such social stimuli before making purchase decisions or act in a certain way. The hypothetical constructs are influenced by the available information, bias, sensitivity and the ability to have restrictions and control on perception. Exogenous variables outline a myriad of other external factors that can greatly alter decisions they include; significance of purchase, personality variables, social class, culture of organization, class, financial status and time pressure. The resulting five outcome which represent the buyers' response, or consumer decision making process are knowledge of need, intention development, actual purchase, attention and attitudes, the theory of buyer behavior accounts for a range of factors including significant stimuli, symbolic stimuli and social stimuli. Therefore, the present study will utilize the theory in guiding the direction for literature review, variable selection, and methodological choices including instrument development.

Review of Empirical Studies

According to Assad and Neti (2017), Social media marketing is a channel to convince potential clients about the existing products and services offered to them that serve their interests through LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. Onobrakpeya and Mac-Attama (2017) did a study on how Digital Marketing improves customer satisfaction at Banks in Nigeria. The researcher noted that SMM has a transformative effect on customer utility in the banking industry in Nigeria. The study was not done in Kenya hence a contextual gap. Ahmad (2017) did a study about event marketing and how it influenced customer satisfaction through the brand image in Jordan. The findings revealed that event marketing indeed had a significant effect on customer satisfaction and that more customers preferred to use such a platform in their businesses. Rootman and Cupp (2016) investigated how event marketing promotes customer satisfaction and retention in the South African Banking Sector. The study output established that event marketing was statistically significant to customer retention in the South African Banking Industry. The researcher failed to cover the current CMP in Kenyan banks thus a knowledge gap.

Management investment for database marketing is highly encouraged since it helps to an internal controllable marketing asset that guarantees customer satisfaction over time (Rust & Zenithaml, 2014). Akroush (2017), investigated the effect of functional and technical aspects of quality service on customer satisfaction in Jordan. The researcher revealed that quality of service had a major effect on customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, and corporate image. They are related and mutually significant to one another in the industry. Li and Nicholas (2017) narrated how industrial marketers relate database marketing to price and service in developed markets. The analysis was very significant to managers since it created a source of knowledge that was employed by managers to formulate forward-looking marketing policies that are geared to satisfy customers and enhance growth in businesses. Odhiambo (2015) carried out a study on how sellers communicate prices over social networks in Nairobi. The findings revealed that the seller did a comparative analysis of prices and price adjustment to properties being sold to meet market needs. Price comparison by investors was a concept employed to create harmony in market prices to satisfy customer needs. The study concluded that technology-based social networks were instrumental in price regulation and price setting at the same time, thus customer satisfaction.

According to Salaun 2019, interactive marketing and customer satisfaction are mutually exclusive events that are explored by the seller and the buyer through trust, familiarity, and personalization of service as well as information quality. In Interaction Marketing, there is an interactive relationship between a buyer and seller (Sultan and Rohn, 2014). Ndung'and Abayo (2020) carried out a study about the influence of marketing through social network on the performance of sales at the real estate in Nairobi. The findings indicated that the use of blogs, Twitter, and online forums affected the performance of the company in real estate to a great extent. The findings also revealed that social medial marketing had a great significant influence on real estate firms in Nairobi.

Network marketing involves a modern way of selling products through social communication tools and networks via verbal marketing and word of mouth. It is done by good customers who talk positively about a certain product or service offered to them without involving traditional intermediaries. It is done through social communication forums or even through a word of mouth (Pedrood, 2018). Most companies spend more money on advertisement which is then passed on to the customer via high prices of products offered hence reducing sales volumes that hen affects profitability. Therefore, network marketing is an alternative way of promoting products and services in eth most cost-effective way (Zhiaqiang, 2010).

Florentino and Casaca (2018) studied how social media network marketing influences performance in the real estate industry in Portugal. The study revealed that most companies in Portugal in different industries employed social network techniques to promote their products and services to clients thus creating significant efficiencies needed for their growth. Assaad and Gomez (2019) did a study on social media opportunities and how it is influenced by network marketing to promote customer satisfaction in Jordan. The researcher concluded that social media communication channels were most preferred in marketing products and sharing information to satisfy customer needs in the industry.

The relationship between Brand Activation and consumer patronage.

Aldaihani and Ali (2018) examined the relationship between Brand Activation and consumer patronage. in Islamic Banks in Kuwait. The study research design was descriptive survey that was cross sectional in its nature. The population target was 360 clients from Islamic banks in Kuwait. The response rate was 94.7%, and descriptive statistics analysis was adopted for evaluation purpose. The study findings showed that between Brand Activation influence consumer patronage. in Islamic Banks in Kuwait. Simultaneously, customer empowerment significantly affected customer retention. The study had two main challenges, that is, generalizability of the findings and its cross-sectional nature, hence recommendations to do further research that are longitudinal and from other sectors.

Rao and Abegaz (2017) explored between Brand Activation and consumer patronage. in Islamic Banks in Kuwait.in Ethiopia, Abay bank. Descriptive survey was adopted for the study. The study targeted 280 customers with the rate of response at 96%. Descriptive statistics was engaged to analysed data from primary and secondary sources.The results pointed out that one-third of the participants had special treatment. 71.1% of the bank customers are contented with the bank's services and are not planning to switch in the future. Furthermore, 45.19% of the bank customers appreciate services rendered by the bank at a lower cost. Finally, 74.81% of customers appreciate extended working hours by the bank. The study recommended that the between Brand Activation influence consumer patronage. in Islamic Banks in Kuwait. The study target population was very small compared to the population of the study, this limited generalization of the findings

The relationship between Event Marketing and consumer patronage

Ishumael, and Munjeri (2019) examined experimental marketing in Zimbabwe Medical sector, Harare. The study design, was descriptive, however, it was cross sectional in nature. Purposive sampling was used to select sixty participants from Cellmed Health in Harare. With the rate of response at 86.7%, descriptive statistics was employed to analyse data. The findings showed experimental marketing, market intelligence, loyalty programs and promotions gave the firm a competitive advantage. The study concluded loyalty programmes was not widely used for retention purpose inn Cellmed Health. In decision making process, the study recommended that managers should consider customer retention strategies to come with a good decision. Besides, the study recommended that for customer retention rates to increase, the organisation endeavour to render exceptional customer service. The study was limited to Cellmed Health in Harare therefore difficult to generalize the findings since the contextual and organization factors are different. Furthermore, the sample population were purposively selected hence the study was bias in selection criteria.

Xing and Devasia (2019) examined experimental marketing and customer patronage of manufacturing industry in Malaysia. The research design used was descriptive design. The study targeted 14 customers' licensed manufacturing industry in life business from Kuala Lumpur with predicted

population of 11,214,860 people. The study used non-probabilistic and convenience sampling techniques to have 230 as a sample size. With a response rate 88.7%, analysis was through descriptive statistical analysis and factors analysis. The findings showed experimental marketing influence customer patronage of manufacturing industry in Malaysi. The study recommended that customer orientation is a major variable to work on for sustained customer retention in the insurance market

The relationship between Social Sharing and consumer patronage

Oh (2021) investigated social sharing, and consumer patronage of medical industry of Korea. This was a survey study that was descriptive hence survey questionnaires were employed to gather data. The study targeted 300 patients from spine specialized hospital. From the target population, there was a positive response of 254 patients. The response rate was 84.7 % and confirmatory factor analysis was deployed for data analysis. The results revealed that social sharing, influence consumer patronage of medical industry of Korea It was limited to specialized hospitals among the medical service field, especially the spine specialized hospital in Korea therefore generalization of its findings becomes a problem. Furthermore, it was cross sectional even though the nature and idea of relationship development and maintenance is dynamic matter.

Sari and Mugiono (2018) determined the relationship between social sharing, and consumer patronage in Indonesia. The researchers adopted descriptive research with survey questionnaires to gather data. The population of the study was all consumers in Javanese Restaurant in North Kuta District. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to target 100 customers. Descriptive statistics was employed for data analysis. The authors found that there is relationship between social sharing, and consumer patronage in Indonesia. The recommendations were that the business needed enhance service quality to establish commitment between customers and service providers which in the end will foster customer retention of restaurants. The study limitation was on the sampling techniques adopted which was non-probabilistic method.

Conceptual Framework/Model of the Study

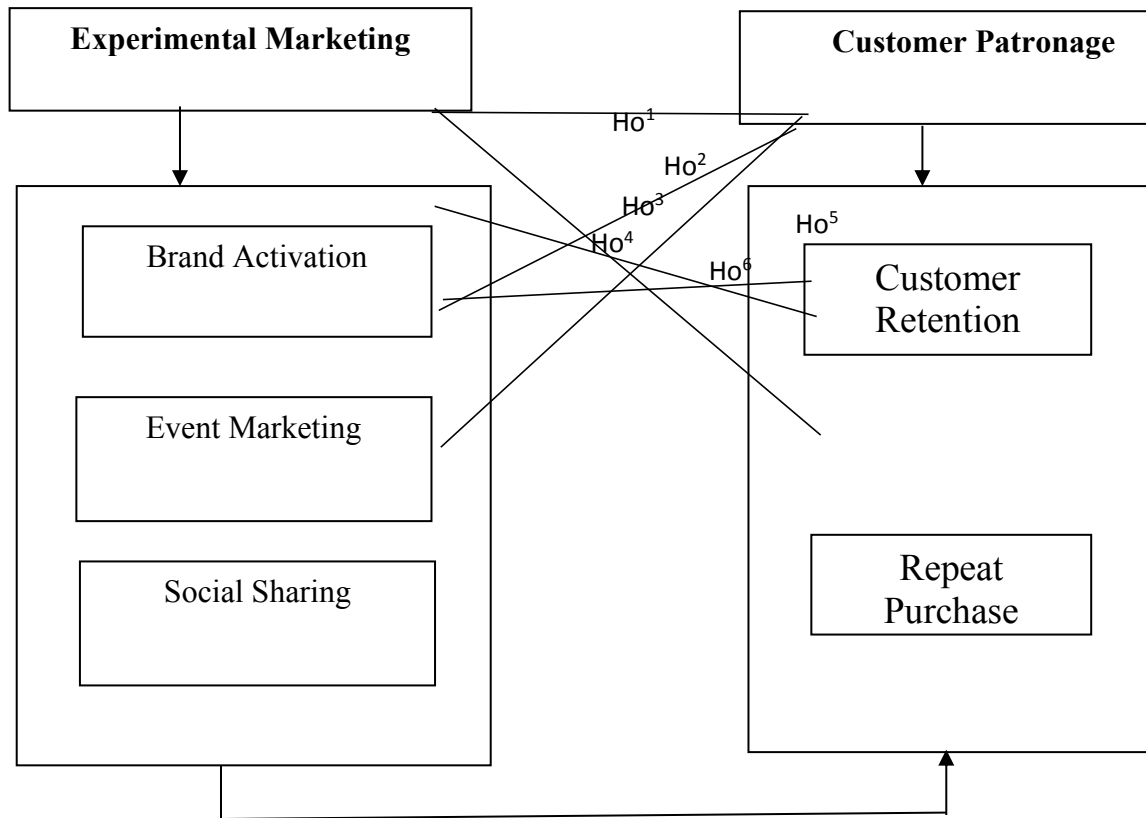


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework of Experimental Marketing and Customer Patronage of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba

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Measures adapted by Adiele, K & Opara, C. (2017). Analysis of corporate identity on customer patronage of banks in Nigeria. *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 3(4), 1809-1818.

Gap of the Study

While existing literature on experimental marketing has shown its effectiveness in industries such as beverages, telecommunications, fashion, and hospitality, there is limited scholarly attention focused on its application in the cosmetics retail sector in smaller urban centers like Asaba. Most available studies concentrate on larger cities or multinational brands, neglecting how small and medium-sized cosmetics businesses implement experimental marketing to sustain patronage. Additionally, prior studies have largely focused on brand awareness and customer satisfaction, with fewer emphasizing repeat patronage, loyalty, and long-term customer relationships. There is also a scarcity of context-specific research that evaluates how local demographics, cultural preferences, and economic conditions shape the effectiveness of experimental marketing strategies in the Nigerian cosmetics market. Therefore, this study fills the gap by providing empirical insights into how experimental marketing drives customer patronage in selected cosmetics shops in Asaba. It bridges the knowledge

void by examining customer responses to hands-on experiences in a setting where direct interactions, affordability, and personalized service are critical factors influencing patronage.

THE STUDY

This research adopted a descriptive research design. The population of this study comprised of 15 selected cosmetics shops in Asaba. The sample size for this study was the same as the population as the population is a small one and less than thirty (30). However, the study adopted the census method of administered structure questionnaire to top four (4) managers of cosmetic shop. They are: marketing manager, sales manager, production manager and transportation manager. The total sample element for the study were 15 cosmetic shops multiplied by 4 = 60. So, the sample element were 60 respondents. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Specifically, the hypotheses were tested through Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22.0.

RESULT

Data Presentation

A total of sixty (60) copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. Out of this number, 50 copies were dully filled and returned while 11 copies were not returned. This represented a seventy-eight percent (83.3%) responsive rate twenty-one percent (16.7%) responsive rate. This number formed the basis for the analysis of data for this study.

Univariate Analysis

The univariate analysis will take data and summarize it before looking for patterns. The patterns found in this type of data can be described using central tendency measures, data dispersion, frequency distribution tables, pie charts, frequency polygon histograms, and bar charts.

Table 1. Summary of Univariate Analysis

Variable	No. of Items	Mean Range	Overall Mean	Std. Deviation (Range)	Interpretation	Remark
Brand Activation	3	2.3 – 3.7	3.07	3.2 – 3.4	Moderate to Strong Response	Accepted
Event Marketing	3	3.3 – 3.3	3.30	3.1 – 3.3	Strong Response	Accepted
Social Sharing	3	3.1 – 3.5	3.27	3.2 – 3.3	Moderate to Strong Response	Accepted
Customer Retention	3	3.4 – 3.7	3.53	2.7 – 3.6	Strong Response	Accepted
Repeat Purchase	3	3.1 – 3.5	3.27	3.2 – 3.3	Moderate to Strong Response	Accepted

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The univariate analysis reveals that respondents generally expressed moderate to strong agreement with all measured variables. Mean scores across Brand Activation, Event Marketing, Social Sharing, Customer Retention, and Repeat Purchase were consistently above the acceptable threshold, indicating positive perceptions and behavioral intentions. Event Marketing and Customer Retention recorded the highest overall mean scores, suggesting strong influence on respondents’ attitudes and

loyalty. Overall, the findings confirm that all variables were positively perceived and statistically accepted for further analysis.

Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate analysis is stated to be an analysis of any concurrent relation between two variables or attributes. This study explores the relationship of two variables as well as the depth of this relationship to figure out if there are any discrepancies between two variables and any causes of this difference.

Table 2 Correlations Analysis of the Relationship Between brand activation and Customer Retention of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba.

		brand activation	Customer Retention
brand activation	Pearson Correlation	1	.762**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
Customer Retention	Pearson Correlation	.762**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Decision on Hypothesis One: Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis one concludes that there is a significant relationship between brand activation and Customer Retention of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba.

Table 3. Correlations Analysis of the Relationship Between brand activation and repeat purchase of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba.

		brand activation	repeat purchase
brand activation	Pearson Correlation	1	.761**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
repeat purchase	Pearson Correlation	.761**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Decision on Hypothesis Two: Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis two and conclude that there is a significant relationship between brand activation and repeat purchase of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba.

Table 4 Correlations Analysis of the Relationship Between Event Marketing and repeat purchase of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba.

		Event Marketing	repeat purchase
Event Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.763**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
repeat purchase	Pearson Correlation	.763**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Decision on Hypothesis Three: Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis three and conclude that there is a significant relationship between Event Marketing and repeat purchase of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba.

Table 5 Correlations Analysis of the Relationship Between Social Sharing and customer retention of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba.

		Social Sharing	customer retention
Social Sharing	Pearson Correlation	1	.760**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
customer retention	Pearson Correlation	.760**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Decision on Hypothesis Four: Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis four and concludes that there is a significant relationship between Social Sharing and customer retention of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba.

Table 6 Correlations Analysis of the Relationship Between Social Sharing and repeat purchase of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba.

		Social Sharing	repeat purchase
Social Sharing	Pearson Correlation	1	.760**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
repeat purchase	Pearson Correlation	.760**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Decision on Hypothesis Five: Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis four and concludes that there is a significant relationship between Social Sharing and repeat purchase of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba.

Discussion of Findings

brand activation and customer patronage

The findings of the study in research question one revealed that brand activation relate to customer patronage of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba. this finding is in line with the view of Ishumael, and Munjeri (2019) examined experimental marketing in Zimbabwe Medical sector, Harare. The study design, was descriptive, however, it was cross sectional in nature. Purposive sampling was used to select sixty participants from Cellmed Health in Harare. With the rate of response at 86.7%, descriptive statistics was employed to analyse data. The findings showed experimental marketing, market intelligence, loyalty programs and promotions gave the firm a competitive advantage. The study concluded loyalty programmes was not widely used for retention purpose inn Cellmed Health. In decision making process, the study recommended that managers should consider customer retention strategies to come with a good decision.

Event Marketing and customer patronage

The findings of the research question two indicated that Event Marketing relate to customer patronage of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba this study or finding is in the same view with Xing and Devasia (2019) examined experimental marketing and customer patronage of manufacturing industry in Malaysia. The research design used was descriptive design. The study targeted 14 customers' licensed manufacturing industry in life business from Kuala Lumpur with predicted population of 11,214,860 people. The study used non-probabilistic and convenience sampling techniques to have 230 as a sample size. With a response rate 88.7%, analysis was through descriptive statistical analysis and factors analysis. The findings showed experimental marketing influence customer patronage of manufacturing industry in Malaysi.

Social Sharing and customer patronage

The findings of the study in research question three revealed that Social Sharing relate to customer patronage of selected cosmetics shops in Asaba. this finding is in line with the view of Oh (2021) investigated social sharing, and consumer patronage of medical industry of Korea. This was a survey study that was descriptive hence survey questionnaires were employed to gather data. The study targeted 300 patients from spine specialized hospital. From the target population, there was a positive response of 254 patients. The response rate was 84.7 % and confirmatory factor analysis was deployed for data analysis. The results revealed that social sharing, influence consumer patronage of medical industry of Korea It was limited to specialized hospitals among the medical service field, especially the spine specialized hospital in Korea therefore generalization of its findings becomes a problem. Furthermore, it was cross sectional even though the nature and idea of relationship development and maintenance is dynamic matter.

CONCLUSION

This research sought to explore the relationship between experimental marketing and customer patronage in selected cosmetics shops in Asaba. The findings indicate that experimental marketing plays a significant role in influencing customer behavior and enhancing patronage in the cosmetics industry. Through various marketing techniques, such as immersive experiences, sensory stimulation, and interactive engagement, cosmetics shops can effectively capture the attention and loyalty of customers. From the analysis, it is evident that customers who experience a personalized and engaging shopping environment are more likely to return and recommend the store to others. The sensory elements, including the use of attractive store layouts, product demonstrations, and hands-on sampling, proved to be effective in strengthening customer relationships and boosting sales. Additionally, the emotional connection created through experimental marketing tactics increases the perceived value of products, thereby encouraging repeated patronage. Moreover, the research highlights that customer satisfaction, resulting from these marketing efforts, leads to positive word-of-mouth, which in turn attracts new customers. In Asaba, where competition in the cosmetics industry is rising, experimental marketing provides a unique avenue for cosmetics shops to differentiate themselves and stand out in the market.

However, it is also important to note that while experimental marketing can drive customer patronage, it requires substantial investment in both time and resources. Smaller shops may find it challenging to implement these strategies on a large scale. Therefore, the study suggests that smaller businesses adopt tailored experimental marketing tactics that are cost-effective yet impactful. The integration of experimental marketing strategies is a powerful tool for improving customer patronage in the cosmetics sector. For cosmetic shops in Asaba to remain competitive and grow their customer base, they must continue to innovate in their marketing approaches and focus on creating memorable and engaging customer experiences

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cosmetics shops should organize regular experiential marketing events like product demonstrations, free trials, and beauty workshops to foster deeper engagement with customers
2. Leverage social media platforms to create interactive content that mimics an in-store experience, such as virtual product trials, live Q&A sessions with beauty experts, and customer reviews. Influencer marketing, especially by local beauty influencers, can also enhance the reach and impact of experiential marketing campaigns.
3. Cosmetics shops should consider sensory marketing strategies by utilizing scents, music, and visual merchandising to create an immersive shopping environment. For example, diffusing pleasant scents like lavender or citrus in-store and using appropriate lighting and color schemes that complement the brand image can increase customer satisfaction and time spent in-store.
4. Cosmetics shops should Train sales representatives to engage with customers in a more personalized and engaging manner. Sales staff should be well-versed in the product's unique features, benefits, and potential results. They should also be skilled in building relationships with customers through active listening and empathy.

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