



Customer Relationship Marketing and Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) In Imo State

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Abstract

Original Research Article

The study examined Customer Relationship Marketing on performance of selected Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Imo state. The work used descriptive survey method and primary data to collect information through questionnaire. The study population involved 427 extracted from six(6) registered Small and Medium Enterprises(SMEs), the study adopts random sampling to obtain three(3) SMEs for the study, they include Raphana Agro farm, Zomas Resources and Ugo resources, Taro Yamane was used to obtain a sample size of 207. The analysis was done using simple linear regression. The study found among others that there is a positive and significant relationship between customer relationship marketing and marketing performance. The research thus concludes that for SMEs to ensure high level of customer relationship marketing, they should imbibe relationship marketing by creating grounds for customers' trust and ensure high commitment (Samsudin, 2011). The study, however recommends that for firms to attain a certain level of growth, they should create trust, commitment and effective communication to avoid customer switching.

Keywords: Customer relationship Marketing, Customer Retention, Marketing performance, Market Share, Regular Communication, SMEs, Timely Service Delivery.

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INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) is a business process in which client relationships, customer loyalty and brand value are built through marketing strategies and activities(Morgan and Hunt, 1994). CRM allows businesses to develop long-term relationships with established and new customers while helping streamline corporate performance(Creswell, 2003). CRM incorporates commercial and client-specific

strategies via employee training, marketing planning, relationship building and advertising. CRM's core strength is an ability to glean insight from customer feedback to create, enhanced, solid and focused marketing and brand awareness(Hakansson 1993). Key motivating drivers for the development of more innovative CRM strategies are web technologies and a sharpened global focus on customer loyalty. CRM provides a way to directly evaluate customer value. For example, a business that is genuinely interested in its customers is rewarded with customer and brand loyalty because CRM



is mutually advantageous, market share viability advances at a sound pace. Nowadays, the main marketing focus is shifting towards customers. Over the past fifteen years, a major shift has occurred in the ways that industrial companies deal with their customers and suppliers. This change came about when companies recognized that a sustainable competitive advantage in the global economy, increasingly requires companies to become trusted participants in various networks or sets of strategic alliances (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

Relationship marketing has emerged over the years as an exciting area of marketing that focuses on building long-term relationships with customers and other parties. Customer relationship marketing management is moving to become an integral part of the marketing function (Aaltonen, 2004). There is general agreement that the quality of relationship between parties involved is an important determinant of the permanence and intensity of the relationship and the consequent success of relationship marketing practices (Gwinner, 1998). Relationship marketing has received increasing attention in both marketing theory and practice. The strategy of relationship marketing is particularly important to the service industries because of the intangible nature of service and their high level of customer interaction. A key feature of the strategy of relationship marketing is that it not only results in increased customer retention and company profitability, but it also provides a sustainable competitive advantage to a service firm as the intangible aspects of a relationship are not easily duplicated by competitors (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). Consequently, there is a growing interest in the subject of relationship marketing. More and more firms are focusing on strong firm-customer relationship (Ndubisi, 2004). Enhancement and focus on customer relationship creates many benefits for firms and customers. By building a relationship with customers, firms can gain quality sources of marketing intelligence for better planning of marketing strategy. As more evidence shows that profitability is directly related, it is vital for firms to develop long term sustainable customer relationships. According to Kotler (2000), upon implementing a relationship

marketing program properly, the firm begins to focus as intently on managing its customers as on managing its products.

Performance of firms as a concept has been included in various theoretical and conceptual frameworks and models (Chan, 2003). These models or frameworks have addressed measurements of growth of firms, drivers of growth of firms, as well as measurements of related variables (Bruce, 1999). Growth of firms is achieved through customer's experiences with a product/service as compared with expectations. Growth of firms has been defined in various ways: an overall feeling, or attitude, a person has about a product after it has been purchased (Solomon 1994), or as summary, affective and variable intensity response centred on specific aspects of acquisition and/or consumption and which takes place at the precise moment when the individual evaluates the object (Giese and Cote, 2000). In most countries, SMEs dominate the industrial and commercial infrastructure (Deros, 2006). According to Samsudin (2011) smaller nations like Nigeria are bound to face difficulties in competing in the global trade economy because it is mostly dominated by the larger economies. Additionally CRM is a complex process to develop adequate resources in the development of the food industry and trading by Nigeria. Thus, the SMEs today need to identify, prioritize and minimize their business challenges in order to be more competitive and relevant in the business world. This scenario is also applicable to SMEs in Nigeria (Salleh and Kupusamy, 2007). Additionally, SMEs are facing great challenges to survive and sustain in the market due to lack of resources and marketing expertise (O'Dwyer, 2009; Xu et al, 2007) as well as the inability to secure additional of funding (Wang & Yao, 2002). Likewise the development of the SMEs sector in Nigeria has been phenomenal thereby contributing significantly to the economic growth process over the years (BNM, 2005)

Statement of the Problem

It was indicated in the work of Payne (2006), that CRM gives an opportunity to business with respect to the usage of information, knowing clients better, offering value through sales

customization and developing long-term relationships. According to (Seybold,2001;Strau B and Schoder,2002), Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is an ongoing procedure whereby organization exchange communication with their clients, and as a result creating, gathering, and analyzing the data of the clients with the purpose of using the result to improve marketing and service activities, However, as a result of limited studies on the extent of customer relationship management, business organizations fail to meet up with target and excel in the competitive market(Walsh et al, 2014). Moreso, the concept of market relationship management can be implemented best when there is a sound basis of knowledge about the extent of customer relationship on performance. A study of available relevant literature by the researcher reveal some gaps. Reinartz (2004) in his work looked at establishing a link between the activities of CRM and organizational performance, Tamuliene & Gabryte (2014) showed that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between factors identified in the theoretical model: customer satisfaction, relationship quality, switching costs and customer retention. Customer satisfaction has a significant effect on customer retention. Osakwe & Anaza (2018) also extend past findings by theoretically integrating firm size as a segmentation tool used to further evaluate the role of marketing resources on organizational performance and confirm that enterprise size is a significant moderator when explaining the relationship between customer retention orientation and e-brand promotion.

From the above stated, it can be observed that various studies on CRM have been carried out in different locations with different variables and indices. Most of the studies did not examine the extent of CRM on these indices; timely delivery and market share, timely delivery and customer retention, regular communication and market share, regular communication and customer retention. There is therefore need to reconcile these varying studies and to indentify the extent of relationship between CRM and performance of SMEs in Imo state. This study is therefore motivated by the observed gap in the

methodology, findings and locations on the sub variables of interest necessitating an enquiry.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to investigate on customer relationship marketing on marketing performance of SMEs in Imo state. The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the relationship between timely delivery and market share
2. evaluate the effect of timely delivery on customer retention
3. evaluate the extent to which regular communication influence market share
4. ascertain the extent which regular communication relate with customer retention

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of the relationship between timely delivery and market share?
2. To what extent does timely delivery affect customer retention?
3. What is the relationship between regular communication and market share?
4. What is the extent of relationship between regular communication and customer retention ?

Research Hypotheses

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between timely delivery and market share
- H₀₂: Timely delivery does not significantly relate with customer retention.
- H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between regular communication and market share.
- H₀₄: Regular communication does not significantly affect customer retention

Significance of the Study

Organizations: The study will ascertain the relationship between customer relationship elements and marketing performance variables which will help to ascertain if the relationship marketing variables will improve marketing performance.

Firms: The cost of customer relationship marketing makes this research important to determine what change can be expected in firms and how to best leverage the investment with positive results.

Managers: From a practical perspective, it is important for managers to know if the satisfaction of their customers will impact positively or negatively on their repeat purchase.

SMEs: The research will answer the question of whether customer relationship marketing makes a positive difference in the marketing performance of the SMEs or not. Through it all, the study will enable SMEs to attain a reasonable height by knowing how to satisfy their customer through customer relationship.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study could be viewed from three dimensions: namely, the content scope, geographical scope and the unit scope.

This study focused on customer relationship marketing and marketing performance of SMEs in Imo state . The study looked at the variables of interest as they relate to the independent(CRM) and dependent variables(performance). The variables are timely service delivery and regular communication for independent variables and market share and customer retention serves as dependent variables. The geographical scope has to do with the area of coverage, the SMEs are Raphana Agro farm, Zomas Resources, Ugo Resources , Anyika Enterprises, Obinwanne Associate and Obi and Sons, two from each senatorial zone all in Imo state. The researcher decided to study these company on the basis of old and new generation and their widespread locations across the state

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

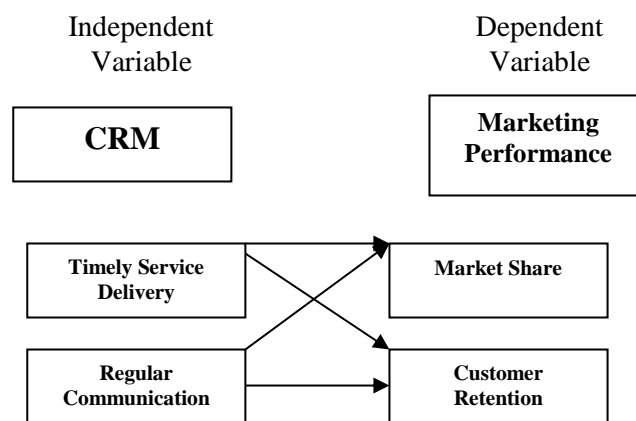


Fig. 2.1

Concept of Customer Relationship Marketing

First, it is worth defining the term “relationship” in the marketing context, although it is difficult to find one. Most writers simply talk about relationships, or a move from a transactional

approach to a relational approach. Hunt and Morgan (1995) used the term as the “personal relationship between two people.” This definition maybe attractive for a supplier, but may not be so for a buyer, who is expected to make a commitment. Radley, (1996), reported

that social psychologists make a distinction between personal and social relationships. They argued that norms and rules of close personal relationships can be different; for example, one can say and do things in personal relationships that would be unacceptable in social ones. The distinction between personal and social relationships is an appropriate one for relationship marketing. In contrast, Hakansson and Snehota (1995) defined a relationship ‘as mutually oriented interaction between two reciprocally committed parties’. From a service marketing point of view, Gronroos (2000) argued that “a relationship has developed when a customer perceives that a mutual way of thinking exists between a customer and a supplier or service provider. Gummesson (1999) stated that relationships require at least two parties who are in contact with each other, a supplier and a customer. Gronroos (2000) argued that relationship is by and large related to an attitude and, from the organization viewpoint, a relationship can develop only when all or at least most important customer contacts and interactions are relationship-oriented. Therefore, organizations should create interaction and communication processes that facilitate relationships. Garbarino and Johnson(1999) described how to build such a relationship. They reported that at the beginning of the relationship between sellers and buyers, the buyers expect how relational involvement and primarily focus on overall satisfaction with the product as an indicator for future involvement. This indicator can be turned to be a high relational involvement when the customer uses.

Walsh et al (2004) define relationship marketing as “the activities carried out by banks in order to attract, interact with and retain more profitable or high net-worth customers”. Based on the mentioned definition, we can say that relationship marketing seek to increase customer profitability while providing better services for customers. According to Clark and Payne (1995) relationship marketing is “the business of attracting and enhancing long-term client relationships”. Gronroos (1990) stated that relationship marketing is “to establish, maintain and enhance relationships with customers and other partners, at a profit , so that the objectives

of the parties are met. This is achieved by a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises”. Gummesson (1999) indicated that relationship marketing had a strong emphasis on business to customer relationships within a customer relationship marketing paradigm. Kotler and Armstrong (1999) illustrated this idea in their definition of relationship marketing “relationship marketing involves creating, maintaining and enhancing strong relationships with customers and other stakeholders”. Relationship marketing is oriented to the long term. the goal is to deliver long-term value to customers, and the measure of success is long-term growth of firms”. Most of relationship marketing definitions emphasize longer term perspective, focusing on keeping customers rather than getting customers. One common point among the many definitions of relationship marketing is that it is associated with attempts by firms to develop long-term relationships with certain customers.

a. Aims of Relationship Marketing

The primary goal of relationship marketing is to build and maintain a base of committed customers, and reduce time and effort spent on them. The advantages that the organization obtain from building and maintaining a base of committed customers are many and can be linked directly to an organization’s bottom line (Aalton, 2004). According to Gronroos(1994), the aim of relationship marketing is to establish , maintain and enhance relationships with customers and other partners, so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. Relationship marketing plays a major role to get the firm close to the customers for the purpose of enabling the firm to accurately and adequately discern and satisfy their needs. Moreover, it enhances a company’s ability to understand customers, increase its market share, and ultimately reduce cost and increase profitability. Ndubuisi (2003) argued that the cost of serving one loyal customer I five to six times less than the cost of attracting and serving one new customer .

Rapp and Collins (1990) reported that relationship marking goals are to create and maintain lasting relationship between the firm

and its customer that are rewarding for both sides. In other words, a key objective is to foster customer loyalty. Further objective of relationship marketing include the delivery of sustained or increasing levels of satisfaction, and the retention of those customers by the maintenance and promotion of the relationship (Christopher, 1996). Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) also support this objective as they argued that relationship marketing focuses on building, maintaining and retaining customers. Profit tends to climb when a company increases as growth of firms rates increase. Relationship marketing addresses the basic human need to feel important. Consumers like to reduce the choices they have by engaging in ongoing relationships. It is a form of commitment made by consumers to patronize selected products, service, and markets rather than exercise choices. Palmatier and Gopalakrishna, (2005) study reported that there is a positive association between relationship marketing and business performance. Keltner (1995) found in his study that German banks compared with American banks, managed to maintain a stable market position during the 1980s and early 1990s as a consequence of relationship oriented banking strategies.

b. Importance of Relationship Marketing

The customer's attitude towards any form of relationship between him/her and the supplier is important. So if the customer perceives the importance of relationship strongly, then he/she develops a stronger relationship with the supplier (Ward et al., 1997). With respect to the firms, the importance of relationship marketing motives of investment in customer relationship building include access to privileged information on customer needs and wants, mutual rewards, cost reduction and increase in profitability, (Ndubisi, 2004). Reichheld (1993) reported that a 5 per cent increase in customer retention typically increase the company's profit by 60 per cent by the fifth year. It has been argued that long term relationships where both parties over time learn how to interact best with each other lead to decreasing relationship costs for the customer as well as for the supplier or service provider. Efficiency is gained, and value is created on both sides of the customer equation. Webster (1992,

14) reported that "there has been a shift from a transaction to a relationship focus". Ndubisi (2003) argued that the only real sustainable business growth strategy is through a mutual symbiotic relationship with customers, which enables a business to understand their needs more clearly and to create and deliver superior value. Verhoef (2003) reported that a relationship is important for firms since establishing and maintaining relationship with customers will foster customer retention, customer share development and increase profit. Relationship marketing, therefore, has become increasingly important as a business strategy (Verhoef, 2003). A relationship orientation implies that the focus of marketing is on retaining customer by maintaining and strengthening win-win relationships over time (Payne and Frow, 1997). This approach implies that relationships are more likely to develop in situation where the customer has more frequent contact with the service provider, where the service is continuously delivered over an extended time period and where the customer perceives the relationship to be important (Bove and Johnson, 2000). Several studies on service marketing have suggested that in order to acquire and maintain a competitive edge, service organizations should develop long-term relationship with their customers (Berry, 1995). There are three rationales for implementing Customer Relationship Marketing:

1. To increase Customer retention
2. To respond effectively to competitive pressure.
3. To differentiate competitively based on customer service superiority.

By linking customer relationship marketing data with growth of firm survey data all companies do show that Customer Relationship Marketing has a larger, indirect effect by influencing customer intentions, (James, 2002). There are a number of underlying assumptions inherent to relationship marketing, including:

- 1- A relationship can be formed with all customers, in all service situations, suggesting that all organizations should partake in relationship development .

- 2- Relationship strength will increase as the duration of the relationship increase.
- 3- The more frequent contact customer have with a particular service provider, the greater the opportunity for the relationship to strengthen.
- 4- That customer demographic characteristics impact on relationship strength; and that relationship strength will increase more if the customer place greater important on such relationships.

Benefits of Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing strategy helps in understanding customers' needs, and can also lead to customer loyalty and cost reduction. Research has shown that the cost of serving one loyal customer is significantly less than that cost of attracting and serving one new customer (Ndubisi, 2004). Rashid (2003) reported that Gwinner et al. (1998) conclude that relationship marketing could bring customer the following advantage:

- 1- **Confidence:** reduce anxiety, faith in a product or service provider, and a feeling of trustworthiness toward the provider.
- 2- **Social Benefits:** person recognition by employees, customer feeling familiar with employees, the development of friendship with employees.
- 3- **Special Treatment:** extra services, special prices, higher priority than other customers.

With respect to relationship marketing advantages from the perspective of the organizations, it allows organization not only to retain customers, but it also improve profitably and decrease costs of acquisition. Some of the motives behind organizational investment in customer relationship building include access to privileged information on customer needs and wants (Ndubisi, 2004). Relationship marketing enable organizations to expand their business, if implemented successfully. loyal customer word-of-mouth can be very influential in terms of gathering new

business and helping to attract new customers, because satisfied customers convey positive messages about the company's service and personal recommendations are often taken most seriously in customers' purchase decisions (Gremler and Brown, 1999). Stone et al.(2000)reported that satisfied customers can become powerful advocates for a company. New customers attracted by the company's reputation would be likely to generate revenue for the company more quickly. Building relationships is beneficial for both the customer and the firms. Organizations seek benefits in order to develop a relationship with their customers, so that they will be able to create a competitive advantage. At the same time, customer seek a benefit to start a relationship and respond with their loyalty.

Market Share: It is the percentage of the total revenue or sales in a market that a company's business makes up

Regular Communication: This refers to the continuous exchange of information between different departments and individuals within an organization

Customer Retention: refers to the ability of a company or product to retain its customers over some specified period. High customer retention means customers of the product or business tend to return to, continue to buy or in some other way not defect to another product or business, or to non-use entirely.

Timely Delivery: It refers to the act of sending or transporting goods to the recipient within the promised or expected time frame

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on five(5) theories

Learning Curve Theory

The Learning Curve Performance management theory states that employees learn in a predictable , measurable way overtime. It's specifically based on the idea that employees perform better as they gain experience in their

jobs. It's generally applicable to any type of job or situation where a manager expects an employee to perform a new task or complete a new project. It's important to note that the learning curve performance management theory doesn't apply to jobs that don't have a learning curve

Expectancy Theory

The expectancy performance management theory is a performance management model that explains why some employees perform better than others. This theory focuses on the beliefs that employees have about their abilities, their behaviour and the outcomes of their actions. It focuses on three factors:

- Instrumentality: An employee's belief that positive consequences directly result from their actions, such as the belief that doing good work leads to a raise.
- Valence: An employee's attitude towards the possible outcome such as if an employee enjoys undertaking more responsibilities.

360-Degree Feedback

The 360-degree Feedback performance management theory involves a method of evaluating employee performance. The idea behind this theory is that multiple people can assess an employee's performance, rather than just one manager. This type of feedback process involves collecting data from four sources, the employee's manager, peers, subordinates and direct reports. Professionals then compare this information to the employee's self-assessment of their work and goals for the year. Managers subsequently present the results of these evaluations to the relevant employee in a written report, which includes suggestions for improvement. The goal of this is to help employees progress.

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory is a performance management theory that dictates there are two types of factors that motivates

employees: hygiene factors and motivational factors. Hygiene factors refers to the requirement necessary for an employee to do their job like pay and working conditions. Another name for them is maintenance factors because they keep employees from becoming dissatisfied with their jobs. Motivational factors, meanwhile refers to the things that inspire people to do great work and feel good about doing it. Like recognition and achievement. They're also called growth factors because they can help people grow as individuals and professionals.

Holistic theory

Holistic theory is a concept that emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of all aspects of a system or entity. It suggests that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and that understanding the entire system is necessary to comprehend its parts fully.

In marketing, holistic theory is often applied to understanding the complexity of customer behavior and mental processes. Instead of reducing behavior to individual elements or components, holistic theory asserts that behavior is influenced by multiple factors, including biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors.

Holistic psychology views individuals as complex systems with unique experiences, beliefs, and contexts that shape their overall well-being. It emphasizes the importance of considering the whole person, rather than focusing solely on isolated behaviors or symptoms.

In holistic approaches to therapy, practitioners often take a comprehensive view of their clients' lives, considering various aspects such as relationships, lifestyle, beliefs, and environment. By addressing the interconnected nature of these elements, therapists aim to promote healing and growth on a deeper level.

Overall, in relation to the study holistic theory highlights the importance of understanding systems as a whole, rather than focusing on isolated parts. It recognizes the complexity and interconnectedness of individuals and systems and seeks to promote a more comprehensive

understanding of behavior and well-being. Firms should look at whole aspect of their customers, in monitoring their behavior generally, business environment and attitude of the organization towards their customers to obtain a holistic result(retention).

Empirical Review

Reinartz (2004) in his work looked at establishing a link between the activities of CRM and organizational performance in New York. Four objectives and four research question guided the study adopted a descriptive study survey design, 308 respondents was used for the study and a total enumeration technique was used. Questionnaire was used for data collection and was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The work gave an indication that CRM do have an impact on organizational performance.

Jones, Sundaram, and Chin, (2002) examined CRM on the efficiency of sales force. The researchers used descriptive survey design and the population of the study as 120 respondents. Random sampling technique was used. Questionnaire was used for data collection. study found that the efficiency of the sales force will be enhanced by the adaptation and application of the CRM practices.

The work of Rigby et al., (2002) examined CRM and motivation of employees. Four research objectives and research questions. A descriptive survey design was used with the sample size of 150 respondents. Data was collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages. Major findings indicated that, improvement of the motivation of employees is one of the probable of CRM. Lostakova (2007) investigate CRM on business performance. The descriptive research design of the descriptive survey type was adopted for the study. The study population consisted of two hundred and fifteen (215) business outlets in Zimbabwe. Data was collected using questionnaire and the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics involving simple percentages, mean and frequency distribution methods. As part of their findings mentioned that a business or an organization can adequately enhance or variate their products in

comparison with that of competition. Businesses can as well raise the number of new products that are introduced to the market. The work also mentioned that CRM can massively raise the volume of sales of clients which will in effect raise the revenue generation of the business.

Kim, Suh & Wang (2003) again mentioned in their work that the process of CRM can enhance the contentment of customers, raise the loyalty of customers, decrease the cost of gaining a client repeatedly raise the profit level of the organization.

Khirallah, (2004) mentioned that, the duration of the conversation or interaction with a customer will increase immensely and at the same time, the delivery time of service to customers will be reduced as a result of CRM.

La Ville & Scheld (2004) gave an assertion that the marketing and sales cost can be reduced as a result of the introduction of CRM. The work also found that, CRM can advance customer retention as well as increase the worth of customers.

Boulding, Stalin, Ehret & Johnson, (2005) research works have shown a constructive and a major association between CRM practice and the performance of an organization. A recent portion of the journal of Marketing showed that the activities of CRM boost firms performance in eight of ten publishes works

Again, Day and Van den Bulte (2002) a well-organized CRM capability can ensure greater of superior performance.

Chang & Zhang (2016) found that an offline (retail-store) channel can be used to migrate customers from an inactive state to an active state, effectively serving the purpose of —education or —revival, whereas an online channel is most effective in keeping the existing active customers active, thus serving the purpose of —retention.

Tamuliene & Gabryte (2014) showed that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between factors identified in the theoretical model: customer satisfaction, relationship quality, switching costs and customer retention. Customer satisfaction has a significant effect on

customer retention.

Osakwe & Anaza (2018) also extend past findings by theoretically integrating firm size as a segmentation tool used to further evaluate the role of marketing resources on organizational performance and confirm that enterprise size is a significant moderator when explaining the relationship between customer retention orientation and e-brand promotion.

Gap in Literature

A study of available relevant literature by the researcher reveal some gaps. Reinartz (2004) in his work looked at establishing a link between the activities of CRM and organizational performance, Tamuliene & Gabryte (2014) showed that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between factors identified in the theoretical model: customer satisfaction, relationship quality, switching costs and customer retention. Osakwe & Anaza (2018) also extend past findings by theoretically integrating firm size as a segmentation tool used to further evaluate the role of marketing resources on organizational performance and confirm that enterprise size is a significant moderator when explaining the relationship between customer retention orientation and e-brand promotion. However, these studies on CRM have been carried out in different locations, using different methods, techniques and with different variables; however, most of the studies did not examine the extent of CRM on these indices; timely delivery and market share, timely delivery and customer retention, regular communication and market share, regular communication and customer retention in the same location of study.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the procedure the researcher used in carrying out the study. It includes design of the study, area population of study, sample size determination and sampling technique, method of data collection, validation of the instrument, reliability, method of data analysis and model specification.

Design of the study

The researcher design that was adopted for this study is descriptive survey. Nworgu (2006) explained that descriptive survey involves a systematic and comprehensive collection of information about the opinions, attitude, feelings, beliefs and behavior of people. This method of research designs will be used because it will help elicit relevant information regarding the impact of customer relationship marketing and performance of selected SMEs in Imo State. Obiozor, (2016) pointed out that descriptive survey is most applicable in situations demanding the opinions and perceptions of persons on existing facts, conditions and events. The design is suitable for this study, because the opinions of people (respondents) were sought for in assessing the impact of CRM and marketing performance of SMEs in Imo State.

Population of the study

The target population of the study is 427 extracted from six (6) registered SMEs in Imo State (Imo State Ministry Commerce, 2022). The SMEs are Raphana Agro farm, Zomas Resources, Ugo Resources, Anyika Enterprises, Obinwanne Associate and Obi and Sons.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Since the entire population of the study cannot be covered by the researcher, simple random sampling technique was used to select three(3)SMEs for the study. The SMEs are Raphana Agro farm, Zomas Resources, Ugo Resources. Taro Yamane was used to determine the sample size

$$n = \frac{\frac{n}{1} + (e)^2}{\frac{472}{2.0675}} = \frac{\frac{427}{1} + \frac{427}{0.05^2}}{2.0675} = 206.5 \cong 207.$$

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected by personal contact of the researcher with the respondents. The researcher did on the spot administration and retrieval of the instruments from respondents. In this process

the researcher solicited for the cooperation of the SMEs. Instruments were giving on how to complete the questionnaire. 207 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents while 168 were retrieved and found useful for the study.

Validation of the instruments

Content and face validity methods were used as the instruments were presented to the supervisor, the corrections and directives from the supervisor were fully adhered to in the final draft of the instrument before distribution.

Reliability of the Instrument

The researcher used test retest reliability method for the study. A pilot test was first conducted with a separate group who is not but possess similar characteristics with the respondents. The Cronbach alpha was used. A comparison of the result generated from the pilot test with the main study shows that the instrument of the study is reliable, since the values of r is 0.89 as against 0.7 which is the benchmark for acceptance according to (Nneneffe, 2008)

Method of Data Analysis

The research questions were answered using

simple linear regression while the simple linear regression analysis was also used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis of no significant difference were upheld with if the calculated significant value is greater than tabulated value, than null tabulated value, we do not reject the null hypothesis but reject the alternative hypothesis. The computation of data was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0, while the results were presented in tables

Model Specification

$$TSD = \beta_0 + \beta_1 iMS$$

$$CR = \beta_0 + \beta_2 iRC$$

RESULTS

Research questions will be answered alongside with hypothesis testing

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question One: What is the relationship between timely service deliveries and market share?

Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error			
1 (constant)	4.827	.211			.000
Market share	.156	.054	-.199	22.889	.004
				-2.904	

a. Dependent Variable: Timely Delivery

The coefficient table shows that there is a positive relationship between timely service delivery and market share.

H01: There is no significant relationship between timely delivery and market share. The significant value of market share is 0.004, which is less than 0.05, we then reject

null hypothesis and accept alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is significant relationship between timely service delivery and market share

Research Question Two: To what extent does timely delivery significantly affects customer retention?

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
(constant)	3.997	.228		17.507	.000
1 Customer Retention	.156	.054	.030	.426	.671

a. Dependent Variables: Customer retention

The coefficient table revealed that there is a positive relationship between timely delivery and customer retention.

H02: There is no significant relationship between timely delivery and customer retention. The significant value of customer retention is 0.671 which is greater than 0.05, we then accept

null hypothesis and reject alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is significant relationship between timely delivery and customer retention.

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between regular communication and market share?

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient			t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(constant)	4.827	.211		22.889	.000
1 Market Share	.156	.854	.799	-2.904	.041

a. Dependent Variable: Regular Communication



There is a positive relationship between regular communication and market share.

H03: There is no significant relationship between regular communication and market share with the significant value of market share is 0.041 which is less than 00.05, we reject null

hypothesis and accept alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is a relationship between regular communication and market share

Research Question Four: What is the extent of regular communication on customer retention?

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(constant)	3.997			17.507	.000
1 Customer Retention	6.035	.228 .038	.071	.426	.009

b. Dependent Variable: Customer retention

There is a positive relationship between regular communication and customer retention.

H04: There is no significant relationship between regular communication and customer retention.

The significant value of customer retention is 0.009 which is less than 0.05, we then reject null hypothesis and accept alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between regular communication and customer retention.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed on the coefficient table1 that there is a positive relationship between timely service delivery and market share. This was further confirmed from the hypothesis which revealed that there is significant relationship between timely service delivery and market share

The coefficient table2 revealed that there is a positive relationship between timely delivery and customer retention. This was confirmed

from the hypothesis which also revealed that there is significant relationship between timely delivery and customer retention.

There is a positive relationship between regular communication and market share. The hypothesis also revealed that there is a significant relationship between regular communication and market share.

Finally, there is a positive relationship between regular communication and customer retention. The hypothesis also revealed that there is a significant relationship between regular communication and customer retention.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that;

1. there is a positive relationship between timely service delivery and market share.
2. there is a positive relationship between timely retention and customer retention.

3. there is a positive relationship between regular communication and market share.
4. there is a positive relationship between regular communication and customer retention.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Among these findings, however, firms ought to ensure high commitment in communicating with potential customers as this will create a rise in them trusting the firm. Thus, bringing about retention and increase in sales and finally growth which is the target of every firm.

The research recommends thus;

1. To increase customer retention, firms should respond effectively to competitive pressures
2. Knowing that customer relationship marketing significantly impacts on the growth of stable and strong customer relationship.
3. To avoid customer switching to competitors, firms should be able to build customers trust towards their products.

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