Full Length Research

Role of relationship marketing on customers' brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited Products in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State

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ABSTRACT: The study examines the effect of relationship marketing on customers' brand loyalty to intercontinental distillers' company products in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. It aimed to examine the effect of organization trust, organization commitment, organization communication and organization service quality and customer loyalty in Jos. A descriptive survey was used for the research study and the sample size of two hundred and eighty-seven (287) was selected using simple random sampling techniques while data used were obtained from only primary sources using structured questionnaires. Data was organized and presented in simple statistical tables while the multiple linear regression analysis was used to analyse the data collected from the findings. The result revealed that trust, commitment, communication and service quality has a significant relationship on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products. It recommended that, organization trust, organization commitment, organization communication and organization service quality by intercontinental distillers should designed products awareness through public relations, podcasts, training work shop, and customers feedback channel so as to achieve more desired repurchase in terms of customers brand loyalty of intercontinental distillers company products.

Keywords: Commitment, communication, customer brand loyalty, relationship marketing, service quality, trust.

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic changing market, all companies especially the food and beverage industries are influenced by what happens while attempting to retain their customers in the competitive market worldwide such as treating new customers' better, prompt attendance to their complaints, appreciating their continuous patronage, along with similar services (Lawson-Body and Limayem, 2004). This is because the growth of any business hinges on the level of patronage of customers as regards their products. Relationship marketing has been seen in the past few decades as a field of great interest to both scholars and practitioners in business and marketing (Julian *et al.*, 2015; Bojei *et al.*, 2013).

According to Forsey (2021), relationship marketing is defined as: "a marketing strategy that cultivates deeper, more meaningful relationships with customers to ensure long-term satisfaction and brand loyalty. Relationship marketing is not focused on short-term wins or sales transactions rather; it is focused on delighting customers for the long haul. There is consensus among researchers that the relationship marketing practice is a multi-dimensional concept (Claycomb and Martin, 2012; Aminu, 2012). Ndudi and Kifordu (2021) have identified trust, commitment, communication, and service quality. On the

other hand, Ojiaku *et al.* (2017) assesses effect of relationship marketing on customers' loyalty, with a focus on customer trust, satisfaction and commitment.

There are many companies that are involved in the production and distribution of food and beverage in Nigeria such as; UAC Foods, Dangote Group, Beloxxi Industry, Nestle, Unilever, Flour Mill, Cadbury, Intercontinental Distillers Limited etc. All these companies have been successful and their contribution in terms of revenue and employment in the country has been very important. The World Trade Organization (WTO) placed Nigeria as the leading country in Africa in terms of food and beverage industry. Flanders Investment and State Market Survey (2020) observed the contribution of the industry to the manufacturing sector was estimated to be 22.5% and 4.6% of the country's GDP. Intercontinental Distillers Limited. Intercontinental Distillers Limited dates back to 1749 when two Italians, Justerini and Brooks came together to form a wine and spirit business which they called J & B (derived from the initial of their names).

The company grew in size through the development of a wide range of portfolio of successful brands, relying on a sound understanding of the Nigerian wines and spirit market, and indeed of the West African sub-region (Adeleke and Aminu, 2012). Eagle Aromatic Schnapps, Chelsea London Dry Gin, Squadron Dark Rum, Bull London Dry Gin, Bull Dark Rum, Action Bitters, Confam Bitters, DeROK Cafe Liqueur, DeROK Chocolate Flavoured Liqueur, Commodore Aromatic Schnapps, Chapeau Wine, Veleta Fruit Drink, Confam Bitters, and Teezers are among the products manufactured and marketed. The company increased in size as a result of the creation of a diverse portfolio of profitable brands based on a thorough grasp of the Nigerian wine and spirit market (Berne-Manero and Marzo-Navarro, 2020). Organizational trust is one of the essential factors for employees to be peaceful, successful, and productive in the workplace.

Trust in the organization increases the employee's commitment to the workplace, as well as increasing organizational success. Organizational commitment is also expressed as a psychological state that forms employees' relationships with the organization and the decision to stay or leave the organization, as a condition where employees are very interested in the goals, values, and goals of the organization. Organizational communication is referred to the social collectives in which people develop ritualized patterns of interaction in an attempt to co-ordinate their activities and efforts in the achievement of personal and group goals. Service quality is dynamic and critical due to its difficulty to measure by service providers. To maintain competition, firms must understand the importance of service quality and its impact on customer satisfaction. Ikraman and Syah (2020) opines that in spite of the enormous studies on service quality in the service industries, scanty efforts have been made to

identify its determinants from customer perspective. Service quality is often considered as strong competitive tool for all service companies which tend to apply it all over the world to raise their competitiveness (Kumar *et al.*, 2021).

Based on the above, the study was triggered on the achievement of dependency on the product by customers through emotional connection, superiority of the products and maintaining an edge ahead of the other competitors. When customers can produce positive feedback about an organization, its products, and its customer support services, they are more likely and willing to return for another business opportunity. The aim of this study therefore, is to determine the effect of relationship marketing on customers' brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers company limited products in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. Many studies in the literature have examined the other facets of relationship marketing impact in the services sectors and other production industries but none have been able to address the issue in the area of customers' brand loyalty with a focus on intercontinental distiller's company product where this study focused on.

Statement of the problem

A company can obtain quality sources of marketing information by establishing relationships with consumers, which can aid them plan their strategies more effectively. Customers on the other hand will be pleased with the product they are purchasing if what the companies stated is in line with what they eventually see in the product. Kusumawati *et al.* (2020) opine that a clear relationship concerning relationship marketing and loyalty of the customer favours both the company and the customer. As such, consumer satisfaction has been identified as one of the most significant determinants of potential product use by consumers (Ibrahim and Samuel, 2020).

Lack of customer satisfaction is also seen as a differentiating factor in a dynamic environment where companies compete for consumers as satisfaction is linked to customer brand loyalty (Obinna and Thecla, 2020). This concept has become a crucial feature of a business strategy in that customer brand loyalty determines the reputation of the business and its products in the minds of customers (Salah and Abou-Shouk, 2019). On the other hand, increased customer and company uncertainty has resulted from enhanced accessibility, the growth of the information age, and the advent of new technological developments, have forced businesses to contend with a variety of different customers and choices (Makinde *et al.*, 2021).

Thus, ineffective marketing fails to create sufficient awareness among members of the public about the existence of the company, this limits the level of awareness

about the company. Poor pricing policy often scares away customers instead of attracting them to patronize the product. The company will therefore lose customers to competitors as a result of high prices. Customer satisfaction which is at the core of customer retention may not be achieved as a result of poor production policy. A lack of knowledge of what customers want will lead to wrong offerings which will leave customers dissatisfied, poor customer service will also leave customers largely dissatisfied and may lead to customers patronizing competitors. Besides, inadequate incentives for existing customers make customer loyalty efforts ineffective. These factors militate against effective relationship marketing on customers' brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers company limited products in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. Furthermore, the field of relationship marketing is a recent innovation in marketing literature, there are scarce in-depth studies in the area, especially in developing economies like Nigeria. This study intends to fill this gap. Role of relationship marketing on customers' brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited Products in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Research question

1. To what extent does organization trust affect customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products?
2. To what extent does commitment affect customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products?
3. To what extent does organization communication affect customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products?
4. To what extent does service quality on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products?

Specific objectives

The following are the specific objectives of this study:

1. To evaluate whether trust leads to customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.
2. To evaluate whether commitment affects customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.
3. To evaluate whether communication affects customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.
4. To evaluate the effect of service quality on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.

Research hypotheses

The following null hypotheses have been formulated to enable us to answer the research questions:

H_{01}: Organization Trust does not have any significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.
H_{02}: Organization Commitment does not have any significant effect on customer brand Loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.
H_{03}: Organization Communication does not have any significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.
H_{04}: Organization Service quality does not have any significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.

Scope of the study

The scope of this study focused on Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria and the focus will be on relationship marketing approaches of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited and the customer's loyalty to their brand trust and commitment. The research will study the period between 5 years (2016-2021). Based on variable scope, the study aimed at assessing relationship marketing and its effects on customer's loyalty. This study identifies the dimensions of relationship marketing such as organization trust, organization commitment, organization communication, and organization service quality as the independent constructs while customer brand loyalty as the dependent construct.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual review

Meaning of relationship marketing

Relationship marketing involves acquiring, building, and retaining client connections. This model is interesting for business owners as well as scholars because it contains intense competition and progressively demanding customers, Studies have attempted relation marketing to find elements that significantly influence buyer-seller interaction, relationship consistency, pleasure, and effectiveness in the setting of buyer-seller interactions (Johanna and Von Koskull Catharina, 2017). Relationship marketing is a facet of customer relationship management (CRM) that focuses on customer loyalty and long-term customer engagement rather than shorter-term goals like customer acquisition and individual sales.

The concept of relationship marketing is going by past exchange since it is based mostly on expectation of organizations to provide prevalent and preferred value by recognizing the point of view of the customer as the basic point of the relationship building exercise. Relationship marketing refers to all marketing exercises coordinated toward setting up, creating, and maintaining successful relationship exchanges (Mishra and Liy, 2018). Mudie *et al.* (2016) defined relationship marketing as a logic of doing business with a strategic intention that focuses on keeping and advancing current customers instead of obtaining recruiting new customers. The goal of relationship marketing (or customer relationship marketing) is to create strong, even emotional, customer connections to a brand that can lead to ongoing business, free word-of-mouth promotion and information from customers that can generate leads." The factors like long-term customer relationships, an emphasis on customer-firm contact, and consumer engagement in service outcomes all contributed to the development of relationship marketing because they might be considered the enablers of it (Johanna and Von Koskull Catharina, 2017). The businesses need to build a good relationship with their customers, create a loyal customer base, and make the relationship bigger while at the same time finding new customers. Customer relationship is described by many dimensions, i.e., organization trust, organization commitment, organization communication, and organization commitment and organization service quality, relationship quality, relationship satisfaction and organizational trust (Morgan and Hunt, 2014; Palmatier *et al.*, 2016).

Business marketing

There are associations among various types of stakeholders that includes (businesses, institutions, and consumers) that exchange various types of resources, and in the process of gaining the resources access and attaining control over them (Möller and Halinen, 2010).

Marketing channels

According to (Haider and Supriya 2007), various challenges arose as time passed. Marketing channels denote a dedication to a system of principles and procedures that encompasses a large number of long-term partnerships. and as for many companies, it is needed a long time and years to build and reflect a considerable corporate commitment to a huge number of small businesses.

Services marketing

The main concept of Service Marketing is to enhance marketing strength and to develop better production value and customer relationships (Verhoef *et al.*, 2015). There has been an added prominence given to the service sector due to the very competitive nature of marketing in the prevailing global economy, where, service marketing and quality marketing strategies have developed into a fundamental subject.

Database marketing and direct marketing

Ros´ario and Raimundo (2021) clarify this by giving the differences in the use of the terms. According to Ros´ario and Raimundo (2021), a customer database only contains information on existing customers, whereas a marketing database is considered broader-holding information on existing and potential customers and in most cases competitors' data. Cheng *et al.* (2021) see marketing database as "the means for storing and retrieving individual-specific data coupled with technological facilitators leading to the targeting of such individuals based on what we know of their interests and characteristics". Database marketing is a marketing method by collecting and accumulating a large amount of consumer information, predicting how likely consumers are to buy a certain product after processing, and using this information to accurately position the product, and making targeted marketing information so as to persuade consumers to buy products (Cheng *et al.*, 2021; Ros´ario and Raimundo, 2021).

Importance of relationship marketing

Nowadays, many companies are aware of the power the customer holds. With technology and information changing drastically, organizations are changing their way of moving with the change, and the companies that do not move with the new trends are being cut down from the business market (Juneja, 2015). With the current situation and use of " technology and data mining techniques", marketing departments in many companies interact and handle each consumer individually, Furthermore, they can also analyse their wants and personalize approaches to satisfy those demands (Juneja, 2015). With the new upcoming technologies, companies are expanding their way of communicating with their customer base (Aberele, 2019).

Dimensions of relationship marketing

These include trust, commitment, communication and service quality.

Organization trust: In the marketing context, trust is customers' confidence in the capacity of a firm to effectively

and satisfactorily meet their needs and requirements. A customer trusts a firm when he believes and is assured that the firm has the expertise and competency to effectively serve his needs and wants (Bradley, 2018). In the view of Olayinka and Odunlami (2018), trust entails customers' expression of confidence or reliance in the ability of firms to provide products and services that are accurate, reliable, appropriate, valuable and capable of satisfying their needs and expectations (Jackie *et al.*, 2017).

Organization commitment: Commitment of the organization towards customers is crucial and contributes to the trust of the customers. This is also called customer partnership and loyalty for future purchases (Conversational, 2015). Several researchers such as Parawansa (2018) and Bricci *et al.* (2016) stressed that elements of marketing relationship such as commitment and trust are positively related to customer's satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, Haghkhah *et al.* (2020) proposed that trust and commitment are important mediators in the relationship between customer value and service quality on customer loyalty.

Organization communication: In the context of relationship marketing, communication is the back-and-forth transmission of information between a business organization and its customers in order to achieve established business objectives (Rajah and Al-Islami, 2014). Communication is defined as the formal as well as informal exchange and sharing of meaningful and timely information between buyers and sellers (Anabila *et al.,* 2012; Rajah and Al-Islami, 2014).

Organization services quality: Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) defined service quality as "the global evaluation or attitude of overall excellence of services. Service quality is the difference between customer's perceptions and perceptions of service satisfaction or dissatisfaction formed by their experience of purchase and use of the service (Umar and Jinaidi, 2012).

Concept of customer brand loyalty

Keller (2018) has proposed that brand loyalty can be historically measured via purchase behaviours; Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) showed their agreement and stated further that purchase loyalty can lead to better and greater market share and empower the brands to position a higher brand pricing. Generally, brand loyalty has appeared as an essential drive for enterprises to aim for. Brand loyalty is a significant variable that can be viewed from different perspectives and different researchers may hold some distinctive beliefs about their definition of brand loyalty. Marketing experts observe the value of consumer loyalty,

with keen reference to a customer's likelihood of repeating a business with a company or brand, arising from customer contentment, positive customer experiences, and the entire value of products received by a customer from a company (Khan *et al.*, 2022; Hassan *et al.*, 2020).

Relationship marketing practices and customer brand loyalty

Due to intense competition in the marketplace in the manufacturing sector, relationship marketing practices have become a necessity rather than a practice of huge potential (Madan *et al.*, 2015). Relationship marketing practices is the best option to motivate, encourage and retain the customer for longer time with the existing bank as the banks serve almost the homogeneous products and services in the market (Vargo and Lusch, 2014). As the relationship progresses, customer relationship gets strengthened which later obstructs the customer to switch to competitor (Abubakar, 2017).

Conceptual framework

The research framework depicts the dependent and independent variables with their dimensions: Relationship marketing as the independent variable with customer brand loyalty as the dependent variable. The independent variables have a direct relationship with customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distiller Company Limited products. When the customers perceive brands that have good packaging, there is a tendency for the customer to keep making use of such products and the patronage will be perpetual. This means that the relationship marketing construct (organization trust, organization commitment, organization communication and organization services quality) will lead to customer brand loyalty to products of Intercontinental Distiller Company Limited in the market. In summary, this conceptual framework proposes four main relationships that are consumer relationship marketing constructs (organization Trust, organization Commitment, organization Communication and organization Service quality) on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distiller Company Limited products in the market (Figure 1).

Theoretical review

The stakeholder theory

This theory was developed by Donaldson in 1995. It asserts that organizations exist not only to maximize shareholder wealth, but also to protect the interests of a wide range of stakeholders whose negative reactions
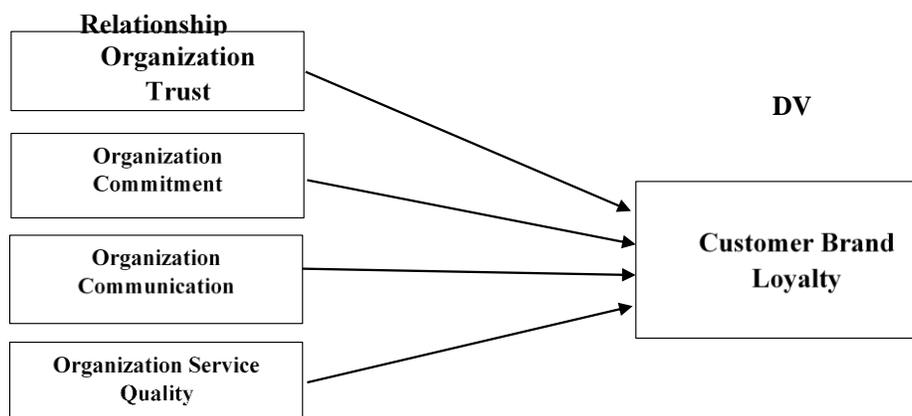
Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study (Source: Ndudi and Kifordu, 2021; Aminu, 2012).

could jeopardize the establishment's survival. The stake-holders include customers, employees, communities, suppliers, creditors as well as the government in the state (Nedelchev, 2018). Customers, according to stakeholder theory, are the lifeblood of any business since without them, revenue cannot flow, and organizations would cease to exist. That implies no customer, no business. Food and Beverages industries have variety of ways to protect customers' interest especially from external intruders or their competitors such as providing after sales services, discounts for goods purchase, and end of the promo and putting in place stringent measures to ensure the loyalty and confidence of the customer towards the product manufactured in their company.

The social exchange theory

This theory was developed by a sociologist named George Homans. It first appeared in 1958 in one of his essays titled "Social Behavior as Exchange. The core premise of Social Exchange Theory is that people make decisions by consciously or unconsciously weighing the costs and benefits of a relationship or activity, with the goal of maximizing their reward. Trust may build as business partners interact on a regular basis. Therefore, since one of the theory's principles demonstrates how it can explain some human connections, such as interpersonal relationship growth, collective decision-making, and job performance (Redmond, 2015), the social exchange theory becomes increasingly significant. This theory appears to be significant as a theoretical framework for this research because the study focuses on the subject of relationship marketing of manufacturing company.

Empirical review

Haghkhah *et al.* (2020) assess the effects of service

quality, trust and commitment on customer loyalty. CRM components were measured by trust and product performance. The study used a proportionately stratified sampling method to collect data from 350 respondents in two manufacturing companies located in Asia. The Partial Least Square Structural Equation model was employed to analyse the data retrieved from respondents. The outcome of their study reveals that positive and significant relation-ships exist between commitment, trust, service quality, and customer loyalty in the industry. They concluded that for the organization to ensure that their customers are loyal to their product, there is a need to ensure that they provide a good service quality, ensure that they practice what they claim to be and be committed to their customer's request.

Haneef *et al.* (2012) examined the effect of relationship marketing on customer loyalty in the Nigerian banking industry using the primary data approach. The data were collected through the questionnaire method using the 5-point Likert scale from 1200 respondents. Results show that relationship marketing proxies (trust, commitment, and service quality) are significant and have a positive impact on both customer retention and loyalty.

A study conducted by Chakiso (2015) with the title "The effect of relationship marketing on customers' loyalty (Evidence from Zemen Bank)" provides empirical evidence for the influence on customer loyalty of five underpinnings of relationship marketing: Trust, commitment, conflict handling, communication, and gratitude. RM constructs are identified from the literature, integrated into the proposed model, and linked with customers' loyalty. In addition, the mediating effect of top management commit-ment to RM and customers' loyalty is also investigated. The study tried to validate that, in Zemen Bank; relation-ship marketing underpinnings affected customers' loyalty. Overall, all relationship marketing underpinnings such as trust, commitment, conflict management, communication, and gratitude have positive and moderate relationships with customers' loyalty.

Furthermore, Ndubisi *et al.* (2015) conducted a quantitative study on the "Effect of relationship marketing strategies on consumer loyalty: a study of Mobile Telecommunications Network (MTN) Nigeria". The study used a semi-structured research questionnaire to obtain primary data from 158 subscribers of Mobile Telecommunications Network (MTN) in Lagos. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and multiple regression were used for testing the hypotheses of the study. The findings of the study revealed that communication, trust building, customer care, and service quality had significant positive relationships and effects on consumer loyalty of Mobile Telecommunications Network (MTN), while commitment had a negative insignificant relationship and effect on consumer loyalty in this regard. Hence, the study reached the conclusion that to a very large extent, relationship marketing significantly improves consumer loyalty in the Nigerian telecommunications sector.

Odili *et al.* (2020) conducted a study on "Relationship marketing and customer retention among telecom networks in Enugu". The study elicited primary data from a sample of 203 telecom subscribers in Enugu Metropolis using a structured questionnaire. The study hypotheses were tested using multiple correlation analysis. Consequently, the findings revealed that relationship marketing (service quality, trust building, customer care and promise fulfillment) had a significant positive association with customer retention to telecom networks in Enugu. Taking these findings into consideration, the study concluded that relationship marketing is significantly and positively related to customer retention in the telecom sector in Nigeria.

Research gap

Based on the above literature reviewed, the study revealed the point that there are still gaps to be filled as it shows that relationship marketing faces certain constrictions connected with the techniques adopted by establishments First, the marketing mix may not be active and so will fail to entice customers (organization trust. Organization commitment, organization communication and organization service quality). Thus, ineffective advertising hinges as a drawback to creating sufficient awareness among members of the public about the existence of the company's product, thereby limiting the level of awareness about the product. Also, poor pricing policy often scares away customers instead of attracting them to patronize the product. Customer satisfaction which is at the core of customer retention may not be achieved as a result of poor production policy, due to lack of knowledge of what customers want leading to wrong offerings and low quality of services, thereby leaving customers dissatisfied. Finally, poor customer services leave customers dissatisfied leading to low customer patronage, and inadequate incentives for existing customers make customer retention efforts ineffective. The above was discovered as a fundamental gap which gave rise to the study.

METHODOLOGY

Kasau (2017) defined a research design as a master plan that specifies procedures and methods for the collection and analysis of the information required in a study. It is the logical sequence that inter-relates the empirical data to the initial research questions of a study. In this study descriptive research design was adopted, this design is chosen for the reason that allows the researcher to gather information on the variables of the study from a relatively large population at the same time and at a less cost. The population of a study is the total of objects being studied and to which the conclusions of the result will apply. The study population comprises of the all distributors and retailers of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited wines and spirit products in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. Data obtained from Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited via their website shows that in Jos, they have two (2) main distributors who has over 400 sub-distributors within and outside Jos North Local Government Area. According to Bolarinwa (2021), a sample is a group of items, taken from the population for examination. For the purpose of this study, census method was adopted, under the census method, data was collected for each and every unit of the population or universe, since census eliminates sampling error and provides data on all the individuals in the population, the researcher deemed it fit because it gave opportunity for the researcher to divide participant based on subdivisions. Sampling theory suggests that method of estimating size in a population will depend on the following factors: the purpose of the study, the type of sampling to be used, time, resources, labour consideration and maximum error to be accommodated (Azila-gbettor *et al.*, 2015; Bolarinwa, 2020). The Yamane (1967) formula for populations that are known and finite will be used. The formula and computation are show as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = the desired sample size, N = the total population under study, 1 = a constant, e = signifies the allowable error limit (0.05) in Management Sciences Research, 2 = square of e.

Therefore,

$$n = \frac{1022}{1 + 1022(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1022}{1 + 2.555}$$

$$n = \frac{1022}{3.555}$$

$n \approx 287 \; respondents$

The sample size for this research is therefore 287 respondents from the total population of 1022 sub-distributors of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.

Source of data

Primary data has not been published yet and is more reliable, authentic and objective. It has not been changed or altered by human beings; therefore, its validity is greater than the source of data collection. The primary data can be collected with the help of different methods and also based on the research approach selected, i.e. interview method, survey questionnaire, observation, case study, independent discussions, experiments etc. This study employs the primary source of data since it is convenient and will present the researcher with anticipated results from the field. The questionnaire is divided into two sections A B and C. A is general data while B is on dimensions of the independent variable (relationships marketing) and C will focus on the dependent variable (customer brand loyalty). The researcher will make use of 'five points Likert scale e.g Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Neutral (N) Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) options which allowed respondents to make their choices freely.

Reliability and validity of instrument

Reliability estimates the consistency of the measurement or simply the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same conditions with the same subjects (Heale and Twycross, 2015). Overall and construct-based scale reliability test conducted using coefficient Alpha and the results have all fallen above 0.7 (Table 1). The coefficient value can range from 0 to 1, and, in most cases, a value of less than 0.6 would typically indicate marginal to low (or unsatisfactory) internal consistency (Hair, 2002). Thus, alpha (r) = 0.70 or higher is considered adequate to determine reliability.

The reliability test indicated that since the overall Cronbach Alpha value is 0.824 and is higher than the benchmark value of 0.7, it can be indicated that the instrument for data collection is reliable. The extent to which a measuring instrument provides adequate coverage of the topic under study is referred to as its validity (Creswell, 2016). The scale's validity was confirmed by involving marketing scholars in a review of the question-naire's content for inclusion of relevant information, absence of jargon, and appealing face validity. It was also

evaluated by the assigned advisor, and some changes were made as a result. Furthermore, after highlighting some previous studies related to the subject of this study, the researcher adapted the questionnaire from the study of Akpoviroro *et al.* (2020), on the relationship marketing construct of trust and communication, while Esumei (2021) and Burg-Brown (2016) on the construct of commitment and service quality while for customers brand loyalty the questionnaire was adapted from Rizan *et al.* (2014). A multiple regression analysis will be used to determine the expected relationships between relationship marketing and customer brand loyalty. The multiple linear regression analysis was adopted for the testing of hypotheses and data collected will be analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics v26. The reason for adopting multiple linear regression analysis is because the study involves multiple variables on the side of independent variables since it is an analysis of the association between two or more independent variables on a single, interval-scaled dependent variable. In this study, independent variables are entered into the same regression equation to predict whether relationship marketing (organization trust, organization commitment, organization communication and organization service quality) has any significant effect on customer brand loyalty of International Distillers Limited wines and spirit products. As a set of techniques for studying the straight-line relationships among two or more variables, multiple linear regression analysis estimates the β's in the equation.

The regression analysis provided estimate equations to predict the magnitude of the dependent variable and provide values for the predictor variables as shown in the equation below.

$Y = \beta 0 + \beta 1 X 1 + \beta 2 X 2 + \beta 3 X 3 + \beta 4 X 4 + \varepsilon$

Where: Y = the dependent variable (customer brand loyalty), B0 = Constant or intercept, $\beta 1$, $\beta 2$, $\beta 3$, $\beta 4$, = Coefficients of determination , X_1 = the independent variable (trust), X_2 = the independent variable (commitment), X_3 = the independent variable (communication), X_4 = the independent variable (service quality), ε = Error term.

Decision rule

The decision rule is:

Reject H_{01}-H_{05} if p-value < 0.05, otherwise Accept H_{01}-H_{05}

Model specification

Model specification refers to the determination of which independent variables should be included in or excluded from a regression equation.

Table 1. Reliability result.

S/N	Questionnaire constructs	Cronbach alpha reliability result	Number of Items	Remark
1	Customer brand loyalty (CBL)	0.773	5	Reliable
2	Trust (TRT)	0.738	5	Reliable
3	Commitment (COMMT)	0.759	5	Reliable
4	Communication (COMM)	0.767	5	Reliable
5.	Service quality(SQ)	0.795	5	Reliable

Source: SPSS 26.0.

RM= f (TRT, COMT, COMM, SQ)

The function model can be transformed into an equation form as thus;

$$RM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \, TRT + \beta_2 \, COMT + \beta_3 \, COMM + \beta_4 \, SQ + et \text{---- (2)}$$

Apriori expectation of the model

$B_1, \beta_2, \beta_3 < 0$ and $\beta_3, \beta_4 > 0$

PRESENTATION OF DATA, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section empirically explained research methods that were used to examine the effect of relationship marketing on customers' brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers company limited products in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. Preliminary analyses was conducted to ensure all the assumptions of the regression model were met. For this study, a total of two hundred and eighty-seven (287) copies of the questionnaire were administered and only two hundred and sixty (260) questionnaire were retrieved giving a sample response rate of 90.59%.

Descriptive statistics

Table 2 shows that 124 respondents representing 47.7% are male, while 136 respondents representing 52.3% are female. The table also shows that majority of the respondents which is 97 representing 37.3% are within the ages of 18-25 years. The result also indicated that 85 respondents representing 32.7% are within the age range of 24-40 years while 78 of the respondents representing 30.0% are 41 and above years. In the case of those who are married, there are 129 respondents representing 49.6% while those who are single have 131 respondents representing 50.4%. Finally, majority of the respondents 74 representing 28.5% have been patronizing for between 16-20 years, 71 respondents representing 27.3% have been patronizing for between 1-5 years. Others are 6-10 years and 11-15 years respectively.

Table 2. Demographic distribution of the respondents.

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	124	47.7%
Female	136	52.3%
Total	260	100%
Age Range		
18-25 years	97	37.3%
26-40 years	85	32.7%
41-above years	78	30.0%
Total	260	100%
Marital Status		
Single	131	50.4
Married	129	49.6%
Total	260	100%
Year of Patronage		
1-5 years	71	27.3%
6-10 years	58	22.3%
11-15 years	57	21.9%
16-20years	74	28.5%
Total	260	100%

Source: SPSS 26.0.

Data analysis

Correlations and multicollinearity

In this study, correlation and multicollinearity were applied to test if there are excessive correlations between the variables in the model. The correlation matrix can scanned as a preliminary look for multicollinearity. To avoid multicollinearity in the sample, there should be no substantial correlations (R > 0.9) between the predictors (Field, 2005). The correlation matrix in Table 3 shows that there are no variables that have excessive correlations between them.

The correlation result for dependent and independent variables in Table 3 shows that all the variables have a

Table 3. Correlation matrix.

Parameters		CBL	TRT	COMT	COMM	SQ
CBL	Pearson Correlation	1	0.188**	0.394**	0.370**	0.294**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	260	260	260	259	260
TRT	Pearson Correlation	0.188**	1	0.328**	0.281**	0.288**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	260	260	260	259	260
COMT	Pearson Correlation	0.394**	0.328**	1	0.524**	0.655**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
	N	260	260	260	259	260
COMM	Pearson Correlation	0.370**	0.281**	0.524**	1	0.579**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000
	N	259	259	259	259	259
SQ	Pearson Correlation	0.294**	0.288**	0.655**	0.579**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	260	260	260	259	260

Source: SPSS 26.0.

Table 4. Model fitness.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.441a	0.194	0.181	0.57970	1.840

a. Predictors: (Constant), service quality, trust, communication, commitment.
b. Dependent Variable: Customer brand loyalty.

positive relationship to customer brand loyalty (CBL). The result revealed that TRT, COMT, COMM and SQ correlate to customer brand loyalty by 18.8%, 39.4%, 37.0%, and 29.4% respectively.

The value of the *R*-squared. In a multiple regression model, this is the proportion of the total sample variation in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variable. The closer the R^2 is to 1 or 100% the better the goodness of fit (Table 4). The R^2 lies between zero and one because sum of square error cannot be greater than sum of square total. A value of R^2 that is nearly equal to zero indicates a poor fit of the OLS line. The coefficient of determination $r^2 = 0.194$ shows a 19.4% contribution of TRT, COMT, COMM and SQ to CBL. The result also indicated that there is no auto-correlation since the Durbin-Watson value is approximately 2.

The F-Statistic is a test used to test multiple hypotheses about the parameters in a multiple regression model. This statistic tests the null hypothesis that all the regression coefficients are equal to zero. If the Fcal > F0.05 (tab), reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis vice-versa. The F- test with a value of 15.298

and p-value of 0.000 shows that there is a strong linear dependency existing among the variables. The F-statistic shows a very good fit, statistically (Table 5).

Test of hypotheses

H_{01}: Trust does not have any significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products

The result of the regression result in Table 6, shows that the p-value of trust (TRT) is 0.473, the decision rule is that if the p-value is less than the level of significance of 0.05, the null hypothesis will be rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. But if the p-value is greater than the level of 0.05, accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternate. Since the p-value (0.473) is greater than the significant level of 0.05. The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected concluding that Trust does not have any significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.

Table 5. Anova.

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.564	4	5.141	15.298	0.000[b]
	Residual	85.358	254	0.336		
	Total	105.922	258			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer brand loyalty.
b. Predictors: (Constant), service quality, trust, communication, commitment.

Table 6. Regression result for TRT and CBL.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.329	0.182		7.292	0.000
	TRT	0.046	0.064	0.043	0.718	0.473

Table 7. Regression result for COMT and CBL.

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.329	0.182		7.292	0.000
	COMT	0.200	0.055	0.282	3.626	0.000

H_{02}: Commitment does not have any significant effect on customer brand Loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products

The result of the regression result in Table 7, shows that the p-value of commitment (COMT) is 0.000, the decision rule is that if the p-value is less than the level of significance of 0.05, the null hypothesis will be rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. But if the p-value is greater than the level of 0.05, accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternate. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the significant level of 0.05. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected concluding Commitment does have any significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.

H_{03}: Communication does not have any significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products

The result of the regression result in Table 8, shows that the p-value of communication is 0.001, the decision rule is that if the p-value is less than the level of significance of 0.05, the null hypothesis will be rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. But if the p-value is greater than the level of 0.05, accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternate. Since the p-value (0.001) is less than the

significant level of 0.05. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected concluding that Communication does have a significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.

H_{04}: Service quality does not have any significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products

The result of the regression result in Table 9, shows that the p-value of service quality is 0.648, the decision rule is that if the p-value is less than the level of significance of 0.05, the null hypothesis will be rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. But if the p-value is greater than the level of 0.05, accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternate. Since the p-value (0.648) is greater than the significant level of 0.05. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected concluding that Service quality does not have any significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products.

DISCUSSION

Trust and customer brand loyalty

The result of this study showed that trust does not have

Table 8. Regression result for COMM and CBL.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.329	0.182		7.292	0.000
	COMM	0.156	0.048	0.231	3.237	0.001

Table 9. Regression result.

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.329	0.182		7.292	0.000
	SQ	-0.034	0.074	-0.037	-0.457	0.648

any significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products. This finding is agreement with that by Haghkhah *et al.* (2020), which reveals that there is positive and significant relationships exist between trust, and customer loyalty in the industry. It also corroborates with the findings of Haneef *et al.* (2012), which show that relationship marketing proxies (trust, commitment, and service quality) are significant and have a positive impact on both customer retention and loyalty. This implies that trust proved to be the chief driver of relationship quality among customers.

Commitment and customer brand loyalty

The result of this study revealed that commitment does have significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products. The finding is consistent with the study of Chakiso (2015), who established that commitment has a positive and moderate relationship with customers' loyalty and plays an important role in establishing a stance for loyalty. This means that commitment expressed by the customers builds and increases customer loyalty.

Communication and customer brand loyalty

The result of this study revealed that communication does have a significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products. The finding was in agreement with the study of Ndubisi *et al.* (2015), that communication, trust building, customer care, and service quality had significant positive relationships and effects on consumer loyalty. This means that effective communication fosters positive interaction and enhances the quality of the relationship between the company product and customers.

Service quality and customer brand loyalty

The result of this study revealed that service quality does not have any significant effect on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products. The finding agreed with the study of Odili *et al.* (2020), which concluded that service quality as a dimension of relationship marketing is significantly and positively related to customer loyalty and retention. This result implies that the effect of service quality on customer loyalty still exists, due to the level of service enjoyed by the customers.

Conclusion

From the results obtained, the findings show that the four basic objectives were achieved. The findings revealed that the trust leads to customers brand loyalty, which indicates that trust has significant effect on customer brand loyalty. Also, commitment was determined to leads to customer's brand loyalty, which indicates that commitment has significant effect on customer brand loyalty. Effective communication was also found out to have positive effect to customer's brand loyalty, which indicates that communication has significant effect on customer brand loyalty. Meaning that trust, commitment, communication and service quality has a significant relationship on customer brand loyalty of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products. Lastly, service quality has positive effect on customers brand loyalty, which indicates that service quality has significant effect on customer brand loyalty.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the researchers have the following recommendations regarding the study:

1. Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited products

should reinforce product awareness programs through public relations activities and personal selling of their products to create brand trust and confidence in the minds of the customers thereby enhancing customers' trust.

2. The management of Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited should be committed to their product offering using structured content and various such as email, podcasts, videos and social media to inform their customers about their product offering.

3. Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited product top management should also design and provide continuous communication training sessions through workshops that emphasizes customer service handling (customer relationship marketing) for employees to develop communication skills, attitude and abilities and to fill customer handling gaps identified under this study.

4. Intercontinental Distillers Company Limited product top management should focus on service quality concepts by keeping track of and evaluating customers' backchannels such as post-call surveys, feedback requests on emails, social media and other online views, therefore providing organization attention to customers to resolve conflicts in a manner that will eliminate unimportant loss and inconvenience to their customers, since the growing number of food and beverages companies has led to the increase in the competition.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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