Innovations

Customer experience management and customer retention in selected restaurants in Asaba, Delta State

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Abstract
This study examined the influence of customer experience management on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba, Delta State. Specifically, the study sought to investigate the influence of affective customer experience, cognitive customer experience and physical customer experience on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba. Customer Relationship Management Pyramid Model forms the theoretical basis for this study. The study adopted survey research method. The population of the study was the customers of selected restaurants in Asaba Delta State. Cochran's formula was employed to get a sample size of 384. Structured questionnaire was used to generate data for the study. Simple percentage analysis was employed in analyzing the research questions while regression analysis was employed in testing the hypotheses 0.05 level of significance. The study found that affective customer experience, cognitive customer experience and physical customer experience have significant influence on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba. Based on the foregoing, the study concludes that customer experience management had significant influence on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba, Delta State. The study recommends amongst others that management of hotels should deliberately focus on mechanic clues in terms of providing a conducive environment, especially one that is clean for its students at all times.

Key Words: Customer Experience Management, Customer Retention, Restaurants, Affective Customer Experience, Cognitive Customer Experience, Physical Customer Experience

Introduction

Changes in consumer behaviour and intense competition have made marketing entities to lay emphasis on building effective relationships with customers. Also, the differentiation created based on goods and services have failed to make companies unique in their offerings, so the need adopt new strategies that cannot be imitated by the competitors. The one way of distinguishing services of a marketing firm from another is by creating customer experience. Experience occurs when a company uses its services as a mean of delivering products and goods to bond individual customers (Crosby & Johnson, 2017). Creating competitive advantage

by building a delightful customer experience is the most powerful marketing strategy today to increase loyalty of the customer. Shaw and Iven cited in Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros and Schlesinger (2019) states that the customer experience creation gets more and more advanced and become the standard in business.

Customer experience creates a distinctive value to the customer that is very difficult to be imitated by competitors, and provide a strong effect on loyalty and recommendations behavior of the consumers (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2016). The organisations that focus on finding the various aspects that impact customer experience and create memorable experience to customers and impress them are able to achieve customer loyalty than the organisation that doesn't focus on the same (Shirin, 2017). Hasfar, Theresia and Gusti (2020) defined customer experience as every touch point between a company and its customers, across all channels, customer expectation can be damaged during a single transaction if it is let down by even one channel (from website to email and then call centre) to find a better experience and enhances the customer loyalty and differentiates the organisation from its competitors. Customer experience management is a strategy that focuses the operations and processes of a business around the needs of the individual customer (Rooney, Krolikowska & Bruce, 2020).

The goal of customer experience management is to move customers from satisfaction to loyal and then from loyal to advocate and improve customer experience to achieve profitability (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). Hong (2016) noted that a one percentage point increase in the Customer Satisfaction Index leads to a 2.9 percent increase in Average Revenue per User (ARPU). A successful brand shapes customers' experiences by embedding the fundamental value proposition in offerings' every feature. Customer experience management implementation is considered as the integration of customer touch points achieved through front and back office integration, supply chain partnerships, and people development, the process starts with some form of touch point mapping that identifies the critical moments at which Customer Experience is enhanced or degraded, the gap between customer expectations and experience spells the difference between customer delight and something less (Borishade, Worlu, Ogunaike, Aka & Dirisu, 2021).

Thus, companies have been increasingly focusing on developing long term profitable relationships in business, internal and consumer markets in order to enhance the value that they deliver to their customers (Forbes, 2020). Customer retention provides many benefits to the company because loyal customers increase their spending at an increasing rate, purchase at a full margin rather than at discount prices, and create operating efficiencies. Since loyal customers are the most important assets of the company, in recent years, companies have been increasingly recognizing the importance of loyal customers and they have been giving attention to develop customer retention and loyalty programs. The fundamental purpose of customer retention efforts is to ensure to maintain relationships with value-adding customers (Chen, 2015).

Customer retention strategy aims to retain valuable customers by reducing their defection rate; while a customer development strategy aims to increase the value of those retained customers to the company by making cross-selling and up-selling to them, and encouraging them for making word of mouth communication and customer referrals (Yan, Xiaoming & Jun, 2015). Improving the customer experience has a huge impact on revenue, customer retention and creating customer loyalty (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2016). This happens in a few key ways. The first one is through the impact of incremental purchases. Customer experience improvements can greatly benefit organisations that have a large number of customers (Chen, 2015). The second happens through reducing churn. It is widely known that it costs more to acquire new customers than to retain existing ones. A great customer experience reduces churn, which drives higher revenues and reduces costs (Saunders, 2018). The third way customer experience can impact revenue is through the power of evangelists. As the adage goes, "Your customers are your best sales people," or at least some variation of it.

Experiences are built around feelings, emotions, colors, human contacts, branding etc. A great experience is not only the result of better product features or functions or better service, but the result of how do people feel. In order to be able to design a great customer experience and consequently to manage it properly it is necessary to learn to see the world with different eyes, to understand customer´s unique perspective. Customers today request more than excellent products and services. They demand an outstanding and unique experience every time (Hlasna, Horvath & Koksal, 2013). And while satisfaction is definitely a necessary prerequisite, it is not sufficient for real customer retention – only satisfaction and loyalty in combination really creates a retained and sustainable customer base. Based on the foregoing, the study investigated the influence of customer experience management on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba Delta State. Specifically, the study sought to investigate the influence of affective customer experience, cognitive customer experience and physical customer experience on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba.

Review of Related Literature

Customer Experience Management (CEM)

Customer experience management focuses on designing and delivering loyalty-building experiences. CEM is not just about using technology, but about mapping the actual consumer experience and the variation in the consumer thought process which results due to any new methods or processes adopted by the organisations. Customer Experience is the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a business (Kalungu, 2019). Direct contact and experience generally occurs in the course of purchase, use, and service and is usually initiated by the customer. Indirect contact most often involves unplanned encounters with representatives of a company's products, service or brands and takes the form of word-of mouth recommendations or criticisms, advertising, news reports, reviews and so forth. Borishade, Worlu, Ogunaike, Aka and Dirisu (2021) noted that customer Experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organisation, which provoke a reaction. This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels. Puccinelli, Goodstein, Grewal, Price, Raghubir and Stewart (2019) noted that its evaluation depends on the comparison between a customer's expectations and the stimuli coming from the interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contact or touch-points.

When defining customer experience, it is inevitable to consider two perspectives of consumer behaviour: the traditional information-processing and decision-oriented approach and the experiential perspective. The information-processing and decision-oriented approach claims that the consumer is engaged primarily in goal-directed activities such as searching for relevant information, considering options and deciding whether to buy a particular product or service or not (Klaus & Maklan, 2012). On the other hand the experiential perspective emphasis emotions and non-utilitarian aspects of consumption, where value resides not in the object of consumptions but in the experience of consumption. Crosby and Johnson (2017) noted that the experiential approach includes the flow of fantasies, feelings, and fun where customer´s behaviour is not exclusively goal-directed. This involves viewing customer experience from a perspective of normal routines actions and from more emotional experiences as well.

It is important to realize that the customer experience involves the total experience, including the search, purchase, consumption, and after-sale phases of the experience and cannot be reduced just to the sole shopping experience. This is also to be claimed by four major stages of customer experience, namely the pre-consumption experience, the purchase experience, the core consumption experience and the remembered consumption experience or nostalgia experience (Grewal, Levy & Kumar, 2019).

By employing the strategies of Customer Experience Management, an institution can attain sustainable competitive advantage, building favourable moments of truth for clients and bringing about improved customer experience, intensify profits, advance customer retention and favourable customer recommendations. According to Crosby and Johnson (2017), managing customer's experience in any institution is the greatest significant component in creating customer loyalty. Otnes, Ilhan and Kulkarni (2012) asserting that the proficient management of customer experience in any organization ought to bring about an exertion to fascinate and preserve customers. Once customers are attended to, the service experiences must be handled such that it will result into memorable experiences, fulfilment and favourable word-of-mouth recommendations. There are three important strategies of customer experience management imbedded in the experience clues; the functional clues, humanic clues and mechanic clues.

The Mechanic Clues: Mechanic clues are especially important for services in which customers experience the facilities for an extended period of time, such as airlines, hotels, universities and hospitals (Leva & Zillani, 2017). Mechanic clues are quite salient to value creation in the aforementioned types of services." Mechanic clues initiate from touchable entities or environments and encompass sounds, smells, sights, tastes and textures. While the functional clues include the trustworthiness of the service offering, the mechanic clues encompass the tangible exterior of the environment of service. Mechanic clues are a solid underpinning of tangible illustrations that support the customer in visualizing the service. Mechanic clues produce initial feelings that instigate the anticipations of the consumer on the type of service delivered by the institute.

The Humanic Clues: Kavitha and Haritha (2018) noted that humanic clues are concerned about the behaviours and utterances of the staff of the institution, such as their body language, level of enthusiasm, selection of right words, right expression, suitable dress and neatness. Mechanic and humanic clues are the "how" of the consumer service experience, revealing a lot as regards the way institution is dedicated to understanding and fulfilling their customers' wants and needs. Humanic clues are concerned about the politeness and the noble human dealings of staff with the university students. This indicates the well-mannered, pleasant, modest, open-minded response of the staff to the student. One investigational study carried out by Brown, Cowles and Tuten (2016) examined the influence of "respectful employees' behavior on service encounter satisfaction".

Sense: It is a sensory experience value to provide an exciting stimulus by appealing directly to the five senses of the consumer such as the visual sense, auditory sense, sense of touch and taste, and sense of smell. In the case of a car, for instance, a Jaguar provides a sensitive experiential value, that appeal to the aesthetic sense. On the other hand, a Porsche has a sensitive experiential value that stimulates excitement (Kalungu, 2019)

Feel (Affective Customer Experience): According to Schmitt cited in Kavitha and Haritha (2018), feel or affective customer experience appeals to customers' inner feelings and emotions, with the objective of creating affective experiences that range from mildly positive moods linked to a brand (e.g. for a non-involving, non-durable grocery brand or service or industrial product) to strong emotions of joy and pride (e.g. for a consumer durable, technology). Feel is about emotional experience values that appeal to the inner feelings and moods of the customers. The relaxed feelings which we experience when drinking a cup of coffee at Coffee shop, the enthusiasm we experience in enjoying a ride at Paul Krugger National Park, and so on are emotional experience values.

Think (Creative/Cognitive Customer Experience): Think appeals to the intellect with the objective of creating cognitive, problem-solving experiences that engage customers' creativity. *Think*; appeals to engage customers' convergent and divergent thinking through surprise, intrigue, and provocation. *Think* campaigns are common for new technology products. Think is about intellectual experience values that appeal to the

intellect of the customers through cognitive and problem solving experiences (Schmitt cited in Kavitha & Haritha, 2018).

Act (Physical Customer Experience): Act aims to affect bodily experiences, lifestyles, and interactions. *Act* marketing enriches customers' lives by enhancing their physical experiences, showing them alternative ways of doing things (e.g. in business-to-business and industrial markets), alternative lifestyles, and interactions. Rational approaches to behavior change related to *Act* are often motivational, inspirational, and spontaneous in nature and brought about by role models, for example movie stars or famous athletes (Schmitt cited in Kavitha & Haritha, 2018). ACT is about behavioral experience values that appeal to physical behaviors, lifestyles and the mutual relationships between people.

Relate (Social-Identity Customer Experience): Relate contains aspects of Sense, feel, Think, and Act marketing. However, *Relate* expands beyond the individual's personal, private feelings, and thus adding to "individual experiences" and relating the individual to his or her ideal self, to other people or to cultures (Schmitt cited in Kavitha & Haritha, 2018). *Relate* is about relative experience values that appeals to individual self-realization. The love of Nike will result in client putting a tattoo on his back or hand to show he/she relates to the brand.

Customer Retention

Customer retention is a complex phenomenon having been topical across industries. Customer Retention has been broadly defined as the ability of a business to get existing customers to repurchase from them which is reflected in the definition by Ginn, Stone and Ekinci (2010) "customers' declared continuation of a business relationship with the firm. Customer retention is known for its reliance on the extent of firm's two way communication in maintaining relationship with customers. Firms frequent interaction and inclination to obtain feedback from the customers besides maintaining continuous contact with the customer are the key instrument of foster retention rate.

While the precise meaning and measurement of customer retention can vary between industries and firms, there appears to be a general consensus that focusing on customer retention can yield several economic benefits. As customer tenure lengthens, the volumes purchased grow and customer referrals increase. Simultaneously, relationship maintenance costs fall as both customer and supplier learn more about each other. Because fewer customers churn, customer replacement costs fall. Finally, retained customers may pay higher prices than newly acquired customers, and are less likely to receive discounted offers that are often made to acquire new customers. All of these conditions combine to increase the net present value of retained customers (Forbes, 2020).

Customer retention has been also acknowledged as a key objective of relationship marketing, primarily because of its potential in delivering superior relationship economics, i.e. it cost less to retain than to acquire new customers (Ghavami 2006). Bateson and Hoffman (2002), define customer retention as focusing a firm marketing effort towards the existing customer's base. This explain the view that instead of trying to acquire a new customers, firms engulfed in customers retention efforts must make sure that the existing customer are satisfied as so to create and maintain long term relationship.

Many companies recognize the importance of customer's retention but relatively few understand the economics of customer retention within their own firms. Since the start of 1990s research has identified the financial benefits of customer's acquisition versus customer retention. Fred Reichared & Earl Sasser, published revealing research which demonstrated the financial impact of customer retention. They found even a small increase in customer retention produced a dramatic and positive effect on profitability: a five

percentage points increase in customer retention yielded a very high improvement in profitability in present value terms. These results have had a significant impact in drawing attention to the critical role customer retention has to play within CRM strategy (Payne 2005).

Theoretical Framework

This research work is anchored on Customer Relationship Management Pyramid Model. This model as developed by Lucas (2005) is based on the principles of the marketing philosophy that seeks to entrench a customer focus orientation and culture in organisations. This model states that customers and their needs should be given first priority and should be the central focus of the organisation. Then, products or services offered to customers should cater for their needs: and this is possible by blending well the marketing mix strategies, and adopting an appropriate marketing orientation. To achieve this, an organisation requires a strong backing of an appropriate technology. The model presents CRM as a philosophy that is supported and enhanced by technology because through technology, relationships can be built and pieces of information integrated for use in decision making to nurture and retain these relationships. The information obtained from the CRM systems can help a company make the right decisions and be ahead of its competitors (Lucas, 2005).

Figure 2.1 CRM Pyramid Model
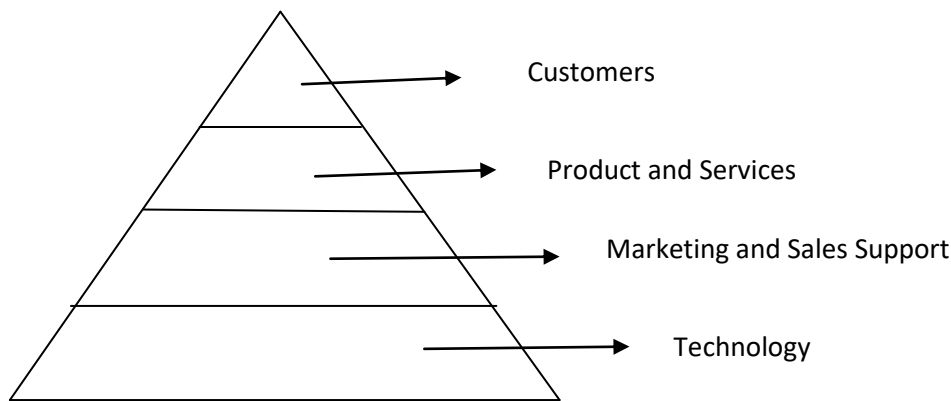
Source: Lucas, (2005)

From the figure 2.1, the CRM pyramid model justifies the reason as to why the researcher used it to explain the variables. Technology is at the base of the pyramid which is the starting point of the pyramid; it creates a base that offers support of other functions in the organisation. Technology acts as a central pole that connects and supports marketing activities in the company. With the appropriate technology, marketing and sales functions are well supported by ensuring that there are accurate and timely information to make right decisions concerning the market. Moreover, technology together with marketing and sales support provide the basis for well tailored products and services that satisfy customers needs and in turn this creates customer satisfaction, where by customers expectations are met (Chikweche & Fletches, 2013). This model shows a strong link between CRM and technology, since CRM alone is not enough to fulfill its core objective of managing customer's relationships without the presence of technology particularly in industries that serve a big number of customers at once like telecommunications industry. Therefore, in creating the espoused customer focus orientation, CRM attempts to carry out several activities that will enable organisations to provide customized offers to clients.

This theory was adopted for the study in that it lays emphasis on customers and their needs which is the focal point of customer experience management. Through customer experience management an effective relationship can be built with the customers and this can help restaurants to make the right decisions that help enhance its customer retention ability.

Empirical Review

In this section, the related empirical studied were reviewed in order to bring out the gap in literature. Borishade, Worlu, Ogunaike, Aka and Dirisu (2021) carried out a study on customer experience management with particular reference to mechanic versus humanic clues and students loyalty in Nigerian higher education institution. Categorical regression analysis was employed in analyzing the data. The findings of this study show that mechanic clues significantly influence students' retention, while humanic clues significantly influence students' disposition to endorse the institution of higher education to others.

Ibrahim and Daha (2021) investigated the effect of customer experience management on customer loyalty with particular reference to Urim Minishop, Abuja. The specific objective was to determine whether or not companies can use the elements of customer experience management as strategies for creating and maintaining customer loyalty. The researchers used Questionnaire to source for primary data from 55 customers of UrimMinishop Abuja. Chi Square Test was used to analyze and interpret the data. The findings revealed that there is a correlation (significant relationship) between Customer Experience Management and Loyalty. In conclusion, the study rejects the statement that the elements of customer experience management cannot be used to create and maintain customer loyalty and accept the statement that the elements of customer experience management can be used to create and maintain customer loyalty. The study contends that for organisations to create and maintain customer loyalty, they need to employ and efficiently manage the elements of customer experience management.

Forbes (2020) carried out a study on augmenting customer loyalty through customer experience management in the banking industry. The study analysed and evaluated the effect of customer experience management (virtual interaction, physical interaction and service interaction) on customer loyalty in the banking industry. The study followed an explanatory research design to sample 384 respondents. Stepwise regression analysis was used to validate the relevance of the study model. The results indicated that there is a positive association between customer experience management and customer loyalty. The dimensions of customer experience management, namely virtual interaction, physical interaction and service interaction, were also found to be statistically significant in explaining customer loyalty behaviour.

Hasfar, Theresia and Gusti (2020) investigated the effect of customer value and customer experience on customer satisfaction and loyalty PT Meratus Samarinda. The population of the study is customers of PT Meratus. Structural equation modeling analysis method or path analyses were employed in analyzing the data. The study found that customer experience has significant positive influence on customer satisfaction; and that customer experience has significant positive influence on customer loyalty.

Kalungu (2019) carried out a study on the effects of customer experience management on customer retention with particular reference to Kenya commercial bank in Nairobi County. The study focused on examining the influence of customer experience management's organisational ware on customer retention, inspect the influence of customer experience management's customer ware on customer retention and determine the influence of customer experience management's stage ware on customer retention at KCB Bank. Descriptive statistics, Simple regression analysis and Pearson correlation were employed in analyzing the data. The study showed that the bank identified key customer touchpoints that needed to be pursued and this identification had enabled the bank to find out areas of competitive advantage. The study showed that the bank's physical surroundings were significant because services are created and consumed simultaneously and thus,

customers' sensory senses serve as a direct medium for customers to be engaged emotionally with the experience from services.

Elena (2018) examined the connection between customer experience management and customer loyalty in Apple and DHL Freight. The study adopted survey research design and questionnaire was employed as the instrument of data collection. Regression analysis was employed in analyzing the data. The study found a positive correlation between systematic customer experience improvement and attitudinal as well as behavioural loyalty.

Gap in Literature

The literature reviewed covered three important segments namely conceptual framework, theoretical framework and empirical review. The conceptual review covered the concept of customer experience management and customer retention. The theoretical framework revealed the theory in which the work is anchored. Customer Relationship Management Pyramid Model is adopted as the theoretical framework for the study. This study is anchored on the theory because it is very germane to the problem being investigated. Furthermore, the exiting studies on customer experience management have covered different sectors ignoring the restaurant subsector. Also, none of the previous studies covered restaurants in Asaba, Delta State, hence, the need for this study. This study therefore, examined the influence of customer experience management on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba, Delta State.

Materials and Methods

The study used the survey research design. Survey research design is a procedures to quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinion, behaviour or characteristics of the population. The study was carried out in Asaba, Delta. Three restaurants in Asaba were selected for the study. They include Rodinia Restaurants and Bar Asaba, De Iceberg Restaurants and Lounge Asaba and Chicken Republic Asaba. The population for this research consists of the customers of the selected restaurants in Asaba. A sample of 150 customers was conveniently selected for the study. Inferential analysis specifically regression analysis was conducted to examine the nature of relationships between study variables in terms of significant and insignificant factors.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Regression technique was employed to test the effect of independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables. The result of the multiple regression analysis is presented in the tables below.

Table 1 Summary of the Regression Result

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.294a	.686	.572	3.185	.086	6.151	5	326	.000	1.875
a. Predictors: (Constant), Affective Customer Experience, Cognitive Customer Experience, Physical Customer Experience,										
b. Dependent Variable: Customer Retention										

Source: SPSS 21.0

Table 1 shows that R^2 which measures the strength of the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable have the value of 0.686. This implies that 69% of the variation in customer retention is explained by variations in affective customer experience, cognitive customer experience and physical customer experience. This was supported by adjusted R^2 of 0.572. In order to check for autocorrelation in the model, Durbin-Watson statistics was employed. Durbin-Watson statistics of 1.875 in table 1 shows that the variables in the model are not auto correlated and that the model is reliable for predications.

Table 2 Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	312.052	5	62.410	6.151	.000b
	Residual	3307.502	348	10.146		
	Total	3619.554	353			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer Retention						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Affective Customer Experience, Cognitive Customer Experience, Physical Customer Experience,						

Source: SPSS 21.0

The f-statistics value of 6.151 in table 42 with f-statistics probability of 0.000 shows that the independent variables has significant effect on dependent. This shows that affective customer experience, cognitive customer experience and physical customer experience can collectively explain the variations in customer retention in restaurants in Asaba.

Table 3 Coefficient of the Regression Result

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	18.916	1.918		9.863	.000
Affective Customer Experience	.123	.043	.158	2.870	.004
Cognitive Customer Experience	.085	.044	.202	2.923	.005
Physical Customer Experience	.076	.049	.185	2.562	.009
a. Dependent Variable: Customer Retention					

Source: SPSS 21.0

Affective customer experience has a t-statistics of 2.870 and a probability value of 0.004 which is statistically significant. This shows that affective customer experience has significant influence on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba. Cognitive customer experience has a t-statistics of 2.923 and a probability value of 0.005 which is statistically significant. This shows that cognitive customer experience has significant influence on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba. Physical customer experience has a t-statistics of 2.562 and a probability value of 0.09 which is statistically significant. This shows that physical customer experience has significant influence on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the influence of customer experience management on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba. The data generated were analyzed and the following were discovered. The study found

that affective customer experience had significant influence on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba. This agrees with the position of Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros and Schlesinger (2019) that the superiority of experience perceived by the customer will serve as one of the utmost significant elements that will influence customer satisfaction and retention. This also agrees with the position of Kavitha and Haritha (2018) that affective customer experience appeals to customers' inner feelings and emotions, with the objective of creating affective experiences that range from mildly positive moods linked to a brand. This agrees with the findings of Borishade, Worlu, Ogunaike, Aka and Dirisu (2021) that humanic clues significantly influence students' retention.

Cognitive customer experience was found to have significant influence on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba. This agrees with the position of Zomerdijk and Voss (2016) that through customer experience management, companies develop a holistic package that attracts, retains and adds value to their customers.

The study further found that physical customer experience had significant influence on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba. This agrees with the findings of Borishade, Worlu, Ogunaike, Aka and Dirisu (2021) that mechanic clues significantly influence students' retention. This also agrees with the findings of Forbes (2020) that physical interaction were also found to be statistically significant in explaining customer loyalty behaviour. Similarly, Kalungu (2019) found that the bank's physical surroundings have significant effect on customer retention.

Conclusion

In recent years a number of fundamental changes have occurred in the marketing environment that have led to the emergence of customer experience management as both a strategic discipline and a fast-growing industry, complete with a wide array of tools and solution sets. The changes have been fuelled by technological advancements, which have expanded the range of services available to customers, and simultaneously led to escalating customer expectations. The result is that there are now more services and products available than at any time in the past, yet customer satisfaction and retention are on a downward slide. Customer experience management are critical to the success of any business or organization by providing efficient business tools that make the interactions between companies and customers more rewarding for both parties. Based on the foregoing, the study examined the influence of customer experience management on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba, Delta State. The data generated from the customers of selected restaurants in Asaba were subjected to empirical analysis.

The study found that affective customer experience had significant influence on customer retention. The study also found that cognitive customer experience had significant influence on customer retention. Physical customer experience was found to have significant influence on customer retention. Based on the foregoing, the study concludes that customer experience management had significant influence on customer retention in restaurants in Asaba, Delta State. The study practically influences the way restaurants and other organizations gain competitive advantage through managing the experiences of customers in a volatile marketing environment. Therefore, restaurants needs to enhanced experience management at all customer touch points.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

- First, restaurant service providers should pay attention to the specific reach of each touch point, both in terms of number and type of customers reached and again, special focus should be devoted, in terms of investment and effort, to a set of touch points to enhance their potential to achieve long-term customer retention.
- Management of hotels should deliberately focus on mechanic clues in terms of providing a conducive environment, especially one that is clean for its students at all times.
- The management of restaurants should motivate their employees for effective implementation of a customer experience management as a new game strategy.

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