



Eco-conscious marketing and user satisfaction of food and beverage firms in Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between eco-conscious marketing and user satisfaction of food and beverage firms in Nigeria. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design. Customers of food and beverage firms in Nigeria were used as population of the study with a sample of 410 drawn from an infinite population using Krejcie and Morgan determining table of 1970 was used to estimate the sample size. 200 questionnaires were retrieved and used. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson product moment with the help of the Statistical Tool for Social Science (SPSS). The result of the study indicated that there is a significant relationship between dimensions of eco-conscious marketing (sustainable and social marketing) and measures of user satisfaction (repeat purchase and customer retention) of food and beverage firms in Nigeria. It concluded that eco-conscious marketing has emerged as one of the powerful tools for increasing user satisfaction, if food and beverage firms adopt fully eco-conscious marketing, it would to a greater extent enhance user satisfaction and recommended that firms should be environmentally responsive in order to achieve environmental objectives and profit related goals.

Keywords: Eco-conscious marketing, Sustainable marketing, Social marketing, User satisfaction, Repeat purchase, Customer retention.

Introduction

User satisfaction is the key for business expansion and increase in growth. Customer retention shows continuous relationship while loyalty indicates relationship between the organizations and user of products and services. User satisfaction is the important aspect of

customer retention, that is why many researches has shown that user satisfaction is paramount because unsatisfied customers will switch to competitor's products. Scholars found that transparency can significantly enhance consumer trust and boost

satisfaction of users, if the eco-conscious marketing strategies emphasizes authenticity.

Lee et al (2019) and White et al (2019) affirmed that consumers are likely to stick to brands they feel that is transparent about their environment and also has genuine commitment to sustainability.

Eco-conscious, green, environmental, or sustainable marketing establishes a link between the company organisation and its surrounding environment (Emery, 2012 in Godday and Owuso, 2020). Eco-conscious marketing, also referred to as green, environmental, or sustainable marketing, is defined as an activity aimed at generating and facilitating changes that fulfil human needs and desires, while minimising harm to natural resources and the environment (Martin and Schouten, 2019; Moloy, 2011).

Eco-conscious marketing transcends traditional marketing by integrating ecological considerations into various business aspects, including product design, manufacturing processes, and advertising strategies, to satisfy environmentally aware consumers while fostering sustainability. It also encourages the judicious utilisation of natural resources, as consumers actively seek products and services that reduce environmental harm, achievable via both collective actions and individual efforts (D'souza et al., 2019). Murphy (2011) posits that green marketing involves companies using their finite resources to manufacture environmentally friendly products, maintain their performance, and accomplish their objectives. He states further that green marketing is to minimize environmental harm caused by corporation marketing and that is overall

purpose. The concept of eco-conscious marketing or green marketing sensitive has attracted attention of firms and business owners. It refers to the sensitive use of natural resources, which focuses on minimizing pollution during entire production process, packaging, and marketing of goods and services (Sedliacik and Dado, 2017).

The term eco-conscious, sustainable, green and environmental marketing are used interchangeably by many scholars and this is applicable to this paper. Bilen and Vehapi (2017) affirmed that increased outcomes by consumers on effect of climate change and human exploitation of limited resources has led to shift in demand to eco-conscious marketing of goods and services, which led to the emergence of “green marketing” “environmental marketing” “sustainable marketing”. Sedliacik and Dado (2017) again opined that firms emphasizes their responsibility in environment in which they market their products for future generation and their consumption pattern. This is achieved by conscious use of their power of marketing as well as maintaining sustainable or green development.

Previously firms were only concerned in marketing of goods and services unlike today firms that focuses on eco-conscious products that offers healthy life and cleaner environment (Duru and Sua, 2013). This has led to increased demand by green product consumers. Consumers choose based on the information available, that is why eco-conscious marketing plays important role in increasing awareness to the consumers and general public (Hecks & Yidan 2013 in Godday et al, 2020). Because of how

important eco-conscious products and services its consumers are ready to purchase it even high price. It is pertinent to note that food and beverages firms are the pillar of the development of every nation. On the Nigerian Stock Exchange food and beverage firms is one of the larger sub-sectors in Nigerian manufacturing sector and also primary producers of consumer goods (Okere, 2012). The food and beverage firms are also faced with fierce competitors as industry is growing by the day (Osundina, 2014). Technological convergence, slow growth, high regulation, long production cycles and food safety are the several features characterized by food and beverage firms that shape their innovation process (Boehlje et al, 2009 in Godday et al, 2020).

Research Problem

There has been an increasing interest among global customers in environmental conservation. Nandim and Deshpande (2011), as cited in Sivesan et al. (2013), asserted that eco-conscious marketing is a manufacturing approach that may enhance organisational profitability, attract customers, and deliver advantages. Eco-conscious marketing benefits can be provided by accessing new markets, ensuring sustainable long-term growth with profitability, help firm market their products and services, enjoying competitive advantage, saving money and maintaining a sustainable environment. It encounters several obstacles, including the necessity for green products to utilise renewable and recycled materials, which can be costly. Additionally, substantial capital investment in research and development

is required, often involving advanced technology. A portion of consumers lacks awareness regarding eco-friendly products and their advantages, whereas a significant number are reluctant to invest extra in these sustainable options. In the meantime, the topic of eco-conscious marketing has been a point of discussion for several years, with a diverse background. It gears towards satisfying customers effectively, without much environmental issues. Studies on eco-conscious or green marketing include Sustainable marketing and ethical consumption behaviour:

The moderating effect on price sensitivity among beverage consumers in Nigeria (Udoka et al., 2021) and Sustainability marketing: A changing marketing concept lead sustainable business. Ecological marketing, green marketing, sustainable marketing: Synonyms or evolution? (Hristo, 2016). Green marketing's influence on customer satisfaction and environmental safety (Dhanjit, 2017), eco-friendly consumption articles: A content study (Ayfer et al., 2017). However, there are few or no literature on the relationship between eco-conscious marketing and user satisfaction of food and beverage firms in Nigeria, which is the study's starting point.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between eco-conscious marketing and user satisfaction of food and beverage firms in Nigeria. Some other specific objectives of this study are to:

- i. Determine the correlation between sustainable marketing and repeat purchase
- ii. Ascertain the relationship between sustainable marketing and customer retention
- iii. Identify the correlation between social marketing and repeat purchase
- iv. Investigate the relationship between social marketing and customer retention

Research questions

In order to adequately address the objectives of this, the following research questions are raised:

- i. To what extent does sustainable marketing relate to repeat purchase?
- ii. To what extent does sustainable marketing relate to customer retention?
- iii. To what extent does social marketing relate to repeat purchase?
- iv. To what extent does social marketing relate to customer retention?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated

H₀₁: There is no positive and significant relationship between sustainable marketing and repeat purchase of food and beverage firms in Nigeria.

H₀₂: Sustainable marketing has no significant relationship with customer retention of food and beverage firms in Nigeria.

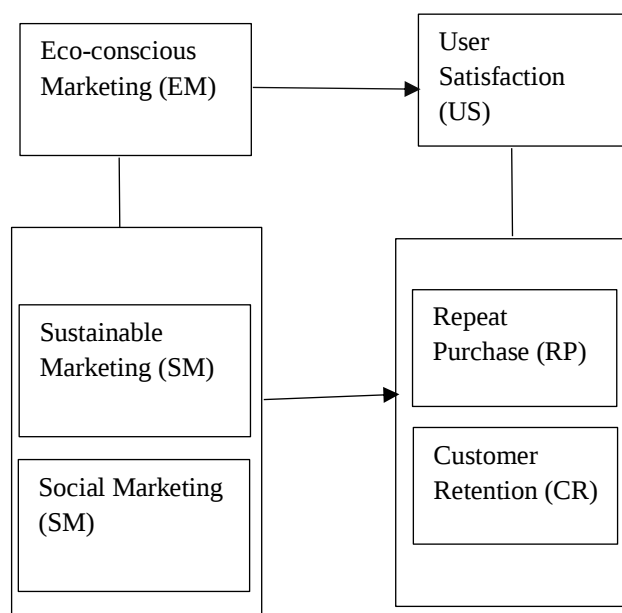
H₀₃: There is no positive and significant relationship between social marketing and repeat purchase of food and beverage firms in Nigeria.

H₀₄: Social marketing has no significant relationship with customer retention of food and beverage firms in Nigeria.

Research Framework

The study variables show the direction of research work as it serves as a framework in which the study is built. Eco-conscious marketing is the predictor variable, with sustainable and social marketing as its dimensions. User satisfaction is the criterion variable with loyalty and retention as its measures. They are fully represented below

Fig 1.1 conceptual framework for eco-conscious marketing and user satisfaction.



Source: Authors conceptualization from literature

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Framework

This study employs the Institutional theory, the Natural Resource-Based View

theory, and the Customer Satisfaction model. This is based on the concept that food and beverage companies should be empowered to allocate their resources towards an effective product offering that satisfies their customers.

Institutional theory

The institutional theory was not attributed to a single individual but rather to collective body of work that emerged in the early 20th century and revolve round the time. The theory was influenced by sociologists and economists who explored how institutions affect social behaviour and economic actions. The main figure in the early institutional theory is Thorstein Veblen, in his work *The Theory of the Leisure class* in 1899 laid the foundation for institutional theory. The modern development of institutional theory, especially as applied to organizations, is often credited to John Meyer, Brian Rowan, Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell.

The theory was formalized by these scholars in late 1970s and early 1980s. This theory is a framework for understanding how institutions (the rules, norms and cultural beliefs in society shape the behaviour of the organizations. The key focus of the theory is on the relationship of an organization with its environment including social and political (cited in Nweke, 2017). How institutional pressures influence the organization, and how these prospects are aligned into the practices and features of an organization is another focus of this theory. Scott (2014) “affirmed that institutional theory emphasizes that organizations are not just influenced by internal goals or economic factors but

also by the need to align with societal (customer) expectations, regulations and cultural practices. The theory mostly states that the institutional environment of the firm is ruled by its behaviour.

Natural Resource Based View (NRBV) Theory

Hart introduced NRBV in 1995. The idea expands the Resource-Based View of the company, which emphasises how organisations employ internal resources to compete. Natural and environmental resources shape competitive strategies, notably for environmental sustainability, according to NRBV. It claims that corporations may maintain a competitive edge by managing natural resources and incorporating sustainability into their plans.

Kumar (2015) says natural resource-based perspective theory underpins eco-conscious, sustainable, green, and environmental marketing. Obafemi and Ihunwo (2022) in King and Lenox (2002) noted that “researchers are using environmental performance measures as a proxy for environmental strategy and also relied on the NRBV to connect environmental strategy to firm performance”. A firm's link to the natural environment is the basis of NRBV competitive advantage theory. Despite the growing, complex nature of ecological issues, the NRBV is better positioned to address how businesses may include the natural environment while retaining their goals and focus.

The Customer Satisfaction Model

The customer satisfaction model, as articulated by Garga and Bambale (2016), evolved from the Swedish

Customer Satisfaction Barometer, which was established in 1989 as the inaugural national customer satisfaction index. This approach focusses on the preservation and perception of enterprises' loyalty to their consumers through the enhancement of product quality, which is anticipated to foster a specific degree of pleasure. The customer satisfaction index measures a firm's ability to meet customer needs and compares its products to industry standards.

Eco-conscious marketing

Eco-conscious marketing originated from environmental movements of the 20th century. The practice is as a result of increasing awareness of environmental degradation, resource depletion and the demand of sustainable products by consumers. The practice also moves in parallel to the rise of environment emerging niche strategies to the broader business practice.

Its roots is traced back to the 1960s and 1970s when it became public discourse and gain prominence as a major environmental concern. Carson (1962) in her publication silently stated the dangers of pesticides, and that was the awareness of ecological issues. This development gave rise to consumer activism with a particular set of population seeking products that are less harmful to the environment. Ottman (2017) affirmed that the era witnesses early development of eco-labelling, and companies trying to market products as environmentally friendly even though these claims were not always well-regulated.

In the 1980s and 1990s eco-conscious marketing gained further attention and was driven by concept of sustainable

development. Brundtland publication in 1987 promoted idea that business has a responsibility of balancing economic growth with environmental protection. In this period there are particular segment of consumers who are ready to more for products that are environmentally friendly. According to Peattie (1995) companies in different sectors such as transportation, energy and consumer goods started adjusting themselves as environmentally responsible through the use of eco-labelling, packaging, recyclable and energy-efficient products that are not harmful to environment.

Conversely, as eco-conscious marketing is spreading rapidly, it was criticized for the practice of “green washing” where the environmental benefits of their products are misrepresented or exaggerated. Delmas and Burbano (2011) highlighted that the criticism continues going on up to the year 1990s and early 2000s and this make corporation to capital on growing demand for sustainable without making meaningful environmental improvements. As a result, both consumers and regulations became more sceptical of green claims and in order to prevent deceptive marketing stricter certification systems regulations was developed.

The early 2000s marked a shift towards accountability and transparency in eco-conscious marketing to a greater extent. Sustainability became a core element of business models. Driven by growing consumer demand and regulatory pressures, company started to adopt it. Kolk (2003) asserts that businesses were encouraged to report their environmental and social impacts through initiatives like the United Nations Global Compact and the Global Reporting Initiative. In 2006,

companies were pushed to align their marketing strategies with environmental sustainability through an Inconvenient Truth by Al Gore, which heighten global awareness of climate change. With the rise of circular economy in 2010, emphasis was on waste reduction, material re-use, creation closed-loop systems, which minimized environmental impact, the concept of eco-conscious marketing evolved. Fashion companies began to adopt the practice of upcycling, recycling, using sustainable materials. This has become influential approach to the fashion industry (Geissdoerfer et al, 2017).

Furthermore, proliferation of eco-certifications and reporting frameworks was developed due to increased consumer demand for companies' transparency in their environmental practices. Today, eco-conscious marketing has been well established as part of corporate strategy and consumers have become more knowledgeable and discerning about environmental claims, authenticity and eco-conscious marketing campaigns.

Eco-conscious Marketing in Nigeria

The history is trace back to the late 1990s and early 2000s, when global discussions on climate change and environmental sustainability started gaining momentum. Prior to this period, companies in Nigeria focussed on profit maximization, and environmental concerns was given little or no attention. The increased global pressure on environmental accountability and negative impacts of businesses on the environment resulted in a shift towards sustainability focussed practices (Adeleke, 2020).

The oil and gas sector in Nigeria such as Shell and Chevron were among the first firms to face significant scrutiny concerning their environmental practices because their gas flaring frequent oil spillage. In the mist of these environmental concerns, they started to adopt sustainability initiatives, and this marked the early phase of eco-conscious marketing in Nigeria. Environmentally friendly activities such as afforestation projects, community development programmes, clean-up operations and corporate social responsibility initiatives began to improve their corporate images and align with the global trends and practices (Olatunji and Adewale, 2018).

From mid 2000s to 2010 eco-conscious marketing move beyond the oil sector to other sectors such as banking, telecommunication, and manufacturing firms especially the multinational corporations operating in Nigeria. The multinational corporations started integrating environmentally friendly practices to maintain a positive global brand reputation. For example, Unilever and PZ Cussons introduced in their operations biodegradable packaging, energy-efficient production processes and emphasized environmentally friendly products.

Access bank and GT Bank are among the pioneers in green bank in Nigeria, by reducing paper usage, promoting digital banking and emphasis eco-conscious marketing by focusing on environment, social and governance practices (ESG). Access bank launched its first sustainable report in 2009 (Olaniyi and Onwe, 2021).

From 2010 to 2020, institutional support for eco-conscious initiatives grew rapidly due to increased awareness. Policies

aimed at promoting sustainability marketing were enacted by Nigerian government, with the collaboration of international organizations. In 2007, the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) was formed to formulate and implement environmental legislation in accordance with global best practices (Obinna and Adebayo, 2014).

Many firms integrated eco-conscious marketing in their business strategies from 2010. MTN telecommunication launched “Going Green” campaign in 2011, which focused on carbon reduction by installing hybrid generating power systems in their base stations, to reduce dependence on diesel generators (Adelaja, 2022). Nigeria Breweries embraced sustainability through projects aimed at water conservation, reduction of carbon emissions and waste management. Their marketing campaign efforts indicated their commitment to environmentally friendly practices (Obinna and Adebayo, 2014). The recent trends from 2020 to date indicated that in the last few years eco-conscious marketing has gained more prominence, especially the rise in the concerns for climate change and younger consumers demand for sustainability. Many firms have adopted green marketing as core business strategy, and not necessary as corporate social responsibility, and many brands have complied (Olusola and Agbaje, 2020).

The firms that have adopted environmental sustainability have started to align their practices with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Adeleke & Sanni, 2017). Access bank in partnership with FMDQ Securities exchange and the Climate

Bond Initiative, launched Green Bond Market in 2021. Its goal is to encourage investment in environmentally sustainable projects, thereby marking a new era in the integration of eco-consciousness into services and financial products (Ajayi and Adebayo, 2019). Businesses in the various sectors in Nigeria will continue to explore green marketing strategies, focusing on eco-friendly products, packaging, renewable energy and waste recycling. Firms seeking to attract environmentally aware customers and for improvement of corporate reputation and image have to employ eco-conscious marketing as one of their tools and strategies.

Sustainable Marketing

In the late 80s and 90s green marketing undoubtedly affected marketing practices. Its practical implementation remains difficult despite the acceptance of the idea by firms. Marketing thinking stilled moved to a new level in the post - 1990 period in spite of the above-mentioned challenges (Katrandjiev, 2016). It is necessary to move sustainable marketing at a higher level as the principles have started to be more acceptable. Fuller (2000) was the first to define the phrase sustainable marketing. He characterised it as the “process of planning, executing, regulating the development, pricing, and distribution of a product to ensure compliance with three domains: (i) Meeting consumer needs (ii) Ensuring the attainment of organisational objectives (iii) Maintaining harmony with the ecosystem” (Fuller 2000 in Katrandjiev, 2016).

Accordingly, Peettie (2000) in Anaele (2018) affirmed that after the year 2000,

marketing began to adopt the principles of sustainability marketing. The juxtaposition between the requirements of present and future generations has emerged prominently due to the notion of sustainable marketing. The bulk of marketing endeavours focus on fulfilling desires rather than needs, but marketing theory posits that it addresses both needs and wants. Some consumers' income allow them to stock their basic needs such as food and water. This indicates that they purchase those things that satisfy their basic needs. Therefore, sustainable marketing focuses essentially to the satisfaction of the users or consumer needs.

Kotler (2018) described sustainable marketing as the promotion of products, services, and brands that addresses consumer requirements while considering environmental, economic, and societal implications. Currently, sustainable marketing has gained increasing significance worldwide as businesses are gradually responding to increased consumer awareness of environmental issues, corporate responsibilities and in alignment with the United Nations SDGs.

According to Jones et al (2018) the major trend in sustainable marketing has been its integration of the SDGs into corporate strategies. The combination of Climate action SDG 13 and responsible consumption SDG 12 make up sustainable marketing consciousness. Globally, 60% of consumers are ready to change their consumption habits in order to reduce environmental impact, while about 80% believed that it is the responsibility of firms to maintain and improve the environment (Nelson, 2018).

However, according to Peattie and Belz (2020) implementation is the major challenge of sustainable marketing, despite the increased awareness. He further warns of the risk of "greenwashing", this refers to when firms falsely claim to be environmentally friendly in order to attract more customers. If consumers found that it is false claim, it can damage their trust, and the genuine efforts towards sustainability will be undermined. To fight against greenwashing, organizations and regulatory agencies should ensure that there is transparency in sustainable claims.

Huang et al (2022) affirmed that to maintain sustainable marketing, businesses, consumers and regulators should continue to emphasize more on sustainability. He stated that sustainable marketing future includes high integration of sustainability in every aspect of the business, from product development to supply chain management. Instead of focusing on merely isolated green initiatives, firms should use marketing to communicate their entire approach to sustainability, build long-term values and trust with their consumers.

Social Marketing

Social marketing refers to the process of using marketing techniques and principles in influencing the target customers for the benefit of both the individual and the society (Akinsanya and Bach, 2014). Asgari et al (2015) provide a wider definition as the primary efforts done to influence people's behaviour in order to protect the environment, enhance health, avert injuries, sustain communities and

improve the economic status of the society. Akdogan et al (2013) noted that social marketing is aimed at benefiting the society, individual and the organization. For Andreasen (2012) it is the deployment of marketing tools and concepts in order to influence the behaviour a set of people to enhance their lives and that of the larger society.

Despite the various definitions and views of different scholars on the meaning of social marketing, it can be deduced that their central view is that it is an attempt or process of using marketing tools and principles to influence positively the behaviour of targeted audience and the larger society in order to improve their well-being and preserve the environment, for the benefit of the individuals, the firms and the society at large. It spans from marketing research, product planning, packaging, distribution, pricing, waste management, communications, and so on. Examples of social marketing are public health campaigns against smoking, alcoholism, drug addiction, population explosion, risky sexual behaviour; environmental campaign against pollution, afforestation; campaigns against corruption, human rights, etc.

User Satisfaction

User Satisfaction, which is also customer satisfaction, is an important concept in marketing and business strategies. It can be described as the degree to which a firm's products or services meet or exceed customer's expectations. It plays a major role in determining customer's loyalty, repeat purchase and the consequent long-term profitability for any organization. Kotler and Keller (2017) affirmed that it is a significant concept as satisfied

customers are likely to exhibit brand loyalty and may recommend the business to others, through direct and indirect means.

Satisfaction can be viewed as a metric that assesses the gap between customer expectations and their actual experiences with a product or service. Huang and Rundle-Thiele (2018) stated that when businesses consistently meet or surpass customers' expectations, it results in high level of customer satisfaction, but if otherwise, it will result to little or no satisfaction.

Customer support, service delivery, pricing and product quality are among the several factors that contribute to satisfaction. Rust and Huang (2019) highlighted that availability of personalized experience, convenience and value for money have also emerged as important determinants of customers' satisfaction in recent years. Studies in recent times have shown that businesses that pays attention to customers' needs and preferences and respond effectively to them are likely to enjoy higher level of satisfaction. For example, some sectors in Nigeria such as telecommunications and retail, customers' satisfaction is sensitive to service quality and pricing (Afolabi and Akimbode,2020). Also, they found that in maintaining satisfied customer base, there is need for prompt complaint resolution and personalized service.

Shankar et al (2020) opined that in the current digital era, the role of technology in enhancing customer satisfaction cannot be overstated. The integration of customer relationship management systems, artificial intelligent and data analytics have made it easier for companies to anticipate customers' needs

and ensure seamless service delivery and offer of tailored recommendations.

As businesses can now provide more responsive and efficient services with these technological advances, it has transformed the customer service landscape, leading to higher levels of satisfaction, the shift towards eco-conscious marketing practices has increasingly influenced customer satisfaction. Today, customers are more eco-conscious and businesses that adopt green practices are likely to enjoy higher rates of customer satisfaction. Adeyemi (2021) opined that sustainability practices in Nigerian firms positively impact customer perceptions, leading to stronger customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Customer or user satisfaction still remain a dynamic and multi-dimensional concept that continues to revolve with changing consumer preferences and technological advancements. There should be continuous monitoring of customers' expectations and adoption of strategies to address the increased changes in customers' needs. These strategies will ensure consistency in the ability of firms in meeting or exceeding the needs of customers in order to maintain competitive advantage among firms.

Repeat Purchase

A satisfied customer from the previous experience with a firm tend to come back to patronize the firm. This is what is referred as repeat purchase. Wirtz and Lwin (2019) assert that repeat purchase is the willingness of a customer to re-patronize the firm's products or services. This is often based on satisfactory earlier experience and development of trust.

This was collaborated by Caudill and Murphy (2000) who observed that when a customer develops trust in a firm's products and services the customer regularly patronizes the firm.

Satisfied customers who have developed trust in a firms' products and services they tend to repeat purchases as they believe the firms have their interest at heart and they would continue to patronize the firms. Repeat purchases may lead to loyal customers if the firms continue to meet or exceed the customers' expectations. Repeat purchases by customers are for the mutual benefits of both the firm and their customers. The customers would be happy to be buying their goods and services from trusted firms, while the patronage will increase sales, profit and sustainability of the firms. Repeat purchases are critical for the profitability and sustainability of every firm, and not new or casual customers that may not come back.

Customer Retention

Customer retention is a very important aspect of customer relationship. It refers to efforts made by firms to attract maintain their customers for the sustainability of the firms. Reinartz (2015) defines customer relationship management techniques as the analysis and use of marketing and communication technology to establish business strategies aimed at maximising the lifetime value of individual customers to the firm. This indicates that it is a long-term marketing plan aimed at attracting and retaining potential and current clients for as long as feasible. Sim and Elham (2015) stated that it is the processes used by firms in providing great experiences in their products and services offering to their

customers. achieve this goal, customers should be satisfied with the firms Products and services. Another definition of customer retention was by Singh and Khan (2017) emphasized that it offers a firm goodwill and reputation in the competitive market environment. Singh and Imran (2017) simply assert that firms provide retention programmes in order to convert casual customer to a frequent one.

Based on the above definitions of customers retention, it safe to observe that for a casual or prospective customers to be converted to retained customers they should be satisfied by products and services of the concerned firms. Their products and their services should meet or exceed the customers' expectation. In other words, the customers' previous experiences are good or acceptable to them. Also, retained customers are likely to recommend the concerned firms to their relatives and friends. And it is cheaper to retain existing customers than acquiring new ones.

Eco-conscious Marketing and User Satisfaction

The relationship between eco-conscious marketing and how consumers are being satisfied has become increasingly researched, especially as sustainability has become a prominent concern in the developing countries. Nigeria is among the African the countries that are facing serious environmental challenges, such as deforestation, gas flaring, pollution and waste management. Because of these challenges, many food and beverage firms in Nigeria adopted eco-conscious marketing strategies to meet the demands of eco-conscious consumers.

Adegbile and Adebisi (2019) conducted a study on the influence of eco-conscious marketing on customer satisfaction in Nigeria's organic food market. The study mainly focussed on organic food producers that promote their products through environmentally friendly practices, such as organic farming, reduced use of pesticides and local sourcing of raw materials. The result indicated that Nigerian consumers, especially those in the urban areas have become more conscious of the benefits of organic food, and are appreciative of firms that are environmentally friendly in their production and products.

User satisfaction was found to be higher as the products are marketed as healthier and environmentally friendly, consumer appreciate and value the concerns of the marketers. The study outline that some of the challenges of the producers is that consumers tend to be price sensitive. Some consumers in the urban areas are willing to pay more for organic products, while many still considered these products very expensive hence, lower user satisfaction. This implies that price is an important factor in customer satisfaction.

Okpara and Nwankwo (2020) examined the impact of eco-conscious marketing on customer satisfaction in the Nigerian beverage industry, focussing on sustainable packaging initiatives. The study analyzed beverage companies that had adopted eco-friendly packaging solutions, such as biodegradable containers and recyclable materials. The study showed that consumers in Nigeria are very much aware of environmental issues especially plastic waste, and beverage firms that have made efforts in reducing plastic waste through

sustainable packaging. Firms that have been actively communicating their eco-conscious practices through product labelling and advertising experienced higher customer satisfaction.

Sustainable Marketing and Repeat Purchase

According to Tuskey et al (2017) consumers are likely repeat purchase if they feel that the brand meets their expectations. Some sectors like food and beverage, high trust and safety are expected. Nwankwo and Okeke (2020) conducted a study on how social and sustainable marketing campaigns by major food and beverage firms, such as Nigerian Breweries and Dangote Foods, influence customer repeat purchases. They focused on campaigns promoting local community development, education and sustainability. They found that customers who are aware of societal marketing efforts turn to repeat buyers. In the study, they concluded that societal marketing can be a powerful tool Nigerian food and beverage sector may use to secure repeat purchase and drive customer loyalty in the industry.

Another study by Yu et al (2018) examined the influence of social marketing campaigns that promote health-conscious products and environmental sustainability on customer repeat purchase behaviour in the food and beverage industry. Some big corporations, such as Megniu Dairy and Yili Group were the main focus as they implemented social marketing strategies by promoting healthier food choices and sustainable agricultural practices. They found that customers who are aware of the initiatives tend to repeat purchases, as they felt that their decisions align with their personal values regarding health

and sustainability. The study concluded that social marketing can be effective strategy to encourage repeat purchase in the food and beverage industry, as it leads to loyalty and brand alignment among consumers.

Therefore, the study of Nwankwo and Okeke (2020) in Nigeria and Yu et al (2018) in China indicated that sustainable marketing promotes sustainability, which led to high level of customer retention and repeat purchases. Based on the claims, the study proposed the following hypothesis:

Ho₁: sustainability marketing does not relate with user satisfaction such as repeat purchase and customer retention.

Social Marketing and Customer Retention

The importance of balancing profitability with environmental and social responsibilities has made social marketing gain prominence in the food and beverage firms. Olayinka and Aminu (2020) affirmed that sustainable and social marketing practices, such as eco-labelling, recycling campaigns and the use of biodegradable packaging have been revealed to enhance customer retention by creating positive brand image.

When the efforts of the firm align with their values, consumers are more likely to remain loyal to brands that shows commitment to social and sustainability. Customer experience, product quality and pricing are some of the factors that affect customer retention in food and beverage industry. Eco-conscious consumers enhance retention of customers in firms that incorporate social and sustainability marketing into their

core business practices and also assist in attracting new customers.

Adeoye and Olawale (2019) conducted a study on the impact of digital marketing on consumer engagement in Nigeria. They focussed on how food and beverage in Nigeria leveraged on digital platforms to enhance their social and sustainable marketing strategies. They examined 150 marketing campaigns from 50 Nigerian food and beverage companies, including Coca-Cola Nigeria and UAC Foods. They conducted online surveys on 400 consumers, and they found that 75% of the respondents preferred brands that actively promoted sustainability through digital platforms. They also found that sustainability, pricing and customers' experiences are some of the factor's customers consider before they can be retained.

The findings underscore the significance of successful sustainability as a relationship enhancer and highlight customer devotion to companies via digital platforms.

Ho₂: social marketing does not relate with user satisfaction such as repeat purchase and customer retention.

Methodology

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design. It is appropriate because it helps the researcher to collect unbiased data from the targets respondents and to examined the relationship between the variables. Food and beverage firms' customers in Nigeria constitute the population of this study. The study uses infinite population, a sample size 410 was used for the study according to Krejcie and Morgan determining table of 1970 as cited in Joel (2017) was adopted and the table is one of the easier ways to estimating the right sample size from the population. 200 questionnaires were returned and valid.

All the items used in the questionnaire were measured using a 5point Likert-type scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Disagree (1) Reliability was measured using the Cronbach's Alpha at an average level of 0.7%. The reliability coefficient of the instrument for each sub-variable of the study is presented in table below

Table 1: Reliability Coefficient of the Research Instrument

Variables	Number of items	Alpha Value	Comments Above 0.7
Sustainable Marketing	5	0.707	Reliable
Social Marketing	5	0.710	Reliable
Repeat Purchase	5	0.782	Reliable
Customer Retention	5	0.705	Reliable

Source: SPSS output 2024

Demographic Table

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age	18-25	60	30.0
	26-35	40	20.0
	36-45	44	22.0
	46+	56	28.0
Sex	Male	118	59.0
	Female	82	41.0
Educational qualification	Primary	40	20.0
	Secondary	54	27.0
	Tertiary	106	53.0
Income level	1,000-10,000	34	17.0
	11,000-20,000	40	20.0
	21,000-30,000	40	20.0
	31,000+	86	43.0

Source: SPSS output 2024

The above table shows the age bracket, sex, educational qualifications and income level that filled the instrument. (30.0%) were age 18-25, (20.0%) were 26-35, (22.0%) were 36-45 and (28.0%) were 46 and above. Age 18-25 (30.0%) has the highest number of respondents that filled the instrument. The table showed that male 118(59.0%) has the highest number of frequencies of the respondent and

female 82(41.0%) has the lowest number of frequencies of the respondent. Educational qualifications, primary 40(20.0%), secondary 54(27.0%) and tertiary 106(53.0%) has the highest number of frequencies respondent that filled the instrument. Income level 1,000-10,000(17.0%), 11,000-20,000(20.0%), 21,000-30,000(20.0%) and 31,000+ (43.0%).

Correlations table between sustainable marketing and measures of user satisfaction

		Sustainable Marketing	Repeat Purchase	Customer Retention
Sustainable Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.752**	.668**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	200	200	200
Repeat Purchase	Pearson Correlation	.752**	1	.884**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	200	2	200
Customer Retention	Pearson Correlation	.668**	.884**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	200	200	200

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

Source: SPSS output 2024

The table shows the result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the association between sustainable marketing and measures of user satisfaction (repeat purchase and customer retention) of food and beverage firms in Nigeria. The result shows a strong relationship exist

between sustainable marketing and measures of user satisfaction (repeat purchase and customer retention) of food and beverage firms in Nigeria at 0.752** and 0.668** p-value = 0.000 indicating a strong relationship which is significant at 0.01 level as indicated in the table. This imply that an

increase in sustainable marketing with effective strategies will result to an increase in repeat purchase and customer retention.

Correlations table between social marketing and measures of user satisfaction

		Sustainable Marketing	Repeat Purchase	Customer Retention
Social Marketing	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 200	.734** .000 200	.650** .000 200
Repeat Purchase	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-) N	.734** .000 200	1 2	.784** .000 200
Customer Retention	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.650** .000 200	.784** .000 200	1 200

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

Source: SPSS output 2024

The table shows the result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the association between social marketing and measures of user satisfaction (repeat purchase and customer retention) of food and beverage firms in Nigeria. The result shows that strong relationship exist between social marketing and measures of user satisfaction (repeat purchase and customer retention) of food and beverage firms in Nigeria at 0.734** and 0.650** p-value = 0.000 indicating a strong relationship which is significant at 0.01 level as indicated in the table. This imply that an increase in social marketing with effective strategies will result to an increase in repeat purchase and customer retention.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the result showed that there is a significant relationship emerged eco-conscious marketing and user satisfaction of food and beverage firms in Nigeria. This means that if food and beverage firms adopt fully eco-conscious marketing, it would to a

greater extent enhance user satisfaction, repeat purchases and customer retention. Customers are likely to continue patronizing the firms that continuously meet their expectations. Customers would be willing to repeat purchase if they are satisfied with the firm product and efforts made by the firm about green production are effectively communicated to them.

However, it is confirmed that firms that environmentally friendly practice in their operations satisfy their environmentally conscious consumers. In meeting the demands of increasing environmentally conscious world market, eco-conscious marketing still remain an important component of food and beverage firms to remain competitive since consumer preferences and taste continue to advance.

Recommendation

1. In order to achieve environmental objectives and profit related goals

- Firms should be environmentally responsive.
2. Environmental concerns should incorporate by board of directors in their decision making.
3. Policies and institutions that will regulate and control effective environmental management should be establish by government across the world.
4. Sensitization and dispensation of information to citizens on how to be responsive to the environment should be increased.
5. Firms that are violating environmental issues should be sanction to ensure compliance.
6. Tax relief or subsidy to encourage effective participation of firms on environmental issues and maximization of resources should be provided the government.

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