

Green Pricing and Customer Patronage of Restaurants in Port Harcourt

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between green pricing and customer patronage of restaurants in Port Harcourt. In order to address the objectives of the study, two research questions and two research hypotheses were formulated. The study was anchored on Institutional Theory; the study adopted correlational survey research design. The population of the study consists of 39 fast food restaurants gotten from www.businesslist.com.ng. The population of the study was adopted as the sample of the study since it is not too large for a study. To generate data for the study, one hundred and ninety-five (195) copies of questionnaire was given to the 39 fast food restaurants in the frame of five (5) copies per firm. A total of one hundred and ninety-five (195) respondents were used as the study subjects. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's alpha test instrument and it stood at 0.98 higher than the benchmark of 0.7. The data collected for this study were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The Spearman Rank-order correlation technique was employed to test the various hypothesis formulated. The result revealed a strong and significant relationship between green pricing and customer patronage of restaurants in Port Harcourt. The study concluded that; fast foods restaurant need to adopt green pricing techniques because environmental problems can be solved by going green. Based on the conclusion, the study recommends that: Fast food restaurants should adopt premium pricing as it would lead to customer patronage; they should start selling green products because green products would help preserve and sustain the environment which would in turn lead to repeat purchase from customers and also consumers should be willing and ready to pay the small premium that comes with green products as it would not only create market for sustainable products but would also ensure that the environment is protected against further pollution and degradation.

Introduction

Customers are the key ingredient in every organization, without customers patronizing a firm's product, the firm will not survive. Customer patronage is the only economic and social justification for the existence of any business and this existence is to create customer satisfaction (Garga & Bambale, 2016). When customers are satisfied with their experience in a restaurant, they are more likely to consistently patronize the restaurant again. Kumar (2016) added that

other factors influence customer patronage which includes the image, cleanliness, attraction of merchandise assortment, product quality, price, pleasant atmosphere, locality and parking space. In the past few years, there have been several talks on the need to preserve the environment in the course of satisfying needs. This issue has become so prominent in recent times in view of the extent to which human existence has been threatened by climate change and global warming orchestrated by the activities of multinationals and local industries (Anucha, et al., 2018). Several calls and appeals have been made to consumers to patronize only green products (biodegradable or recyclable products). This is based on the belief that by buying only green products, the environment will be preserved for future generations to meet their own needs. Many consumers are willing to patronize green products but they are constrained by the fact that green products come with higher prices (Anucha, et al., 2018).

Green marketing is a concept that opens opportunities in new markets or investments by increasing consumers' roles and commitments to saving the environment. The basic notion of green pricing revolves around price points consumers are willing to meet to purchase green products and services. Consumers place value on green products and services, and their willingness to purchase recycled paper, unbleached coffee filters, and renewable energy services can boost opportunities for green pricing. Customers will often purchase a green product at a higher price. The success of a green pricing program depends on several factors. Consumers' interest level is important in the design of a successful plan; consumers must show their interest in the concept and their willingness to pay for adopting environmentally preferable utility services. It must be understood that people's level of understanding and willingness to accede to green pricing will vary with their income patterns and uses; business customers will need to be convinced that green pricing can contribute to their enterprises, and some may not find it effective.

Consumers' commitment to and engagement with a green pricing program is paramount. It is important to implement pilot programs that will determine whether their long-term commitment exists or they are likely to exit the program. Any effort to establish a green pricing program must therefore link the costs clearly to the benefits in improved environmental initiatives.

From a marketing perspective, green pricing is a pricing system which allows customers to pay a small premium in exchange for value added from environmental friendly products (Holt & Holt, 2004). Most green products (sustainable products) come with small premium (high) prices because of its added value of protecting the environment from pollution and degradation. Green marketers usually charge small premium for their green products (biodegradable and recyclable products) because of the environmental benefits the products offer in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, ecological footprints and wastes (Leszczynska, 2018).

Environmental problems can be solved by going green. The adoption of green products can be facilitated if we understand the consumer behaviour underlying the decision to purchase green products. Currently, there seems to be a trend toward buying green. The results of two Harris Interactive studies in 2009 and 2010 indicate that the consumer interest in green products is robust regardless of age, gender, geographic region or economic cycle. However, marketers of green products would benefit from gaining more specific knowledge about the factors that affect the adoption of green products.

From initial investigation, it was observed that customers' patronage towards fast food restaurants in Port Harcourt is relatively low. This was as a result of sales of products that are not environmental friendly. Globally, the challenges of increased awareness and need for sustainable consumption have plagued the fast food industry, as consumers are beginning to connect their nutrition and quality of food purchased to their daily lifestyle (Ali & Ahmad, 2012). This has necessitated the call for green pricing.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework showing the relationship between green pricing and customer patronage being measured by customer loyalty and repeat purchase.

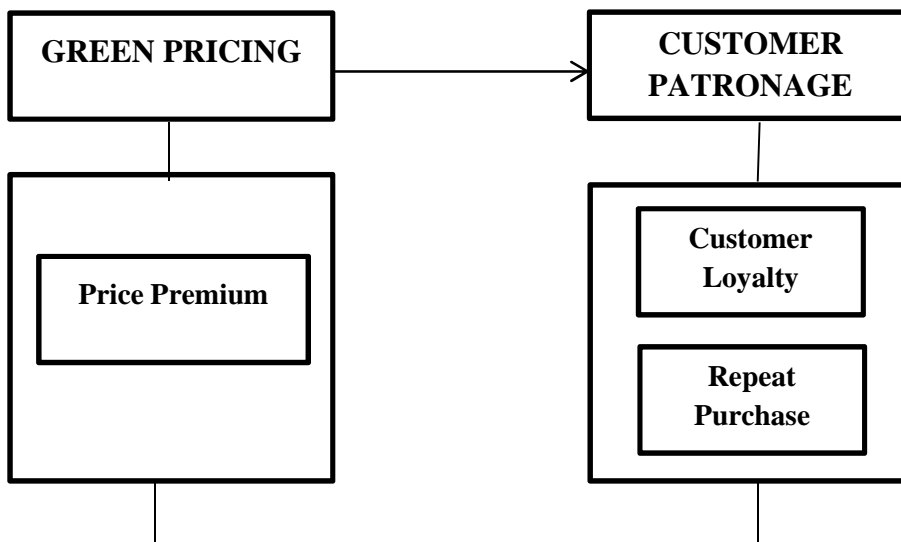


Fig.1.1 Conceptual framework of green pricing and customer patronage of restaurants in Port Harcourt.

Source: Anucha, et. al., (2018); Alabo & Anyasor (2021).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this paper was to investigate the relationship between green pricing and customer patronage of restaurants in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives are as to:

- I. determine the relationship between price premium and customer loyalty of restaurant in Port Harcourt.
- II. investigate the relationship between price premium and repeat purchase of restaurant in Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

In order to address the objectives of the study, the following research questions were raised:

- I. To what extent does price premium relate with customer loyalty of restaurant in Port Harcourt?
- II. To what extent does price premium relate with repeat purchase of restaurant in Port Harcourt?

Research Hypotheses

Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between price premium and customer loyalty of restaurant in Port Harcourt.

Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between price premium and repeat purchase of restaurant in Port Harcourt.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Concept of Green Pricing

The price is the cost paid by the customer to obtain particular product/services. Of the other elements of marketing-mix, it is only price that creates an ideal link between sales returns and profit, while others create costs (Awan, 2011). At its most basic definition, price pertains to monetary values that are replaced by the benefits and the possession or use of products or services. In this regard, customers use their monetary power to benefit from the product or service, and those consumers who desire green products shoulder higher prices emanating from the additional costs of the production process (Al-Salaymeh, 2013).

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In pricing strategies for green products, consumers' environmental concerns are commonly considered in analyses of product choice and demand. Shamdasani et al. (1993) discovered that environmental awareness affects consumers' purchasing decisions and behaviour. For consumers' environmental purchasing behaviors Schuhwerk and Lefkoff-Hagius (1995) examined the impact of advertising on consumer choice. Their results, based on laboratory experiments, shows that consumers with higher environmental awareness do not care whether an advertisement exhibits more green elements, and always choose environmentally friendly products. Ginsberg and Bloom (2004) pointed out that in dealing with green market-related issues, researchers and managers cannot ignore that consumers do not want to obtain green benefits at the expense of the original convenience, quality, and other commodity attributes. Chitra (2007) shows that the higher the level of consumer environmental awareness, the more consumers are willing to pay for eco-friendly products. Other studies investigate how green awareness influences supply chain players' operational decisions. Conrad (2005) uses a spatial duopoly model to study the effects of environmental concern on competing firms' decisions. Liu et al. (2012) focus on the impact of consumers' green awareness on supply chain players under competition. Their result shows that an increase in consumer environmental awareness benefits retailers and manufacturers that have superior eco-friendly operations. Considering the effects of

consumer environmental awareness on consumer demand, Zhang et al. (2015) investigated the green product pricing problem in a two-echelon supply chain, where a manufacturer makes the environmental and traditional products. In addition to the pricing strategies studied by Zhang et al. (2015); Basiri and Heydari (2017) investigated the green sales effort and green quality decisions of the retailer and manufacturer, respectively.

Price Premium

Price premium refers to the excess prices over and above the “fair” price which reflects the “true” value of the product (Anucha, et al., 2018). Such price is slightly above the prices attached to conventional (unsustainable) products. As earlier stated, most green products come with price premium which reflect the additional environmental benefits of the products. However, some consumers are price sensitive when making their purchasing decision. Price sensitivity refers to consumer response to the amount of money asked for a product or service (Anucha, et al., 2018). They further stated that consumers fall into two categories, those who are less sensitive to price and those who are more sensitive to price. For consumers who are more sensitive to price, a change in the price of one product will lead to the demand for a close substitute whose price remain unchanged. On the other hand, consumers who are less sensitive to price, a change in the price of one product will not necessarily lead them to demand for a close substitute provided that the quality of the favourite brand is sustained. Freriks (2012) stated that consumers who are more sensitive to price are not willing or prepared to pay the price premium that comes with green products even if they show concern for the environment. However, consumers who are less sensitive to price and show concern for the environment are often prepared to pay price premium for green products (Freriks, 2012). This category of consumers are willing to sacrifice their hard earn money to purchase green products that come with price premium. Freriks described this category of consumers as “green consumers” who are willing to protect the environment at any cost. Naturally, most green consumers are less sensitive to price when making their purchasing decisions. According to Biswas (2016), green consumers are prepared to buy products that are considered safe, healthier and good for the environment even if such products come with price premium. Kapogianni (2011) added that green consumers act irrationally when it comes to purchasing green products. They are willing to pay price premium for biodegradable and recyclable products. Xia and Zeng (2010) observed that consumers who are conscious of the environment pay higher price (price premium) for fuel-efficient vehicle because they believed that by purchasing this product, it will help to reduce fuel consumption, transportation footprints, greenhouse gas emissions and general environmental pollution.

Concept of Customer Patronage

A customer is a person that eats or uses something or a person who buys goods and services for personal consumption or use. The word patronage simply means to patronize a firm’s products/services over competitors’ products. According to Oxford Advance Learner’s Dictionary (1995) patronage can be described as the support and encouragement given by a patron. Customer patronage is deeply held commitment to repurchase a firm’s products at the expense of a competitors’ offering is known as customer patronage (Adiele, et. al., 2015).

Consumer patronage is the approval or support provided by customers with respect to a particular brand. Patronage delivers the foundation for an established and growing market share.

Kotler (2007) advocates that consumers have unpredictable degree of patronage to particular services, stores and other entities. In this study consumers can be categorized into four groups which consist of hard core patrons who are consumers of one particular product always; split patrons usually become loyal to either two or three products within a specified period of time; shifting patrons move from one product to another and finally switchers are consumers who are not loyal to any brand at all.

Measures of Customer Patronage

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty can be defined as the adherence of customers to a company. Even if businesses make mistakes, loyal customers will not leave. Kincaid (2003) defines customer loyalty “as a consumer behavior, built on positive experience and value, which leads to buying products, even when that may not appear to be the most rational decision” . Furthermore, the concept was later divided in to behaviouristic and non-behaviouristic dimensions where the latter is more focused on the underlying causes of customer loyalty and attitudes of consumers (Peppers and Rogers, 2004). So, in the investigation of customer loyalty, it is valid to explore two fields: the behavior of consumers and their intentions (Schweizer, 2008). Stone et al., (2000) posits that customer loyalty is also dependent on a number of customer related factors, i.e. how customers perceive the business rather than what the business really does. Given all these benefits, it’s only natural that businesses should turn to a diverse range of tools to develop customer loyalty. And every company seems to have a different formula for making that loyalty happen. Such initiatives include creation of valuable customer experiences, creation of resonant brand, proactive marketing initiatives, quality control processes, and customer relationship management.

Repeat Purchase

Repeat purchase can be described as the placing of order after order by a consumer from the same organization, it can also be seen as the buying of a product or services by a consumer of the same brand Repeat purchase customers are customers who are satisfied emotionally, intellectually, physically by an organization offering which could be in form of a product which exceeds their expectations. Repeat purchase in another context could be referred to as “re-patronage intentions,” according to Wirtz and Lwin (2009) it is the willingness of an individual to re-patronize a services organization. In a relationship built on trust commitment is engendered and then becomes a major predictor of future purchases. Customers regularly visit a particular firm based on their perception of trust-that is, they believe that the company has their best interest at heart when providing a service (Caudill & Murphy 2000).

The Relationship between Green Price and Customer patronage

The price of green product must be affordable for the customer to get inspired and to be able to purchase. On the other hand, industrial differentiation works only when products reduce client’s cost. Buyers are usually influenced by advertisements that mirrors a company’s commitment to environment, hence companies that do green advertisement tend to depict an image of environmental friendliness, influences their customer purchase decisions. When a company links this through their advertisements, promotions, publicity and corporate social responsibilities, they are sure to get many loyal customers. A lower price will encourage more consumers to

purchase environmentally friendly goods. When the call for a product is related to its price, a lower price strategy used will be a more successful. Literatures show that most of the consumers can afford to pay only a premium if there is an added additional product value. Sharma (2011) posits that this value may be enhanced function, performance, design, taste or visual appeal. Environmental benefits are usually a plus but will often be the deciding factor between products of equal value and quality (Singh, 2013). Accordingly, Hashem and Al-Rifai (2011) conceptualize green pricing as the price particularly in the light of company's policies with regard to environmental consideration imposed by rules and corporation instructions or its initiatives in this regard.

It was shown that consumers have become sensitive to the ecological issues, and this has to be incorporated in to green products for them to be deemed successful in their relevant markets. Customers who are concerned with the environmental impact of products are likely to purchase green products where they are available to them; it is also likely that they will be more willing to pay a higher price for such products if they are deemed to be better for the environment (Laroche, et. al., 2001).

Theoretical Review

This paper anchored on Institutional Theory

The institutional theory is a theoretical framework used to analyze social phenomena. The theory views the social world as considerably consist of institutions (rules, practices, and structures) that set conditions on action. In order to adequately explain the social world, institutions are vital. This is because they are built into the social order and also direct the flow of social life (Lawrence & Shadnam, 2008). Institutional theory, which originated in organisational studies, incorporates both classical and pluralist views of the political economy theory. According to Dillard, et. al., (2004) the main focus of the theory is on the interaction of an organization with its economic and political institutional environment. The theory also focuses on how institutional pressures influence the organization, and how these expectations are incorporated into the practices and characteristics of an organization. Institutional theory takes into consideration the procedures by which cultural, regulative and normative reasoning structures are recognized as the standard for social behaviour (Scott, 2008) where consideration for social and environmental implications of an organizations activities is a part. Institutional theory generally states that a firm's behaviour is governed by its institutional environment. This institutional environment is made up of the organizations activities, its social context and its web of social relationships (Doshi & Khokle, 2012). According to the institutional theory, an increasing number of stringent global environmental guidelines have been developed. There has also been an increasing environmental consciousness among consumers, implying that organizations must change their patterns in business and marketing activities (Chen & Lin, 2010). This theory is relevant to the study given that it supports the notion that firms must follow institutional rules, practices, and structures that set conditions on action right. Firms must work based on institutional laws in regards to environmental sustainability.

Empirical Review

Macharia, et. al., (2017) study attempted to ascertain the extent to which green marketing practices relates to satisfaction of consumers of soft drinks in Nairobi, Kenya. A total of 180 trade customers and 162 soft drink firms were sampled for the study. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics, correlation, analysis of variance and regression analysis were employed in analyzing the data. The study found a statistically significant positive linear relationship between green marketing practices and customer satisfaction.

Mehdi, et. al., (2013) studied the effect of green marketing-mix on market share increase in the manufacturing industry of Iran. The study adopted survey research design sourcing primary data with the aid of structured questionnaire. 159 and fifty nine respondents were sampled for the study. Descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank correlation were used to analyze the data. The results revealed green marketing-mix (green product, green pricing, green distribution, green promotion) and market share increase are significantly and positively correlation and, confirming all the hypotheses.

Aditi (2016) investigated the impact of green marketing on consumer purchasing patterns and decision-making in Telangana, India. Data were collected from 231 respondents with the questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive, regression analysis and correlations. The study findings indicate that green packaging branding, and premium green pricing significantly and positively impact consumer behaviour and consequently, green purchases. Place of residence and some environmental belief factors were found to be associated. Eco-labelling, green branding and green pricing were found to be correlated with environmental behaviour of consumers.

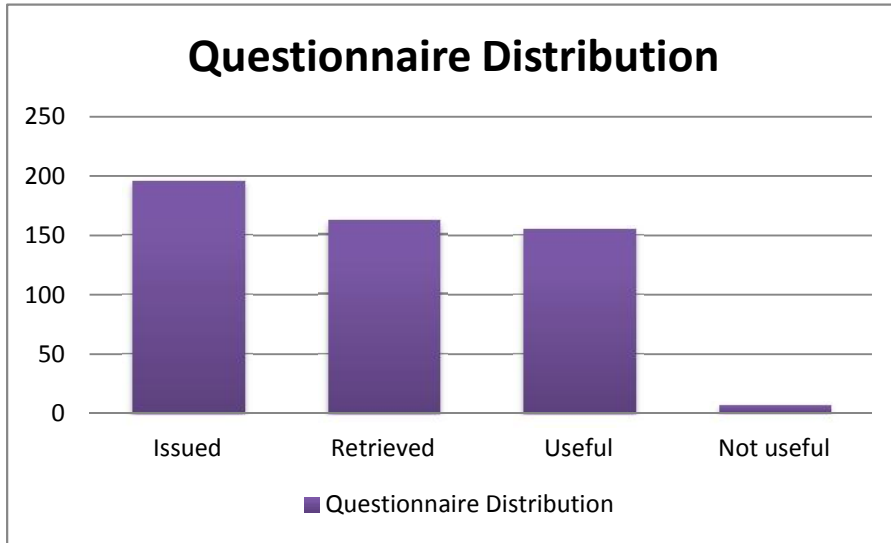
Methodology

The study adopted correlational survey research design. The population of the study consists of 39 fast food restaurants gotten from www.businesslist.com.ng. The population of the study was adopted as the sample of the study since it is not too large for a study. To generate data for the study, one hundred and ninety-five (195) copies of questionnaire was given to the 39 fast food restaurants in the frame of five (5) copies per firm. A total of one hundred and ninety-five (195) respondents were used as the study subjects. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's alpha test instrument with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 and it stood at 0.98 higher than the benchmark of 0.7. The data collected for this study were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The Spearman Rank-order correlation technique was employed to test the various hypotheses formulated through the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0

Data Analysis

Presentation of Data (descriptive statistics)

Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

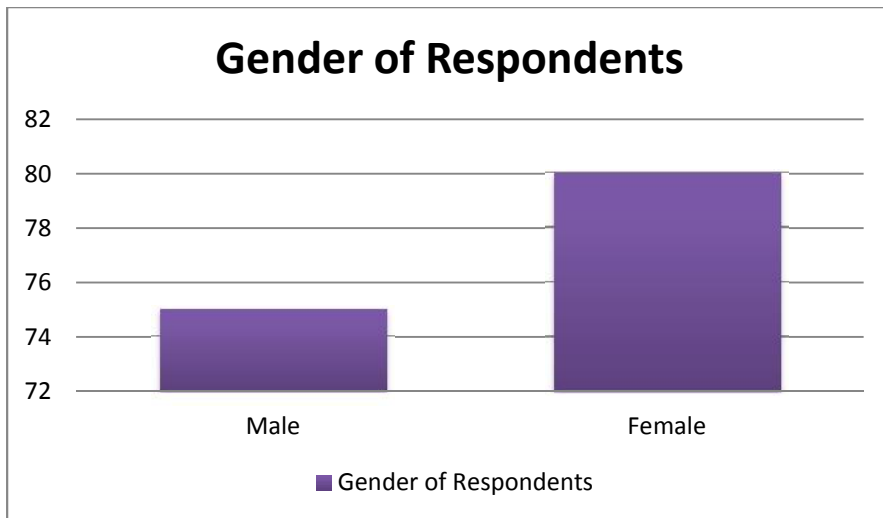


Source; survey Data, 2022.

The table above shows the questionnaire distribution and retrieval. The researcher issued 195 copies of questionnaire and from consistent visit, he retrieved 162 copies, 155 copies were useful and 7 copies were not useful. This represent 78% response rate and it was considered significant for the study.

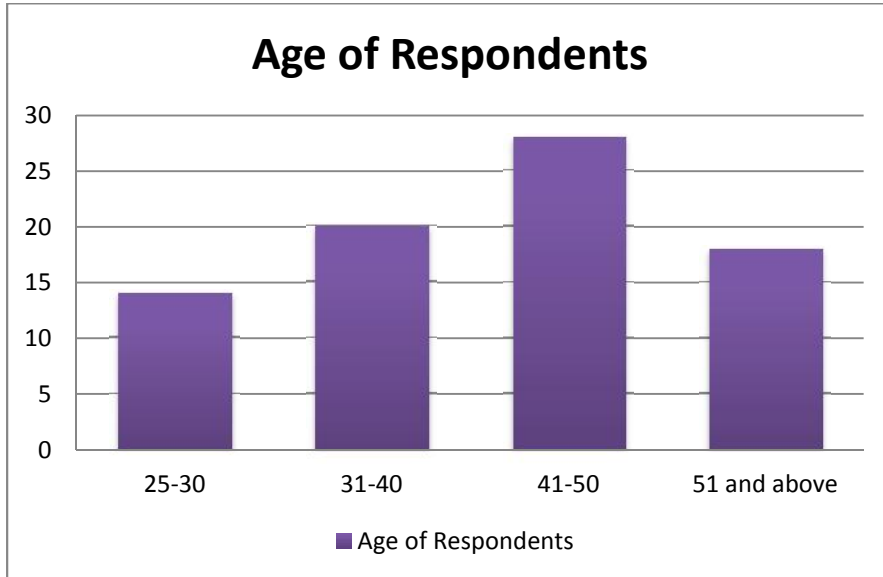
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demography of the respondents and the selected demography considered in the process of this research are; gender, age bracket and marital status of respondents.



Source: Survey Data, 2022.

The above chart shows the gender of respondents as a means of ensuring that both male & female are represented in the study 80(61%) of the respondents are female and 75 (39%) are male. This shows that majority of the respondents are female.



Source: Survey Data 2022.

The clustered chart above shows the age distribution of respondents 14(17.5%) of the respondents are between the ages of 25-30, 20 (25%) of the respondents are between the ages of 31-40, 28(35%) of the respondents are between the ages of 41-50 and 18(22.5%) of the respondents are between the ages of 51 and above.

Bivariate Analysis

Here, efforts were made to test the hypotheses formulated for this study.

Test of Hypothesis One (1)

Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between price premium and customer loyalty of restaurants in Port Harcourt.

Correlations

		price premium	customer loyalty
Spearman's rho	price premium	1.000	.768*
			.023
	N	162	162
	customer loyalty	.768*	1.000

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.
	N	162	162

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

Source: SPSS output, 2022

The table above presents the result of correlation analysis between price premium and customer loyalty of restaurant in Port Harcourt. The result indicates that there is a strong correlation between price premium and customer loyalty ($\rho = .768^*$) and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level as indicated by the symbol *. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is significant relationship between price premium and customer loyalty of restaurants in Port Harcourt.

Test of Hypothesis Two (2)

H_{02} There is no significant relationship between price premium and repeat purchase of restaurants in Port Harcourt.

Correlations

		price premium	repeat purchase
price premium	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.802*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.017
	N	162	162
	Spearman's rho		
repeat purchase	Correlation Coefficient	.802*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.
	N	162	162

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

Source: SPSS output, 2022

The table above presents the result of correlation analysis between price premium and repeat purchase of restaurants in Port Harcourt. The result indicates that there is a strong correlation between price premium and repeat purchase ($\rho = .802^*$) and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level as indicated by the symbol *. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is significant relationship between price premium and repeat purchase of restaurants in Port Harcourt.

Summary of Findings

From the results of the bivariate analysis, the following findings were discovered:

1. That, price premium showed a strong, positive and significant relationship with customer loyalty of restaurants in Port Harcourt.
2. That, price premium showed a strong, positive and significant relationship with repeat purchase of restaurants in Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

From the result of the analysis carried out, it was confirmed that there is significant positive relationship between price premium and customer loyalty of restaurants in Port Harcourt. This finding emerged from the result of the SPSS correlation analysis between the two variables. The result indicated that price premium has a significant and strong relationship with customer loyalty of restaurants in Port Harcourt. As a result of this, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This finding is in line with the study of Anvar and Venter (2014) they pointed out that younger generation of consumers, demanding green products have greater spending power and are ready to buy at the price. It is indeed a fact that going green is expensive in respect of new technology installation and equipment, personnel training, absorbing external costs, waste conversion into products recycling. However, we find these costs added in the final product.

Also, from the result of the analysis carried out, it was confirmed that there is significant positive relationship between price premium and repeat purchase of restaurants in Port Harcourt. This finding emerged from the result of the SPSS correlation analysis between the two variables. The result indicated that price premium has a significant and strong relationship with customer loyalty of restaurants in Port Harcourt. As a result of this, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This finding is in line with the study of Drozdenko et al (2011) who noted that 398 consumers are willing to pay a 5% premium for a green product (green music player) above a conventional music player that cost \$200; and that the desire and willingness to pay the price premium for green products is informed by the affective attitudes towards the environment and sustainable products.

Conclusion

From the analysis of the study, we observed that green pricing and customer patronage of restaurants in Port Harcourt. The empirical results indicated that there is significant positive relationship between price premium and customer loyalty of restaurants in Port Harcourt. The study also found a significant positive relationship between price premium and repeat purchase of restaurants in Port Harcourt. Based on these findings, it was concluded that fast foods restaurant need to adopt green pricing techniques because environmental problems can be solved by going green.

Recommendations

In line with the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that:

1. Fast food restaurants should adopt premium pricing as it would lead to customer patronage

2. Fast food restaurants should start selling green products because green products would help preserve and sustain the environment which would in turn lead to repeat purchase from customers.
3. Consumers should be willing and ready to pay the small premium that comes with green products as it would not only create market for sustainable products but would also ensure that the environment is protected against further pollution and degradation.

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