Customer Experience and Marketing Performance of Electricity Distribution Companies in Nigeria

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A B S T R A C T

The goal of the study is to identify the association between Customer Experience (which comprises peace of mind, moments of truth, outcome focus and product experience) and Marketing Performance using non-financial indicators (customer satisfaction, customer retention and loyalty) of electricity customers in the South-South of Nigeria. The research examined customer experience in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River and Rivers States and the marketing performance of the Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company in the area. The study used data generated from 234 study elements, analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and affirms that the dimensions of study play significant and substantial roles in enabling positive customer experience. The results support the assertion that customer experience is critical in sustaining marketing performance.

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INTRODUCTION

The customer experience journey has different phases. It begins with a search, purchase, consumption and after sales phase of the product. In distribution operations, the customer begins the search process by acquiring information about connection procedures and the documentation processes involved in electricity connection to their premises. When this information is acquired by electricity customers and acted upon through connection application filing, the purchase process has been activated and it continues until the customer is connected, account status set up and the proto bill or account status report is generated. The product (energy) consumption stage commences when bills are issued or when energy tokens are vended while the after sales phase comprises of account maintenance activities that guides both products and service delivery. During the various phases the customer underwent, Chatzopoulos and Weber (2018) identified positive emotional experiences like pride, love, happiness and contentment or negative emotional experiences like shame, sadness, fear and anger.

Rawat and Mann (2018) in their research concluded that experiences are seen as memorable, personally inherent and exists in the minds of an individual who have been engaged on the physical, emotional and intellectual or even on spiritual level and that today's customers are looking for goods and services which are directed towards their fantasies, feelings and fun.

To understand customer experience requires comprehensive knowledge of all the things that can make a product marketable. A product or service sold or distributed, can then be used by consumers as end users. Klaus and Maklan (2013) describe customer experience as the cognitive and emotional evaluation of all direct and indirect interactions a customer has with a company in relation to their buying behavior. To fully grasp customer experience, one must possess in-depth knowledge not only about the products or services but also about the processes, marketing, and sales strategies involved (Meyer and Schwager 2007; Payne and Frow 2004; Schmitt 2003). The growth of a business is indicated by an increase in sales of its products and services, a reduction in production costs, and an overall rise in profits.

Marketing performance refers to the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing strategies, as defined by various scholars (Maclayton and Nwoka, 2012). Despite numerous definitions, there is no consensus on a single measure of marketing performance. Brudan (2010) describes marketing performance measurement as a part of performance management that involves identifying, monitoring, and communicating results through performance indicators. Lamberti and Noci (2010) evaluated marketing performance based on factors such as marketing budget, marketing assets, and the behavior of marketing units.

In this study context, the electricity sector in the South-South region of Nigeria can thrive in a dynamic environment by maintaining a strong focus on customer experience. This approach involves meeting customer needs through the application of effective processes and expertise, ultimately delivering high-quality service. In this study, marketing performance is viewed as the dependent variable influenced by customer experience.

Statement of the Problem

The performance of electricity distribution companies requires the understanding of customer experience from the feedback of service rendered. Most challenges and problems of electricity distribution companies result from lack of power supply, inadequate interest and focus on the changing needs and expectations of the electricity market; demand for electricity by households for lighting, cooking, and heating and by firms to operate equipment to produce goods and services (Khanna, 2015).

This gave rise to complaint and criticism of their services ranging from those of inefficiency, long outages, poor availability, long delays in fault clearing, non-reflection of payments, over billings (estimations and wrong meter readings), poor attention to details and unfriendly nature of most electricity workers. This is further compounded by their apparent lack of innovative ways in tackling the challenges and growing service gaps in their environment.

The demand from households, which constitutes the largest portion, is expected to grow due to rising urbanization (projected at 4.23% annually) and population growth (estimated at 2.7% per year, compared to a global average of 1.1%), both of which are more than double the global rates. Additionally, industrial and commercial electricity demand is likely to rise, with gross domestic product growth rates forecasted between 4.50% and 7% (NERC 2016). Therefore, this study aims to assess the impact of customer experience on marketing performance, specifically identifying the key factors that will support both operational and technical improvements needed to enhance customer service operations of distribution companies in South-South Nigeria.

Goal and Purposes of the Research

The goal of this study is to empirically examine the extent to which customer experience effect with marketing performance of electricity distribution companies. However, the specific objectives are to empirically examine.

i. The extent to which peace of mind relates to marketing performance.
ii. The extent to which moments of truth relates to marketing performance.
iii. The extent to which outcome focus relates to marketing performance.
iv. The extent to which product experience relates to marketing performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer experience is a relatively developing area of study. Earlier, The Dissonance Theory (Cardozzo, 1965) suggests that a person who expected a high-value product and received a low-value product would recognize the disparity and experience a cognitive dissonance, the Expectancy Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP) as proposed by Oliver (1977; 1980) is the most promising theoretical framework for the assessment of customer satisfaction. This model explained that when consumers purchase goods and services with pre-purchase expectations about the anticipated performance, the expectation level then becomes a standard against which the product is judged. When the customer's experience matches the expectation, confirmation occurs, while disconfirmation occurs when there is a difference between expectations and outcomes.

In 2011, Klaus and Maklan developed a scale to measure customer experience, known as EXQ, which includes four key dimensions: product experience, outcome focus, moments-of-truth, and peace-of-mind (POMP). Product experience highlights the significance of customers' perceptions regarding their options and the ability to compare different offerings, which is essential for understanding consumer behavior and fostering loyalty. Outcome focus pertains to minimizing customers' transaction costs, such as the effort involved in finding and evaluating new providers, underscoring the value of goal-oriented experiences in consumer behavior (Huffman and Houston, 1993). Moments-of-truth stresses the necessity of effective service recovery (Tax et al., 1998) and adaptability (Liljander & Strandvik, 1993) when addressing customer issues. Peace-of-mind reflects the customer's evaluation of all interactions with the service provider throughout the service purchase process, encompassing emotional aspects of the service experience.

This scale was initially developed and validated in the banking sector (Maklan and Klaus, 2011; Klaus and Maklan, 2012). Subsequently, Klaus and Maklan (2013) confirmed its applicability across four different service areas: retail banking, mortgages, fuel and service stations, and luxury goods, all within the context of the United Kingdom, a developed economy. The dimensions were also tested in the hotel industry in India, a developing country similar to Nigeria, by Imran, Ruchi, and Zillur in 2015. This raises three pertinent questions: (1) Is customer experience significant in a developing economy like Nigeria? (2) Can the dimensions of customer experience, as adapted from Imran et al. (2015), provide a more effective measurement in the electricity sector, which is a highly experiential service industry? and (3) How does this contribute to our understanding of customer experience research and its implications in the Nigerian electricity market?

This study aims to explore the dimensions of customer experience as adapted from Imran et al. (2015) within the electricity sector, addressing the issue of generalizability and examining its impact on key marketing outcomes, such as customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention (Gao, 2010). Consequently, the focus is on understanding the significance of customer experience in the electricity industry in South-South Nigeria and its relationship with marketing performance.

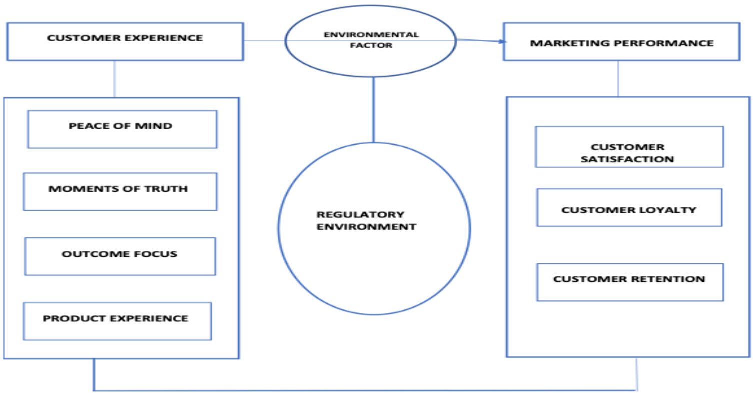

Figure. 1. Conceptual framework of the relationship between customer experience and marketing performance. Source: (Dimensions). Imran, Ruchi & Zillur, (2015). (Measures). Gao (2010).

METHODOLOGY

For this study, the population consists of the customers and Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company (PHED) managers in the South-South Nigeria. The population consists of six hundred and thirty-five thousand, seventy-four (635,074) customers and managers of PHED in the South-South Nigeria. A total of 281 copies of the questionnaire were administered, out of which a total of 244 copies were retrieved, representing 86.83% of actual distribution rate. The study adopted a dominant quantitative methodology in the study and data analysis for inferential statistics was carried out through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) involving AMOS 24.0 software and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25.0.

RESEARCH RESULT

a. Assessment of Reliability

The reliability of the measurement tool was evaluated by examining the Cronbach's Alpha values for the various scales. A threshold of 0.7 was established as the acceptable minimum for Cronbach's Alpha, following the guidelines set by Nunnally and Bernstein in 1994. Overall, all scales demonstrated strong internal consistency, surpassing the recommended minimum of 0.70. Specifically, the Cronbach's Alpha values for three constructs—customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and customer retention—were at or above 0.90. Additionally, three other constructs—peace of mind, moment of truth, and political factors—showed Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.80. Lastly, the outcome focus and product experience scales had Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.70. In conclusion, these findings indicate that the measurement tool is reliable. An overview of the final results from the reliability analysis is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

SN	CONSTRUCT	NO. OF ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
1.	Peace of Mind (PM)	6	0.845
2.	Moment of Truth (MT)	5	0.812
3.	Outcome Focus (OF)	5	0.778
4.	Product Experience (PE)	5	0.740
5.	Customer Satisfaction (CS)	5	0.920

Source: Researcher's Desk, SPSS 25.0 Outputs 2020.

b. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Respondents were asked to provide information on their gender, marital status, age, years of experience using electricity, educational qualification, employment status and income per month. Other demographic information included state of residence, state of business, whether the respondent is a customer or staff of Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company (PHED), if the respondent is a staff and length of time with the company, as well as grade in PHED. Their responses were computed using frequencies, percentages, bar charts and pie charts, as given below:

The findings indicate that among the respondents, males comprised 62.2% (n = 143) while females accounted for 37.8% (n = 87). This suggests a significant male dominance within the organization and potentially within the electricity distribution sector as a whole. Additionally, the data reveals that more males than females are responsible for managing household electricity bill payments.

This gender imbalance raises several important considerations, particularly regarding the potential inequalities present in societal structures that may prioritize certain roles for men over women. It could also reflect patriarchal systems that provide men with greater opportunities. On the other hand, one might argue that these disparities could stem from the competitive and aggressive nature of the electricity distribution industry in South-South Nigeria, with women possibly opting for less demanding roles.

Overall, the evidence highlights a critical need to address gender disparities and emphasizes the importance of promoting equity for both genders by ensuring equal employment opportunities. This situation underscores the prevailing notion that the electricity distribution sector is predominantly male dominated, potentially creating barriers for women in the form of glass ceilings.

c. Customer Experience

The average distribution for customer experience is derived from the summaries of its sub-components: Peace of Mind (18.10), Moments of Truth (12.27), Outcome Focus (15.57), and Product Experience (15.76). Analysis indicates that all four components are generally of moderate significance within the context of the electricity distribution studied. The findings show that these components have mean values that are moderate yet meaningful, implying that the PHED is actively engaged in developing new services and delivery methods, likely due to changes in the organization's management. The summaries of these components serve as a basis for evaluating customer experience distribution. The results highlight customer experience as a vital aspect of PHED, with data suggesting that most respondents view it as a strong attribute and a key factor in achieving the organization's marketing performance goals.

Table 2. Distribution of the Dimensions of Customer Experience

Descriptive Statistics							
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Peace of Mind	230	18.10	4.727	.139	.160	-.107	.320
Moments of Truth	230	12.27	3.160	.138	.160	-.478	.320
Outcome Focus	230	15.57	3.898	.012	.160	-.211	.320
Product Experience	230	15.76	4.243	-.021	.160	-.447	.320
Valid N (listwise)	230						

Source: SPSS Data result, 2020.

Peace of Mind

Table 2 and Figure 2 illustrate the distribution of data related to Peace of Mind, which is the initial aspect of customer experience. It encompasses the customer's evaluation of their interactions with the service provider at all stages—before, during, and after receiving a service. This concept highlights the emotional advantages that customers derive from their experiences, influenced by their perception of the service provider's expertise.

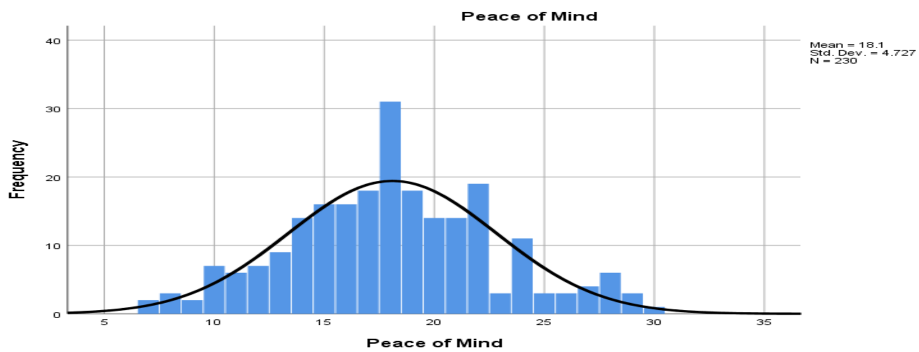

Figure 2. Histogram of Peace of Mind
Source: Researcher’s desk: SPSS Data result, 2020.

The analysis of the variable distributions indicates that they are moderate and significant, particularly in relation to the central tendencies of the indicators. For instance, PM1: *I am confident in PHED frontline staff expertise* has a moderate and significant mean of 3.06 (SD = 1.01), indicating that respondents generally agree with this statement. PM2: *The whole process of getting service from the Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company was easy* shows a moderate yet significant mean of 2.95 (SD = 0.93), suggesting that most respondents view this statement positively. PM3: *Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company will look after me to serve my needs for a long time* has a notable and significant mean of 3.02 (SD = 1.06), reflecting that many respondents believe this statement to be accurate.

In a similar vein, PM4: *I will stay with Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company because of my past dealings* has a high and significant mean of 3.09 (SD = 1.11), indicating that a majority of respondents agree with this sentiment. PM5: *I* *have dealt with Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company before and getting what I needed was really easy* has a significant mean of 2.92 (SD = 1.18), suggesting that most respondents resonate with this statement. PM6: *Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company staff give (s) independent advice* has a strong and significant mean of 3.06 (SD = 1.10), showing that many respondents affirm this statement as true. Overall, the evidence for the Peace of Mind distribution confirms that all six statements related to this latent variable are significantly and substantially reflected by the respondents and their organizations, indicating a strong presence of Peace of Mind within the dataset.

Moments of Truth

Table 2 Figure 3 depict the distribution of Moments of Truth, which represent the second dimension of Customer Experience. These moments are critical opportunities for an organization, where it can either fail to meet customer expectations, leading to disappointment, or succeed by fulfilling or surpassing those expectations. The analysis of the indicators shows that they have notable and moderate average values.

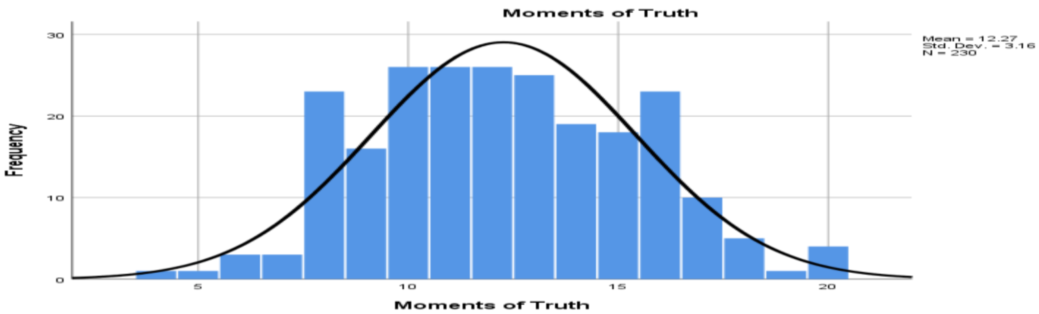

Figure 3. Histogram of Moment of Truth
Source: Researcher's desk: SPSS Data result, 2020.

MT1: *Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company was flexible in dealing with me and looked out for my needs*, with a moderate and significant mean score of 2.87 (SD = 1.02), indicating that respondents generally agree with this statement. MT2: *Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company keeps me up to date with service information*, reflected in a significant mean of 2.87 (SD = 1.10), suggesting that most respondents believe this statement to be true. MT3: *PHED is a safe and reputable Electricity Distribution Company*, with a notable mean of 3.04 (SD = 1.02), indicating that most respondents support this view, especially in critical situations. MT4: *Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company staff have good skills*, as evidenced by a mean of 3.50 (SD = 0.89), suggesting that most respondents agree and recognize the company's commitment to monitoring and improving staff capabilities. MT5: *Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company deal(t) with me correctly when things go (went) wrong with my bill and supply*, with a significant mean of 3.05 (SD = 1.04), indicating that most respondents affirm this statement. Overall, the analysis suggests that PHED meets customer expectations and is proactive, with the majority of its customers in the South-South Region considering the company to be generally efficient.

Outcome Focus

Table 2 Figure 4 illustrate the distribution related to outcome focus, which is the third aspect of customer experience. This dimension pertains to minimizing customers' transaction costs, including the process of finding and evaluating new service providers. The findings show that, according to the established criteria for moderate and significant levels of manifestation (2.00 < x < 4.00), all indicators demonstrate moderate to significant mean values.

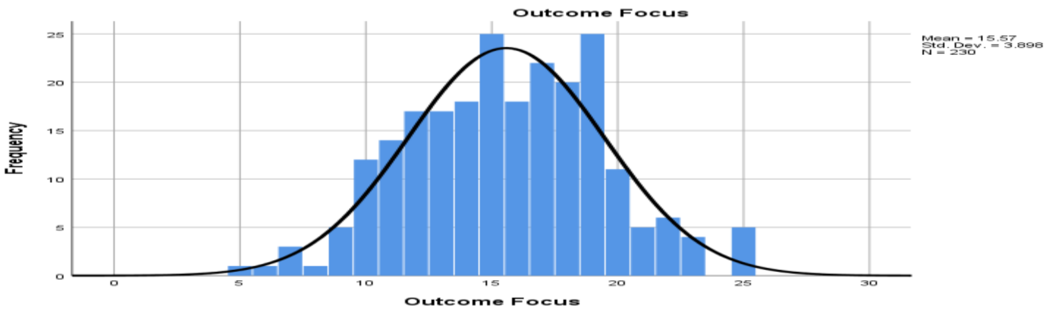

Figure 4. Histogram of Outcome Focus

OF1: *Staying with Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company makes the process of getting electricity much easier*. The average score (mean = 2.87, SD = 1.05) suggests that respondents generally agree with this statement. OF2: *Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company gives me electricity to meet my need swiftly* has a moderate average score (mean = 2.53, SD = 1.06), indicating that many respondents likely support this view. OF3: *I prefer PHED electricity power supply over generator as alternative source of power (provider)*. The significant average score (mean = 3.67, SD = 1.22) reflects that respondents widely acknowledge the importance of having a reliable electricity supply instead of relying on generators. OF4: *The people at the frontline desk of Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company can relate to my situation when I complain*, as indicated by a high average score (mean = 3.13, SD = 1.00). This suggests that a considerable number of respondents feel that PHED staff are empathetic to their situations. OF5: *PHED frontline staff are customer focused and result oriented*, as shown by a significant average score (mean = 3.37, SD = 1.00). This indicates that most respondents believe this statement to be accurate.

Product Experience

Table 2 Figure 5 illustrate the distribution for Product Experience. This is the fourth dimension for Customer Experience and describes the pleasure derived from power supply, accurate billing of postpaid meters, quick response to fault clearing in all categories, ease of access to electricity supply/ reduction of time it takes to get connected to the national grid and replacement of aged / obsolete infrastructure. The result from the analysis on the indicators presents them as having significant and moderate mean values.

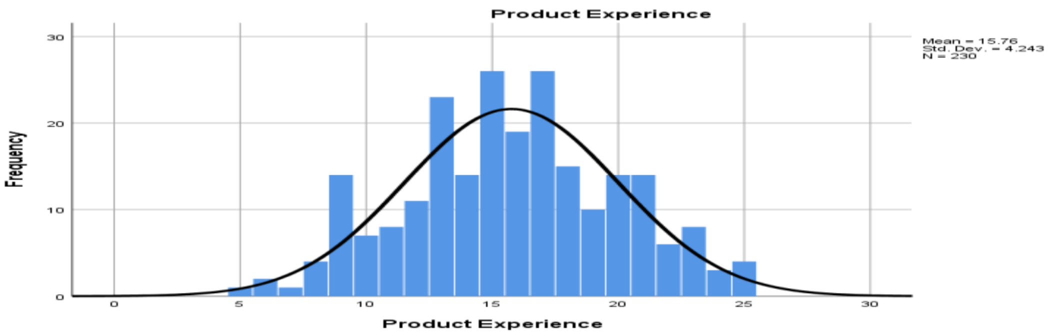

Figure 5. Histogram of Product Experience
Source: Researcher's desk: SPSS Data result, 2020.

PE1: *I need to choose between prepaid and postpaid meter options at PHED*, has a substantial and significant mean (mean = 3.47, SD=1.27) indicating that in generality, respondents agree to the statement as being correct; PE2: *I need to receive my monthly electricity bill offers from more than just one method from PHED*, has an evident and significant mean (mean =3.30, SD=1.20) suggesting that majority of the respondents affirm the statement as being true; PE3: *I need to compare the different payment options from PHED*, has a substantial and significant mean (mean = 3.19, SD=1.09) implying that majority of the respondents agree to the position of the statement as regards the need to compare the different payment options from PHED; PE4: *I have one designated contact person at PHED who solves my problems*; has a moderate and evident mean (mean = 2.90, SD=1.20) suggesting that majority of the respondents are in agreement with the statement and consider PHED provides designated contact persons to solve customers' challenges; PE5: *There is a staff in PHED managing my house and/or company and I know the staff*, has a moderate and significant mean (mean =2.91, SD=1.29) suggesting that majority of the respondents affirm the statement as being true; The result form the analysis presents the PHED as being able to assign staff who are available to solve customers' electricity challenges. The evidence from the analysis shows that customers of PHED have relative peace of mind, see the company as having positive moments of truth, prefer PHED electricity supply to usage of generators and have one-on-one interaction with PHED personnel.

c. Marketing Performance

The mean distribution for marketing performance is based on the summaries of its measures (Customer Satisfaction = 14.11, Customer Loyalty = 16.57, and Customer Retention = 21.70). The evidence from the analysis reveals that all three measures on the average tend to be significant within the framework of the Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company examined in this study. The results depict all three variables as having mean values that can be described as substantial and significant, suggesting that the PHED's customers are positively inclined to the services and will go extra length to recommend the services to other users. The evidence from the distribution indicates that marketing performance is enhanced when customer service is top-notch.

The next variable evaluated is marketing performance, which involves identifying, monitoring, and communicating performance outcomes through specific indicators. As the main variable of the study, marketing performance was assessed using three constructs: customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and customer retention. The distributions and corresponding histograms for these components are presented below:

Table 3. Distribution of the Measures of Marketing Performance

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Customer Satisfaction	230	14.11	4.997
Customer Loyalty	230	16.57	5.015
Customer Retention	230	21.70	7.079
Valid N (listwise)	230		

Customer Satisfaction

Table 3 and Figure 6 describe the distribution for the data on Customer Satisfaction. This is the first measure of marketing performance and describes the manifest emotional response to the experience associated with a particular product or service purchased, retail outlets, as well as the overall marketplace.

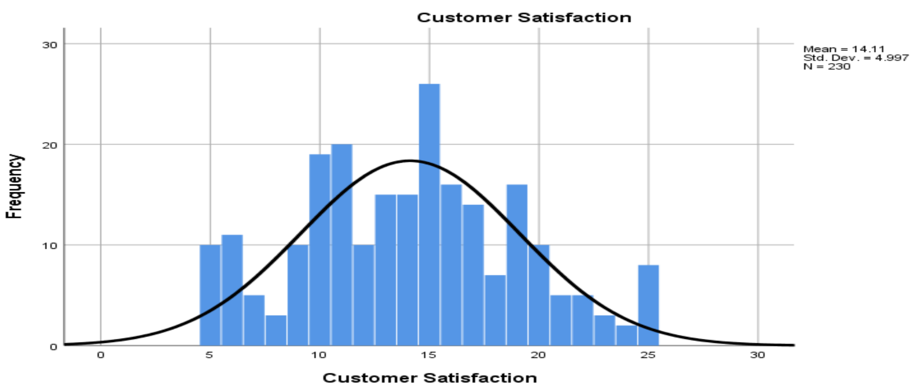

Figure 6. Histogram of Customer Satisfaction

The analysis of the variable distributions indicates that they are both moderate and significant, as shown by the central tendencies of the indicators. For instance, CS1: *My feelings towards PHED are very positive* has a moderate and significant mean of 2.83 (SD = 1.19), indicating that respondents generally agree with this statement. Similarly, CS2: *I feel good about coming to PHED office for the services I am looking for* has a mean of 2.88 (SD = 1.16), suggesting that most respondents view this statement positively. CS3: *Overall, I am satisfied with PHED and the service they provide* also shows a moderate and significant mean of 2.80 (SD = 1.13), reflecting that many respondents consider this statement to be true.

In addition, CS4: *I feel satisfied that PHED produce the best results that can be achieved for me*, has a moderate and significant mean of 2.73 (SD = 1.15), indicating that a majority of respondents agree with this sentiment. CS5: *The extent to which PHED has solved my problems is satisfying* shows a moderate but significant mean of 2.86 (SD = 1.11), suggesting that most respondents resonate with this statement. Overall, the evidence from the customer satisfaction distribution confirms that all five statements related to the latent construct are significantly endorsed by the respondents and their organizations, highlighting a strong presence of customer satisfaction in the study.

Customer Loyalty

Tables 3 and Figure 7 depict the distribution of Customer Loyalty, which represents the second aspect of Customer Experience. This dimension reflects a strong commitment from customers to continue supporting and returning to a favored product or service in the future, even when faced with external influences and marketing strategies that might encourage them to switch. The analysis of the indicators shows that they possess moderate yet meaningful average values.

Figure 7. Histogram of Customer Loyalty

CL1: *I say positive things about PHED to other people.* Respondents generally express positive sentiments about PHED, with a moderate and significant average score (mean = 2.95, SD = 1.15), indicating agreement with the statement. CL2: When asked if *I recommend PHED to someone who seeks my advice about electricity supply*, respondents provided a substantial and significant average score (mean = 3.07, SD = 1.11), suggesting that most agree with this statement. CL3: The statement about *I encourage friends and relatives to use electricity from PHED instead of generators* received a significant average score (mean = 3.44, SD = 1.19), indicating that many respondents support this idea. CL4: *I consider PHED as the first choice to buy electricity services instead of buying generators* reflected in a significant average score (mean = 3.55, SD = 1.22), suggesting strong agreement with this preference. CL5: The statement, *I will use electricity from PHED more in the next few years*, scored significantly (mean = 3.56, SD = 1.17), indicating that most respondents believe this to be true. Overall, the analysis shows that PHED customers are inclined to remain loyal to the company despite some shortcomings, as they perceive PHED's electricity supply to be more cost-effective than using generators.

Customer Retention

Tables 3 and Figure 8 illustrate the distribution of customer retention, which serves as the third metric for evaluating marketing performance and reflects the loyalty of PHED customers to their services. The findings show that, according to the established criteria for moderate and significant levels of manifestation (2.00 < x < 4.00), all indicators demonstrate moderate to significant mean values.

Figure 8. Histogram of Customer Retention

CR1: *I mentioned to others that I get electricity from PHED and I enjoy their supply.* The average response (mean = 2.75, SD = 1.18) suggests that, on the whole, respondents agree with this statement. CR2: *I made sure that others knew that I got my electricity from PHED and I am their customer,* which has a notable average (mean = 3.17, SD = 1.22), indicating that many respondents likely concur with this assertion. CR3: *I spoke positively about PHED employee(s) to others*. The significant average (mean = 3.14, SD = 1.16) supports the idea that respondents generally speak favorably about PHED staff. CR4: *I spoke positively of PHED services to others*, which has a strong average (mean = 3.07, SD = 1.21), suggesting that a considerable number of respondents share positive views about PHED's services. CR5: *I recommended the use of electricity from PHED to family members*, reflected in a high average (mean = 3.26, SD = 1.16), indicating that most respondents find this statement valid. CL6: *I recommended PHED Disco to acquaintances for electricity*, which has a significant average (mean = 3.11, SD = 1.08), implying that most respondents agree with this recommendation. CL7: *I recommended PHED to close personal friends for electricity*, with a notable average (mean = 3.20, SD = 1.14), indicating that many respondents affirm this statement as accurate.

The analysis results show that PHED customers are generally inclined to promote the company through word-of-mouth, recommending it to friends, family, and acquaintances. This suggests that PHED management should continue to enhance customer service to improve marketing effectiveness and increase shareholder value.

d. Structural Model Results

Based on a priori specification of parameters, a one factor model was specified in which the indicators CS1: *My feelings towards PHED are very positive*, CS2: *I feel good about coming to PHED office for the services I am looking for*, CS3: *Overall, I am satisfied with PHED and the service they provide*, CS4: *I feel satisfied that PHED produce the best results that can be achieved for me*, CS5: *The extent to which PHED has solved my problems is satisfying*, and had a range of 1 to 5, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of customer satisfaction. The population variance-covariance matrix was analysed using AMOS 24.0, and a maximum likelihood minimization function (factor loadings and error variances are provided in Table 4). Goodness of fit was evaluated using the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), probability of close fit (PCLOSE), and normed fit index (NFI).

Table 4. First Order Measurement Model Analysis of Moments of Truth

Model	Chi-Square(df), Significance	χ^2/df	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	Variable	Factor Loading Estimates	Error VAR
Moments of Truth	(5df) =4.431, P=0.489	0.886	0.987	1.003	1.000	0.000	MT1	0.71	0.52
							MT2	0.67	0.67
							MT3	0.78	0.41
							MT4	0.64	0.47
							MT5	0.63	0.66

Source: Amos 24.0 output on research data, 2020

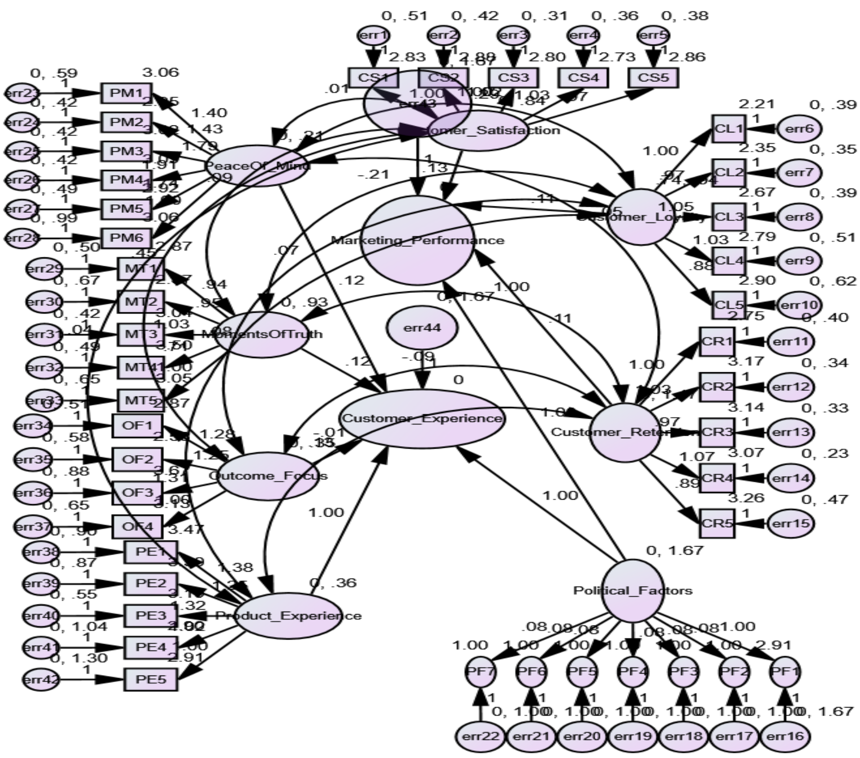

Figure 11. Structural Model (Linking the Hypotheses)

DISCUSSION

The initial hypothesis (Ho:1) posits that there is no significant correlation between Peace of Mind and Customer Satisfaction. However, as shown in Table 5, there is a positive and significant correlation between Peace of Mind and Customer Satisfaction among electricity distribution companies in South-South Nigeria (β=0.79, t=0.75, p=0.008). Therefore, Ho:1 is not upheld. The findings suggest that Peace of Mind is a strong predictor of Customer Satisfaction in this context. Statistically, an increase of one standard deviation in Peace of Mind corresponds to an increase of 0.79 standard deviations in Customer Satisfaction. Conversely, a one standard deviation increase in Customer Satisfaction leads to a 0.75 standard deviation increase in Peace of Mind. The regression coefficient for Peace of Mind in predicting Customer Satisfaction is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level of significance (two-tailed).

Table 5. Summary of Result on the Tests of Hypotheses Ho:1; Ho:2 and Ho3

S/N	Mediation Stage	Hypothesis (Null Hypothesis)	Std. Beta	Modi-fied Beta	S.E	C.R	P	Remark	Decision
1	X →Y (Ho:1)	There is no significant relationship between Peace of Mind and Customer Satisfaction.	0.68	0.79	0.23	1.98	0.008	Positive and Significant	Not supported
2	X →Y (Ho:2)	There is no significant relationship between Peace of Mind and Customer Loyalty.	0.71	0.88	0.16	3.92	0.032	Positive and Significant	Not supported
3	X →Y (Ho:3)	There is no significant relationship between Peace of Mind and Customer Retention.	0.67	0.86	0.15	4.90	0.000	Moderate and Significant	Not supported

Source: Amos 24.0 output on research data, 2020

The second hypothesis (Ho:2) posits that there is no significant correlation between Peace of Mind and Customer Loyalty. However, the data in Table 5 indicates a positive and significant relationship between Peace of Mind and Customer Loyalty for electricity distribution companies in South-South Nigeria (β=0.88, t=3.92, p=0.032). Consequently, Ho:2 is not supported. This implies that a sense of peace of mind among consumers of electricity distribution companies in South-South Nigeria contributes to their loyalty. Statistically, an increase of 1 standard deviation in peace of mind corresponds to an increase of 0.88 standard deviations in customer loyalty. In other terms, a 1 standard deviation rise in

customer loyalty is associated with a 3.92 increase in peace of mind. The regression coefficient for peace of mind in predicting customer loyalty is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 significance level (two-tailed).
The third hypothesis (Ho:3) asserts that there is no significant relationship between Peace of Mind and Customer Retention. However, Table 5 also reveals a moderate and significant relationship between peace of mind and customer retention for electricity distribution companies in South-South Nigeria ($\beta=0.86$, $t=4.90$, $p=0.000$). Therefore, Ho:3 is also not supported. This indicates that peace of mind serves as a strong predictor of customer retention in these companies. Statistically, a 1 standard deviation increase in peace of mind leads to a 0.86 standard deviation increase in customer retention. In simpler terms, a 1 unit increase in customer retention corresponds to a 4.90 increase in peace of mind. The regression coefficient for peace of mind in predicting customer retention is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 significance level (two-tailed).

These findings highlight peace of mind as a crucial predictor and factor influencing the marketing performance of electricity distribution companies in South-South Nigeria. As a result, all three null hypotheses suggesting no significant relationships between peace of mind and various measures of marketing performance are rejected due to the absence of statistical evidence to the contrary. The results imply that the expertise and capability of electricity distribution companies to enhance and innovate their service delivery mechanisms play a vital role in boosting customer satisfaction, fostering customer loyalty, and ultimately ensuring customer retention.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overreaching goal of the study is to identify the connection between Customer Experience (which comprises peace of mind, moments of truth, outcome focus and product experience) and Marketing Performance (comprising of customer satisfaction, customer retention and loyalty) of electricity distribution companies in the South-South of Nigeria. The findings indicate that customer experience is key to marketing performance, in line with Imran, K., Ruchi, J.G. and Zillur, R. (2015), who operationalized customer experience, using peace of mind, moments of truth, outcome focus and product experience, as a facet of the internationalization of service-related firms.

A possible explanation of this finding is that customer experience – as expressed by the electricity consumer's internal and subjective response to any direct or indirect contact with the PHED across multiple touch points - can lead to positive outcomes such as marketing performance. This finding is in agreement with the preposition of Payne, Storbacka and Frow (2008) who posited that service providers can enhance customer experience by supporting customer learning and developing processes that acknowledge cognition, emotions, and behaviour. The seemingly insufficient adaptation of customer experience by some electricity distribution companies in Nigeria, could be traced to the assertion made by Khanna (2015), suggesting while the demand for electricity is a derived demand by households for lighting, cooking, and heating and by firms to operate equipment to produce goods and services, Nigeria still generates below 5,000 MW of power for the population of over 180 million people, thus compelling the distribution companies to adopt several load management strategies like energy management (load shedding and power rotation) to assuage customer agitations.

Recommendations

From the results of the studies of customer experience and marketing performance of electricity distribution companies in Nigeria which suggest that the evidence of work/expertise and the electricity distribution companies' ability to develop and update their distribution mechanisms of delivering its services plays a critical role in enhancing its level of customer satisfaction, the underlisted measures are hereby recommended:

1. Peace of mind drives and enhances the electricity distribution company's capacity for developing customer satisfaction strategies which are key to customer satisfaction in the South-south of Nigeria. Peace of mind implies speedy resolution of customer issues which leads to customer loyalty and ability of Discos staff to supply independent advice to customers which dovetails to customer retention.
2. Moments of truth are critical to the marketing performance of electricity distribution companies in South-South Nigeria and implies that moments of truth drive the customer satisfaction, loyalty and ultimate retention in PHED. The Company should develop strategies towards ensuring customer satisfaction through employee training to improve customer service skills, thereby promoting customer loyalty and this will lead to customer retention.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study was carried out at the micro level comprising of electricity consumers of the distribution company covering the four states of South-south, Nigeria with a focus on the relationship between customer experience and marketing performance of electricity distribution companies. Customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and customer retention are the only indicators of marketing performance used in this study. There are other indicators which are not used, and future study should focus on these indicators.

Again, only electricity Distribution Companies in the South-south region of Nigeria was chosen in the electricity industry leaving others. Since the study was domiciled in this region, what is obtainable in other parts of the country and the larger world is yet to be made known. Thus, the generalizability of the findings of the study will be limited. This means, the findings are unique and can be applied only within the South-south region of the country.

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