

Investigating Effects of The Use of Premium as Promotional Tool on Retention of Customers of Pay Television in Ekiti State, Nigeria



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ABSTRACT: The study investigated effects of premium as a promotional tool in attracting and retaining the customers of pay television in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined effects of extra channels, free channels and extra viewing periods on retention of customers of pay television in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. The sample size used for the study was 390 customers of the three major pay television providers in Ekiti State. This represents 72, 132 and 186 customers of Startimes, DsTv and GoTv respectively selected through proportionate and multi-stage sampling techniques. Semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather necessary data needed for the study and the data were analysed with the aid of multiple regression. Findings from the study indicated that extra channels, free channels and extra viewing periods provided by the pay television providers have significant and positive effects in attracting new customers and retaining the existing ones. Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that premium as a promotional tool has positive and significant effect on retention of customers of pay television in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Pay television, Sales Promotion, Premium, Customer Retention, Mediamorphosis Theory

I. INTRODUCTION

Pay Television popularly refers to as digital, cable or subscription television is gradually taking over the Nigerian broadcasting sector. Pay television (Tv) was first introduced to Nigeria in the 2000's. Not until the second half of the 2000's, the broadcast media practice in Nigeria was largely conducted through traditional and analog technologies (Endong, 2015)

Recently, pay television has become a household commodity in Nigeria. Most customers or subscribers of the analog television operated nearly by all States and Federal governments in Nigeria are now switching to digital television thereby making the sector keenly competitive. Almost all the houses and offices especially in the urban and major cities in Nigeria have digital/cable television. This may largely be due to varieties of channels, interesting, educative and entertaining programmes, and ability to know the happenings around the world, which subscribers have access to.

Pay or subscription television is a means of providing specialized programming for a fee in a digitalized format. Pay Television is the system of television broadcasting in which people pay to watch particular programmes or particular channels. It is a subscription to a television service from cable, satellite or telephone company (Newcomb, 2014). The term pay television excludes internet-based streaming services which also charge a monthly fee. The major Pay Tv service providers in Nigeria are digital satellite television (DSTV), get organised television (GOTV), Startimes Tv, Trend Tv and Daarsat (Afolabi, 2019) which customers can access either through the digital satellite which required installation of dish and decoder or terrestrial digital Tv that uses antenna.

The ever increasing competition in the pay television sector in Nigeria has prompted the deployment of series of sales promotion tools by the service providers with a view to attracting new customers and retaining the existing ones as well as increasing their customer base. To the service providers, sales promotion is viewed as a veritable tool in increasing their market base.

Customers are familiar with sales promotion messages such as "pay before due date and enjoy seven days of max sport", "stay connected for three months nonstop and get monthly airtime" and many more. It is not uncommon during festive period for service providers to advertise their products to prospective customers at a discounted rate. Customers are exposed to such promotional messages through bill boards, short message services (SMS), jingles on radio and advertisement on television. These are done with a view to attracting prospective customers and retaining the existing ones.

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In today's competitive business environment attracting and retaining customers have been a herculean task. According to Timothy, Bruce, Lerzan, Tor and Jaw in Adetayo, Ogundipe, Olasehinde and Omojuwa (2020) customer retention is the customer's stated continuation of a business relationship with the firm. Retaining customers in the pay television sector will therefore means keeping the customers active by subscribing regularly to their chosen programme through effective customer service, and offer of interesting and informative programmes. Due to keen competition in the pay television sector in Nigeria, the pay television service providers have embarked on massive deployment of different sales promotion tools including premium, rebates, price discounts, coupons and promotion packs and free samples with a view to retaining the existing customers and attracting the potential ones. However despite the massive utilization of the diverse sales promotion tools, it is yet to be determined the possible effect the singular use of premium as a promotional tool may have on retention of customers of Pay Television in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Despite several studies on sales promotion, customer retention and diverse marketing strategies, researchers seem to have ignored the possible effect premium as sales promotion tool may have on retention of pay television subscribers in Nigeria. For instance, Nakarmi (2018) studied the effect of sales promotion on consumer behaviour. Oyeniyi (2011) conducted a study on sales promotion and consumer loyalty in the telecommunication industry in Nigeria. Similarly, studies on customer retention have focused more on determining the relationship between customer relationship management/marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, customer service and retention. For instance, Mohamed, Njuguna and Maende (2022) studied relationship marketing and customer retention among deposits taking savings and credit cooperative societies in Embakasi, Nairobi City County, Kenya. Sarah (2021) conducted a study on the analysis of working class women expectations and post patronage satisfaction with tailoring services in Adamawa State, Nigeria. From the foregoing, it is evidently clear that while various promotion mix have been well investigated, premium as a promotional tool has not been isolated to determine its effects on retention of customers particularly of pay television in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

It is in the view of the above that this study investigated the possible effects the use of premium proxies with extra channels, free channels and extra viewing periods may have on retention of customers of pay television in Ekiti State, Nigeria, whose repurchase or continuous patronage behaviour is yet to be well understood due largely to the dearth of empirical research on them.

This study therefore postulates that "the use of premium as a promotional tool has no significant effect on retention of customers of pay television in Ekiti State, Nigeria"

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Literature Review

A premium is a product or service offered at a relatively low price in return for the purchase of one or many products or services (d'Astous & Jacob, 2015; Czinkota, Kotabe, Vrontis & Shams, 2021). For instance, premium promotion may include having a free tooth brush with a purchase of toothpaste; free key holder with a purchase of a pair of shoes; free glasses with a purchase of soft drinks, etc. A typical example of premium in pay television sector is to pay for a package but allowed the benefits of a higher package. Also, 'pay for one month, get two months extra'. Another example is 'free to view channels'. A premium is an offer of merchandise or services either free or at a low price that is used as an extra incentive for buyers (Zoellner & Schaefer, 2015).

Three types of premiums exist which may be in form of free gifts which go with the product inside or on top of the packaging; free postage premiums which consumers get if they submit a proof of purchase and self-liquidating premiums which involves a manufacturer or seller selling the product to consumer at a reduced price that is at a price that is at the level of costs of production or procurement (Fahy & Jobber, 2019; Keller & Kotler, 2015). Main tasks of premiums are to stimulate the existing and realised customers to purchase as well as maintenance of market share.

Darkea and Chungb in Shrestha (2015) indicated that free gift as a premium is effective in enhancing quality perception by customers because customers make their inferences based on the original price of the product rather than the price or value of the free gift. This implies that use of a separate free gift is a good tool that communicates value to customers. This assertion was supported by Neha and Manoj in Etuk, Anyadighibe, James and Egemba (2022) who opined that premium promotion is one of the most influencing variables for consumer purchase decision. This means that free gifts or premium promotion is a means of differentiating a product from others and induces potential customers to make a trial while keeping the existing one to continue to buy. With regard to pay television sector in Nigeria, free gift in forms of extra channels, free channels and extra viewing periods are key in attracting new customers and enhancing continuous patronage by the existing ones.

Retaining customers or subscribers of pay television implies keeping them active through constant payment of subscriptions based on provision of innovative, educative, interactive and entertaining programmes as well as free viewing channels. Customer Retention is the activity that a selling organization undertakes in order to reduce customer defections. Customer retention is the process when customers continue to buy products and services within a determine time period (Njane in Kugbonu, 2020). This points to the need by organizations to maintain their customers with a view to remaining profitable at all times.

Customer retention is an important component of pay television providers' strategy in today's increasingly competitive environment. The argument for customer retention is that it is more economical to keep customers than to acquire new ones (Lu, 2006). The costs

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of acquiring customers to replace those who have been lost are high. Hogan, Lemon and Libai in Pansari and Kumar (2017) opined that customer defection refers to a situation in which a customer leaves one firm in order to patronise another. When a customer defects, the firm loses the direct sales that the customer would have made and revenues that could have generated if the customer had remained loyal. Evidence has shown that the longer customers stay with an organisation the more utility they generate.

Customer retention in this study is explained in terms of customer satisfaction, complaint-handling, positive word-of-mouth (WOM), recommendation and repeat purchase.

Various studies on sales promotion tools have been conducted. For instance, Alimpic (2014) investigated the effectiveness of sales promotion tools: customers' perspective in Serbia. The T-test results showed that discounts and bonus packs were the most effective sales promotion tools in the creation of most responses in consumer behaviour, while coupons were the most inefficient. Iqbal, Ahmad, Ateeg, and Javaid (2013) investigated the role of sales promotion on sales volume in the context of fast moving consuming goods (FMCG) industry in Dera Ghazi Khan, Pakistan. The results of the frequency Tables and correlation coefficient showed that there was positive relationship between bonus pack and sales volume. Also Genchev and Todorova (2017) conducted a study on sales promotion activities – effective tool of marketing communication mix in Bulgaria. Using descriptive statistics of percentage the study confirmed that sales promotion was an effective instrument which had a positive direct impact on users purchase behaviour. In Nigeria, a study conducted by Eze, Orekyeh and Ezeanwu (2017) on assessment of TV consumers' awareness of digital migration process in Enugu metropolis revealed a low level of awareness of digital migration process among residents of Enugu metropolis. Discontented with the current TV viewing experience, the respondents showed favourable disposition to digital migration and expressed willingness to explore new TV viewing experience it presents. However despite these studies, it has been observed that little or no attempt has been made to investigate the possible effect of the use of premium on customer retention among customers of pay television in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

B. Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the mediamorphosis theory and expectation-confirmation theory. These two theories therefore provide the theoretical underpinning of this study. Mediamorphosis theory describes the manner in which the media has transformed from a less to a more sophisticated state, to meet a number of complex contemporary needs. According to the mediamorphosis theory, the present sophisticated nature of the media such as the digital television is the product of systemic emanations from older one (analogue television). Expectations-confirmation theory according to Oliver (1980) holds that expectations, coupled with perceived performance, lead to post-purchase satisfaction. This effect is mediated through positive or negative disconfirmation between expectations and performance.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey research design to explore the effects of the use of premium as a promotional tool on customer retention in the Nigerian pay television sector in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The sample size used for the study was 390 customers of the three major pay television providers in Ekiti State. This represents 72, 132 and 186 customers of Startimes, DsTv and GoTv respectively selected through the use of proportionate and multi-stage sampling techniques. Semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather necessary data needed for the study and were analysed with the aid of multiple regression.

The regression equation model for the study was developed as follows:

$$CR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AFCH + \beta_2 EMPP + \beta_3 FCSL + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where:

CR = Customer Retention

AFCH= Availability of Free Channel

EMPP= Extra Month for Regular Payment

FCSL= Free Channel and Subscribers' Likeness

β_0 = intercept

$\beta_1 - \beta_4$ = Parameter estimates

ϵ = Error term

IV. RESULTS

A Perception of Respondents on the Effect of Premium on Retention of Customers of Pay Television

Table I presents the distribution of respondents' perception on the effect of premium on retention of customers of pay television. From the Table, 58.61% of the respondents strongly agreed that Occasionally their paid Tv service provider used to give subscribers at least one free channel to view while 23.87% of the respondents agreed with this test item. Conversely, 5.44%, 9.97% and 2.11% of the respondents were undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this test item. This revealed that substantial

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numbers of the respondents agreed that occasionally my pay Tv service provider used to give subscribers at least one free channel to view. The ability of pay television service provider to give one exciting free channel to subscribe before their next subscription might go a long way in enhancing customer retention for these pay television service providers. This corroborate Inalegwu, Ugbe and Oji (2022) who established that the rate of free-credit promotions by GSM providers significantly influences the choice of network subscription among people in Benue State, Nigeria. The mean value obtained for this test item of 4.30 affirmed that the test item was significance.

Also, 46.83% of the respondents strongly agreed that during sales promotion, the service provider used to grant them one or two extra months upon payment for one month while 36.57% of the respondents agreed with this test statement. In addition, 8.80%, 5.10% and 2.70% of the respondents were undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with the test item. This indicated that substantial numbers of the respondents agreed that during sales promotion, the service provider used to grant them one or two extra months upon payment for one month. The outcome of this study was in line with Yeboah (2021) whose study indicated a significant influence of promotion mix on consumer purchasing behaviour and consumer knowledge of insurance services in Ghana. The mean and standard deviation obtained for this test variable of 4.20 and 0.99 confirmed that the test statement was significantly true and might be a determinant of customer retention.

Furthermore, 50.15% of the respondents strongly agreed that they liked their pay Tv service providers because it used to give subscribers free channel to view while 33.23% of the respondents agreed with this test item. Consequently, 12.40%, 2.42% and 1.80% of the respondents were undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this test statement. This showed that sufficient numbers of the respondents agreed that they like their pay Tv service providers because it used to give subscribers free channel to view. The mean value computed for this test item is 4.24 with standard deviation of 0.94 confirmed that the test item was significance.

More so, 41.10% of the respondents strongly agreed that they liked their pay television service providers because they used to give subscribers extra months occasionally while 38.10% of the respondents agreed with this test statement. On the other hand, 6.90%, 8.50% and 5.40% of the respondents were undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this test item. This indicated that substantial numbers of the respondents agreed that they liked their pay television service providers because they used to give subscribers extra months occasionally. Pay television liked Start time, and GoTv were indicated by respondents to give extra months occasionally to subscribers before they make the next payment. This had encouraged a lot of subscribers to stay with this digital television service providers. Effectively, with the right premium customer retention might be achieved for the pay television. The mean value computed for this test item of 4.01 confirmed that the test item was significance.

Table I: Distribution of Respondents' Perception on the Effect of Premium on Retention of Customers of Pay Television

S/N	Test Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std	Remark
1	Occasionally my pay Tv service provider used to give subscribers at least one free channel to view	194 (58.61)	79 (23.87)	18 (5.44)	33 (9.97)	7 (2.11)	4.30	1.05	Sign
2	During sales promotion, my service provider used to grant me one or two extra months upon payment for one month	155 (46.83)	121 (36.57)	29 (8.80)	17 (5.10)	9 (2.70)	4.20	0.99	Sign
3	I like my pay Tv service providers because it used to give subscribers free channel to view	166 (50.15)	110 (33.23)	41 (12.40)	8 (2.42)	6 (1.80)	4.24	0.94	Sign
4	I like my pay Tv service providers because it used to give subscribers extra months occasionally	136 (41.10)	126 (38.10)	23 (6.90)	28 (8.50)	18 (5.40)	4.01	1.15	Sign

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

B. Ordinary Least Square Regression Results Showing Relationship between Premium and Customer Retention

Table II presents the results of the regression analysis on the effect of premium on customers' retention. Looking at the results from the Table, it was found that the p-value of the t-statistics computed for premium (PM) of 0.0000 was less than the critical value of 5% with significance t-statistics value of 6.86. This implied that the null hypothesis which stated that premium was not significance on customer retention of the pay Tv service providers was rejected. It was save to assert that premium was significant on customer retention. The availability of premium might enhance customers brand loyalty for a particular pay television service provider. The

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regression coefficient computed for this test variable of 0.17 was positive. This showed that there was a positive relationship between customer retention and premium. Effectively, a unit increase in premium for customers might result in 0.17% improvement in customer retention for the pay Tv service providers in Ekiti State Nigeria. The sign of this variable was in conformity with a priori expectation.

Furthermore, it was found that the p-value of the t-statistics calculated for price discount (PD) of 0.0047 was less than the critical value of 5% with significance t-statistics value of 2.85. This showed that the null hypothesis which stated that price discount was not significant on customer retention was rejected. It was reasonable to infer that price discount was significance on customer retention. Effective use of price reduction through the right subscription fees by the pay television service providers in Ekiti State might enhance customers' continuous loyalty. Economic downturn in Nigeria was so worrisome as to impose a fee on pay Tv beyond the reach of subscribers. Doing this might lead to loss of customers and consequently, it might force the pay television to be out of business. There was a strong affinity between the amount the pay television service providers were ready to offer as discount and customers retention. Customers by nature always patronize a pay television that was ready to offer them the best price for their money. In fact, customers were usually patronizing a product more when the price of the product was reasonable and fail to patronize a product/service that the price was beyond their reach. The regression coefficient obtained for this test variable of 0.07 confirmed that there was a positive and direct relationship between price discount in the inclusion of premium and customers retention. This import of this was that a 1% increase in price discount when premium was included might lead to 0.07% increase in customer retention. The sign of this parameter was in conformity with the priori expectation for the variable and hence, this variable might be a determinant of customer retention for the pay Tv service providers. The results of the other test statistics obtained revealed that premium and price discount might be one of the determinants of customer retention for the pay Tv service providers in Ekiti State. For instance, the p-value of the F-statistics computed for the test of 0.0000 was less than the critical value of 5%. This showed that the joint null hypothesis which stated that premium had no significant effect on retention of customers of pay television in Ekiti State, Nigeria was rejected. It was reasonable to assert that premium had a significant effect on retention of customers of pay television in Ekiti State, Nigeria. More so, the coefficient of determination obtained for the test of 0.844 revealed that approximately 84% of customer retention for the pay television service providers in the study area might be as a result of availability of premium and price discount. Therefore, it was reasonable to state that premium was a better predictor variable for customer retention for the pay Tv service providers. In addition, the Durbin Watson statistics computed for the test of 1.794530 indicated that the variables of this test were free from serial auto –correlation and hence, premium possibly exerted a considerable effect on customer retention.

Table II: Ordinary Least Square Regression Results Dependent Variable = Customer Retention

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	T-calculated	P-value
C	1.278703	2.136679	0.598922	0.9876
PM	0.169346	0.024675	6.863018	0.0000
PD	0.070569	0.024766	2.849440	0.0047
	OTHER	TEST	STATISTICS	
R-squared	0.843835		Mean dependent var	1.740181
Adjusted R-squared	0.838615		S.D. dependent var	0.386167
S.E. of regression	0.358404		Akaike info criterion	0.794713
Sum squared resid	42.13284		Schwarz criterion	0.839173
Log likelihood	-128.5250		Hannan-Quinn criter	0.808457
F-statistic	27.55195		Durbin-Watson sta	1.794530
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Source: Data Analysis (2024)

V. DISCUSSION

The study highlighted a number of sales promotion tools such as price discount, premium, bonus packs and samples which pay television service providers, managers and government regulatory agency will found useful in making decisions and formulating relevant policies that would enhance satisfaction and retention of customers of the pay television sector in Nigeria. The results of

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the study revealed a significant positive effect of premium on retention of customers of pay television sector in Nigeria. This finding confirmed the results of the study of Njeru (2022) which found a positive relationship among promotional strategies, government policies and sales performance of state corporations in Kenya. This finding further reaffirmed the result of the study conducted by Genchev and Todorova (2017) which indicated that sales promotion was an effective instrument which had a positive direct impact on users purchase behaviour. In addition, this finding further reinforced the work of Kumar, Suganya and Imayavendan (2018) which found a significant positive relationship between free samples, bonus offer, and scratch and win offers and customer retention.

VI. CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings from the study, it was concluded that the use of premium especially of extra channels and programmes, free viewing channels, extra viewing periods and other bonuses positively and significantly influenced retention of customers of pay/digital television in Nigeria. This indicates that a unit increase in the deployment of premium by service providers has significant effect on the retention of customers of pay/digital television in Nigeria. Furthermore, it can be generalized that the use of premium among other promotional tools deployed by the digital television service providers occupied a central position in attracting and retaining customers of pay television in Nigeria. The study revealed that premium as a sales promotion strategy enhances continuous patronage of customers for digital service providers. Therefore, the study recommended a deliberate and significant improvement in the use of various premium mix by digital television service providers with a view to attracting new customers and retaining the existing ones. This study suggests that in order to enhance the retention of customers of the pay television sector in Nigeria the service providers need to improve on their provision of extra channels and programmes, free viewing channels, extra viewing periods and other sales promotion tools with a view to ensuring continuous patronage by their customers. Pay television service providers must ensure that they embarked on yearly sales promotion. This was necessary in order to retain their customer patronage and encouraged new customers to patronize their services.

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