

VALUE CO-CREATION ADOPTION AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY OF APPAREL DESIGNERS IN NIGERIA; THE MODERATING ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORK

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the influence of social media on the relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of apparel designers in Nigeria. Data for the study was gathered through structured questionnaires distributed to 100 potential and actual customers of the Top 10 Rated Nigerian Apparel Designers using technology to grow their business. The data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) to test the hypothesis and determine the degree of relationship between the value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty while Partial Correlation Statistical Tool was used to determine the moderating role of social media network on the relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of the studied apparel Designers. The findings revealed a positive and strong relationship between the variables. Based on the findings, the study concluded that; there is a significant relationship between value co-creation and customer loyalty and social media networks significantly influence the relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of apparel designers in Nigeria. Built on the conclusions, the study recommended that: Apparel designers should continue utilizing social media platforms to engage existing customers and attract potential ones. Apparel designers that seeks to build and sustain customer loyalty should consider the adoption of value co-creation imperative. Apparel designers should continue incorporating customer reviews on the quality of product offerings, given ideas, experience expressed, and information based on their taste and preferences in the value co-creating process to gain and sustain competitive advantage within the industry locally and globally.

Keywords: Value Co-creation Adoption, Customer Loyalty, Social Media Networks, Apparel Designers

INTRODUCTION

The rapidly evolving customers' taste and preferences, globalization of cultures and innovations in technology, and dynamic nature of the contemporary business environment with new business concepts, formats, and activities of competitors have made it imperative for apparel designers to adopt strategies that elicit customer loyalty and confer sustainable competitive advantage coupled (Idenedo & Ebebuwa, 2022; Idenedo & Jennifer, 2022). Customer loyalty as expressed by Sima and Elham (2015) as in Idenedo and Ebebuwa (2022), is customers' predisposition to prefer one brand and its products over those of competitors, based on the satisfaction they derive from using the brand's products. Customer loyalty is also viewed as the attitude of customers to prefer a brand due to satisfaction derived from using that brand or other psychological, economic, or social reasons (Otite & Dida, 2017).

Singh and Khan (2012) and Otite and Dida (2017) suggests that customers' exhibition of loyalty is anchored on their positive experiences with an organization's service contacts regardless of whether the organization has the best product, price, or service delivery. Similarly, Sadia (2012) asserts that a strong positive customer experience increases customers' loyalty and creates hopes of achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Value co-creation according to Paulo et al. (2020), creates an experiential environment in which consumers can have an active dialogue with an organization or allows the customers to co-construct the service experience to suit their context. This assertion coheres with Maltzahn (2016) that emphasized dialogue, access, risk-return, and transparency as

the most pertinent aspects involved in the process of value co-creation and these will make companies more communicative and also more assertive regarding customer's needs and desires. On these statements, this study seeks to explore the extent of relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of apparel designers in Nigeria. Social media networks are assumed to have the capacity to moderate the relationship between value co-creation and customer loyalty; as it provides platforms for current and potential customers to easily interact with apparel designers thereby facilitating the exchange of information between them. Utilization of social media networks decreases information asymmetry and barriers to time and location for apparel designers-consumer interactions (Farzin, et al., 2022).

Several studies have been carried out by different scholars on the connection between value co-creation and other variables in different sectors and different levels/scopes of analysis. For instance, Farzin, et al., (2022) studied social network marketing, value co-creation, and consumer purchase behavior: by combining PLS-SEM and NCA. Mimmi (2022) examined the levels of co-creation; how sustainable fashion companies create value with their customers. Gaopeng et al. (2021) ascertained co-design: a novel approach to creating value-added products in the creative fashion industry. Mehran et al. (2021) determined the influence of value co-creation on customer loyalty, behavioral intention, and customer satisfaction in emerging markets. Ercsey (2017) considered the role of customers' involvement in value co-creation behavior is value co-creation the source of competitive advantage. Igwe et al. (2020) investigated customer involvement practices and the competitive advantage of Apparel Designers in Port Harcourt. Marian (2014) examined the co-creation of value by open innovation: Unlocking new sources of competitive advantage. Nathalie (2013) looked at co-creation: obtaining an advantage through the involvement of consumers.

Though the mentioned studies examined value co-creation in connection with other variables, relatively, none have considered it directly with customer loyalty and social media networks as a latent moderator for the link between value co-creation and customer loyalty in their studies. This current study therefore, bridged this perceived gap in extant literature by exploring the extent of relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of apparel designers in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sociological baseline theories

This study on value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of apparel designers in Nigeria mediated by social media networks is premised on the resource-based theory and the theory of core competency. The resource-based view theory was proposed by Wernerfelt (1984) specifically to determine organization's resources that can be effectively and efficiently engaged to gain and sustain an edge over competing brands or companies in an industry. The theory suggests that performance is based on the resource profile of the firm and explains why some companies enjoy superior financial performance (Winnie & Francis 2016; Idenedo, et al., 2020). For firms to achieve a sustainable competitive edge, they must possess key resources, capabilities, and attributes that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and not substitutable which are in turn effectively deployed in the chosen markets (Baker & Sinkula, 2005). Customers can be seen as a resource for firm innovation as they provide new product ideas and solutions (Anna & Fang, 2018). An apparel designer that involves its customers through co-creation in her value creation will be better positioned to outsell its competitors. Involving the customer in the value creation process (Idenedo, et al., 2020) will bring about superior and un-substitutable capabilities; and enable the firm to achieve a sustainable competitive edge (Winnie & Francis, 2016). The theory of core competencies was put forward by Prahalad and Hamel (1990). The theory argues that companies already compete during the creation of competencies and not only later in the market for products. It is claimed that instead of structuring a company around diversified business units and end-products, a company should be structured around a few core competencies because, core competencies are extremely difficult to copy and can easily be leveraged on other markets (Lavina, 2014; Idenedo, et al., 2020).

A core competency allows a company to be flexible, respond to a rapidly evolving environment, and be prepared for the future. Value co-creation may be viewed as an apparel designer's competence because the involvement of the customers will bring about customer loyalty (Idenedo, et al., 2020).

Concept of Value Co-Creation

There has been a paradigm shift of customers being seen as passive receivers of an offering towards the center of focus and being more active partners in value creation (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Improved technology adoption and social media platform have made consumers more information, choices, and opportunities now than ever, increasingly pushing companies to a customer-centric business approach (Mimmi, 2022).

Value co-creation as a concept became popular through the publication of scholars such as Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), the introduction of the service-dominant logic (S-D logic) by Vargo and Lusch (2004), Bharti and Agrawal (2018), and Merz et al. (2018) while value co-creation introduced by Kambil et al. (1999). The term co-creation according to Bharti and Agrawal (2018), is a collaborative engagement process facilitated through physical or virtual interaction in a formal or informal network between two or more two entities through participation for joint value creation or solution building for self or others. Bharti et al. (2015) as in Mimmi (2022) alleged value co-creation as an activity or a philosophy where an organization collaborates with its customers to meet the customers' needs and acquire a long-term relationship while working toward a shared goal and creating.

Co-creation of value is determined in use through activities and interactions of customers with the service provider and other customers (Ercsey, 2017). Thus, customers play active, albeit varying roles in the provision of service and the realization of benefits (Jillian et al., 2015). According to Ercsey (2017) as in Igwe et al. (2020), a consumer activity during the process of value co-creation and support of the activity during the co-creation process enables service providers to tailor their offering to the needs and preferences of the customer. Co-creation is mutually beneficial; it gives value to customers and firms (Idenedo, et al., 2020).

Ercsey (2017) outlined different roles customers play in value co-creation: Innovator, source of competence, co-producer, and promoter. Customers as innovators contribute ideas and knowledge to new product design. As a source of competence, customers define value for themselves and co-create it. In the role of co-producers, customer's co-produce products by contributing to the development of the design specification, quality control, and marketing, while as promoters, customers advocate and spread positive word-of-mouth about the brand or product (Ercsey, 2017). Co-creation is an imperative strategy to elicit customer loyalty in the apparel designing sector because it enables firms to identify what the value of a product could be and help customers understand what is possible (Korhonen & Kaarela, 2015); and identify latent needs and find solutions that would profit both parties and create a better world (Idenedo, et al., 2020).

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty has been rated by scholars (Bagdonienė & Jakštaitė, 2007; Khan, 2013; Idenedo & Goodie-Okio, 2022; Idenedo & Ebebuwa, 2022; Idenedo & Wali, 2022) based on research as the highest valuable result of marketing efforts, thus the improvement on customer loyalty has become an imperative focus of achievement for every organization. It is a win-win relationship for both the organization and the customer (Khan, 2013) if the organization can win the confidence of the customer through its product offering and service delivery quality. Customer loyalty is not won by chance; research has it that, it is a function of satisfying customer's expectations because customers compare their subjective perceptions after purchasing a product/service with their expectations before the purchase decision (AchieveGlobal, 2008; Kotler & Keller, 2009; Khan, 2013; Idenedo & Goodie-Okio, 2022). This comparison according to Kotler and Keller (2009) leads to a situation of satisfaction if satisfaction exceeds expectations (customer enthusiasm). Though, the nexus between customer satisfaction and loyalty is not unswervingly comparative because the evaluation of

satisfaction relative to the performance of the service provider or product offered differs with customers (Kotler & Keller, 2009). This implied that customers can be satisfied but for different reasons.

Customer loyalty as asserted by Bruhn (2001) is part of a cause-effect sequence that involves processes from the initial contact with the client to the economic success of the organization. According to Bruhn (2001), the stages begin with the customer's first contact with the tendered by the purchase of a product or service, compare previous expectations with the product or service, and assess the level of satisfaction. If the customer's assessment is favorable or customer expectations have been exceeded, customer loyalty will be triggered and that will build his/her trust for the organization's offerings and willingness to patronize the same product/service in the future. The mentioned sequences transpire into loyalty when this purchasing conviction becomes a repeated purchase and the product or service is being recommended to other potential customers and end when it has resulted in the economic success of the enterprise (Bruhn, 2001).

Similarly, Daffy (2009) as in Idenedo and Goodie-Okio (2022) defined loyalty as a physical and emotional commitment given by customers in exchange for meeting their expectations. Budică and Barbu (2010) explained the emotion mentioned in Daffy's (2009) definition of loyalty as the positive or negative feelings brought to mind by an object or idea. Customer loyalty is customers' predisposition to prefer one brand and its products over those of the competitors, based on the satisfaction they derive from using the brand's products or other psychological, economic, or social reasons (Didia & Idenedo, 2017; Idenedo & Goodie-Okio, 2022). Customer loyalty encourages consumers to shop more frequently, and consistently, and often informs an increase in the volume or value of purchases (Sima & Elham, 2015). Customer loyalty is the willingness of customers to purchase the company's products, instead of those of competing brands; and maintain a profitable relationship with the preferred brand (Kendal, 2012; Mohammad et al., 2012; Inamullah, 2013).

Daffy (2009) established an equation ($Loyalty = Satisfaction + Affinity + Involvement$) to explain loyalty. Daffy (2009) explained further that, to gain customer loyalty, the organization should make sure its products or services meet and exceed customer expectations. By involvement, Daffy implies a relationship between the organization and the customer that will enhance their decision quality based on feedback from customers while affinity occurs when there is satisfaction and involvement. Daffy's loyalty equation was the premise on the notion that an increase in customer loyalty is possible if all resources and processes are focused on customers' needs and expectations and involving them in the process of discovering their needs and co-creating value makes them feel appreciated (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

Social Media Network

It will not be inappropriate to associate the rapidly evolving customers' tastes and preferences with the globalization of cultures and innovations in technology. Social media as an innovation in technology based on Kaplan and Haenlein's (2010) definition, has impinged and modified users' cultures, tastes, and preferences as regards fashion design. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Similarly, Kietzmann et al. (2011) considered it a highly interactive internet-based platform that permits users to share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. While Paris et al. (2010) as in Sahni and Appiah (2019) described social media as a second generation of web development and design features that its websites facilitate communication, information sharing, and collaboration among people. Anchored in the mentioned definitions, Sahni and Appiah (2019) inferred that, social media websites permit two-way communications through the sharing of information and relationship building amongst users that is facilitated by second-generation web technology and its attendant design characteristics. Social medial networks include; Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Myspace, and others. These social media platforms are

highly interactive internet-based networks. Thus they are used by individuals and organizations to engage existing customers and attract potential ones.

Value Co-creation Adoption and Customer Loyalty

To establish a hypothesized relationship between the variables of the study results the following previous studies were considered. For instance, Farzin, et al., (2022) studied social network marketing, value co-creation, and consumer purchase behavior: by combining PLS-SEM and NCA. The study revealed that social networking marketing positively and significantly influenced economic, enjoyment, and relational values. Mimmi (2022) examined the levels of co-creation; how sustainable fashion companies create value with their customers. The study shows that sustainable fashion companies implement and utilize co-creation practices with the customers at various stages of the economic, environmental, and social levels of their business models. Gaopeng et al. (2021) ascertained co-design: a novel approach to creating value-added products in the creative fashion industry. The study result demonstrates that customer involvement, co-creating design method, and collaborative product development mechanism are the essential aspects of the implementation of co-design in the fashion industry. Ercsey (2017) considered the role of customers' involvement in value co-creation behavior is value co-creation the source of competitive advantage? The survey revealed that involvement influences the customers' mandatory behavior and volunteer behavior when working on a co-creation value. Igwe et al. (2020) investigated customer involvement practices and the competitive advantage of Apparel Designers in Port Harcourt. The study observed that customer involvement practices have a positive and statistically significant relationship with competitive advantage through co-creation and co-design. Nathalie (2013) looked at co-creation: obtaining an advantage through the involvement of consumers. The results show that co-creation can have a positive effect on consumer perceptions. There especially appears to be a positive relation between co-creation and perceived customer orientation and product advantage. Based on the mentioned empirical studies, the study hypothesized that:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of apparel designers in Nigeria.

The Moderating Role of Social Media on the Relationship between Value Co-creation Adoption and Customer Loyalty

As earlier stated, social media networks are assumed to have the capacity to moderate the relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty; as it provides platforms for current and potential customers to easily interact with companies thereby facilitating the exchange of information between them. Utilization of social media networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn) and many others, enhance interactive communications, build stronger relationships with users, offer an opportunity for customers to contribute to the value creation process, and eventually drives customer loyalty (Masayuki et al., 2018). Social media has been proven to be an efficient platform (Kaplan & Haenlein 2011) for firms to communicate, interact and connect with their prospective and actual customers which in turn provides boulevards for customers to review the quality of products offered by firms, contribute valuable ideas, experience, and information based on their taste and preferences in the value co-creating process (Sahni & Kenneth, 2019). As noted by Junic and Hwanho (2019), social media as a channel not only offers new opportunities for companies to innovate, which can then lead to their improved credibility, success, and sustainability, but social media platforms also offer the possibility of collaborating with consumers and enhancing consumer loyalty. On this premise, the study hypothesized that:

Ho2: Social medial networks do not influence the relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of apparel designers in Nigeria.

This study is built on the assumption operationalized below.

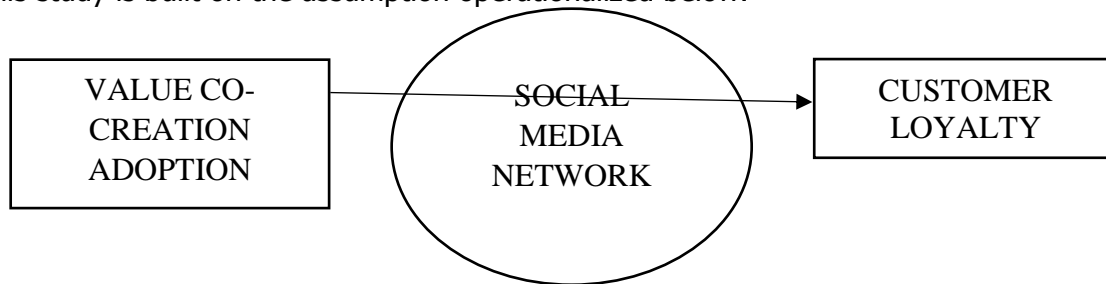


Figure 1. Operational Conceptual Framework of Value Co-creation Adoption and Customer Loyalty; Moderated by Social Media Network.

Source: Desk Reviewed, (2023).

METHODOLOGY

This adopted a correlational research design. The top 10 Rated Nigerian Apparel Designers using technology to grow their business constitute the population of the study. In determining the sample size for this study a consensus was taken, 10 potential and actual customers of each of the top 10 rated Apparel Designers in Nigeria were randomly selected from the Apparel Designer's social media platform thereby making the number of respondents that participated in the study a hundred (100). The choice of using the Apparel Designer's actual and potential customers for the study is hinged on the conviction that they are better placed to provide an answer to the research instrument. A questionnaire was utilized as the instrument of primary data collection and the questionnaire was administered using a monkey survey App. Respondents were required to tick from 1-5 on a Likert scale, where 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= neutral; 4= agree; and 5= strongly agree. To justify the study instrument, a comprehensive reliability test was conducted, with a threshold of 0.7 set by Nunnally (1978); while the opinion of scholars and practitioners with relevant experience on the study constructs was used to validate the instrument. Table 1 below displays the summary of the test of reliability.

Table 1: Result of Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Items
Value Co-creation Adoption	0.756	5
Customer Loyalty	0.733	5
Social Media Networks	0.735	5

Source: SPSS Output of The Influence of Social Media on the Relationship between Value Co-creation Adoption and Customer Loyalty (2023).

It is expected that given the same background, the same results would be achieved if the questionnaire is re-distributed to the same, or distributed to a different set of respondents. This demonstrates the reliability of the research instrument and the integrity of the data obtained. A correlation model, specifically the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was applied to test the hypothesis and determine the degree of relationship between the value co-creation and customer loyalty while Partial Correlation Statistical Tool was used to determine the moderating role of social media network on the relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of the studied apparel Designers. The statistical analysis was done with the aid of SPSS version 22.0.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

Table 2: Questionnaire Distribution

Numbers	Questionnaire	Percentage
No. Sent out	100	100.0
No. Returned	93	93.0
No. Not Returned	7	07.0

Source: SPSS Output of The Influence of Social Media on the Relationship between Value Co-creation Adoption and Customer Loyalty (2023).

Table 2 shows that questionnaires were given to one hundred (100) respondents representing (100%). Ninety-three (93) of the said sums of questionnaires were filled and successfully returned representing (93%) while seven (7) of the said sums were not returned also representing (7%). It must be stated that the analysis is based on the ninety-three (93) returned questionnaires from the respondents of the study.

The key to the interpretation of the strength of the relationship between the variables of the study considered appropriate is the categorization set by Dunn (2001). The interpretation process was subject to a 0.01 (two-tail) level of significance. Positive sign connote a positive relationship, while negative sign means a negative relationship

Table 2: Range of Correlation (r) Values and the Corresponding Level of Relationship

Range of Relationship values	Descriptive Relationship	level	of Remark
0.00 - 0.19	Very Low		Very Weak
0.20 - 0.39	Low		Weak
0.40 - 0.59	Moderate		Moderate
0.60 - 0.79	High		Strong
0.80 - 1.0	Very High		Very Strong

Source: Categorization set by Dunn (2001)

Hypotheses Testing

Pearson's Correlation Decision Rule

The null hypotheses should be rejected and conclude a significant relationship if the probability value (PV) < (0.05) Significance level. The null hypotheses should be accepted and conclude an insignificant relationship if the probability value (PV) > (0.05) Significance level

Table 3: Correlation Analysis of Value Co-Creation Adoption and Customer Loyalty Correlations

Control Variables		Value Co-Creation Adoption	Customer Loyalty
Value Co-Creation Adoption	Pearson Correlation	1	0.737**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	93	93
Customer Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	0.737**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	93	93

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

Source: SPSS Output of the Influence of Social Media on the Relationship between Value Co-creation Adoption and Customer Loyalty (2023)

Table 3 shows that Pearson's Correlation (r) = 0. 737**, this value is high, indicating a strong relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient means that a positive relationship exists between them. This implies that an

increase in customer loyalty is associated with the adoption of value co-creation in the studied apparel designers in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of apparel designers in Nigeria

As shown above, the PV is (0.000), and this value is < (0.05) significance level, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected and the researchers conclude that a significant relationship exists between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of apparel designers in Nigeria.

The Partial Correlation Decision Rule

There is a significant moderating influence if the variation between the Zero Order Partial Correlation (ZPC) and the Controlled Partial Correlation (CPC) > (0.01).

Partial Correlation of the influence of Social Media Networks on the Relationship between Value Co-Creation Adoption and Customers Loyalty

Correlations

Control Variables			Value Creation Adoption	Co-Customers Loyalty	Social Media Networks
Value Adoption	Co-Creation	Correlation	1.000	.737	.601
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		Df	0	92	92
-none ^a	Customers Loyalty	Correlation	.737	1.000	.699
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		Df	92	0	92
Social Media Networks	Social Media Networks	Correlation	.601	.699	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		Df	92	92	0
Social Media Networks	Value Adoption	Correlation	1.000	.688	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		Df	0	92	
Social Media Networks	Customers Loyalty	Correlation	.688	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	
		Df	92	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

Source: SPSS Output of The Influence of Social Media on the Relationship between Value Co-creation Adoption and Customer Loyalty (2023).

The statistics in the Table 4 established that a strong significant and positive relationship exists between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty $r = (0.737)$, $PV = (0.000) < (0.05)$. The table also shows that social media networks also have a significant and direct relationship with value co-creation adoption and customers loyalty $r = (0.601)$, $PV = (0.000) < (0.05)$ and with customers loyalty $r = (0.699)$, $PV = (0.000) < (0.05)$ the positive sign of the r value is an indication that when social media networks are efficiently and effectively engaged, value co-creation adoption and customers loyalty also improves.

Hypothesis 2

HO₂: Social medial networks do not influence the relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of apparel designers in Nigeria.

The Zero Order Partial Correlation (ZPC) = (0.737), and Controlled Partial Correlation (CPC) = (0.699). The difference between the Zero Order Partial Correlation (ZPC) and the Controlled Partial Correlation (CPC) $(0.737 - 0.688) = (0.49 > 0.01)$ hence the null hypotheses were rejected and the researchers conclude that; there is a significant relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty and social media networks significantly influence the relationship between value co-creation adoption and customers loyalty.

The positive sign of the difference is an indication that social media networks assert a positive influence on the relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty.

Discussion of Findings

This study hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty and social media does not significantly influence the relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of apparel designers in Nigeria. However, the tested hypotheses as exhibited in Table 4 established that a strong and positive relationship exists between value co-creation and customer loyalty $r = (0.737)$, $PV = (0.000) < (0.05)$. The table also shows that social media networks also have a significant and direct relationship with value co-creation adoption and customers loyalty $r = (0.601)$, $PV = (0.000) < (0.05)$, and with customers loyalty $r = (0.699)$, $PV = (0.000) < (0.05)$. These findings cohered with previous studies on value co-creation with other variables. For instance, Farzin, et al., (2022) studied social network marketing, value co-creation, and consumer purchase behavior: by combining PLS-SEM and NCA. The study revealed that social networking marketing positively and significantly influenced economic, enjoyment, and relational values. Mimmi (2022) examined the levels of co-creation; how sustainable fashion companies create value with their customers. The study shows that sustainable fashion companies implement and utilize co-creation practices with the customers at various stages of the economic, environmental, and social levels of their business models. Gaopeng et al. (2021) ascertained co-design: a novel approach to creating value-added products in the creative fashion industry. The study result demonstrates that customer involvement, co-creating design method, and collaborative product development mechanism are the essential aspects of the implementation of co-design in the fashion industry. Ercsey (2017) considered the role of customers' involvement in value co-creation behavior is value co-creation the source of competitive advantage? The survey revealed that involvement influences the customers' mandatory behavior and volunteer behavior when working on a co-creation value. Igwe et al. (2020) investigated customer involvement practices and the competitive advantage of Apparel Designers in Port Harcourt. The study observed that customer involvement practices have a positive and statistically significant relationship with competitive advantage through co-creation and co-design.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study concludes that; there is a significant relationship between value co-creation and customer loyalty and social media networks significantly influence the relationship between value co-creation adoption and customer loyalty of apparel designers in Nigeria. Built on the conclusions, the study recommended that:

Apparel designers should continue utilizing social media platforms to engage existing customers and attract potential ones.

Apparel designers that seek to build and sustain customer loyalty should consider the adoption of value co-creation as imperative.

Apparel designers should continue incorporating customers' reviews on the quality of products offered, given ideas, experience expressed, and information based on their taste and preferences in the value co-creating process to gain and sustain competitive advantage within the industry locally and globally.

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