

NEUROMARKETING AND CUSTOMERS INTENTIONS OF FAST-FOOD FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between neuromarketing and customer's intention in Fast-food firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This study adopted a correlational survey research design as the study seek to determine the relationship between both variables under study. The population of the study consisted of 11 fast-food firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study adopted a census population. 3 Managers were selected from each firm multiplied 11 firms give us a total of 33 respondents under study. Structured questionnaire instrument title "neuromarketing and customer's intentions questionnaire" was developed on five-point likert scale. The result of the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test indicates .702 which is above .70 which implies that the items are reliable. The primary data for this study were generated through questionnaire. hypotheses were tested using Pearson product moment correlation on SPSS. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between electroencephalography and purchase pattern of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. There is a significant relationship between eye-tracking and loyalty intention of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study concluded that there is significant relationship between neuromarketing and customer's intention. The study recommended that fast-food firms should consider integrating electroencephalography technology into their marketing strategies to better understand consumer decision-making processes, firms should conduct eye-tracking studies during customer interactions with advertisements and menus to gauge visual attention and preferences

INTRODUCTION

Neuromarketing is an interdisciplinary field that merges neuroscience and marketing, aiming to understand customers behavior through the lens of brain activity and physiological responses. This innovative approach utilizes various techniques, including electroencephalography (EEG) and eye-tracking, to gather data on how customers respond to marketing stimuli. electroencephalography measures electrical activity in the brain, providing insights into cognitive processes such as attention, emotion, and decision-making (Lee et al., 2019). Eye-tracking technology complements electroencephalography by monitoring where and how long a customers looks at different elements of a marketing stimulus, revealing preferences and engagement levels (Duchowski, 2007). Together, these tools enable marketers to create more effective campaigns by understanding the subconscious influences on customers choices.

Customers intentions, particularly in the context of purchase patterns and loyalty intentions, are critical areas of research that provide insights into how customers make decisions and develop preferences for specific brands or products. Purchase patterns refer to the habitual behaviors exhibited by customers when selecting products, which can be influenced by various factors such as marketing strategies, product availability, and individual customers characteristics (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Loyalty intentions, on the other hand, reflect a customer's commitment to repurchase a brand or product consistently over time. This commitment is often shaped by previous experiences with the product or service, perceived value, and emotional connections to the brand (Oliver, 1999). Understanding these dimensions is essential for businesses aiming to enhance customer satisfaction and retention.

In the context of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, examining customers intentions becomes particularly relevant due to the competitive nature of the industry. Fast-food establishments must navigate diverse customers preferences while also addressing local cultural nuances that influence purchasing behavior. Research indicates that factors such as convenience,

price sensitivity, and brand reputation play significant roles in shaping customers purchase patterns within this sector (Akanbi et al., 2020). Furthermore, loyalty intentions among customers in Port Harcourt may be influenced by promotional activities and customer service quality offered by fast-food firms. By analyzing these dynamics, businesses can tailor their marketing strategies to foster greater customer loyalty and improve overall market performance.

Statement of the Problem

Customers intentions, particularly in the fast-food industry, are complex and influenced by a range of factors including marketing strategies, brand loyalty, and individual purchase behaviors. In Port Harcourt, fast-food firms face challenges in maintaining consistent customers purchase patterns and loyalty. Neuromarketing, a recent development in customers behavior research, offers insights into how brands can better engage their customers by tapping into subconscious decision-making processes (Plassmann et al., 2015). However, there is limited understanding of how neuromarketing techniques directly impact customers purchase patterns and loyalty intentions in fast-food firms within this region.

One of the key issues is the lack of knowledge on how fast-food firms can leverage neuromarketing to influence purchase patterns. Purchase patterns are driven by a mix of emotional and cognitive factors that influence how often customers visit a fast-food outlet, how much they spend, and the types of products they buy (Lim, 2018). Despite global trends showing the positive influence of neuromarketing on customers behavior, local fast-food firms in Port Harcourt struggle to create campaigns that lead to sustained customers engagement (Ariely & Berns, 2010). This indicates a gap between the application of neuromarketing principles and the actual purchase behaviors observed in the region.

Additionally, customers loyalty is a major issue for fast-food firms in Port Harcourt. Loyalty intentions refer to a customer's commitment to repeatedly purchase from a brand despite alternatives being available (Oliver, 1999). Neuromarketing studies suggest that emotional connections with brands can significantly enhance loyalty (Stasi et al., 2018). However, in the fast-food sector of Port Harcourt, there is limited empirical research on how neuromarketing can foster loyalty intentions. Without such insights, fast-food brands may find it difficult to build long-term relationships with their customers, leading to high churn rates.

Nevertheless, the problem lies in the insufficient application and understanding of neuromarketing strategies to influence customers intentions, particularly purchase patterns and loyalty intentions, in fast-food firms in Port Harcourt. As the market becomes more competitive, it is essential for these firms to adopt neuromarketing approaches to create more effective customers engagement strategies (Lee, Broderick, & Chamberlain, 2007). Without addressing these gaps, fast-food firms may continue to face challenges in sustaining their customer base and improving their market share.

Conceptual Framework

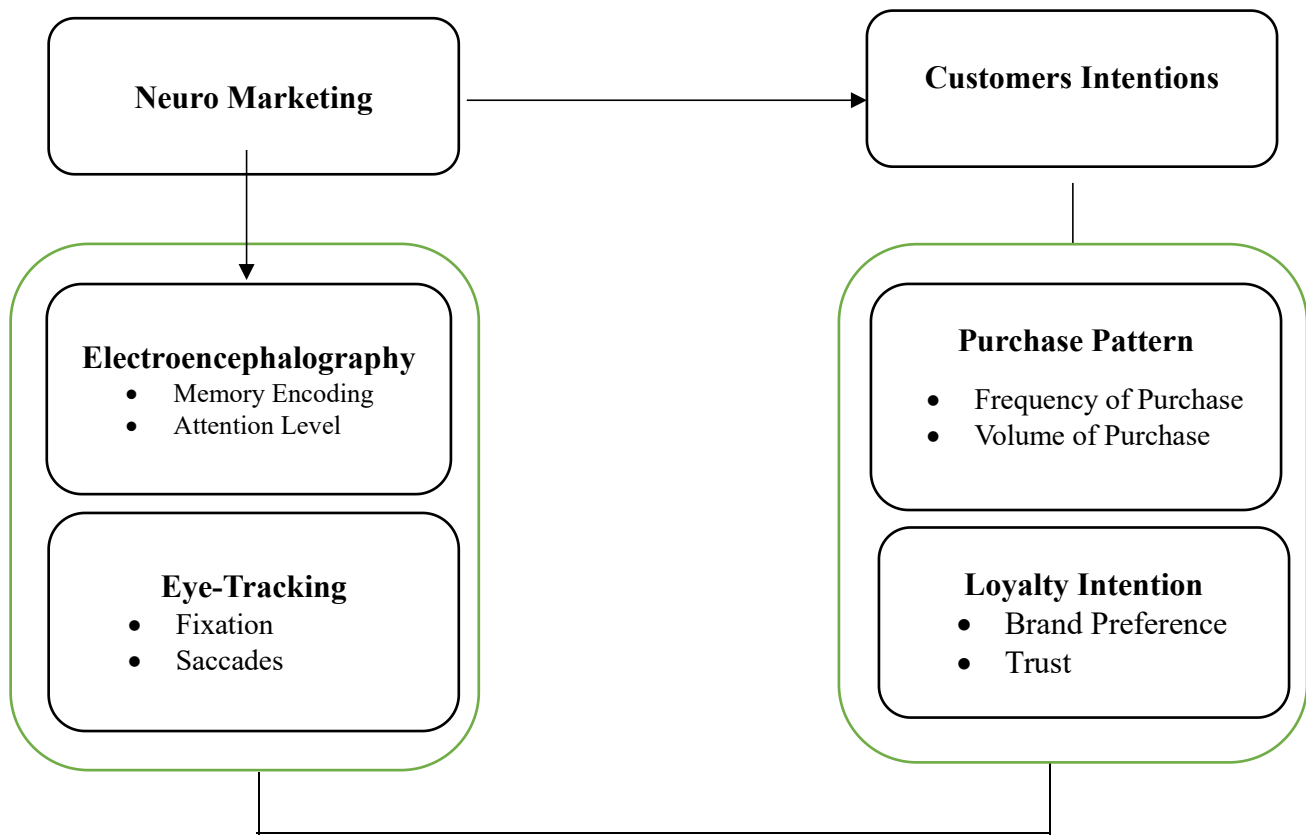


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of Neuro marketing and customer's intentions of Fast-Food firms in Port Harcourt

Source: Adapted from Lee, & Broderick (2007), Schiffman et al., (2009).

Aims & Objectives

The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between neuromarketing and customers intention of Fast-Food firms in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives are to:

- 1) determine the relationship between electroencephalography and purchase pattern of Fast-Food firms in Port Harcourt.
- 2) determine the relationship between eye-tracking and loyalty intention of Fast-Food firms in Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

- 1) What is the influence of electroencephalography on purchase pattern of Fast-Food firms in Port Harcourt.
- 2) What is the influence of eye-tracking on customer loyalty of Fast-Food firms in Port Harcourt.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a significant level of 0.01.

Ho₁: Electroencephalography does not significantly influence purchase pattern of Fast-Food firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho₂: Eye-tracking does not significantly influence loyalty intention of Fast-Food firms in Port Harcourt.

Significance of the Study

The significance of studying neuromarketing extends to various stakeholders:

1. **Employees:** Understanding customers behavior through neuromarketing can empower employees in sales and marketing roles to tailor their strategies effectively. By leveraging insights into customers preferences and emotional triggers, employees can enhance customer engagement and satisfaction.
2. **Employers:** For employers, neuromarketing research provides valuable data that can inform product development and advertising strategies. By aligning marketing efforts with neurological insights, companies can optimize their campaigns for better performance and increased return on investment.
3. **Researchers:** For researchers, the study of neuromarketing opens new avenues for exploring the intersection of neuroscience and customers behavior. It encourages interdisciplinary collaboration and the development of innovative methodologies to analyze customers decision-making processes.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study will be discussed under content scope, geographical scope, and unit of analysis.

Content Scope: The content scope of the study is limited to neuromarketing and customers intentions. Discussions on neuromarketing are restricted to electroencephalography and eye-tracking; while customers intentions as the dependent variable is measured and discussed through purchase pattern and loyalty intention.

Geographical Scope: The geographical scope of this study is delimited to fast-food firms operating in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Unit of Analysis: This study adopted a macro level analysis; this implies at the organisational level (management) of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section reviews various review of related literature related to the study under investigation under the heading of conceptual review, theoretical review and empirical review.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Neuromarketing

According to Kotler et al. (2017), neuromarketing involves using technologies such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and electroencephalography (EEG) to analyze brain activity. These insights allow marketers to create more effective advertisements, product designs, and brand experiences by tapping into subconscious emotional and cognitive responses. This approach moves beyond traditional marketing research techniques, which rely on surveys and interviews, by offering a more direct and objective measurement of how customers feel and think during the decision-making process. As a result, neuromarketing can help businesses develop strategies that better resonate with their target audience, thus enhancing customer engagement and driving purchase behavior.

Furthermore, Plassmann et al. (2015) explain that neuromarketing helps marketers uncover the hidden preferences and biases of customers that they may not be able to articulate consciously. For instance, traditional research methods may fail to capture the emotional appeal of a product or advertisement, but neuromarketing can reveal whether certain visuals, sounds, or messages evoke positive or negative reactions in the brain. In this way, neuromarketing can assist in refining marketing strategies by identifying the elements that trigger favorable responses, ultimately leading to more effective branding, advertising, and customer retention efforts. As customers are often unaware of the factors that influence their decisions, neuromarketing offers a deeper understanding of customers behavior, allowing companies to align their marketing messages with the subconscious desires of their target markets.

Dimensions of Neuromarketing

Electroencephalography

Electroencephalography (EEG) is a non-invasive neuroimaging technique that measures electrical activity in the brain, providing real-time insights into cognitive and emotional processes. As a dimension of neuromarketing, electroencephalography is used to understand customers responses to marketing stimuli by analyzing brainwaves associated with various cognitive states, such as attention, engagement, and memory recall. Neuromarketers employ electroencephalography to track how individuals process advertisements, products, and brand messages, aiming to uncover unconscious reactions that traditional marketing methods may overlook. For instance, electroencephalography can reveal the extent to which certain visual or auditory elements of an advertisement capture a viewer's attention, which can be pivotal in designing more effective marketing campaigns. This process allows for a deeper understanding of customers behavior, as decisions are often driven by subconscious processes (Plassmann et al., 2015; Venkatraman et al., 2015).

Eye-tracking

Eye-tracking technology has emerged as a pivotal dimension of neuromarketing, providing insights into customers behavior by analyzing where and how long individuals focus their visual attention on various stimuli. This technology utilizes sophisticated cameras and software to monitor eye movements, including fixation points and saccades, which are rapid movements of the eye between fixation points. By understanding these patterns, marketers can gain valuable information about customers preferences, emotional responses, and decision-making processes (Duchowski, 2007). The ability to quantify visual attention allows researchers to identify which elements of advertisements or product designs capture interest and elicit engagement. This data is crucial for optimizing marketing strategies to align with customers expectations and behaviors.

Concept of Customers Intentions

Customers intention refers to the mental state that precedes a customer's decision-making process, reflecting their plans or inclinations to engage in specific purchasing behaviors. According to Ajzen (1991), customer intention is a critical component of the Theory of Planned Behavior, which posits that intentions are influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This theory suggests that customers form intentions based on their evaluations of the outcomes associated with a purchase, social pressures they perceive regarding the behavior, and their confidence in their ability to perform the behavior. Thus, understanding customer intention is essential for marketers aiming to predict purchasing behaviors and tailor strategies accordingly.

Moreover, customer intention can be shaped by various factors including marketing stimuli, personal experiences, and socio-economic conditions. As noted by Schiffman and Kanuk (2010), customer intentions are not static; they evolve based on new information and changing circumstances. For instance, promotional efforts such as discounts or advertisements can significantly alter a customer's intentions to buy a product. Additionally, psychological factors such as motivation and perception play crucial roles in shaping these intentions. The interplay between external influences (like advertising) and internal motivations (such as personal values) creates a dynamic environment where customer intentions can shift rapidly.

Measures of Customers intentions

Purchase Pattern

Purchase patterns refer to the habitual behaviors exhibited by customers when making buying decisions, which can be influenced by various factors such as personal preferences, social influences, and economic conditions (Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2006). Understanding these patterns allows marketers to predict future purchasing behavior and tailor their strategies accordingly. For instance, if a customer consistently purchases organic products, this pattern may

indicate a strong preference for health-conscious choices and an intention to maintain such a lifestyle (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). By analyzing purchase patterns through data analytics and market research techniques, businesses can gain insights into customers intentions that go beyond mere transactional data.

Loyalty Intention

Loyalty intention is a critical construct in customers behavior research, representing the likelihood that a customers will continue to purchase from a particular brand or company over time. This concept is often viewed as an indicator of customer commitment and satisfaction, which are essential for fostering long-term relationships between customers and brands. According to Oliver (1999), loyalty intention encompasses not only repeat purchasing behavior but also the emotional attachment that customers develop towards a brand. This emotional connection can significantly influence their decision-making processes, leading to higher levels of advocacy and word-of-mouth promotion. The interplay between satisfaction and loyalty intention has been extensively studied, with researchers like Dick and Basu (1994) emphasizing that satisfied customers are more likely to exhibit loyalty intentions, thereby creating a positive feedback loop that benefits both the customers and the brand.

Theoretical Review

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive Dissonance Theory was propounded by Leon Festinger in 1957, positing that individuals experience psychological discomfort (dissonance) when they hold conflicting beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors (Festinger, 1957). This theory is particularly relevant to the study of neuromarketing and customer intentions as it helps explain how consumers reconcile conflicting information or experiences related to a product or brand. For instance, when consumers encounter marketing messages that contradict their prior beliefs or experiences, they may experience dissonance, leading them to change their attitudes or behaviors to reduce this discomfort (Egan, 2019). Understanding this dynamic can enable marketers to design campaigns that minimize dissonance and align their messaging with consumers' existing beliefs, ultimately influencing purchase patterns and loyalty intentions (Rivis & Sheeran, 2003).

Assumptions of Cognitive Dissonance Theory

1. **Inconsistency Affects Attitudes and Behaviors:** The theory assumes that inconsistency between beliefs and behaviors leads to psychological discomfort, prompting individuals to resolve the inconsistency.
2. **Motivation for Consistency:** People have an inherent desire for cognitive consistency. When faced with dissonance, individuals are motivated to restore harmony through various strategies, such as rationalization or changing beliefs.

Implications of Cognitive Dissonance Theory

1. **Understanding Consumer Behavior:** Neuromarketing can leverage cognitive dissonance to understand consumer decision-making processes. By identifying situations that create dissonance, marketers can develop strategies that help consumers reconcile conflicting feelings about their purchases, enhancing customer satisfaction.
2. **Influencing Purchase Intentions:** Marketers can design campaigns that acknowledge potential dissonance related to product choices. By highlighting benefits and addressing concerns, they can reduce dissonance and positively influence purchase intentions.

Empirical Review

Adeyemi & Olaniyan (2021) worked on neuromarketing: understanding customers behavior in the fast-food Industry. This study aimed to explore how neuromarketing techniques influence customers behavior and purchasing intentions within Nigeria's fast-food sector. The objectives included identifying specific neuromarketing strategies employed by fast-food firms, assessing

their effectiveness in shaping customers preferences, and analyzing the psychological mechanisms behind these influences. The research utilized a descriptive survey design targeting customers of fast food in urban areas of Nigeria. The population consisted of individuals aged 18-45 who frequently patronize fast-food outlets. A sample size of 400 respondents was determined using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different demographics. Data were collected through structured questionnaires that incorporated both closed and open-ended questions. To ensure validity, the instrument was pre-tested with a small group outside the main sample, and adjustments were made based on feedback. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient above 0.7, indicating acceptable reliability. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and regression analysis to determine relationships between neuromarketing strategies and customers intentions. The study found that neuromarketing strategies such as sensory branding (e.g., appealing visuals and sounds) significantly influenced customers preferences for fast food. It revealed that emotional responses elicited by these strategies led to increased purchase intentions among customers. Additionally, factors like brand loyalty and perceived quality were identified as mediators in this relationship. The authors concluded that neuromarketing is a powerful tool for understanding customers behavior in the fast-food industry in Nigeria. They emphasized that companies should integrate these insights into their marketing strategies to enhance customer engagement and drive sales. The study recommended that fast-food firms invest in neuromarketing research to tailor their marketing efforts more effectively. Furthermore, it suggested training marketing teams on neuromarketing principles to optimize campaign designs that resonate with target audiences.

Nwankwo & Okafor (2022) carried out study on the impact of neuromarketing on customers decision-making processes: evidence from Nigerian fast-food customers. This research aimed to investigate how neuromarketing influences decision-making processes among customers in Nigeria's fast-food industry. Specific objectives included examining the role of emotional appeal in advertising campaigns and its effect on customers choices. Employing a mixed-methods approach, this study combined qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys. The population comprised young adults aged 18-30 who regularly consume fast food across major cities like Lagos and Abuja. A sample size of 300 participants was selected through convenience sampling for the survey component while 20 individuals were interviewed for qualitative insights. Data collection involved online surveys distributed via social media platforms alongside face-to-face interviews conducted at various fast-food locations for richer context. Validity was ensured through expert reviews of the survey instrument, while reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha score exceeding 0.75. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software for statistical significance, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data. Results indicated that advertisements utilizing emotional appeals significantly impacted customers decision-making processes when choosing fast food options. Participants reported higher engagement levels with ads featuring relatable narratives or humor compared to traditional promotional content. The authors concluded that incorporating emotional elements into marketing campaigns could lead to better customers engagement and improved sales performance for fast-food brands in Nigeria. Recommendations included encouraging marketers to adopt storytelling techniques within their advertising strategies and conducting further research into demographic variations regarding emotional responses to advertisements.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlational survey research design as the study seek to determine the relationship between both variables under study. The population of the study consisted of 11 fast-food firms in Port Harcourt. The study adopted a census population.

Table 1: Population of the Study

S/N	FIRMS
1	Genesis Fast Food
2	Kilimanjaro Restaurant

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- 3 The Promise
 - 4 4gee’s Chicken Fast Food
 - 5 Country Style Chicken
 - 6 Dakota Restaurant
 - 7 Mega Grill Fast Food & Restaurant
 - 8 Merri’s Grills
 - 9 Relish Kitchen
 - 10 ShiningLight Fast Food
 - 11 Skippers Fast Food
-

Source: Nigeria Directory, 2024

3 Managers were selected from each firm multiplied 11 firms give us a total of 33 respondents under study. Structured questionnaire instrument title “Neuromarketing and customers intentions” was developed on five-point likert scale. The questionnaire was independently subjected to content and construct validity by two Lecturers in the Department of Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State. The corrections and suggestions of the validators were affected on the finale copy of the instrument. The reliability of empirical measurement is indicated by the internal consistency, one of the most commonly used indicators of internal consistency is Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. Questionnaire item statements with Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient below the 0.70 threshold were eliminated. the test-retest method was used. 10 copies of the questionnaire instrument were issue and some later same copies were issue through electronic media. the results were used in computation using Cronbach’s alpha test of reliability.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.702	4

Source: Researcher Computation via SPSS Version 25

The result of the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test indicates .702 which is above .70 which implies that the items are reliable. The primary data for this study were generated through questionnaire. hypotheses were tested using Pearson product moment correlation on SPSS.

Data Analysis

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between electroencephalography and purchase pattern of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 1: Correlations on Electroencephalography and Purchase Pattern

		Electroencephalo graphy	Purchase pattern
Electroencephalogram	Pearson Correlation	1	.442*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	N	33	33
Purchase pattern	Pearson Correlation	.442*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	N	33	33

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 Correlations on electroencephalography and purchase pattern revealed there is a significant relationship between electroencephalography and purchase pattern of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State where P. .442 = .010 leading to the acceptance of alternate hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between electroencephalography and purchase pattern of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between eye-tracking and loyalty intention of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 2: Correlations on Eye-tracking and Loyalty Intention

		Eye-tracking	Loyalty intention
Eye-tracking	Pearson Correlation	1	.745**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	33	33
Loyalty Intention	Pearson Correlation	.745**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	33	33

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

Table 2: Correlations on eye-tracking and loyalty intention revealed that there is a significant relationship between eye-tracking and loyalty intention of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State where $P = .745 = .000$ leading to acceptance of alternate hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between eye-tracking and loyalty intention of fast-food firms in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 Correlations on electroencephalography and purchase pattern revealed there is a significant relationship between electroencephalography and purchase pattern of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt where $P = .442 = .010$ leading to the acceptance of alternate hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between electroencephalography and purchase pattern of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt. Similarly, Adeyemi & Olaniyan (2021) worked on neuromarketing: understanding customers behavior in the fast-food Industry. The study found that neuromarketing strategies such as sensory branding (e.g., appealing visuals and sounds) significantly influenced customers preferences for fast food. It revealed that emotional responses elicited by these strategies led to increased purchase intentions among customers. The authors concluded that neuromarketing is a powerful tool for understanding customers behavior in the fast-food industry in Nigeria. They emphasized that companies should integrate these insights into their marketing strategies to enhance customer engagement and drive sales. The study recommended that fast-food firms invest in neuromarketing research to tailor their marketing efforts more effectively.

Table 2: Correlations on eye-tracking and loyalty intentions revealed that there is a significant relationship between eye-tracking and loyalty intention of fast-food firms in Rivers State where $P = .745 = .000$ leading to acceptance of alternate hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between eye-tracking and loyalty intention of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt. Also, Nwankwo & Okafor (2022) carried out study on the impact of neuromarketing on customers decision-making processes: evidence from Nigerian fast-food customers. Results indicated that advertisements utilizing emotional appeals significantly impacted customers decision-making processes when choosing fast food options. Participants reported higher engagement levels with ads featuring relatable narratives or humor compared to traditional promotional content. The authors concluded that incorporating emotional elements into marketing campaigns could lead to better customers engagement and improved sales performance for fast-food brands in Nigeria. Recommendations included encouraging marketers to adopt storytelling techniques within their advertising strategies and conducting further research into demographic variations regarding emotional responses to advertisements.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that neuromarketing significantly influences customers intentions of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Fast-food firms should consider integrating electroencephalography technology into their marketing strategies to better understand consumer decision-making processes.
2. Firms should conduct eye-tracking studies during customer interactions with advertisements and menus to gauge visual attention and preferences.

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