

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT AND REPEAT PATRONAGE OF BOTTLED  
WATER PRODUCERS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT**

*This paper explored customer experience management and repeat patronage of bottled water producers in Rivers State. The aim of their study was to determine the relationship between customer experience management (customer focus, interaction management and product improvement) and repeat patronage (repurchase intention and repeat purchase) of bottled water producers in Rivers State. The study adopted the positivist research philosophy and correlational research design. The population of this study consisted of 100 managerial staff drawn from all the 25 bottled water companies registered with the Water Producers Association of Nigeria (WAPAN), Rivers State Chapter. The census sampling technique was employed where all the members of the population were used as sample for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The data collected were analyzed statistically while the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient ( $\rho$ ) was used to test the hypotheses. The SPSS software program version 23.0 was used to aid the bivariate analysis. The findings revealed that customer focus has a significant relationship with repurchase intention and repeat purchase of bottled water brands in Rivers State. The study also revealed that interaction management has a significant relationship with repurchase intention and repeat purchase of bottled water brands in Rivers State. The study equally revealed that product improvement has a significant relationship with repurchase intention and repeat purchase of bottled water brands in Rivers State. Based on the findings, it was concluded that customer experience management such as customer focus, interaction management and product improvement are significant predictors of repeat patronage of bottled water producers in Rivers State. The study therefore recommended that companies should put their customers first beyond every other thing by focusing on their needs and expectations, interacting with them regularly to identify their changing needs and preferences and continuously improving the quality of products offered to give customers a pleasant and memorable experience that will lead to repeat patronage of their brand.*

**Keywords:** *Customer experience management, customer focus, interaction management, repeat patronage, repurchase intention and repeat purchase.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The bottled water industry in Nigeria is one of the fastest growing industries in Nigeria. This growth is manifested in the increasing number of bottled water producers in the country. The increasing demand for bottled water and the small amount of capital required to run the business have made this industry more attractive to small and medium sized entrepreneurs. Many entrepreneurs have established bottled water companies across the major cities in the country to meet the growing demand for clean, treated and safe water. Despite the large number of bottled water producers in the country, more and more bottled water producing companies are being established in the major cities of the country (Frow & Payne, 2007). This growth of bottled water producers across the country has increased the level of competition in this industry as every bottled water producer is intensifying their effort to increase repeat patronage of their brand (Koçoglu & Kirmaci, 2012). To increase repeat patronage, bottled water producers need to provide customers with a pleasant and memorable experience which can be achieved through effective customer experience management.

Customer experience management deals with how products and services are formed around the customers' expectations and how business leaders can align their company's functions to maximize the quality of customer experience (Uusitalo, 2012). It involves tracking, overseeing and organizing all interactions between

a customer and the company throughout the customer lifecycle (Rouse & Horwitz, 2018). The aim of customer experience management is to optimize the customer experience through gaining the loyalty of the current customers in a multi-channel environment and ensure they are completely satisfied (Frow & Payne, 2007). It also helps in creating advocates of their current customers with potential customers as a word of mouth form of marketing (Frow & Payne, 2007). Customer experience management is mostly built around surveys, observations and listening to customer's point of view. It focuses on understanding what the customer thinks about a company by collecting data about customer interactions with their product while they are still occurring or immediately after use (Meyer & Schwager in Uusitalo, 2012). It seeks to capture customers' subjective impressions about the company's product via customer feedback after use of the product.

While managing customer experience, companies need to focus on the current experience which the customer had with their product and not the past experience with their product. Managers must try to understand the customer emotions on the different touch points, and offer quality product that will give customer a positive and memorable experience. To achieve this, a company needs to adjust its work systems, structure and processes to reflect customer-centric priority (Meyer & Schwager, 2003). Making adjustments to the work systems and processes would help to improve the product quality. After adjustments in the work systems and processes, the experience which customer had with the product is compared or measured against the customer expectations in all areas of contact with the product (Imbug et al, 2018). Rae, in Plessis and Vries (2016) argued that a company that is determined to succeed in managing customer experience must adopt a mixture of strategies including the integration of modern technology, orchestrating business models, brand management and executive commitment.

Customer experience management can help to increase repeat patronage of firms. According to Richardson (2010), proper management of customer experience can help to increase repeat patronage and reduce the rate at which customers switch from one brand to another. Schmitt (2003) noted that a company that manages customer experience effectively stands the chance of providing positive and memorable experience to its customers, increase repeat patronage and achieve brand loyalty. Palmer (2010) argued that a company that manages customer experience effectively addresses the individual customer's needs and creates a positive and memorable experience to customers which motivates them to make repeat patronage and purchases. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the relationship between customer experience management and repeat patronage of bottled water producers in Rivers State.

### **Statement of Problem**

The bottled water industry in Rivers State is highly competitive due to the large number of bottled water producers in the State. This has increased the rate at which customers switch from one brand to another. The frequencies with which customers switch from one brand to another has become a source of worry to bottled water producers in Rivers State. Some bottled water producers in the State are finding it difficult to hold onto their customers and increase repeat patronage. Some bottled water producers have lost reasonable number of their customers to their rivals due to their inability to provide quality products that will give customers a positive and memorable experience (Agyekum et al, 2015). It is assumed that customer experience management will give customers a positive experience and increase repeat patronage of bottled water brand in Rivers State. However, it is not yet certain whether customer experience management can potentially increase repeat patronage of bottled water brand in Rivers State as empirical studies that examined the relationship between customer experience management and repeat patronage of bottled water producers in Rivers State are scanty. This has created a gap in literature which this study is designed to fill and contribute to existing knowledge on the subject matter.

### **Conceptual framework**

The operational conceptual framework of customer experience management and repeat patronage of bottled water producers is shown in figure 1 below:

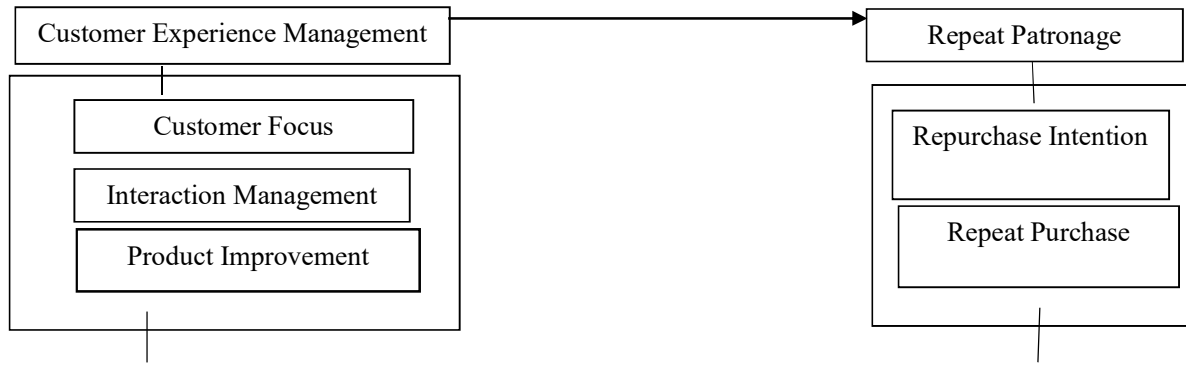


Fig 1: Conceptual framework of customer experience management and repeat patronage of bottle water producers in Rivers State.

### Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between customer experience management and repeat patronage of bottled water producers in Rivers State. To achieve this aim, the study intends to accomplish the following specific objectives:

1. To ascertain the relationship between customer focus and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State.
2. To determine the relationship between customer focus and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State.
3. To find out the relationship between interaction management and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State.
4. To ascertain the relationship between interaction management and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State.
5. To determine the relationship between product improvement and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State.
6. To ascertain the relationship between product improvement and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State.

### Research Questions

Efforts were made to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does customer focus relate to re-patronage intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does customer focus relate to repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does interaction management relate to re-patronage intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State?
4. To what extent does interaction management relate to repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State?
5. To what extent does product improvement relate to re-patronage intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State?
6. To what extent does product improvement relate to repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State?

### Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to guide this study:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between customer focus and re-patronage intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State.

- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between customer focus and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between interaction management and re-patronage intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State.
- Ho<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant relationship between interaction management and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State.
- Ho<sub>5</sub>: There is no significant relationship between product improvement and re-patronage intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State.
- Ho<sub>6</sub>: There is no significant relationship between product improvement and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **Concept of Customer Experience Management**

Customer experience management is a business strategy designed to manage the customer experience and gives benefits to both retailers and customers (Grewal et al, 2009). It captures the instant response of the customer to its encounters with the brand or company. Rouse and Horwitz (2018) described customer experience management as the process that companies use to oversee and track all interactions with a customer during their relationship. This involves the strategy of building around the needs of individual customers. Customer experience management can be monitored through surveys, targeted studies, observational studies, or "voice of customer" research. Customer surveys, customer contact data, internal operations process and quality data, and employee input are all sources of "voice of customer" data that can be used to quantify the cost of inaction on customer experience issue. The aim of CEM is to optimize the customer experience through gaining the loyalty of the current customers in a multi-channel environment and ensure they are completely satisfied (Frow & Payne, 2007). It also helps in creating advocates of their current customers with potential customers as a word-of-mouth form of marketing (Frow & Payne, 2007). Building great consumer experiences is a complex enterprise, involving strategy, integration of technology, orchestrating business models, brand management and CEO commitment (Rae, 2006). Richardson (2010) stated that a company must define and understand all dimensions of the customer experience in order to have a long-term success.

### **Dimensions of Customer Experience Management**

Previous studies have identified the several dimensions of customer experience management. However, the most common dimensions found in literature include customer focus, interaction management and product improvement. This study will work with these dimensions of customer experience management.

### **Customer Focus**

Customer focus is the orientation of an organization toward serving its customer needs (Singh & Ranchhod, 2004). It is not just about offering great customer service but offering a great experience from the awareness stage, through the purchasing process and finally through the post-purchase process (MacDonald, 2019). Customer focus approach requires companies to puts the customer first, and at the centre of the business. It is a philosophy where an organization sees the customer as the most valuable assets and the reason for being in business (Bii & Wanyoike, 2014). When an organization placed customer at the centre of the business and followed them up through customer relationship management, such organization is said to be implementing a customer focus approach. Customer focus is an important element of customer experience management and an essential part of any successful business (Baker & Sinkula, 2009). Managers need to have a sound knowledge on customer focus approach and apply it in their business operations to give customers a positive experience and increase brand loyalty. Customer focus philosophy would enable companies to gain a vast knowledge on customer centric strategy and use the information to increase customer patronage. As Lambert (2017) rightly stated, a sound knowledge on customer centric approach would enable companies apply the concept in their business endeavour and create add value to their customers to give them a great customer experience and enhance repeat patronage.

### **Interaction Management**

Interaction deals with the form of communication between customer and organization (Elahi, in Jafari et al, 2015). Interaction management is an entire system that monitors customer communication at every possible contact point (Reichheld, 2015). An organization needs to set up a system to monitor customer means of interaction (Brown & Gulycz, 2002). There are several ways in which an organization and customer can interact with each other. The interaction could be through e-mail, telephone calls, instagram, facebook, twitter, touch points, distribution channel, etc (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2001). However, today customers “converse” with an organization through a variety of channels including telephone, fax, e-mail, Web site, kiosk, and face-to-face exchanges (Reichheld, 2015). Each channel provides a different contact point for customer communication. Conversations through these contact points can be discrete, one-time interactions or continuous, ongoing dialogues (Reichheld, 2015). Interactions through multiple-channels play a vital role in supporting customer service and customization. In a global electronic marketplace, the absence of face to-face meetings requires a firm to seek other means to engage in effective and efficient two-way dialogs with its customers and understand and influence their behaviours (Chen & Ching, 2007). Hence, it is important for firms to deploy multiple-channels of communication that are best aligned to satisfying its customers’ communication needs (Chen & Ching, 2007).

### **Product Improvement**

Product improvement refers to a procedure or set of procedures intended to ensure that a product under development meets specified requirements (Horsfall et al, 2018). The essence of product improvement is to deliver a higher quality of product that will give customer a pleasant and memorable experience (Manova, 2011). When judging product improvement, customers focus on the *specification quality* of a product and compares it to competitors’ own in the market. Producers might measure the *conformance quality*, or degree to which the product/service was produced correctly. Support personnel may measure quality in the degree that a product is reliable, maintainable, or sustainable. Although some of the attributes of quality must be measured objectively, quality must be measured in terms of buyer’s perception (Kotler et al, in Agyekum et al, 2015). Consumers want to see certain degree of improvement in products offered by companies. Many business managers get wrapped up in the technical details involved in improving a product quality (Perrault et al in Agyekum et al, 2015). Manova (2011) stated that product improvement is best determined by the customer who uses the product. It is based upon that person's evaluation of his or her entire customer experience. Therefore, companies cannot boast of improving their product unless customers who are the final users of the product confirm the improvement (Agyekum et al, 2015). The entire customer experience is used to ascertain the level of product improvement based on how the product fulfills his or her expectation. For example, any time one buys a product, one forms an impression based on how it was sold, how it was delivered, how it performed, how well it was supported etc. This is why Drucker in Wikipedia (2014) stated that product improvement is not what the supplier puts in; it is what the customer gets out and is willing to pay for.

### **Concept of Repeat Patronage**

Repeat patronage is the willingness and desire of a consumer to re-patronize a particular organization in future (Jere, et al, 2014). Panda (2013) defined repeat patronage as a behaviour whereby a consumer repeatedly purchases his or her needs from a particular company despite the fact that there are other companies rendering the same services. Kumar (2016) described repeat patronage as the behaviour in which a customer frequently patronize the products and services of a particular company without considering the products and services offered by other competing organizations. Repeat patronage is a crucial factor that enhances organizational competitiveness. According to Amelia (2017), repeat patronage gives a company an edge over its competitors. It helps to sustain sales growth and increase profit margin. Garga and Bambale (2016) posited that repeat patronage is the desire of every organization because it helps to sustain the customer base of the organization. An organization that enjoys repeat patronage from its customers stands the chance of achieving business success. Panda (2013) stated that increasing repeat patronage is the key priority for business managers as it helps to sustain the customer base of the firm and increase profit margin.

### **Measures of Repeat Patronage**

Repeat patronage can be measured using various indicators. However, for the purpose of this study, repurchase intention and repeat purchase were used to measure repeat patronage.

### **Repurchase Intention**

Repurchase intention is the willingness of an individual to re-patronize a product, service or organization (Oghojafor et al, 2014). Oyeniya (2011) defined re-purchase intention as a future intention of the consumer to re-buy the product or service of an organization. Some customers usually develop repurchase intention especially when they are satisfied with the product or service at the first time of use (Garga & Bambale, 2016). Mei-Lien and Green in Oghojafor et al (2014) posited that loyal customers usually have the intention to re-buy product or service if the products or service gives them a positive and memorable experience. Repurchasing intention may create positive consequences over the present and future financial conditions of businesses. Customer satisfaction plays a key role in developing repurchasing intention. Garga and Bambale (2016) noted that customers who are satisfied with a particular offer are more likely to engage in repeat purchase of the same offering but dissatisfied customers, on the other hand, are likely to switch. In the same vein, Singh and Zeithaml in Rahman et al (2014) posited that satisfied customers have a high future repurchase intentions. If the customer is not satisfied with the images and/or service delivered by a particular service organization, they often find other outlets for their purchase the next time (Holman & Wilson, in Johnson et al, 2018).

### **Repeat Purchase**

Repeat purchase can be described as the placing of order after order by a consumer from the same organization (Emir & Kozak, 2011). It is the act of buying of a product or service of the same brand (Oghojafor et al, 2014). Customers who make repeat purchase are usually satisfied emotionally, intellectually, physically with the company's products or services (Rahman et al, 2014). Customers regularly visit a particular firm based on their perception of trust-that is, they believe that the company has their best interest at heart when providing a service (Caudill & Murphy 2000). Higher repeat purchase value can mean higher profitability as it does not include new customer acquisition costs; but organization can take some actions to ensure repeat purchase of either their products or services by listening to customer comments, suggestion, feedback, complaints, about the product or services they are offering, by also providing value adding services to the customer experience (Ogunnaike et al, 2014). Repeat purchase is the prime goal a company can set for its products since it is consumer reference to purchase a given brand in a product category (Oyeniya, 2011). Customer repeat purchase is a good indicator of a long term business sustainability and profitability of an organization; this is because it points to customer satisfaction and retention. (Nwulu & Asiegbu, 2015).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the expectancy value theory which was developed by Vroom in 1964. The theory states that the motivation for a given behaviour or action is determined by two factors namely;(i) expectancy i.e. how a wanted outcome is achieved through the display of certain behaviour or action; and (ii) values i.e. how much the customer values the desired outcome (Eccles, 1983). The idea behind the expectancy value theory is that there are expectations and value (beliefs) which affect customer behaviour. According to this theory, expectancies for success, and subjective task values are the two factors that influence customers' achievement and achievement related choice. Spence (2000) described expectancies as the degree of confidence which a customer has in the ability of a product to satisfy his or her needs whereas values refer to how enjoyable the customer perceives the performance of the product.

Expectancy-value theory argues that customers often make judgment about a product, its benefits and the likely outcomes of using the product (Mill, 2000). Tokman in Mill (2000) stated that people will learn to perform behaviour that they expect will lead to positive outcomes. The attitudes displayed by a customer regarding a product is a function of his or her beliefs about the product's attributes as well as the strength of these beliefs. The relationship between product attributes and consumer decision making is recognized and expressed in the equation below:

$$Q = I_i (P_i - E_i)$$

Where Q is the overall quality; I is the importance of product attribute, i; the sum is over the number of product attributes; P is the perception; E is expectation. The expectancy value theory is relevant in explaining the relationship between customer experience management and repeat patronage of firms. The theory argues that the motivation behind the display of repeat patronage behaviour by customer is affected by value that he or she expects to receive from using the product or service. The theory explains that companies must offer products that will create value and give customers a pleasant experience because this is what customers expect from the products offered to them. The theory believes that expectations and values drive repeat patronage and as such companies must offer quality products that will meet customers' expectations and create superior value for them. When customers' expectations are met and superior values are created, customers will likely to re-patronize the brand, and become loyal it.

### **Empirical Review**

Some related empirical studies have been conducted on customer experience management and repeat patronage of brand. For instance, Wijathammarit and Taechamaneestit (2012) explored the impact of customer experience management on customer loyalty of supercenter's shopper in Thailand. The researchers adopted the descriptive survey research design and used a close-ended questionnaire to collect data from 1200 customers who usually had shopping experience in supercenters in Thailand. The data collected were analyzed using correlation matrix, structural equation modeling and path analysis. The findings showed that customer experience management significantly influence loyalty behaviour in terms of increase purchase, up-buying, cross-buying, re-buying, mouth-of-mouth and share of wallet. The study also revealed that affective experience, cognitive experience and customer satisfaction have a significant effect on brand loyalty.

Joshi (2014) examined customer experience management in the telecom industry. His study focused on the parameters (brand, environment, culture, communications and offerings) affecting customer experience for cellular mobile services of a telecom company. The researcher adopted the exploratory survey research design and used a structured questionnaire to collect data from 536 mobile customers in the city of Pune, Maharashtra. The data collected were analyzed statistically using factor analysis while the outcome of the factor analysis was used to test the formulated hypotheses. After running the factor analysis on the study variables, the researchers found out quality service delivery, customer care services, brand, communication and internal environment affect customer experience.

Uusitalo (2012) empirically examined customer experience management in telecom business. The researcher analyzed the problem from a customer service perspective. His study adopted the case study research design and the qualitative research approach. The researcher collected his data from managers in telecom companies in Finland using interview schedule. The data collected were analyzed using graphs, pie chart and bar chart. After analyzing the data collected, the researcher found out most telecom companies in Finland use customer service focus strategy to improve their customer experience management practices. The study also revealed that customer service focus enhances effective customer experience management in telecom companies. The study equally found a positive and significant relationship between customer focus strategy and customer loyalty in telecom companies.

Sirapracha and Tocquer (2012) empirically examined customer experience, brand image and customer loyalty in telecommunication services. Their study adopted the descriptive survey research design where questionnaire was used to collect data from 240 Thai universities students who use mobile telecom services. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis while the hypotheses were tested using MANOVA, ANOVA and correlation methods. The finding revealed that the different telecommunication brands provide significant different customer experiences and have different image. The study also found a positive relationship between customer experience and brand image. The study equally found significant positive relationship between customer experience and customer loyalty.

Biedenbach and Marell (2010) explored the impact of customer experience on brand equity in a business-to-business services setting. The aim of their study was to determine the impact of customer experience on the

measures of brand equity (brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty). The researchers adopted the survey research design and the quantitative research approach and used a structural equation modelling to analyze the data and test the model developed in B2B setting. The findings showed that customer experience has a positive effect on the four measures of brand equity (brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty).

**Gap in Literature**

From the empirical studies reviewed, two major gaps were identified. First, it was observed that most of the studies conducted on customer experience management relate the concept to brand loyalty in India, United States, Sweden, South Africa, Thailand, Malaysia, Albania and Maharastra while empirical studies that examined the relationship between customer experience management and repeat patronage of firms in Nigeria are limited. Secondly, it was observed that most of the studies conducted on customer experience management were carried out in the telecommunication sector, banking sector and hotel industry while empirical studies that examined the relationship between customer experience management and repeat patronage of bottled water brand in Rivers State are lacking. Following the gaps created in literature, this study is an attempt to fill these gaps in literature by exploring the relationship between customer experience management and repeat patronage of bottled water brand in Rivers State.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted the positivist research philosophy and correlational research design. The population of this study consisted of 100 managerial staff drawn from the 25 bottled water producing companies registered with the Water Producers Association of Nigeria (WAPAN), Rivers State Chapter. The census sampling technique was used in this study where all the members of the population are used as the sample size of the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was structured using the modified four (4) Likert-type scale which range from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire was validated through face and content analysis and its reliability was determined using the Cronbach Alpha method. A total copy of 100 questionnaires was administered to the respondents and 65 copies were completed and retrieved. The data collected were analyzed statistically while the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) was used to test the hypotheses. The correlation analysis was performed with the aid of SPSS software program 23 version

**Empirical Results and Discussion**

The results of the correlation analysis carried out between customer experience management and repeat patronage of bottled water brand were presented in this section. The data collected on customer experience management (customer focus, interaction management and product improvement) were collected with those obtained on repeat patronage (repurchase intention and repeat purchase) using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho). This analysis was aided with the SPSS 23.0 version. The results of the analysis are presented in the tables below:

**Table 1: Result of bivariate analysis between customer focus and repeat purchase of bottled water brand**

		Customer Focus	Repurchase Intention
Spearman (rho)	Customer Focus	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.
		N	65
	Repurchase Intention	Correlation Coefficient	.661**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001
		N	65

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 1 presents the result of the bivariate analysis carried out between customer focus and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State. The result indicates that customer focus is strongly and positively correlated to repurchase intention of bottled water brand ( $\rho = .661^{**}$ ) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol  $^{**}$ . Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is strong positive and significant relationship between customer focus and repeat repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State.

**Table 2: Result of bivariate analysis between customer focus and repeat purchase of bottled water brand**

		Customer Focus	Repeat Purchase
Spearman (rho)	Customer Focus	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.588 $^{**}$
		N	65
	Repeat Purchase	Correlation Coefficient	.588 $^{**}$
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001
		N	65

$^{**}$ Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

$^{*}$ Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 2 shows the result of the bivariate analysis carried out between customer focus and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State. The result indicates that customer focus has a moderate and positive correlation with repeat purchase of bottled water brand ( $\rho = .588^{**}$ ) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol  $^{**}$ . Based on this result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is moderate positive and significant relationship between customer focus and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State.

**Table 3: Result of bivariate analysis between interaction management and repurchase intention of bottled water brand**

		Interaction Management	Repurchase Intention
Spearman (rho)	Interaction Management	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.623 $^{**}$
		N	65
	Repurchase Intention	Correlation Coefficient	.623 $^{**}$
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001
		N	65

$^{**}$ Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

$^{*}$ Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 3 shows the result of bivariate analysis carried out between interaction management and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State. The result indicates that interaction management is strongly and positively correlated to repurchase intention of bottled water brand ( $\rho = .623^{**}$ ) and the symbol  $^{**}$  signifies that this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this, we then reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is strong positive and significant relationship between interaction management and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State.

**Table 4: Result of bivariate analysis between interaction management and repeat purchase of bottled water brand**

			Interaction Management	Repeat Purchase
Spearman (rho)	Interaction Management	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.721**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	65	65
	Repeat Purchase	Correlation Coefficient	.721**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	65	65

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

*Source: SPSS-generated Output*

Table 4 contains the result of bivariate analysis carried out between interaction management and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State. The result shows a strong positive correlation between interaction management and repeat purchase of bottled water brand ( $\rho = .721^{**}$ ) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol \*\*. Based on this result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{04}$ ) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is strong positive and significant relationship between interaction management and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State.

**Table 5: Result of bivariate analysis between product improvement and repurchase intention of bottled water brand**

			Product Improvement	Repurchase Intention
Spearman (rho)	Product Improvement	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.802**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	65	65
	Repurchase Intention	Correlation Coefficient	.802**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	65	65

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

*Source: SPSS-generated Output*

Table 5 presents the result of bivariate analysis carried out between product improvement and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State. The result indicates that product improvement has a very strong positive correlation with repurchase intention of bottled water brand ( $\rho = .802^{**}$ ) and the symbol \*\* indicates that this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Based on this result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{05}$ ) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between product improvement and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State.

**Table 6: Result of bivariate analysis between product improvement and repeat purchase of bottled water brand**

			Product Improvement	Repeat Purchase
Spearman (rho)	Product Improvement	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.817**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	65	65
	Repeat Purchase	Correlation Coefficient	.817**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.

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N

65

65

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\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 6 shows the result of the bivariate analysis carried out between product improvement and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State. The result shows a very strong positive correlation between product improvement and repeat purchase of bottled water producing companies ( $\rho = .817^{**}$ ) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol \*\*. As a result of this, we then reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{06}$ ) and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is very strong positive and significant relationship between product improvement and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State.

### Discussion of Findings

This study found a strong positive and significant relationship between customer focus and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State. This finding emanated from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on the two variables in the first hypothesis. The result revealed that customer focus is strongly and positively correlated to repurchase intention of bottled water brand ( $\rho = .661^{**}$ ) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this, we then rejected the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) and accepted the alternate hypothesis which states that there is strong positive and significant relationship between customer focus and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State. This finding is supported by Kavitha and Haritha (2016) who postulated that customers are likely to develop repurchase intention if companies adopt a customer focus strategy. Sahin et al (2011) also supported this finding when they stated that customer focus culture brings about repurchase behaviour among customers who are satisfied with the product or service.

This study found a moderate positive and significant relationship between customer focus and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State. This finding emerged from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on two variables in the second hypothesis. The result revealed that customer focus is moderately and positively correlated with repeat purchase of bottled water producing companies ( $\rho = .588^{**}$ ) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This means that we then accepted that there is moderate positive and significant relationship between customer focus and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State. This finding is supported by Makudza (2021) who noted that customer focus has a significant impact on repeat purchase and brand loyalty. Wijathamarit and Taechamaneestit (2012) also supported this finding when they revealed that customer focus strategy has the potentials of increasing repeat purchase.

This study equally discovered a strong positive and significant relationship between interaction management and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State. This finding emerged from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on the two variables in the third hypothesis. The result revealed that interaction management has a strong positive correlation with repurchase intention of bottled water brand ( $\rho = .623^{**}$ ) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Based on this result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This means that we then accepted that there is strong positive and significant relationship between interaction management and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State. This finding is supported by Ertemel et al (2021) who noted that companies should maintain constant interaction with their customers as this would help to increase repurchase intention. Sahin et al (2011) also agreed with this finding when stated that customers are likely to develop a repurchase intention if there is regular interaction with them.

A strong positive and significant relationship was reported between interaction management and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State. This finding emerged from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on the two variables in the fourth hypothesis. The result showed a strong positive correlation

between interaction management and repeat purchase of bottled water producing companies ( $\rho = .721^{**}$ ) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level (90% confidence level). Based on this result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{04}$ ) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is strong positive and significant relationship between interaction management and repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State. This finding is in line with the research conducted by Biedenbach and Marell (2010) which reported that effective interaction management enables companies to build a long-term relationship with their customers and increase their repeat purchase. Makudza (2021) also supported this finding when they noted that constant interaction with customers helps to sustain the brand relevance in the minds of the customers and increase repeat purchase of a brand.

This study disclosed that a very strong positive and significant relationship exists between product improvement and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State. This finding was derived from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on the two variables in the fifth hypothesis. The result revealed that product improvement has a very strong positive correlation with repurchase intention of bottled water brand ( $\rho = .802^{**}$ ) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Based on this result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{05}$ ) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This means that we then accepted that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between product improvement and repurchase intention of bottled water brand in Rivers State. This finding is supported with the research conducted by Grewal et al(2009) which confirmed that product improvement attract customers to a firm and increase repurchase intention of a brand. Johansson and Kidron (2017) also agreed with this finding when they reported that a company that continuously improve the quality of its products would enjoy repurchase behaviour from its customers and other benefits that come with it.

Finally, it was discovered that product improvement has a very strong positive and significant relationship with repeat purchase of bottled water brand in Rivers State. This finding was derived from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on the two variables in the sixth hypothesis. The result showed a very strong positive correlation between product improvement and repeat purchase of bottled water producing companies ( $\rho = .817^{**}$ ) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this, we then rejected the null hypothesis ( $H_{06}$ ) and accepted the alternate hypothesis which states that there is very strong positive and significant relationship between product improvement and repeat purchase of bottled water producing companies in Rivers State. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Malik (2015) and Imbug et al (2018) as both studies found a significant positive relationship between product improvement and repeat purchase of brand.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study critically analyzed the relationship between customer experience management and repeat patronage of bottled water brand in Rivers State. From the result of the analysis carried out, it was confirmed that customer experience management requires companies to put customers first beyond every other thing by focusing on their needs and expectations, interacting with them regularly to identify their changing needs and preferences and continuously improving the quality of products offered to give customers a pleasant and memorable experience that will lead to repeat patronage of their brand. The results of this study confirmed this as all the dimensions of customer experience management (customer focus, interaction management and product improvement) were found to be significant predictors of repeat patronage as measured by repurchase intention and repeat purchase exhibited by bottled water consumers. Since all the dimensions of customer experience management are significant predictors of repeat patronage, it is therefore concluded that customer experience management significantly facilitate repeat patronage of firms.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. That, bottled water companies in Rivers State should effectively manage their customer experience by focusing on satisfying customers' needs and even surpass their expectations as this would give customers a pleasant and memorable experience that will motivate them to re-patronize their brand.

2. That, bottled water companies in Rivers State should adopt customer focus orientation as it would facilitate effective customer experience management in their organization and increase repeat patronage of their brand in the midst of other competing brands in the market.
3. That, bottled water companies in Rivers State should maintain a constant interaction with their customers to determine and understand their experience with their products as this would not only improve the quality of customer experience management in their organization but also increase repeat purchase of their brand.
4. That, bottled water companies in Rivers State especially those that are experiencing high level of customer defection should improve their product quality as it would enable them give customers a pleasant and memorable experience and increase repeat purchase of their brand.
5. Finally, bottled water companies in Rivers State should embark on product innovation as this would not only improve the quality of their products and give customers a positive experience but also ensure customer loyalty to their brand.

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