

ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING CAPABILITIES AND CUSTOMER RETENTION OF LUXURY HOTELS IN PORT HARCOURT.

Barr. Ben Nwekeala, Ph.D

**Department of Marketing, Faculty of Administration and Management,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt. Rivers
State, Nigeria**

Email: benonyedi@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study empirically investigates the relationship between entrepreneurial marketing capabilities—specifically value creation, and learning capabilities—on customer retention in luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. Emphasizing the dimensions of repeat patronage and referral behaviors, the study aims to understand how these marketing capabilities foster long-term customer loyalty in a competitive hospitality environment. The study had four (4) objectives, four (4) research question and four (4) hypotheses that were analyzed base on the responses provided by the respondents. The study adopted the descriptive research survey to describe the characteristics of respondents. The population of this study comprised of 30 luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. In line with the population of the study which is 30 luxury hotels, the study adopted a census approach and studied the entire 30 luxury hotels with a focus on the staff. The judgmental sampling technique was adopted to reach out to the study elements. The Structured questionnaire was employed as data collection instrument. The questionnaire was structured using the 5 point Likert scale. . Spearman's (rho) correlation was used to analyze the relationship between independent and dependent variables at $P > 0.01$ (two - tailed test). Partial correlation was employed to test the moderating variable and independent and dependent variables as well. The findings reveal a strong positive correlation between entrepreneurial marketing capabilities and customer retention. The study concludes that entrepreneurial marketing capabilities—value creation and learning capability—have a significant positive impact on customer retention in luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. This research contributes to the field by providing insights specific to the hospitality industry in Port Harcourt. This study recommends that hotels should engage in market research to identify shifts in consumer demand and adapt their offerings accordingly and invest in exclusive service offerings that resonate with luxury experiences, as this will drive both repeat patronage and new sales volume.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial marketing capabilities, value creation, learning capabilities and customer retention.

INTRODUCTION

Customer oriented firm depends on customers for its survival. Customer retention is the ability of the firm to keep customer for another purchase. Blattberg et al. (2001) stated that customer retention takes place when a customer keeps on buying the same market offering over a long period of time. For products with short purchase cycles, they define customer retention as occurring when 'the customer continues to purchase the product or service over a specified time period'. For products with long purchase cycles, they define customer retention as taking place when the customer indicates the intention to purchase

the product or service at the next purchase occasion. Payne (2000) defines customer retention rate as the percentage of customers at the beginning of the period who still remain customers at the end of the period. Payne warns, however, that other more complex definitions might be more appropriate in instances where customers make use of more than one business simultaneously.

Customer retention has a direct impact on long term customer lifetime value, which is a more profitable avenue for firms that seek to pursue growth and sustainability or those that seek to protect themselves from market shrinkage resulting from a contracting economy (Gee et al., 2008). Supporting this argument, Lombard (2009) notes that today the pressure on companies to retain customers is fuelled by the market where customer acquisition is slow. Customer retention is important when loyalty is decreasing within the business environment. Under these circumstances, losing an important customer to a competitor would impact significantly on the organisation's profitability and growth. However, in order for Luxury hotels to improve their rate of customer retention amidst stiff competition from larger rivals, it is believed that there is need to adopt entrepreneurial marketing capabilities.

Entrepreneurial marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers as well as managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders (Otika et al, 2019). Morris et al (2002) defined entrepreneurial marketing as the process of proactively identifying and exploiting attractive market opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches, risk management and resource leveraging to create goods and services that generate superior value. This marketing concept requires a firm to pursue market opportunities in uncertain circumstances and deliver superior value to customers. Entrepreneurial marketing applies the same approach to the conventional marketing but blend the concept of entrepreneurial orientation and marketing orientation to achieve business success. Collinson (2002) described entrepreneurial marketing as a new paradigm that integrates critical aspects of marketing and entrepreneurship into a comprehensive concept where marketing becomes a process used by firms to act entrepreneurially.

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

Statement of the Problem

In today's competitive hospitality industry, customer retention has become a significant challenge for luxury hotels, particularly in dynamic markets like Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Despite the luxurious offerings, many hotels struggle to maintain consistent patronage

from their guests, leading to high customer turnover rates. This trend can be attributed to several factors, including insufficient engagement with customers, limited innovation in service delivery, and a lack of strategic focus on the evolving expectations of modern luxury clients. As a result, hotels experience increased marketing costs to attract new customers, reduced customer lifetime value, and diminished brand loyalty—all of which undermine long-term profitability and growth potential. The inability to retain customers effectively points to a gap in the deployment of entrepreneurial marketing capabilities within these luxury establishments. Entrepreneurial marketing, characterized by a proactive, opportunity-focused, and innovative approach, offers potential solutions to these issues. Unlike traditional marketing, entrepreneurial marketing emphasizes customer intimacy, agility in responding to customer feedback, value co-creation, and personalized service delivery—all crucial factors in cultivating long-term customer loyalty. By harnessing these capabilities, luxury hotels can differentiate themselves in a crowded market, anticipate and respond to customer needs more effectively, and create memorable, personalized experiences that encourage repeat patronage. However, the absence of a structured entrepreneurial marketing framework limits the ability of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt to capitalize on these benefits. Thus, there is a critical need for empirical research to explore how entrepreneurial marketing capabilities can be effectively implemented to address poor customer retention in this context. This study seeks to bridge this gap by investigating the role of entrepreneurial marketing in enhancing customer loyalty, with the ultimate goal of providing actionable insights for luxury hotels in Port Harcourt to foster customer retention, reduce churn, and achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of entrepreneurial marketing capabilities and customer retention of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt shown in figure 1.1 below. The conceptual framework shows the predictor variable of the study and its dimensions as well as the criterion variable and its measures.

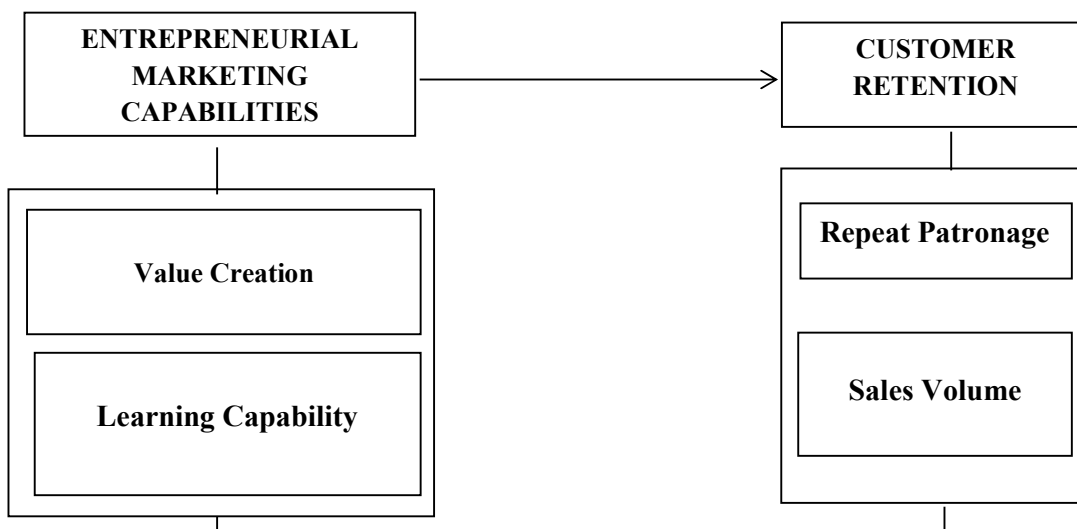


Figure.1.1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between entrepreneurial marketing capabilities and customer retention of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Source: Morris et al (2002); Nwekala (2023); Otika et al., (2019).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

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

1. determine the relationship between value creation and repeat patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.
2. evaluate the relationship between value creation and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.
3. ascertain the relationship between learning capability and repeat patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.
4. determine the relationship between learning capability and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered:

1. What is the relationship between value creation and repeat patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt?
2. What is the relationship between value creation and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt?
3. What is the relationship between learning capability and repeat patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt?
4. What is the relationship between learning capability and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between value creation and repeat patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.
- H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between value creation and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.
- H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between learning capability and repeat patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.
- H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between learning capability and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Entrepreneurial Marketing Capabilities

Entrepreneurial marketing emerged from disciplines specifically; entrepreneurial (which means the overall behaviour and activities of an entrepreneur) and marketing (that is a hard and fast of activities that begin with market research, product development, packaging, pricing, promoting to bodily distribution). Those standards are merged together to shape a new marketing concept that's these days called entrepreneurial marketing. Collinson (2002) said that entrepreneurial marketing is a new paradigm which integrates essential factors of marketing and entrepreneurship right into a comprehensive concept where marketing becomes a process used by firms to act entrepreneurially.

Entrepreneurial marketing is the process of proactively figuring out and exploiting appealing market opportunities for obtaining and maintaining worthwhile customers

through innovative procedures, hazard control and useful resource leveraging to create goods and services that generate superior value. Baverland and Lockstin (2004) defined entrepreneurial marketing as “effective motion” or the version of marketing and marketing idea for the precise wishes of firms. These valuable moves concurrently cope with many problems: opportunity, innovation, chance and assets constraints for such firms, those actions are the undertaking of the character proprietors/operator (Baverland&Lockstin, 2004).

Entrepreneurial marketing is commonly involved with the development of new commercial enterprise fashions and value curves to create an uncontested new market (Schindehutte& Morris, 2010). It specializes in creating new market and price for customers via innovation. The exercise of entrepreneurial marketing calls for the proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for obtaining and keeping profitable customers via innovative techniques to threat management, resource leveraging and price introduction. The main philosophy of entrepreneurial marketing is possibility seeking and price creation. Through the implementation of entrepreneurial marketing concept, enterprise firms can use the modern method to create goods and offerings with a purpose to provide customers advanced price, retain existing customers, gather new ones, expand and create new commercial enterprise ventures (Morrish et al, 2010).

Entrepreneurial marketing is important to the increase of small and medium companies in Nigeria. In line with Morrish (2011), SMEs that engage in entrepreneurial marketing are more pushed by creative ideas and instinct i.e. Innovation-oriented. They typically have a twin cognizance of entrepreneur-centric and purchaser-centric which have an effect on and form their marketing techniques, method and lifestyle. Such corporations do now not solely rely upon the formalized research and marketing intelligence structures rather they use informal networking. Entrepreneurial marketing and marketing can allow SMEs to create advanced fee to their customers. Morris et al (2002) referred to that SMEs can use entrepreneurial marketing idea to discover and make the most marketplace possibilities will create superior fee to customers, keep current customers and entice new customers to the companies, and enjoy fast growth and business enlargement.

Value Creation

Value creation is a key component of entrepreneurship and implies the addition of value in every possible things in the marketing strategies as well as adding value to customers or adding value to consumer’s offer (Morris et al., 2002). Value creation can be defined as the ability of an action to bring about an increase in the worth of a product or service and a business in general. Organizations these days engage in value creation to create better value for its customers by creating a worthwhile product, and also improving the wellbeing of its shareholders by compensating them with a higher dividend. It was suggested by Harmsen and Jensen (2004) that the creation of value must connect market demand with the capability of the organization, else there will be wastage of benefits which will be detrimental to both the customer and the seller. Value creation has the ability to have a proper understanding of the needs of customers and the strength of the expertise product service in which according to Ursula et al., (2012) the ability of value creation is defined as the ability of an organization to analyse, understand and turn the customer’s business needs to a greater solution for customers.

Morris et. al., (2002) pointed out that the focal point of entrepreneurial engagement is innovative value creation, on the assumption that value creation is a prerequisite for transactions and relationships. The task of entrepreneur is to fine-tune untapped sources of customer value and create unique resources to produce value. It was argued that because of the superior ability to identify and exploit opportunities, entrepreneurial marketing processes are better able to identify attractive entrepreneurial opportunities and exploit them by leveraging innovation to enhance the offering's benefits and or decrease the offering costs resulting in superior value for the customer (Miles & Darroch, 2004). Value creation is an essential condition for exchange to occur; successful firms emphasize the value creation activities best suited to their strategic intent within their competitive niche (Miller & Floricel, 2004). While traditional marketing has placed more focus on the transaction and customer relationship, entrepreneurial engagement placed emphasis on value creation to satisfy customer's needs and wants profitably (Morris et. al., 2002). Porter (1985) developed a framework of value chains which is known as Porter analysis in creating value in organizations category. Moreover, Porter (1985) conducted value chain analysis by studying company activities which have direct effect to the value creation, and supporting activities so that they affect the value and eventually will affect performance. Tsai and Ghoshal (1998) explain that organization needs to create novel product and unique products, needs to specific its product and reallocate resources, to combine new resources, and combine existing resources in new market. O'Cass and Sok (2013), emphasized that value creation concept in an organization is a determinant variable of company's innovation activity. Moreover, managers and employees have important roles in creating value.

Learning capabilities

According to Man (2001) learning capabilities connotes the capacity to —learn from various means, learn proactively, keep up to-date in the related field, and apply learned skills and knowledge into actual practices. It is the capacity to acquire relevant skills, knowledge and abilities for subsequent application at different stages of enterprise development (Deakins, et., al., 2000). To Müller, (2018) Learning capabilities can be defined as "the capability to acquire and apply knowledge effectively, encompassing cognitive skills, adaptability, critical thinking, and the ability to learn from experiences. Learning capabilities could also be viewed as the ability to create, acquire and integrate knowledge —aimed at the development of resources and capabilities that contribute to better organizational performance (Pérez et., al., 2005).

Entrepreneurs who have developed learning capabilities are open to experience and constantly go for innovative ways of carrying out enterprise tasks. They easily learn from previous mistakes, achievement, failures, personal experiences, and from other peoples' experiences; and then deploy such learned concepts and understanding into organisational problem contexts. It is acknowledged that learning capabilities enhances enterprise adaptability and coping capability (Deakins & Freel, 1998; Stokes & Blackburn, 2002), and promotes the generation of knowledge that could be deployed to reduce business risk (Darroch & McNaughton, 2002; Ward, 2004; Song & Kolb, 2012; Galliers). Learning competency is known to foster entrepreneurial achievement which in turn amplifies entrepreneurial learning (Rae & Carswell, 2001). Furthermore, literature suggests that enterprises develop learning capabilities because it aids them to assimilate experience and opportunity (Politis, 2005), to ponder on past strategy, to acknowledge

mistakes, to access resources, to recruit new members to the —entrepreneurial team and to effectively deploy the experiences for problem solving (Man, 2007). Learning capabilities is the reason some enterprises are more innovative, acquire more external resources, access and share more information, learn more from experience and implement strategy better than others (Deakins, 1998; Man, 2002). Studies have recognized that learning capabilities enhances knowledge creation and sharing, stimulates innovation, reduces uncertainty and boosts business achievement, and consequently competitive advantage, growth, profitability, superior performance and success (Darroch& McNaughton, 2002).

Concept of Customer Retention

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

Ramakrishnan, (2006) defines customer retention as the marketing goal of preventing customers from going to the competitor. Customer retention is the way in which organizations focus their efforts on existing customers in an effort to continue doing business with them. However, customer retention can also mean the number of customers who stay with the provider in the course of an established period, such as a year (Dawes, 2009). Customer retention is a key factor in determining the success of businesses today. Fluss (2010) notes that competitors are always on the lookout to steal customers through better deals. Fluss has observed that annual customer attrition rates range from 7% in industries that have high exit barriers such as banking and insurance, to almost 40% in the mobile phone industry. It can, therefore, be concluded that customers in the cellular industry keep on switching network providers for better deals. Customer retention has a direct impact on long term customer lifetime value, which is a more profitable avenue for firms that seek to pursue growth and sustainability or those that seek to protect themselves from market shrinkage resulting from a contracting economy (Gee et al., 2008). Supporting this argument, Lombard (2009) notes that today the pressure on companies to retain customers is fueled by the market where customer acquisition is slow. Customer retention is important when loyalty is decreasing and sales cycles are aggravating the business environment. Under these circumstances, losing an important customer to a competitor would impact significantly on the organization's profitability and growth.

Measures of Customer Retention

Repeat Patronage

Repeat purchase can be described as the placing of order after order by a consumer from the same organization, it can also be seen as the buying of a product or services by a

consumer of the same brand Repeat purchase customers are customers who are satisfied emotionally, intellectually, physically by an organization offering which could be in form of a product which exceeds their expectations. Repeat purchase in another context could be referred to as "re-patronage intentions," according to Wirtz and Lwin (2009) it is the willingness of an individual to re-patronize a services organization. In a relationship built on trust commitment is engendered and then becomes a major predictor of future purchases. 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). A repeat purchase is often a measure of loyalty to a brand by consumers, higher repeat purchase value means a well retained, satisfied customer, also higher repeat purchase value drives higher customer value, which means a better top line in the loyalty ladder. Higher repeat purchase value can mean higher profitability as it does not include new customer acquisition costs; 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. 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. 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.

Sales Volume

Sales volume is a fundamental metric in business and marketing that quantifies the total number of units sold by a company within a specified period (Kotler & Keller, 2016). It serves as a critical indicator of market performance, providing insights into customer demand, market penetration, and operational effectiveness. Typically expressed as the number of products or services sold, sales volume is central to measuring business growth, analyzing market trends, and gauging customer preferences (Jobber et., al., 2019). Scholars emphasize that sales volume is not only a result of consumer purchasing decisions but also reflects broader strategic efforts in pricing, promotion, distribution, and competitive positioning (Lamb, Hair, & McDaniel, 2018).

Sales volume is closely linked to a firm's revenue generation and profitability. As sales volume increases, businesses typically experience higher revenues, which can lead to enhanced economies of scale, reduced per-unit costs, and improved profit margins (Baker & Hart, 2016). This relationship underscores the importance of actively managing sales volume through targeted marketing strategies, particularly in sectors with narrow profit margins or high competition (Malhotra, 2019). For example, Lamb et al. (2018) note that businesses often focus on increasing sales volume as a path to achieving market share growth, thereby strengthening their competitive standing.

Sales volume is influenced by multiple factors, including product quality, customer satisfaction, pricing strategies, and promotional efforts (Doyle & Stern, 2006). Kotler and Keller (2016) argue that effective marketing campaigns significantly boost sales volume by building brand awareness, creating demand, and converting potential customers into buyers. Additionally, factors such as seasonal demand fluctuations, competitor actions, and market dynamics play pivotal roles in shaping sales volume over time (Blythe, 2013). Studies also suggest that customer retention is crucial for maintaining or increasing sales

volume, as returning customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and generate word-of-mouth sales volume (Fornell et al., 2016).

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on **Resources Based view theory** (RBV)

The resource based view theory was propounded by Penrose in 1959. Penrose first provided a logical explanation to the performance rate of the firm by clarifying the causal relationships among firm resources, production capability and performance. Her concern was mainly on efficient and innovative use of resources. She claimed that bundles of productive resources controlled by firms could vary significantly by firm that, firms in this sense are in the same industry (Mugambi & Karugu, 2017).

The resources based theory equally asserts that entrepreneurial firm can achieve sustainable competitive advantage and success through the acquisition and deployment of appropriate resources and capabilities in a sustainable manner over a long term. It also asserts that with a good understanding of the resource potentials theory good vision, intuition and creative act, an entrepreneur will be able to choose a particular industry where his/her resources are valuable, rare, hard to copy (inimitable). With such non-substitutable resources, the entrepreneur will not only succeed but will also enjoy long term competitive advantage and economic success (Agwu, 2012).

Ganotakis and Love (2010 as cited in Mugambi and Karugu, 2017) used the Resource Based Theory (RBT) to explain the importance of human capital to entrepreneurship. According to RBT, human capital is considered to be a source of performance for entrepreneurial firms. This leads to idiosyncratic endowments of proprietary resources. According to RBT, sustainable competitive advantage results from resources that are inimitable, not substitutable, tacit in nature, and synergistic (Mugambi & Karugu, 2017). Therefore, managers need to be able to identify the key resources and drivers of performance and value in their organizations. The RBT also states that a company's performance is derived from the company's ability to assemble and exploit an appropriate combination of resources; Such resources can be tangible or intangible, and represent the inputs into a firm production process; such as capital, equipment, the skills of individual employees, patents, financing, and talented managers (Mugambi&Karugu, 2017).

Empirical Review

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

entrepreneurship and marketing as discussed in the findings on the areas of differences, similarities, overlap, and collaboration will give practitioners, academics and scholars greater synergetic leverage over unstable marketplace in the application of marketing and entrepreneurial processes for greater results.

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

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

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

Syarif, (2019) empirically carried out a study on the effect of entrepreneurial marketing and competitive advantage on marketing performance. The study adopted the case study research design and a qualitative research approach. The researcher uses questionnaire to elicit data from 93 marketing managers, supervisors and marketing leaders in Indonesia. the data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentage and frequency tables, mean and standard deviation and influential statistics

such as Pearson correlation, and regression analysis which were computed with the aid of SPSS software program version 21. The findings of the study however revealed that entrepreneurial orientation has a positive and significant effect on marketing performance and competitive advantage.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey design within a quantitative method. The population of this study comprised of 30 luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. In line with the population of the study which is 30 luxury hotels, the study adopted a census approach and studied the entire 30 luxury hotels with a focus on the staff. The judgmental sampling technique was adopted to reach out to the study elements. The primary data was collected through the administration of questionnaire to the respondents of luxury hotels. The instrument was administered to the respondents (operations manager, sales & marketing executives and customer relations executive) of luxury hotels in Rivers State. The instrument was administered in a frame of three (3) copies per hotel. A total number of 90 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents. This study adopted a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical tools with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 in order to facilitate the analysis. Charts, frequency tables, means, as well as percentages constituted the descriptive statistical while the Spearman's (rho) correlation was used to analyze the relationship between independent and dependent variables at $P > 0.01$ (two - tailed test).

Data Presentation

In this section, the data obtained in the questionnaire were presented in tables and interpreted. A total of 90 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents (Managers) of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Table 1 Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Questionnaire Distribution	Questionnaire Retrieval	Useful Questionnaire	Not Useful
90	86	80	6

Table 4.1 shows the order in which copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents and their collection rate. From the table, it is observed that out of the 90 copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents (Managers) of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt, 86 copies were collected, 80 copies were useful and 6 copies were not useful.

Data Analysis and Results

In this section, the data collected in the questionnaire were analyzed statistically. The analysis covered the demographic variables of the respondents as well as the univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses. The results of the analysis were interpreted and used to draw the logical conclusion for the study.

Demographic Analysis

The demographic variables of the respondents were analyzed in this section. The demographic variables include the sex, marital status, age, years in business as well as

the educational qualifications of the respondents. The percentage and frequency tables were used to analyze the demographic variables of the respondents as shown below:

Table 2: Sex of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	46	57%
Female	34	43%
Total	80	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 2 contains the sex of the respondents who participated in this study. The table shows that out of the 80 respondents who completed and returned the questionnaire, 46 (57%) of them were male while 34 (43%) were female.

Bivariate Analysis

In this section, the bivariate analysis was conducted. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) was used to determine the strength of relationship between the two variables in each of the hypotheses. This was done with the aid of the SPSS software package version 23.0. The result of SPSS bivariate analysis for each hypothesis is presented below:

Hypothesis one

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between value creation and repeat patronage luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Table 3: Result of bivariate analysis between value creation and repeat patronage

			value creation	repeat patronage
Spearman n (rho)	value creation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.721**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	80	80
	repeat patronage	Correlation Coefficient	.721**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	80	80

**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 value creation and repeat patronage luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. The result reveals a strong positive correlation between value creation and repeat patronage luxury hotels in Port Harcourt ($\rho = .721^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol **. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is strong positive and significant relationship between value creation and repeat patronage luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Hypothesis two

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between value creation and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Table 4: Result of bivariate analysis between value creation and sales volume

			value creation	sales volume
Spearman n (rho)	value creation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.849**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	80	80
	Sales volume	Correlation Coefficient	.849**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	80	80

**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 value creation and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. The result shows that value creation has a very strong positive correlation with sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt (rho = .849**) and the symbol ** indicates that this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (Ho₂) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is very strong positive and significant relationship between value creation and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Hypothesis three

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between learning capability and repeat patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Table 5: Result of bivariate analysis between learning capability and repeat patronage

			learning capability	repeat patronage
Spearman n (rho)	learning capability	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.578**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	80	80
	repeat patronage	Correlation Coefficient	.578**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	80	80

**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 the bivariate analysis carried out between learning capability and repeat patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. The result indicates that learning capability is significantly and positively correlated to repeat patronage ($\rho = .578^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol **. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is moderate positive and significant relationship between learning capability and repeat patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Hypothesis four

H_{06} : There is no significant relationship between learning capability and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Table 6: Result of bivariate analysis between learning capability and sales volume

			learning capability	sales volume
Spearman n (rho)	learning capability	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.676**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	80	80
	Sales volume	Correlation Coefficient	.676**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	80	80

**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 bivariate analysis carried out between learning capability and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. The result indicates that learning capability has a very strong positive correlation with sales volume ($\rho = .676^{**}$) 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_{04}) and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is strong positive and significant relationship between learning capability and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Summary of Findings

From the analysis carried out, the result revealed that:

- i. There is significant relationship between value creation and repeat patronage luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.
- ii. There is significant relationship between value creation and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.
- iii. There is significant relationship between learning capability and repeat patronage of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.
- iv. There is significant relationship between learning capability and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

Value Creation and Customer Retention

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

Learning capability and Customer Retention

Learning capability showed a strong and positive relationship with customer retention of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. This finding was deduced from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on two variables in the first hypothesis. The result indicates that learning capability is significantly and positively correlated to repeat patronage ($\rho = .578^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol ** . The result indicates that learning capability has a very strong positive correlation with sales volume ($\rho = .676^{**}$) 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_{06}) and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is strong positive and significant relationship between learning capability and sales volume of luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. This finding is in line with the study Fader, (2012); Kaufmann and Mohammed, (2012) who submitted that learning capability approach can add value to a company by differentiating themselves from competitors who do not offer the same experience. Similarly, Hacıoglu et al., (2012) mentioned that entrepreneurial marketing combines the need for a creative approach to customer acquisition, building, and retaining customers. Utami (2020) submitted that the basic concept of close relationship with customers produces dynamic knowledge about changing conditions and customer needs.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that entrepreneurial marketing capabilities—value creation, and learning capability—have a significant positive impact on customer retention in luxury hotels in Port Harcourt. The ability to identify and act on new business opportunities plays a vital role in retaining customers by keeping the hotel offerings aligned with evolving

customer preferences. Hotels that deliver unique, high-quality services see an increase in both repeat patronage and sales volume, as customers perceive greater value in continued engagement. The capacity to continually adapt to market demands and refine service quality fosters long-term customer loyalty and strengthens referral likelihood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed for luxury hotels in Port Harcourt to enhance customer retention:

1. Hotels should engage in market research to identify shifts in consumer demand and adapt their offerings accordingly.
2. Invest in exclusive service offerings that resonate with luxury experiences, as this will drive both repeat patronage and new sales volume.
3. Establish ongoing staff training to ensure they are equipped with up-to-date skills in customer service and emerging trends in hospitality.
4. Develop personalized engagement strategies to foster a sense of loyalty and exclusivity among customers.
5. Create referral incentives that encourage satisfied customers to promote the hotel within their networks.

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