

Correlate of Bar Product Mix and Customer Retention in Rivers State, Nigeria: An Empirical Investigation

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Abstract

The Commercial bar sector has not attracted adequate empirical investigations despite its rising status as a fast-growing sub-sector of the hospitality industry contributing significantly to national and global GDP. This study, therefore, investigated bar products mix and customer retention in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The cross sectional survey research design was adopted for the study whereby data were collected from 136 bar customers in Port Harcourt, Rivers State through the questionnaire method. Descriptive analytical tools of frequencies, percentage, mean score and standard deviations were used for demographic data and univariate analysis. Bivariate analysis (test of hypotheses) was performed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analytical technique, aided by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 21, tested at 5% (0.05) level of significance. The study revealed that bar product mix (varieties of local cuisines, car wash service, sport view entertainment and service delivery) were significant variables that affected customer retention in the local bars surveyed in Port Harcourt. On the basis of the findings, the study concluded that varieties of native food and beverages, car wash services, sport view entertainment and effective service delivery had a positive and significant correlation with customer retention through loyalty and referrals to the local bars surveyed. Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended that managers of the bars should maintain or improve on the integrated bar services by ensuring availability of the varieties of products at all times, customer service and exploring opportunities for innovative products/services and training of service personnel for improved service delivery for sustainable customer retention.

Key words: Bar Product Mix, Customer Retention

1. Introduction

The bar industry is an ancient thriving sector that has been associated with the evolution of alcoholic drink products and hospitality industry development for centuries, thus becoming an inescapable and essential part of modern society, whereby commercial bar activities have been reported to facilitate relaxation, socialization in a safe, secured and an ambient atmosphere for guests and travellers (Edgars, 2023).

De-Vero (2024) asserts that bars has played important role in tourism and hospitality industry in attracting and retaining visitors through their product/service offerings. He contends that cultural tourists and investors are not just motivated by diverse and attractive foods but also by an array of diverse beverages reflecting cultural heterogeneity, which drive cultural and gastronomic tourism.

Bar is defined in the Cambridge dictionary as a place where drinks, especially alcoholic drinks, are sold and drunk. It refers to the area in such a place where the person serving the drinks stands. Collins views a bar as a room in pub or hotel where alcoholic drinks are served. However, the Oxford dictionary broadens the concept of bar to connote a commercial establishment where alcohol and sometimes other refreshments served.

From the foregoing, it stands to reason that a bar can be viewed as a licensed retail business or commercial organization that serves alcoholic beverages, such as beer, wine, liquor, cocktails and other non-alcoholic beverages along with snacks or full restaurant menu for consumption on premises. The purpose is to attract and retain profitable customers for its success. This is because Customers are the cornerstone of any business. This is because their continued patronage of the organization's product and service offerings is the source of

revenue, profit and sustainability. Marketing literature suggests that customers' retention in a competitive business environment can be a function of customer satisfaction. Consequently, customer retention has become a very important area of interest to both business managers and researchers (Williams, 2013). The growing status of customer retention derives from the premise that it is a satisfied customer that makes repeat purchases or spreads positive word-of-mouth to others about the organization. This in turn leads to the growth of the business in particular and the economy in general. In this regard, customer retention is critical to organizational success in any sector of the Nigerian economy, including commercial bar establishments.

The rising profile of bars as a key component of the hospitality industry is easily discernable through its pervasive presence in almost every nook and cranny in both metropolitan and local centres, offering wide range of services beyond alcoholic beverages to include menu assortments, sports view entertainment and car wash services, to mention a few. Nevertheless, the effects of bar services on customer satisfaction and consequent behavioural outcomes in the Nigerian local context have not stimulated sufficient empirical interest among researchers. Yet, it has been acknowledged that bars create a welcoming atmosphere and can build customer loyalty, enhance customer experience for profitable business operation through its product mix.

Bar product mix is also known as product assortment refers to the total number of variety of food and beverage that a bar sells to their customers. A successful product mix strategy enables a bar to focus efforts and resources on the products and product lines within its offerings that have the greatest potential for growth, market share, revenue and competitive advantage (Karl, 2016).

Recent research suggests positive influence of product mix on customer satisfaction and retention in other organizational and geographical contexts (Ahmed, Ghazali and Othman, 2021). This therefore implies that product mix might also induce favourable purchase behavioural outcomes in the bar context. However, this has not been validated empirically in the Nigerian hospitality industry where some sub-sectors such as bars and lounges are competing with nightclubs for customers' acquisition and retention. Given the high rate of customers' switching behavior due to incidence of service failure, this study ascertained the influence of bar product mix on customer retention in Port Harcourt, Rivers State .

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Clarifications

Bar Product Mix

Bar is defined in the Cambridge dictionary as a place where drinks, especially alcoholic drinks, are sold and drunk. It refers to the area in such a place where the person serving the drinks stands. Odion and Osawere (2022) views a bar as a room in pub or hotel where alcoholic drinks are served. However, the Oxford dictionary broadens the concept of bar to connote a commercial establishment where alcohol and sometimes other refreshments served.

Therefore, a bar product mix also known as product assortment, refers to the complete range of products/services that is offered for sale by a bar to its customers. According to Armstrong and Maru, (2015), bar products mix are commodities and services that draw customer's attention to the bar. It is tangible and intangible goods and services in the bar for customer's consumption and enables them to satisfy their needs.

Dimensions of Bar Product Mix

Certain variables can be used to measure bar product mix as gleaned from the literature such as the following:

Varieties of local Cuisine

Varieties of local cuisine refer to the assortments of local delicacies that a bar offers to its customers to optimize their dining experience (Akbar, (2009). A variety of local cuisine may also be viewed as a list of food and beverage ready for purchase in a bar or lounges. It is a marketing weapon deployed to provide customers with menu options for selection, satisfaction and retention. Andreoni and James (2016) asset that food tourism is becoming increasingly popular because it is the important products travellers and tourists

consume during their trips. It also represents one of the basic services during a touristic trip. The varieties of local cuisines reflect or represent diverse authentic gastronomic heritage of a people at the local, state, regional or national levels.

Car Wash Services

Car wash services are provided to keep vehicles clean and well-maintained. It ranges from self-service, automatic to full-service car washes by individuals and business organizations (Psd-Coax, 2023). Commercial car wash service utilizes equipment, such as pressure washers, brushes, and vacuum cleaners where customers pay for a certain amount of time or specific services. Car washes can be self-service, full-service (with attendants who wash the vehicle), or fully automated (possibly connected to a gas station). Research suggests that migration from hand washing to an automated wash has resulted in increased efficiency and reliability (Nicolo, 2015).

Sport View Entertainment

Commercial sport view entertainment is a recreational service offered to guests in an ambient and relaxing atmosphere for customers to watch live or recorded sporting events on several televisions mounted at highly visible areas of the bar, usually for profit-making (). This is because such settings encourage purchase of food and beverages. Furthermore, sport view entertainment activity in bars also features special promotions, local sports celebrity appearances, giveaways and other events that attract sports fans to the bar (James, 2015), thus becoming a prominent features of bars and lounges business across the globe.

Concept of Customer Retention

Customer retention is the ability of an organization to retain its customers for a long time (Colbert, 2017). It encompasses all those activities which reduce the customer's defection rates of business. Higher customer retention rates means that companies are able to retain their customers for a long time. The main aim of customer retention programs and activities is to ensure that customers may continue to buy the company products and services for the long term. It focuses on improving the loyalty of customers towards the business so that long term relationship can be established. It pays attention to the needs of existing customers of the business to serve them better. This is premised on the fact the sole purpose of a business is to create and retain profitable customers (Ramstad, 2015).

2.2 Measures of Customer Retention

Loyalty

Customer loyalty is the likelihood of a customer's return to a brand (Bowen & Shoemaker, 2000). Loyalty may also be viewed as a consistent patronage of a particular brand based on prior experience with the brand. Accordingly, customer loyalty is customer behaviour characterized by a positive patronage driven by a positive attitude towards the company and its products or services. Krishtovic and Dovani (2022) opine that customer loyalty has become a challenge and concern in many business organizations and industries due to intense competition and the prevalence of service failure.

Referral

Customer referral is conceptualized as a consumer to consumer positive communication about goods and services of an organization (Dean & Lang, 2008). As a positive word-of-mouth communication, customer referral programmes provide incentives to existing customers to bring in new customers (Philipp, Bernd & Christophe (2011). Referrals are generally regarded as being more effective and reliable than other forms of communication.

2.3 Empirical Studies

Relationship between varieties of local cuisine and customer retention

Ahmad, (2015) investigated the relationship between local cuisine and customer retention in service restaurants in Jordan. Findings showed that local cuisine had a positive influence on customer retention. Olowo and Sunday (2020) studied the determinants of customer patronage for local cuisine in Awka metropolis involving a sample size is 246 respondents. The result of the multiple regression analysis shows that varieties of local cuisine were the major predictors of customer retention. Yaun (2016) investigated impact of local cuisine on customer retention in Italy among 294 customers of native restaurants.

Data analysis revealed a strong correlation between local cuisine assortment and revisit intentions. Therefore, our underlying hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Varieties of local cuisine correlate positively with customer retention in bars in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Relationship between Car wash Service and Customer Retention

Moore (2019) conducted a study to determine factors influencing the rising profile of car wash business and its integration into bar and lounge business model in metropolitan cities. The study involved a sample size of 238. The study revealed that most car wash automated with modern technologies rendered remarkable services which delighted customers for repeat visit and referrals.

In the same vein, Udymon and Isanghidi (2021) investigated integrated lounge services and customer satisfaction among 382 customers in Oman. Analysis of data showed that modern automated, high tech car wash services accounted significantly for patronage and customers willingness to recommend the services to others. From the foregoing, we formulated our second thus:

H2: Car was services correlate positively with customer retention in bars in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

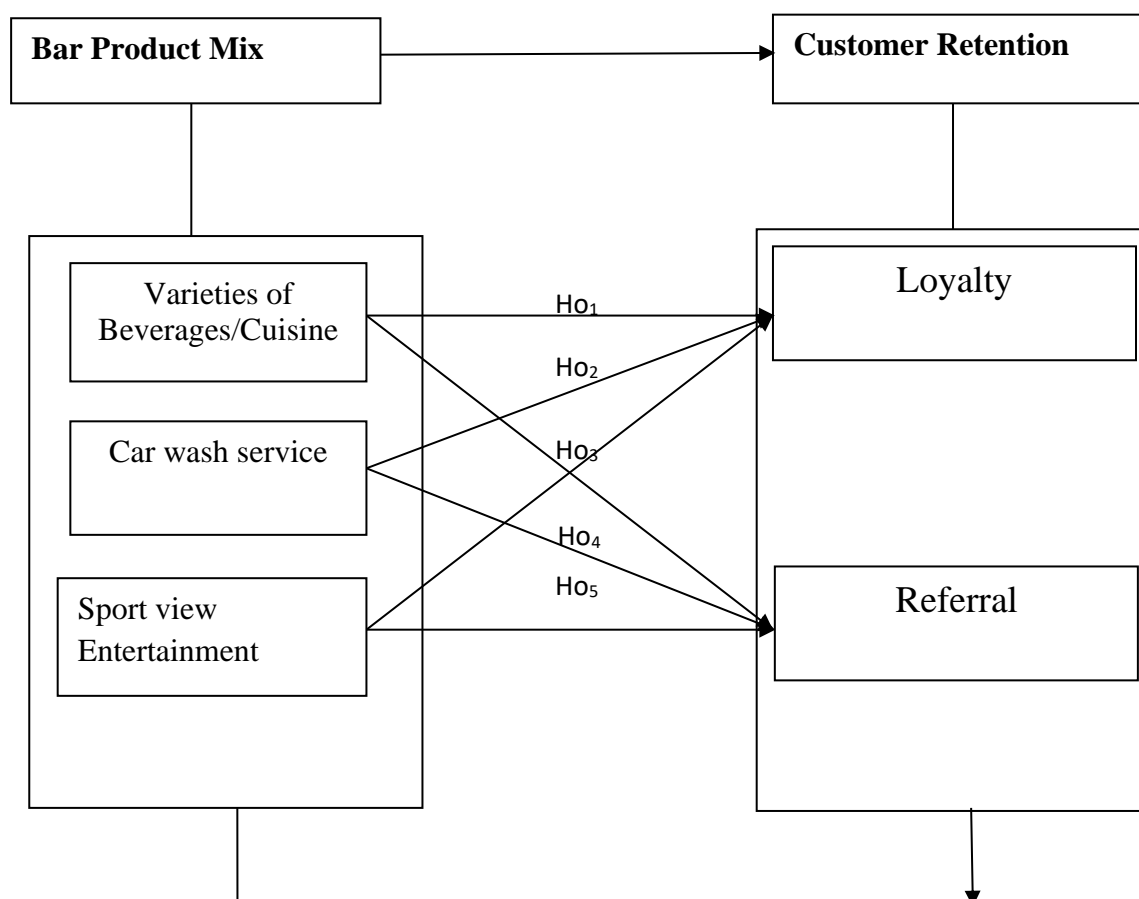
Relationship between Sport view Entertainment and Customer Retention

Mbakwe (2019) conducted a research on sport viewing entertainment and customer retention in Imo State. The result revealed that sport viewing entertainment encouraged customer to re-buy and stay longer in the bar. Raja and Larry (2005) carried out an investigation on sport viewing entertainment and customer retention in Ogun State involving 292 respondents. It was found that a strong positive relationship exists between sport viewing entertainment and customer retention.

New research revealed that screening live sport in pubs and bars substantially increased customers' spending, dwell time and loyalty (Dean, 2023). Therefore, our third proposition is stated thus:

H3: Sport view entertainment correlates positively with customer retention in bars in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Fig. 2.1: Operational Framework of the Study



3. Methodology

Research Design, Population and Sampling

This study adopted the survey research design. Survey research designs are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population.

The target population for this study consisted of customers of bar/lounges operating in GRA, Port Harcourt Rivers State. What informed the choice of GRA as the research location is the presence of commercial bars that have operated successfully for many years in the area. The population size of the study could not be determined because it was large and unknown. In most cases, tourism and hospitality research, population involving customers is usually very large, unknown, transient or mobile and the researcher cannot pre-determine the actual population size (Hielson, 2017). Accordingly, the researcher could not pre-determine the total number of customers that patronized the bars/ at a particular period of the day or week. In that case, the Kerjcie and Morgan formula for determining sample size from an infinite population was used to determine a sample size of 136 customers from five (5) popular bars operating in GRA, Port Harcourt: Cheers Bar, Genesis Skybar, Liquid Lounge & Bar, The Backyard Lounge & Karaoke Bar and the Boss Lounge, Rivers State. Consequently, 136 customers were purposively drawn from the 5 bars based on availability and willingness to participate in the survey.

Instrumentation, Validity/Reliability, Measures and Analytical Techniques

The questionnaire was designed and used to collect primary data from the respondents. It was divided into two sections (section A & B). Section A contains the demographic information of respondent, while section B consists of questions relating to the subject matter of inquiry. The questionnaire was structured along the Likert 5 – point scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) =4, Undecided (U)=3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SA)= 1.

Content validity was used in this study. Validity of the survey instruments was achieved through peer vetting assessment by academics and practitioners in the tourism and hospitality industry. Their review aided improvement in the final draft. Reliability of the instrument was determined through reliability test using SPSS version 22.0. The reliability test for each of the five constructs in the instrument was examined for its Cronbach's Alpha. The outcome of the analysis showed that each of the five constructs in the instrument had a Cronbach's Alpha reading > 0.7 which is considered acceptable.

Bar product mix dimensions (cuisine assortments, car wash service, sport bar entertainment and quality of service delivery. Customer retention being the dependent variable was measured on a using such indicators as customer loyalty and referrals.

The univariate analysis was performed using standard deviation, frequencies and tables. The bivariate analysis was done using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, being a parametric analytical tool to test the relationships between the postulated hypotheses with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20.0.

4. Analysis and Results

A total of one hundred and thirty-six (136) questionnaire were administered on the customers of local bars in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Of this number, one hundred and twenty-six (126) copies (92.6%) were retrieved, ten (10) copies (16%) distributed questionnaire were not retrieved. The 126 duly completed copies of the questionnaire were used for analyzing the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

S/NO	Demographic Variable	NO	Percentage (%)
1	Gender		
	Male	79	62.7
	Female	47	37.3
	Total	126	100

2	Age		
	18 – 25 years	19	15.1
	26 – 35 years	47	37.3
	36 – 45 years	27	21.4
	46 – 55 years	20	15.9
	56 years and above	13	10.3
Total		126	100
3	Educational Qualification		
	WAEC/OND	52	41.3
	BSc/HND	39	31.0
	M.Sc.	24	19.0
	PhD	11	8.7
	Total	126	100

Source: Survey Data 2021 with IBM SPSS version 21.0

Table 1 above shows the information on demographic profile of respondents.

The table revealed that 79 respondents (62.7%) were male while 47 respondents (37.3%) were female. This implies that male respondents were of the majority.

The information on age bracket of the respondents in section 2 of Table 1 above shows that 19 respondents (15.1%) were within 18 – 25 years, 47 respondents (37.3%) were within 26 – 35 years, 27 respondents (21.4%) were within 36 – 45 years, 20 respondents (15.9%) were within 46– 55 years, 13 respondents (10.3%) were within 56 years and above. This information shows that majority of the respondent were within the ages of 26 – 35 years.

Section 3 of Table 1 above shows information on the respondents' level of education. They were represented as follows: WAEC/OND (52 that is 41.3%), BSC/HND (39 that is 31%), MSc (24 that is 19%), and PhD (11 that is 8.7%). From the information it shows that respondents with WAEC/OND are of the majority.

4.1 Univariate Analysis

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics on Items of Varieties of Local Cuisine.

	N	Means	Std. Deviation
Isiewu/Ugba/Abacha/Nkwobi are available	126	4.4230	.54722
Okpa is available	126	3.3142	.73819
Assorted pepper soup is to customer's preference	126	4.1358	.68763
Egusi, Ogbono and Oha soups are readily available	126	4.0038	.61211
Valid N (listwise)	126		

Information on Table 2 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of varieties of local cuisine. The mean scorer on 3 of the 4 items were greater than the threshold of $3.9 > 3.0$ on a 5 point Likert scale. This suggests that there was an appreciable agreement by the respondents that the bar offered a variety of local cuisine to customers.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics on Items of car wash service

	N	Means	Std. Deviation
Functional car wash service is rendered	126	4.6354	.55720
Car wash is equipped with new technology	126	4.4288	.67660
Car wash operated by competent personnel	126	4.0385	.67308
Efficient and affordable service	126	4.5520	.64677
Valid N (listwise)	126		

Table 3 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of car wash service. All the items had a mean score that is above the threshold of $3.9 > 3.0$ on 5 point Likert scale. This result shows thus that respondents showed an appreciable agreement on the four items of car wash service. This suggests that bar operators offered quality car wash services as ancillary services to customers.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics on Items of Sport View Entertainment.

	N	Means	Std. Deviation
Sport view entertainment is important to guest	126	4.6367	.64677
Live premiership matches draw people	126	4.7660	.64521
Live local leagues matches are hardly aired	126	4.4688	.73082
Valid N (listwise)	126		

Information on Table 4 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of sport view entertainment. All the items exceeded the threshold of $3.9 > 3.0$ on a 5 point Likert scale. This shows an appreciable agreement on the three items by the respondents. The implication here is that sport view entertainment is a major attraction for retaining customers at the bars.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on Items of Service Delivery

	N	Means	Std. Deviation
Speedy service delivery	126	4.3750	.69642
Readiness to respond to customer's needs	126	4.2500	.71443
Timely respond to complaint	126	4.3323	.61523
Courteous personnel	126	4.0347	.62298
Valid N (listwise)	126		

Information on Table 5 above shows the result of service delivery. The mean scorers of all the items exceeded the threshold of 3.9 on a 5-point Likert scale. This shows that there was appreciable agreement on all items of service delivery. The descriptive statistics suggests that the bar delivered quality services to guests.

Table.6: Descriptive Statistics on Items of Customer Loyalty

	N	Means	Std. Deviation
First choice patronage	126	4.3149	.72298
Wise choice to patronize bar	126	4.6023	.64767
Expectations are fulfilled	126	4.3336	.74633
Repeat visit in the future	126	4.4497	.69426
Valid N (listwise)	126		

Information on Table 6 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of customer loyalty. The mean scores of all the items are above the threshold of $3.9 > 3.0$ on a five point Likert scale. This shows that there was appreciable agreement on all the items of customer loyalty by the respondents. This means that majority of the respondents exhibited tendency of loyalty to the bar.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on Items of Referral

	N	Means	Std. Deviation
Will inform friends	126	4.4880	.78410
Will give positive words of mouth	126	4.6240	.68022
Will inform family members	126	4.2090	.99301
Valid N (listwise)	126		

Information on Table 7 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of referral. The mean scores of all the items are above the threshold of $3.9 > 3.0$ on a five point Likert scale. This shows that there was

appreciable agreement on all the items of referral by the respondents. This means that majority of the respondents are willing to refer others to visit the bar.

Table 8: Summary of Aggregate Mean Values and Standard Deviations of Bar Product Mix and Customer Retention

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Varieties of local cuisine	126	3.3142	4.4230	3.9692	.64629
Car wash services	126	4.0385	4.6354	4.4137	.63841
Sport view entertainment	126	4.4688	4.7660	4.6238	.67427
Service delivery	126	4.0347	4.3750	4.2480	.66227
Customer loyalty	126	4.3149	4.6023	4.4251	.70281
Referral	126	4.2090	4.6240	4.4403	.81911
N	126				

Information on Table 8 above indicates the summary of the aggregate mean and standard deviation scores of dimensions of bar product mix and measure of customer retention through the application of descriptive statistics with statistical package for social science (SPSS). The aggregate mean value of each of the four dimensions of bar product mix was greater than 3.9 (the criterion mean), thus implying that most of the respondents were in agreement to all the items of the dimensions of bar product mix used in this study. This is reflected by the mean values: varieties of local cuisine (3.9692), car wash services (4.4137); sport view entertainment (4.6238); service delivery (4.2480). The table further shows that the aggregate mean score values of customer loyalty and referral were equally high with (4.4251) and (4.4403) respectively.

Bivariate Analysis

A correlation analysis was carried out to test the hypothesized relationships. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical technique was used to ascertain the degree of relationship existing between the independent and dependent variables of the study. The test results are summarized below.

Table 9: Summary of PPMC Results

5. Predictor Variables	Criterion Variable	Rho Value	P-Value	Level of Sig.	Decision
Varieties of local cuisines	Customer loyalty	.902	.000	$p=.000$ 0.05	< Supported
Varieties of local cuisines	Referral	.916	.000	$p=.000$ 0.05	< Supported
Car wash service	Customer loyalty	.891	.000	$p=.000$ 0.05	< Supported
Car wash service	Referral	.864	.002	$p=.002$ 0.05	< Supported
Sport view entertainment	Customer loyalty	.857	.000	$p=.000$ 0.05	< Supported
Sport view entertainment	Referral	.881	.001	$p=.000$ 0.05	< Supported
Service delivery	Customer loyalty	.914	.000	$p=.001$ 0.05	< Supported
Service delivery	Referral	.920	.000	$p=.000$ 0.05	< Supported

Discussion

This study examined the link between bar product mix and customer retention in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The findings of the study are discussed as follows:

Variety of Local Cuisine and Customer Retention

The result of the test of hypotheses shows a positive and strong correlation between variety of local cuisine and customer retention of bars in Port Harcourt, Rivers State with ($r=.902$, $p=.000<0.05$) and ($r=.916$, $p=.000<0.05$) for customer loyalty and referral respectively. This result is consistent with the findings of Ahmad (2015), whose investigation showed that local cuisine had a positive influence on customer retention; Olowo and Sunday (2020) and Yaun (2016) whose studies revealed significant positive relationships between food image and visit intentions. Hence, the result of this study is not out of place because it can be observed that having product varieties not only attracts but maintain customer base as opposed to having a singular product as the later will ultimately be relegated for the former.

Car Wash Service and Customer Retention

The result of the test of hypotheses shows a positive and strong correlation between car wash service and customer retention of bars in Port Harcourt, Rivers State with ($r=.891$, $p=.000<0.05$) and ($r=.864$, $p=.000<0.05$) for customer loyalty and referral respectively. This is consistent with the findings of studies conducted by Moore (2019) and Janik, (2007). As earlier established, the car wash industry has gone through a massive period of growth with the use of modern technology, driven largely by the popularity of unlimited wash plans and the rise of the express exterior tunnel business model and the inclusion of car wash service in the integrated bar operation especially in the 21st century, poses significant customer retention capability. This further confirms the result of this study as it gives customers an avenue for referrals and will encourage their loyalty as opposed to not having such services.

Sport View Entertainment and Customer Retention

The result of the test of hypotheses shows a positive and strong correlation between sport view entertainment and customer retention of bars in Port Harcourt, Rivers State with ($r=.857$, $p=.000<0.05$) and ($r=.881$, $p=.000<0.05$) for customer loyalty and referral respectively. This is consistent with the findings of Dean (2023); Mbakwe (2019), the result of which revealed that sport viewing entertainment encouraged customer to re-buy and stay longer in the bar. Similarly, in the study of Raja and Larry (2005), it was found that a strong positive relationship exists between sport viewing entertainment and customer retention. This is not surprising as sport being a major tool of socialization will draw people in their crowd to wherever it may be obtained. Hence including sport viewing entertainment in a bar product mix will increase customers' loyalty and avenue of referral to such establishment. Therefore, the importance of sport view entertainment to customer retention in bars is captured by Andy (2023) in the following words: 'This research confirms the enormous value of live sport to pubs, bars and drinks suppliers. These venues give people memorable and communal experiences that simply can't be replicated at home, especially during major football competitions, and these occasions not only boost spend but improve reputation. With businesses and households alike facing major cost pressures, it's more important than ever to provide compelling reasons to eat and drink out, and investing in live sport viewing is an excellent way to keep people coming through the doors.'

6. Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between bar product mix (with dimensions: varieties of local cuisine, car wash services, sport view entertainment and service delivery) and customer retention (with measures: customer loyalty and referral) in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The findings of this study are summarized:

1. Variety of local cuisine provided by the bars correlated positively and significantly with customer loyalty and referrals.
2. Car wash services provided by the bars correlated positively and significantly with customer loyalty and referrals.
3. Sport view entertainment provided by the bars correlated positively and significantly with customer loyalty and referrals.
4. Service delivered by the bars correlated positively and significantly with customer loyalty and referrals.

Based on the findings the study concludes that innovativeness in bar services whereby car wash and sport view entertainment are fused with the provision of native cuisines actually gives the business a competitive advantage over rivals. By providing an integrative service, more customers who ordinarily would have gone

elsewhere are given such services under one roof. Consequently, more sales revenues are guaranteed for the firm's success and survival. Thus, the integrated bar business model is a veritable strategy of customer retention in the ever dynamic and competitive bar recreational business. Therefore, the conclusion is that a positive and significant relationship exists between all the dimensions of bar product mix and customer retention in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are put forth:

1. Bars owners and managers should maintain or improve on the quality of their product/service offerings.
2. The managers should conduct regular informal interactions with the customers to determine possible areas of improvements or new product introduction.
3. Suggestion box should be provided for customers to express their opinion on their experience at the bar for positive service encounters.
4. Bar owners should improve on the sport view entertainment by airing important local league matches for customers' viewing delight.
5. Branded staff uniform should be provided for service contact personnel for proper packaging.

Suggestion for Further Study

The study only examined the relationship between bar product mix and customer retention in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study focused only on varieties of local cuisine, car wash services, sport view entertainment and service delivery as dimensions of bar product mix and customer loyalty and referral as measures of customer retention. Therefore, there are areas the study failed to consider at which further research efforts can be directed. They include the following:

1. Product mix and customer retention in other hospitality establishments in Nigeria not covered in the study.
2. Innovative hospitality services and customer revisit intention in local bars in Rivers State
3. Native bar product attributes and economic boost in Rivers State
4. The role of native bars in driving cultural tourism and promoting cultural authenticity in Nigeria.

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