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Experiential Marketing Strategy And Customer Emotional Retention Of Fast Moving Consumer Goods Firms In Delta State

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ABSTRACT: *This study thus examined experiential marketing strategy and customer emotional retention of selected fast moving consumer goods Firms in Delta State, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design method. A target population of 13, 988 customers was identified across selected Departmental Stores in Delta State. Using the formular cited in Taro Yamane sample size determination table, 488 respondents were selected. Data were collected using a structured and validated questionnaire, out of which 379 responses were completed and deemed usable, representing a 77.7% response rate. The study used the convenient sampling technique and the researcher designed a structured questionnaire to collect data directly from customers of selected Departmental Stores. Reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha, and the data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The test-retest reliability method was employed to determine the instrument's reliability. The data collected for the study were analysed using frequencies, percentages, correlation and multiple regression analysis to arrive at a conclusion, while the hypotheses developed for the study were tested using multiple linear regression in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 25.0). The findings revealed sensory marketing ($\beta = 0.218$, $t = 2.911$, $p<0.05$), nostalgia marketing ($\beta = 0.256$, $t = 3.428$, $p<0.05$), Relational marketing ($\beta = 0.214$, $t = 2.645$, $p<0.05$). The study concluded that examined experiential marketing strategy and customer emotional retention of selected fast moving consumer goods Firms in Delta State, Nigeria. The study recommended that retail organizations should improve communications with customers by welcoming customers' feedback, maintaining more channels of communication with customers and responding promptly to customers' enquiries, suggestions and other communications. This two-way flow of information between retail organizations and customers will enable retail organizations to understand customers' dynamic needs and how to effectively satisfy them.*

Key Words: Sensory Marketing, Nostalgia Marketing, Relational Marketing, experiential Marketing Strategy and Customer Emotional Retention and Fast Moving Consumer Goods

INTRODUCTION

The business world is so dynamic that change occurs frequently. Compared to the old days when marketing was based on transactions and the exchange of goods, today's marketing practice has moved to a more experience-based consumption perspective where the experience surrounding a purchase has become even more vital than the product itself. The concept of experiential marketing has been globally embraced as a guide to designing memorable experiences that succeed in satisfying target consumers (Chang, 2020). Customers' behavior designates differentiation in consuming diverse products and creates positive or negative experiences, the reason why businesses create several experiences for their consumers as a way to encourage interaction with the products, developing various positive reactions or perceptions (Ihtiyar et al. 2019). Consumers have changed their needs, being more focused on experiences that are stimulating their sensations and emotions when they interact with a brand (Urdea & Cristinel, 2021)). For this reason, the business-to-consumer (B2C) field was chosen to be approached in this study on the development of experiential marketing strategy. Accordingly, a new promotion strategy is required, one that enables consumers to experience marketing touchpoints around the landscape of consumption through personalized interaction design using new technology (Rather 2020), especially in times when information and digital technologies advance (Kuzior & Lobanova 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Service system in Nigeria has been epitomized with failures, which have led to the industry witnessing frequent collapse of eateries, supermarkets among other service stores in the country, thereby threatening the fate of customers on its services. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding the impact of experiential marketing on customer emotional retention within the consumer goods sector. As a result of this aggressive competition, the primary challenge facing all fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria is the conception, development, and execution of various marketing activities that would lead to engaging new customers but also retention of the existing ones who would then become loyal customers.

Moreso, a good number of retail stores in Nigeria, especially those regarded as MSMEs (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises) involved in retail trade are yet to fully appreciate and apply relationship marketing practices to their operations. As a consequence, they are oblivious to the value of the customer and are often times rude, impolite and inconsiderate in their interactions with customers, thereby causing customer dissatisfaction, disloyalty and negative word of mouth. Consequently, the inability of retail organizations to effectively satisfy customers' needs and retain them through relationship marketing practices has adversely impacted their business operations and led to the failure of many retail stores across the country. Thus, there is a pressing need for comprehensive research that explores the mechanisms through which experiential marketing influences customer emotional retention in the context of consumer goods industry addressing gaps in existing literature and informing strategic decision-making by industrial stakeholders and policymakers.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effect of experiential marketing strategy on customer emotional retention of fast moving consumer goods firms in Delta State, Nigeria. Other specific objectives were to:

i. ascertain the effect of sensory marketing on customer emotional retention of fast moving consumer goods firms in Delta State.
ii. determine the impact of nostalgia marketing on customer emotional retention of fast moving consumer goods firms in Delta State.
iii. ascertain the effect of relational marketing on customer emotional retention of fast moving consumer goods firms in Delta State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Experiential Marketing

Effective EXPMKT, also known as engagement marketing, creates engaging and memorable consumer encounters. Through an authentic experience with a brand, product, or service, this strategy goes beyond traditional advertising. According to Chang, Liao, Chung & Chen (2020), marketers who want to foster deeper connections with their target audience and increase BL are increasingly turning to EXPMKT and its benefits. Customer impressions of EXPMKT are long lasting. Brands may leave a stronger impact than traditional ads by engaging them in sensory experiences. A pop-up event that lets customers try a new product or enjoy a brand-related activity can build a good brand association (Chen & Lin, 2020).

Sensory Marketing

Sensory experience is expressed as "the experience that customers get from the senses of sight, smell, taste, sound, and touch (Khan and Rahman, 2023),. It refers to "messages developed by customers for products or services" in terms of marketing (Nigam, 2016). Sensory experiences are also used as a brand identity element, enabling customers to focus on the brand. Sensory marketing is used to differentiate products, services, and brands by motivating customers with their aesthetic and excitement senses (Schmitt, 2019). The sensory dimension of experiential marketing is aimed at creating a perception of customers. Sensory marketing is more advanced than traditional marketing as it adds to customer experiences and emotions; it focuses on not just functional aspect of the products. The five senses can be used as reference points for this reason, in many service industries and there are many factors stirring sensory stimulation (Nisan & Cafer, 2016). It is generally accepted that multi-sensory marketing generates certain beliefs, feelings, thoughts and opinions to create a brand image in the consumer's mind (Rupini & Nandagopal, 2015). A multi-sensory marketing takes place when more than one of the five senses is implemented to influence consumer buying behaviour.

Nostalgia Marketing

This approach is commonly used to evoke feelings of nostalgia, comfort, and a connection to earlier time periods. The goal of nostalgia marketing is to elicit nostalgic sentiments in consumers (Shin & Jeong, 2022) (Baltezarevi & Mili, 2021). Nostalgia marketing can be categorized into two types: personal and historical. Each category has a distinct influence on the formation of consumers' brand attitudes when exposed to advertisements. Personal nostalgia relates to an individual's personal experiences from the past, while historical nostalgia refers to a time period preceding the individual's birth. In a study conducted by Muehling (2013), fictitious advertisements were created to manipulate the type and level of nostalgia for a non-existent camera brand, allowing the researcher to test participants' brand attitudes while controlling for the preceding brand attitude variable. The results revealed that both forms of nostalgia had a positive impact on consumer brand attitudes. Interestingly, a significant amount of personal nostalgia was observed among participants exposed to the historical nostalgia advertisement, which raised discussions regarding the psychological explanation (Muehling, 2023).

Relational Marketing

Relational experience has a relationship with other types of experience (Schmitt, 2019). Relational experience arises from the interaction of the individual with other people. Individuals are affected by their sensory, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual experiences. Relational experience is associated with social awareness and belonging for customers. Therefore, it is to establish a bond between the product, service, or brand and the customer (Çakırkayan, 2019). Experiences gained with relational marketing strategies allow the customer to develop himself and stay connected to a social community. The marketing researchers focus no only on the products offered to customers in a fast service chain restaurant but also on the intangible services provided with it (Nigam, 2016).

Customer Emotional Retention

Customer retention is a critically important concept in business management, involving how a company successfully maintains and retains its existing customers to ensure their continued purchase of products or services and the establishment of stable customer relationships (Zhang et al, 2024). The importance of customer retention lies not only in reducing customer churn but also in enhancing customer loyalty, both of which are crucial for long-term profitability and competitive advantage for businesses (Afnen, et al, 2023). Customer retention can be defined as a strategic activity aimed at keeping existing customers engaged and willing to continue purchasing from and interacting with the company through the delivery of exceptional value, service, and experiences (Jishnu & Kumar, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Hedonic Consumption Theory. This theory was advanced by Morris Holbrook for his work on consumer emotions, fantasy and hedonic consumption; Elizabeth Hirchman contributed to the development of hedonic consumption theory, emphasizing the role of emotions and fantacy; and Mihaly Cskzentmihalyi introduced the concept of flow experiences, which are closely related to hedonic consumption. The theory posits that individuals engage in consumption activities not only for utilitarian purposes but also for hedonic reasons, such as pleasure, enjoyment, and emotional gratification. This theory emphasizes the role of experiential aspects in consumer behavior, highlighting the importance of sensory, emotional, and experiential elements in shaping consumer preferences and behaviors. This theory is beneficial to the study of experiential marketing strategies as follows: hedonic consumption theory highlights the significance of the consumer's emotional and sensory experiences, providing a more nuanced understanding of consumer behaviour; this theory considers the multifaceted nature of consumption, incorporating factors like fantasy, imagination, and emotional responses; the theory provides marketers with insights into creating immersive and engaging consumption experiences that emphasize hedonic value; this theory acknowledges the impact of contextual factors such as cultural background and social context, on hedonic consumption and the theory draws from psychology, sociology, anthropology and marketing, providing a rich and interdisciplinary understanding of consumer behaviour. The hedonic consumption theory can be applied to understand the relationship between experiential marketing strategies and consumer retention by creating immersive experiences that stimulate consumer senses; design experiences that evoke emotions; use storytelling and imaginative experiences to transport consumers to new scenarios. Consequently, experiential marketing strategies can create pleasurable and enjoyable experiences, leading to increased consumer satisfaction and retention.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used was a mixed method, involving both cross sectional survey research design and ethnographical qualitative approaches. The Participant observation and descriptive statistics designs were adopted for the study. The study's population is 13,988 customers of the selected Departmental Stores. The population for consists of the individuals who speared extra few minutes after their shopping experience. This convenience sampling technique was adopted to select and administer questionnaire to customers of the selected Departmental Stores to participate in the questionnaire survey. Data used for the current study were collected from a questionnaire titled 'Experiential Marketing Strategy and Customer Retention Questionnaire (EMASCURQ). The questionnaire is divided in two sections. The first section of the questionnaire sought important personal information of the respondents while the second section consists of questions on consists of statements measuring respondents' perceptions on experiential marketing strategy and customer emotional retention. To ensure validity, the questionnaire undergoes expert review by governance and public administration scholars to confirm content, construct, and face validity. A pilot study involving 30 respondents is conducted to refine ambiguous questions and improve clarity. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. The study employs both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution summarize the respondents' demographic data and perceptions. The inferential analysis employed the multiple regression model to examine the relationship between experiential marketing strategy and customer emotional retention

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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A total of three hundred and eighty eight (388) copies of questionnaire were administered customer of selected Departmental Stores (Gabs, Warri Mall and Asaba Mall) in Delta State, however, three hundred and thirty-three (333) where retrieved and properly filled. This three hundred and thirty-three (333) respondents represent 84 percent of the total questionnaire administered, which shows that three hundred and thirty-three (333) respondents is sufficient for the study. This response was excellent and representative of the population and conforms to Cooper & Schindler (2014) stipulation that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and above is excellent.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Sensory	333	11	16	18.76	2.911
Nostalgia	333	12	16	18.34	3.596
Relational	333	12	16	17.59	3.416
Valid N (listwise)	333				

Source: SPSS Version 25 Output, 2026.

The descriptive statistics in table 1 offer key insights into the perception of sensory marketing, nostalgia marketing and relational marketing on customer emotional retention of FMCG firms in Delta State. Based on responses from 333 participants, sensory had a higher mean of 18.76 and a standard deviation of 2.91, indicating that respondents widely acknowledge its effectiveness in improving customer emotional retention. The low variability in responses further affirms a general consensus on sensory marketing strategy as a reliable strategy. Nostalgia marketing reported a mean of 18.34 with a wider standard deviation of 3.596, indicating greater variability in responses. Nostalgia marketing itself recorded a mean of 17.59 with a standard deviation of 3.416, indicating a generally positive but slightly more varied perception of customer emotional retention outcomes. Overall, the mean values across all relational marketing are high, reflecting strong positive perceptions of their impact on customer emotional retention.

Table 2: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

S/N	Model	B	T	Sig	ANNOVA (sig)	Adjusted R^2	F(4.309)
	(constant)	2.075	6.391	.0000	0.000^b	0.217	22.635
	Sensory	0.218	2.911	0.004			
	Nostalgia	0.256	3.428	0.001			
	Relational	0.214	2.645	0.009			
	a. Dependent Variables: Customer Emotional Retention						
	b. Predictors (constant) Sensory, Nostalgia Relational						

Source: Researcher's Field Survey Analysis (2026)

The table 2 shows the multiple regression analysis results for the effect of the constructs of experiential marketing strategy; Sensory marketing, Nostalgia marketing and Relational marketing. The results of sensory marketing revealed ($\beta = 0.218$, $t = 2.911$, $p<0.05$), nostalgia marketing ($\beta = 0.256$, $t = 3.428$, $p<0.05$), Relational marketing ($\beta = 0.214$, $t = 2.645$, $p<0.05$). The result revealed that Sensory marketing, Nostalgia marketing and relational marketing have significant effect on customer emotional experience of at moving consumer goods firms in Delta State.

The correlation R value was 0.476. It showed that experiential marketing strategy; Sensory marketing, Nostalgia marketing and Relational marketing have a moderate effect with customer emotional experience. The adjusted R^2 was 0.217, implying that the 21.7% of the variance in customer emotional experience was attributable to experiential marketing strategy; Sensory marketing, Nostalgia marketing and Relational marketing, while the 78.3% change that occurs is accounted by other dimensions not captured in the model. The data suggested that increase in experiential marketing dimensions would lead to increase in customer emotional experience.

Test of Hypotheses

***Decision Rule*:** Accept the Null hypothesis (H_0) if the t-value calculated is lesser than table statistics at 5% level of significant or 95% degree of confidence. Reject H_0 when t-calculated is greater than t-table valueat 0.05 significant levels. The significance of the relationship is based on the P-value. When the associated P-value is less than 5%, then the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable would be said to be significant but when it is greater than 5%, then it would be insignificant.

Table 3: Correlation Efficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	18.308	3.925		4.664	.000		
Sensory	.941	.320	.044	2.941	.001	.803	1.303
Nostalgia	.272	.058	.107	4.690	.001	.840	1.263
Relational	.293	.411	.053	3.882	0.002	.821	1.311

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Emotional Retention
Source: SPSS Version 25.0 Output, 2026.

The hypotheses were tested using the regression coefficients presented in Table 3, focusing on the significance values (p-values), t-statistics, and unstandardized coefficients for each independent variable. The hypotheses regarding the impact of experiential marketing strategy dimensions were rigorously tested using the regression coefficients derived from Table 3. The statistical analysis supports the rejection of all three null hypotheses, indicating that each independent variable is statistically significant on Customer Emotional Retention.

Discussion of Findings

The Findings showed that experiential marketing strategy such as Sensory marketing, Nostalgia marketing and Relational marketing have a positive and significant effect on customer emotional experience selected fast moving consumer goods firms in Delta State. However, the research contexts have accounted for the difference in the results from the existing studies and their findings.

Sensory marketing was found to have a significant effect on customer emotional experience of selected fast moving consumer goods firms in Delta State. This finding agrees with the findings of Harcourt (2024) investigated the correlational effect of visual sensory perception on brand performance of quick-service restaurants in Rivers State. The findings revealed existence of significant correlational effect of visual sensory perception on brand performance of quick-service restaurants in Rivers State. Based on the findings, the study concluded that visual sensory perception significantly correlates with brand performance of quick-service restaurants in Rivers State. The study recommended that managers of quick service restaurants should adopt vision as a strategy to boost customer experience, as well as improve overall brand performance; they should also consider the strategic role of visual sensory perception in their quest to understand consumer behaviour, this would boost brand loyalty as well as improve overall performance.

Nostalgia marketing was found to have a significant effect on customer emotional experience of selected fast moving consumer goods firms in Delta State. This discovery conforms with the findings of Ekankumo and Otobo (2025) investigated the relationship between experiential marketing strategy and customer retention in financial technology banks in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. The multiple regression results indicated a positive and significant relationship exists between sensory marketing, emotional marketing, cognitive marketing, relational marketing and behavioural marketing on customer retention in financial technology banks in Yenagoa. Consequently, the study recommended amongst others that fintechs should implement relational marketing as an aspect of experiential marketing strategy as a way of building trusts, loyalty and commitment among customers. Hence, relational marketing improves customer service leading to increased satisfaction and retention

Lastly, relational marketing was found to have a significant effect on customer emotional experience of selected fast moving consumer goods firms in Delta State. This finding is in agreement with Osuji, Ekakitie and Owuise (2023) examined relationship marketing practices and customer retention of commercial banks in Nigeria. The study appraised some basic concepts, theories and current trends in relationship marketing consumption and how the proof of effective relationship marketing factors can have significant outcome in retaining customers in the Nigeria banking sector. The outcome of the study findings were analyzed through pearson correlation analysis, which revealed that there is a significant effect between the dimensions of relationship marketing practices (compliant handling and community experience) adopted in this study and customer retention. The study recommends that banks should address each barrier on a case-by-case basis, establish and implement a relationship marketing implementation report (for all relationship marketing aspects). To handle client complaints that should be on behalf of complaints, competent and experienced specialists and/or staff should be employed.

Conclusion

The conclusion is drawn from its aim as well as the outcome findings and discussions which revealed the solution to activating the emotional retention of customers through experiential marketing practices. After analyzing the collected data from the respondents, the study concluded that experiential marketing dimensions had effects on customer emotional retention. As compared other imperial studies discussed in the section two, on the research done by various scholars and researchers to determine the effect of experiential marketing practices on customer emotional retention, the results of the correlation analysis shows that relationship marketing factors identified in this study contributes significantly to retaining the emotional stimulants of customers

The study further concluded that nostalgia marketing had significant effect on consumer emotional retention in selected fast moving consumer goods firms in Delta State. This means that using nostalgia marketing techniques, such as invoking positive memories or emotions from the past, can encourage customers to make repeat purchases of FMCG products in Delta State. Consequently, creating and maintaining value-laden and cordial relationships with customers has been considered to be an effective strategy of enhancing customer emotional retention by businesses around the world. This is why researchers across various industries have conducted studies aimed at determining the effect of relational marketing in a bid to determine how relationship marketing practices could be implemented to substantially enhance customer satisfaction, retention and overall performance of organizations including retail stores.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study and given its consistency with the result of similar studies, we put forward the following recommendations:

i. managers of fast moving consumer goods firms should also consider the strategic role of visual sensory perception in their quest to understand consumer behaviour, this would boost emotional connections as well as improve overall performance

ii. management of FMCG firms should incorporate local cultural elements such as traditional festivals, customs, and ceremonies in their marketing campaigns to evoke a sense of nostalgia among consumers.

iii. managers must deliver on their commitments, constantly deliver high-quality network services, and uphold their integrity. In doing so, set realistic expectations for their consumers that they can deliver on, and they should also regularly train their staff particularly customer service representatives on how to conduct themselves professionally in interactions with clients

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