

Determinant of Product Awareness among Telecommunication Industry Consumers in Nigeria

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Abstract

Consumers have become more anxious about the economic situation over the past five years and have been looking for value. The number and depth of sales promotions and offers have increased across the market, but customers are not just looking for low prices, they are also looking to balance quality and the price they pay for things to make their budgets go further. The cardinal aim of this paper is targeted to investigate sales promotional factors on the aspect of consumer behaviour. These factors encompass discounted prices, product giveaway, loyalty points and demos and sampling including how it affects product awareness in Nigeria telecommunication industry. The present study aims to unveil and contribute towards the consumer behaviour on the components associated with product awareness. The research design is a quantitative correlational study and data were collected using questionnaires through the aid of google link form, and 407 participants were involved. Results of both Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses show that demos and sampling is the sales promotional strategy that has the strongest relationship and strongest predictor of product awareness among telecommunication users in Edo state, Benin metropolis, Nigeria. In addition, this study offers new insights towards the extant literature and provides implications and directions for future research, as the findings of this study will be helpful to telecom companies as they devise marketing plans and work to increase product awareness.

Keywords: Behaviour, Consumer, Product Awareness, Sales Promotion Strategies, Telecommunication

Introduction

Branding is an essential part of every company's success, yet it remains a challenge for a company to stand out among its competitors' offerings. This is a problem that businesses are working hard to solve and get their product into the minds of consumers. These goals are achieved by promoting the product through various means. The ability to recognise, recall and identify a product is the first purposeful step that consumers take toward purchasing it. The development of a favourable or negative attitude about a product is predicated on the consumer's awareness of it. In the absence of knowledge about a thing, no attitude toward it or willingness to purchase it will exist. Consumers are more likely to buy things that trigger images in their minds when shopping for retail products.

Over the past five years, customers have gotten increasingly concerned about the economy and have been searching for value (Soni & Verghese, 2018). Even if the number and variety of sales incentives have grown, shoppers still want to find a balance between value and quality when shopping to stretch their purchasing power farther on their limited budgets (Yaseen & Mazahir, 2019). Product loyalty is becoming a thing of the past as more and more discounts are offered; therefore, marketers need to be more creative in their promotions.

Sales promotion has a role to play in reinforcing consumer commitment and encouraging repeat purchases. As a competitive weapon, sales promotion provides additional incentives for the target audience to choose one brand over the other. When it comes to encouraging product trial and accidental purchases, it is very successful (Fam et al., 2021). Sales promotion has been extensively researched in the literature (Osaremen, 2019). Customers' brand choice, buying time, quantity, and brand switching are all affected by sales promotion.

However, there has not been much research on whether product awareness can attenuate the influence of sales promotion. Sales promotion and product awareness have been widely studied, however most of these research focus on the impact of sales promotions on consumer choice during the time they are presented (Luo & Lee, 2018). Only a few studies have examined the lag effect of sales promotions on product awareness and subsequent purchasing behaviour after the promotion campaign is cancelled.

Telecommunication industry in Africa is considered as one of the major players of the economic growth and development. In recent years, the telecommunications industry has seen fierce rivalry, resulting in aggressive employment of various marketing strategies by market competitors to promote their brands by appealing to stakeholders' good conscience. Companies with a keen eye on the future have found that employing various tactics has helped them boost their brand's visibility and revenue.

A constantly shifting business environment, notably in the Nigerian telecommunications industry, has resulted from the rapid pace of competition, which has speed up the response time of competitors. Management, decision-makers, and marketing strategists have had to take a step up in their strategic marketing efforts and activities because of the increased competition. Despite these differences, strategic marketing management is based on the belief that the role of marketing is to help an organisation achieve its long-term goals and a sustainable competitive advantage through the development of long-range marketing plans that adequately reflect an understanding of the firm's resources and its competitive situation as well as the needs and desires of customers (Akingbade, 2021).

Communication companies use sales promotions to encourage consumers to get more involved with their products and present the essence of those products in a compelling manner to their target audience. Consumers are increasingly aware that well-executed sales promotion strategies can help telecommunications companies differentiate their products

from their competitors, by building a brand's equity which involves creating a positive, memorable, and consistent brand image. Thankfully, Nigeria's telecommunications sector has also kept pace with the rest of the world's rapid expansion (Ajisola & Awodun, 2014). The advent of mobile phone technology has revolutionised the dissemination of news and information, especially in underdeveloped regions. The complete liberalisation of the Nigerian telecommunications market has allowed private companies to compete with government-run telcos to bring affordable mobile phone service to the country's residents. Because of this, the GSM (global system for mobile) communication licensing process began in 2001. Competition in Nigeria's GSM market is fierce because of the country's rapidly expanding number of cell phone subscribers (Hashim et al., 2014).

As a result of the intense competition among Nigeria's telecommunication networks, many marketing methods and approaches have been implemented. Many of these networks have employed sales promotion to outsmart their competitors. Meanwhile, sales promotion, an important component of marketing campaigns that includes a variety of incentive tools, is primarily short-term in nature and is intended to spur customers to buy products or services more quickly or in greater quantities, but it is lacking in the ability to keep them as customers. Sales promotion helps firms in spreading and popularising their products amongst the customers which in turn helps in widening their market segment leading to increased sales volume. Since it is an expensive undertaking, it should fulfil the goals for which the companies and firms want to achieve at a given time. Companies in the telecommunication sector will always strive to understand the decisions made by consumer when they want to buy a product or service to determine whether sales promotion strategies stimulate their decisions or not as increase in sales volume is sometimes might not attribute to the sales promotion strategies. Hence several factors usually contribute to consumer purchase decisions.

Studies done in Nigeria mainly focused on distribution strategies. Few studies have been carried out and none has been done in respect to sales promotion strategies. According to Ochieng (2014) study, it focused mainly on sales distribution strategies used by wines and spirit importers and manufacturers in Lagos. Muriithi and Waithaka (2020) carried out research in the agrochemical industries and focused on the types of sales promotion strategies used in Nigeria. Ng'ang'a (2018) examined sales promotion practices and sales performance of companies and firms that deals mainly on fast moving consumer goods while Fasana and Haseena (2017) researched on the sales promotion tools used by restaurants dealing in fast foods. The studies done by Ochieng (2014) only investigated the distribution strategies used in wines and spirit industries. This research sought to bridge the gap by answering question on the influences of sales promotion strategies on consumer behaviour and product awareness on the Nigeria telecommunication industries, based on the researcher best knowledge a gap exists in the Nigeria telecommunication industry particularly in Edo state Benin metropolis, which the researcher aims to bridge the gap.

In conjunction to that, the objectives outlined for this study is to examine the relationships between sales promotion strategies and product awareness of telecommunication industries consumers in Edo state, Benin metropolis, in Nigeria. It is also to determine the significant predictors of sales promotion strategies (discounted prices, product giveaway, loyalty points and, demos and sampling) on product awareness among telecommunication industries consumers in Edo state, Benin metropolis, in Nigeria.

Literature Review**Product Awareness**

Product awareness, according to Vazifehdoost and Negahdari (2018), is the degree to which customers can recall or recognise a particular product. Lost customers can be re-captured with product awareness, if a customer prefers the goods and services of a competitor, they may decide to forego a purchase from a brand. A retargeting campaign can help businesses find and re-engage with lost customers. To increase sales, you can use the retargeted group's familiarity with the brand and an incentive like a discount or an offer (Chandran et al., 2020).

Sales Promotion Strategies

Advertisement, public relations, personal selling, coordination marketing, deals advancements and sponsorship are just a few of the ways in which companies can communicate their marketing messages. Consumer-oriented sales promotions, retail sales promotions, and exchange promotions are all subsets of what Hafissou (2020) terms "sales promotions." Regarding the telecommunication sectors, this study focused on the impact of sales promotion strategies on product awareness. When referring to "consumer-oriented sales promotions," it all entails incentives offered exclusively to members of an association's customer base or potential members, with the goal of expediting members' purchase decisions (Nikcević et al., 2020).

There are many ways to increase the urgency of sales such as the use of free samples or the use of incentives such as coupons or freebies. Since they immediately and unmistakably increase a brand's value, these methods are frequently referred to as "esteem included" (Alimpić et al., 2020). The goal of sales promotions is to influence customers' purchasing behaviour by expediting the acquisition or utilisation of the product, thereby motivating them to act quickly in response to the limited time offer. Because these incentives are only available for a limited time, customers are under pressure to decide quickly.

Discounted Prices

Products are frequently on sale in stores. A common practise in retail is to mark down a product by a percentage of its original price. A product that normally costs #50,000 has been reduced by 10% in this issue. As a result, "10% off" refers to the percentage off (Bhatti, 2018). After conducting an advertising investigation, a company develops a pricing strategy for a product.

To sell large quantities of low-priced goods, businesses use discount pricing. Keeping costs down and staying focused is essential in this strategy. A discount pricing strategy can be very effective when applied to many retailers. In general, it is difficult to compete with retailers who build their businesses solely around a low-cost pricing strategy. Discounts off the list should be used wisely and sparingly. Discounts that are offered on a regular basis or that reward customers for their loyalty are viable options in the long run, discounting too frequently may harm your ability to sell the product at its highest price (Hoxha, 2017). Discounts to reward customers who buy a lot, repeat customers, and salespeople help keep customers loyal. If used sparingly, special discounts have the potential to boost sales, income, and benefit. It is possible for the company to reduce its stock and at the same time raise its profits by taking advantage of a short-term discount period (Li et al., 2017).

Even though some customers may choose a product based solely on price, other customers may choose a rival product based on quality. Prices that are too low may tempt customers to make purchases, but this does not create customer loyalty or trust (Kurniawati & Widiyanto,

2020). When a lower-estimated elective comes along, you may lose out on a piece of the pie you have worked so hard for. Competitors can either match or outdo each other's prices. It is difficult to raise prices after a product's price has dropped to an all-time low, especially if the item is perceived to be of lower quality (Weng, 2021).

Price Discount and Product Awareness

Price discounts have been demonstrated to have both good and negative effects on product awareness in previous marketing research (Daneal, 2021). There are three types of promotional effects: (a) economic, (b) informative, and (c) affective. A combination of positive and negative economic, informational, and affective influences is what Tey et al (2018) claim a price promotion has on a customer's purchasing decision in the end. Liu et al (2021) found a negative correlation between perceived quality and product awareness while discounting the price. Discounted products are perceived to be lower quality, especially if the price is unusually high compared to other stores' offerings. When it comes to price cuts and product awareness, past research has shown mixed results. Increased product awareness Huang et al (2014) may lead to an increase in product consciousness, decreased product awareness (Lee & Chen-Yu, 2018), or no influence on perceived quality (Yoon et al., 2021). As Aydin et al (2020) claim, consumers' perceptions of a product's quality are influenced more by its external features than its intrinsic ones. An extrinsic product attribute is not a physical part of the product but rather a product-related cue (e.g., price, brand, and level of advertising), whereas intrinsic product attributes are physical qualities of the product (e.g., colour and textures). According to Yoon et al (2021), dental service is an example of an industry where consumers demand a certain level of performance depending on the cost of the service. High price discounts warn customers that the service they will receive may be of inferior quality. But if consumers know they can count on the product's quality regardless of price promotion (as it is delivered to everyone at Starbucks regardless of price promotion; Huang et al (2014), they will be delighted to receive a price reduction and give the promotion favourable feedback.

When purchasing clothing online, customers are unable to analyse the product's fit and texture, which are key factors to consider when evaluating the quality of a garment. Extrinsic cues (such as price reductions) are more likely than intrinsic cues (such as fit and texture) to be used by customers when evaluating the quality of clothing products; price reductions are a strong cue to infer the quality of clothing online for product awareness. This could be an indication that the product is of poor quality if it is offered at a steep discount. Aigner (2020); Aydin et al (2020); Mathur and Gangwani (2021) support this claim, which is in line with the price-quality-value model and the means-end model, in which price and perceived quality have a beneficial impact on product awareness.

Product Giveaways

To no end, people enjoy receiving something. Marketers are taking advantage of this zeal for the permissible to disseminate information about their products, attract new customers, and increase sales (Park & Yi, 2019). Giveaway advertising, which includes everything from free books on Amazon to free samples at the grocery store, aims to increase sales later by giving away products for a limited time (Kim & Lee, 2021). Whether it is a perfume or a pizza, companies frequently giveaway free samples when they introduce a new product to the market. Customers receive free products and coupons in the mail from this business. People who "like" the product on Facebook get free coupons (Santini et al., 2020). Many people are

willing to give anything a go if it is free, even if they do not think they can succeed at it, because they do not want to waste money. People will need more pizza or perfume if the product is excellent. Even though the product will never be free again, they will always return to get it. Companies can reach out to potential customers in this way (Wakefield et al., 2018). Customers in supermarkets and restaurants, or those who peruse Sunday coupon fliers, get freebies from them. These people are likely to be interested in the new product because they already use similar products (Waqas et al., 2021).

Product Giveaways and Product Awareness

According to Ibrahim (2017), there must be an additional benefit beyond what is supplied in the main product or service to qualify as a sales promotion. Promotional actions and materials that do not focus solely on short-term earnings are included in this category. To increase the efficacy of an advertisement, sales promotions use the images, symbols, and statements that appear in the commercial. Promoting a product by giving away freebies or gifts to customers is a typical practise among marketers who want to ensure that their customers have a great experience while purchasing (Sun et al., 2020). Providing gifts is mostly aimed at promoting a specific product or commodity. One of the most exciting and unifying aspects of human civilisation is the act of gift-giving, which has the potential to enhance interpersonal relationships by bringing people together (Hwang, & Chu, 2019). Gift-giving research suggests that recipients may feel obliged to repay the favour by purchasing a product or using a service because of receiving gifts (Sarikaya & Köksalan, 2021). People will seek to strike a balance between the benefits they receive and the ones they give away. Recipients may feel obligated to repay any benefits they receive only if the recipient reciprocates (Branco & Heath, 2020). Recipients may feel obligated if they get a present that exceeds the value of what they have already provided to the giver, or if they have no way to repay the favour (Branco & Heath, 2020).

Researchers that study consumer behaviour have taken note of the prevalence of promotional gifts and giveaways as a means of influencing consumers' views and behaviours (Barnes et al., 2021). Previously conducted consumer research has found that gift-giving can help people balance their feelings of duty and re-establish fairness in their ongoing relationships (Barnes et al., 2021). Reciprocal responses to gift-giving in the workplace include favourable views, brand preference, purchase intention, and loyalty (Barnes et al., 2021). Gómez et al (2019) found that tourists who received complimentary wine tastings reported higher levels of purchase intent and spent more money at the vineyards. Reciprocity was proven to have a favourable effect on travellers' overall tour satisfaction in a field research of group excursions (Park & Yi, 2019). Using a giveaway as a marketing strategy can help you accomplish a wide range of objectives. According to Sun et al (2020), the most efficient promotional tactics for increasing attendance at athletic events were freebies, particularly bobblehead giveaways. Sport event gifts were identified as the most essential marketing promotion for college students (Tavormina & Won, 2016). Customers' intents to spend money in-store were also found to be boosted by promotional incentives, as reported by (Yukse et al., 2017). To increase booth traffic and improve product awareness at trade fairs, promotional gifts are a great approach to generate leads as a post-show reminder (Haque et al., 2018). Consumers are motivated to spread great news about a product or service when they receive a product giveaway.

Loyalty Points

To encourage customers to continue shopping at or using the services of businesses affiliated with each programme, traders have devised an organised marketing strategy known as "loyalty programmes" (Alshurideh et al., 2020). Many different types of businesses have these programmes, and each one has varying elements and prize plans (Clemence, 2017). Loyalty cards can be plastic or paper cards that look like credit cards, check cards, or computerised cards but identify the cardholder as being a member of a loyalty programme. These cards are widely used in marketing and retailing. Both physical and electronic rewards cards serve to identify and demonstrate the loyalty program's existence (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2017). When it comes to loyalty cards, they are known in the UK as "loyalty cards," while in Canada they are called "rewards cards," or in the United States they are known as "club cards," or "rewards cards." In Australia, they are known as either a "client card" or a "Brand Name being referred to" card. Magstripe or chip cards, which can be filtered, are more common, but chip cards and proximity cards can also be found (Pratt, 2013). Using small key tags (also known as key ring cards) as key dandies, travellers can easily transport their keys (Evanschitzky et al., 2012).

Loyalty Point and Product Awareness

In mature and competitive marketplaces, marketing's primary goal is to win over customers. According to Yang et al (2019), loyalty programmes are among the most popular customer retention tactics and the most attractive marketing tool. One way to describe loyalty programmes is to think of them as "programmes that draw consumers to amass free prizes when they make repeat purchases with a firm, and thereafter retain relationships with the firm and earn return on business (Bilgin, 2018)." Companies are realising that acquiring new consumers is becoming more expensive (Bogomolova et al., 2019), and that it can cost three to five times as much to acquire a new customer as it does to keep an existing one happy. Despite the importance of attracting new clients, the focus is increasingly on cultivating strong relationships with current ones. Within other variables, corporations were forced to look for more appealing ways to keep profitable clients on board (Dah et al., 2015). In addition, customer loyalty programmes are becoming an increasingly vital component in fostering customer relationships and raising awareness of a brand's products (Ramantoko, 2020). Retailers like department stores and supermarkets are using customer loyalty programmes as a strategic tactic to keep their consumers coming back. By lowering service costs, increasing expenditure, and encouraging loyal consumers to recommend the company to their friends, with this, profitability is generated (Khan et al., 2019). Loyalty programmes were instituted by many of these organisations to compete in the commercial world (Jatiwaringin, 2017). In addition to ensuring customer retention, loyalty programmes are designed to encourage dynamic purchasing. A loyalty programme should be designed to encourage customers to return and accrue rewards, as redeeming points for perks motivates customers to rise through the ranks (Moran, et al., 2019).

Loyalty programmes that are well-conceived improve the bonds between businesses and their existing consumers, increase the number of customers who remain loyal over time, and ultimately raise revenue (Sasmita & Suki, 2015). An investigation of a retail store by Dorotic et al (2021) found that customer loyalty programmes have a significant impact on product awareness and customer share of purchase and visitation. It was determined that the design of the Membership Card Rebate and Lottery Draw had a strong beneficial influence on product awareness and consumer loyalty in departmental stores (Sasmita & Suki, 2015).

Another thing to keep in mind is that members of a company's loyalty programme tend to make a lot of purchases (Song et al., 2019). Loyalty programmes, according to Kwiatek et al (2020), create impediments to customers' exit if they are well invested in the programme. Loyalty programmes have the challenge of increasing their share of consumer spending by enticing customers to spend more (Dorotic et al., 2021). One of the most important things you can do is provide them a reason to choose your products over those of your competitors. You can choose whatever airline you want to use your Starwood hotel points on, for example (Chenini & Touaiti, 2018). Starwood currently has an advantage over other hotel chains in the eyes of a traveller. Loyalty programmes, according to Ndlela and Chuchu (2016), generate an incentive for more purchases, which are inherently more profitable for a successful company. In the case of loyalty programmes that have several tiers, this is vital. If you are trying to move up the social ladder, you are more likely to spend more money than someone who is not quite there yet. One of the most essential soft benefits that a customer loyalty programme can provide to a company is the ability to collect information about consumer behaviour (Ramantoko, 2020). This element of the programme does not provide any direct financial gain, but the data it provides may be useful in the future. Customers' propensities and behaviours can be tracked using customer behaviour information, allowing businesses to learn more about their customers' wants and requirements.

Demos and Samples

Demonstrating a product to potential customers is known as an "item show" in the marketing world. The goal of a demonstration like this is to familiarise customers with the product in hopes of encouraging them to purchase it (Karampini, 2018). In these demonstrations, products that can be tested, may include new or updated versions of existing products, as well as products that have just recently been introduced to a new market or industry (Xu et al., 2015). Typically, in-store demonstrations take place in retail stores, such as general stores, office supply stores, or discount stores, as well as in shopping malls. In-store demonstrations may feature a wide range of products, including food and beverages, food preparation equipment, housekeeping products, personal care products, and more. The demonstrator can either set up samples nearby or use pre-assembled parcels for the exhibit. When the demonstrator is required to bring equipment like a microwave stove or hot plate to the area to take advantage of prearranged food, this is known as an "appropriation demonstration". Coupons for the product are frequently distributed as part of the show. There are a few demonstrations in which coupons are given out. Some of the demonstrators could be employees of the store where they are being held or independent contractors who work for an employment agency. Most salespeople lack the ability to identify customers who are likely to buy the product (Vigna & Mainardes, 2019).

Demos and Samples, and Product Awareness

Several theories have been put out in the marketing literature to explain how customers discover new items. Gilovich and Gallo (2020) distinguish two types of products: learning and/or experience products and search products. Things for searching can be evaluated before purchase, but products to learn with must be acquired and used before their quality can be assessed, therefore demonstrations and the provision of free samples are typical and crucial promotional tools for product awareness. For today's customers, demos and samples are still the best approach to get their attention and introduce them to new items or companies. Demos and samples appeal to both the literate and the illiterate, which sets them

apart from other forms of media in this way. Promoting a product using demos and samples is an effective way to get people interested in purchasing it. It is the narrator's goal to share his thoughts on the merchandise with the audience members. In their research, Moosa and Jagadeesan (2020) found that consumers viewed advertisements and other demonstrations of products and services as trustworthy sources of information. We see product demonstrations nearly every day. Demos and samples are viewed by some as both a reflection of and a creator of culture. Even though advertising bring in new sounds and symbols, their language and imagery still represent the present and the past. Demos and samples, according to some, are simply a way for companies to market their products.

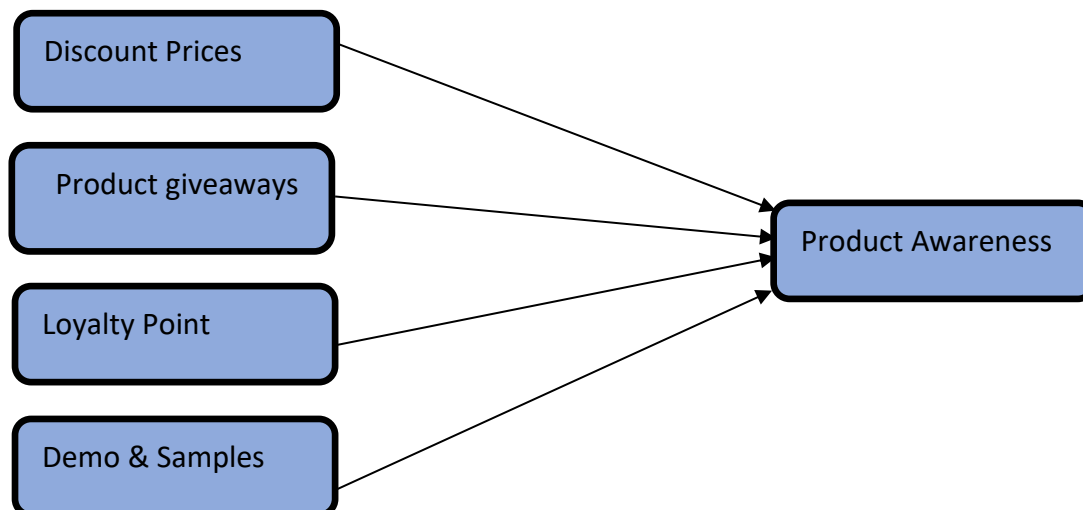
The pattern of consumer purchases is a direct result of consumer conduct and mindset. A person's behaviour is the result of a complex interplay of factors. The first factor that influences and shapes consumer behaviour is the consumer's culture. Customer views of a product are shaped by the cultural context in which it is sold (Khalid et al., 2018). Several national and international items, according to Rai (2013), have a powerful impression on people's thoughts. Because of their culture and the demos and samples they have already envisioned in their head, lifestyles, and surrounds, these perceptions are firmly etched in their minds. In addition, consumer behaviour is significantly influenced by demonstrations. Demonstrations serve as both a source of inspiration and a source of trust because they help people get familiar with a product. If a consumer is looking for quality and price, he is more likely to buy. It is also possible to cultivate a positive attitude about purchasing by conducting product evaluations and recognising products through demos and samples (Rai, 2013).

Demos and samples have been proved to increase product awareness by 20% (Childs & Jung, 2018). Research conducted by Lew and Tee (2019) shows that consumers who are more knowledgeable about a product have higher recall rates, better attitudes, and more likely to make a purchase. A positive attitude toward a product lead to a higher recall rate when product awareness is high. Recall can be greatly influenced by demonstrations and samples (Bogonondo & Artanti, 2019). For instance, when the visual and plot connections are congruent, memory is improved. Using aided recollection measures and free recall measures, Hofman (2020) discovered that viewers can properly identify and recall placed brands when shown samples. Furthermore, brands that are widely displayed are more likely to be remembered than those that are not. Recognisability can be significantly impacted by product placement (demos and samples) (Bogonondo & Artanti, 2019). Products that are more known to consumers are more likely to be remembered (Hofman, 2020).

Product demos and samples, according to Babin et al (2021), maintain product salience and the order in which products are remembered. According to the authors, demos and samples should be used to demonstrate the product's superiority, durability, performance, and specifications to increase awareness or salience. Although the product may be seen as an artificial addition for commercial gain, marketers should focus on how the product might be observed. As a result, product samples and demos require equal attention from marketers. The positioning of product demos and samples can also improve recall (Laban et al., 2020).

Conceptual Framework

Assumptions, principles, and rules form the theoretical framework of a concept's ideas, which are held together by this framework.



As such, the hypotheses were developed based on the past studies, the null hypothesis was used to test the subject phenomenon as follows.

1. H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between discounted prices and product awareness among telecommunication industries consumers in Edo state, Benin metropolis, in Nigeria.
2. H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between product giveaway and product awareness among telecommunication industries consumers in Edo state, Benin metropolis, in Nigeria.
3. H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between loyalty points and product awareness among telecommunication industries consumers in Edo state, Benin metropolis, in Nigeria.
4. H_{04} : There is no significant relationship between demos and sampling and product awareness among telecommunication industries consumers in Edo state, Benin metropolis, in Nigeria.
5. H_{05} : There is no predictive variable between discounted price, product giveaway, loyalty point and, demos and sampling on product awareness among telecommunication industries consumers in Edo state, Benin metropolis, in Nigeria.

Methodology

Research Design

This study makes use of a quantitative correlational design. The purpose of a correlational study is to determine the relationships between variables and use these relationships to make predictions.

Population of the Study

The study population are on the four (Oredo, Egor, Ikpa-Okha, and Uhunmwunode) local government areas that make up Benin's metropolis, and their residents are the subjects of this study. According to the 2006 National Population Census, Egor Local Government has a total population of 340,287, Ikpoba-Okha has a population of 372,080, Oredo has a population of 374,515, and Uhunmwunode Local Government has a population of 121,749. The total population of the Benin City metropolis is 1,208,631.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The researcher earlier intention was to collect the data through the means of face to face or physical distribution of questionnaires. But due to the pandemic issues of Covid 19, the researcher had to design a google form link to avoid contacting or spreading the virus and adhere to the rules and regulations of the state. Due to the enormous large population size, the criterion formula used in calculating the minimum requirement for sample for a particular survey design according to Bartlett et al (2001) was used which is a minimum of 384 for a population more than a million at 95 percent confidence level and five percent margin error. Therefore, questionnaires were distributed among the selected participants with an increment of 10 percent than the minimum and the usable questionnaires was a total 407.

Instrumentation

To meet the research objectives and hypotheses of this study, the study makes use of standardised measurements that are either adopted or adapted from previous studies. Multi-item scales developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986); Lichtenstein et al (1993) and by Feick and Price (1987) was used to measure sale promotion strategies (Discount prices, Product giveaways, Loyal point, Demo, and sampling) on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. While Product Awareness (PA) scale by Netemeyer et al (2004); Yoo et al (2000) was used to measure product awareness (see appendix). It entails 11 questions measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The reliability for the was conducted and measurements of variables were high and was achieved for the measurements adapted from previous studies (Product awareness 0.883; Discount prices 0.823; Product giveaways 0.707; Loyal point 0.877, Demo, and sampling 0.869). Furthermore, the distribution of the data for all the variables were normally distributed with skewness and kurtosis within the accepted range of ± 1.0 SD which fulfilled the requirements for a multiple regression.

Research Procedures

An approval to conduct this study was firstly sought from the Ethics Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects at Universiti Putra Malaysia. The researcher earlier intention was to collect the data through face to face or physical distribution of questionnaires. But due to the pandemic issues of COVID-19, the researcher had to design a google form link to avoid contacting or spreading the virus and adhere to the rules and regulations of the state. The data collection took four months aided through each local government youth leader or head, who help distribute the google form link through WhatsApp group of the community.

Data Analysis

The present study makes use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29 to analyze the data. Data collected from the field was coded and entered manually into SPSS statistical software with all precautions. Transformation and recoding of the data were also conducted. Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses were used in analyzing the data to answer the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

Results and Discussion

Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation analysis results shown in Table 1 give significant relationships for all the sales promotional strategies with product awareness among telecommunication users in Nigeria.

Table 1

Pearson's correlation analysis between sales promotional strategies and product awareness (n=407)

Variables	r	p
Product Awareness	---	---
Discounted Price	0.287**	0.000
Product Giveaway	0.285**	0.000
Loyalty Point	0.368**	0.000
Demos and Samples	0.428**	0.000

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

As shown in Table 1 above, there is a statistically significant relationship between discounted price and product awareness ($r = .287$, $p = .000$), and between product giveaway and product awareness ($r = .285$, $p = .000$). while a significant relationship also exists between loyalty point and product awareness ($r = -.368$, $p = .000$) and demos and samples ($r = 0.428$, $p = .000$). Therefore, the null hypotheses were rejected for discounted price, product giveaway, loyalty point and demos and samples on product awareness.

Multiple Linear Regression

A multiple linear regression results for determinants of product awareness on telecommunication industry in Edo state, Benin metropolis, in Nigeria are presented in Table 2. The validity of the regression model is confirmed by the significant F statistic ($F = 37.607$; $p = .000$) in Table 2 that enables it to be further interpreted.

Table 2

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3408.415	4	852.104	37.607	.000 ^b
	Residual	9108.504	402	22.658		
	Total	12516.919	406			

a. Dependent Variable: Product Awareness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Discounted Price, Product Giveaway, Loyalty Point, Demos & Samples

In Table 3, the R-square value of 0.272 indicates that about 27.2 percent of the total variation in the dependent variable (Product Awareness) is explained by the independent variables. According to Gignac and Szodorai (2016) R-square value .12 or below indicate low, between .13 to .25 values indicate medium, .26 or above and above values indicate high effect size. This indicates that the model has an adequate goodness of fit with a high effect size.

Table 3

Model Summary of Product Awareness of Discounted Price, Product Giveaway, Loyalty Point and, Demos and Samples

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.522 ^a	.272	.265	4.76004

a. Predictors: (Constant)

b. Discounted Price, Product Giveaway, Loyalty Point, Demos and Samples

Table 4

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	11.901	1.940		6.136	.000
Discounted Price	.296	.078	.168	3.789**	.000
Product Giveaway	.214	.088	.112	2.438*	.015
Loyalty Point	.293	.074	.188	3.974**	.000
Demos and Sampling	.441	0.74	.287	5.980**	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Product Awareness

*Significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed); **Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 shows the coefficient of regression result that is needed to predict Product Awareness from Discounted Price, Product Giveaway, Loyalty Point and Demos and Samples. According to Pallant (2001), the standardised coefficient (column labelled Beta) is used when comparing variables. This is because the values of a different variable are converted into the same scale for comparison purposes. On the other hand, if the interest lies in constructing a regression equation, the unstandardised coefficient values listed B is utilised. For comparing the strength among the significant predictors, the Beta values under standardised Coefficient was used. In comparing the strongest predictor, standardised coefficient B values are used. The largest Beta coefficient is 0.287 ($p = .000$) which is for demos and samples. This implies that demos and samples make the strongest unique contribution in explaining the dependent variable, which is product awareness.

Discussion

The relationship between discounted price and product awareness is quite low (see correlation result table 1) but positively correlated. This demonstrated that an increase in product or services in terms of discount resulted in an increase in the product or services awareness. In other words, customers who are more inclined with their primary service provider are more likely to be aware of the promos organised by their service provider. This result is in congruence with the findings of (Aigner, 2020; Aydin et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2014; Mathur & Gangwani, 2021), that there is a significant relationship between discounted price and product awareness.

The results show that discounted price has a large and beneficial influences on product awareness. According to the findings of this study, consumers are always delighted and are more likely to stick with their chosen networks when there is a discounted price associated with a particular product or services. Analysis of the study shows that discounted prices led to product awareness among the consumer of telecommunications in the Nigerian. The two ideas are intertwined in a constructive way. As a result, product awareness rises when there is a discounted price associated with it. Users of telecommunications networks acquire a fondness for their brands, think about their brands, and are more conscious of it, particularly when there is a form of discount associated to these networks.

Product giveaway has also showed a positive relationship and a significant influence on product awareness among the telecommunication users. The portrays that giveaway stand as a means of creating awareness about a particular products or commodities among the telecommunication users. The result of the current study supported other researchers in the field, which claims that there is a significant relationship between product giveaways and product awareness. The result suggested that product giveaways which stands as gift encourages consumer to patronise a particular product or services, thereby serving as a means of creation awareness about the products, this finding is also in consonance with the study of Sarikaya and Köksalan (2021) that discovered and posit that giving can lead to a recipient's perceived sense of obligation to return the favour thereby patronizing a product or services, invariably increasing the awareness on that particular product or services. It also coherent with the research conducted by Barnes et al (2021), the study reveals that there is a significant relationship between product giveaway and product awareness, as gifts or giveaways are widely used as promotional tools to influence consumers' attitudes and behaviours.

Product giveaway has a significant and influence on product awareness among the telecommunication users in Edo state Nigeria. The results of this current study suggest that when a consumer has a positive level of involvement with a particular service or product, the consumer is more likely to be satisfied with the service or product, then invariably becomes loyal towards the services. This was better clarified by Tavormina and Won (2016); Yukse et al (2017), which they concluded that giveaways stand as the most important marketing promotion tools which thus creates product awareness about a particular product or services. In consolidation with previous findings, this study found that, product giveaways also strengthen the positive relationship on product awareness. Based on the research findings, it shows that promotional giveaways are effective to promote product awareness.

In investigating the relationship between loyalty point and product awareness from consumer of telecommunication users in Edo state Nigeria. The results of the analysis of the study show that, in the context of the telecommunication industry in Edo state, Nigeria, loyalty point leads to awareness in product and services. The two constructs have a positive direct relationship between them. As a result, product awareness rises because of loyalty point. Telecom customers acquire feelings for their brands, think about them, and show loyalty behaviours toward them because the loyalty programs enable consumers to accumulate free rewards when they make repeat purchase with a firm. The logos and colours of their favourite telecommunications company may be painted on their homes and. There is no better way to illustrate the depth of emotional investment customers have in their favourite businesses than this.

This study's findings are like those found by other researchers in past who has engage in similar studies. According to Rahahleh et al (2020) in a retail shop finds that loyalty programs

have a large influence on product awareness and on customers' share-of-purchase and share-of-visits. Likewise, Bilgin (2018) in their study found, the design of membership card rebate and lottery draw had a significant positive impact on product awareness and customer loyalty in departmental store. Again, loyalty scheme members have high purchase intensities and patronize the company's products frequently (Moran et al., 2019). Sasmita and Suki (2015) point out that loyalty programs present barriers to exit for customers if they are well vested in the program. These loyalty program retain and fostered development of mutual trust and affective commitment, between the consumer and the firm.

On the part of demos and samples have been found to be correlated with product awareness. Demos and samples remain the most effective medium for reaching today's customers, it is also the most efficient way for introducing people to products. This result is in congruence with the findings of Moosa and Jagadeesan (2020) where their study revealed that consumers considered advertisement or any form of demonstration as a reliable source of knowledge about any product or services, that there is a significant relationship between demos and samples, and awareness of any type of product and services.

The positive relationship between demos and samples on product awareness is further supported in a study of Hofman (2020) who discovered that when a product is been sampled, the viewers can correctly recognise and recall placed brands when being demonstrated as samples using aided recall measures and free recall measures. Bogonondo and Artanti (2019) also emphasised that when a product is been sample, it enjoys higher brand recall than those that are not, which in turn has a significant effect on recognition, Babin et al (2021) also agrees with the statement. The finding of this current study demonstrates that when a product is been displayed and been given as a sample, consumers become aware of such product. When satisfied with their overall services experiences, they are more likely to retain and patronise such products or services. This in turn might manifested in behaviours such as making positive recommendation of the network service to other potential users, who are to purchase the network, promoting the network brand to the market.

This analysis shows that customers are happy when they receive sales promotions, so they should be held more frequently in the future. This is in accordance with the findings of Eric (2010), who studied the role of sales promotion in boosting revenue: According to an investigation of the telephony industry in kumasi metropolis, the positive impact of sales promotion on consumer purchasing motivations outweighed the negative impact. In a similar vein, Darko (2012) found that sales promotion is more effective in elucidating consumer purchasing motives in their study of the influence of sales promotion on consumer buying behaviour in the telecom industry, the case of Vodafone Ghana.

Conclusion

The findings of the study have sparked a slew of questions for Nigeria's telecoms executives. Advertising resources should be devoted to television, outdoor advertising, and internet advertising rather than other mediums, according to the findings of this study on IMC for increasing client patronage. First, market research is needed to determine which segments of the market are most likely to benefit from radio, online/internet, and print advertising. Rather than focusing on a broad audience, sales promotions and communications should be tailored to specific groups. That's because not all clients in the same group will find the same type of promotion appealing. Customers in the Benin City metropolitan area may benefit from a closer look at the personal selling and direct marketing tactics used by the telecommunications industry. Because this study found them to be particularly beneficial,

more resources should be invested in them. There is clear evidence of brand switching among Nigerian telephone subscribers, which could be attributable to a variety of factors, according to Aminu and Hartini (2008); Oyeniyi and Abiodun (2010), if customer loyalty is to rise above the current level, IMC techniques must be improved substantially.

This research has shown from the consumer's point of view that demos and sampling has a beneficial impact on long term relational advancements. The research demonstrates that demos and sampling explain why consumers are interested in building a business relationship with firms in terms of recognition and loyalty. It also impacts on improving the position of the consumers and meeting their social requirements. Demos and sample are one the most cost-effective beneficial approaches for improving business efficiency and making consumers to be aware of a particular products or services.

Recommendation

Recommendations are based on the study's findings; it is recommended that consumers need to be empowered. According to the findings, telecommunications companies should make more of an effort in their marketing efforts, run more sales promotions, cultivate longer-term relationships with the public, interact with potential customers one-on-one, and provide channels for customers to ask questions, voice concerns, and make suggestions for service improvements. Investing in marketing will increase the company's market share and customer base by encouraging both existing customers to continue purchasing from them and new people to check out the business for the first time.

Businesses in the telecommunications industry have a responsibility to their customers to keep them fully informed about the products and services they offer via various media including television, newspapers, radio, and social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. It was recommended that customers' loyalty to mobile telecommunications companies will increase when they offer sufficient information about the services they offer through enough advertisements, publicity, personal selling, and direct marketing as well as when they offer the necessary incentives that will encourage prompt purchase of their offers.

Furthermore, telecommunications service providers who take the time to establish and maintain a positive public image will inspire clients to acquire their product offerings and achieve a competitive advantage quickly and steadily. Finally, telecommunications service providers should invest more in sponsoring popular events (trade fair exhibitions, sporting events, arts, and entertainment) to raise awareness of their services and capture more market share.

The research contributes significantly to the field of consumer behaviour, particularly in telecom services. In the first place, customers' opinions of marketing variables that influence product awareness have been elicited and documented. With this information, telecom service providers may learn how their customers evaluate their products and services. This is particularly critical in Nigeria, where the telecommunications business is fiercely competitive, making it easy for customers to migrate between providers.

This study enriches the body of knowledge on consumer behaviour in our society. To the researcher's best of knowledge, few studies have been found conducted empirically in Edo state, Benin metropolis Nigerian telecommunication industries. However, the aim of these studies was to empirically explore the factors that are associated with product awareness and their linkages. This research extends the existing theoretical and empirical look at how the determinant of product awareness looks like.

This study provided the foundations for future research to increase the understanding of sale promotional strategies on product awareness in all marketing and consumer behaviour aspect. Replication of this study with other samples of consumers from other provinces to confirm the results of this study or detect factors that affect product awareness are recommended. This study only had one sample group, which are the consumers from telecommunication users. Therefore, if this study were to be conducted with a sample from a different population, different relationships may have been found.

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S/no	Sales promotion tools			Levels		
	Product giveaways / Buy-one-get-one-free (BOGOF)	SA	A	N	SD	D
1	I buy more products when the product offers BOGOF.					
2	BOGOF has allowed me to buy another product which I don't regularly buy.					
3	I usually buy the same product even when I have a (BOGOF) on the products.					
4	I am more likely to buy a product if there is a "buy one get one free" promotion.					
5	BOGOF allows me to buy more quantities of the same product.					

S/no	Sales promotion tools			Levels		
	Loyalty Point / Coupons discount	SA	A	N	DA	D
1	I am more likely to buy a product if I have a coupon discount for it.					
2	A coupon has allowed me to buy another brand that I do not regularly buy.					
3	I usually buy the same brand even when I have a coupon on the other brands.					
4	I have favorite brands, but most of the time I buy a brand that offers coupon.					
5	A coupon has allowed me to buy the product earlier than planned.					
6	A coupon has allowed me to buy more quantities of the same product.					

S/no	Sales promotion tools			Levels		
	Demos & Sampling / Free sample	SA	A	N	SD	D
1	A free sample has affect my buying of a brand at a supermarket.					

2	A free sample has allowed me to buy another brand that I do not regularly buy.					
3	Free sample is essential to make repeat purchase of an unknown product.					
4	Free sample always motivates the customer to shift from one brand to another.					
5	I usually buy the same brand even when I have a free sample on the other brands.					
6	Special free sample always makes consumers interested, happy & lucky					

PART C: Product Awareness

S/no	Product Awareness			Levels		
	Product Awareness / Buying Behavior	SA	A	N	SD	D
1	Consumer's choices and buying decision depend on only their own beliefs & attitudes.					
2	In general, I try to get the best overall quality.					
3	I usually buy well-known brands.					
4	It is great to buy something new and exciting.					
5	I look very carefully to find the best value for money.					
6	I usually buy the lower price products.					
7	To get variety, I shop in different stores and buy different brands.					
8	I should spend more time deciding on the products and brands I buy.					
9	I normally shop quickly, buying the first product or brand I find that seems good enough.					
10	The more I learn about products, the harder it seems to choose the best.					
11	Once I find a product I like, I buy it regularly					