

## Strategic Marketing Practices and Customer Retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc, Ibadan Plant

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### **Abstract**

*Complexities in the twenty-first century business environment attributable to the dynamisms of globalisation, technological advancement, and changing consumer lifestyles have resulted in intense marketing competitiveness, compelling organisations to adopt strategic marketing practices that shift attention from transactional approaches to relationship-oriented strategies emphasising customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. This study examined strategic marketing practices and customer retention in the Nigerian retail sector, using Nigeria Bottling Company (NBC) Plc. as a case study. Specifically, the study focused on product differentiation, branding strategy, pricing strategy, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and promotional strategies. The study was anchored on Relationship Marketing Theory (RMT) and Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) and utilised a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected from 55 management and Marketing/Sales Department staff of NBC Plc., Ibadan Plant, using a structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings indicated significant positive relationships between product differentiation and customer retention ( $r = 0.732$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), branding strategy and customer retention ( $r = 0.684$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), CRM and customer retention ( $r = 0.751$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), pricing strategy and customer retention ( $r = 0.562$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and promotion strategy and customer retention ( $r = 0.711$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). CRM and product differentiation recorded the strongest relationships with customer retention. The study concludes that strategic marketing practices are important in strengthening customer retention and recommends sustained investment in customer relationships, product differentiation, branding, pricing and promotional activities.*

**Keywords:** Strategic Marketing Practices, Customer Retention, Customer Relationship Management, Product Differentiation, Nigeria Bottling Company Plc.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The business environment of the 21st century is characterised by intense competition, globalisation, technological advancement and changing customer needs. These developments have made it necessary for organisations to adopt strategic marketing practices that enable them to understand market opportunities, satisfy customers and maintain competitive advantage. Strategic marketing involves the formulation and implementation of marketing activities that align an organisation's resources and capabilities with market opportunities and customer needs.

Customer retention has become an important concern for organisations because retaining existing customers contributes to repeat purchases, customer loyalty and long-term business continuity. Reichheld and Sasser (1990) observed that customer retention can contribute significantly to business performance, while Zeithaml et al. (2022) emphasised the importance of delivering value and maintaining relationships in sustaining customer patronage.

In a competitive market, organisations employ different strategic marketing practices to retain customers. Product differentiation enables firms to distinguish their products from competing alternatives through product features, quality, packaging, sizes, flavours and other attributes. Branding also helps organisations create a distinct identity and influence customers' perceptions of their products. Adewale and Ayozie (2020) noted the importance of branding in building customer preference and loyalty. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) focuses on developing and maintaining relationships with customers through effective communication, service delivery, complaint handling and continuous engagement. Pricing strategy also influences customers' perception of value and their purchasing decisions, while promotion creates awareness and communicates the benefits of products to existing and potential customers. Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasised the importance of integrating marketing activities in responding effectively to customer needs. The Nigerian beverage industry operates within a highly competitive environment where consumers have access to different brands and product alternatives. Changes in customer preferences, purchasing power, technology and market competition have increased the need for firms to adopt effective marketing strategies. Novatia Consulting (2024) and Kasmu (2024) identified the changing nature of the Nigerian market and the need for businesses to respond to evolving consumer expectations. Similarly, Academia (2024), Jot Form (2025) and Incentive Smart (2023) highlight the importance of customer engagement, satisfaction and loyalty in sustaining customer relationships. Nigeria Bottling Company Plc. operates in this competitive environment with a portfolio of products serving different consumer segments. The company has continued to employ strategic marketing practices involving product differentiation, branding, customer relationship management, pricing and promotion. These practices are expected to influence customers' perceptions, purchasing behaviour and continued patronage. However, the adoption of marketing practices does not automatically guarantee customer retention, particularly in a market where consumers can switch between competing brands.

### **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

The Nigerian beverage market has witnessed increasing competition, changing consumer preferences and the availability of alternative products. These developments have created challenges for organisations seeking to maintain customer loyalty and repeat purchases. Although firms invest in product differentiation, branding, customer relationship management, pricing and promotional activities, the extent to which these practices contribute to customer retention may differ.

Previous studies have examined different aspects of marketing practices and customer behaviour. However, there remains a need for an integrated examination of product differentiation, branding strategy, customer relationship management, pricing strategy and promotion strategy in relation to customer retention within the Nigerian bottling industry. Zhang et al. (2024) and Azad et al. (2025) also point to the continuing importance of strategic marketing and customer-related practices in competitive markets.

The study therefore examines the relationship between strategic marketing practices and customer retention, using Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, as the focus of the study.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study examined the effects of strategic marketing practices on customer retention in the Nigerian retail sector using Nigeria Bottling Company (NBC) Plc as a case study. Other specific objectives are:

- i. to examine the relationship between product differentiation and customer retention in Nigeria bottling industry.
- ii. to assess the relationship between branding strategy and customer retention in Nigeria bottling industry.
- iii. to evaluate the relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and customer retention in Nigeria bottling industry.
- iv. to examine the link between promotional strategies and customer retention in Nigeria bottling industry.
- v. determines the association between product pricing strategies and customer retention in Nigeria bottling industry.

### **1.4 Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested:

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between product differentiation and customer retention in the bottling industry.
- H<sub>02</sub>: Product branding has no significant influence on customer retention in the bottling industry.
- H<sub>03</sub>: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) have no significant effect on customer retention in the bottling industry.
- H<sub>04</sub>: Promotional strategies have no significant effect on customer retention in the bottling industry.
- H<sub>05</sub>: Product pricing strategies do not significantly improve customer retention in the bottling industry.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

The conceptual review examines the key concepts relevant to the study, focusing on strategic marketing practices and customer retention within the retail and Fast-Moving consumer Goods (FMCGs) context. It establishes the conceptual foundation upon which the study is built and clarifies the relationships among the major variables.

### **2.1.1 Strategic Marketing Practices**

Strategic marketing practices refer to the planned activities and decisions adopted by an organisation to identify market opportunities, satisfy customer needs and achieve organisational objectives. Strategic marketing involves understanding the market environment, identifying customer needs and developing appropriate strategies for creating value and achieving competitive advantage. Varadarajan (2010) views strategic marketing as concerned with the formulation and implementation of marketing strategies that enable firms to respond to market conditions and achieve desired performance outcomes.

Kotler and Keller also emphasise the importance of understanding customer needs and delivering superior value in the development of effective marketing strategies. In a competitive business environment, strategic marketing requires organisations to coordinate different marketing activities rather than relying on a single marketing practice. Product differentiation, branding, customer relationship management, pricing and promotion are therefore considered important practices through which firms can respond to customer expectations and competition.

For the purpose of this study, strategic marketing practices are examined through product differentiation, branding strategy, customer relationship management, pricing strategy and promotion strategy.

### **2.1.2 Components of Strategic Marketing**

Strategic marketing comprises several interrelated components that collectively shape how a firm competes and delivers value to customers. The key components of strategic marketing activities and functions include segmentation, targeting, positioning, branding strategy, product differentiation, pricing strategy, distribution, and promotion. Consequently, it goes to say that strategic marketing strategy encompasses product differentiation, branding, pricing strategies, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and promotional strategies. These elements determine how customers perceive the firm and influence their decision to remain loyal. In other words, each component influences customer perceptions, satisfaction, and loyalty, thereby affecting customer retention.

#### **2.1.2.1 Product Differentiation**

Product differentiation refers to the process of creating meaningful distinctions between a firm's products and those of competitors. It is the process of creating unique product attributes that distinguish a brand from competitors (Porter, 1985). In Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) markets and sector, differentiation may take the form of taste variations, packaging, design, product size variants, and nutritional content, value, or perceived quality.

Porter (1985) identifies differentiation as a key competitive strategy through which firms offer unique attributes that customers value. Effective product differentiation reduces perceived similarity among competing brands and lowers the likelihood of customer switching. In the beverage industry, where functional differences are often minimal, symbolic and experiential attributes such as brand image and packaging aesthetics play a crucial role in shaping customer preference and retention.

#### **2.1.2.2 Branding Strategy**

Branding strategy involves the deliberate creation and management of brand identity to influence customer perceptions and build emotional connections. It is a strategic initiative that develops and nurtures perceptions, emotional associations, and customer expectations. Aaker (1991) argues that

strong brands and branding generate brand equity, which consists of brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. These elements collectively enhance customer retention by strengthening brand attachment, loyalty, and trust.

In competitive consumer markets, branding strategy serves as a key mechanism for differentiation and value communication. Well-established brands benefit from reduced price sensitivity, increased repeat purchases, and greater resistance to competitors' promotional efforts.

#### **2.1.2.3 Pricing Strategy**

Pricing affects consumer value perception and buyer behaviour. Kotler and Armstrong (2018) assert that value-based pricing is more effective than cost-based pricing in retaining customers. Pricing strategy refers to the approach adopted by firms in setting prices to reflect value, cover costs, and achieve competitive positioning. Kotler and Armstrong (2018) emphasise that pricing is the only marketing mix element that generates revenue, while all others incur costs. Consequently, pricing decisions have a direct impact on customer perceptions of fairness and value. In price-sensitive markets such as Nigeria, value-based pricing strategies are particularly effective in enhancing customer retention. When customers perceive prices as fair relative to product benefits, they are more likely to remain loyal, even in the presence of competing alternatives.

#### **2.1.2.4 Customer Relationship Management (CRM)**

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) refers to technologies, systems, and practices used to manage customer interactions. It refers to organisational strategies, processes, and technologies used to manage interactions with customers throughout the customer life cycle. Peppers and Rogers (2011) describe Customer Relationship Management (CRM) as a customer-centric approach aimed at understanding individual customer needs and delivering personalised value. That is, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) improves customer satisfaction through personalisation, complaint handling, and loyalty programmes. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) practices include customer data management, complaint handling, loyalty programmes, personalised communication, and after-sales support. Effective Customer Relationship Management (CRM) enhances customer satisfaction, trust, and commitment, which are critical drivers of customer retention in competitive markets.

#### **2.1.2.5 Promotional Strategies**

Promotional strategies encompass marketing communication activities designed to inform, persuade, and remind customers about products and brands. These activities include advertising, sales promotion, sponsorship, digital marketing, influencer campaigns, and social media engagement. Shimp (2017) notes that well-designed and effective promotional activities not only stimulates interest, encourages trial and purchase but also reinforces brand positioning and customer loyalty. In the FMCG sector, promotional strategies are often used to counter competitive pressures and maintain brand visibility. However, excessive reliance on price promotions may encourage switching behaviour if not supported by strong brand and relationship-building efforts.

### **2.1.3 Customer Retention**

Customer retention refers to a firm's ability to sustain long-term relationships with customers and encourage repeat patronage over time. That is, the firm's ability to maintain long-term buyer-seller relationships and reduce customer switching. According to Hallowell (1996), customer retention

is the outcome of customer satisfaction, perceived value, trust, and overall service quality. It involves maintaining repeat patronage by creating satisfaction, trust, and switching barriers (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). In FMCGs, retention is influenced by brand experience, price fairness, availability, and relationship engagement. It is vital for profitability, reducing cost of acquisition, and increasing lifetime value (Ascarza et al., 2017).

Retention is particularly critical in FMCG markets where customer acquisition costs are high and product differentiation is limited. Reichheld and Sasser (1990) argue that even small improvements in customer retention can lead to significant increases in profitability. Retained customers tend to purchase more frequently, are less price-sensitive, and act as brand advocates through positive word-of-mouth communication.

#### **2.1.3.1 Key Customer Retention Metrics**

Customer retention can be measured through indicators that capture customer behaviour and attitudes. Common metrics include repeat purchase rates, customer satisfaction scores, churn rates, participation in loyalty programmes and customer feedback analysis. These measures enable firms to evaluate the effectiveness of strategic marketing practices, identify areas requiring improvement and support data-driven decision-making. Novatia Consulting (2024) highlights feedback analysis, satisfaction analysis, retention metrics, tracking, churn analysis and participation rates as useful measures of customer retention. Feedback analysis helps businesses understand customer needs and preferences; satisfaction scores indicate how well customer needs are being met; retention metrics measure the strength of customer relationships; tracking facilitates comparison with industry standards; churn analysis identifies patterns of customer attrition; and participation rates can provide an indication of customer engagement and loyalty. Customer segmentation can further assist firms in tailoring strategies to groups according to their behaviours and preferences.

#### **2.1.3.2 Future Trends in Customer Retention**

Advancements in digital technology are reshaping customer retention strategies. Artificial intelligence, big data analytics and machine learning enable firms to gain deeper insights into customer behaviour and preferences, supporting personalised marketing, predictive analytics and real-time engagement. Behavioural analytics is increasingly becoming a cornerstone of customer retention because it enables businesses to analyse customer interactions and preferences in real time. These technologies can help firms anticipate customer needs, proactively address dissatisfaction and identify patterns that were previously difficult to discern. Firms that leverage such technologies are better positioned to deliver customised experiences that foster customer satisfaction, loyalty and long-term relationships.

#### **2.1.2.3 Challenges of Customer Retention in Nigeria**

Customer retention in Nigeria is constrained by economic instability, inconsistent service quality and misalignment between customer expectations and actual service delivery. Many firms struggle to consistently meet customer expectations, resulting in dissatisfaction and switching behaviour. Misaligned expectations and inconsistent service quality remain important challenges because failure to deliver the expected experience can strain relationships, particularly with loyal customers. High price sensitivity and aggressive competitive promotions further complicate retention efforts. Firms therefore need to prioritise service quality, value delivery and relationship-building strategies while seeking to meet or exceed customer expectations and consistently provide quality service that encourages customers to return.

## **2.2 Theoretical Review**

This section reviews theories relevant to the study and explains how they support the relationship between strategic marketing practices and customer retention. The study will adopt the Relationship Marketing Theory and Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), emphasising the importance of meeting and exceeding customer expectations through strategic marketing to foster customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention.

### **2.2.1 Relationship Marketing Theory**

Relationship Marketing Theory (RMT) associated with Oliver (1980), explains customer responses in terms of the comparison between expectations and actual performance. Customers form expectations before or during consumption and subsequently compare their experiences with those expectations. When performance meets or exceeds expectations, positive confirmation or satisfaction may result; when performance falls below expectations, dissatisfaction may occur.

The theory is relevant to customer retention because continued patronage may depend partly on whether customers' experiences correspond with their expectations. Product quality and differentiation, brand promises, customer service, price and promotional messages may all shape customer expectations. When the actual experience is consistent with or exceeds expectations, customers may be more willing to continue their relationship with the organisation.

The theory therefore complements Relationship Marketing Theory by explaining how customer experiences and expectations may influence continued patronage.

### **2.2.2 Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory**

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) associated with Oliver (1980), explains customer responses in terms of the comparison between expectations and actual performance. Customers form expectations before or during consumption and subsequently compare their experiences with those expectations. When performance meets or exceeds expectations, positive confirmation or satisfaction may result; when performance falls below expectations, dissatisfaction may occur.

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The theory therefore complements Relationship Marketing Theory by explaining how customer experiences and expectations may influence continued patronage.

### **2.2.3 Empirical Review**

Empirical studies have examined different aspects of marketing practices and customer-related outcomes. The existing evidence generally suggests that product characteristics, branding, customer relationships, pricing and promotional activities can be associated with customer behaviour. Bello and Sule (2019) examined product-related marketing strategies and reported the relevance of product differentiation to customer responses. Aliyu and Bello (2020) similarly highlighted product differentiation as an important strategy in competitive markets. These findings support the inclusion of product differentiation in the present study.

Adewale and Ayozie (2020) examined branding and marketing outcomes and identified the importance of branding in influencing customer behaviour. Agyapong (2011) also examined

factors associated with customer perceptions and relationships, indicating the relevance of service and brand-related considerations in sustaining customer relationships.

With respect to customer relationship management, Akintunde and Akaighe (2016), Nwokah and Ondukwu (2021) and Ogunnaike et al. (2022) examined relationship-oriented marketing practices and customer outcomes. Their findings generally support the view that maintaining customer relationships and responding to customer needs are important considerations in customer retention. Pricing has also received attention in previous studies. Olaoye (2021) and Ojo (2022) examined pricing-related practices and customer behaviour, showing that price and perceived value are relevant to customers' purchasing decisions. However, the relationship between price and retention may differ depending on the broader marketing environment and other factors affecting customer decisions. Promotion has similarly been examined by Ebitu (2020), Adeola and Ezenwafor (2020) and Oberiri (2016). Their studies demonstrate the relevance of promotional communication and marketing activities to customer responses and marketing outcomes.

Although these studies provide useful evidence, there remains a need for further examination of the five strategic marketing practices together within the context of a Nigerian bottling company. This study addresses this gap by examining product differentiation, branding strategy, customer relationship management, pricing strategy and promotion strategy simultaneously in relation to customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between strategic marketing practices and customer retention. Strategic marketing practices, which consists of product differentiation, branding strategy, pricing strategy, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and promotional strategies, serve as independent variables influencing customer retention. Customer service quality acts as a moderating variable, shaping the strength of these relationships.

Based on literature, the conceptual model for the study is depicted in Fig. 2.1 below explains the study variables and constructs.

**Independent variables:** These are the key components of the Strategic Marketing practices. They are Product differentiation (PD), Pricing Strategy (PS), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Branding Strategy (BS), Promotion Strategy (PR).

**Dependent variable:** Customer Retention (CR) with focus on customers behavioural outcomes.

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

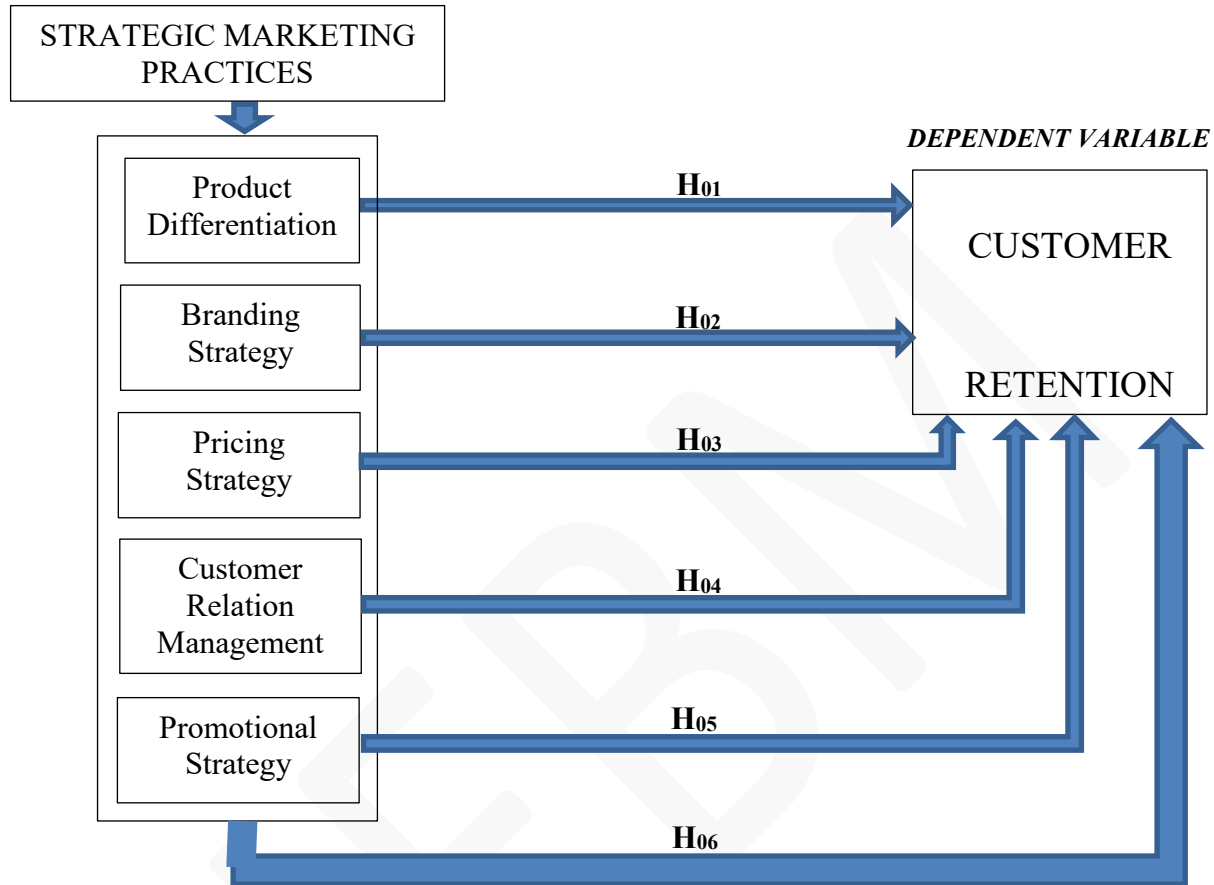


Fig. 2.1: Conceptual Framework of Strategic Marketing Practices and Customer Retention  
*Source: Researcher's Conceptualisation, 2026*

## 2.5 Gaps in Literature

Despite extensive research on marketing strategies, several gaps remain. Few studies focus specifically on Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., particularly within Oyo State. Existing studies also often examine marketing variables in isolation rather than within an integrated framework. Limited attention has further been given to moderating factors such as service quality within the Nigerian beverage context.

The literature nevertheless provides strong support for the relationship between marketing strategy and customer retention and confirms that strategic marketing is multidimensional in its influence on customer outcomes. Major constructs, including branding, CRM, promotion, pricing and differentiation, show important links with customer loyalty and retention. This study therefore seeks to address the identified gaps by examining the combined and individual relationships between these strategic marketing practices and customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **3.0 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Study Area**

The study was conducted in Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo State, Southwestern Nigeria. Ibadan is one of the largest metropolitan cities in West Africa, with a population of over 3 million residents across eleven Local Government Areas and diverse socioeconomic, cultural and demographic characteristics (Wikipedia; Wisdomlib, 2026). The city is a major commercial, industrial and administrative centre and serves as an important market for Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs), including beverages. Its competitive business environment, diverse consumer segments and active market interactions provide a suitable context for examining strategic marketing practices and customer retention (Tamunoiselegha et al., 2024).

The city also offers research accessibility and a concentration of manufacturing firms, wholesalers, retailers and distributors. The competitive pressures and resource constraints experienced by firms operating in such an environment require sophisticated marketing strategies (Ayokunmi et al., 2024; Ibojo et al., 2025), while the accessibility of respondents facilitates data collection (Ojelabi, 2025). Previous marketing research in Ibadan, including studies on digital marketing and customer experience, further provides an academic research context (Carim, Ibrahim, & Adedokun, 2024; Ayokunmi, Abu-Seman, & Rashid, 2024). Nigeria Bottling Company (NBC) Plc., the authorised bottling partner of the Coca-Cola system in Nigeria, has a significant operational and distribution presence in Ibadan. Its products are widely distributed and consumed within the city and surrounding communities, providing a suitable setting for examining strategic marketing practices and customer retention. The competitive beverage environment, involving soft drinks, bottled water, energy drinks and fruit juice manufacturers, further makes Ibadan appropriate for the study. The choice of NBC Plc.'s Ibadan Plant was also informed by its historical significance and established customer relationship. The plant was founded in 1961, ten years after the incorporation of Nigeria Bottling Company as a franchise bottler of the Coca-Cola Company, and formally opened in 1977. It presently has major distribution outlets in Oyo State, including Ibadan, Shaki, Kishi, Ogbomosho, Oyo and Lanlate (NBC Plc.).

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This The study adopted a mixed survey method involving qualitative and descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey design enabled the systematic collection of data from a defined population to describe existing conditions, relationships and practices as they occur naturally. The design was considered appropriate because the study seeks to examine how strategic marketing practices influence customer retention within the Nigerian retail sector and to measure perceptions and experiences relating to loyalty and retention.

#### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The population of the study comprised of Company Management Staff, Marketing/Sales Managers, and Front-line Executives of the Marketing and Sales Department of Nigeria Bottling Company (NBC) Plc., Ibadan. Based on the study's focus, the company's Management staff and Marketing and Sales Department team of the Nigeria Bottling Company (NBC) Plc.'s were involved, because they are directly involved in, or affected by the company strategic marketing practices and customer retention efforts.

### **3.4 Sampling Methods and Sample Size**

A sample size of 55 respondents, consisting of 15 Management staff and 40 Marketing and Sales Department staff, was selected for the study. This size is considered adequate for statistical analysis and consistent with similar empirical studies in marketing and retail research (Ogunnaike, et al., 2022, Azad, et al., 2025, & Zhang, et al., 2024). The researcher will employ stratified random sampling technique for the study.

### **3.5 Sources and Methods of Data Collection**

The study utilised primary data obtained through the administration of structured questionnaires to respondents. The researcher personally collected the primary data to ensure a high response rate and to seek clarification where necessary. Questionnaires were distributed and retrieved within a specified period, with liaison with the Human Resources Department (Corporate Affairs Unit) of NBC Plc. to minimise non-response bias. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity to encourage honest and accurate responses.

Secondary information was obtained from relevant scholarly and academic journals, literature, publications, company bulletins and annual reports, periodicals and books, including online sources

### **3.7 Research Instruments**

The primary instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher based on the study objectives, research questions, and reviewed literature. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section A is structured on demographic information of respondents, while Section B is on the constructs of the independent and dependent variables. These are strategic marketing practices (product differentiation, branding, customer relationship management, pricing, and promotional strategies), which is the independent variable and customer retention, which is also the dependent variable. Responses are measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The Likert scale is chosen because it will allow respondents to express varying degrees of agreement and facilitates quantitative analysis.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments**

Validity refers to the extent to which the research instrument measures what it is intended to measure. To ensure content and face validity, the questionnaire items were developed in line with established literature on strategic marketing and customer retention. The instrument was reviewed by experts in marketing and research methodology, whose suggestions were incorporated to improve clarity, relevance, and coverage. This process ensures that the questionnaire adequately captured all key constructs of the study. Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the measurement instrument. To ensure reliability, a pilot test conducted using five respondents not included in the final sample, using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient gave reliability coefficients that were above 0.70 which is considered acceptable, indicating internal consistency among questionnaire items. This conforms with the adapted similar empirical studies in marketing and retail research of Ogunnaike, et al. (2022), Azad, et al. (2025), and Zhang, et al. (2024).

### **3.9 Methods of Data Analysis**

Data collected was coded in excel spreadsheet and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques was employed.

Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations are used to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics and responses. Inferential statistics, including correlation and multiple regression analysis are used to test the research hypotheses and examine the relationships between strategic marketing practices and customer retention. Hypotheses 1 to 5 are analysed using Pearson's Correlation, while the hypothesis 6 was tested using multiple regression.

All hypotheses are tested at a 5% level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The results are presented using tables and interpreted in line with the research objectives.

### 3.10 Variable Identification

**The Independent Variable (X):** Strategic Marketing Practices involving elements of Product Differentiation (PD), Pricing Strategy (PS), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Branding Strategy (BS), and Promotion Strategy (PR).

**The Dependent variable (Y):** Customer Retention (CR) exhibited in loyalty and repeat purchases.

### 3.11 Model Specification

The model specification for this study in linear explicit functional form will be given as:

$$Y = f(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5) \text{ and } Y = CR$$

$$CR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PD_1 + \beta_2 BS_2 + \beta_3 CRM_3 + \beta_4 PS_4 + \beta_5 PR_5 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

CR is the dependent variable; PD, BS, CRM, PS, and PR are the independent variables; and CR = Customer Retention

PD = Product Differentiation

BS = Branding Strategy

CRM = Customer Relationship Management

PS = Pricing Strategy

PR = Promotion Strategy

$\varepsilon$  = Error term

### 3.12 A priori Expectation

$\beta_1, \beta_2$ , and  $\beta_3$  = Beta coefficients

$\beta_i > 0$  (Positive)

Expectation of positive coefficients for PD, BS, CRM, PS, PR as these practices should positively influence retention. A high service quality, for instance, have strengthens effect of CRM on retention.

### 3.13 Ethical Considerations

The researcher was guided in the course of gathering information from the respondents, by the ethical consideration of their voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality with no potential harm to them as to the usage of information given.

Permission was secured from NBC Plc to access their relevant customers and staff data to carry out the survey, while also explaining purpose and their voluntary participation.

## 4.0 Results and Discussion

This chapter discusses the analysis and interpretation of data from respondents from Nigeria Bottling Company (NBC) Plc, Ibadan Plant. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data

from fifty-five (55) respondents consisting of fifteen (15) Management staff, seventeen (17) senior staff and twenty-three (23) junior staff, spread across all departments and units of Nigeria Bottling Company Plc.'s Ibadan Plant, Metro, Depots and Outstations.

#### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

**Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

| Variable                |         | Category           | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|---------|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Gender                  |         | Male               | 36        | 65.5           |
|                         |         | Female             | 19        | 34.5           |
|                         |         | Total              | 55        | 100            |
| Age Bracket             |         | 20-30 years        | 6         | 10.9           |
|                         |         | 31-40 years        | 10        | 18.2           |
|                         |         | 41-50 years        | 17        | 30.9           |
|                         |         | 51 years and above | 22        | 40.0           |
|                         |         | Total              | 55        | 100            |
| Marital Status          |         | Single             | 12        | 21.8           |
|                         |         | Married            | 43        | 78.2           |
|                         |         | Total              | 55        | 100            |
| Religion                |         | Christianity       | 30        | 54.5           |
|                         |         | Islam              | 25        | 45.5           |
|                         |         | Total              | 55        | 100            |
| Educational Level       |         | OND/NCE            | 13        | 23.6           |
|                         |         | B.Sc./HND          | 19        | 34.5           |
|                         |         | Postgraduate       | 23        | 41.8           |
|                         |         | Total              | 55        | 100            |
| Department/Unit         |         | Marketing          | 20        | 36.4           |
|                         |         | Sales              | 19        | 34.5           |
|                         |         | Distribution       | 8         | 14.5           |
|                         |         | Customer Service   | 5         | 9.1            |
|                         |         | Others             | 3         | 5.5            |
|                         |         | Total              | 55        | 100            |
| Status/Position Level   |         | Junior Staff       | 23        | 41.8           |
|                         |         | Senior Staff       | 17        | 30.9           |
|                         |         | Management Staff   | 15        | 27.3           |
|                         |         | Total              | 55        | 100            |
| Working Experience      |         | 0-5 years          | 6         | 10.9           |
|                         |         | 6-10 years         | 15        | 27.3           |
|                         |         | 11-15 years        | 6         | 10.9           |
|                         |         | 16 years and above | 28        | 50.9           |
|                         |         | Total              | 55        | 100            |
| Non-Bottling Experience | Company | 0-5 years          | 41        | 74.5           |
|                         |         | 6-10 years         | 14        | 25.5           |
|                         |         | Total              | 55        | 100            |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

**Interpretation:** The results show that 36 (65.5%) of the respondents were male, while 19 (34.5%) were female. In terms of age, respondents aged 51 years and above constituted the largest group with 22 (40.0%), followed by those aged 41–50 years with 17 (30.9%). Respondents aged 31–40 years accounted for 10 (18.2%), while those aged 20–30 years constituted 6 (10.9%).

The majority of the respondents were married, accounting for 43 (78.2%), while 12 (21.8%) were unmarried. With respect to religion, 30 (54.5%) were Christians and 25 (45.5%) were Muslims.

The educational qualification of the respondents indicates that 23 (41.8%) had postgraduate qualifications, 19 (34.5%) had B.Sc./HND qualifications and 13 (23.6%) had OND/NCE qualifications. In terms of departmental distribution, Marketing and Sales accounted for the largest proportions, with 20 (36.4%) and 19 (34.5%) respondents respectively.

Regarding position, 23 (41.8%) were junior staff, 17 (30.9%) were senior staff and 15 (27.3%) were management staff. The respondents also had considerable work experience, with 28 (50.9%) reporting 16 years and above. Forty-one respondents (74.5%) had between 0 and 5 years of employment experience outside the bottling industry, while 14 (25.5%) had 6–10 years.

#### 4.2.1 Product Differentiation Strategy

**Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for Product Differentiation Strategy**

| S/<br>N          | Item                                                                 | Mean        | Std.<br>Dev. | SA<br>% | A %  | U %  | D % | SD<br>% |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------|------|------|-----|---------|
| 1                | The company's products are easily identifiable from competing brands | 4.93        | 0.39         | 93.6    | 6.4  | 0.0  | 0.0 | 0.0     |
| 2                | The taste and consistency of products contribute to customer loyalty | 4.51        | 0.84         | 65.5    | 23.6 | 7.3  | 3.6 | 0.0     |
| 3                | Packaging design enhances customer preference for products           | 4.27        | 0.95         | 41.8    | 36.4 | 18.2 | 3.6 | 0.0     |
| 4                | Multiple flavours and product sizes encourage continuous purchases   | 4.69        | 0.61         | 72.7    | 18.2 | 9.1  | 0.0 | 0.0     |
| <b>Composite</b> |                                                                      | <b>4.60</b> | <b>0.70</b>  |         |      |      |     |         |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

**Interpretation:** The composite mean of 4.60 indicates a generally high level of agreement among the respondents regarding product differentiation. The highest mean score of 4.93 was recorded for the view that the products are distinguishable from other brands. The availability of different sizes and flavours also recorded a high mean of 4.69, suggesting positive perceptions regarding product variety and repeat purchase.

The lowest mean score of 4.27 was recorded for packaging and design strengthening customer preference. The standard deviations indicate some variation in respondents' views, with the highest variation recorded for the packaging/design item.

#### 4.2.2 Branding Strategy

**Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics for Branding Strategy**

| S/N              | Item                                                         | Mean        | Std. Dev.   | SA % | A %  | U %  | D %  | SD % |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 5                | The company's brands are easily recognised by customers      | 4.69        | 0.65        | 72.7 | 23.6 | 3.6  | 0.0  | 0.0  |
| 6                | The company maintains a strong and consistent brand identity | 4.84        | 0.52        | 83.6 | 16.4 | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  |
| 7                | Customers perceive the company's brands as reliable          | 4.91        | 0.40        | 90.9 | 9.1  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  |
| 8                | Brand image positively influences customer loyalty           | 4.49        | 0.89        | 54.5 | 29.1 | 16.4 | 0.0  | 0.0  |
| 9                | Brand reputation influences repeat purchase behaviour        | 4.31        | 0.99        | 41.8 | 21.8 | 16.4 | 20.0 | 0.0  |
| 10               | Company effectively communicates brand messages and values   | 4.87        | 0.51        | 87.3 | 12.7 | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  |
| <b>Composite</b> |                                                              | <b>4.69</b> | <b>0.66</b> |      |      |      |      |      |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

**Interpretation:** The composite mean of 4.69 indicates a high level of agreement concerning branding strategy. The highest mean score of 4.91 was recorded for the perception that the brand is trustworthy and reliable. Brand communication and brand identity also recorded high mean scores of 4.87 and 4.84 respectively.

The lowest mean score of 4.31 was recorded for the item relating to the influence of branding on purchasing behaviour. Overall, the findings indicate positive perceptions of branding strategy among the respondents.

#### 4.2.3 Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

**Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics for Customer Relationship Management**

| S/N | Item                                                             | Mean | Std. Dev. | SA % | A %  | U %  | D % | SD % |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| 11  | Company responds to customer complaints timely and appropriately | 4.36 | 1.01      | 43.6 | 38.2 | 18.2 | 0.0 | 0.0  |
| 12  | NBC treats customers fairly and makes them feel recognized       | 4.56 | 0.89      | 58.2 | 30.9 | 10.9 | 0.0 | 0.0  |
| 13  | Customers regularly informed about new                           | 4.49 | 0.88      | 52.7 | 34.5 | 12.7 | 0.0 | 0.0  |

|                  |                                                          |             |             |      |      |     |     |     |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
|                  | products, offers, and service delivery                   |             |             |      |      |     |     |     |
| 14               | Employees trained to provide quality customer service    | 4.76        | 0.63        | 76.4 | 18.2 | 5.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 15               | Company maintains long-term relationships with customers | 4.80        | 0.53        | 80.0 | 20.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| <b>Composite</b> |                                                          | <b>4.59</b> | <b>0.79</b> |      |      |     |     |     |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

**Interpretation:** The composite mean of 4.59 indicates generally positive perceptions of customer relationship management. The highest mean score of 4.80 was recorded for building and maintaining strong customer relationships, while employee training for quality customer service recorded a mean of 4.76.

The comparatively lower mean of 4.36 was recorded for responsiveness to customer complaints. This item also recorded the highest standard deviation of 1.01, indicating greater variation in respondents' views.

#### 4.2.4 Pricing Strategy

**Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics for Pricing Strategy**

| S/N              | Item                                                              | Mean        | Std. Dev.   | SA % | A %  | U %  | D % | SD % |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| 16               | Company's pricing is competitive and does not discourage purchase | 4.29        | 1.06        | 50.9 | 21.8 | 20.0 | 5.5 | 1.8  |
| 17               | Customers perceive products as offering value for money           | 4.38        | 0.82        | 47.3 | 40.0 | 12.7 | 0.0 | 0.0  |
| 18               | Price discounts and incentives encourage repeat purchases         | 4.80        | 0.63        | 80.0 | 16.4 | 3.6  | 0.0 | 0.0  |
| 19               | Company reviews prices regularly in response to market conditions | 4.24        | 0.99        | 40.0 | 30.9 | 20.0 | 9.1 | 0.0  |
| <b>Composite</b> |                                                                   | <b>4.43</b> | <b>0.88</b> |      |      |      |     |      |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

**Interpretation:** Pricing strategy recorded a composite mean of 4.43, which was the lowest among the five strategic marketing practices examined, although it still indicates generally positive responses. The highest mean score of 4.80 was recorded for discounts and incentives encouraging purchasing frequency. The item relating to value for money recorded a mean of 4.38, while pricing responsiveness to market conditions recorded the lowest mean of 4.24. The findings indicate that respondents generally viewed pricing as an important marketing practice, particularly where discounts and incentives are concerned.

#### 4.2.5 Promotion Strategy

**Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics for Promotion Strategy**

| S/N              | Item                                                                 | Mean        | Std. Dev.   | SA % | A %  | U %  | D % | SD % |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| 20               | NBC adverts are persuasive and well communicated                     | 4.67        | 0.67        | 70.9 | 25.5 | 3.6  | 0.0 | 0.0  |
| 21               | Social media marketing activities are effective                      | 4.58        | 0.74        | 63.6 | 30.9 | 5.5  | 0.0 | 0.0  |
| 22               | Sales promotions messages encourage customers to purchase repeatedly | 4.58        | 0.74        | 63.6 | 30.9 | 5.5  | 0.0 | 0.0  |
| 23               | Advertisement activities match customer expectations                 | 4.55        | 0.79        | 61.8 | 25.6 | 12.7 | 0.0 | 0.0  |
| 24               | Sponsorship and event marketing enhance brand visibility             | 4.73        | 0.64        | 76.4 | 20.0 | 3.6  | 0.0 | 0.0  |
| <b>Composite</b> |                                                                      | <b>4.62</b> | <b>0.72</b> |      |      |      |     |      |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

**Interpretation:** The composite mean of 4.62 indicates a high level of agreement regarding promotion strategy. Sponsorship and event marketing recorded the highest mean score of 4.73, followed by advertising being persuasive with a mean of 4.67.

The lowest mean score of 4.55 was recorded for advertising meeting expectations. Although the overall response was positive, the result indicates some variation in respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of individual promotional activities.

#### 4.2.6 Customer Retention

**Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics for Customer Retention**

| Marketing Strategy               | Mean | Std. Dev. | Rank 1 % | Rank 2 % | Rank 3 % | Rank 4 % | Rank 5 % |
|----------------------------------|------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Product Differentiation          | 3.42 | 1.56      | 9.1      | 27.3     | 25.5     | 20.0     | 18.2     |
| Branding Strategy                | 3.25 | 1.22      | 12.7     | 21.8     | 30.9     | 18.2     | 16.4     |
| Customer Relationship Management | 4.22 | 1.43      | 40.0     | 29.1     | 18.2     | 7.3      | 5.5      |
| Pricing Strategy                 | 3.34 | 1.41      | 18.2     | 18.2     | 25.5     | 20.0     | 18.2     |
| Promotion Strategy               | 2.18 | 1.44      | 60.0     | 14.5     | 7.3      | 5.5      | 12.7     |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

**Interpretation:** The results show that promotion recorded a mean rank of 2.18, while customer relationship management recorded a mean rank of 4.22. Product differentiation, branding and pricing recorded mean ranks of 3.42, 3.25 and 3.34 respectively.

The ranking results should be interpreted as respondents' perceptions of the relative importance of the strategies as retention tools. The ranking order is presented as reported in the original analysis and is not used to determine the statistical significance of the relationships tested subsequently.

### 4.3 Composite Means and Standard Deviations

**Table 4.8: Summary of Composite Means and Standard Deviations**

| Variable                               | Composite Mean | Standard Deviation |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Product Differentiation (PD)           | 4.60           | 0.70               |
| Branding Strategy (BS)                 | 4.69           | 0.66               |
| Customer Relationship Management (CRM) | 4.59           | 0.79               |
| Pricing Strategy (PS)                  | 4.43           | 0.88               |
| Promotion Strategy (PR)                | 4.62           | 0.72               |
| Customer Retention (CR)                | 3.48           | 1.41               |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Branding strategy recorded the highest composite mean of 4.69, followed by promotion strategy with 4.62, product differentiation with 4.60 and customer relationship management with 4.59. Pricing strategy recorded the lowest composite mean of 4.43. The results indicate that respondents generally expressed positive perceptions of all five strategic marketing practices.

### 4.4 Inferential Statistics

Pearson's Correlation is used to test hypotheses 1 to 5 for the individual effects of Strategic Marketing Practices on Customer Retention, while hypothesis 6 with focus on the joint impact of Strategic Marketing Practices on Customer Retention is analysed with multiple regression. All the hypotheses were tested at the 5% significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

#### 4.4.1 Correlation Analysis

To measure correlation and determine direction, Pearson's Product-Moment correlation Coefficient (r) was used. An r value between -1.0 and +1.0 was used to describe the relationship. r value scoring between -1.0 and -0.9 reflects a strong negative correlation, scoring between -.9 to +1.0 reflects a moderate correlation, scoring between +1.0 to +.9 reflects a strong positive correlation. r value scoring very close to zero reflects a weak correlation. Relationship strength was described as very weak (0.00 to 0.19), weak (0.20 to 0.39), moderate (0.40 to 0.59), strong (0.60 to 0.79), and very strong (0.80 to 1.00).

**Table 4.9: Pearson's Correlation Matrix**

| Variables                    | CR      | PD      | BS      | CRM     | PS      | PR    |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Customer Retention (CR)      | 1.000   |         |         |         |         |       |
| Product Differentiation (PD) | 0.732** | 1.000   |         |         |         |       |
| Branding Strategy (BS)       | 0.684** | 0.698** | 1.000   |         |         |       |
| CRM (CRM)                    | 0.751** | 0.645** | 0.623** | 1.000   |         |       |
| Pricing Strategy (PS)        | 0.562** | 0.541** | 0.512** | 0.587** | 1.000   |       |
| Promotion Strategy (PR)      | 0.711** | 0.672** | 0.659** | 0.638** | 0.554** | 1.000 |

**Source:** Computed from Researcher's Field Survey Data, 2026

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

**Interpretation:** The result indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between each of the five strategic marketing practices and customer retention.

Product differentiation had a strong positive relationship with customer retention ( $r = .732$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Branding strategy also had a positive and significant relationship with customer retention ( $r = .684$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Customer relationship management recorded the strongest correlation with customer retention among the five variables ( $r = .751$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Pricing strategy recorded a moderate positive relationship with customer retention ( $r = .562$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while promotion strategy had a strong positive relationship ( $r = .711$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

#### 4.4.2 Test of Hypotheses

##### 4.4.2.1 Hypothesis One

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between product differentiation and customer retention in the bottling industry.

**Table 4.9a: Pearson's Correlation between Product Differentiation and Customer Retention**

| Variables               | Measurement         | Product Differentiation | Customer Retention |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Product Differentiation | Pearson Correlation | 1                       | .732**             |
|                         | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                         | .000               |
|                         | N                   | 55                      | 55                 |
| Customer Retention      | Pearson Correlation | .732**                  | 1                  |
|                         | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                    |                    |
|                         | N                   | 55                      | 55                 |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey Data, 2026 (Computed via SPSS)

**Note:** Correlation is significant at the 0.01\*\* level (2-tailed)

**Interpretation:** Product differentiation has no significant relationship with customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan.

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between product differentiation and customer retention ( $r = 0.732$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Since the probability value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, product differentiation has a significant positive relationship with customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan.

##### 4.4.2.2 Hypothesis Two

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Product branding has no significant relationship on customer retention in the bottling industry.

**Table 4.9b: Pearson's Correlation between Branding Strategy and Customer Retention**

| Variables          | Measurement         | Branding Strategy | Customer Retention |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Branding Strategy  | Pearson Correlation | 1                 | .684**             |
|                    | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                   | .000               |
|                    | N                   | 55                | 55                 |
| Customer Retention | Pearson Correlation | .684**            | 1                  |
|                    | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000              |                    |
|                    | N                   | 55                | 55                 |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey Data, 2026 (Computed via SPSS)

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

**Interpretation:** Branding strategy has no significant relationship with customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan.

The result showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between branding strategy and customer retention ( $r = 0.684$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, branding strategy has a significant positive relationship with customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan.

#### 4.4.2.3 Hypothesis Three

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has no significant effect on customer retention in the bottling industry

**Table 4.9c: Pearson's Correlation between Customer Relationship Management and Customer Retention**

| Variables                        | Measurement         | Customer Relationship Management | Customer Retention |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Customer Relationship Management | Pearson Correlation | 1                                | .751**             |
|                                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                                  | .000               |
|                                  | N                   | 55                               | 55                 |
| Customer Retention               | Pearson Correlation | .751**                           | 1                  |
|                                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                             |                    |
|                                  | N                   | 55                               | 55                 |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey Data, 2026 (Computed via SPSS)

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

**Interpretation:** Customer Relationship Management has no significant relationship with customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan.

The correlation result indicated a positive and statistically significant relationship between Customer Relationship Management and customer retention ( $r = 0.751$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Since the p-value is below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, Customer Relationship Management has a significant positive relationship with customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan.

#### 4.4.2.4 Hypothesis Four

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Promotional strategies have no significant relationship on customer retention in the bottling industry

**Table 4.9d: Pearson's Correlation between Promotional Strategies and Customer Retention**

| Variables              | Measurement         | Promotional Strategies | Customer Retention |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Promotional Strategies | Pearson Correlation | 1                      | .711**             |
|                        | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                        | .000               |
|                        | N                   | 55                     | 55                 |
| Customer Retention     | Pearson Correlation | .711**                 | 1                  |
|                        | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                   |                    |
|                        | N                   | 55                     | 55                 |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey Data, 2026 (Computed via SPSS)

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

**Interpretation:** Pricing strategy has no significant relationship with customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan.

The analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between pricing strategy and customer retention ( $r = 0.562$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, pricing strategy has a significant positive relationship with customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan.

#### 4.4.2.5 Hypothesis Five

**H<sub>05</sub>:** Product pricing strategies do not have significant relationship on improve customer retention in the bottling industry

**Table 4.9e: Pearson's Correlation between Pricing Strategies and Customer Retention**

| Variables                 | Measurement         | Pricing Strategies | Customer Retention |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Pricing Strategies</b> | Pearson Correlation | 1                  | .562**             |
|                           | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                    | .000               |
|                           | N                   | 55                 | 55                 |
| <b>Customer Retention</b> | Pearson Correlation | .562**             | 1                  |
|                           | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000               |                    |
|                           | N                   | 55                 | 55                 |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey Data, 2026 (Computed via SPSS)

**Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01\*\* level (2-tailed)**

**Interpretation:** Promotion strategy has no significant relationship with customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan.

The result showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between promotion strategy and customer retention ( $r = 0.711$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Since the p-value is below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, promotion strategy has a significant positive relationship with customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan.

#### 4.5 Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that strategic marketing practices have significant relationships with customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan. The findings are discussed in relation to the five specific hypotheses tested.

The first finding established a significant positive relationship between product differentiation and customer retention ( $r = 0.732$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that product attributes such as variety, packaging, product sizes, flavours and perceived uniqueness contribute to customers' continued patronage. The finding supports Porter (1985), who identified differentiation as a strategy through which firms create unique attributes valued by customers. In the Nigerian beverage market, where consumers have several alternatives, the ability of a company to provide distinguishable products can strengthen customer preference and reduce switching behaviour.

The second finding showed a significant positive relationship between branding strategy and customer retention ( $r = 0.684$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The result indicates that a strong and consistent brand identity contributes to customer loyalty and continued patronage. This finding is consistent with Aaker (1991), who argued that brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and brand

loyalty contribute to brand equity. The strong branding perception observed in the study suggests that trust, reliability and consistent brand communication can strengthen customers' attachment to the brand.

The third finding revealed a significant positive relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and customer retention ( $r = 0.751$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). CRM recorded the strongest correlation among the five strategic marketing practices. This suggests that effective customer interaction, complaint handling, personalised communication, customer service and relationship maintenance are important in sustaining customer relationships. The finding supports Berry (1983) and the principles of Relationship Marketing Theory, which emphasise trust, commitment, communication and continuous relationship development as important mechanisms for customer loyalty and retention. The fourth finding established a significant positive relationship between pricing strategy and customer retention ( $r = 0.562$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that customers' perceptions of price fairness, value for money, discounts and incentives are associated with their continued patronage. The finding is consistent with Kotler and Armstrong (2018), who emphasise the importance of value-based pricing and customers' perceptions of value in marketing decisions. However, the comparatively lower correlation suggests that pricing, although important, may operate alongside other factors such as product quality, branding, relationships and product differentiation in influencing retention. The fifth finding showed a significant positive relationship between promotion strategy and customer retention ( $r = 0.711$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This demonstrates that advertising, sponsorship, sales promotion, event marketing and other promotional activities can strengthen brand visibility and encourage continued patronage. The finding agrees with Shimp (2017), who noted that effective promotional activities can stimulate interest, encourage purchase and reinforce brand positioning and loyalty. The result further suggests that sustained communication with customers is important in a competitive FMCG environment where brands continuously compete for consumer attention. Overall, the findings demonstrate that product differentiation, branding, CRM, pricing and promotion are relevant dimensions of strategic marketing in relation to customer retention. The results also reinforce the relevance of Relationship Marketing Theory, particularly the importance of continuous engagement, trust and value creation in developing long-term customer relationships.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This study examined the relationship between strategic marketing practices and customer retention in Nigeria Bottling Company Plc., Ibadan. The study focused on product differentiation, branding strategy, Customer Relationship Management, pricing strategy and promotion strategy.

The findings established significant positive relationships between each of the five strategic marketing practices and customer retention. Product differentiation was associated with customer retention through product variety, packaging, sizes, flavours and other distinguishing attributes. Branding strategy was found to support customer loyalty through brand identity, trust and consistent communication. CRM demonstrated the strongest relationship with customer retention, highlighting the importance of customer engagement, service quality, complaint handling and relationship maintenance. Pricing strategy also showed a significant relationship, indicating the relevance of perceived value and price fairness, while promotion strategy demonstrated a strong positive relationship through advertising, sponsorship, sales promotion and other communication activities. Based on these findings, the study concludes that strategic marketing practices constitute important mechanisms through which Nigeria Bottling Company Plc. can strengthen customer relationships and encourage continued patronage in the competitive Nigerian beverage market.

#### 4.7 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Customer Relationship Management:** Nigeria Bottling Company Plc. should continue to strengthen its CRM practices through active customer engagement, effective complaint-resolution mechanisms, personalised communication and customer loyalty initiatives. Continuous training and development of customer-facing employees should also be encouraged.
2. **Product Differentiation:** The company should continue to improve its product portfolio through product innovation, new flavours, packaging options, sizes and product-line improvements that respond to changing consumer preferences and market segments.
3. **Branding Strategy:** The company should sustain consistent brand development and communication across its marketing channels. Strong attention should be given to maintaining brand trust, product quality and a consistent brand identity.
4. **Pricing Strategy:** The company should maintain pricing strategies that reflect customer perceptions of value and fairness. Discounts, incentives and competitive pricing may be used appropriately while ensuring that pricing decisions do not undermine product quality or brand positioning.
5. **Promotion Strategy:** The company should sustain effective advertising, digital communication, sponsorship, event marketing and sales promotion activities to maintain brand visibility and strengthen customer engagement and loyalty.
6. **Quality and Consumer Protection:** Relevant regulatory bodies, particularly NAFDAC and the FCCPC, should continue to ensure compliance with product-quality and fair-competition standards, as these contribute to consumer confidence and sustainable market competition.

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