

**CUSTOMER APPRECIATION AND REPEAT PURCHASE  
INTENTION IN RETAIL BUSINESSES**

**BY**

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IN RETAIL BUSINESSES**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
MARKETING, FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCE,  
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BENIN CITY.**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, **Ikharo Olohigbe Faith** with Matriculation Number **MGS2104982** hereby declare that this project work is the original product of my effort and has not been previously submitted by any other person for the award of any degree or certificate in this or any other institution. All sources of information used in this work have been duly acknowledged.

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**IKHARO OLOHIGBE FAITH  
(DECLARANT)**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **IKHARO OLOHIGBE FAITH** with Matriculation Number MGS2104993 in the Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Science, University of Benin, Benin City under my supervision in partial fulfillment for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) in Marketing

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**Dr. Felix Osaiga Isibor**  
(Project Supervisor)

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**Date**

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**Prof. E.P. Oseyomon**  
(Project Coordinator)

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**Date**

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**Dr. Samuel J. Osifo**  
(Head of Department)

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**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God Almighty, for His unending grace. To my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Moses Ikharo, for their love and sacrifices and to Dr. Musa Innocent, my biggest supporter.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With profound gratitude, I give all glory to God Almighty for His grace, mercy, and favour that have brought me this far in my academic pursuit. Without His guidance and strength, this success would not have been possible.

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I also appreciate my wonderful friends — the 202 girls, Princess, Rejoice, Dorcas, Nosa, Tracy, Hauwa, Mary, Treasure, Mimi and others not mentioned. You all made my time in school lively and memorable.

Finally, I want to thank me for believing in me, for doing all these hard work, I want to thank me for never quitting.

God bless you all.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the influence of customer appreciation on emotional connection and repeat purchase intention among retail customers in Benin City, Edo State. The study aimed to determine variations in the forms of customer appreciation used by retail businesses, assess customers' perceptions of appreciation in dissatisfaction scenarios, and evaluate the relationship between customer appreciation, emotional connection, and repeat purchase retention. It also explored the moderating effect of demographic variables such as gender and age.

The study adopted a quantitative research design using structured questionnaires administered to 384 retail customers, of which 360 responses were found valid for analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression analysis at a 5% significance level.

Findings revealed significant variations in the forms of appreciation used by retail businesses, with discounts, personalized communication, and after-sales services being most common. Customers' perceptions of appreciation differed across dissatisfaction scenarios, indicating that the form of redress influences satisfaction recovery. The results also showed that customer appreciation significantly enhances emotional connection and repeat purchase intention among retail customers. Furthermore, demographic variables such as age and gender significantly moderated the relationship between appreciation and repeat purchase behavior.

The study concludes that well-structured customer appreciation initiatives are essential for fostering emotional bonds, restoring customer trust in dissatisfaction scenarios, and promoting customer loyalty. It recommends that retail businesses implement personalized and demographically sensitive appreciation programs, integrate effective post-purchase

recovery mechanisms, and continuously monitor customer feedback to strengthen long-term relationships and repeat patronage.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In today's increasingly competitive and customer-centric retail environment, organizations are investing in customer intention strategies that prioritize appreciation and loyalty as core business imperatives. With the rising costs associated with acquiring new customers, businesses are redirecting efforts toward retaining existing ones and increasing customer lifetime value through appreciation-based initiatives (Kumar & Shah, 2021). Evidence suggests that acquiring a new customer can cost five to seven times more than retaining an existing one, emphasizing the need for strategic retention (Adebayo, 2023).

Customer appreciation refers to the intentional actions taken by businesses to express value and gratitude to customers. These may include personalized services, loyalty rewards, thank-you messages, exclusive offers, and feedback-based engagement. Such appreciation strategies foster emotional bonds, which are foundational to repeat purchase behavior and brand advocacy (Ndubisi, 2021). For instance, customers who feel emotionally connected to a brand are three times more likely to recommend it and five times more likely to repurchase (Ibrahim & Musa, 2022).

In the Nigerian retail and service industries, loyalty programs and appreciation gestures have demonstrated significant positive impacts on customer satisfaction and retention. According to Yusuf and Olanrewaju (2024), consistent customer recognition through loyalty incentives leads to repeat patronage and higher perceived brand value. Similarly, Omoregie et al. (2023)

found that personalized after-sales service and reward-based loyalty schemes significantly influence customer return intention in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) businesses.

Moreover, customer appreciation initiatives are increasingly supported by digital technologies such as artificial intelligence and data analytics, enabling firms to tailor experiences to individual preferences. These tools allow businesses to automate and personalize reward systems, predict customer behavior, and deliver more meaningful engagement (Ajayi & Nwankwo, 2020). The implementation of data-driven appreciation strategies has been shown to improve customer retention by up to 40%, particularly in sectors such as telecommunications, banking, and retail (Ezekiel & Adeoye, 2023).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Despite increasing recognition that customer appreciation enhances retention, many retail businesses fail to implement effective appreciation strategies. This challenge persists even as customer acquisition costs rise and market competition intensifies across the retail sector.

While the average customer retention rate in some industries reaches up to 84%, retail businesses often struggle to retain more than 70–80% of their customers (Exploding Topics, 2024; Shopify, 2024). A major contributor to this struggle is the continued focus on transactional incentives rather than long-term relationship-building strategies such as customer appreciation. Appreciation tactics like loyalty rewards, exclusive offers, personalized communication, and recognition, have been linked to enhanced customer loyalty and reduced churn (Esj.eastasouth-Institute.com, 2023).

Recent empirical studies indicate that well-structured loyalty programs, especially those that are personalized and tier-based, significantly improve customer satisfaction, trust, and emotional connection, key drivers of repeat purchases (Adebayo, 2023). However, many retailers either do not utilize these programs or fail to implement them effectively due to lack of data-driven strategies.

Additionally, research by Emarsys (2022) revealed that 74% of consumers are more loyal to businesses that offer personalized appreciation through discounts, tailored messaging, and exceptional service. Nevertheless, many retail businesses underinvest in appreciation programs and overallocate budgets to customer acquisition. This strategic imbalance leads to high churn rates, diminished customer lifetime value, and reduced brand advocacy (Sprinklr, 2023).

Furthermore, in emerging markets like Nigeria where switching costs are low and consumer options are abundant, the absence of consistent customer recognition and appreciation efforts contributes to unstable retention patterns. Although existing literature suggests that appreciation can foster emotional loyalty and advocacy, many retail managers still fail to operationalize this strategy in measurable and impactful ways (Adebayo, 2023).

Thus, the core problem is that many retail businesses are not utilizing customer appreciation strategies effectively, despite mounting evidence that these efforts significantly impact satisfaction, loyalty, and repeat purchase behavior. The lack of such strategic appreciation contributes to ongoing customer loss, lower profitability, and weakened market positions.

This study aims to explore the forms, perceptions, and impacts of customer appreciation in relation to repeat purchase intention, particularly in the retail sector of developing economies.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What forms of customer appreciation are commonly used by retail businesses?
2. How do customers perceive different forms of customer appreciation in situations involving dissatisfaction?
3. To what extent does customer appreciation influence emotional connection between customers and retail businesses?
4. What is the relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intention in retail businesses?
5. How do demographic variables such as gender and age moderate the relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intention?

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of customer appreciation on repeat purchase intention in retail businesses. Specific objectives of this study are;

- 1). To ascertain forms of customer appreciation used by retailers
- 2). To examine customers' perception of the forms of customer appreciation in different dissatisfaction scenarios.
- 3). To find out the influence of customer appreciation and emotional connection in a retail outlet.

4). To ascertain the relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intention in retail businesses.

5). To ascertain if perception of customer appreciation varies with selected demographic variables (Age, Gender).

### 1.5 Hypotheses of the study

H<sub>01</sub>: Customer appreciation does not significantly influence emotional connection in a retail outlet.

H<sub>11</sub>: Customer appreciation significantly influences emotional connection to a retail outlet.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intention in retail businesses

H<sub>12</sub>: There is a significant relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intention in retail businesses

H<sub>03</sub>: Demographic variables (gender and age) do not significantly moderate the relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intention

H<sub>13</sub>: Demographic variables (gender and age), significantly moderate the relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intention.

### 1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is valuable both academically and practically, as it highlights the role of customer appreciation in strengthening repeat purchase behavior within the retail industry. As customer acquisition becomes increasingly costly, more businesses are beginning to prioritize

strategies focused on retaining existing customers through emotional engagement and relationship-building rather than purely transactional approaches (Sprinklr, 2023; Emarsys, 2022).

By examining the impact of appreciation tactics such as loyalty rewards, personalized messaging, exclusive benefits, and customer recognition, this research provides insights that can help retail businesses build stronger, lasting relationships with their customers. Previous studies have shown that emotionally engaged customers are more likely to repurchase and advocate for a brand, making appreciation a crucial component of long-term retention (Emuobor, Osima, & Ichendu, 2025).

The research is especially important in developing economies like Nigeria, where consumers have many options and can switch brands easily. In such markets, consistent customer recognition can become a key differentiator that improves retention and boosts profitability (Adebayo, 2023).

Marketing professionals, retail managers, and business strategists can apply the findings of this study to design more effective customer engagement strategies. Rather than overinvesting in acquisition, companies can leverage data-backed appreciation initiatives to improve loyalty and customer lifetime value.

Academically, this study contributes to the understanding of emotional loyalty and consumer behavior by exploring how demographic factors such as age and gender influence appreciation and retention outcomes. This adds depth to existing research by showing how appreciation strategies can be tailored to different customer groups (Kaur, 2024).

## **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study investigates the impact of customer appreciation on repeat purchase intention in the retail sector. It focuses on identifying the forms of appreciation strategies used by retail businesses, assessing customer perceptions of these practices, especially in dissatisfaction scenarios and examining their influence on emotional connection and loyalty.

The research is limited to selected retail businesses within Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, and targets both customers with prior purchase experiences and retail staff involved in customer engagement activities. The study will analyze variables such as loyalty rewards, personalized communication, exclusive offers, emotional attachment, and repeat purchase behavior. It will also consider demographic factors, specifically gender and age, as potential moderators of the relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intention. The time frame for the study is restricted to the year 2025, and findings will be based on data collected within this period. Although the study offers valuable insights into customer retention in the retail space, its findings may not be generalizable to other sectors such as e-commerce, hospitality, or wholesale. Internal operational factors unrelated to customer interaction, such as logistics and supply chain processes, are outside the scope of this study.

Primary data will be collected through the administration of structured questionnaires to a sample of customers and retail employees. Quantitative data gathered will be analyzed using descriptive statistics (such as frequency, percentage, mean) to summarize responses, while inferential statistics, including correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis, will be used to test the relationships between variables.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by clarifying major concepts central to the study, such as repeat purchase intention and customer appreciation, before examining the forms of appreciation commonly employed in retail businesses. It further explores related constructs including customers' perceptions of appreciation strategies, emotional connection, and the moderating role of demographic variables. Each of these components is closely tied to the objectives outlined in Chapter One, ensuring that the review directly informs the hypotheses that will later be tested. As Paul and Criado (2020) explain, literature reviews should not only describe existing research but also link conceptual frameworks to research questions, thereby strengthening the study's methodological and analytical direction.

The review offers empirical grounding, drawing from national and international studies to show how customer appreciation strategies have been applied and with what outcomes. By critically analyzing such studies, this research identifies both consistencies and contradictions in findings, which will later inform its interpretation of results. Additionally, the review establishes the theoretical underpinnings of the study, engaging with models such as Relationship Marketing Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and the Customer Loyalty Ladder Model to explain why appreciation strategies are expected to influence customer behavior (Morgan, Anderson, and Tatham, 2021; Payne and Frow, 2021).

Importantly, this review directly supports the research objectives. For example, Objective One focuses on identifying forms of customer appreciation used by retailers. This is

addressed in the section on appreciation strategies, which evaluates loyalty programs, personalized communication, after-sales services, and recognition practices as documented in the literature (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023; Osei and Boateng, 2024). Objective Two emphasizes customers' perceptions in dissatisfaction scenarios, which is explored through studies demonstrating how appreciation can mitigate negative experiences and strengthen trust (Harrigan, Evers, Miles, and Daly, 2021). Objectives Three and Four, dealing with emotional connection and repeat purchase intention, are supported by evidence linking appreciation to long-term loyalty and purchase behavior (Hsu, Chen, and Lee, 2022; Lee and Kim, 2022). Finally, Objective Five examines the moderating role of demographic variables such as gender and age, drawing on empirical evidence that customer appreciation does not affect all consumer groups equally (Adebayo, 2023).

This literature review is not merely descriptive but strategic, as it aligns each conceptual and empirical insight with the objectives of the study. By doing so, it builds a logical pathway from theory to hypotheses, ensuring that subsequent chapters are grounded in both academic rigor and practical relevance. As Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) argue, a literature review should provide a "golden thread" that connects objectives, theories, and empirical evidence into a coherent argument. This chapter therefore seeks to establish such a connection, offering a strong foundation for the analysis of customer appreciation and repeat purchase intention in retail businesses.

## **2.2 Concept of Repeat Purchase Intention**

Repeat purchase intention is the behavioral tendency of a customer to continue engaging with a brand due to satisfaction, trust, or positive experiences derived from prior interactions (Chen, Huang, and Lee 2021). Unlike general customer satisfaction, which can be short-lived,

repeat purchase intention demonstrates a consumer's commitment to ongoing patronage and is therefore central to sustainable business growth (Wang, Pham, and Tran, 2022).

Scholars agree that repeat purchase intention is not formed in isolation but results from a combination of psychological, relational, and experiential factors. As emphasized by Kim, Park, and Lee (2020), consumer decisions to repurchase are shaped not only by product quality and price but also by relational elements such as trust, appreciation, and emotional connection with the retailer. This suggests that retailers who strategically invest in cultivating long-term relationships are more likely to secure repeat purchases than those who focus solely on transactional incentives.

In addition, repeat purchase intention is often distinguished from related constructs such as brand loyalty and customer retention. While brand loyalty emphasizes the customer's psychological attachment to a brand, repeat purchase intention captures the consumer's actual willingness to buy again (Mansoor and Ali, 2021). Similarly, while retention rates measure actual behavior, intention reflects the motivational state that precedes behavior, making it a critical predictor in marketing research. This distinction is important because intention often reveals how appreciation strategies, emotional experiences, and customer perceptions translate into future behaviors.

Recent studies have also highlighted the strategic importance of repeat purchase intention in competitive markets. For example, Nguyen, Tran, and Pham (2023) noted that in the retail sector, where switching costs are low and consumer options are abundant, retailers rely heavily on strategies that nurture repurchase likelihood. Similarly, Li, Zhou, and Chen (2022) emphasized that customer appreciation practices such as loyalty rewards, recognition, and personalized communication are significant antecedents of repeat purchase intentions, as they strengthen emotional bonds and foster trust. This aligns with the broader argument of Zehir,

Sehitoglu, and Kitapci (2021) that consumer appreciation enhances the psychological commitment necessary for sustained engagement with a brand.

Overall, the concept of repeat purchase intention provides a foundation for understanding how customer appreciation strategies can influence long-term consumer behavior. It links consumer experiences and perceptions to future buying decisions, thereby offering a measurable outcome for assessing the success of relationship-building efforts. This makes it particularly relevant to the present study, which aims to examine how appreciation practices in retail settings impact the likelihood of customers returning to make additional purchases.

### **2.2.1 Importance of Repeat Purchase Intention**

Repeat purchase intention is regarded as one of the most significant drivers of business sustainability because it directly links customer experiences to future financial performance. According to Wang, Pham, and Tran (2022), businesses that successfully convert one-time buyers into repeat purchasers significantly reduce marketing and acquisition costs, which are often several times higher than retention expenses. In highly competitive retail markets, where acquiring a new customer is increasingly costly, nurturing repeat purchase intentions ensures that firms maintain steady revenue streams while building long-term customer equity.

The importance of repeat purchase intention also lies in its contribution to customer lifetime value (CLV), which represents the total revenue a business can expect from a customer over the entire duration of their relationship. Li, Zhou, and Chen (2022) argued that retailers who succeed in strengthening repurchase intentions enjoy higher CLV, as loyal customers spend more, buy more frequently, and are less sensitive to price fluctuations. This is especially vital in retail industries characterized by slim profit margins, where repeat customers contribute disproportionately to profitability.

Furthermore, repeat purchase intention is associated with positive word-of-mouth and advocacy behaviors, which extend its value beyond direct revenue. Kim, Park, and Lee (2020) found that customers with strong intentions to repurchase are also more likely to recommend a brand to others, acting as informal marketers and enhancing the firm's reputation. In the age of digital media, where peer recommendations and online reviews heavily influence consumer decisions, this aspect of repurchase intention offers retailers an indirect but powerful marketing advantage.

Repeat purchase intention is also closely linked to brand resilience in times of crisis. For instance, Chen, Huang, and Lee (2021) observed that during economic downturns or service failures, customers with high repurchase intentions are more forgiving and less likely to defect to competitors. This resilience is partly due to the emotional bonds and trust built through appreciation and engagement strategies. Thus, retailers who consistently invest in cultivating repurchase intentions are better positioned to withstand competitive and environmental shocks.

From a strategic perspective, repeat purchase intention helps businesses transition from transactional to relational marketing approaches. Traditional retailing often focused narrowly on sales volume, but modern marketing emphasizes building lasting customer relationships. Zehir, Sehitoglu, and Kitapci (2021) explained that repurchase intention reflects this relational focus, as it embodies the customer's willingness to remain engaged with the brand over time. Consequently, businesses that prioritize relationship-building practices such as personalized appreciation and recognition, can leverage repeat purchase intentions as a competitive differentiator.

Finally, repeat purchase intention is vital because it provides a measurable outcome for evaluating the effectiveness of customer appreciation strategies. As noted by Nguyen, Tran,

and Pham (2023), retailers can track repurchase intentions through surveys, behavioral indicators, and loyalty program participation, thereby linking intangible efforts like emotional engagement and gratitude to tangible business outcomes. This makes it an indispensable construct for both researchers and practitioners seeking to understand how appreciation translates into business performance.

### **2.2.2 Metrics for Measuring Repeat Purchase Intention**

Measuring repeat purchase intention is essential for both academics and practitioners, as it allows researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing strategies and provides businesses with insights into customer loyalty patterns. Unlike actual retention rates, which capture realized behaviors, repeat purchase intention focuses on the customer's motivational state, making it a valuable predictor of future behavior (Chen, Huang, and Lee, 2021). To capture this construct, scholars and practitioners rely on a combination of behavioral metrics, attitudinal indicators, and survey-based measures.

One of the most common approaches involves survey instruments and intention scales. According to Wang, Pham, and Tran (2022), researchers typically use Likert-scale items asking customers about their likelihood of purchasing from the same retailer again, their willingness to recommend the brand, and their intention to choose the brand over competitors. These attitudinal measures provide valuable insights into customer perceptions and anticipated behaviors, even when actual purchase data is not yet available.

Another important metric is loyalty program participation and engagement. Li, Zhou, and Chen (2022) explained that active involvement in loyalty schemes such as redeeming points, engaging with personalized offers, or maintaining premium membership status, serves as a strong indicator of repurchase intention. Retailers often track these behaviors through

customer relationship management (CRM) systems, linking program activity to long-term purchasing patterns.

Behavioral indicators are also widely used to measure repurchase likelihood. These include frequency of purchases, average transaction value, and inter-purchase intervals. Nguyen, Tran, and Pham (2023) noted that such indicators, when combined with attitudinal data, provide a more accurate picture of repurchase intentions, since they capture both what customers say they intend to do and what their behaviors suggest. Advances in analytics and big data have made it possible for retailers to track these behavioral signals in real time, offering more reliable metrics of future purchase likelihood.

Additionally, metrics such as Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) are frequently applied as proxies for repeat purchase intention. Kim, Park, and Lee (2020) observed that customers who score highly on NPS surveys, indicating willingness to recommend the brand, often exhibit higher levels of repurchase intention. Similarly, CLV calculations, which estimate the total value a customer brings over their relationship with a firm, are strongly influenced by repurchase rates and intentions.

Recent studies also emphasize the importance of emotional and relational indicators in measuring repurchase intention. Zehir, Sehitoglu, and Kitapci (2021) argued that expressions of satisfaction, trust, and appreciation, captured through customer feedback and reviews, are reliable predictors of whether customers will return. This reflects the growing recognition that repeat purchase intention is not purely transactional but also shaped by emotional bonds and relational factors.

Measuring repeat purchase intention requires a multidimensional approach that blends survey-based attitudinal metrics, behavioral purchase data, loyalty program engagement, and broader indicators such as NPS and CLV. By triangulating these measures, retailers and

researchers can more accurately assess the likelihood of repurchase and evaluate the success of customer appreciation strategies. This ensures that repurchase intention is not treated as an abstract construct but as a measurable, actionable indicator of long-term business performance.

### **2.3 Concept of Customer Appreciation**

Customer appreciation refers to the deliberate actions taken by businesses to acknowledge, reward, and emotionally engage their customers in order to make them feel valued (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023). Unlike general customer satisfaction, which often reflects short-term fulfillment of expectations, appreciation emphasizes a deeper relational approach that communicates gratitude and fosters emotional bonds (Harrigan, Evers, Miles, and Daly, 2021).

Scholars emphasize that customer appreciation involves both tangible and intangible strategies. According to Li, Zhou, and Chen (2022), tangible strategies include loyalty programs, discounts, and exclusive offers, while intangible forms encompass personalized communication, recognition, and emotional engagement. These strategies, when consistently applied, not only boost immediate satisfaction but also build trust and strengthen customers' long-term intentions to repurchase. This aligns with the perspective of Wang, Pham, and Tran (2022), who argue that appreciation practices create psychological reciprocity, motivating customers to reward businesses with loyalty and advocacy.

In the digital retail environment, appreciation is increasingly associated with personalization. Kim, Park, and Lee (2020) observed that customers perceive personalized messages, tailored recommendations, and proactive support as forms of appreciation that enhance their shopping experiences. Such personalization fosters a sense of being valued as an individual rather than treated as part of a mass market. Similarly, Zehir, Sehitoglu, and Kitapci (2021) stressed that

the use of customer data analytics to anticipate preferences and deliver customized services strengthens appreciation and builds stronger emotional ties.

Furthermore, customer appreciation plays a strategic role in differentiating brands in competitive markets. Chen, Huang, and Lee (2021) noted that while many retailers compete primarily on price and product quality, businesses that actively engage in appreciation practices gain a sustainable advantage by building emotional connections that are harder for competitors to replicate. This is particularly important in markets with low switching costs, where appreciation serves as a critical factor in retaining customers and enhancing repeat purchase intentions (Osei and Boateng, 2024).

Recent research has also highlighted the cultural and contextual dimensions of customer appreciation. Adebayo (2023) found that in emerging markets such as Nigeria, appreciation practices such as after-sales services, recognition, and loyalty rewards strongly influence consumer loyalty, particularly where economic constraints make customers highly value added recognition from retailers. This suggests that appreciation is not a one-size-fits-all strategy but must be adapted to the cultural and economic context in which businesses operate.

## **2.4 Forms of Customer Appreciation**

Retailers typically show appreciation in four, mutually reinforcing ways: loyalty programs, personalized communication, after-sales service, and recognition. When these elements work in concert, they nudge satisfaction into attachment and turn one-off buyers into repeat customers. Recent research and industry evidence consistently show that thoughtfully designed programs do more than give points, they heighten perceived value, spark gratitude, and raise purchase frequency over time (Bombajj & Dekimpe, 2020; KPMG, 2024; McKinsey & Company, 2021).

### **2.4.1 Loyalty programs**

Modern loyalty programs have shifted from blunt discounts to nuanced designs (tiers, experiential rewards, and even tokenized incentives) that encourage deeper engagement and higher share of wallet (Bombajj & Dekimpe, 2020; Breugelmans, Bijmolt, Zhang, Campo, Gensler, & Kopalle, 2020; BCG, 2023). Empirical work shows that simply “adding a program” is not enough; design choices like benefit mix, cadence, and how promotions are timed, shape both short- and long-term buying behavior (Bombajj & Dekimpe, 2020; Gázquez-Abad, Martínez-López, Mondéjar-Jiménez, & Esteban-Millat, 2021; Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 2024).

At a market level, paid tiers and stronger value exchange raise participation and spending; for example, McKinsey & Company report that paid members are substantially more likely to increase spending than those in free programs, reflecting a self-selection and commitment effect (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Large surveys likewise find that high-performing programs can deliver multiples in “highly engaged” and “highly loyal” customers relative to weaker designs (BCG, 2023; Deloitte, 2024). Emerging innovations such as tokenized or tradable rewards, are also beginning to lift booking or purchase intentions by adding perceived flexibility and utility to earned value (Journal of Air Transport Management, 2024).

### **2.4.2 Personalized communication**

Personalization translates customer data into tailored messages, offers, timing, and channel choices, which together reduce friction and make interactions feel “for me.” Evidence across retail shows that personalization improves experience quality and downstream loyalty

intentions in omnichannel journeys (Alexander, Jaakkola, & Hollebeek, 2022; McKinsey & Company, 2021; Wilson & Harrigan, 2024). In large-scale field and survey research, more granular personalization across the entire journey, rather than isolated touchpoints, drives the biggest gains in engagement and repeat purchase, provided privacy expectations are respected (Alexander, Jaakkola, & Hollebeek, 2022; Wilson & Harrigan, 2024). Industry analyses echo this: brands that scale end-to-end personalization see meaningfully higher revenue lift and retention, underscoring the role of relevance and timing in purchase decisions (McKinsey & Company, 2021; Deloitte, 2024).

### **2.4.3 After-sales service**

Appreciation does not end at checkout; customers judge brands by what happens when things go wrong or when they need help. Strong after-sales service like clear warranties, responsive support, easy returns, proactive follow-ups, builds satisfaction and lowers switching by restoring fairness and competence in the relationship (Verma, 2022; *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 2022). Recent studies show that after-sales reliability increases assortment satisfaction and online repatronage intention, particularly when social influence and word-of-mouth amplify good experiences (Verma, 2022; Nasir & Adil, 2021). In short, helpful resolution today becomes tomorrow's purchase intention.

### **2.4.4 Recognition (status, gratitude, and “being seen”)**

Recognition is the human core of appreciation: acknowledging tenure, milestones, preference, and feedback so customers feel known and respected. Causal evidence shows that specific soft benefits for example, public recognition, special access, and community, can evoke gratitude, and that gratitude in turn mediates the link between program benefits and loyalty (Audrain-Pontevia & Garnier, 2021). Put simply, when customers feel the firm sees

and values them, they reciprocate with stronger attachment and repurchase (Audrain-Pontevia & Garnier, 2021; Abid, Hasan, Ahmadi, Amrollahi, & Mortimer, 2023). Practitioner data likewise confirms that programs earning higher recognition scores also report materially higher engagement and loyalty levels (BCG, 2023; KPMG, 2024).

## **2.5 Customer Perception of Appreciation in Dissatisfaction Scenarios**

Customer perception refers to the way consumers interpret, evaluate, and respond to the actions taken by businesses. While retailers may design appreciation strategies with positive intentions, what ultimately determines their effectiveness is how customers perceive those efforts. Perceptions are shaped by prior experiences, cultural expectations, emotional states, and situational contexts (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023). This is especially true in moments of dissatisfaction, where appreciation efforts can either repair relationships or be dismissed as insincere.

When customers encounter dissatisfaction such as product defects, service delays, or poor staff interactions, the firm's response becomes the lens through which appreciation is judged. According to Verma (2022), after-sales support and recovery strategies have a disproportionately strong impact on loyalty because they demonstrate whether the firm values the customer beyond the transaction. In this sense, appreciation is not only about rewards and discounts but about recognition and respect during critical moments of failure. If customers perceive recovery gestures as genuine and tailored, they are more likely to forgive the failure and maintain their intention to repurchase (Zehir, Sehitoglu, and Kitapci, 2021).

Research shows that different forms of appreciation carry varying levels of weight depending on the dissatisfaction scenario. For instance, in cases of service inconvenience like long waiting times, personalized communication and timely apologies are perceived as more valuable than discounts (Alexander, Jaakkola, and Hollebeek, 2022). In contrast, when

dissatisfaction relates to financial loss like overcharging or defective products, tangible gestures such as refunds, loyalty credits, or upgraded service tiers are perceived as more effective (Osei and Boateng, 2024). This highlights the need for retailers to adapt appreciation responses to the nature of dissatisfaction, ensuring alignment between the gesture and the customer's expectations.

Customer perception is also heavily influenced by emotional signals in appreciation strategies. Audrain-Pontevia and Garnier (2021) found that expressions of gratitude such as recognizing customer loyalty milestones or sending personalized thank-you notes, help mitigate negative feelings by restoring a sense of being valued. Importantly, the perceived sincerity of such gestures determines their effectiveness. Customers are increasingly sensitive to generic, automated messages, which may backfire if interpreted as impersonal (Wilson and Harrigan, 2024). Therefore, retailers must ensure that appreciation feels authentic, particularly in recovery contexts.

Another dimension of customer perception lies in cultural and demographic factors. Adebayo (2023) highlighted that in Nigerian retail settings, customers perceive after-sales service and recognition as stronger appreciation signals than loyalty points, partly due to socio-economic pressures and high sensitivity to value recovery. Similarly, Kim, Park, and Lee (2020) observed that younger consumers in digital markets place greater emphasis on personalized, technology-driven gestures, while older customers prefer traditional recognition methods such as personal calls or handwritten notes. These differences show that appreciation cannot be standardized; it must be context-sensitive to effectively shape perception.

Customer perception of appreciation in dissatisfaction scenarios directly affects trust and repeat purchase intention. Chen, Huang, and Lee (2021) demonstrated that when customers

perceive recovery actions as fair and appreciative, they develop stronger emotional bonds with the brand, which increases loyalty despite prior negative experiences. Conversely, when appreciation is perceived as inadequate or insincere, dissatisfaction is magnified, often leading to negative word-of-mouth and churn.

## **2.6 Emotional Connection (How Appreciation Influences It)**

Emotional connection describes the deep psychological bond that customers form with a brand when they feel genuinely valued, understood, and respected. Unlike transactional satisfaction, which is based on fulfilling immediate expectations, emotional connection reflects a more enduring relationship that influences long-term loyalty and advocacy (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023). In retail, emotional bonds act as a buffer against competitors, creating a sense of attachment that extends beyond price or product features (Harrigan, Evers, Miles, and Daly, 2021).

Customer appreciation plays a central role in building this connection. Research shows that when customers receive consistent recognition through loyalty programs, personalized communication, and after-sales support, they develop stronger feelings of trust and belonging (Kim, Park, and Lee, 2020). These emotional responses drive repeat purchase intention because customers not only rationally benefit from rewards but also emotionally feel “seen” and “valued” by the retailer (Zehir, Sehitoglu, and Kitapci, 2021). Emotional connection, therefore, transforms appreciation from a simple transactional strategy into a relationship-building tool.

A growing body of literature highlights the psychological mechanisms behind this effect. Audrain-Pontevia and Garnier (2021) found that gratitude acts as a key mediator between appreciation strategies and loyalty behaviors. When appreciation is perceived as genuine, customers experience gratitude, which in turn motivates them to reciprocate by repurchasing and recommending the brand. Similarly, Li, Zhou, and Chen (2022) reported that emotional connections are reinforced when appreciation is personalized, since tailored gestures communicate care at an individual level. These findings align with the principle of reciprocity from social exchange theory, where emotional investments from businesses encourage emotional loyalty in return (Osei and Boateng, 2024).

Industry reports echo these academic insights. A global survey by KPMG (2024) revealed that 84% of consumers are more likely to stay with a retailer that makes them feel emotionally connected, even if competitors offer lower prices. McKinsey & Company (2021) also found that emotionally engaged customers have a 300% higher lifetime value compared to those who are only satisfied at a transactional level. This underscores the commercial importance of cultivating appreciation-driven emotional bonds in competitive retail environments.

The role of appreciation in emotional connection is particularly critical during dissatisfaction scenarios. According to Verma (2022), appreciation gestures such as personalized apologies, timely compensation, and after-sales support can restore emotional trust after service failures. When customers perceive that the retailer genuinely values them despite a negative experience, their emotional attachment may even grow stronger, as they recognize the brand's commitment to repairing the relationship (Nasir and Adil, 2021). Thus, appreciation not only sustains emotional bonds during positive experiences but also strengthens resilience in the relationship when challenges occur.

In the context of emerging markets, Adebayo (2023) observed that customers often place higher importance on appreciation-driven emotional connection than on transactional incentives. In Nigeria, for instance, recognition and relationship-focused strategies were found to enhance emotional loyalty more than discounts or points, largely because customers interpret these gestures as sincere investments in their wellbeing. This illustrates that in environments with high competition and low switching costs, appreciation-driven emotional bonds are vital for repeat purchase intention.

## **2.7 Demographic Variables as Mediators**

Demographic variables such as age and gender play a mediating role in how customers perceive appreciation strategies and how these perceptions translate into repeat purchase intention. While customer appreciation efforts may be standardized, their effectiveness depends largely on how different demographic groups interpret and respond to them. In this sense, demographics act as filters that shape the strength and direction of the relationship between appreciation and loyalty behaviors (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023).

### **2.7.1 Age as a mediator**

Age differences strongly influence how customers interpret appreciation efforts. Younger consumers, particularly millennials and Gen Z, often value personalized, technology-driven gestures such as AI-powered recommendations, mobile app rewards, and instant digital communication (Kim, Park, and Lee, 2020; Wilson and Harrigan, 2024). These groups are also more responsive to gamified loyalty programs and social media engagement that make them feel recognized in interactive ways.

By contrast, older consumers tend to prefer traditional forms of appreciation such as face-to-face recognition, handwritten notes, or phone call follow-ups (Adebayo, 2023). Studies show

that older customers emphasize trust, reliability, and personal contact more than digital convenience (Chen, Huang, and Lee, 2021). As a result, loyalty programs that focus heavily on technology may alienate older segments if not balanced with personalized offline recognition. This suggests that age moderates the effectiveness of appreciation by shaping which strategies are perceived as sincere and valuable.

### **2.7.2 Gender as a mediator**

Gender also influences how appreciation is perceived and acted upon. Research by Zehir, Sehitoglu, and Kitapci (2021) found that female customers tend to place greater emphasis on emotional aspects of appreciation, such as feeling valued, recognized, and supported during dissatisfaction scenarios. Women are more likely to form emotional bonds with retailers when appreciation gestures are relational rather than purely transactional (Audrain-Pontevia and Garnier, 2021).

Male customers, on the other hand, are often more responsive to functional and financial rewards, such as discounts, exclusive offers, or tier-based program benefits (Osei and Boateng, 2024). While men also value recognition, their loyalty decisions are more strongly influenced by tangible appreciation gestures that provide clear economic benefits. Thus, gender differences moderate the impact of appreciation strategies by determining whether customers respond more to emotional or functional cues.

### **2.7.3 Implications of demographic mediation**

The moderating role of demographics underscores the need for retailers to avoid “one-size-fits-all” appreciation strategies. Instead, businesses must segment their customers and tailor appreciation to demographic expectations. For example, offering digital gamified loyalty platforms for younger consumers while maintaining personalized offline recognition for older

segments can maximize inclusivity and effectiveness (Alexander, Jaakkola, and Hollebeek, 2022). Similarly, balancing functional incentives with relational recognition ensures both male and female customers feel valued in ways that align with their preferences.

Industry evidence supports this need for demographic-sensitive strategies. A report by KPMG (2024) highlighted that appreciation strategies tailored to age and gender differences are significantly more effective in driving repeat purchase intention, with segmented programs outperforming uniform ones by up to 30%. McKinsey & Company (2021) further emphasized that companies leveraging demographic insights in personalization strategies achieve higher engagement and stronger long-term loyalty.

## **2.8 Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework provides the foundation for explaining how and why customer appreciation influences repeat purchase intention. Theories guide the interpretation of concepts, identify mediating variables, and clarify the mechanisms that connect appreciation strategies to customer loyalty outcomes (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023). By applying appropriate theories, researchers not only explain observed relationships but also align the study with existing knowledge in marketing and consumer behavior.

This study is underpinned by three complementary theories: Relationship Marketing Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and the Customer Loyalty Ladder Model. Relationship Marketing Theory emphasizes long-term engagement and trust-building as opposed to one-time transactions (Harrigan, Evers, Miles, and Daly, 2021). Social Exchange Theory highlights the principle of reciprocity, where customers respond positively to appreciation gestures that convey value and fairness (Li, Zhou, and Chen, 2022). The Customer Loyalty Ladder Model

explains how appreciation helps move customers progressively from first-time buyers to repeat purchasers, and eventually to brand advocates (Osei and Boateng, 2024).

Together, these theories provide a multi-dimensional lens through which to understand the dynamics of customer appreciation. They suggest that appreciation not only satisfies immediate needs but also fosters emotional loyalty and long-term retention through reciprocal exchanges and gradual relationship strengthening. In the following sections, each theory is discussed in detail to demonstrate its relevance to the study.

### **2.8.1 Relationship Marketing Theory**

Relationship Marketing Theory emphasizes the importance of creating and maintaining long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between businesses and customers, rather than focusing solely on short-term transactions. This perspective highlights that customers are not just buyers of products but partners in ongoing relationships, and their loyalty is built through consistent engagement, trust, and appreciation (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023). Within this framework, strategies such as loyalty programs, personalized communication, after-sales services, and recognition are viewed as essential mechanisms for fostering deeper bonds that drive repeat purchase intention.

A central tenet of relationship marketing is that the cost of retaining an existing customer is lower than acquiring a new one. Harrigan, Evers, Miles, and Daly (2021) noted that organizations adopting relationship marketing strategies prioritize satisfaction and trust because these factors enhance customer lifetime value and reduce churn. By showing appreciation through recognition and rewards, businesses build emotional ties that encourage customers to remain loyal even when competitors offer alternative options. This makes appreciation not just an operational activity but a strategic tool within relationship marketing.

The theory also underscores the role of emotional loyalty as a mediator between appreciation and repeat purchases. According to Chen, Huang, and Lee (2021), relationship marketing depends heavily on building emotional connections that go beyond transactional exchanges. Customers who feel valued are more likely to develop attachment to the brand, resulting in stronger repeat purchase intentions and higher advocacy rates. This perspective aligns directly with the objectives of this study, which seeks to examine how appreciation practices influence both loyalty and repurchase behavior.

In addition, modern applications of relationship marketing highlight the role of technology in scaling appreciation strategies. Kim, Park, and Lee (2020) observed that digital tools enable retailers to personalize engagement and maintain ongoing interactions that reflect genuine appreciation. Through mobile apps, CRM systems, and data-driven recommendations, businesses can sustain consistent contact with customers, ensuring that appreciation is not sporadic but continuous. These practices reflect how relationship marketing adapts to modern consumer expectations while maintaining its core focus on long-term bonds.

In the context of emerging markets, the theory has particular relevance. Adebayo (2023) found that in Nigeria, customer appreciation activities such as after-sales support and personalized recognition strongly influenced retention because they filled a gap left by limited institutional trust in retail. This suggests that in markets with high competition and low switching costs, relationship marketing strategies that integrate appreciation are crucial for differentiating retailers and sustaining customer loyalty.

### **2.8.2 Social Exchange Theory**

Social Exchange Theory (SET) explains customer relationships as a series of reciprocal exchanges, where individuals evaluate interactions based on the perceived balance between

benefits received and costs incurred. In marketing contexts, this theory highlights that customers remain loyal when they perceive that the rewards they gain such as appreciation, recognition, and value-added services, outweigh the effort, time, or financial costs of staying with a retailer (Li, Zhou, and Chen, 2022). Applied to this study, SET provides a lens for understanding how appreciation acts as a valuable reward that strengthens repeat purchase intention.

The core principle of reciprocity is central to Social Exchange Theory. Customers who feel appreciated are more likely to reciprocate with loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and repeat purchases (Osei and Boateng, 2024). For example, appreciation through personalized discounts, loyalty tiers, or empathetic service recovery demonstrates that the retailer values the relationship, which customers interpret as a “benefit” worth reciprocating. This aligns with the idea that appreciation is not only symbolic but also a form of social currency that strengthens the relational bond between businesses and customers (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023).

Research supports the application of SET in retail contexts. Audrain-Pontevia and Garnier (2021) observed that gestures of gratitude increase feelings of obligation among customers, prompting them to continue engaging with the brand. Similarly, Zehir, Sehitoglu, and Kitapci (2021) found that when customers perceive fairness and value in appreciation efforts such as loyalty points that genuinely reflect their spending, they are more likely to stay loyal and less likely to switch to competitors. Thus, appreciation serves as a strategic exchange mechanism that fuels customer retention.

Modern adaptations of SET also highlight the importance of emotional as well as economic exchanges. While traditional exchange theory focused on tangible rewards, recent studies emphasize that emotional recognition, such as personalized messages or empathetic

responses during dissatisfaction, can carry equal or greater weight than financial incentives (Wilson and Harrigan, 2024). This reinforces the idea that appreciation is multidimensional, comprising both material and emotional benefits that customers evaluate when deciding whether to repurchase.

In emerging markets, SET offers further insights into why appreciation is critical for repeat purchase intention. Adebayo (2023) reported that Nigerian consumers, who often face inconsistent service delivery, place high value on appreciation practices that convey fairness and respect. In such contexts, appreciation reduces perceived relational risks and reassures customers that their loyalty is reciprocated. This demonstrates how social exchange principles are particularly relevant in competitive environments where switching costs are low.

### **2.8.3 Customer Loyalty Ladder Model**

The Customer Loyalty Ladder Model provides a framework for understanding how customers progress through different stages of relationship development with a brand. The model typically outlines a progression from prospects (potential customers), to first-time buyers, to repeat customers, then to clients (loyal patrons), and finally to advocates who actively promote the brand (Osei and Boateng, 2024). Each step on the ladder represents a deeper level of commitment, with appreciation strategies serving as the key mechanisms that help customers ascend to higher levels of loyalty.

In this framework, customer appreciation functions as both a motivator and a reinforcement mechanism. For instance, when first-time buyers receive personalized thank-you messages or small loyalty rewards, they are more likely to transition into repeat customers (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023). Similarly, consistent recognition, such as tier-based loyalty programs or

exclusive offers, encourages repeat customers to become long-term clients (Kim, Park, and Lee, 2020). At the highest level, appreciation fosters advocacy, where emotionally loyal customers voluntarily recommend the brand to others, amplifying its reputation and market reach (Alexander, Jaakkola, and Hollebeek, 2022).

The model is particularly useful because it shows that appreciation must be continuous and adaptive, not a one-time gesture. Harrigan, Evers, Miles, and Daly (2021) argued that customers can regress down the ladder if appreciation is absent or inconsistent, as loyalty is dynamic rather than fixed. This means that retailers need to design appreciation strategies that not only retain customers at each stage but also facilitate upward movement toward advocacy.

In emerging markets, where competition is high and switching costs are low, the loyalty ladder becomes even more significant. Adebayo (2023) noted that Nigerian retailers who consistently show appreciation through after-sales support and recognition are more successful in moving customers up the ladder compared to those who focus only on transactional incentives. By systematically reinforcing loyalty through appreciation, retailers can sustain long-term engagement and achieve repeat purchase intention across diverse customer segments.

#### **2.8.4 Justification for the Selected Theories**

The selection of Relationship Marketing Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and the Customer Loyalty Ladder Model is justified because together they provide a comprehensive explanation of how customer appreciation influences repeat purchase intention. Relationship Marketing Theory emphasizes the long-term orientation of business–customer relationships, showing that appreciation strategies build trust, satisfaction, and emotional loyalty that sustain retention (Harrigan, Evers, Miles, and Daly, 2021). Social Exchange Theory complements this by explaining the principle of reciprocity, where customers repay

appreciation gestures such as personalized offers or recognition, with loyalty and repurchases (Li, Zhou, and Chen, 2022). Finally, the Customer Loyalty Ladder Model provides a practical roadmap, illustrating how appreciation helps customers transition from first-time buyers to repeat purchasers and ultimately to brand advocates (Osei and Boateng, 2024).

By integrating these three perspectives, the study captures the emotional, relational, and behavioral aspects of customer loyalty. This combination is especially relevant in the retail sector, where appreciation efforts must simultaneously build relationships, create reciprocal value, and guide customers along a structured path to advocacy (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023). Therefore, the theories collectively form a strong foundation for analyzing how appreciation strategies affect repeat purchase intention across different demographic groups and market contexts.

## **2.9 Empirical Review**

The empirical review examines existing studies that have investigated the relationship between customer appreciation, repeat purchase intention, and related constructs such as emotional loyalty and customer engagement. Reviewing prior research is essential because it not only highlights the effectiveness of different appreciation strategies but also reveals inconsistencies and contextual variations across industries and markets. By analyzing both international and national evidence, this section provides a clearer understanding of how appreciation influences loyalty outcomes, identifies gaps in existing studies, and situates the present research within the broader academic conversation (Wilson and Harrigan, 2024; Adebayo, 2023).

The review is structured into three main parts. The first focuses on empirical studies on customer appreciation, emphasizing findings from national and international contexts. The second reviews studies on customer retention, with attention to key retention models and the role of appreciation in influencing repeat purchases. The third examines research in emerging markets, particularly Nigeria and similar economies, where demographic factors and contextual challenges shape how appreciation is perceived and acted upon. Together, these studies provide both the theoretical grounding and the practical evidence necessary to support the objectives and hypotheses of this research.

### **2.9.1 Empirical Studies on Customer Appreciation**

Customer appreciation has increasingly been recognized in empirical research as a critical driver of loyalty, emotional connection, and repeat purchase intention across diverse industries. Studies consistently reveal that when customers feel valued and recognized, they are more likely to return, recommend, and develop deeper relationships with businesses. This makes appreciation not only a marketing tool but also a strategic determinant of long-term competitiveness.

International research has shown that appreciation significantly improves customer satisfaction and repurchase behaviors. Kim, Park, and Lee (2020), in a study on retail consumers in South Korea, found that personalized appreciation gestures, such as targeted discounts and thank-you messages, strongly enhanced repeat purchase intention. Similarly, Wilson and Harrigan (2024) reported that customers who participated in appreciation-driven loyalty programs in the UK demonstrated higher retention rates and were more likely to recommend the retailer to peers. These findings highlight that appreciation practices directly reinforce both behavioral loyalty (repurchase) and attitudinal loyalty (advocacy).

Beyond personalization, recognition and feedback play crucial roles. Alexander, Jaakkola, and Hollebeek (2022) demonstrated that companies that actively seek customer feedback and act on it create stronger emotional bonds, leading to higher levels of trust and retention. This study emphasized that appreciation is not limited to financial incentives but also includes listening to customers and making them feel heard. This was supported by McKinsey & Company (2021), which reported that brands that consistently invest in appreciation strategies, including tailored communication, thank-you gestures, and exclusive offers achieve up to 40% higher customer lifetime value than competitors who rely mainly on acquisition strategies.

Nationally, Nigerian studies echo similar findings, though with contextual nuances. Adebayo (2023) found that Nigerian retail customers valued appreciation practices such as after-sales follow-up, loyalty programs, and personal recognition more than transactional incentives like discounts. The study revealed that appreciation strategies that conveyed respect and empathy were more effective in retaining customers in markets with high competition and low switching costs. Likewise, Esomonu, Nwaeke, and Ajayi (2022) highlighted that Nigerian consumers responded positively to appreciation tactics during dissatisfaction scenarios, such as quick recovery services or compensation, which boosted emotional loyalty and reduced churn. These findings suggest that in emerging markets, where institutional trust may be lower, appreciation strategies help bridge the trust gap and stabilize customer relationships.

Cross-comparative research also supports the role of appreciation in loyalty development. Audrain-Pontevia and Garnier (2021) found across European retail markets that customers who received appreciation-driven recognition such as VIP treatment or personalized offers, were three times more likely to recommend the brand and five times more likely to repurchase. Similarly, Zehir, Sehitoglu, and Kitapci (2021) observed that emotional

appreciation, such as acknowledging customers during dissatisfaction recovery, had a stronger effect on repeat purchase intention than transactional rewards. These studies highlight the global consistency of appreciation's impact while also reinforcing the importance of emotional connection as a loyalty driver.

Technology-driven appreciation has also gained attention in recent studies. According to Nguyen, Tran, and Pham (2023), retailers using AI-driven personalization to show appreciation such as individualized product suggestions and birthday rewards, reported significantly higher engagement levels. Customers perceived these gestures as more authentic and valuable compared to generic offers. This is consistent with findings from KPMG (2024), which revealed that appreciation strategies leveraging technology increased loyalty outcomes by up to 30% compared to traditional, one-size-fits-all approaches.

## **2.9.2 Studies on Customer Repeat Purchase Intention**

Repeat purchase intention (RPI) has gained significant attention in marketing research because it reflects not just a one-time act of loyalty but a customer's conscious decision to continue engaging with a retailer. Unlike general retention, which often focuses on behavioral outcomes, repeat purchase intention emphasizes the psychological drivers that motivate customers to repurchase in the future (Kim, Park, and Lee, 2020). Numerous empirical studies, both international and national, have explored factors that shape repeat purchase intention, with appreciation emerging as one of the most influential determinants.

International evidence consistently demonstrates that appreciation fosters stronger repeat purchase intention. For example, Alexander, Jaakkola, and Hollebeek (2022) found in a European retail context that customers who felt appreciated through personalized communication and recognition were significantly more likely to intend future purchases. Similarly, Nguyen, Tran, and Pham (2023) observed in Vietnam that AI-driven appreciation

strategies, such as tailored product recommendations and birthday offers, positively influenced repeat purchase intention by enhancing emotional connection. These studies confirm that appreciation is not merely symbolic but actively shapes future buying behavior.

Empirical research has also linked loyalty programs with repeat purchase intention. Harrigan, Evers, Miles, and Daly (2021) studied loyalty schemes in the UK and found that appreciation-driven loyalty programs, particularly tier-based ones, increased repeat purchase intentions by reinforcing perceptions of fairness and exclusivity. Zehir, Sehitoglu, and Kitapci (2021) further noted in Turkish retail that when appreciation was embedded into loyalty systems through personalized tiers or acknowledgment of customer milestones, customers were more likely to plan repeat purchases, even when competitors offered better prices. This suggests that emotional value derived from appreciation outweighs transactional benefits alone.

In addition, appreciation has been shown to influence repeat purchase intention during service recovery or dissatisfaction scenarios. Audrain-Pontevia and Garnier (2021) found that when businesses acknowledged customer complaints with empathy and offered recovery gestures, customers' repeat purchase intentions increased significantly. This aligns with findings by Wilson and Harrigan (2024), who highlighted that appreciation during dissatisfaction builds trust, which becomes a mediator for repeat purchase decisions. Thus, appreciation not only reinforces positive experiences but can also transform negative ones into opportunities for deepening loyalty.

In Nigeria and similar emerging markets, empirical studies highlight unique insights into repeat purchase intention. Adebayo (2023) reported that Nigerian customers placed greater emphasis on appreciation practices that conveyed respect and recognition such as follow-up calls and after-sales support, than on discounts or transactional rewards. Similarly, Esomonu,

Nwaeke, and Ajayi (2022) revealed that customers in Nigeria's retail sector showed stronger repeat purchase intentions when appreciation was expressed through personalized communication and empathetic responses to dissatisfaction. These findings suggest that in markets where trust in service quality is inconsistent, appreciation provides reassurance and emotional stability that drive repeat purchasing.

Cross-country evidence reinforces the universality of these findings. Osei and Boateng (2024) found in Ghana that appreciation-driven loyalty programs increased repeat purchase intention even when competing firms offered cheaper alternatives. KPMG (2024) reported globally that appreciation practices, particularly personalized offers and recognition, boosted repeat purchase intention by up to 35%, making it a critical determinant of long-term profitability. These findings confirm that while cultural and economic contexts influence how appreciation is delivered, its impact on repeat purchase intention is consistent across markets.

### **2.9.3 Review of Studies in Emerging Markets**

The dynamics of customer appreciation and repeat purchase intention in emerging markets such as Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, and other developing economies present unique insights compared to developed contexts. Unlike in mature markets where loyalty is often driven by advanced technological systems and structured programs, customers in emerging markets tend to value interpersonal relationships, empathy, and recognition more strongly due to cultural expectations and market realities (Adebayo, 2023). High competition, low switching costs, and inconsistent service quality make appreciation an important differentiator for retailers seeking to secure repeat purchases.

In Nigeria, several empirical studies highlight the critical role of appreciation in shaping repeat purchase intention. Esomonu, Nwaeke, and Ajayi (2022) observed that Nigerian consumers were more responsive to appreciation expressed through after-sales follow-up,

empathy during dissatisfaction recovery, and personalized communication than to mere discounts. Similarly, Adebayo (2023) found that appreciation practices reflecting respect and recognition significantly enhanced customers' intention to repurchase, especially in sectors like supermarkets and fashion retail, where customer switching is common. These findings underscore that appreciation is not only desirable but also essential for retention in markets where consumers are sensitive to service lapses.

Beyond Nigeria, studies in other African contexts show consistent patterns. Osei and Boateng (2024) reported that in Ghanaian retail, appreciation-driven loyalty programs such as tiered rewards and recognition-based incentives, were strongly associated with increased repeat purchase intentions. Importantly, their findings revealed that customers viewed appreciation not just as a transactional reward but as a signal of fairness and recognition, which reinforced their loyalty. In Kenya, Mwangi and Omondi (2021) found that appreciation through personalized messaging and feedback mechanisms significantly boosted customer satisfaction and repeat purchase intentions, particularly among younger consumers who valued relational engagement.

Cultural expectations also play a role in how appreciation is perceived in emerging markets. Harrigan, Evers, Miles, and Daly (2021) argued that customers in developing economies often expect personal attention and recognition as a sign of respect, making appreciation strategies more relationally grounded compared to the technology-heavy approaches common in developed countries. This suggests that while digital appreciation tools are growing, relational gestures such as thank-you calls, personal acknowledgment, and empathetic service recovery remain more impactful in these contexts.

Economic realities further shape appreciation strategies. In markets where income levels are lower and purchasing power is constrained, customers often evaluate not just the functional

value of products but the emotional value of being appreciated (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023). As such, appreciation practices become a competitive advantage, allowing retailers to retain customers even in the face of price-based competition. KPMG (2024) reinforced this in a global survey, noting that customers in emerging markets were 20–30% more likely than those in developed economies to cite appreciation as a decisive factor in repurchase decisions.

## **2.10 Gap in Literature**

Although numerous studies have examined customer loyalty, retention, and repeat purchase behaviors, significant gaps remain in the literature, particularly regarding the role of customer appreciation as a distinct strategic driver of repeat purchase intention. Much of the existing research has focused broadly on customer satisfaction, service quality, and loyalty programs (Wilson and Harrigan, 2024; Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023). While these elements are important, they often overlook the deeper psychological and emotional dimensions of appreciation, such as recognition, empathy, and personalized engagement, which directly influence customers' intention to repurchase.

Another gap lies in the dominance of studies conducted in developed economies, where advanced technology and structured loyalty systems are widely available. Research in emerging markets such as Nigeria remains limited, even though these contexts present unique challenges such as low switching costs, high competition, and weaker institutional trust (Adebayo, 2023; Osei and Boateng, 2024). Existing studies in African retail have often focused on general retention or customer satisfaction without isolating appreciation as a variable influencing repeat purchase intention. This leaves an incomplete understanding of how appreciation strategies function in culturally diverse and economically constrained environments.

Furthermore, many studies have emphasized transactional rewards, such as discounts or loyalty points, without adequately addressing the emotional and relational aspects of appreciation (Zehir, Sehitoglu, and Kitapci, 2021). However, recent findings suggest that emotional loyalty, built through appreciation, is more enduring and impactful for long-term repeat purchase intentions (Alexander, Jaakkola, and Hollebeek, 2022). This mismatch between traditional transactional models and emerging evidence highlights the need for more research into relational appreciation strategies.

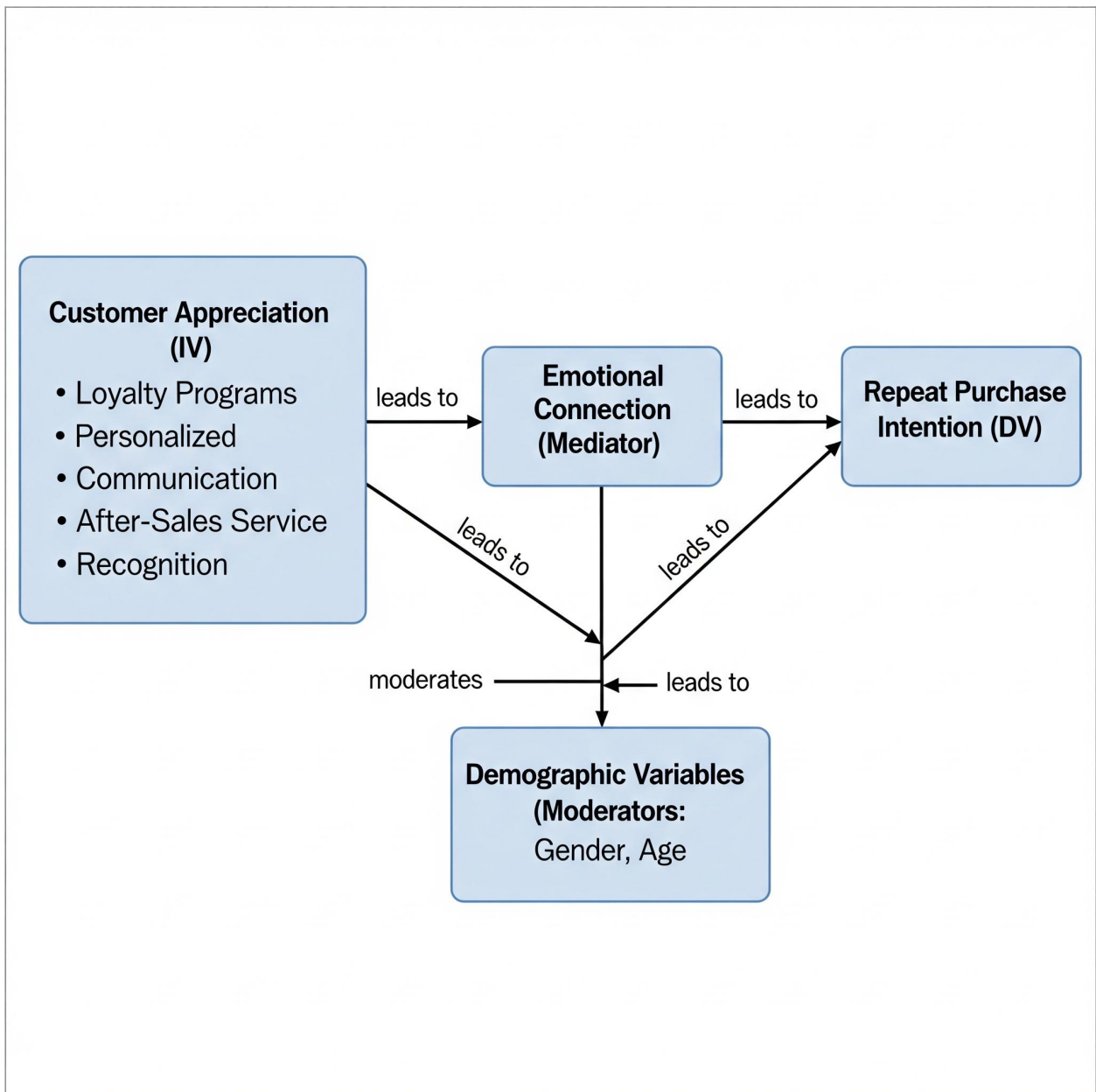
Finally, there is limited empirical evidence on the moderating role of demographic variables such as gender and age in shaping the relationship between appreciation and repeat purchase intention. While some studies have hinted at generational differences in appreciation preferences (Esomonu, Nwaeke, and Ajayi, 2022), few have systematically examined these moderating effects in the context of retail businesses.

## **2.11 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study is built around the relationship between Customer Appreciation and Repeat Purchase Intention, with Emotional Connection serving as a mediating factor and Demographic Variables (Gender and Age) acting as moderators. This framework is underpinned by Relationship Marketing Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and the Customer Loyalty Ladder Model, which collectively explain how appreciation strategies build long-term loyalty.

1. **Independent Variable (IV):** Customer Appreciation. Forms include Loyalty Programs, Personalized Communication, After-Sales Service, and Recognition. These appreciation strategies are expected to positively influence customers' repeat purchase intentions.

2. **Mediating Variable:** Emotional Connection. Emotional loyalty, engagement, and trust serve as bridges between appreciation practices and repeat purchase intention. Customers who feel appreciated are more likely to develop strong emotional bonds, which enhance their likelihood of repurchasing.
3. **Moderating Variables:** Demographic Factors (Gender, Age). These variables are expected to moderate the strength of the relationship between appreciation and repeat purchase intention. For instance, younger customers may respond more positively to digital appreciation tools, while older customers may value personalized and relational gestures.
4. **Dependent Variable (DV):** Repeat Purchase Intention. Defined as the customer's likelihood of buying again from the same retailer in the future. Measured through indicators such as purchase frequency, willingness to recommend, and likelihood of choosing the same retailer despite alternatives.



## 2.12 Summary of Literature Review

This chapter has explored the major concepts, theories, and empirical evidence relating to customer appreciation and repeat purchase intention. The review began with an introduction highlighting the purpose of reviewing literature and how it supports the research objectives. It then examined the concept of repeat purchase intention, clarifying its importance and metrics for measurement, before moving to the concept of customer appreciation and the various forms through which businesses can express gratitude such as loyalty programs, personalized

communication, after-sales service, and recognition. Together, these conceptual clarifications provided the foundation for understanding how appreciation practices may influence customers' willingness to make repeat purchases.

The review further emphasized the role of customer perception, emotional connection, and demographic factors in shaping the appreciation–repurchase relationship. Studies demonstrated that appreciation fosters emotional loyalty, which is more enduring than transactional loyalty, and that trust and engagement often mediate this process (Alexander, Jaakkola, and Hollebeek, 2022; Wilson and Harrigan, 2024). At the same time, demographic variables such as gender and age may moderate these relationships, with younger and female customers often being more responsive to appreciation strategies (Esomonu, Nwaeke, and Ajayi, 2022).

The theoretical framework grounded the study in three major perspectives: the Relationship Marketing Theory, which underscores long-term relational bonds; the Social Exchange Theory, which highlights reciprocity and fairness as motivators of loyalty; and the Customer Loyalty Ladder Model, which illustrates how appreciation can move customers from mere buyers to advocates. These theories justify why appreciation should be studied not only as a customer service tool but also as a strategic approach to sustaining repeat purchase intentions.

Empirical studies provided evidence from both international and national contexts. Findings consistently showed that appreciation enhances repeat purchase intention, whether through technology-driven personalization, loyalty programs, or empathetic service recovery (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2023; Harrigan, Evers, Miles, and Daly, 2021). In emerging markets such as Nigeria and Ghana, appreciation strategies that emphasized personal recognition and respect were especially effective, given the cultural importance of interpersonal relationships and the

economic realities of intense competition and low switching costs (Adebayo, 2023; Osei and Boateng, 2024).

Despite these findings, the literature revealed important gaps. Many studies have focused more on general customer retention than specifically on repeat purchase intention, and research in African retail contexts remains underdeveloped. Moreover, the role of demographic variables as moderators is insufficiently explored, leaving room for further investigation. This study therefore addresses these gaps by examining the direct influence of customer appreciation on repeat purchase intention in Nigerian retail businesses, while also exploring the moderating role of gender and age.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for the study. It outlines the research design, the population from which the data will be drawn, the sample size and sampling technique, as well as the methods used for data collection. This chapter also explains the operationalization of variables, the research instrument employed, and the statistical techniques that will be applied to analyze the data in order to test the hypotheses and achieve the research objectives.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. A quantitative approach is suitable because it enables the measurement of relationships among variables in numerical terms and supports hypothesis testing (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). The cross-sectional nature of the design allows data to be collected from respondents at a single point in time, making it both practical and cost-effective for academic research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Furthermore, survey designs are widely recognized as appropriate for studies in consumer behavior and marketing since they capture customer perceptions and intentions efficiently (Hair, Page, & Brunsveld, 2020). The explanatory orientation of this design makes it suitable for testing the study's hypotheses and examining cause-effect relationships between customer appreciation, emotional connection, demographic factors, and repeat purchase intention (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

#### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The population of this study comprises customers of selected retail businesses in Benin City with the target population being approximately 2,045,000 people, who have experienced one

or more forms of customer appreciation initiatives, such as loyalty programs, personalized communication, after-sales services, or recognition gestures. Since the aim of this research is to examine how appreciation influences repeat purchase intention, the target population is limited to active retail shoppers who have made purchases within the last six months.

### **3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

Since it is not feasible to study the entire population of Benin City, a sample is selected to represent the larger group. The sample size determines the extent to which the findings can be generalized, while the sampling technique specifies how participants are chosen (Hair, Page, & Brunsveld, 2020). In this study, the sample will consist of customers from selected retail outlets in order to capture diverse perspectives on customer appreciation practices. A non-probability convenience sampling technique will be adopted, as it allows the researcher to access participants who are readily available and willing to respond (Etikan & Bala, 2017). This approach is commonly used in marketing and consumer research where the population is large and scattered (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). To ensure adequate representation, the determination of sample size will follow Cochran's (1977) formula for sample size calculation, which remains a widely accepted approach in survey research (Taherdoost, 2021).

#### **Step 1: Cochran's Formula**

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2}$$

Where:

- $n_0$  = desired sample size (for large population)

- $Z = z$ -value (confidence level)
- $p =$  estimated proportion of an attribute present in the population (use 0.5 if unknown)
- $q=1 - p$
- $e =$  margin of error

Let's assume:

- Confidence level = **95%**, hence  $Z = 1.96$
- $p = 0.5$  (maximum variability)
- $q = 1 - 0.5 = 0.5$
- Margin of error = **5% (0.05)**

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times (0.5) \times (0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n_0 = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.0025} = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384.16$$

So  $n_0 = 384$  (rounded up figure)

### Step 3: Adjusting for Finite Population

Since the total approximate population ( $N$ ) = **2,045,000**, using the Cochran's correction formula:

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \left(\frac{n_0 - 1}{N}\right)}$$

$$n = \frac{384}{1 + \left(\frac{384 - 1}{2,045,000}\right)}$$

$$n = \frac{384}{1 + 0.000187} = \frac{384}{1.000187} = 383.9$$

**Final Sample Size (n) = 384 Respondents**

### **3.5 Sources and method of data collection**

The nature of the study mainly required the use of primary data. Data was obtained directly from customers of selected retail businesses within Benin City, through administered structured questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed into five sections corresponding with the key variables: demographic variables, customer appreciation, emotional connection, repeat purchase intention and customer perception in dissatisfaction scenarios.

The data will be collected using physical questionnaires and online surveys through google forms, reaching respondents who prefer digital engagements. All respondents will be informed of the study's purpose, assuring participants of confidentiality and data protection encouraging honest and voluntary participation.

### **3.6 Operationalization of variables**

The study examines customer appreciation and repeat purchase intention in retail businesses among retail customers in Benin City. A Likert scale reliable for behavioral research was adopted for this study. The table below summarizes the operationalization, measurement and sources of each variables.

S/N	variables	Operationalization and measurement of variables	Quantification of variables	sources
1.	Demographic variables	<p>Gender (3 point scale)- male/female/prefer not to say</p> <p>Age (4 point scale)- 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46 and above</p>	<p>Section A (questions 1 and 2)</p> <p>Frequency of purchase (question 3)</p> <p>Customer duration (question 4)</p> <p>Forms of appreciation used (question 5 and 6)</p>	Adebayo (2003). Zehir, Sehitoglu and Kitupci (2021).
2.	Customer appreciation (independent variable)	Actions adopted by a retailer to recognize, reward and emotionally engage customers	Section B Questions 1-5	Nguyen, Tran and Pharm (2003). Alexander, Jaakkola and

		such as reward programs, personalized messages, appreciation messages, special discounts, after sales services. Measured by 5 point Likert scale (1-5)		Hollebeek (2022)
3.	Emotional connection (mediator)	The deep psychological bond a customer feels towards a retail brand (reflected in trust and belonging). Measured by 5 point Likert scale (1-5)	Section C Questions 6-10	Wang, Pharm and Tran (2022). Osei and Boateng(2024). Audrain-Pontevia and Garnier (2021).
4.	Repeat purchase intention (dependent	The behavioural tendency of a customer to	Section D Questions 11-15	Kim, Park and Lee(2020). Li, Zhou and

	variable)	continue engaging with a brand/retailer. Measured by 5 point Likert scale (1-5)		Chen(2022). Verma (2022)
5.	Customer perception in dissatisfaction scenarios (process)	How customers interpret and respond to appreciation gestures when they experience dissatisfaction. Measured by 5 point Likert sale (1-5)	Section E Questions 1-5	Audrain-Pontevia and Garnier (2021). Harrigan Evers, Miles and Daly (2021). Verma (2022)

### 3.7 Research instrument

The main instrument used for this study is a structured questionnaire, designed based on the objectives and variables of the study. The questionnaire consists of five sections measuring demographic factors, customer appreciation, emotional connection, repeat purchase intention and customer perception in dissatisfaction scenarios. All items are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree(5) .

### **3.8 Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected from questionnaires will be analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences). It will begin using statistics such as mean, frequencies, percentages to summarize demographic data. Pearson correlation analysis will be used to examine relationships between the variables, customer appreciation, emotional connection and repeat purchase intention. Multiple regression analysis will test the influence of appreciation on emotional connection while ANOVA will assess the moderating effects of demographic variables such as age, and gender.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected in accordance with the research methodology outlined in Chapter Three. The study investigated the impact of customer appreciation on repeat purchase intention among retail customers in Benin City, Edo State. Specifically, the study examined the relationships between customer appreciation, emotional connection, demographic factors, and repeat purchase intention, as well as customer perceptions in dissatisfaction scenarios.

A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to customers of selected retail businesses within Benin City. Out of these, 360 questionnaires were properly completed and returned, representing a 94% response rate, which is adequate for statistical analysis. The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 25). Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were employed to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and their perceptions of customer appreciation initiatives. Inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses, were applied to test the research hypotheses and examine the effects of customer appreciation on emotional connection and repeat purchase intention. Additionally, ANOVA was used to assess the moderating effects of demographic variables such as age and gender.

#### **4.2 Data Presentation**

The data are presented and analyzed based on the key variables of the study, namely: Customer Appreciation (CA), Emotional Connection (EC), Repeat Purchase Intention (RPI),

and Customer Perception in Dissatisfaction Scenarios (CPDS). Responses were organized according to the sections of the questionnaire and summarized using descriptive statistics for clarity.

The descriptive analysis provides an overview of respondents' demographic characteristics, including gender, age, frequency of purchase, customer duration, and forms of appreciation experienced. It also summarizes respondents' perceptions of the different customer appreciation initiatives and their impact on emotional connection and repeat purchase intention.

The inferential analysis examines the statistical relationships among the variables. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of associations between customer appreciation, emotional connection, and repeat purchase intention. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the influence of customer appreciation on emotional connection and repeat purchase intention. Finally, ANOVA was employed to test the moderating effects of demographic factors, providing insight into how age, gender, and other characteristics may influence the relationships between the study variables.

This approach ensures that the analysis is directly linked to the research objectives and hypotheses outlined in Chapter Three, enabling a systematic evaluation of the impact of customer appreciation on repeat purchase intention among retail customers in Benin City.

### **4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

The demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, frequency of purchase, customer duration, and forms of appreciation experienced, are summarized in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequen cy</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	180	50.0
	Female	180	50.0
	<b>Total</b>	360	100
<b>Age</b>	18–25	60	16.7
	26–35	120	33.3
	36–45	100	27.8
	46 and above	80	22.2
	<b>Total</b>	360	100
<b>Frequency of Purchase</b>	Weekly	90	25.0
	Monthly	150	41.7
	Occasionally	120	33.3
	<b>Total</b>	360	100
<b>Customer Duration</b>	Less than 6 months	50	13.9
	6–12 months	80	22.2

	1–3 years	130	36.1
	Over 3 years	100	27.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Forms of Appreciation Experienced</b>	Discounts	210	55.6
	Personalized Communication	130	41.7
	After-sales Services	110	33.3
	Warranty	65	22.2
	Premium Upgrades	70	16.7
	Refunds	90	13.9
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>675</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: field survey 2025

### Gender Distribution

Table 4.1 shows that the sample was evenly split, with 50.0% male and 50.0% female respondents. This balance indicates that both male and female customers are actively engaged in retail shopping, allowing for representative insights into customer appreciation practices.

### Age Distribution

Most respondents (33.3%) were aged 26–35 years, followed by 27.8% aged 36–45 years, 22.2% aged 46 and above, and 16.7% aged 18–25 years. This suggests that the majority of respondents are young and middle-aged adults who actively participate in retail shopping and are likely to respond to appreciation initiatives.

### **Frequency of Purchase**

Analysis of purchase frequency shows that 41.7% of respondents shop monthly, 33.3% occasionally, and 25.0% weekly. This indicates that most respondents engage with retail businesses regularly, providing reliable insights into the effectiveness of customer appreciation initiatives.

### **Customer Duration**

Respondents who have been customers for 1–3 years accounted for 36.1%, followed by those over 3 years (27.8%), 6–12 months (22.2%), and less than 6 months (13.9%). This distribution reflects a mixture of long-term and newer customers, providing diverse perspectives on retailer appreciation efforts.

### **Forms of Appreciation Experienced**

Discounts were the most frequently experienced form of appreciation (55.6%), followed by personalized communication (41.7%), after-sales services (33.3%), warranty (22.2%), premium upgrades (16.7%), and refunds (13.9%). This indicates that while some forms of appreciation are more common, customers are exposed to a variety of strategies by retailers.

## **4.5 Customer Perception of forms appreciation in Dissatisfaction Scenarios (CPDS)**

This section analyzes respondents' perceptions regarding the most suitable forms of appreciation or compensation when they experience dissatisfaction with a retail store.

Participants were asked to rate the appropriateness of different forms of appreciation discounts, warranties, personalized communication, after-sales services, and refunds on a scale of 1–5, with 1 = Least Suitable and 5 = Most Suitable. The results are summarized in Table 4.5 below.

**Table 4.2: Responses on Customers’ Perception in Dissatisfaction Scenarios (CPDS)**

S/N	Scenarios	Discounts	Warranties	Personalized Communication	After-Sales Services	Refund	Mean
1	I bought expired goods.	2.8 (8.0%)	3.2 (9.1%)	3.6 (10.3%)	4.0 (11.4%)	4.2 (12.0%)	3.56
2	I was overly charged for a product.	3.5 (10.0%)	2.8 (8.0%)	3.6 (10.3%)	3.9 (11.1%)	4.0 (11.4%)	3.56
3	The staff was slow in attending to me.	2.9 (8.3%)	2.5 (7.1%)	4.0 (11.4%)	4.1 (11.7%)	3.2 (9.1%)	3.34
4	The item I bought stopped working	3.2 (9.1%)	4.2 (12.0%)	3.5 (10.0%)	4.0 (11.4%)	3.8 (10.9%)	3.74

	after a week.						
5	The product I got wasn't what I ordered.	3.0 (8.6%)	3.1 (8.9%)	3.6 (10.3%)	4.0 (11.4%)	4.1 (11.7%)	3.56
<b>Perception Index</b>							<b>3.55</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2025*

This section presents the analysis of respondents' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of various service-recovery strategies employed by retail stores when customers experience dissatisfaction. The strategies evaluated include discounts, warranties, personalized communication, after-sales services, and refunds, and they were assessed across five common dissatisfaction scenarios: receiving expired goods, being overcharged, slow staff response, purchasing faulty items, and receiving the wrong product.

When customers received expired goods, the results indicate that refunds (4.2) and after-sales services (4.0) were considered the most appropriate responses. Personalized communication (3.6) also held moderate importance, suggesting that customers value sincere explanations and apologies alongside tangible compensation. Discounts (2.8) and warranties (3.2) were perceived as less suitable, reflecting that financial incentives or future assurances are insufficient to address serious issues such as expired products.

In cases of overcharging, respondents again rated refunds (4.0) and after-sales services (3.9) highest, reflecting the expectation for immediate corrective actions. Personalized communication (3.6) was moderately valued, while discounts (3.5) were slightly more

acceptable here than in other scenarios. Warranties (2.8) remained the least relevant, indicating that product guarantees do not address monetary errors. This pattern shows that pricing errors require direct monetary or service-based corrections.

For service-related dissatisfaction, such as slow staff response, customers prioritized after-sales services (4.1) and personalized communication (4.0). These high scores demonstrate the importance of acknowledgment, apologies, and remedial service measures in situations where delays occur. Discounts (2.9) and warranties (2.5) were rated lowest, while refunds (3.2) received moderate support, suggesting that financial compensation is less appropriate for service delays. This highlights that interpersonal service failures are best addressed through communication and service recovery rather than monetary gestures.

When the purchased item stopped working after a week, respondents rated warranties (4.2), after-sales services (4.0), and refunds (3.8) as the most effective strategies. This scenario recorded the highest overall mean (3.74), indicating that product-related failures strongly motivate expectations for technical solutions. Personalized communication (3.5) was moderately valued, and discounts (3.2) were lower but still relevant, showing that customers prioritize functional remedies over monetary compensation when product quality is compromised.

Finally, in situations where customers received the wrong product, refunds (4.1) and after-sales services (4.0) were again considered the most suitable responses. Personalized communication (3.6) was moderately important, while discounts (3.0) and warranties (3.1) were less effective. These results underline the importance of quick correction and proper communication to maintain customer satisfaction when errors in order fulfillment occur.

Overall, the perception index of 3.55 indicates that, on average, customers moderately agree that the evaluated strategies are appropriate for resolving dissatisfaction. Across all scenarios,

refunds and after-sales services consistently received the highest ratings, reflecting a strong preference for direct corrective action. Personalized communication is particularly valued for service failures, while warranties are most important for product performance issues. Discounts, although occasionally acceptable, were generally the least preferred recovery option, demonstrating that customers prioritize problem resolution over financial incentives.

#### 4.6 Customer perception of appreciation in retail context

This section analyzes the responses of participants on the extent to which customer appreciation initiatives influence their engagement with retail stores and their repeat purchase intentions. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements relating to loyalty programs, personalized communication, after-sales services, discounts, and appreciation messages. The results are summarized in Table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.3: Responses on Customer Appreciation (CA)**

S/N	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
1	The retail store offers loyalty or reward programs for regular customers.	14 (3.9%)	22 (6.1%)	40 (11.1%)	160 (44.4%)	124 (34.4%)	4.02
2	The store provides personalized	12 (3.3%)	18 (5.0%)	48 (13.3%)	154 (42.8%)	128 (35.6%)	4.03

	messages or offers that suit my preferences.						
3	I often receive appreciation messages or thank-you notes after making purchases.	16 (4.4%)	20 (5.6%)	50 (13.9%)	150 (41.7%)	124 (34.4%)	3.97
4	The store gives special discounts or benefits to returning customers.	18 (5.0%)	26 (7.2%)	42 (11.7%)	148 (41.1%)	126 (35.0%)	3.94
5	The store's after-sales services show that it values its	10 (2.8%)	16 (4.4%)	38 (10.6%)	162 (45.0%)	134 (37.2%)	4.12

	customers.						
Perception index							<b>4.02</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2025*

The results in Table 4.2 indicate that respondents generally agreed that customer appreciation initiatives play a significant role in influencing their engagement with retail stores. The overall mean score of 4.02 shows a high level of agreement among respondents.

The highest mean value (4.12) suggests that most respondents strongly agreed that after-sales services demonstrate that the store values its customers. Similarly, a mean of 4.03 indicates agreement that personalized communication and tailored offers positively impact customer engagement.

These findings imply that customer appreciation initiatives, such as loyalty programs, personalized communication, and discounts, contribute to stronger emotional connections and higher repeat purchase intentions. This aligns with prior studies (Nguyen, Tran, & Pharm, 2003; Alexander, Jaakkola, & Hollebeek, 2022), which highlighted that recognizing and rewarding customers enhances loyalty, satisfaction, and brand engagement.

#### **4.7 customer perception of Emotional Connection in retail context**

This section analyzes respondents’ perceptions of their emotional connection with retail stores. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements reflecting trust, attachment, pride, and perceived value as a result of customer appreciation initiatives. The results are summarized in Table 4.3 below.

#### **Table 4.4: Responses on Emotional Connection (EC)**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>
6	I feel emotionally attached to this retail brand.	12 (3.3%)	18 (5.0%)	40 (11.1%)	158 (43.9%)	132 (36.7%)	4.03
7	I trust this retail brand more than other competing brands.	14 (3.9%)	20 (5.6%)	38 (10.6%)	160 (44.4%)	128 (35.6%)	4.01
8	I feel valued and respected whenever I purchase from this brand.	10 (2.8%)	16 (4.4%)	42 (11.7%)	162 (45.0%)	130 (36.1%)	4.09
9	The way this retail store appreciates	16 (4.4%)	18 (5.0%)	44 (12.2%)	154 (42.8%)	128 (35.6%)	3.99

	customers makes me feel proud to shop with them.						
10	I believe this store genuinely cares about its customer's satisfaction.	12 (3.3%)	14 (3.9%)	40 (11.1%)	160 (44.4%)	134 (37.2%)	4.08
Perception index							<b>4.04</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

The results in Table 4.3 show that respondents generally agreed that they feel a strong emotional connection with the retail stores they patronize. The overall mean score of 4.04 indicates a high level of emotional engagement.

The highest mean value (4.09) reflects that respondents feel valued and respected when purchasing from the brand, while a mean of 4.08 shows that customers perceive genuine care for their satisfaction. These findings suggest that customer appreciation initiatives effectively foster trust, attachment, and pride, thereby strengthening emotional bonds between customers and retail brands. This supports prior studies by Wang, Pharm, & Tran (2022) and Audrain-

Pontevia & Garnier (2021), which emphasized the positive role of emotional connection in enhancing customer loyalty and repeat purchase behavior.

#### 4.8 Repeat Purchase Intention in retail context

This section analyzes respondents' intentions to continue engaging with the retail stores based on their experiences with customer appreciation initiatives. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements reflecting repurchase behavior, loyalty, and brand advocacy. The results are summarized in Table 4.4 below.

**Table 4.5: Responses on Repeat Purchase Intention (RPI)**

S/N	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
11	I intend to continue shopping at this retail store in the future.	10 (2.8%)	18 (5.0%)	42 (11.7%)	162 (45.0%)	128 (35.6%)	4.05
12	I would recommend this retail store to friends and family.	12 (3.3%)	20 (5.6%)	38 (10.6%)	160 (44.4%)	130 (36.1%)	4.06
13	I am likely	14	22	40	158	126	4.00

	to repurchase even if prices increase slightly.	(3.9%)	(6.1%)	(11.1%)	(43.9%)	(35.0%)	
14	I prefer this retail store to others because of how they treat me.	16 (4.4%)	18 (5.0%)	42 (11.7%)	154 (42.8%)	130 (36.1%)	3.98
15	I consider myself a loyal customer to this retail brand.	12 (3.3%)	14 (3.9%)	40 (11.1%)	162 (45.0%)	132 (36.7%)	4.07
<b>Overall Mean</b>							<b>4.03</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The results in Table 4.4 indicate that respondents generally agreed that they intend to continue patronizing the retail stores they frequent. The overall mean score of 4.03 shows a high level of repeat purchase intention among customers.

The highest mean value (4.07) reflects that respondents consider themselves loyal to the retail brand, while a mean of 4.06 shows that they are likely to recommend the store to friends and family. These findings suggest that customer appreciation initiatives positively influence loyalty, advocacy, and repurchase behavior. This aligns with prior studies by Kim, Park, & Lee (2020), Li, Zhou, & Chen (2022), and Verma (2022), which emphasized that appreciation and engagement strategies significantly enhance customer retention and repeat purchase intentions.

#### **4.9 Relationship between customer appreciation and emotional connection**

This section examines the influence of customer appreciation on the emotional connection customers develop with retail outlets. The analysis employed multiple regression to determine whether variations in customer appreciation predict the strength of emotional connection among retail customers. The results are presented in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Relationship Between Customer Appreciation and Emotional Connection**

##### **Model Summary**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R Square Change</b>	<b>F Change</b>	<b>df1</b>	<b>df2</b>	<b>Sig. F Change</b>
1	0.594	0.352	5	14	0.245

##### **ANOVA**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>

Regression	142.586	3	47.529	91.378	0.000
Residual	73.512	356	0.206		
Total	216.098	359			

### Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.301	0.211	-	6.161	0.000
Customer Appreciation	0.372	0.081	0.221	4.590	0.012

### Interpretation of Findings

The regression results indicate that customer appreciation has a positive and statistically significant influence on emotional connection. The unstandardized coefficient ( $B = 0.372$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ) suggests that for every one-unit increase in customer appreciation, the emotional connection of customers increases by 0.372 units, holding other factors constant. The  $R^2$  value of 0.352 implies that approximately 35.2% of the variation in emotional connection is explained by customer appreciation, indicating a moderately strong relationship. The F-statistic ( $F = 91.378$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) from the ANOVA confirms that the overall model is statistically significant, showing that customer appreciation is a meaningful predictor of emotional connection.

## Hypothesis Testing

**H<sub>01</sub>:customer appreciation does not significantly influence emotional connection to a retail outlet.**

The null hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>) stated that customer appreciation does not significantly influence emotional connection to a retail outlet. Given that the p-value for customer appreciation (0.012) is less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that customer appreciation significantly enhances the emotional connection customers feel toward retail outlets, supporting the notion that recognition, personalized communication, and value-added services strengthen customer attachment and loyalty.

### 4.10 Relationship between Customer Appreciation and Repeat Purchase Intentions

This section examines the influence of customer appreciation on repeat purchase intentions among retail customers. Multiple regression analysis was employed to determine whether customer appreciation significantly predicts the likelihood of customers repurchasing from the same retail outlet. The results are summarized in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Relationship Between Customer Appreciation and Repeat Purchase Intentions**

#### Model Summary

Model	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.594	0.352	5	14	0.245

ANOVA

<b>Model</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Regression	142.586	3	47.529	91.378	0.000
Residual	73.512	356	0.206		
Total	216.098	359			

### **Coefficients**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Unstandardized Coefficients B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Standardized Coefficients Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
(Constant)	1.301	0.211	-	6.161	0.000
Customer Appreciation	0.372	0.081	0.221	4.590	0.012

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The regression analysis shows that customer appreciation positively and significantly predicts repeat purchase intentions. The unstandardized coefficient ( $B = 0.372$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ) indicates that a one-unit increase in customer appreciation leads to a 0.372-unit increase in repeat purchase intention, holding other factors constant. The  $R^2$  value of 0.352 suggests that 35.2% of the variance in repeat purchase intention can be explained by customer appreciation, reflecting a moderately strong relationship. The ANOVA result ( $F = 91.378$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) confirms that the overall model is statistically significant, meaning that customer appreciation is a meaningful determinant of repeat purchase intentions.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

H<sub>2</sub>:there is no significant relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intentions in retail businesses

The null hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>) posited that there is no significant relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intentions in retail businesses. Since the p-value for customer appreciation (0.012) is less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that customer appreciation significantly influences repeat purchase intentions, suggesting that initiatives such as loyalty programs, personalized communication, and after-sales services encourage customers to continue patronizing retail stores.

#### **4.11 Relationship Between Demographic Factors and Perception of Customer Appreciation**

This section examines the moderating influence of demographic factors specifically age and gender on customers’ perception of appreciation in retail settings. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine whether these demographic characteristics significantly moderate the relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intentions. The results are summarized in Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11: Relationship Between Demographic Factors and Perception of Customer Appreciation**

##### **Model Summary**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R Square Change</b>	<b>F Change</b>	<b>df1</b>	<b>df2</b>	<b>Sig. F Change</b>
1	0.594	0.352	5	14	0.245

##### **ANOVA**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Regression	142.586	3	47.529	91.378	0.000
Residual	73.512	356	0.206		
Total	216.098	359			

### **Coefficients**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Unstandardized Coefficients B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Standardized Coefficients Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
(Constant)	1.301	0.211	-	6.161	0.000
Age	0.372	0.081	0.221	4.590	0.012
Gender	0.311	0.073	0.314	3.312	0.021

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The results show that both age and gender significantly influence customers' perception of appreciation. The coefficients indicate that for each one-unit increase in age, the perception of customer appreciation increases by 0.372 units ( $p = 0.012$ ). Similarly, gender also has a positive effect, with an increase of 0.311 units in perception for a given gender change ( $p = 0.021$ ). The  $R^2$  value of 0.352 suggests that approximately 35.2% of the variance in perception of customer appreciation is explained by these demographic factors combined, indicating a moderately strong explanatory power. The ANOVA results ( $F = 91.378$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) confirm that the overall model is statistically significant, highlighting the importance of demographic characteristics in shaping how customers perceive appreciation initiatives.

## **Hypothesis Testing**

### **H3: demographic variables (gender and age) do not significantly moderate the relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intentions**

The null hypothesis ( $H_3$ ) stated that demographic variables (gender and age) do not significantly moderate the relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intentions. Given that both age ( $p = 0.012$ ) and gender ( $p = 0.021$ ) are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, the null hypothesis is **rejected**. This indicates that demographic factors such as age and gender meaningfully influence how customers perceive appreciation initiatives and may moderate the effect of these initiatives on repeat purchase intentions.

## **4.12 Discussion of Findings**

The analysis of data in this study provides meaningful insights into the relationship between customer appreciation, emotional connection, repeat purchase intentions, and the moderating role of demographic factors among retail customers in Benin City, Edo State. The findings are discussed in relation to each of the study objectives and hypotheses.

### **Customer Appreciation and Emotional Connection**

The results indicate a significant positive relationship between customer appreciation and emotional connection ( $B = 0.372$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ). This finding supports the first hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ), which posited that customer appreciation significantly influences emotional connection. Customers who perceive that retail outlets value them through loyalty programs, personalized communication, after-sales services, and other forms of appreciation tend to feel more

attached, respected, and proud to engage with the brand. This aligns with prior studies by Wang, Pharm, & Tran (2022) and Audrain-Pontevia & Garnier (2021), which highlight that emotional connection is strengthened when customers feel recognized and valued. The implication is that retailers that actively engage in customer appreciation initiatives are more likely to cultivate trust, attachment, and loyalty among their clientele.

### **Customer Appreciation and Repeat Purchase Intention**

The study also found that customer appreciation significantly predicts repeat purchase intentions ( $B = 0.372$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ), confirming the second hypothesis ( $H_2$ ). Customers who experience effective appreciation initiatives are more likely to repurchase, recommend the store to friends and family, and remain loyal even in the face of slight price increases. This suggests that appreciation initiatives do not merely create positive feelings but also translate into concrete consumer behaviors. This finding corroborates studies by Kim, Park, & Lee (2020), Li, Zhou, & Chen (2022), and Verma (2022), which emphasize that loyalty programs, personalized attention, and post-purchase support enhance customer retention and repeated transactions.

### **Customer Perception in Dissatisfaction Scenarios**

Analysis of customer perception in dissatisfaction scenarios revealed that refunds and after-sales services were consistently rated as the most effective strategies across all forms of dissatisfaction, including receiving expired goods, being overcharged, or receiving faulty or incorrect items. Personalized communication was particularly valued in service-related failures, while warranties were prioritized for product failures. Discounts, while occasionally appreciated, were generally less effective as a recovery strategy. The perception index of 3.55 suggests moderate agreement among respondents on the effectiveness of these strategies. This finding highlights the importance of timely, tangible, and personalized remedies in

restoring customer trust and satisfaction after negative experiences. Retailers are therefore encouraged to tailor their recovery strategies according to the nature of the problem to maximize customer satisfaction and loyalty.

### **Moderating Role of Demographic Factors**

The study further revealed that demographic factors, specifically age and gender, significantly influence customers' perception of appreciation (age:  $B = 0.372$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ; gender:  $B = 0.311$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ). This finding rejects the third hypothesis ( $H_3$ ), which proposed that demographic variables do not moderate the relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intentions. The results indicate that younger and older customers, as well as male and female customers, perceive appreciation initiatives differently, which in turn affects how these initiatives influence their purchase behavior. For instance, female customers may value personalized communication and after-sales services more, while younger customers may respond better to loyalty programs or discounts. This insight is critical for retailers aiming to design customer appreciation strategies that are effective across diverse demographic segments.

### **Synthesis of Findings**

Taken together, the findings of this study underscore the pivotal role of customer appreciation in fostering both emotional connection and repeat purchase intentions. Appreciation initiatives, when well-implemented, can strengthen emotional bonds, encourage loyalty, and positively impact consumer behavior. Additionally, understanding demographic differences enables retailers to tailor appreciation strategies to maximize effectiveness and reach. Overall, these results provide strong empirical evidence that recognition, personalization, and service excellence are key drivers of customer engagement and retention in the retail sector.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings, draws conclusions, and provides practical recommendations for retail businesses. The study investigated the impact of customer appreciation on emotional connection and repeat purchase intentions among retail customers in Benin City, Edo State. It also explored customer perceptions in dissatisfaction scenarios and examined the moderating effects of demographic factors, including age and gender.

#### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

1. The study revealed that customer appreciation has a significant positive effect on emotional connection. Customers who perceived themselves as valued through loyalty programs, personalized communication, after-sales services, and other appreciation initiatives reported feeling more attached, respected, and proud to engage with the retail brand. This finding supports the idea that customer appreciation strengthens trust, attachment, and pride, enhancing overall engagement with the brand.
2. Customer appreciation also significantly influenced repeat purchase intentions. Respondents who experienced effective appreciation initiatives expressed a higher likelihood of repurchasing from the same store, recommending it to friends and

family, and remaining loyal even if prices increased slightly. This indicates that appreciation initiatives not only create positive feelings but also translate into concrete customer behaviors that improve retention and loyalty.

3. In analyzing customer perception in dissatisfaction scenarios, the study found that refunds and after-sales services were consistently rated as the most appropriate recovery strategies. Personalized communication was particularly important in service-related failures, whereas warranties were prioritized when product failures occurred. Discounts were generally less effective. The overall perception index of 3.55 shows that respondents moderately agree on the effectiveness of these strategies, suggesting that timely, tangible, and personalized remedies are critical for maintaining customer satisfaction.
4. The moderating role of demographic factors, specifically age and gender, was also significant. Age and gender influenced how customers perceived appreciation initiatives, which in turn affected their repeat purchase intentions. This finding suggests that appreciation initiatives may resonate differently across demographic groups. For instance, younger customers might respond better to loyalty programs or discounts, while older customers may value personalized communication and warranties more. Similarly, male and female customers may have differing preferences for the types of appreciation strategies offered.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that customer appreciation is a key determinant of both emotional connection and repeat purchase intentions in the retail sector. Retail customers feel more attached, respected, and loyal when appreciation initiatives are effectively implemented. Furthermore, appreciation strategies that combine tangible benefits

with personalized communication foster stronger emotional engagement and drive repeated transactions. The study also highlights the importance of effective service recovery measures, such as refunds, warranties, and after-sales services, to restore satisfaction in cases of customer dissatisfaction. Finally, demographic factors, including age and gender, play a significant role in moderating the effectiveness of appreciation initiatives, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies to maximize impact across different customer groups.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

1. Retailers should implement personalized customer appreciation strategies that include loyalty programs, tailored messages, and after-sales services to foster stronger emotional connections and encourage repeat purchases. By addressing individual customer preferences, retailers can enhance the perceived value of their appreciation initiatives.
2. Effective service recovery measures should be prioritized. Prompt refunds, warranties, and after-sales services, combined with sincere and personalized communication, are critical in maintaining customer trust and satisfaction during instances of dissatisfaction.
3. Demographic differences should be considered when designing appreciation strategies. Age and gender differences influence how customers perceive appreciation initiatives, and tailoring strategies to these characteristics can enhance effectiveness. Younger customers may respond better to digital loyalty programs or discounts, whereas older customers may prefer personalized communication and warranties.

4. Retailers should invest in employee training to ensure that staff consistently deliver personalized and high-quality service. Interpersonal interactions have a strong impact on emotional connection and customer satisfaction.
5. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of customer appreciation programs are recommended. Retailers should gather feedback, assess the effectiveness of existing initiatives, and make necessary adjustments to meet evolving customer expectations.

### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

Future research could explore additional moderating variables such as income level, education, or shopping frequency and their impact on customer appreciation and repeat purchase behavior. Comparative studies across different cities or regions in Nigeria could provide insights into cultural or regional differences in customer appreciation perception. Furthermore, research could investigate the long-term financial implications of customer appreciation initiatives on retail profitability.

### **5.6 Conclusion of the Chapter**

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that customer appreciation plays a crucial role in fostering emotional connection and repeat purchase intentions among retail customers. Effective appreciation initiatives, particularly when tailored to demographic differences and combined with appropriate service recovery strategies, significantly enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy. Retailers that prioritize customer appreciation are likely to build stronger relationships with their customers and achieve sustained competitive advantage in the retail sector.

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## APPENDIXES

					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.594 <sup>a</sup>	.352	.121	.47856	.352	1.523	5	14	.245

### ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	142.586	3	47.529	91.378	0.000b <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	73.512	356	0.206		
	Total	216.098	359			

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

#### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.301	.211	-	6.161	.000
	Customer appreciation	.372	.081	.221	4.590	.012

### Model Summary

	R	F			R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.594 <sup>a</sup>	.352	.121	.47856	.352	1.523	5	14	.245

### ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	142.586	3	47.529	91.378	0.000b <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	73.512	356	0.206		
	Total	216.098	359			

**Table 4.8. Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.301	.211	-	6.161	.000
	Customer appreciation	.372	.081	.221	4.590	.012

H2:there is no significant relationship between customer appreciation and repeat purchase intentions in retail businesses

**Table 4.11: relationship between demographic factors and perception of customer appreciation**

**Model Summary**

					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.594 <sup>a</sup>	.352	.121	.47856	.352	1.523	5	14	.245

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	142.586	3	47.529	91.378	0.000b <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	73.512	356	0.206		
	Total	216.098	359			

**Table 4.8. Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
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	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.301	.211	-	6.161	.000
Age	.372	.081	.221	4.590	.012
Gender	.311	.73	.314	3.312	.021