

Research Article

Assessment of Product Quality and Customer Satisfaction of Selected Bakeries in Nasarawa State–Nigeria

Kufreh Daniel Inyang¹ and Iliya Bawa, Ph.D².

¹Department of Marketing, Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa, Nigeria.

²Department of Business Administration, Federal University, Lokoja, Nigeria

¹Email: kufredaniel@gmail.com; ²Email: iliyabawa84@gmail.com

Received: July 23, 2022

Accepted: August 8, 2022

Published: August 17, 2022

Abstract: The pressure and increased rivalry facing bakery businesses in Nigeria, notably in Nasarawa State, has compelled them to look for new ways to stand out and improve their competitive position in the eyes of consumers. Product quality is quickly emerging as a key factor in determining consumer loyalty and happiness in the marketplace. The goal of the study is to evaluate bakery companies' product quality characteristics for client satisfaction. The investigative design for the inquiry was a descriptive survey. The research population comprised 15 bakeries, 5 from each of the 3 senatorial zones of Nasarawa State, Nigeria along with their customers. The responders were given closed-ended questionnaires. Multiple regression was used to evaluate the data. The results showed that while flavor has a negative influence on the dependent indicator with a value of -0.014, packaging and branding have a positive effect on customer satisfaction with values of 0.830 and 0.168, respectively. The study concluded and recommended that owners of bakery firms should improve on attributes such as flavor, sweet, umami so as to increase customer satisfaction and patronage.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, quality, branding, taste, packaging product.

Introduction

Due to the increasing commoditization of goods and services, many businesses are now elevating the way they add value to their clients. The product is the center of the marketing conversation. The entire endeavor will have been in vain if the product does not meet the expectations set by other components of the marketing mix or provides the benefits the client desired. Of course, that is a gross over simplification of the crucial roles that both play in bridging the gap between producers and consumers. Brassington and Pettit (2003) claimed that the nature of wholesale and retailing is both about purchasing and selling for a profit. Both companies obtain products from a variety of sources and then convey them to suitable places alongside a marketing package that is prized by the clientele or the end user. Usually these locations are shops and warehouse but, increasingly, other forms of non-store retailing are becoming evident. In a result of increased customer awareness brought about by globalization, market proliferation, and the development of information technology, extensive achievement is no more attainable by technologies that optimize products and prices. The businesses must instead rely on enduring and positive customer relationships. According to numerous studies, acquiring new clients is about six times more difficult than keeping the ones you already have (Awara and Amaechi, 2014). As a result, retaining clients is prioritized over acquiring new ones. The fulfillment of the customer's needs and his assessment of the quality of the product form the natural foundation of contentment. The perception of the product's worth and quality, along with the complete fulfillment of the customer's needs, are the major factors that determine satisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

Businesses are concerned that modern consumers are less likely to be loyal to a particular brand. Because there are so many options available to them, buyers don't care about staying with a certain brand (Marjit and Kabiraj, 2007). Similarly, it is very essential for bakery firms to sale their products which is recognize by customer through symbols. The increasing competition in the bakery firms in Nigeria particularly in Nasarawa state has forced and put pressure to bakery businesses to look for fresh ways to stand out from the competition and achieve a stronger place in consumers' eyes to increase customer loyalty and happiness. However, customers are still not satisfy with their products. The market place's patronage and client pleasure are increasingly being determined by the product quality. Meeting client demand by providing quality-focused services is an essential component of the operations of today's bakery businesses.

Objective of the Study

✓ To assess product quality attributes of bakery firms for customer satisfaction.

Literature Review

The Concept of Customer Satisfaction and Quality

Customer satisfaction, more properly known as Sat, is a phrase that is widely used in marketing. It evaluates whether a company's goods and services meet or exceed customers' expectations. The individual who buys the goods and occasionally uses it is the customer. The degree to which a customer will experience fulfillment is referred to as satisfaction (Oliver, 1997). The idea of satisfaction is when a customer requests a service and the business provides it. According to Zeithsmal, Valarie, and Mary (2000), quality is simply the characteristics of what is delivered, produced, or offered, whereas customer pleasure or dissatisfaction is the response to that offer. In this respect, they are distinct from one another: although a company is in charge of quality, client pleasure is a matter of expertise. However, these two ideas are clearly connected in terms of how customers react—whether they are satisfied or not—which may be used to determine whether quality was actually provided. Hayes (1998) asserted that one's perception of quality is subjective. According to these concepts, superiority is complete satisfaction. This arbitrary, demand-driven viewpoint acknowledges that various clients have various demands and preferences. Because manufacturing is reliant on supply, it is primarily concerned with engineering and production technique. This method focuses on compliance to standards that were internally established, which are frequently motivated by productivity and cost-containment objectives. As competition among bakery businesses grows and they start to offer more or less comparable goods and services, it is the satisfaction of the customers that can improve the performance of the businesses and raise their competitiveness and success.

The concept Taste

A sense brought on by stimulating the gustatory. The chemical sensory system includes taste. It is a distinct sensation, mediated by taste buds on the tongue, that detects and identifies the sweet, sour, bitter, salty, or umami character of a dissolved material. Kant (2003) asserts that it is an aesthetic judgment, which is based on feeling of pleasure or displeasure. According to Nwokoye (2004), such perception is the method through which a person chooses, arranges, and interprets data on an object. When a recipe directs you to add a specific spice or other flavoring, it indicates you are free to use as much as you desire. The five basic flavors are umami, sour, salty, and bitter. They are communications that provide information about the objects we place in our mouths, allowing us to decide if they should be consumed. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2001), the link between the customer's expectations and the product's perceived performance is what ultimately determines whether the consumer is content or dissatisfied with the product purchase. After using a product, if it doesn't live up to expectations, the customer is dissatisfied; if it does, the customer is satisfied; and if it does, the customer is thrilled. The consumer's unhappiness increases with the size of the expectation-performance gap. This suggests that in order to keep customers happy, vendors should make product claims that accurately reflect the products' performance. Because the perception

created or inspired when a substance in the mouth reacts chemically with taste receptor cells located on taste buds in the oral cavity, primarily on the tongue, is what actually defines taste, and customer satisfaction is a function of how closely the product meets the customers' expectations.

The Concept of Packaging

Visually beautiful packaging has promotional value and can convey key messages about the effectiveness of the product. Packaging promotes, defines, provides information, expresses benefit. Ann (2008) observed that product packaging or design is undoubtedly a significant aspect that influences the perceived value of the product. There are typically two ways to think about packing. One is to make the product packaging very straightforward, and the other is to make a colorful impression that will draw customers' attention to the product. It has a significant impact on how consumers perceive value, which affects their intention to buy. The presentation of information such as the nutritional content and health claims is another component of modifying the box design, according to Silayoi and Speece (2004). Such details about the packaging could affect consumer buying behavior. A crucial element that could assist consumers to assess the nutritional content of packaged items is a clear introduction of the nutritional value and health claims on the packaging. Given how carefully consumers choose a product, packaging considerations are crucial for marketing. They typically favor goods that are properly wrapped; the outer cover includes all pertinent details about the good and its maker, as well as instructions for using, consuming, or opening the good.

The Concept of Branding

When there are numerous businesses delivering the same service or product, branding is the process of marketing an idea or image to make it more identifiable and associated with that service or product. It's another tool businesses employ to stop rival businesses from utilizing a graphic that can be mistaken for one of their own products. Brand recognition, according to Kotler and Armstrong (2015), might draw customers' attention to novel items that might be useful to them. They serve as the cornerstone on which an entire narrative about the special qualities of the product can be constructed. Branding makes products of higher and more reliable quality. A company guarantees the consumer that they will be satisfied. Because the buyer has particular expectations, the seller cannot easily compromise the brand's quality or be irresponsible with quality control.

Theoretical Foundation

Theory of Customer Demand

Michelle put out this theory. The hypothesis was founded on taking into account a few demographic factors that were created through many years of research into customer behavior. The hypothesis makes an effort to and may serve as a useful tool for luring new customers and keeping existing ones. Consumers' loyalty is a priceless resource, as obvious to business owners who see repeat customers. The creation of more business can be influenced by incorporating the principles of the customer loyalty theory into daily interactions.

Similar to this, customer satisfaction happens when expectations are met and exceeded, yet different people have various expectations. The level of happiness varies depending on the buyer, as a product could be very alluring to one and not at all so to another. Businesses might more successfully establish customer loyalty by understanding more about what their own consumers value and enjoy and working to match those expectations rather than aiming to impact client loyalty purely via the products they carried (Turley and Milliman, 2000).

Research Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The selection of the research design was justified by the goal of identifying and describing how the independent variables interacted (taste, branding and packaging) influenced the dependent variables (customer satisfaction). The research population comprised 15 bakeries, 5 from each of the 3 senatorial zones of Nasarawa State along

with their customers (Field Survey, 2021). Respondents were given a closed-ended questionnaire, and data were analyzed using multiple regression. The research advisors table was used to calculate the necessary sample size, with a significance level of 5% and a confidence level of 95%. As a result, 370 clients who represented the whole customer population were included in the study's sample.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Test of Reliability

The test of reliability results for each of the research's construct are displayed in the table below.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Satisfaction of Customer	0.929	6
Packaging	0.929	5
Taste	0.900	5
Branding	0.903	5

Satisfaction of Customer as measured by Cronbach's Alpha is seen in the above table. Satisfaction of Customer 0.929, packaging 929, taste 900, and branding 903. Because the Cronbach Alpha is normal at 700 therefore the research tool is trustworthy.

Regression Analysis

The findings of the study's independent constructs (packaging, taste, and branding) and dependent construct (consumer satisfaction) are presented here. In the table below, the summary of the regression results from the study's model is shown.

Table 2. Model summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. error
1	0.988 ^a	0.976	0.975	0.198
a. Predictors: (constant), packaging, taste, branding Source: Output from SPSS 17 (2021)				

Table 3. ANOVA^b

Table 17. ANOVA						
Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	533.926	3	177.975	4542.17	.000 ^a
	Residual	13.361	341	.039	2	
	Total	547.287	342			
a. Predictors: (constant), packaging, taste, branding						
b. Dependent variable; customer satisfaction						
Source: Output from SPSS 17 (2021)						

Table 4. Coefficients^a

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.057	.036		1.563	.119
	Packaging	-.014	.051	-.014	-.276	.783
	Taste	.830	.024	.839	34.456	.000
	Branding	.168	.050	.172	3.344	.001
a. Dependent variables: customer satisfaction Output from SPSS 17 (2021)						

The Research Finding

The outcome demonstrates that while taste has a negative impact on the dependent indicator with a value of -0.014, packaging and branding have favorable effects on customer satisfaction with values

of 0.830 and 0.168, accordingly. It can be seen that the packaging and branding explanatory variables are significant at 5% and have a positive correlation with the dependent variables. This demonstrates that raising the two independent variables will raise customer satisfaction by 83 and 16.8 percent, respectively. According to the corrected R^2 table, the combined influence of all the regression variables can explain the dependent variable up to 97.5 percent, with the remaining 2.5 percent being explained by other variables.

With a beta coefficient of 0.831 and a statistical significance threshold of 0.5, the test of hypothesis reveals a positive relationship between packaging and customer happiness. This suggests that packaging influences customer satisfaction in bakery businesses in a good way.

With a correlation of 0.168, which is statistically significant at 5% and a P-value of 0.000, it is discovered that customer happiness is positively correlated with branding in bakery businesses. With a coefficient of -0.014, which is statistically insignificant at 0.5 and a P-value of 0.783, taste is discovered to be negatively related with customer happiness in the bakery firms.

Conclusion and Recommendations

According to a test on the data gathered on the quality of the products and customer satisfaction at the bakery firms in Nasarawa State, branding and packaging have a substantial positive impact on customer satisfaction, however flavor has a big negative impact on both. According to the investigation, it is advised that bakers in Nasarawa State can enhance their products' flavor, sweetness, sourness, saltiness, umami, and other ingredient qualities to boost consumer satisfaction and sales. Although packaging and branding have a good relationship, there is still room for improvement in order for them to remain relevant to consumers.

Conflicts of interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Citation: Kufreh Daniel Inyang and Iliya Bawa. 2022. Assessment of Product Quality and Customer Satisfaction of Selected Bakeries in Nasarawa State–Nigeria. *International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research*, 6(8): 22-27.

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