



Consumer Perception and Patronage of Ibom Air Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was carried out to determine the effect of consumer perception on patronage of Ibom Air Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was two million passengers of Ibom Air Company. The study adopted Taro Yamane's scientific formula to obtain a sample size of 400 consumers. Data for the study were obtained from the structured questionnaire administered to the passengers who patronized the Ibom Air company. Data for the study were analyzed using tables, frequency and percentage. Hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression and multiple regression models to measure the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that consumer awareness, brand image, and consumer impression individually and collectively had positive significant influence on patronage of Ibom Air company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that consumer perception plays a crucial role in influencing patronage of Ibom Air company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It was recommended amongst others that Ibom Airline should create more awareness using online content on social media platforms to sensitize consumers on the services they offer to targeted market locally and

internationally.

Keywords: Consumer perception, consumer awareness, brand image, consumer impression and patronage of Ibom Air company.

Introduction

The airline industry is one of the most intangible industries, dealing with the provision of services, and thus, contributing over \$12.9 billion to the nations GDP in 2006 (Adeola & Adebiyi, 2014). Hence, it has not only become one of the commanding heights of global economy but aids globalization by facilitating the rate of international economic exchanges among nations (Johan & Zhang 2014). However, with the springing up of many airlines in the country, the airline industry has become highly competitive in recent years. The fierce competition existing among airlines globally has made airlines operating in both developed and developing countries to devise strategies in order to ensure continuous patronage by customers (Ben & Adebola, 2014). Interestingly, as airlines operators increasingly strive to attract, build, and retain customers through the quality of their service product offerings, consumers perceive and evaluate their services differently, encouraging many airline operators to invest heavily in innovative, streamlined and efficient service systems to improve performance and remain competitive (Asiegbo, Igwe & Akekue-Alex, 2012).

Consumer perception is a long-term imaginary feeling about a brand's image that can sustain or mar consumer loyalty and consequently, patronage (Dobbelstein, Mason & Kamwendo, 2020). According to Attih (2020), customer patronages are based on customer's perception, brand image, and positive attitude formed from experience. It encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses towards products or services and plays a central role in shaping consumer behavior across various industries (Smith & Dubbink, 2011). Consumer perceptions are diverse regarding customer service delivery and travel experience. Hence, the quality of consumer perception and experience is crucial, and it can only be achieved from previous purchase, (Teraiya, Namboodiri & Jayswal 2023). Consumer awareness as a vital component of consumer perception has to do with making a brand known to the consumers which is necessary in influencing consumer patronage (Ahmed, Ahmad Nadeem, 2014). It is also the buyer's knowledge of a product or service which allows the consumer to get more from what he buys. Consumer brand awareness guides a consumer in choosing among different and competing brands (Ikpo, Okolo, & Oranusi, 2021). Attih (2019) stated that consumer's awareness of a brand and the impression a consumer has towards a brand can affect its patronage. According to Brent (2023), the initial experience a potential consumer has with a company sets the tone for their customer's journey. Since it takes only a period of time for an individual to judge a brand based on their initial impression, it is important for Ibom airline to create a good first impression on their customers which is necessary to increase the level of patronage. Brand image is another component of perception which the airline company should take into consideration while re-strategizing.

(Ufod 2022) opined that, brand image is how existing or potential customers view the

brand and associate with it. It is something that eventually forms in the minds of the consumer. This brand image is simply an impression or an imprint of over a period of time in the consumer's mindset. Brand image represent rational or sentimental perception consumers attach to specific brands. Keller (1993, as cited in Ateke et al., 2015) described brand image as consumers' perception of a brand which is measured in terms of brand associations held in their memory. Ateke et al (2015) further stated that brand image consists functional and symbolic brand beliefs. It is a strong, favorable and unique brand association, which result in positive attitude, perceived quality and positive overall effect.

Patronage arises when an individual displays conscious effort to choose among products and services that will satisfy his or her needs through the process of analyzing situations which would be rewarding and relatively satisfying amidst some challenges faced in the course of fulfilling his own desires (Bassegy et al., 2023). This explains why individuals can exhibit unconditional attachment and affection towards objects, persons or services. In the aviation industry, patronage entails the deliberate act of a passenger to consistently fly with a particular airline instead of going to other airline service operators (Kenneth & Harcourt, 2018). It also entails passenger's selection of an airline from a set of alternatives. Thus, airline patronage is heavily dependent on factors such as air fare, flight frequency, convenience, non-stop flight, reliability, easy accessibility to airline by passenger disposition towards airline image (Park, & Ewill, 2009).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of consumer perception on patronage of Ibom Air company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of this study were to:

Examine the effect of consumer awareness on patronage of Ibom Air company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Assess the effect of brand image on patronage of Ibom Air company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Examine the influence of consumer impression on patronage of Ibom air company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were raised to guide the study:

What is the effect of consumer awareness on patronage of Ibom Air Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?

What is the effect of brand image on patronage of Ibom Air Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?

What is the influence of consumer impression on patronage of Ibom Air Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

Based on the objectives of the study, the following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

There is no significant effect of consumer awareness on patronage of Ibom Air Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

There is no significant effect of brand image on patronage of Ibom Air Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

There is no significant effect of consumer impression on patronage of Ibom Air Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would be useful to Ibom Air as well as aviation industry. It would help the management of airlines to formulate policies on consumer perception. The findings of the study would also add to the existing body of knowledge on consumer perception and patronage. Finally, the study would serve as a reference material for students, academia and researchers who may want to carry out studies in related field.

Literature Review

2.1 Consumer Perception

Consumer perception is the process of being aware of or comprehending sensory information (Paul & Sharma, 2023). Perception is a process of interpretation of a present stimulus on the basis of prior experience. According to Ifediora, Ugwuanyi and Ifediora (2018), consumer perception can be regarded as a process whereby individual selects, organizes as well as interprets sensations in the consumer perceptual process, more attention is paid to a particular stimulus for interpretation (Xu, Zhao and Cui, 2020). Kotler (2008) defined perception as the process by which information is received, selected, organized and interpreted by an individual. Rao and Narayan (2018) defined consumer perception as the opinions, feelings, and beliefs consumers have about a brand. Yu (2021) described consumer perception as how a consumer feels about a company and this includes their thoughts, emotions and opinions related to a brand. According to Sharma (2023), consumer perception is a process during which an individual acquires knowledge about the environment and interprets the information according to his/her needs. It is also a process of gaining mental understanding as it guides the perceiver in harnessing, processing and using the information that the act of seeing anything may be broken down into three stages: selection, organization and interpretation (Rao & Narayan, 2018; Farooq, Habib & Aslam (2019).

According to Rao and Narayan (2018), the elements of perception are attention, feelings, and the ways we act are influenced by our environment. Perception helps an individual to gather data from his/her surroundings, process the data, and make sense out of it. In perception, it is sometimes difficult to separate the information from the action. It plays an important role in building customer loyalty and retention as well as brand reputation and awareness.

2.2 Dimensions of Consumer Perception

2.2.1 Consumer Awareness

According to Zhang, Zeng and Zhang (2020), consumer awareness is a subjective consumer response that can be elicited by a narrative brand message. It is also defined as an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive process with respect to some aspects of the individual's world (Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2018). Consumer awareness refers to the degree your potential customer is aware of their problems, pain points, possible solutions, your product, and how you can solve their problems. Put simply, if the customer does not know they have a problem, they will not buy your product. (Uford & Mfon, 2022). Consumer awareness could be seen as the ability of the consumers to recognize and remember the brand in different situations. Attih (2013) asserted that the creation of brand awareness can be carried out through the application of various elements of promotion, namely, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, word-of-mouth communication, and interactive marketing. It could also be referred to as a buyer's knowledge of a particular product, service or company which allows the buyer to get the most from what he/she buys. Consumer brand awareness is a basic level of brand knowledge involving at least recognition of the brand name (Hoyer & Brown 1990 as cited in Ateke et al., 2015). Hence it is concerned with accessibility of a brand in memory and describes how well customers and potential customers recognized the brand. According to Essien et al., (2023), consumer awareness consists of brand recall and brand recognition, while brand recall means the ability of a consumer to see a product's category, and remember the brand name precisely. Therefore, continuous public awareness campaigns that mobilize public interest could contribute to the additional expansion of an industry to bring about financial inclusion and sustainable development Essien & Attih (2023).

According to Essien, et al (2024), brand is competing in a highly globalized market so consumer awareness is a key indicator of a brands competitive market performance. Given the importance of awareness in customer purchasing decision and patronage, marketers have developed a number of matrix design to measure brand awareness. Attih (2019) asserted that brand awareness is simply making a brand known. It is the perception of a brand in the mind of a consumer.

2.2.2 Brand Image

Brand image can be defined as the observations around a brand as reflected by the brand association held in consumer's memory Keller, (1993), as mentioned in Anwar et al., (2011). It is defined as consumer's sentiments and thought regarding the brand (Erfan & Kwek, 2013). As such, brand picture portrayed as a summary of brand relationship in shopper's mentality that outcome in brand recognition and brand relationship alongside brand state of mind, brand advantages and brand characteristics. In addition, according to Aaker (1996), as mentioned in Hsiang-Ming et al (2011), these associations could indicate to a few aspects of brand in the memory of consumer, stated that brand image provide several benefits to firms in today's fiercely competitive markets. Brand and product choices is mostly based on consumer's perspective, feeling or attitude towards the brand image. Therefore, brand image could be recognized as a representation of individual imagery that customers collaborate with the brand, which incorporates a large portion of brand related information. (Iversen and Hem (2008) stated in Hsiang-Ming et al., 2011). On the other hand, if a company could constantly maintain a positive and ideal

image by the public it would result in gaining a better market place and increasing competitive advantage that leads to a higher market share. It could also lead to strong brands that inform consumers' willingness to attend to additional communications from the brand, process this communication favourably and recall the communication or their accompanying cognitive or affective reactions easily. People wear brands, eat brands, listen to brands, and they're constantly telling others about the brands they love. It is not possible to tell someone about a brand you cannot remember; thus, brand image has many facets.

Ateke et al. (2015) observed that several indicators have been put forward by different scholars, as aspects of brand image. In this study however, brand identity, brand awareness and brand reputation are adopted as dimensions of brand image. Brand identity: Brand identity is a key element in branding and core element of a successful brand is to perceive how the brand identity is created and developed. Creating a sustainable image in the minds of customers requires brand identity. It is an issue of brand management and as the brand continues to expand and diversify, customers are now faced with different brand names and a product without a value in the marketplace will be defeated. Vaesen (2018) noted that the strongest brand identities are instantly recognizable and also convey a message about a business. Brand awareness is a basic level of brand knowledge involving at least, recognition of the brand name (Hoyer and Brown, 1990, as cited in Ateke et al., 2015); hence, concerned with accessibility of a brand in memory, and describes how well customers and potential customers recognized the brand. Brand awareness is thus, an outcome of brand-related exposures and experiences consumers accumulate; and is strengthened by every stimulus that calls the attention of consumers to a brand (Ateke and Nwulu, 2017).

2.2.3 Consumer Impression

An impression is a metric used to quantify the number of digital views or engagements of a piece of content, usually an advertisement, digital post, or web page. Impression are is referred to as an "ad view" (Will, 2023). Therefore, Consumer impression is used in online advertising, which often pays on a per-impression basis. Counting impressions is essential to how web advertising is accounted for and paid for in search engine marketing, as well as measuring the performance of social media campaigns. Impressions are not a measure of whether an advertisement has been clicked on, but how many times it was displayed or had potential "eyeballs" on it, which leads to some debate as to how accurate the metric is (Will, 2023).

2.3 Consumer Patronage

According to Adiele and Horsfall (2018), customer patronage is a combination of psychological factors that influence purchase behavior and these factors are considered important by consumers as yardsticks in determining which firm to patronize. Similarly, Dobbstein, et al (2020) defined consumer patronage as the analysis and improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of purchase behaviors of consumers. This can also be said to be indicators managers use to assess the progress of patronage. Patronage arises when an individual displays conscious effort to choose among products and services that will satisfy his or her need (s) through the process of analyzing situations which would be rewarding and relatively satisfying amidst some challenges faced in the course of fulfilling his own desires (Adiele & Etuk, 2017). This explains why individuals exhibit unconditional attachment and affection towards objects or persons (Adiele & Grend,

2016). It is a determinant of sales growth which leads to profitability, high market share as well as competitive advantages. It is the desire of every marketer to be patronized by customers; because the essence of every business is to attract customers

Essien et al, (2023) opined that, in Nigeria, patronage can be viewed or classified from two dimensions: conditional and unconditional patronage. Unconditional patronage is mostly associated with expectations which are not tied to reward for financial exchanges such as preference for issues that are affectively and psychologically oriented, particularly that gives them joy and satisfaction.

2.5 Review of Empirical Studies

Anyadighibe, Ezikiel, S., Udey, A. & Ogeyi, M. L. (2023) examined the brand image and Customer Patronage of Petroleum Products in Calabar Metropolis. This study investigated brand image (brand identity, awareness, and reputation) on customers' patronage of selected petroleum filling stations and was conducted in Calabar Metropolis. The study adopted a survey research design, and collected data in a cross-sectional survey. A sample size of 143 was extracted for the study. A 5-point structured Likert questionnaire was developed, validated and tested for reliability using test-retest technique. Data collected were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. Finding revealed that brand identity, awareness and brand reputation have positive influence on customers' patronage of petroleum filling stations in Calabar Metropolis. The study concluded that the need for acceptable brand image makes firms to direct efforts in gaining customers' patronage. The study recommends that brand identity, awareness and reputation should be continuously employed to give filling stations competitive advantage when differentiated from competitors.

Devi & Sankara Rao (2016) studied the consumer awareness-role of education. The objective of the study was to understand the level of awareness among educated and uneducated consumers about Consumer rights. A Sample of 1000 consumers from Andhra Pradesh was selected through purposive sampling method. SPSS 20.0 was used. Exploratory factor analysis, correlation and regression tests were applied. The study found that education did not create much difference in the level of awareness, majority of consumers do not have knowledge of Consumer Rights and laws. A positive correlation was found between Consumer Perceptions, buying Practices and Problems. The study identified three critical factors of Consumer Protection Namely Government Initiatives, Consumer Awareness and Accessibility.

Johan & Dewi (2019) examined customers first impression of a brand and its relation to their shopping experience in SKA Mall in Pekanbaru Indonesia. This research discusses about how the impression an individual formed from an individual' shopping experience. The research used a descriptive qualitative method by aligning the AIDA brand awareness marketing models and the relevant factors of the consumer behaviours process. The result was that impression can be formed by the motivation, perception, attitude formation, and integration from the consumer and it will build the brand equity including satisfaction and loyalty that is unconsciously formed in the mind of the consumer. In conclusion, the improvement of brand awareness of mall SKA will be more effective if they do same adjustments to their physical evidence, situation and ambience, lights and other sporting facilities. These adjustments are necessary to keep the consumer

from the competitor.

Kenneth, Adiele, & Etuk (2017) investigated the determinants of airline patronage in Nigeria: A Path Analytical Approach. The main objective of this study was to examine the determinants of domestic airline patronage in Nigeria. The population for the study consists of all users of the current and functional domestic Airline operators in Nigeria which are estimated to be 75,000. Furthermore, the sample size for the study comprised 382 passengers/ customers of the Nigerian Domestic Airlines and the data collection instrument were 382 copies of structured questionnaire which were distributed to passengers in waiting lounges of designated airports in Nigeria; out of which, 377 copies were retrieved and used for the study. The postulated hypotheses were tested with the Multiple Regression Analysis; the Anova and it was found that most of the identified determinants of airline patronage used for the study significantly influenced domestic airline patronage in Nigeria. The authors concluded that the determinants of airline patronage affect domestic airline patronage; and therefore, recommended that if a holistic and consistent blend of the determinants of airline patronage model used for the study is adopted by the management of airline service providers in Nigeria, it will immensely increase their level of patronage.

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized the survey research design. The choice of this research design was considered appropriate because it provides the researcher the opportunity of gathering data from a representative population of the study.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised of Two Million passengers of Ibom Air as at December 2022, according to Mr. Aniekan Essien, General Manager, Marketing and Communication Ibom Air company.

3.3 Specification of Conceptual Model

Based on the research hypotheses, a conceptual model was developed to determine the effect of consumer perception on patronage of Ibom Air company in Akwa Ibom State. The model specifies that patronage of Ibom Air company is influenced by consumer perception-brand image, consumer awareness and consumer impression.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Model

Source: Researcher’s Conceptual Model (2024).

3.4 Sample size determination

The population of this study comprised of all passengers of Ibom Air as at December 2023 according to Aniekan Umana the GM Marketing and Communications Ibom Air, they are about two million passengers.

With the two million passengers of Ibom Air as at December, 2023, the sample size was determined using Taro Yamane’s (1967) scientific formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$$

Where:

N = Population

1= constant

e = Level of significance

n= sample size

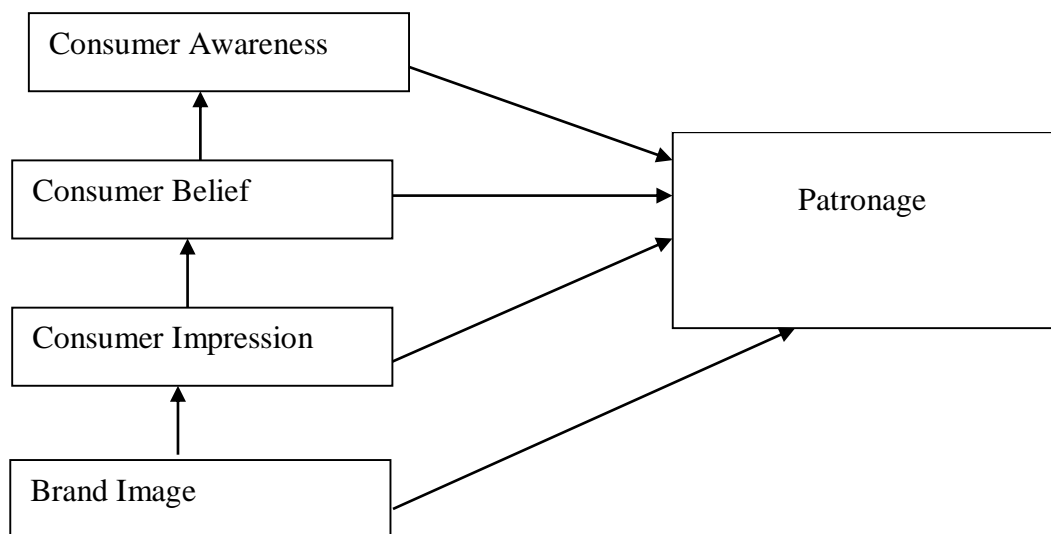
$$n = \frac{2,000,000}{1+2,000,000 \times 0.052}$$

$$n = \frac{2,000,000}{1+2,000,000 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{2,000,000}{1+5,000}$$

$$n = \frac{2,000,000}{5,001} = 399.92$$

Thus, n= 400



3.5 Sampling Technique

The convenient sampling technique which is a non-probability sampling design was used to collect data from respondents. This sampling technique was adopted because the researcher easily chooses Igom Airline customers he could reach and get in touch with as they went to book their flight tickets or await their departure time at the Victor’s Attah International Airport, Akwa Igom State, respondents within the study area were also conveniently reached by developing and sending an online questionnaire to their WhatsApp platforms. The researcher after two weeks collected the questionnaire from the Igom Airline manager while the online questionnaires were sent back to the researcher’s WhatsApp platform for validation and analysis.

3.6 Sources of Data

Data for this study were obtained from primary source. Primary data were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to the respondents. The questions were closed-ended, and directed to collect relevant data. The questionnaire is preferable because it is convenient for respondents to fill during their spare time.

3.7 Validity of Research Instrument

The instruments developed were subjected to face validation by the researcher’s supervisor and other lecturers in the Department of Marketing, Akwa Igom State University. They were given the objectives, research questions, hypotheses, and questionnaire for vetting. They assessed the relevance of each item in relation to the objectives of the study and considered the appropriateness of the items. Their comments and inputs were used for the modifications of the final copy of the instrument used for the study.

3.8 Reliability of Research Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was based on the premise that the measuring instrument would produce similar result when repeated over and again. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach’s Alpha (CA) statistics technique. All the dataset in the variables were computed using Cronbach’s Alpha (CA) statistics technique via SPSS. The results revealed that the Cronbach’s Alpha values for the variables were above 86%, which are considered reliable for analysis because they variables passed the benchmark of 70%.

/No	Variables	No of Items	Co-Efficient
1.	Awareness	4	0.903
2.	Image	4	0.908
3.	Impression	4	0.898

Source: Researcher’s Computation (2024).

Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

Testing of Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant effect of customer awareness on patronage of Ibom Air Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Table 1: Summary of simple linear regression showing the relationship between consumer awareness and patronage of Ibom Airline.

	B ₁	SE	B ₂	t-value	Significant (2 tailed)
Constant	8.288	0.646		12.833	0.000
Consumer awareness (X ₁)	0.417	0.044	0.433	9.467	0.000
Dependent variable: Patronage of Ibom Air					
R=	0.433				
R ² =	0.188				
Adjusted R – Square =	0.186				
Std Error of estimate =	1.71224				
F-statistics =	89.617				
Probability (Significant p-value) =	0.000				

Significant related at 5% ($p \leq 0.05$). B₁ = unstandardized beta, B₂ = standardized beta, SE = standard error.

Source: Researcher’s computation (2024).

Table 1 shows a regression coefficient of R² = 0.188 which means that the independent variable, consumer awareness (X₁) accounted for 18% of the variation in dependent variable, patronage of Ibom Airline. In addition, the significant F-ratio at F = 89.617 and p-value 0.000 suggests that the result of the regression model could not have occurred by chance and that consumer awareness as an indicator of consumer perception significantly predict patronage of Ibom Airline. To evaluate the degree of change between the independent variable and the dependent variable, the value of the beta for consumer awareness (Ca) had a statistically significant unstandardized coefficient of $\beta \times 1 = 0.417$ and p-value = 0.000, indicating a positive significant relationship with patronage to Ibom Airline. This finding can be interpreted that every unit change in consumer awareness will result to a 0.417 increase in patronage of Ibom Airline. Based on the simple linear regression equation stated, the model is represented thus:

$$Y = a_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$$

$$Y_p = a_0 + \beta_1 Ca_1 + e$$

The resulting simple linear equation is thus:

$$Y_p = 8.288 + 0.417Ca \tag{Equation 4.1}$$

With reference to the earlier stated decision rule, since the generated p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 ($p\text{-value} = 0.000 \leq 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that there is a significant positive influence between consumer awareness and patronage of Ibom Airline in Akwa Ibom State.

Ho2: There is no significant effect of brand image and patronage of Ibom Air Company

in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Table 2: Summary of simple linear regression showing the relationship between brand image and patronage of Ibom Airline.

	B ₁	SE	B ₂	t-value	Significant (2 tailed)
Constant	6.457	0.657		9.827	0.000
Brand Image (X ₂)	0.539	0.045	0.523	12.101	0.000
Dependent variable: Patronage of Ibom Air					
R=	0.523				
R ² =	0.274				
Adjusted R – Square =	0.272				
Std Error of estimate =	1.61867				
F-statistics =	146.433				
Probability (Significant p-value) =	0.000				

Significant related at 5% ($p \leq 0.05$). B₁ = unstandardized beta, B₂ = standardized beta, SE = standard error

Source: Researcher’s computation (2024).

Table 2 shows a regression coefficient of R² = 0.274 which means that the independent variable, brand image (X₂) accounted for 27% of the variation in dependent variable, patronage of Ibom Airline. In addition, the significant F-ratio at F = 146.433 and p-value 0.000 suggests that the result of the regression model could not have occurred by chance and that brand image as an indicator of consumer perception significantly predict patronage of Ibom Airline.

To evaluate the degree of change between the independent variable and the dependent variable, the value of the beta for Brand Image (Bi) had a statistically significant unstandardized coefficient of $\beta_{x2} = 0.539$ and p-value = 0.000, indicating a positive significant relationship with patronage to Ibom Airline. This finding can be interpreted that every unit change in brand image will result to a 0.539 increase in patronage of Ibom Airline. Based on the simple linear regression equation stated, the model is represented thus:

$$Y = a_0 + \beta_2 X_2 + e$$

$$Y_p = a_0 + \beta_2 B_i + e$$

The resulting simple linear equation is thus:

$$Y_p = 6.457 + 0.539 B_i \tag{Equation 4.2}$$

With reference to the earlier stated decision rule, since the generated p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 ($p\text{-value} = 0.000 \leq 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected.

Ho₃: There is no significant effect of Consumer Impression and Patronage of Ibom Air Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Table 3: Summary of simple linear regression showing the relationship between

consumer impression and patronage of Ibom Airline.

	B ₁	SE	B ₂	t-value	Significant (2 tailed)
Constant	6.296	0.653		9.636	0.000
Consumer Impression (X ₃)	0.549	0.044	0.533	12.417	0.000
Dependent variable: Patronage of Ibom Air					
R=	0.533				
R ² =	0.284				
Adjusted R – Square =	0.283				
Std Error of estimate =	1.60705				
F-statistics =	154.191				
Probability (Significant p-value) =	0.000				

Significant related at 5% ($p \leq 0.05$). B₁ = unstandardized beta, B₂ = standardized beta, SE = standard error

Source: Researcher’s Computation (2024).

Table 3 shows a regression coefficient of R² = 0.284 which means that the independent variable, consumer impression (X₃) accounted for 28% of the variation in dependent variable, patronage of Ibom Airline. In addition, the significant F-ratio at F = 154.191 and p-value 0.000 suggests that the result of the regression model could not have occurred by chance and that consumer impression as an indicator of consumer perception significantly predict Patronage of Ibom Airline.

To evaluate the degree of change between the independent variable and the dependent variable, the value of the beta for Consumer Impression (C_i) had a statistically significant unstandardized coefficient of $\beta \times X_3 = 0.549$ and p-value = 0.000, indicating a positive significant relationship with Patronage to Ibom Airline. This finding can be interpreted that every unit change in consumer impression will result to a 0.549 increase in Patronage of Ibom Airline. Based on the simple linear regression equation stated, the model is represented thus:

$$Y = a_0 + \beta_3 X_3 + e$$

$$Y_p = a_0 + \beta_3 C_{i3} + e$$

The resulting simple linear equation is thus:

$$Y_p = 6.296 + 0.549 X_3 \tag{Equation 4.3}$$

With reference to the earlier stated decision rule, since the generated p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 ($p\text{-value} = 0.000 \leq 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected.

Results and Discussion

The main aim of this study was to determine the relationship between Consumer Perception and Patronage of Ibom Airline in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The indicators of Consumer Perception adopted in this study were, consumer awareness, brand image, consumer impression and consumer belief. Major findings in the study are examined below:

Findings of this study shows that hypotheses one which is consumer awareness is significant and determines the patronage of Ibom Airline Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Invariably, in a situation where the consumers are rightly informed, there will certainly be an increase in the patronage of Ibom Airline Company. On the bases of the result, there is need for Ibom Airline Company to make provision for more advertisements, creating content for the services they offer.

The finding that there is a significant influence of consumer awareness on patronage of Ibom Airline is in disagreement with the claims by Utama and Ambarwati, (2022) who investigated the effect of brand awareness, brand image and trust on consumer repurchase intension of PT Astra international Isuzu Warung Buncit branch which revealed that brand awareness has a negative effect and is not significant in customer repurchase interest. The result agrees with Okon and Kolo (2021) who conducted a study on the relationship between advertisement and the Patronage of consumer goods amongst business education undergraduate in tertiary institutions, revealed that positive relationship exist between digital advertising and print advertising and patronage consumer good amongst business education undergraduate in tertiary Education in Cross River State.

Findings of this study revealed that hypotheses two, brand image is significant, determining the patronage of Ibom Airline Company of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Ideally, when the reliability and punctuality level of Ibom Airline Company is upheld, customer will build a positive image of the Company. The finding that there is a significant influence of brand image on the patronage of Ibom Airline Company does agree with the research work done by Shama (2023) who investigated customer perception of service quality standards of Starbucks in Bangalore, India, and revealed that there is a significant difference between expectation and the performance of Starbucks. The result of the study agreed with the research work done by Calvin, Abdullahi, Salisu & Mutiu (2023) which examine brand image, customer satisfaction and consumer purchase intensions in the Banking Sector of Nigeria. His finding revealed brand image and customer satisfaction have significantly affected the customer purchase intension.

The finding of the study revealed that hypotheses three, consumer impression significantly determines the patronage of Ibom Airline Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Dependability and trustworthiness of Ibom Airline Company will build a consumer impression to the Company. The finding that there is a significant influence of customer impression on the patronage of Ibom Airline Company in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria agrees with the investigation of Udonde and Eke (2023) who examine the interplay of consumer perception on consumer patronage of made in Nigeria fabrics in Akwa Ibom State, the result of the finding showed that consumer perception has a positive significant relationship with the consumer patronage of made in Nigeria fabric in Akwa Ibom State.

Conclusion

The study was on consumer perception and patronage of Ibom Airlines in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The results clearly showed that consumer perception have significant positive relationship with patronage of Ibom Airlines Company in Akwa Ibom State.

Therefore, it is concluded that consumer awareness, brand image, and consumer

impression significantly influence patronage of Ibom Airlines when combined to market Ibom Airline by way of boasting patronage, leading to customer retention and referrals.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

- I. Ibom Airline should create more awareness using online content on social media platforms to sensitize consumers on the services they offer to targeted market locally and internationally.
- II. Ibom Airline Company should implement targeted brand image by identifying and sponsoring a sparkle picture or image related that will capture the minds of the consumers This will help increase brand visibility and create a positive relationship between consumers and the Ibom Airline Company.
- III. Ibom Airline Company should be critical in the selection of their services and approaches so as to create a positive impression on the minds of the consumers. This will encourage continuous patronage of the Ibom Airlines.

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