



Strategies for Ensuring Customers' Satisfaction by Business Entrepreneurs for Sustainability of Livelihood in Oyo State

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ABSTRAK

Kepuasan pelanggan merupakan salah satu hal penting yang harus dijaga. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis berbagai strategi yang dapat digunakan pengusaha untuk membangun kepuasan pelanggan demi kehidupan berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain survei deskriptif. Populasi penelitian terdiri dari 3.659 pengelola usaha kecil dan menengah yang terdaftar di Kementerian Perdagangan, Perindustrian, dan Teknologi. Sampel penelitian ini berjumlah 783 pemilik usaha kecil dan menengah yang diambil melalui teknik proporsional stratified sampling. Instrumen pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini adalah kuesioner terstruktur dengan judul "Kuesioner Membangun Strategi Kepuasan Pelanggan untuk Kehidupan Berkelanjutan" (SBCSSL). Validitas muka instrumen ditentukan dengan menggunakan pendapat para ahli. Reliabilitas instrumen dihitung menggunakan Cronbach Alpha. Rata-rata aritmatika dan deviasi standar digunakan untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian, sedangkan uji t sampel independen digunakan untuk menguji hipotesis. Temuan-temuan tersebut antara lain mengungkapkan bahwa para pengusaha pada dasarnya menilai pemberdayaan karyawan, orientasi kewirausahaan, dan pemasaran sebagai hal yang strategis dalam membangun kepuasan pelanggan demi kehidupan yang berkelanjutan. Berdasarkan temuan penelitian, direkomendasikan antara lain agar pemilik usaha bersikap terbuka dan bersemangat untuk menerapkan inovasi kewirausahaan pada tingkat yang lebih tinggi untuk meningkatkan pertumbuhan dan daya saing, profitabilitas, dan kelangsungan hidup mereka.

ABSTRACT

Customer satisfaction is one of the essential things that must be maintained. This research aims to analyze the various strategies that entrepreneurs can use to build customer satisfaction for sustainable livelihoods. This study used a descriptive survey design. The study population consisted of 3,659 managers of small and medium-sized enterprises registered with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Technology. The sample of this study amounted to 783 small and medium-sized business owners who were taken through a proportional stratified sampling technique. The data collection instrument in this study was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Building Customer Satisfaction Strategies for Sustainable Livelihoods" (SBCSSL). The face validity of the instrument was determined using expert opinions. The reliability of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach Alpha. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while an independent sample t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed, among others, that business entrepreneurs essentially rated employee empowerment, entrepreneurial orientation, and marketing as strategic to building customer satisfaction for sustainable livelihood. Based on the research findings, it is recommended, among others, that business owners should be open and eager to implement entrepreneurial innovations at a higher level to enhance their growth and competitiveness, profitability, and survival.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of business people is to maintain the comfort of their customers, who are considered kings; therefore, their satisfaction is essential for business continuity. Customers are the lifeblood of any business, and the happier they are, the better it is for the company. Therefore, every business person needs to meet his customers' expectations and ensure that they are sufficiently satisfied. Customer satisfaction (CSAT) measures a low-income company's overall products, services, and customers; improvements meet customer expectations. It reflects the health of one's business by showing how healthy buyers receive your product or service (File & Prince, 2022; Isimoye & AndBakarey, 2022). The problem that business actors often experience is how to persuade customers to be satisfied and stay put. If customers are happy with the goods or services provided, they will likely use the service again. In addition, satisfied customers are likely to speak enthusiastically about their purchase or use of a particular service, resulting in positive advertising (Manzoor, 2018; Otley, 2011). Keeping customer satisfaction high is essential if you want to retain customers and increase lifetime value. Otherwise, customers will quickly switch to competitors who offer better prices, better product choices, and better customer service interactions (Liu et al., 2009; Marakhimov & Joo, 2017).

One way to achieve active customer satisfaction is through effective strategy. Strategies are deliberate actions that will develop a business's competitive advantage and incorporate (Ali, 2021; Alshamsi et al., 2020). Previous study identified several strategies that can be used to increase customer satisfaction, including entrepreneurial orientation strategies, marketing strategies, and employee empowerment strategies. Entrepreneurial orientation is one of the essential strategies that need to be examined in research (Kurdi et al., 2020; Xiang & U, 2010). From the perspective of this research, it is the practice of strategy making, the strategic orientation of the organization, and the decision-making process in business. Another strategy to increase customer satisfaction is a marketing strategy. Therefore, marketing strategy strategically analyzes the feasibility of the environment and business factors affecting the business unit and forecasts functional trends in the business field of interest to the company (Ramseook-Munhurrun & Naidoo, 2011; Vij & Upadhya, 2020). Other strategies that can be used to increase customer satisfaction include entrepreneurial orientation, marketing, and employee empowerment. By following these customer satisfaction improvement strategies, it should be noted that the benefits that can be obtained, which include employee commitment, high-quality products/services, efficiency, responsiveness, synergy, management leverage, and increased competitiveness, lead to employees/customers (Golpira & Khan, 2019; Marr, 2016). Job satisfaction and improving employee relationships with customers. Unfortunately, this understanding and information is still far from the reach of some business actors engaged in production and services. It is this problem that underlies this research. However, customer satisfaction can only be achieved if business entrepreneurs implement effective strategies to build it. Business entrepreneurs have lost many customers because they failed to build and attract customers. It is generally believed that when a customer is well served, he will come back and attract other customers. A business can only thrive if customers are satisfied. Therefore, the identified strategies to improve customer satisfaction depend on certain factors (Leung, 2020; Morgan & Rego, 2016).

The experience of entrepreneurs over the years plays an important factor in formulating strategies to improve customer satisfaction for the sustainable livelihood of business owners. Experienced entrepreneurs may devise better strategies to enhance the entrepreneur's ability to provide a particular product or service, thereby conferring legitimacy on the old organization, which new firms lack. Many studies have classified entrepreneurs below five years in business as "inexperienced" and entrepreneurs above six years as "Experienced" (Isimoye & AndBakarey, 2022; Turki et al., 2021). However, the respondents' variable of years of experience may affect their assessment of strategies to build customer satisfaction differently (Alshamsi et al., 2020; Morgan & Rego, 2016). It is, therefore, against this background that this study was carried out with the aim of analyzing the various strategies that entrepreneurs can use to build customer satisfaction for sustainable livelihood in Oyo State.

2. METHOD

The design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey design. The study was carried out in Oyo State. The population of the study comprised 3,659 managers of small and medium scale entrepreneurs in Oyo State who are registered with the state ministry of commerce, industry and technology, The sample of this study comprised 783 small and medium scale enterprise operators drawn through proportionate stratified sampling technique, instrument for data collection in this study was structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on strategies for building customers' satisfaction for sustainability livelihood" (SBCSSL) has two sections. A and B. Section A contain two items on demographic

data of respondents while section B contains items arranged in four cluster of B1 to B3 according to the research questions. All the items are structured on a four scale response option of Very Great Extent (VHE), Great Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent. Facevalidity of the instrument was established using the opinion of experts. The reliability of the instrument was computed using cronbach Alpha and Yielded a co-efficient of 0.78 the instrument was therefore deemed reliably for the study. In collecting data, the researchers trained three research questions. Standard deviation scores were used to determine how close or spread apart the respondents ratings are. Decision were taken thus: item with mean score of 2.50 and above were accepted and signified high extent while item with mean score of 2.49 and below were rejected signifying low extent. In testing the null hypotheses, independent sample t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level The analysis was done using statistical package for social societies (SPSS) version 3.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the first question on the extent to which employers perceive employee empowerment as a strategy to build customer satisfaction for sustainable livelihoods in Oyo State can be found out through the mean scores and standard deviations of the respondents on employee empowerment as a strategy to increase customer satisfaction. The mean scores and standard deviations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents’ Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings Employee Empowerment as a Strategy for Enhancing Customers’ Satisfaction for Sustainability of Livelihood

S/N	To do what do you as a business owner	X	SD	Remarks
1	Empower your employee to do what is necessary to serve the customer	3.73	0.56	Great extent
2	Delegate responsibility to employee for customer satisfaction	3.51	0.73	Great Extent
3	Take autonomous decision on your employee to enhance customers satisfaction	3.44	0.80	Great extent
4	Assist your employees when they have problems relating to customers satisfaction	3.51	0.73	Great extent
5	Empower your employees to improve profit of the organization through repeated business	3.63	0.65	Great extent
6	Empower your employees in order t promote good relationship between the employee and the customers	3.29	0.84	Great extent
7	Allow employees to solve customers’ problems on their own and on the spot	3.93	1.19	Great extent
8	Allow employees to make decisions concerning their jobs and about customers’ satisfaction	3.88	0.89	Great extent
9	Allow employees to make use of necessary human resource to enhance the company’s competitiveness and enhance customers’ satisfaction	3.64	0.55	Great extent
Grand Mean		3.64		Great extent

Result shown in Table 1 indicated that business entrepreneurs to a great extent rate employee empowerment as a strategy for enhancing customers’ satisfaction for sustainability of livelihood in Oyo State. The results of the second question on how business entrepreneurs use self-employment to enhance customer satisfaction for sustainable livelihoods in Oyo State can be ascertained through the respondents’ mean scores and standard deviations on self-employment orientation as a strategy to improve customer satisfaction. The mean scores and standard deviations are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents’ Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of Entrepreneurist Orientation as A Strategy for Enhancing Customers’ Satisfaction for Sustainability of Livelihood

S/N	To what extent do you as a business owner	X	SD	Remark
20	Engage in new ideas, experimentation and creative processes for customers’ satisfaction	3.88	0.73	Great Extent
21	Entertain new ideas from employees regardless of their position towards enhancing customers’ satisfaction	3.60	0.58	Great Extent

S/N	To what extent do you as a business owner	X	SD	Remark
22	Encourage new employees to develop new ideas regarding strategies, creativity and customer satisfaction	3.53	0.67	Great Extent
23	Emphasizes on utilizing new technology to boost customer patronage	3.72	0.65	Great Extent
24	Recognize clear customer needs	3.29	0.63	Great Extent
25	Train staff to adapt to technological advancements	3.30	0.61	Great Extent
26	Take bold, wide-ranging actions to achieve the customers' needs	3.26	0.78	Great Extent
27	Take advantage of new opportunities	3.43	0.87	Great Extent
28	Identify cost-effective means of marketing products	3.52	0.69	Great Extent
29	Invest in highly competitive projects	3.66	0.69	Great Extent
Grand Mean		3.52		Great Extent

Result shown in Table 2 indicated that business entrepreneur to a great extent rate entrepreneurial orientation as a strategy for enhancing customers' satisfaction for sustainability of livelihood in Oyo State. The results of the third question on the extent to which entrepreneurs perceive marketing as a strategy to enhance customer satisfaction for sustainable livelihood in Oyo State can be ascertained through the respondents' mean scores and standard deviations on marketing as a strategy to enhance customer satisfaction. The mean scores and standard deviations are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Respondents' Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of Marketing as A Strategy for Enhancing Customers' Satisfaction for Sustainability of Livelihood

S/N	To what extent do you as a business owner	X	SD	Remark
30	Retain customers through customers' relationship marketing strategy	3.74	0.74	Great Extent
31	Achieve an encouraging level of profitability through marketing strategy	3.99	0.77	Great Extent
32	Increase sales volume as a result of relationship with customers	3.53	0.78	Great Extent
33	Improve strategy positioning due to marketing strategy	3.84	0.74	Great Extent
34	Increase market share as a result of effective marketing strategy provided to customers	3.73	0.69	Great Extent
35	Boost the image of your business as a result of satisfied marketing strategy provided to customers	3.66	0.67	Great Extent
36	Maintain a regular contact with customers	3.81	0.72	Great Extent
37	Fulfill promises promotional terms made to customers through marketing	3.63	0.50	Great Extent
38	Undertake development and expansion strategy for enhancing customers' satisfaction	3.68	0.49	Great Extent
39	Apply marketing mix strategy on customers' satisfaction	3.65	0.51	Great Extent
Grand Mean		3.73		Great Extent

Result shown in Table 3 indicated that business entrepreneurs to a great extent rate marketing as a strategy for enhancing customers' satisfaction for sustainability of livelihood in Oyo State. The result of testing the first hypothesis which reads that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of employers to the extent of ranking employee empowerment as a strategy to enhance customer satisfaction for livelihood sustainability in Oyo State based on years of experience (0-5 years; 6 years and above) can be known through the result of t-test analysis of the significant difference in the mean responses of employers to the extent of ranking employee empowerment as a strategy to enhance customer satisfaction. The values of the t-test analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. T-test Analysis of the Significant Difference in the Mean Responses of Business Entrepreneurs on the Extent of Rating Employee Empowerment as A Strategy for Enhancing Customers' Satisfaction for Sustainability of Livelihood in Oyo State Based on Years of Experience

Variable	N	X	SD	df	p-value	a-level	Remark
0-5 years	498	34.70	2.64	781	0.211	0.05	Not Significant
6 years and above	285	35.08	2.26	781	0.211	0.05	Not Significant

The result in Table 4 shows a p-value of 0.211 with 781 degree of freedom and a-level of 0.05 ($0.211 > 0.05$). the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of business entrepreneurs on the extent of rating employee empowerment as a strategy for enhancing customers' satisfaction for sustainability of livelihood in Oyo State based on years of experience. The result of testing the second hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of the entrepreneurs on the extent to which they rated entrepreneurial orientation as a strategy to enhance customer satisfaction for sustainable livelihood in Oyo State based on years of experience can be known through the result of the t-test analysis of the significant difference in the responses of the entrepreneurs on the extent to which they rated entrepreneurial orientation as a strategy to enhance customer satisfaction. The values of the t-test analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. T-test Analysis of the Significant Difference in the Mean Responses Of Business Entrepreneurs on the Extent They Rate Entrepreneurial Oriented as A Strategy for Enhancing Customers' Satisfaction for Sustainability of Livelihood in Oyo State Based on Years of Experience

Variable	N	X	SD	df	p-value	a-level	Remark
0-5 years	498	41.70	2.40	781	0.610	0.05	Not Significant
6 years and above	285	41.56	2.12	781	0.610	0.05	Not Significant

The result in Table 5 shows a p-value of 0.610 with 781 degree of freedom and a-level of 0.05 ($0.610 > 0.05$). the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of business entrepreneurs on the extent they rate entrepreneurial oriented as a strategy for enhancing customers' satisfaction for sustainability of livelihood in Oyo State based on years of experience. The result of testing the third hypothesis, which reads There is no significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs on the extent to which they rate marketing as a strategy to enhance customer satisfaction for livelihood sustainability in Oyo State based on years of experience (0-5 years; 6 years and above) can be known through the result of t-test analysis on the significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs on the extent to which they rate marketing as a strategy to enhance customer satisfaction. The values of the t-test analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. T-test Analysis of the Significant Difference in the Mean Responses of Business Entrepreneurs on the Extent They Rate Marketing as A Strategy for Enhancing Customers' Satisfaction for Sustainability of Livelihood in Oyo State Based on Years of Experience

Variable	N	X	SD	df	p-value	a-level	Remark
0-5 years	498	26.75	3.42	871	0.278	0.05	Not Significant
6 years and above	285	26.29	3.40	871	0.278	0.05	Not Significant

The result in Table 6 shows a p-value of 0.278 with 871 degree of freedom and a-level of 0.05 ($0.278 > 0.05$). the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of business entrepreneurs on the extent they rate marketing as a strategy for enhancing customers' satisfaction for sustainability of livelihood in Oyo State based on years of experience.

Discussion

The findings in research question one revealed that business entrepreneurs to a great extent rate employee empowerment as a strategy for enhancing customers' satisfaction for sustainability of livelihood in Oyo State. Employee empowerment, involving them in decision-making, enhancing their skills, and giving them autonomy, often results in increased motivation and commitment to their work. This high-quality service, in turn, increases customer satisfaction, strengthens their loyalty, and creates long-term profitable relationships. Thus, employee empowerment strategies improve productivity and morale and contribute significantly to business sustainability through increased customer satisfaction and retention. This finding agreed with that of (Hair et al., 2018; Liao et al., 2020) that the customer satisfaction most influenced by image, service quality, room quality and price according. The finding of (Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2019; Raible & Williams-Middleton, 2021) that delegation of authorities, taking decisions alongside employees and promotion of good interpersonal relationships are employee empowerment strategies that can foster customer satisfaction. The finding in research question two revealed that business entrepreneurs orientation as a strategy for enhancing customers' satisfaction for sustainability of livelihood in Oyo State. The entrepreneurial orientation of business as a strategy to improve customer satisfaction for sustainable livelihood is based on the principle that satisfied customers are the key to achieving long-term stability and growth. Entrepreneurs can create significant value and

build strong customer loyalty by focusing on innovation, product or service quality, and being responsive to customer needs and wants. This finding agreed with (Abu Zayyad et al., 2021; Vieira, 2013) that dimension of entrepreneurial innovativeness have a significant positive influence on the growth of micro and small enterprises in Kenugoya, Kenya. The finding of (Alameeri et al., 2021; Alhamad et al., 2021) confirmed that business entrepreneurs who are oriented at developing new products tend to provide higher satisfaction to customers.

The finding in research question three revealed that business entrepreneurs to a great extent rate marketing as a strategy for enhancing customers' satisfaction for sustainability of livelihood in Oyo State. Effective marketing helps them better understand and fulfill customer needs and wants. Through market research and customer data analysis, companies can develop more relevant products and services that align with consumer expectations, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty. This finding agreed with the finding of (Ali et al., 2021; Alzoubi et al., 2020) that e-mail marketing, strategic positioning and maintaining regular contacts with customers positively influence customers' satisfaction in the Nigerian deposit money banks. The finding in hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of business entrepreneurs on the extent of rating employee empowerment as a strategy for enhancing customers' satisfaction for sustainability of livelihood in Oyo State based on years of experience. This finding was not in tandem with (Alzoubi et al., 2021; Gajanova, 2019) that there is a significant relationship between employee empowerment and customers satisfaction. This difference in both findings could be as a result of nature respondents, research design and geographical location.

The finding in hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of business entrepreneurs on the extent they rate entrepreneurial orientation as a strategy for enhancing customers' satisfaction for sustainability of livelihood in Oyo State based on years of experience. This finding is in line with finding of (Aaker, 2008; Turki et al., 2021) that entrepreneurial orientation jointly predicted customers' satisfaction. The finding in hypothesis three revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of business entrepreneurs on the extent they rate marketing as a strategy for enhancing customers' satisfaction for sustainability of livelihood in Oyo State based on years of experience. This finding was in line with the finding of (Isimoye & AndBakarey, 2022; Manzoor, 2018) that high level of four market segment leads to highly increase in the customer satisfaction. This research has the merit of providing in-depth insights into best practices entrepreneurs can use to improve customer satisfaction, such as improved service quality, product personalization, and better customer interaction. Consequently, the findings can help entrepreneurs in Oyo State to develop more effective business strategies, increase customer loyalty, and ensure sustainable growth. But of course, this research still needs to be improved. The shortcomings of this study may lie in the limited sample used and the geographical focus that may be too narrow, so the results may only be generalizable to some types of businesses or other regions. Suggestions for future research are to expand the geographical coverage and types of companies studied and involve more respondents to obtain more representative data.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the above findings, business entrepreneurs essentially rated employee empowerment, entrepreneurial orientation, and marketing as strategic strategies for building customer satisfaction for sustainable livelihood in Oyo State. The findings also revealed, among others, that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs to the extent of rating employee empowerment as a strategy for building customer satisfaction for sustainable livelihood in Oyo State based on years of experience. Based on the study's findings, it is recommended, among others, that business owners should be open and eager to implement entrepreneurial innovations at higher levels to enhance their growth and competitiveness, profitability, and survival.

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