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IMPACT OF AFTER SALES SERVICE ON CUSTOMER RETENTION OF LAFARGE CEMENT, LAGOS, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
This study examined Impact of after sales service on customer retention of Lafarge cement Lagos, Nigeria. Data were collected using questionnaires administered to three hundred and sixty eight (368) employees through simple random sampling technique from each department or unit. Analysis of data was carried out using electronic statistical package for social sciences, (SPSS). The study used descriptive analysis to achieve the mean, frequency distribution, percentage and statistical tools such as regression analysis in testing hypotheses and ANOVA which will help in the interpretation of results. Findings from the study shows that that after sales service create competitive advantage for the company, helps to build long-term customer relationship, customer retention and loyalty, and build good will for the company Result from the model summary table revealed that the extent to which the variance in organizational performance can be explained by the components of after sales services is 0.35% i.e. (R square = 0.348), with R value of 0.220. In conclusion, after-sales services maximize the value extracted by customers over the entire product life cycle. Base on the findings, the study concluded that to after sales service has significant impact on customer retention of Lafarge Cement, Lagos State, Nigeria. This study recommend that Organizations should be dedicating more and more resources to after-sales, expand their after-sales department with employees focusing only on providing after-sales services and developing after-sales offers, create sustainable relationships with customers and contribute greatly to customer satisfaction by offering different after-sales services during the various stages of the primary product lifecycle.

Keywords: Sales, Service, Customer, Retention and Organization.

1. INTRODUCTION
Customers are the assets of every business (Murthy 2017). Sales professionals must try their level best to satisfy customers for them to come back again to their organization. Providing good after-sales service shows your customers you want to build a long-term relationship with them earn their loyalty and keep their business. When a business provides excellent customer service, it can attract new customers, increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, and build strong, positive relationships with its customers. On the other hand, poor customer service can drive customers away and decrease customer satisfaction and loyalty.
Customers are considered as a king in every business. The main purpose of every business is to satisfy their existing customers and to attract new customers. Customer satisfaction is a basic priority and it cannot be considered as a separate function in business and it is considered very

important, it shows how firms are committed to provide quality product or services to their customers that eventually increase customer loyalty satisfying the customer is one of the basic objectives of the organization, as it is often said that customer is boss and boss is always right, so it means customer is right when he demands for after-sales services (Yuen & Chan, 2010).

After-sales service is activities organized by business organizations after the products have been delivered and is a part of customer relationship management. It is noteworthy to point out that after-sales plays a key role in supporting marketing activities to enhance customer retention and loyalty, and thus to increase profitability in the long term (Saccani, et. al, 2017). According to Alexander et al., (2013) and Wise and Baumgartner (2016) profit margins can be generated higher by delivering the after sale service compared to product sale without it. It may generate at least three times turnover of the original purchase during a given product lifecycle. After sale services represent one of the few constant connections those customers have with a brand (Gallagher, Mitchke, & Rogers, 2015). Gaiardelli, Saccani, and Songini (2016) point to after-sales as a way to recover profits lost as a result of the fierce competition on sales prices of original equipment. Thus, after-sales service is a potential source of competitive advantage for an organization (Goffin, 2018). After-sales services have a strong correlation with customer satisfaction, financial performance, manufacturing costs, customer retention, customer loyalty, and the success of marketing strategy (Gaiardelli, Cavalieri, & Ierace, 2007).

However, a lot of organizations are not aware about the after-sales service factors and its effect on customer retention. Failing to realize the importance of the factors can lead to a disastrous and threatening business relationship. Dissatisfied customers will turn to competitors who can offer better after-sales services (Murthy, 2017). According to Murthy (2017) customer dissatisfaction can occur as a result of poor performance of the purchased item and/or the quality of after sales service provided by a company. In either case, it leads in an adverse effect on the overall performance of an organization. Thus, a dissatisfied customer will likely switch to a competitor or the company would likely lose potential new customers as a result of negative word-of-mouth effect. This implies that good after sales service support is very important to achieve customer retention and loyalty by organizations, suppliers, manufacturers, dealers and so on in order to maximize profit.

In Nigeria, it is very prevalent to hear and read words like “sold goods cannot be returned” from various shops and supermarkets to big companies. This showed that the relationship between buyers and sellers cease after the delivery of goods or services. As Kotler (2002) stated, selling process should go beyond the delivery of goods and services and there should be “follow-up” step that a company should apply to ensure customer are satisfied and thus encourage a repeat purchase. After sale service is more than giving the customer what they expect; it is about surpassing their expectations so that they become loyal advocates for the brand.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of after sales service on customer retention of Lafarge Cement, Lagos State, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives are;

i. To examine the impact of after sales service on customer retention
ii. To find out the effect of after sales services on service quality

Research Questions

The following research questions will be poised for the study

i. What are the impact of after sales services on customer retention ?.

ii. How does after sales services affect service quality ?.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses is formulated in their null form

Ho1: After sales services has no significant impact on customer retention

Ho2: After sales services does not affect service quality.

Conceptual Framework

After-sales service

After-sales service is service that is provided to the customer after the product has been delivered (Rigopoulou, *2018*). This service is intended to support customers in the use and disposal of the product (Fazlzadeh, *2011*). After-sales service is a means to provide benefits to customers and create a business opportunity for the company (Saccani, 2017). After-sales service is generally utilized in a manufacturing industry. Manufacturing firms strive to meet customer needs with product design, comprehensive product offerings, consumer support, and after-sales service (Richard 2016).

Customer Retention

Customer retention refers to a company's ability to turn customers into repeat buyers and prevent them from switching to a competitor. It indicates whether your product and the quality of your service please your existing customers. It is also the lifeblood of most subscription-based companies and service providers (Oliver, 1993). Customer retention strategies are the processes and initiatives businesses put in place to build customer loyalty and improve customer lifetime value. Customer retention is different from customer acquisition or lead generation. It focuses on customers who have already signed up for a service or purchased a product from you. But retaining customers is about more than just transactions—it is about relationships. Research shows that customers view their relationships with brands similarly to their relationships with friends. Customers like brands that are reliable, authentic and aware of what matters to them. Focus on buyer relationships with your existing customers to boost their brand loyalty. These shoppers will continue to choose your brand even when presented with other options. With this loyal base, your brand will be more likely to weather explosive markets (Richard, 2016).

Customer Satisfaction

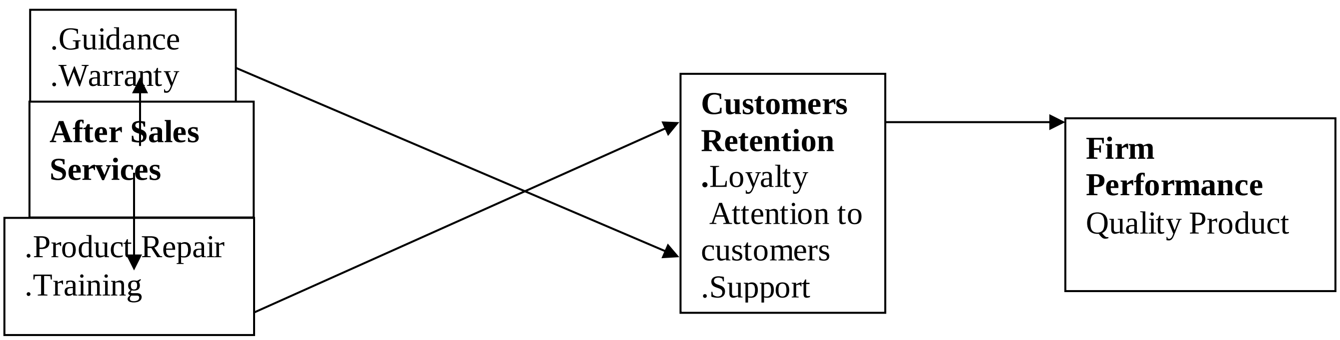
According to (Goffin, 2018) stated that satisfaction is the customers evaluation of a product or service in terms of whether that product or service has met their needs and expectations. Satisfaction is a positive, affective state resulting from the appraisal of all aspects of a party's working relationship with another.

Raddats (2011) elaborated hunt definition where they said, customer satisfaction is a process of consumer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations and the actual performance of the product as perceived after its consumption.

Customer Loyalty
Customer loyalty has been identified as the prominent source of competitive advantage (Khan, 2012). The literature identifies different kinds of customer loyalty. At first customer loyalty is assumed to comprise of behavioral loyalty only (Rauyruen, 2007). Behavioral loyalty is defined as readiness to make a repeat purchase from or maintain an association with a company (Khan 2012). Later on, some authors come with the idea of attitudinal loyalty, which is described as emotional attachment to the company, provision of positive word of mouth, and recommendation to use its product/service (Khan, 2012).

Organizational Performance
Richard, Derinney, George, and Johnson (2016) described organizational performance as the real output measured against the intended or expected output. They see organizational performance as a term that is made up of three major areas of firm outcomes and these three areas are: Financial performance that is made up of profits, return on assets (ROA), return on investment (ROI) etc. and Product market performance such as sales, market share, etc. Shareholders return such as total shareholder return (TSR), economic value added (EVA).

Conceptual Framework



Source: *Researcher's Conceptual model (2024)*

Conceptual Theory
Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory

Oliver (1977; 1980) proposed the Expectancy-Disconfirmation theory. The theory is regarded as the most promising theoretical framework for the evaluation of customer satisfaction. The theory suggests that consumers purchase goods and services with pre-purchase expectations about the anticipated performance. The expectation level then becomes a standard against which the product is judged. That is, once the product or service has been used, outcomes are compared against expectations. If the outcome matches the expectation confirmation occurs. Disconfirmation takes place where there is a discrepancy between expectations and outcomes. A customer is either satisfied or dissatisfied due to positive or negative difference between expectations and perceptions. Thus, when service performance is better than what the customer had initially expected, there is a positive disconfirmation between expectations and performance which results in satisfaction. On the other hand, when service performance is not as good as what the customer expected, there is a negative disconfirmation between expectations and perceptions which causes dissatisfaction (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994; Oliver, 1993). The analysis suggested a new hypothesis about customer retention: *some customers will not change their brand of service even if they are dissatisfied, while others will switch or try new alternatives even when they are completely satisfied.*

Relevance of the theory to the study

The theory is application to this study because when customer feel satisfied with the pre-consumption, consumption, and post-consumption expectation of a company, it increases their loyalty and retains them to the company. On the other hand, when these expectations are not met, it dissatisfied the customers and thus makes them switch brand.

Empirical Findings

Very few scholars (to the best knowledge of the researcher) have provided an empirical investigation on the assessment of after sales services on customer retention in manufacturing industry, especially in a developing economy like Nigeria. Murali et al. (2016), in his research work addresses effect of after sales services on customers' satisfaction by using process of analyzing structural equations to check research hypotheses. The results of the research shows that commitment and guarantee factors and quality of services affects customers' satisfaction. This is in line with this research work that relationship with Customers enhance their retention.

Hsiao, Chang and Tang (2016), in their study examined the consequences of after sales service on customer satisfaction and retention. Data was collected through closed ended questionnaire, which was administered through telephone interviews from 420 respondents in Greece. The results show that after sales service has significant and positive impact on customer satisfaction and retention. They suggest that service marketing managers should understand the impact of after sales service on customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions. This research work corroborate hypothesis one which says there is significant relationship between after sales service and customers retentions.

Gupta and Lehmann, (2007), the study examined the impact of after sales service on customer relationship. They discovered that after-sales service is regarded as an important factor that has an impact on establishing good relationships with customers. Alexander et al., (2013) accepted the claim that returning customers are the most profitable ones, as they require less marketing effort and relationship building. They agreed that after-sales service acquires a critical role as a means to achieve customer satisfaction and retention. The result is in line with result in hypothesis one which says that for every 100% customer retention, after sales services contributed 48.0%. Based on the results, the null hypothesis one (Ho1) which states that after sales services has no significant impact on customer retention was rejected.

Ladokun Isaac, Adeyemo & Ogunleye (2013) examined the impact of after sales service on customer satisfaction and retention with special reference to LG Electronics in Ibadan, Nigeria. The population of the study covered selected distributors and customers of LG Electronics in Ibadan.The sample size for this study was sixty (60) respondents who were randomly selected from ten (10) LG electronics distributors and fifty (50) of their customers respectively. Ordinary least squares multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The result showed that the predictor variables (i.e Product delivery, installation and warranty) were significantly joint predictors of customer satisfaction and retention. Subsequently, recommendation was made to the management of LG electronics to set up more after sales service departments to the existing ones with experience staff with the view of developing long term relationship with the customers. This is in line with the second recommendation in this study that Organizations should expand after-sales department with employees focusing only on providing after-sales services and developing after-sales offers.

Gap in the literature

By considering the above reviewed empirical literature, it is evident that a good number of similar researches have been done, but there are a number of gaps left ranging from country to time to research techniques and as well as nature of the organization studied. Despite the fact that a number of researches have been done to explore the impact of after sales services, most of them were carried in developed countries, while only a few were conducted in African countries like Ethiopia. However, no study of this nature has been found to be carried out in Nigeria based on the above empirical reviewed. Therefore, this study will fill the existing gap left by previous literature specifically the impact of after sales services on customer retention in Nigeria context, using Lafarge Cement Plc, Lagos State, Nigeria, as the study case.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a survey research design where data was collected from a sample of respondents to determine the relationship between After sales service and customers retention. The research setting is a cross sectional study design which involves collection data only once or at one point in time to be able to meet the research objectives (Zahra, 2019)). The adoption and usage of the survey research design was justified on the ground of its capacity for collecting large data (Students).

Scope of the study and Population of the study

The study area is Lafarge Cement Plc, Lagos State, Nigeria. The population of the study consists of all staff from various departments in Lafarge Cement Plc, Lagos State, Nigeria. Thus, the population of the study is 4,600 employees of Lafarge Cement Plc, Lagos State, Nigeria. Consequently, the sample size of this study was determined by Taro Yamane (1974) formula.

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Table 1: Study Population and Sample Size Determined

UNIT OR DEPARTMENT	NO OF EMPLOYEES	SAMPLE SIZE
Mobile Plant Operators.	1000	(1000÷4600x368) = 80
Mechanical Technician.	500	40
Electrical Engineer.	400	32
Sales & Logistics Administrator.	1500	120
Technical Services Engineer.	1200	96
TOTAL	**4600**	**368**

Source : *Researcher's Field Computation (2024)*

Sample Size

From the total population of 1688, sample of 323 was selected from the company and it cut across all the departments in the firm. Taro Yamane (1974) formula was used to determine sample size for the study. This formula uses the normal approximation with a 95% confidence level and 5% error tolerance. The formula is given as follows:

n= $\frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$

Where:

n= Sample size;

N= Population, which is 4,600;

e= margin error, which is 0.05 and

1=theoretical constant

n= $\frac{4600}{1+4600(0.5)^2}$

n= $\frac{4600}{1+4600(0.0025)}$

n= 4600/1+11.5 = 4600/12.5

Sample size =368 employees.

Sources of Data Collection

The main source of data for this study is primary data through questionnaire generated from a qualitative survey of the study sample. While journals, textbooks, company annual reports and business news serves as secondary data.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was adopted to collect relevant information from the study's participants. The questionnaire was divided into the following segments:

After Sales Questionnaire (ASS): This scale was used to measure after sales levels of the organization. The scale was developed and validated by Susppiah and Sandhu (2012). It is a Likert type scale anchored on 5-point rating scale. Its response format ranges from "strongly agree,

Agree, Partially Agree, Partially Disagree and Disagree, rating from 5 to 1 respectively. The ASQ consists of four items of Product repairs scale with reliability alpha coefficient of 0.85; a three-item of users complaint scale with alpha reliability coefficient of 0.76; a four-item of warranty scale with alpha of 0.74 and three-item of training with alpha of 0.80., in the current study, composite reliability alpha coefficient for the ASQ was obtained as 0.85.

Customers Retention Questionnaire: (CRS) This scale was used to assess customers retention services levels of employee performance. The scale was developed and validated by William and Anderson (1991). The response format was in Likert form with indicants ranging from strongly agree (5) to disagree (1). It consisted of 7 items and the scoring procedure indicates that high scores represent high perceived customers retention and low scores imply low perceived customers retention. The authors reported Crombach reliability alpha of 0.87.

Firm/Business Performance Questionnaire: (FP) This scale was used to assess perceived level of business performance of the organization. The instrument was developed and validated by Suppiah and Sandhu (2012). It is a Likert type scale anchored on 5-point rating scale with degree of response ranging from strongly agree (5) to disagree (1). The authors reported Crombach reliability alpha of 0.78.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

The instruments used in this study and submitted to a panel of experts for validation. The panel carried out a content analysis of each of the questionnaires for modification. After necessary modifications, the panel of experts recommended the use of the instruments for the study. The scales are subjected to further item analysis as to determine their psychometric soundness.

Scale	No of Items	Reliability alpha coefficient
After sales Questionnaire	14	0.85
Customers Retention Questionnaires	10	0.87
Business Performance Questionnaire	11	0.78

Data Analysis

The data collected from the field survey was analyses using descriptive analysis such as mean, frequency distribution, percentage and statistical tools such as regression analysis in testing hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One

H01: After sales services has no significant impact on customer retention.

Table 4.4.1a. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.119[a]	.114	.011	3.45505

a. Predictors: (Constant), After sales service

The result from the model summary table revealed that the extent to which the variance in customer retention can be explained by the after sales services is 11.4% i.e. (R square = 0.114), with R value of 0.119.

Table 4.4.1b. ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	55.238	1	55.238	4.627	.002[b]
	Residual	3843.824	322	11.937		
	Total	3899.062	323			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer retention

b. Predictors: (Constant), After sales service

The ANOVA table shows the F vlue of 4.627 at 0.0001 significance level. The table shows that after sales services has significant impact on customer retention. This implies that, at 0.002 significance level, after sales services is statistically significant on the customer retention of employees at Lafarge Cement Plc, Lagos State.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	21.132	.834		25.350	.000
	AFTER SALES SERVICES	.480	.037	.119	2.151	.032

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Retention

The coefficient table above shows that the simple model that expresses how after sales services has significant impact on customer retention. The model is shown mathematically as follows: Y = a+bx where y is customer retention and x is after sales services, a is a constant factor and b is the value of coefficient. From this table therefore, customer retention = 21.132 + 0.480 after sales services. This means that for every 100% customer retention, after sales services contributed 48.0%. Based on the results, the null hypothesis one (Ho1) which states that after sales services has no significant impact on customer retention is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis Two

H02: After sales services has no significant impact on service quality

Table 4.4.2a. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.212[a]	.545	.042	3.88908

a. Predictors: (Constant), After sales services

The result from the model summary table revealed that the extent to which the variance in service quality can be explained by the democratic leadership style is 0.54% i.e. (R square = 0.545), with R value of 0.212.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	230.089	1	230.089	15.213	.000[b]
	Residual	4870.241	322	15.125		
	Total	5100.330	323			

a. Dependent Variable: Service quality

b. Predictors: (Constant), After sales services

The ANOVA table shows the F value 15.213 at 0.000 significance level. The table shows that After sales services significantly has impact on service quality. This implies that, at 0.000 significance level, after sales services are statistically significant on service quality at Lafarge Cement Plc, Lagos State.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	14.074	1.747		8.055	.000
	SERVICE QUALITY	.278	.071	.212	3.900	.000

A. Dependent variable: after sales services

The coefficient table above shows that the simple model that expresses how after sales services has significant impact on service quality. The model is shown mathematically as follows:
Y = a+bx where y is service quality and x is after sales services, a is a constant factor and b is the value of coefficient. From this table therefore, service quality = 14.074 + 0.278 after sales services. This means that for every 100% service quality at Lafarge Cement Plc, after sales services contributed 27.8%. Based on the results, the null hypothesis two (Ho2) which states that after sales services has no significant impact on service quality is hereby rejected.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

All explanatory variables (ASS, CRS and FP) were significantly independent and joint predictors of customer satisfaction and retention. This implies that after sales service dimensions are positively related and significant to customer satisfaction and retention. Moreover, service quality has highest beta (0.2.12) followed by product delivery of after sales services (β = 0.119) respectively. This indicates that quality of service on the product has highest influence on customer satisfaction and retention followed by product delivery respectively. The findings agree with previous researches (Murah *et al*, (2016); Hsia O, *et al*(2016); Gupta, (2007) and Oladokun et al (2013)) who asserted that after sales service is a marketing tool that enhances and establishes strong and long relationship with customers, which in the long run lead to customer satisfaction, retention and profitability.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the impact of after sales service on customer satisfaction and retention with special reference of Lafarge Cement, Lagos State, Nigeria and researchers agreed that the after sales service plays a major role in satisfying customers as well as increasing number of firms across industries. The study found that after sales service indices were significantly independent and joint predictors of customer satisfaction and retention. The study also discovered that customers rate warranty contract highest among after sales service dimensions followed by delivery and installation respectively. The study conforms to the positions of Murah *et al,* (2016); Hsia O, *et al*(2016); Gupta, (2007) and Oladokun et al (2013). In conclusion, after sales service play important roles in establishing long-term relationships with customers. Furthermore, management of Lafarge Cement, Lagos State should set up more after sales service departments to the existing ones with experienced staff with the view of developing long term relationship with the customers.

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