RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF FIRST BANK NIGERIA PLC IN MAKURDI METROPOLIS OF BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

[1]Dimgba Orjiugo Dorcas; [2]Hanmaikyur Tyoapine John and [3]Onugwu Izunna ThankGod

[1,2,3]Department of Marketing, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi-Nigeria

Abstract

While bank services are becoming more widely available in Nigeria, the high rate of failure indicates that ineffective customer relationships are still prevalent. Such a disparity means that there is still a lot to think about how to build close customer relationships using the right relationship techniques. Consequently, this study examined the effect of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction of First Bank Nigeria Pic in Makurdi metropolis. The specific objectives were; to; assess the effect of organizational commitment and determine the effect of organizational bonding; on customer satisfaction of First Bank pic Makurdi. The study adopted survey research approach, using questionnaire for data generation. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. Findings of the study indicated that organizational commitment had significant/ positive effect on customer satisfaction and organizational bonding had significant/ positive effect on customer satisfaction. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that relationship marketing (organizational commitment and organizational bonding and organizational communication) can be considered an essential and viable strategy in satisfying customers in First bank (in terms of service quality, customer retention, customer loyalty, repeat service and service charge) as they have potentials for enhancing the customers satisfaction of the bank through creating an atmosphere that makes the bank to have competitive advantage over their competitors by being able to adjust their business process to customer needs. The study recommended amongst others that Management of deposit money banks, and First bank pic Makurdi in particular, should emphasize a more customer commitment focused structure that projects organizational commitment, as it will enhance service quality and thus customer satisfaction

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The turbulence circumstances surrounding businesses globally, has adversely affected their smooth operations especially the deposit money banks which serve as treasury hand bag for the society. Contemporary financial service industry has become highly dynamic and turbulent, with many changes in form of new regulations, changed consumer behavior, increased usage of information and communication technology and intense competition. Banks have to invest great efforts to create added value and one way to do that is to generate and support the development of long-term customer relationships that provide greater value than the value provided by the banking product itself. Globally, businesses are focusing on customer satisfaction in order to improve products and services

and enhance customer loyalty and retention in the face of increasing competition. This continued focus is motivated by the fact that enhanced customer satisfaction increases retention and loyalty, repeat patronage, competitive advantage, market share and profits as well as improved organizational performance (Eden *et al.,* 2019; Omeje and Olise, 2022; Simeone and Hamilton-Ibama, 2022; Augustine *et al.,* 2023).

The banking sector is a subsector of the nation's financial system that has a commercial goal to pursue. It has its foundation pillared on sustainable customer satisfaction. The customers are the heart and soul of successful business concern that is rooting for profitability, sustainability and survival (Audu, 2022). To win, retain, sustain and maintain customers require business managers to build an enduring relationship with them. Business Managers need to develop a mechanisms that will consistently enable them know their customers and what is valuable to them and how best to serve them delightfully. Customer complaints must be resolved timely and satisfactorily at all times. The banking industry in Nigeria is an important sector in the business world which has a growing impact on all other sectors of the economy because of its financial services provisions (Gololo, 2018). In this volatile situation, financial institutions were not left out as they are seriously affected by the level of competition both locally and internationally. There is the need to develop effective technique to enhance the interaction of customers and the bank staff. The complexity in the banking industry has made bank managers to focus on how to create close affiliation with their customers. The Nigerian banking sector for instance, has gone through a challenging time in the last two decades (Ailemen, 2019). The banking restructuring at various times and different policies of government had brought about increased competition into the banking environment.

Relationship marketing acknowledges that a stable customer base is a core business asset (Bolton *et al.,* 2008). Following the successful banking sector consolidation exercise in December 2005, there has been fierce rivalry among the emerging banks, necessitating and requiring these banks' managers to pursue more stringent relationship marketing with their customers. The recapitalization exercise has strengthened all competitive banks and placed them on a near-identical template in the industry, resulting in fierce and cutthroat competition (Omoniyi *et al.,* 2020). Aside from the issue of competition, the costs of servicing customers by banks in Nigeria are extremely high due to infrastructure deterioration, forcing banks and other businesses in the country to invest heavily in infrastructure (electricity, boreholes, roads, and so on). This also necessitates banks cultivating advantageous partnerships with their current customers in order to maintain a large number of customers and spread the costs among them, lowering operating costs. Consequently, this study seeks to examine the effect of relationship banking on customer satisfaction of First Bank Nigeria pic in Makurdi metropolis of Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

With some knowledge acquired in the use of customer relationship marketing by banks (especially, First Bank PLC) to satisfy customers, it is still not clear to what extent these banks have used this strategic management tool to meet with the expectations of customers. This is occasioned by the stiff competition among banks in attracting the customers of one another and is still introducing innovative banking technologies to satisfy customer interests. Observations are that with the availability of customer relationship marketing centers and services staff in the bank, yet there are inconsistencies in patronage by their customers, thereby affecting the banks aim in being able to retain and attract customers.

While bank services are becoming more widely available in Nigeria, the high rate of failure indicates that ineffective customer relationships are still prevalent. Such a disparity means that there is still a lot to think about how to build close customer relationships using the right relationship techniques. This problem of lack of good customer relationship calls for great attention and remedy. It is on this basis that the study is carried out to understand the effect of relationship marketing variable such as organizational communication and bonding on customers' satisfaction in banks with our focus on First Bank Branches in Makurdi.

Objective of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction in First Bank pic Makurdi. The specific objectives are to;

i.   Assess the effect of organizational commitment on customer satisfaction of First Bank plc. Makurdi.

ii. Determine the effect of organizational bonding on customer satisfaction of First Bank plc. Makurdi.

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses shall be tested in this study

Ho$_1$:   Organizational commitment has no significant effect on customer satisfaction of First Bank plc. Makurdi.

Ho$_2$:   Organizational bonding has no significant effect on customer satisfaction of First Bank plc. Makurdi.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Concept of Relationship Marketing

The term relationship marketing was popularized in the 1980s when the focus of marketers started to switch from customer acquisition to customer retention (Gronroos, 2004). According to Morgan and Hunt (2014), relationship marketing is defined as all the marketing activities that are designed to establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational relationship with customers. Braimah and Ihionkhan (2017) also defined relationship marketing as company behaviour with the purpose of establishing, maintaining and developing competitive and profitable customer relationship to the benefit of both parties. Akakabota (2016) suggested that different levels of relationship duration would result in different levels of consumption experience, producing different results, satisfaction and loyalty with different relationship marketing tactics. Compared with traditional marketing, relationship marketing is more concerned about building customer relationships in order to achieve long-term mutual benefits for all parties involved in the exchanges.

Relationship marketing essentially means developing customers as partners, where the approach is different from traditional transaction (Adiele and Gabriel, 2018). Another view of relationship marketing is that it deals with the analysis, planning, realization and control of measures that initiate, stabilize, intensify and reactivate business relationships with the corporation's stakeholders (mainly customers) and the creation of mutual value (Ayo-Oyebiyi *et* al, 2019). In other words, RM is about mutually beneficial relationships between customers and service providers. In the exchange process, its economic nature is

manifested in goods, services, delivery systems, financial solutions, material administration and the transfer of information (Gilbert and Choi, 2013). Relationship marketing is cross-functional and is organized around processes that involve all aspects of an organization. Relationship marketing is a strategy designed to promote customer loyalty, interaction and long-term engagement with customers by providing them with information directly suited to their needs and interests and by promoting open communication. Morgan and Hunt (2014) described relationship marketing as all the marketing activities that are designed to establishing, developing and maintaining successful relational relationship with customers. Saka and Elegunde (2014) also defined relationship marketing as company behaviour with the purpose of establishing, maintaining and developing competitive and profitable customer relationship to the benefit of both parties. Relationship Marketing is a form of marketing that evolved from direct response marketing; it places emphasis on building longer-term relationships with customers rather than on individual transactions.

Dimension of Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing involves interactions, relationships and networks as the three central pillars of this marketing perspective (Ndidi and Ibrahim, 2020). This study utilized commitment and bond as dimensions of Relationship Marketing; amongst others due to their germane nature to the banking sector.

i.   Organizational Commitment

Commitment can be described along four dimensions: (i) loyalty, (ii) willingness to make short-term sacrifices, (iii) long-term orientation, (iv) willingness to invest in the relationship (Gundlach *et al*, 2015). Liu Yu (2008 as cited in Omoniyi *et al*, 2020) defined commitment as the desire to continue a relationship along with the willingness to work towards that continuance, and the expectation that the relationship will continue. Relationship commitment is a key aspect in building and maintaining business relationships (Morgan and Hunt, 2004). If a firm committed to a relationship with its customers, the customers are also likely to be committed to maintaining the relationship with that organization, thereby becoming loyal to it.

While commitment in marketing literature is defined as an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship, this implies a higher level of obligation to make a relationship succeed and to make it mutually satisfying and beneficial (Morgan and Hunt, 2014). It also means keeping in touch with valued customers, providing timely and trustworthy information on service and service changes, and communicating proactively if a delivery problem occurs. In relationship marketing literature, commitment has widely been acknowledged to be an integral part of any long-term business relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 2014). In most cases it is described as a kind of lasting intention to build and maintain a long-term relationship (Dwyer *et al.,* 2017; Moorman *et al.,* 2014).

ii.   Organizational Bonding

Bonding is a feature of a business partnership in which two parties (the customer and the supplier) cooperate to attain a common goal. A buyer and seller's dyadic connection might be described as a complex, time-consuming bonding operation. The primary dynamics of a seller's need to find a buyer for their goods and a buyer's need to buy a product that will suit their wants kick off the bonding phase (Mazikana, 2019). According to Akintunde and Akaighe (2016), there are two types of bonding: social bonding and structural bonding. Social bonding includes social engagement, connection, and friendship, as well as personal satisfaction.

Concept of Customer Satisfaction

Satisfaction is the customer assessment of a product or service, depending on whether that product or service has met the needs and demands of customers or not. Failure in satisfying the needs and expectations of customers leads to feelings of dissatisfaction with the subjective evaluation. Hamilton-lbama and Ogunu (2021) stated that customer satisfaction is the main concern of business sectors of today. Customer satisfaction provides many advantages for companies. Higher levels of customer satisfaction lead to more loyalty. Customer satisfaction is defined as a customer's overall evaluation of the performance of an offering to date (Johnson and Fornell 1997 as cited in Hamilton-lbama and Ogunu, 2021). Customer satisfaction is regarded as a primary determining factor of repeat shopping and purchasing behavior (Wong and Sohal, 2013 as cited in Hamilton-lbama and Ogunu, 2021). Research into the role of customer satisfaction has generally focused on expectations, perceived performance, and satisfaction as modeled within a confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm (Krampf *et al.,* 2013 as cited in Hamilton-lbama and Ogunu, 2021).

Based on banking sector perspective, Customer satisfaction with bank's product is the essential determinants of retention and it leads to a successful relationship and a long-term competitiveness (Okonkwo *et* al, 2019). Carol *et al.* (2015 as cited in Okonkwo *et* al, 2019) noted that psychological and personal customer's expectations are main factors of customer satisfaction and must be met. While Ojiaku *et al.,* (2017) argued that employee's behaviour and physical characteristics influence the personal satisfaction. Banks lose or win based on numbers of their customers they can keep and the best way to do that is by reaching their satisfaction (Okonkwo *et al.,* 2019). Customer satisfaction is one of the commonest problems to managers, which comes from many reasons and a key issue of improving the performance of the market. Omoniyi *et al.* (2020) indicated that good service quality and effective service delivery and products leads to customer satisfaction and profitability. The new marketing philosophies and studies are all about how to reach customer satisfaction because the customers now are the basic or come at the top of the modern Customer-Oriented Organization. The dimensions of this study are customer satisfaction and the elements are the overall satisfaction of customers.

Measures of Customer Satisfaction

Reichheld and Detrick (2016) found a distinct link between customer satisfaction, loyalty and customer retention. Dimitriades (2006) reported that concentrating efforts on customer satisfaction for the purpose of obtaining customers' loyalty is a major part of the customer relationship marketing strategy of financial service firms. There are many factors that can be used to measure customer satisfaction in an organization. Therefore, for the purpose of this study Customer Retention and Customer Loyalty formed the measures of Customer Satisfaction.

i. Customer Retention

Hamilton-lbama and Ihunwo (2022) defined Customer Retention as the activity that a selling organization undertakes in order to reduce customer defections. Successful customer retention starts with the first contact an organization has with a customer and continues throughout the entire lifetime of a relationship. Reicheld and Detrick (2016) is of the view that customer retention is the activity that a selling organization undertakes in order to reduce customer switching behaviour. Successful customer retention starts with the first contact an organization has with a customer and continues throughout the entire lifetime of a relationship. He argued that company's ability to attract and retain new

customers is not only related to its products or services, but strongly related to the way it services its existing customers and the reputation it creates within and across the marketplace (Iwalewa, 2022). Customer retention is more than giving the customer what they expect; it's about exceeding their expectations so that they can become loyal advocate for your brand. Creating customer loyalty puts customer value rather than maximizing profit and shareholders' value at the centre of business strategy.

ii. Customer Loyalty

Customers are the driving force for profitable growth and customer loyalty can lead to profitability (Agbo, 2018). For a customer, loyalty is a positive attitude and behaviour related to the level of re-purchasing commitment to a brand in the future (Ailemen, 2019). Loyal customers are less likely to switch to a competitor solely because of price and they even make more purchases than non-loyal customers (Bowen and Shoemaker, 2013 as cited in Ailemen, 2019). Loyal customers are also considered to be the most important assets of a company and it is thus essential for vendors to keep loyal customers who will contribute long-term profit to the business organizations (Tseng, 2017). Attempt to make existing customers increase their purchases is one way to strengthen the financial growth of a company (Ogbechi *et* al, 2018). Furthermore, organization's financial growth is dependent on a company's ability to retain existing customers at a faster rate than it acquires new ones. Managers should understand that the road to growth runs through customers-not only attracting new customers, but also holding on existing customers, motivating them to spend more and getting them to recommend products and services to the other people.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Commitment-Trust theory of Relationship Marketing.

Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing

This theory of relationship marketing was posited by Morgan and Hunt in (1994), they noted that commitment and trust are vital for any successful relationship. They further posited that relationship marketing involves creating a unique tie with your customers by ensuring their needs are met, honoring commitments other than focusing on short term profits. Thus, in ensuring customers' loyalty is achieved, there would be repeated patronage and referrals which would beef-up the profits of the company. Product innovation has the potential of opening new markets if a particular brand has proven to be of high quality. When customers retain the new innovated products, it has the potential to protect the firm from market threats and competitors (Edeh *et* al, 2019).Commitment-trust theory concepts can be utilized to describe and develop relationship marketing paradigms when studying relationship marketing. Relationship marketing refers to a diverse set of 'relationship factors' that have emerged over the last few decades in product and service marketplaces, as well as consumer and business-to-business sectors. According to Peppers and Rogers (2016), traditional marketing has been focused on acquiring new customers. The 'offensive marketing' technique entails obtaining entirely new clients and seeking to entice dissatisfied customers away from competitors, especially during times of high competition.

The theory's principal focus highlights the importance of client retention while acknowledging that acquiring clients is, of course, the foundation for having any customers to keep. Furthermore, the idea holds that a corporation can only succeed in the business world if it restricts the flow of old consumers as well as the flow of new customers. According to Peppers and Rogers (2016), the theory views relationship marketing as a defensive strategy with two essential techniques. The first is client acquisition, which is a

continuing requirement in a business for 'new consumers.' According to Egan (2011), there is a constant demand in company for new customers. As a result, any decrease in the overall number of consumers has repercussions for the marketer's profitability, particularly in service industries where fixed costs (people) are an essential component of the service mix and the highest. Moreover, in the past, firms focused on the customer acquisition process since market expansion provided a steady supply of new prospects.

However, there is always the risk of substitutes or new competitors entering the market and diverting the flow. As a result, the general trend is that customer acquisition will get more difficult. Second, one of the primary convictions of relationship marketing is customer happiness, which focuses on keeping existing customers happy and satisfied. One of the underlying convictions of RM is that it advocates retention marketing first and acquisition marketing second (Agbo, 2018). The modern business environment necessitates a shift from transaction marketing, which involves the exchange of values between two or more parties, to relationship marketing, which involves developing a long-term satisfying relationship between the parties involved in a transaction (e.g., customers, employees, suppliers, distributors, and so on).

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Augustine *et al.* (2023) examined the impact of customer relationship marketing on customer retention. This study focused on the banking industry in Asaba, but specifically on GTB. Findings revealed that promise, fulfillment, trust and bonding have an impact on customer retention. Garba (2022) investigated the effect of relationship marketing practice on customer satisfaction in selected Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) in Zaria-Nigeria. The findings revealed that relationship marketing had a direct and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Simon and Hamilton-lbama (2022) study examined the relationship between Relationship Marketing and Customer Satisfaction of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The findings revealed that there is a relationship between Relationship Marketing and Customer Satisfaction of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Omeje and Olise (2022) examined the mediating effect of customer satisfaction on relationship marketing and customer loyalty among commercial bank customers in Awka, Anambra state, relationship marketing dimensions used in this study (trust, commitment, communication and conflict handling) has significant influence on customer loyalty. Audu (2022) investigated the effects of Bank-customer relations practices on customer's satisfaction in selected banks in Kogi State. It was found that there is a significant positive effect of bank customer relations management practices and customers' satisfaction. Omoniyi *et al.* (2020) in his study examined the impact of relationship marketing as a sustainable tool for enhancing customer satisfaction, using customers of GTBank PLC branches in llorin, Nigeria as the study area. The results of the hypotheses tested showed that commitment in relationship marketing have significant effect on customer satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the survey research design. The relevant data were gathered in order to establish the effects of the independent on the dependent variables. The study population comprised of all customers of First Bank in Makurdi Metropolis, Nigeria. First Bank was selected because it is well known as one of the leading banks in Nigeria and Africa, which sums up to 57774.

However, since this population is finite given the volume of transactions on a daily and monthly basis in each of the branches, the sample size of using Taro Yamane formula ∴ The sample size for this study is 397

The data for this study was collected through questionnaire administration. To ensure the research instrument (questionnaire) measures what it is intended to measure, the instrument was validated by professional experts in the field of management for face and content validity, as well as the head of operations of the banks. Pilot test (test retest method) was carried out whereby 30 copies of the questionnaire were administered in the first instance, two weeks after; another 30 copies of the questionnaire were administered to customers of one deposit money bank. The reliability of the instrument was conducted by means of Crombach Alpha test statistic; which yielded 0.798.

In this study, customer satisfaction is a function of relationship marketing. In view of this, the implicit form of the regression model is specified thus: CS = ƒ(RM) ....(2)

The model for this research is given as

CS　　=　　ƒ (RM) = (OC, OB)... (3)

Where
CS = Customer Satisfaction
RM = Relationship Marketing
OC = Organizational Commitment
OB = Organizational Bonding
The regression model, thus is given as CS = x + β_1 OC + β_2 OB + e .... (4)

Where
X = Intercept of the regression
β1 - β2 = Parameter estimates
e = error term

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Data Presentation

A total of three hundred and ninety seven (397) questionnaires were distributed to respondents in the selected deposit money banks chosen for this study, out of which three hundred and ninety seven (397) were successfully filled and returned.

Regression Analysis

The model used to test the hypotheses designed for this study, explores the effect of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction of First Bank pic in Makurdi-Benue State.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adj.R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Durbin Watson
1	.886[a]	.785	.780	0.910	2.01

a: Predictors (constant), Organizational Commitment and Organizational Bonding.
b. Dependent variable: Customer Satisfaction
Source: SPSS printout (Version 25.0 for windows output), 2023.

Table 2: Regression Coefficient Result

Model	Beta	T	Sig
1 (Constant)	1.099	11.56	.000
Commitment	.798	4.64	.014
Bonding.	.842	5.12	.001

Dependent variable: Customer Satisfaction
Source: SPSS regression print out (version 25.0 for windows output), 2023

Table 3: ANOVA[b] for the overall significance of the model

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	117.064	2	58.532	19.38	.001[s]
Residual Total	216.855	395	0.549		
	333.919	397			

a. Predictors: (constant); OC, OB Dependent variable: CS

Regression Model Explained

In the model, organizational commitment and organizational bonding were used to predict the customers' satisfaction. The F-statistics of regression model showed that the result is significant, as indicated by a value of the F-statistic, 19.38 and it is significant at the 5.0 percent level.

The coefficient of determination (R-square), indicates that the model is reasonably fit in prediction, that is, 78.5 % change in customers satisfaction was jointly due to organizational commitment and organizational bonding, while 21.5 % unaccounted variations was captured by the white noise error term. It showed that organizational commitment and organizational bonding had significant effect on customers' satisfaction of First bank pic in Makurdi metropolis.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Examine the effect of organizational commitment on customer satisfaction of First bank pic Makurdi metropolis

The analysis of research question one was to examine the effect of organizational commitment on customer satisfaction of First bank pic Makurdi metropolis. From Table 1, the (R2) statistic was 0 .785. Taking into the record the contribution of the explanatory variable in customer satisfaction, from Table 2, the beta value for organizational commitment was 0.798. The beta value apparently indicated that the predictor variable of organizational commitment had a positive effect on customer satisfaction (t-computed 4.64 > t-critical 1.960, p=0.014 < .05). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings of this investigation also agree with Simon and Hamilton-lbama (2022), Omeje and Olise (2022), Garba (2022), amongst others; who all avers that when organizations interact with their key customers, they achieve deep relationship and commitment. They further argue that stronger relationship commitment reoffered to buyers' repeat patronage and this determines the strength of marketing relationship and becomes a useful construct for measuring the likelihood of customer loyalty and predicting future purchase frequency. Therefore this study concludes that there is a positive/significant effect of organizational commitment on customer satisfaction in First bank pic Makurdi.

Access the effect of organizational bonding on customer satisfaction of First bank pic Makurdi metropolis

The analysis of research question four was to access the effect of organizational bonding on customer satisfaction of First bank pic Makurdi metropolis. From Table 1, the (R2) statistic was 0 .785. Taking into the record the contribution of the explanatory variable in customer satisfaction, from Table 2, the beta value for organizational bonding is 0.842. The beta value apparently indicated that the predictor variable of organizational bonding had a positive effect on customer satisfaction (t-computed 5.12 > t-critical 1.960, p=0.001 < .05). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings of this investigation also agree with Augustine et al. (2023), Audu (2022), Omoniyi et al. (2020) amongst others; who all avers that bonding have proven to be an effective way to regulate social and corporate behavior in organizations, as well as to remove doubt, build trust, and develop strong connections. They further argue that establishment and enhancement of consumer and brand loyalty, as well as, a long-term relationship (a bonded relationship) with the seller, are all aspects of bonding as it relates to relationship. Therefore this study concludes that there is a positive/significant effect of organizational bonding on customer satisfaction of First bank pic in Makurdi metropolis.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that relationship marketing (organizational commitment and organizational bonding and organizational communication) can be considered an essential and viable strategy in satisfying customers in First bank (in terms of service quality, customer retention, customer loyalty, repeat service and service charge) as they have potentials for enhancing the customers satisfaction of the bank through creating an atmosphere that makes the bank to have competitive advantage over their competitors by being able to adjust their business process to customer needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sequel to the findings and conclusions above, the following recommendations are made:

i. Management of deposit money banks, and First bank pic Makurdi in particular, should emphasize a more customer commitment focused structure that projects organizational commitment, as it will enhance service quality and thus customer satisfaction,

ii. Deposit money banks, and First bank pic Makurdi in particular, should improve their engagement and connection with their customers as it will enhance and improve customer loyalty.

References

Adiele, K. C. and Gabriel, J. M. O. (2018). Customer relationship management and bank performance in Nigeria. An empirical validation study. *International Journal of Science and Research,* 2(1), 416-422

Agbo, M. U. (2018). Effect of customer relation management on performance of deposit money banks in Umuhia, Abia State. A study of First bank Pic and Guarantee Trust Bank Pic Umuhia, Abia State-Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research,* 2(10); 1-7.

Ailemen, O. (2019). Relationship Marketing and Deposit Mobilization in Five Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria. In *Academy of Strategic Management Journal,* 18 (6), 1939-6104.,

Akakabota, E. E. (2016). The effectiveness of banks/customer relationship in banks performance. *European Journal of Business and Management,* 8(31), 11-20

Akintunde, O. A. and Akaighe, O. G. (2016). Customer relationship management and customer retention in Nigeria banking industry. A strategic stand point. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness,* 10(2); 81-90

Audu, Y. P. (2022). Bank customer relation and customer satisfaction in deposit money banks in Kogi State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Democratic and Development Studies,* 5(3), 30-44

Augustine, M. O., Bayai, I. S. and Ikiere, R. E. (2023). The impact of customer relationship marketing on customer retention (a case study of GTB of Nigeria pic). *Journal of Management, Marketing and Accounting Innovations* 8(2), 65-73.

Ayo-Oyebiyi, G. T. Ladokun, I. O. and Taiwo, D. J. (2019). Customer or relationship management dimension and Nigerian Banks' performance: Evidence from Zenith Bank Pic. *South Asian Journal of Social Studies and Economics,* 3(2); 1-8.

Bolton, R. N., Lemon, K. N. and Verhoef, P. C. (2008). Expanding business-to-business customer relationships: Modeling the customer's upgrade decision. *Journal of Marketing,* 72(1), 46-64.

Braimah, Q. A. and Ihionkhan, C. E. (2017). Customer relationship management panacea for sustaining customer service satisfaction in modern banking industry in Nigeria. *Journal of Education Policy and Entrepreneurial Research,* 4(6), 45-61.

Dimitriades, Z. S. (2006). Customer satisfaction, loyalty and commitment in service organizations: Some evidence from Greece. *Management Research News,* 29(12), 782-800.

Dwyer, F. R., Schurr, P. H. and Oh, S. (2017). Developing buyer-seller relationships. *The Journal of marketing,* 3(5), 11-27.

Edeh, O. F., Ugboego, C. A. and Chibuike, O. N. (2019). Effect of customer relationship management on organizational resilience of deposit money banks in Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Sciences,* 6(2), 272-2884

Gilbert, D. C. and Choi, K.C. (2013). Relationship marketing practice in relation to different bank ownerships: A study of banks in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Bank Marketing,* 21(3), 137-146.

Gololo, I. A. (2018).Challenges of the Nigerian Banking Sector and the Way Forward. *American Finance and Banking Review,* 3(1), 12-22

Gronroos, C. (2004). Creating a relationship dialogue: communication, interaction and value. *The Marketing Review,* 7(1), 5-14.

Gundlach, G. T., Achrol, R. S. and Mentzer, J. T. (2015). The structure of commitment in exchange. *The Journal of Marketing,* 78-92.

Hamilton-lbama, E. L. and Ihunwo, E. (2022). Service quality and customer retention in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. *American Journal of Economics and Business Management (AJEBM), 5(2),* 27-41.

Hamilton-lbama, E. L. and Ogonu, C. G. (2022). Customer perceived value and customer satisfaction of hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. *South Asian Journal of Marketing & Management Research (SAJMMR),* 72(1-2), 75-93.

Hamilton-lbama, E. L. and Ogunu, C. G. (2021). Customer integration and organizational success of multinational firms in Rivers State. *HARD International Journal of Economics and Business Management,* 7(3), 42-55.

Iwalewa, I. P. (2022). Effect of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction in Access bank plc. Ibadan. Thesis project, University of Ibadan.

Mazikana, A. T. (2019).The Effectiveness of Relationship Marketing Strategies in Driving a Competitive Advantage. A Case of the Zimbabwean Banking Sector. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3487586

Moorman, C., Deshpande, R. and Zaltman, G. (2014). Factors affecting trust in market research relationships. *The Journal of Marketing,* 2(3), 81-101.

Morgan, R. M. and Hunt, S. D. (2014). The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. *The Journal of Marketing,* 3(5), 20-38.

Ndidi, M. I., and Ibrahim, A. U. (2020). Impact of Customer Relationship Marketing On the Performance of Commercial Banks in Nigeria. In *Www.ijbmm.com International Journal of Business Marketing and Management* (Vol. 5, pp. 2456-4559).www.ijbmm.com

Ogbechi, A. D., Okafor, L. I., and Orukotan, C. L. (2018). Effect of relationship marketing on customer loyalty and retention in the money deposit bank industry. *African Research Review,* 12(2), 1-12.

Ojiaku, O., Agbara, V. and Ezeoke, I. (2017).Effect of Relationship Marketing Programs on customer loyalty. *International Journal of Business and Management Review 5(5):58-71.*

Okonkwo, C. D., and Ugwuonah, G. (2019).Improving Bank Customers' Satisfaction through Relationship Marketing Practices. *International Journal of Marketing Research Innovation,* 3(1), 21-34.

Omeje N L). and Olise M.C. (2022). Mediating Effect of Customer Satisfaction On Relationship Marketing and Customer Loyalty Among Commercial Banks Customers in Awka, Anambra State, *British Journal of Marketing Studies,* 10 (5),28-40,

Omoniyi, E., Abimbola, E., and Asola, K. (2020). Relationship Marketing: A Sustainable Tool for Customer Satisfaction in the Nigerian Banking Industry. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa,* 22(1).56-68

Peppers, D., and Rogers, M. (2016). Managing Customer Experience and Relationships: A Strategic Framework *.John Wiley & Sons, New Jersey.*

Reichheld, F. and Detrick, C. (2016). Loyalty: A prescription for cutting costs. *Marketing Management,* 72(5), 24-25.

Saka, R. O., and Elegunde. A. F. (2014). Effects of Customer Relationship Marketing on Bank Performance in Nigeria: An Empirical Approach. *European Journal of Business and Management, 6(17), 20-34*

Simeon, B. and Hamilton-lbama, E. L. (2022). Relationship marketing and customer satisfaction of deposit money banks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. *RIK International Journal of Business and Management,* 6(1), 58-78

Tseng, Y. M. (2007). How can marketing tactics build behavioural loyalty? The Business Review, Summer, 3(2), 298-302. Cambridge Hollywood