

## **ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING CAPABILITIES AND CUSTOMER RETENTION OF SUPERMARKET OUTLETS IN PORT HARCOURT - RIVERS STATE OF NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study investigated the relationship between Entrepreneurial Marketing Capabilities and Customer Retention of Supermarket Outlets in Port Harcourt, Rivers State of Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive research survey. The population of the study comprised of twenty-eight (28) supermarket outlets gotten from Nigeria Business Directory. The unit population consisted of one hundred and twelve (112) staff. In line with the population of the study which is twenty-eight (28), the study adopted a census approach and studied the entire 28 supermarket outlets with a focus on the staff. The Structured questionnaire was employed as data collection instrument. The questionnaire was structured using the 5 point Likert scale. The Spearman's (rho) correlation was used to analyze the relationship between independent and dependent variables at  $P > 0.01$  (two-tailed test). The results of the analysis were interpreted and findings of the study revealed that the various dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing capabilities showed a strong positive relationship with customer retention of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt. The study concluded that supermarket outlets should continuously explore entrepreneurial opportunities because their resources can only enable them to temporarily sustain competitive advantage, create value, take proactive steps and make ground breaking innovations. The study recommended that; entrepreneurial managers should always create avenues for innovations as it drives manufacturing activities and it enables a firm to compete favourably in its industry and improves sales growth and that entrepreneurial managers should always learn to innovate and create a source of customer value that would enhance unique combinations of resources to provide value to customers.*

**Keywords:** *Capabilities, Competitive advantage, Customer Retention and Entrepreneurship.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Retaining customers is a panacea for organizational growth. Product oriented firm depends on customers for its survival. Customer retention is the ability of the firm to keep customer for another purchase. Blattberg et al. (2001) stated that customer retention takes place when a customer keeps on buying the same market offering over a long period of time. For products with short purchase cycles, they define customer retention as occurring when 'the customer continues to purchase the product or service over a specified time period'. For products with long purchase cycles, they define customer retention as taking place when the customer indicates the intention to purchase the product or service at the next purchase occasion. Payne (2000) defines customer retention rate as the percentage of customers at the beginning of the period who still remain customers at the end of the period. Payne warns, however, that other more complex definitions might be more appropriate in instances where customers make use of more than one business simultaneously.

Customer retention has a direct impact on long term customer lifetime value, which is a more profitable avenue for firms that seek to pursue growth and sustainability or those that seek to protect themselves from market shrinkage resulting from a contracting economy (Gee et al., 2008). Supporting this argument, Lombard (2009) notes that today the pressure on companies to retain customers is fuelled by the market where customer acquisition is slow. Customer retention is important when loyalty is decreasing and sales cycles are aggravating the business environment.

Under these circumstances, losing an important customer to a competitor would impact significantly on the organization's profitability and growth. However, in order for Supermarkets to improve their rate of customer retention amidst stiff competition from larger rivals, they need to adopt entrepreneurial marketing capabilities.

Entrepreneurial marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers as well as managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders (Otika et al, 2019). Morris et al (2002) defined entrepreneurial marketing as the process of proactively identifying and exploiting attractive market opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches, risk management and resource leveraging to create goods and services that generate superior value. This marketing concept requires a firm to pursue market opportunities in uncertain circumstances and deliver superior value to customers. Entrepreneurial marketing applies the same approach to the conventional marketing but blend the concept of entrepreneurial orientation and marketing orientation to achieve business success. Collinson (2002) described entrepreneurial marketing as a new paradigm that integrates critical aspects of marketing and entrepreneurship into a comprehensive concept where marketing becomes a process used by firms to act entrepreneurially. Entrepreneurial marketing cuts across seven dimensions which include: proactiveness, calculated risk taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resource leveraging, customer intensity, and value creation. Proactiveness demonstrates a firm's anticipatory action to future market demand to gain competitive advantages over its market competitors, followed by opportunity scanning (Wales et al, in Hossain & Asheq, 2019). Calculated risk-taking is the willingness of an entrepreneur to invest in projects which have uncertainty outcomes (Aziz et al, 2017). Innovativeness is the ability of a firm to foster a spirit of creativity, engage in research and development including experimentation, develop new processes, introduce new products and services, and display technological leadership (Otika et al, 2019).

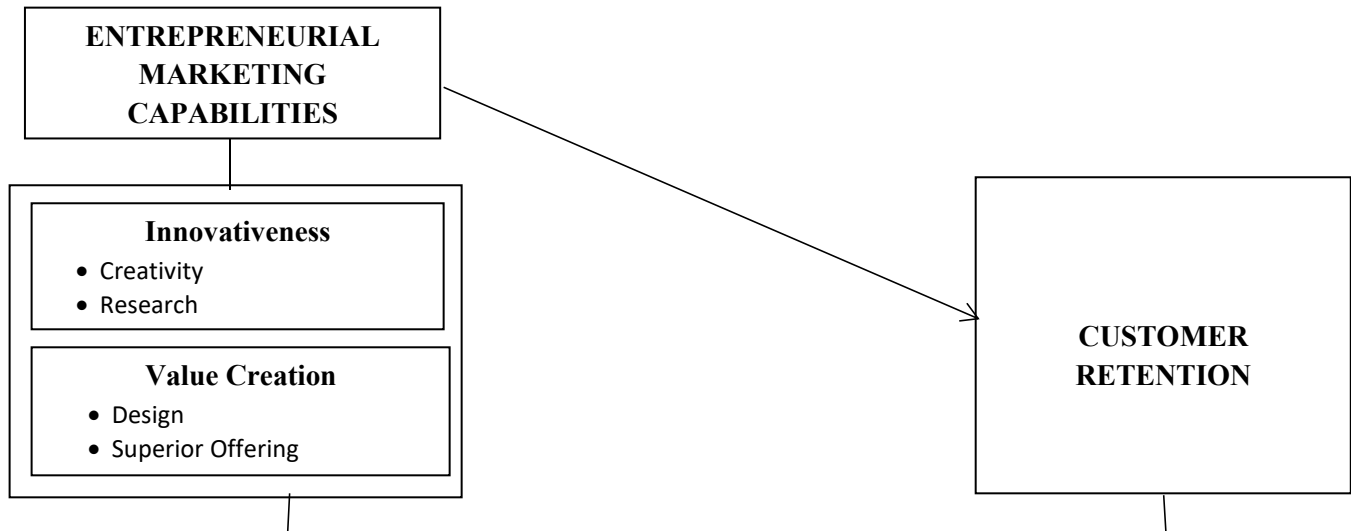
Entrepreneurial marketing strategies can be used as vital tools for improving rate of customer retention in supermarkets. Otika et al (2019) noted that entrepreneurial marketing is one of the key ingredients for superior performance and global competitiveness in small and medium-sized enterprises. Oluwatoyin and Badamasi (2015) argued that an individual who engage in entrepreneurship and practice entrepreneurial marketing will become successful in business, take advantage of market opportunities, create superior value for their customers, increase customer patronage, maximize profitability and expand his or her business operations. It is on this premise that this paper is designed to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurial marketing capabilities and customer retention of supermarkets outlets in Port Harcourt.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Customers want to be enticed and proven so that they get value for their money. Organizations on the other hand, venture into several strategies and techniques to ensure that they obtain new customers and retain their customer base for as long as it is possible. In today's business, more organizations are capitalizing on strong entrepreneurial marketing. This allows the store manager to apply entrepreneurial marketing principles in building relationship with customers and stop them from defecting to competing companies. Customer retention in supermarket outlets is relatively low. This is as a result of poor relationship approach put forward by the firm. Customers complained of lack of customer intimacy, no value for products bought and lack of innovations. It is on this premise that this study is designed to solve the myriad of problems facing supermarket outlets by introducing the concept of entrepreneurial marketing capabilities with its dimensions such as customer intensity, value creation and innovativeness.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of entrepreneurial marketing capabilities and customer retention of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt shown in figure 1.1 below. The conceptual framework shows the predictor and the criterion variables and its dimensions with the indicators.



**Fig.1.1:** Conceptual framework of the relationship between entrepreneurial marketing capabilities and customer retention of supermarkets in Port Harcourt **Sources:** Morris et al (2002) and Otika et al., (2019)

### Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial marketing capabilities and customer retention of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives of this study include to:

1. Investigate the extent of relationship between innovativeness and customer retention of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt.
2. Determine the relationship between value creation and customer retention of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt.

### Research Questions

Attempts were made to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of relationship between innovativeness and customer retention of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt?
2. To what extent does value creation relate to customer retention of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt?

### Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in this Paper:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: Innovativeness has no significant relationship with customer retention of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between value creation and customer retention of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Concept of Entrepreneurial Marketing Capabilities**

Entrepreneurial marketing emerged from two disciplines namely; entrepreneurial (which implies the overall behaviour and activities of an entrepreneur) and marketing (which is a set of activities that begin with market research, product development, packaging, pricing, promotion to physical distribution). These two concepts are merged together to form a new marketing concept which is today known as entrepreneurial marketing. Collinson (2002) stated that entrepreneurial marketing is a new paradigm which integrates critical aspects of marketing and entrepreneurship into a comprehensive concept where marketing becomes a process used by firms to act entrepreneurially.

Entrepreneurial marketing is the process of proactively identifying and exploiting attractive market opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches, risk management and resource leveraging to create goods and services that generate superior value. Baverland and Lockstin (2004) defined entrepreneurial marketing as "effectual action" or the adaptation of marketing theory for the unique needs of firms. These effectual actions simultaneously address many issues: opportunity, innovation, risk and resources constraints for such firms, these actions are the task of the individual owners/operator (Baverland & Lockstin, 2004).

The approach to entrepreneurial marketing remains the same as the conventional marketing but adheres to the concept of entrepreneur and customer opportunity-driven which shape the way in which the firm carries out market segmentation, targeting and positioning (Morrish et al, 2010). However, Sabrina and Swald (2010) argued that entrepreneurial marketing utilizes a different approach to business, its relationship with the market place and the role of marketing function within the firm or as a strategic entrepreneurial posture or behaviour in marketing which is represented by an individual/organization

Entrepreneurial marketing is primarily concerned with the development of new business models and value curves to create an uncontested new market (Schindehutte & Morris, 2010). It focuses on creating new market and value for customers through innovation. The practice of entrepreneurial marketing requires the proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches to risk management, resource leveraging and value creation (Schindehutte & Morris in Ozdemir, 2018). The main philosophy of entrepreneurial marketing is opportunity seeking and value creation. Through the implementation of entrepreneurial marketing concept, business enterprises can use the innovative approach to create goods and services that will give customers superior value, retain existing customers, acquire new ones, expand and create new business ventures (Morrish et al, 2010).

Entrepreneurial marketing is crucial to the growth of small and medium enterprises in Nigeria. According to Morrish (2011), SMEs that engage in entrepreneurial marketing are more driven by creative ideas and intuition i.e. innovation-oriented. They usually have a dual focus of entrepreneur-centric and customer-centric which influence and shape their marketing tactics, strategy and culture. Such enterprises do not solely rely on the formalized research and marketing intelligence systems rather they use informal networking. Entrepreneurial marketing can enable SMEs to create superior value to their customers. Morris et al (2002) noted that SMEs can use entrepreneurial marketing concept to identify and exploit market opportunities will create superior value to customers, retain existing customers and attract new customers to the firms, and experience rapid growth and business expansion.

Entrepreneurial marketing is considered as a vital tool for improving business performance. According to Ardichivilli and Soviary (2003), entrepreneurial marketing has the ability of improving firm performance and competitiveness in the local and global markets. Hadiyati and Lukiyanto (2019) stated that the practice of entrepreneurial marketing concept can help SMEs to achieve high levels of success in market. It can lead to positive macroeconomic outcomes and improve the business performance of SMEs (Fillis, 2000). Morrish et al (2010) stated that entrepreneurial marketing philosophy can be strategically employed to create superior value for customers as well as business owners. It can increase a firm's financial and non-financial returns and attract new customers to the firm. Excimiery and Mohammed (2013) noted that entrepreneurial marketing does not only attract new customers to a firm but also retain existing customers. Junde (2014) noted that businesses that experience superior performance over its competitors are those that adopt entrepreneurial marketing strategies.

Entrepreneurial marketing has the potentials of alleviating poverty in Nigeria. According to Hills et al (2008), entrepreneurial marketing can be used a vital tool for eliminating or reducing poverty in any country. Oluwatoyin and Badamasi (2015) argued that an individual who engage in entrepreneurship and practice entrepreneurial marketing will become successful in business, take advantage of market opportunities, create superior value for their customers, increase customer patronage, maximize profitability, expand business operations, generate wealth, and improve living conditions.

### **Dimensions of Entrepreneurship Marketing Capabilities**

Entrepreneurial marketing has often been dimensionalized in terms of three dimensions as identified by Miller (1983) through his definition of entrepreneurial organization as "one that engages in product-market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures, and is first to come up with proactive innovations, beating competitors to the punch". However, Lumpkin and Dess (1996) identified two additional dimensions 'autonomy' and 'competitive aggressiveness' to compliment the original three dimensions proposed by Miller (1983). Similarly, Morris, Schindehutte and Laforge (2002) identified seven dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing: proactiveness, opportunity focus, innovativeness, calculated risk-taking, resource leveraging, customer intensity and value creation. In the same vein, Kraus, et. al., (2010) identified four dimensions of EM; Creating customer relationship; delivering value; communicating value and innovativeness. Recently, Whalen et al., (2015) dimensionalized EM in terms Innovative, risk assessment, opportunity driven and value delivery. In line with the forgoing discourse, the current study has opted not to use all the dimensions listed above but decided to focus on three entrepreneurial marketing dimensions: innovation, value creation and customer intensity which are believed to be more appropriate in competitiveness of firms.

### **Innovation**

The onset of innovation is creativity. Innovation is the successful implementation of the generated creative ideas. Innovation is the heart of entrepreneurship because without innovation there is no entrepreneurship. Innovation is simply deviating from the norm and doing it in a new and different way to make life better for the populace. Hellriegel, Slocum and Jackson (2005) also described innovation as the process of creating and implementing a new idea, which can take different forms. Innovation is regarded as a key business process that organizations are using to achieve competitive advantage. Innovations are currently a fundamental prerequisite of competitiveness (Ariguzo et. al., 2018).

Innovativeness involves the tendency to engage in and support new ideas, novelty, experimentation and creative processes (Mohammad et. al., 2013). Successful companies are currently the ones that implements innovative strategies, invests in research, development and

innovations. The basic precondition for the creation and use of innovation in the enterprise is a well formulated and implemented innovative strategy. Innovativeness is a central component in an entrepreneurial orientation as posited by Nazdrol and Breen (2011). Lumpkin and Dess (1996) credited Schumpeter with being amongst the first to emphasize the role of innovation in the entrepreneurial process, in the form of a process of creative destruction, by which wealth was created when existing market structures were disrupted by the introduction of new goods or services reallocating resources from existing businesses to new businesses and growth.

Hacioglulua et al., (2012) stated that innovation can be a requirement for companies to compete and survive and it is a vital aspect for small-scale companies that have limited resources. According to Utami (2020) said that innovation is defined as opening the door to global and international competitiveness through the creation of markets with unique new products, providing the necessary resources to develop products through learning and creating value. New values that shape a competitive environment. Meanwhile, Rusmiarti, (2015) states that innovation is an idea, action or item that is considered new by a certain person or group to be applied or adopted by subjective measurement according to the views of the individual who captures it. From the theory above, it can be concluded that the measurement indicator in seeing the innovations carried out by the company is to find out whether the company is always trying to create markets, marketing ideas, or new products.

Drucker (2007) introduced the concept of knowledge-based innovation as the super star of entrepreneurship. Such innovations could be scientific, technical or social in nature. Knowledge Based Innovation require careful analysis of all the necessary factors and clear focus on the strategic position which entails developing systems, market focus and occupying the strategic position for effective business performance. According to DeepaBabu and Manale (2016) innovations are three types; technological, product, and administrative innovativeness. Likewise, innovation in businesses can be classified into; product, market innovation and technological innovation. Innovativeness in this case refers to provision of solutions to both routine and non-routine problems. It is the business's ability to engage in new ideas or thinking creatively that an idea can generate future economic benefits to the business (Kihara, et al., 2016). Creativity is the core of and foundation on which innovation stands. It is the predecessor of any invention. It is idea generation that must be new, valuable and useful. The ideas could be generated through proper imagination and use of initiative to identify and fill the existing gap, by seeking solution to identified problem, through previous experience, knowledge of industry and market structures, new knowledge acquired, personal change in perception, observations, survey, internet, inspiration, brainstorming and so on.

### **Value Creation**

Value creation is a key component of entrepreneurship and implies the addition of value in every possible thing in the marketing strategies as well as adding value to customers or adding value to consumer 's offers (Morris et al., 2002). Alertness to and investment in new ways to create and capture value are key characteristics of businesses that pursue entrepreneurial strategy (Kuckertz et. al., 2017). The proximity of the market causes entrepreneur marketers to often have decision-making process that is closely related with customer 's culture. They make decision based on the feedback of customers or information gathered throughout the direct or face-to-face interaction with customers. This information enables them to implement marketing strategies and their communication effectively. Some entrepreneur marketers rely on their experience when making decision about new products and services because they believe that their experience helps them make competent marketing decision.

Morris et. al., (2002) pointed out that the focal point of entrepreneurial engagement is innovative value creation, on the assumption that value creation is a prerequisite for transactions and relationships. The task of entrepreneur is to fine-tune untapped sources of customer value and create unique resources to produce value.

It was argued that because of the superior ability to identify and exploit opportunities, entrepreneurial marketing processes are better able to identify attractive entrepreneurial opportunities and exploit them by leveraging innovation to enhance the offering's benefits and or decrease the offering costs resulting in superior value for the customer (Miles & Darroch, 2004). Value creation is an essential condition for exchange to occur; successful firms emphasize the value creation activities best suited to their strategic intent within their competitive niche (Miller & Floricel, 2004). While traditional marketing has placed more focus on the transaction and customer relationship, entrepreneurial engagement placed emphasis on value creation to satisfy customer's needs and wants profitably (Morris et. al., 2002).

Porter (1985) developed a framework of value chains which is known as Porter analysis in creating value in organizations category. Moreover, Porter (1985) conducted value chains analysis by studying company activities which have direct effect to the value creation, and supporting activities so that they affect the value and eventually will affect performance. Tsai and Ghoshal (1998) explain that organization needs to create novel product and unique products, needs to specific its product and reallocate resources, to combine new resources, and combine existing resources in new market. O'Cass and Sok (2013), emphasized that value creation concept in an organization is a determinant variable of company's innovation activity. Moreover, managers and employees have important roles in creating value. Gurau (2004) opined that value creation concept is closely related with internal activities in creating of value for the customers. The organization internal activities include design, product, market, delivery and other activities which support the creation of a product.

O'cass and Ngo (2012) argued that designing a value offering that matches customers' expectations provides the means to gain a marketplace advantage. In designing its value offering, the entrepreneurial firm needs to give significant attention to interpreting and responding to what value it perceives customers are looking for. By doing this better than competitors, the firm can obtain an advantage (Slater, 1997; Woodruff, 1997) through the delivery of superior value.

Day and Wensley (1988) argued that superior performance requires a firm to achieve "positional superiority based on the provision of superior customer value". The key task for managers then, is to decide how to gain such advantages (through offering specific types of value in the value proposition), especially those that distinguish their offering from competitors (Day & Wensley, 1988; Hult & Ketchen, 2001).

### **Concept of Customer Retention**

Blattberg et al. (2001) state that customer retention is taking place when a customer keeps on buying the same market offering over a long period of time. For products with short purchase cycles, they define customer retention as occurring when 'the customer continues to purchase the product or service over a specified time period'. For products with long purchase cycles, they define customer retention as taking place when the customer indicates the intention to purchase the product or service at the next purchase occasion. Payne (2000) defines customer retention rate as the percentage of customers at the beginning of the period who still remain customers at the end of the period. Payne warns, however, that other more complex definitions might be more appropriate in instances where customers make use of more than one business simultaneously.

Ramakrishnan, (2006) defines customer retention as the marketing goal of preventing customers from going to the competitor. Customer retention is the way in which organizations focus their efforts on existing customers in an effort to continue doing business with them. However, customer retention can also mean the number of customers who stay with the provider in the

course of an established period, such as a year (Dawes, 2009). Customer retention is a key factor in determining the success of businesses today. Fluss (2010) notes that competitors are always on the lookout to steal customers through better deals. Fluss has observed that annual customer attrition rates range from 7% in industries that have high exit barriers such as banking and insurance, to almost 40% in the mobile phone industry. It can, therefore, be concluded that customers in the cellular industry keep on switching network providers for better deals. Customer retention has a direct impact on long term customer lifetime value, which is a more profitable avenue for firms that seek to pursue growth and sustainability or those that seek to protect themselves from market shrinkage resulting from a contracting economy (Gee et al., 2008). Supporting this argument, Lombard (2009) notes that today the pressure on companies to retain customers is fueled by the market where customer acquisition is slow. Customer retention is important when loyalty is decreasing and sales cycles are aggravating the business environment. Under these circumstances, losing an important customer to a competitor would impact significantly on the organization's profitability and growth.

To measure customer retention, therefore, a number of factors need to be taken into account. These include the customer retention rate over time, the customer retention rate by market segment in terms of the different services or products offered, and share earned of the customer's wallet (Payne, 2000). Measuring the customer retention rate is seen as the initial step in improving loyalty to, and the profitability of, a service organization (Payne, 2000a), yet many organizations do not understand the importance of improving customer retention rates, and the impact of these on profitability.

The customer retention rate must be measured and managed and can be calculated in two ways: a crude customer retention rate, or a weighted one. A crude customer retention rate measures the total percentage of customers the organization retains, based on the decline or escalation of customers over a specific period of time. The weighted retention rate is calculated by weighting customers according to the volume of their purchases. Ahmad and Buttle (2001) state that in the case of hotels, measuring retention should involve measuring the absolute number of customers who have been retained, as well as using a weighted rate, which takes into account the 'share of wallet', as well as the life time value, of a customer. Service organizations need to understand why their customers remain with them and should not assume that when customers remain it is a positive, mindful choice on their part. Customers may stay with a service organization due to any number of (sometimes intangible) ties or links with it. Some of these are positive, and increase the dedication of customers as with, for example, increased satisfaction.

Other links are negative, yet still tie the customer to the service organization: a sales representative, for example, is obliged to stay at a particular hotel every time the customer travels in the area because of an agreement between his or her company and the hotel. Retained customers represent an opportunity to increase profitability as well as loyalty. Egan (2001) suggest that customer relationship profitability is the result of improved quality in the service provided by an organization. A satisfied customer creates a strong relationship with the service provider; this leads to relationship durability and customer loyalty and retention. Loyalty is widely considered to include both a behavioral, as well as an attitudinal, dimension (Baloglu, 2002) yet the focus in the literature has gradually shifted from an attitude changing effort at creating a satisfied customer, to a behaviour changing approach that seeks to create a loyal customer who will be retained and who will make referrals. Approaches to relationship marketing in the hotel industry have, in the past, focused largely on transactional devices such as frequent user programmes, gifts for repeat customers, and free stays for meeting planners to encourage them to use the hotel and its facilities. Yet nowadays researchers indicate that, due to competitive pressures, service organizations should reevaluate the gains derived from loyalty programmes. Reliability of service delivery is also seen as an important factor in creating loyalty, since

competitors cannot easily copy this (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998). A study of hotel guests conducted by Bowen and Chen (2001) supports the notion that there is indeed a positive relationship between loyalty, repeat business (retention), and profitability. According to Egan (2001) a number of scholars in the field of relationship marketing (Buttle, 1996; Reicheld, 1996) consider the causal links between satisfaction, loyalty, and profitability to be rather tenuous. They maintain that this model cannot be accepted without criticism and that accepting this model unconditionally will deceive the marketer (Egan, 2001).

### **Empirical Review**

Hanmaikyur (2016) studied the effect of entrepreneurial marketing practices on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State, Nigeria. The study investigated the effect of Entrepreneurial Marketing practices on the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey design was put in place for the study. The unit of analysis was organizations while the owner/managers of SMEs were the respondents. Systematic, simple random and snowball sampling techniques were employed to collect the needed data for the study. A sample size of 401 SMEs covering all sectors that exist in the study area was drawn from a population of 1101 SMEs. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used to empirically and statistically analyze the data collected for the study with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. Regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. Performance variables include Return on Investment, Customer Satisfaction, Market share and Sales Growth. The findings of the study revealed that Entrepreneurial marketing practices made up of Customer Relationship Management with a p-value of 0.012, Market segmentation with 0.038, Quality with 0.026 and Market Promotion 0.031 have significant positive effect on SMEs performance, while cooperation with 0.002 was not found to be a predictor of SME performance in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State, Nigeria. The study found that marketing practices have a positive effect on the performance of SMEs in the study area.

Nwaizugbo and Anukam (2014) empirically carried out a study to determine the assessment of entrepreneurial marketing practices among small and medium scale enterprises in Imo State Nigeria: prospects and challenges. The study seeks to explore with empirical evidence the extent of overlap, similarities, and dissimilarities between entrepreneurial practices and the marketing concepts among Small to Medium size Enterprises (SMEs) in Owerri, Nigeria. It inquires and assesses approaches to marketing practices entrepreneurs apply. They employed Primary data collection tools consisting of structured instruments for personal interviews and guide for focused-group discussion (FGD) and the questionnaire was used to collect survey data. Secondary data were sourced from firms' records, periodicals, and related literature. The study through convenient sample investigated twenty (20) SMEs and found that traditional marketing is structured and its framework requires certain conditions to thrive-formal planning and theoretical structures. Entrepreneurial marketing (EM) improvises and does not seek for a perfect condition to grow a firm. Thus, the highlights of the interface between entrepreneurship and marketing as discussed in the findings on the areas of differences, similarities, overlap, and collaboration will give practitioners, academics and scholars greater synergetic leverage over unstable marketplace in the application of marketing and entrepreneurial processes for greater results.

Otika and Udoka (2019) empirically carried out a study to determine the effect of entrepreneurial marketing practices and competitive advantage of small and medium enterprise in Enugu state. their study adopted a descriptive research design with the aid of survey method where questionnaires was used to collect data from 356 owners and managers of 3,252 registered small and medium sized enterprises in Enugu State. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the bio data of the respondent while multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis using spss version 2010. The result showed that risk taking, opportunity focus has a significant relationship with competitive advantage.

Mohammed and Rusinah (2017) in their study, the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on competitive advantage moderated by financing support in SMEs in Iraq. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage (CMA) and to investigate the moderated role of financial support (FNC) between the influences of entrepreneurial orientations on CMA. The study adopted a quantitative approach using survey instruments. The used sample size of 680 from a total manager population in 3526 SMEs working in Kurdistan Region Government (KRG) in Iraq. The total number of usable questionnaires was 580. Structural equation modeling was employed to examine the relationship between the variables. The statistical result showed that entrepreneurial orientations significantly influenced on CMA. The results also highlight that FNC had a moderated role in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and CMA in SMEs in Iraqi KRG.

Abdul and Kanu (2020) empirically carried out a study to determine the rewards and challenges of entrepreneurial marketing among small and medium enterprises. The study adopted a triangular method which afforded the researcher to gather information from primary and secondary sources. The qualitative research approach was adopted and questionnaires were used to collect data from 25 managers and owners of small and medium enterprises in UK. The researcher finds out that entrepreneurial marketing enables entrepreneurs to think strategically and contribute positively to the success and marketing performance of their enterprises. Furthermore, entrepreneurial marketing helps to generate sales, grow and survive in modern day competition, increase market share, increase revenue, improved efficiency and enhance customer relationship. The study also enumerated some challenges as follows: limited marketing and managerial knowhow, narrow customer base, lack of expertise etc.

Syarif, (2019) empirically carried out a study on the effect of entrepreneurial marketing and competitive advantage on marketing performance. The study adopted the case study research design and a qualitative research approach. The researcher uses questionnaire to elicit data from 93 marketing managers, supervisors and marketing leaders in Indonesia. the data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentage and frequency tables, mean and standard deviation and influential statistics such as Pearson correlation, and regression analysis which were computed with the aid of SPSS software program version 21. The findings of the study however revealed that entrepreneurial orientation has a positive and significant effect on marketing performance and competitive advantage.

Hindu (2021) carried out a study on entrepreneurial marketing dimensions play a critical role in small and medium scale enterprises performance. The population of the research was 1979 registered small and medium scale enterprises in Nasarawa State, Nigeria, with a sample size of 322 which was determined using Raosoft sample size calculator. The data collected were analyzed using the regression analysis technique to test the study hypothesis using statistical product and services solutions. The study found out the significance of entrepreneurial marketing on owners, managers, researchers, policy maker. The research further recommended that SMEs should be encouraged to embrace entrepreneurial dimensions such as innovativeness, risk taking, and value creation in other to increase business performance.

Hacioglu (2012) carried out a study on the relationship between seven entrepreneurial Marketing dimensions and innovative performance of Turkish SMEs. The researcher adopted the survey research design and the quantitative research approach and used a structural equation modelling to analyses the data and test the model developed in B2B settings. And the results revealed that four Entrepreneurial Marketing dimensions, i.e., pro-activeness, innovativeness, customer intensity, and resource leverage, have a significant positive impact on firm's innovative performance.

Hamali (2015) investigated the effect of seven entrepreneurial marketing dimensions on business performance in the small garment industry in Indonesia and found that pro-activeness, resource leverage, value creation, and customer intensity are positively related to business performance.

Miles and Darroch (2006) the process of how large firms might leverage entrepreneurial marketing processes to gain and renew competitive advantage was explored. The paper applied past

research on entrepreneurial marketing and entrepreneurship with examples from a long-term case study of firms in New Zealand, Sweden, the UK, and the USA to illustrate how entrepreneurial marketing processes can be strategically employed by large firms to create or discover, assess, and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities more effectively and efficiently. The researcher adopted the cross sectional survey research design where data were collected from owners and managers of SMEs with the aid of a structured questionnaire while percentage and frequency tables, mean, and standard deviation, regression analysis were used for data analysis. They adopted risk management, pro-activeness, opportunity driven, innovation, customer intensity, value creation, and resource leveraging as the explanatory variables that contributed to this competitive advantage. Their findings gave insights into how large firms leverage entrepreneurial marketing processes to grow. The findings suggested that, in free and open markets, entrepreneurial marketing processes can be strategically employed to create superior value for the firm's customers and owners. While conducting a study on the emergence of Entrepreneurial Marketing nature and meaning;

Sadiku et. al., (2019) explored the impact of seven Entrepreneurial Marketing dimensions on a firm's overall performance (measured in terms of efficiency, profit, owner's personal goal, and firm and owner's reputation) in Kosovo State. The study adopted the case study research design and a qualitative research approach. The results suggested that Pro-activeness and calculated risk-taking have a significant negative effect on a firm's overall Performance, while opportunity-driven, innovativeness, customer intensity, resource Leveraging and value creation have significant positive effects on overall firm performance.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. Anyanwu (2016) asserted that, "descriptive survey describes the characteristics of the variables of interest in a study". Given that the study focuses on entrepreneurial marketing capabilities and customer retention of supermarket outlets in Rivers State; the descriptive survey is considered more appropriate in achieving the goals of the paper. The population of this study comprised of twenty-eight (28) supermarket outlets gotten from Nigeria Business Directory. The unit population consisted of one hundred and twelve (112) staff. In line with the population of the study which is twenty-eight (28), the study adopted a census approach and studied the entire 28 supermarket outlets with a focus on the staff. In order to generate data for the study, copies of the questionnaire was distributed in the frame of four (4) copies per firm. A total of one hundred and twelve (112) respondents were used as the study subjects. A structured and self-administered questionnaire was employed. This study adopted a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical tools with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 in order to facilitate the analysis. Charts, frequency tables, means, as well as percentages constituted the descriptive statistical, while the Spearman's (rho) correlation was used to analyze the relationship between independent and dependent variables at  $P > 0.01$  (two - tailed test). Partial correlation was employed to test the moderating variable and independent and dependent variables as well.

## **FINDINGS**

The result of this study revealed that a strong, positive and significant relationship between innovativeness and customer retention of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt. This finding was deduced from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on two variables in the first hypothesis. The result indicates that innovativeness is significantly and positively correlated to repeat patronage ( $\rho = .588^{**}$ ) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol \*\*. And also the result indicates that innovativeness has a very strong positive correlation with referrals ( $\rho = .644^{**}$ ) and the symbol \*\* signifies that this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. This finding is supported by Adams et al (2006) who opined that innovativeness enables a

firm to compete favourably in its industry and increase its sales volume. Eximiery and Mohammed (2013) also supported this finding when they stated that a firm that possesses innovative capability would experience massive sales growth. Value creation showed a strong, positive relationship with customer retention of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt. This finding was deduced from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on two variables in the first hypothesis. The result reveals a strong positive correlation between value creation and repeat patronage supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt ( $\rho = .721^{**}$ ) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol  $^{**}$ . And also, the result shows that value creation has a very strong positive correlation with referrals of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt ( $\rho = .849^{**}$ ) and the symbol  $^{**}$  indicates that this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Based on this result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{04}$ ) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This finding is in line with the study of O'cass and Ngo (2012), they submitted that value co-creation enhances the performance of business to business firms. The finding of the study was equally supported by the findings of Becherer, et al. (2012). They submitted that value creation positively influences outcomes of SMEs. It affects not only financial performance but also growth, customer success, and generally building a strong sustainable company. Similarly, Hacıoglu et al., (2012) stated that value creation can be a requirement for companies to compete and survive and it is a vital aspect for small-scale companies that have limited resources. Utami (2020) submitted that value creation is defined as opening the door to global and international competitiveness through the creation of markets with unique new products, providing the necessary resources to develop products through learning and creating value.

## CONCLUSION

It was concluded that that entrepreneurial marketing capabilities significantly relate with customer retention of supermarket outlets in Port Harcourt. Therefore, supermarket outlets need to continuously explore entrepreneurial opportunities because their resources can only enable them to temporarily sustain competitive advantage, create value, take proactive steps and make ground breaking innovations. Thus, we can say that higher levels of entrepreneurial marketing capabilities will lead to higher levels of customer retention.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion it was then recommended that:

1. Entrepreneurial managers should always create avenues for innovations as it drives manufacturing activities and enables firms to compete favourably in its industry and improve sales growth.
2. Entrepreneurial managers should always learn to innovate and create a source of customer value that would enhance unique combinations of resources to provide value to customers.
3. Supermarket managers should sell with the consciousness of preserving the reputation of their outlets for future exploits.

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