



## **CONSUMER BRAND ENGAGEMENT AND SALES PERFORMANCE OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the relationship between consumer brand engagement and sales performance of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to determine the extent to which emotional engagement and cognitive engagement relate with market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. The chosen population for this study is twenty nine (29) registered food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. The census approach was adopted to select our respondents for the study and the researcher purposively selected two hundred and ninety (290) respondents for the study, however only two hundred and forty (240) respondents provided information for the analysis of the data. Kendall' tab-u was used to test four hypotheses. From results of the analysis it was revealed that emotional engagement and cognitive engagement which are the dimensions of consumer brand engagement positively and significantly relate with market share growth (measures of sales performance) of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. Based on these findings, it was concluded that consumer brand engagement fosters emotional connections and loyalty. When consumers feel emotionally attached to a food and beverage brand, they are more likely to become repeat customers and advocates. Therefore, the study recommended that food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt should focus on personalizing brand experiences. Tailoring products, marketing messages, and engagement efforts to individual preferences can enhance emotional engagement and drive sales.

**Keywords: Brand Engagement; Sales Performance; Emotional; Cognitive**



## Introduction

Consumer brand engagement refers to the level of interaction and connection between a consumer and a brand. It involves the consumer's emotional and psychological attachment to the brand, as well as their willingness to engage with the brand through various activities such as purchasing, recommending, or advocating for the brand. In the food and beverage industry, consumer brand engagement plays a crucial role in driving sales performance. When consumers are engaged with a brand, they are more likely to choose and purchase its products over competitors. Engaged consumers also tend to have higher brand loyalty, leading to repeat purchases and increased sales.

There are several factors that contribute to consumer brand engagement in the food and beverage industry. These include the brand's reputation, product quality, customer service, marketing strategies, and overall brand image. Brands that consistently deliver high-quality products, provide excellent customer service, and effectively communicate their values and benefits to consumers are more likely to engage and connect with their target audience. Consumer brand engagement can be measured through various metrics such as brand awareness, brand equity, customer satisfaction, and social media engagement. These metrics provide insights into the level of consumer engagement and can help food and beverage firms identify areas for improvement and develop strategies to enhance brand engagement.

A strong consumer brand engagement can positively impact sales performance for food and beverage firms. Engaged consumers are more likely to become brand advocates, recommending the brand to others and increasing its reach and visibility. They are also more willing to pay a premium price for products they perceive as valuable and trustworthy. Consumer brand engagement plays a pivotal role in influencing the sales performance of food and beverage firms. It is essential for these companies to understand how consumers interact with their brand and how it affects their buying behavior. This interaction can be measured through various touchpoints, such as social media engagement, customer reviews, and loyalty programs (Kumar & Pansari, 2016).

Several studies have highlighted the correlation between brand engagement and sales performance. For instance, Smith and Yang (2017) found that food and beverage firms with higher brand engagement levels tend to experience increased sales, as engaged consumers are more likely to make repeat purchases. Additionally, when customers feel emotionally connected to a brand, they exhibit greater loyalty and are more likely to become brand advocates (Batat, 2018).

Drawing on previous studies, this study seeks to reveal the relationship between consumer brand engagement and sales performance of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. Consumer brand engagement is a critical driver of sales performance for food and beverage companies, as it fosters customer loyalty and advocacy. Understanding and effectively managing brand engagement can lead to improved financial results in this industry.

## Statement of Problem

The interplay between consumer brand engagement and the sales performance of food and beverage firms is a central concern in the contemporary business landscape. In an industry as competitive as food and beverage, where numerous brands vie for consumers' attention and loyalty, understanding the precise dynamics of the relationship between brand engagement

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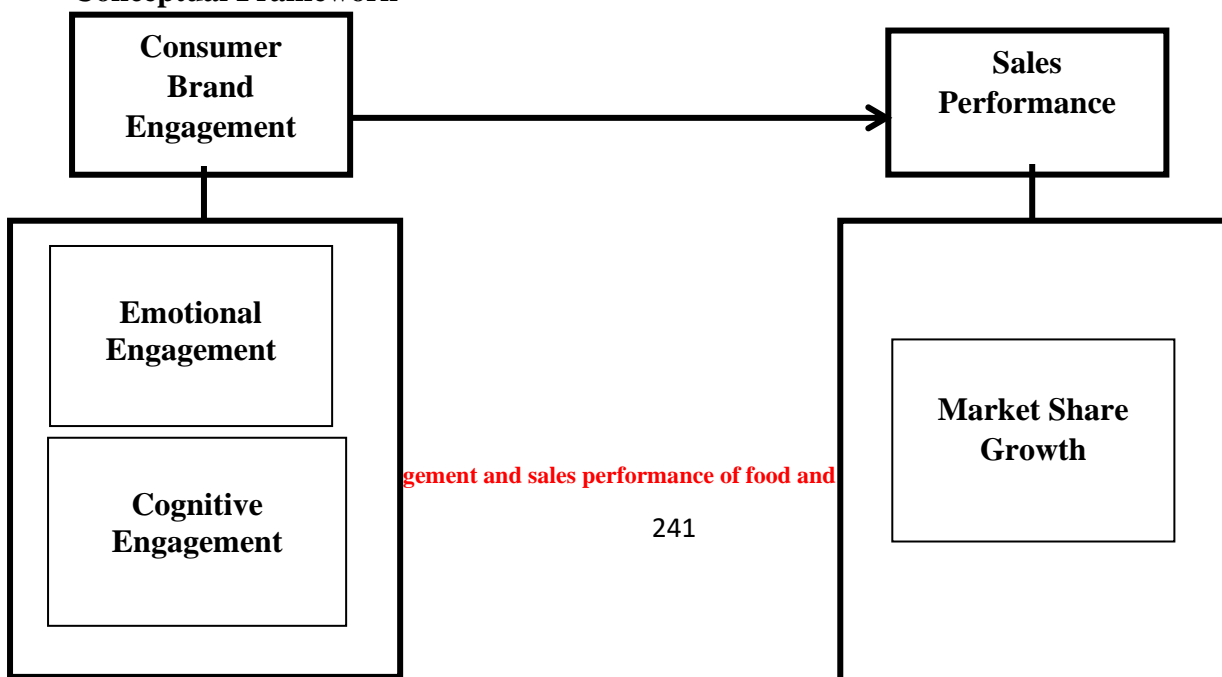
and sales outcomes is of paramount importance. This research is aimed at addressing the complexity and ambiguity inherent in this connection.

Consumer brand engagement encompasses a diverse range of interactions and connections that consumers establish with a brand, including activities such as social media interactions, participation in loyalty programs, and leaving product reviews. While the intuitive link between brand engagement and sales performance is evident, the specific mechanisms through which these interactions influence sales remain elusive. This knowledge gap necessitates an in-depth exploration to unravel the underlying dynamics.

The food and beverage industry's inherent complexity and dynamism further underscore the significance of this research. This landscape is marked by rapidly shifting consumer preferences, regulatory pressures, and evolving market trends. As a result, food and beverage companies must continuously adapt their marketing strategies to remain competitive. Therefore, this research seeks to shed light on how consumer brand engagement strategies can be effectively harnessed to impact sales performance within the context of this volatile industry.

This research aims to answer critical questions such as: What are the primary drivers of consumer brand engagement in the food and beverage sector? How do these levels of engagement translate into tangible sales figures? Are there specific engagement tactics that prove more effective in driving sales? Ultimately, this research seeks to provide actionable insights for food and beverage companies, enabling them to refine their branding and engagement strategies to boost sales, foster consumer loyalty, and effectively navigate the challenges posed by this ever-evolving market.

### Conceptual Framework





**Figure 1.1:** the conceptual framework showing the predictor variable and its dimensions, criterion variable and its measures.

**Source:** Thomas C. Thomas (2015).

### **Research Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this paper is to investigate the relationship between consumer brand engagement and sales performance of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. The objectives of this paper are to:

1. Determine the relationship between emotional engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.
2. Ascertain the relationship between cognitive engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the paper:

1. What is the relationship between emotional engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt?
2. What is the relationship between cognitive engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses will be tested using 0.05 as a benchmark:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between emotional engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between cognitive engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

### **Review of Related Literatures**

#### **Concept of Consumer Brand Engagement**

Consumer brand engagement is a multifaceted concept that lies at the heart of contemporary marketing strategies. It represents the depth of the connection that consumers establish with a brand, encompassing various forms of interaction and emotional attachment. This connection transcends the transactional nature of a purchase and extends into ongoing relationships

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between consumers and brands (Hollebeek, 2011). Consumer brand engagement is more than just buying a product; it involves active participation, loyalty, and advocacy.

One key aspect of brand engagement is the emotional connection consumers develop with a brand. This emotional bond is often fostered by a brand's ability to align with the values, lifestyle, and aspirations of its target audience (Thomson & MacInnis, 2010). When consumers perceive a brand as sharing their beliefs and values, they are more likely to engage with it at a deeper level. Furthermore, consumer brand engagement includes various touchpoints through which consumers interact with a brand. These touchpoints can include social media interactions, customer reviews, participation in loyalty programs, and even word-of-mouth recommendations (Hollebeek, 2011). Brands that actively manage and leverage these touchpoints can enhance their engagement levels.

The concept of consumer brand engagement is instrumental in building long-term customer relationships and influencing purchasing decisions. Engaged customers are more likely to be brand advocates, spreading positive word-of-mouth and influencing others to choose the brand (Muntinga et al., 2011). This, in turn, can lead to increased sales and sustained business success.

Activities involving consumers are indirectly related to search, evaluation of alternatives, and decision-making involving brand selection (Vivek et al., 2012). The brand of a product/service can create an attractive impression for consumers, in building awareness, trust, and customer loyalty. A good brand for a product/service can stimulate the creation of a good relationship between producers and consumers. This relationship increases customer engagement through social media, this can make customers happy and voluntarily share experiences and good news about the brand with their friends, fans, and followers, and they can become potential customers for the brand (Sherman & Smith, 2013).

In summary, consumer brand engagement is a multifaceted concept that involves emotional connections, various interaction touchpoints, and the potential for consumers to become brand advocates. It is a fundamental aspect of modern marketing, driving loyalty and influencing consumers' choices.

### **Emotional Engagement**

Consumer emotional engagement is a pivotal aspect of the broader concept of brand engagement, emphasizing the emotional connection that consumers establish with a brand. This connection goes beyond mere product satisfaction and transactional interactions, delving into the realm of emotions and feelings. It's an area of increasing significance in marketing and has garnered substantial research attention in recent years.

One fundamental aspect of emotional engagement is the emotional bond consumers develop with a brand. This bond is often cultivated when consumers perceive that a brand aligns with their values, lifestyle, and personal aspirations (Thomson & MacInnis, 2010). When a brand resonates with consumers on an emotional level, it has the potential to establish a long-lasting and deep-seated connection.

Moreover, consumer emotional engagement is strongly associated with brand loyalty. Research indicates that consumers who have a strong emotional connection with a brand are more likely to exhibit brand loyalty, such as making repeat purchases and choosing that brand



over competitors (Romani et al., 2017). This loyalty can translate into higher customer retention rates, increased customer lifetime value, and a positive impact on a brand's sales performance.

Consumer emotional engagement is also linked to positive word-of-mouth and advocacy. Engaged customers who feel emotionally connected to a brand are more inclined to share their positive experiences with friends and family, further bolstering a brand's reputation and attracting new customers (Homburg et al., 2010). This viral effect can lead to organic growth in a brand's customer base. Most importantly, consumer emotional engagement is a vital component of brand engagement, focusing on the emotional bond between consumers and a brand. This emotional connection not only fosters loyalty but also leads to positive word-of-mouth, both of which can significantly impact a brand's sales performance. Recognizing and cultivating emotional engagement is a strategic imperative for modern marketers.

### **Cognitive Engagement**

Consumer cognitive engagement is a fundamental dimension of brand engagement that focuses on the rational and cognitive aspects of consumer interaction with a brand. It entails consumers' awareness, knowledge, and intellectual connection with a brand. This form of engagement is characterized by consumers' ability to understand and recognize the brand, including its attributes, features, and functional benefits.

Cognitive engagement is closely related to brand recognition and recall. When consumers exhibit high cognitive engagement with a brand, they are more likely to recognize and remember the brand when making purchasing decisions. This recognition can be vital in influencing consumer choices, particularly in competitive markets (Hollebeek, 2011).

One aspect of cognitive engagement is related to consumers' information processing and decision-making. Research has shown that cognitively engaged consumers tend to be more information-seeking and deliberative in their decision-making processes (Harmeling et al., 2017). They may actively seek out and process information about a brand before making a purchase, which has implications for marketing and communication strategies.

Cognitive engagement is also linked to brand loyalty. When consumers possess a strong understanding of a brand's unique selling propositions and benefits, they are more likely to develop trust and loyalty toward that brand (Louro et al., 2019). This loyalty can lead to repeat purchases and positive brand advocacy.

Furthermore, consumer cognitive engagement underscores the importance of consumers' cognitive processes and rational understanding of a brand. It influences brand recognition, decision-making, and brand loyalty. Recognizing and nurturing cognitive engagement is a critical aspect of effective marketing strategies.

### **Concept of Sales performance**

Sales performance is the evaluation sales quantity generated by the activities of business primarily about that of individual sales representatives as described by O'Sullivan, and Abela (2007). Meanwhile, performance is the process of executing a task that can be used for



evaluation in marketing (Bonoma, 2012; Franco-Santos et al, 2007). Multiple organizations use Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to assess their targeted goal and objectives. KPIs are essential indicators used to measure and quantify sales performance to aid in more predictable and repeatable revenue generation process (Bonoma, 2012). Sales performance is measured by several KPI's including sales, the rate of contact, lead response time, follow-up contact and also through opportunity-to-win ratio.

The most apparent KPI in marketing is sales; particularly gross sales. Besides, marketers track sales by tracking its distribution to determine what methods work for them i.e. wholesale, retail, sales representatives, and online selling tools among others (Bendle, Farris, Pfeifer and Reibstein, 2016). On the other hand, the rate of contact is mostly relevant for sales representatives involved in outbound sales activities. Contact is assessed by the reach rates for the number of emails and calls that result in meaningful conversation which is crucial in measuring sales performance. Lead Response Time is also crucial to the measurement of performance of sales as it determines the speed at which sale representatives respond to customer queries, something that is vital in enhancing performance. It should be minimal to contact as many customers as possible within the shortest time. Companies use lead response time to access the customer- sales representative beneficial interaction. Additionally, follow-up contact involves following up queries after failed contact attempts which tends to be the most overlooked aspect of sales.

Sales Representatives should be persistent in following up with customer's attempts of contacts. By following up with the key performance indicators, companies can get a clear indication of follow-ups by their representatives. Finally, opportunity-to-Win ratio once a contact lead is transformed into an opportunity. Marketers need to measure how many customers are generated for sales opportunities. This performance indicator is also often used to measure the strengths and weaknesses of individual sales representatives apart from determining the overall performance of the sales team. Learning the strengths and weakness of the sales team influences allocation of resources (Claro & Kamakura, 2017).

Sales is an activity involving selling of products and services in return of money or other compensation, which is initiated and completed by the seller, the owner of the goods (Pendharkar & Pandey, 2011). However, sales performance can be defined as the actual quantity of goods sold in a given period of time as compared to the expected or budgeted sales for the year (Singh & Pingali, 2015). The sales performance of an organization depends



on the efficiency of the sales department. Kennan (2015) stated that when the sales department is efficient, it leads to improved sales performance and vice versa. Firms with a record of good sales performance have functional sales departments (Dale Carnegie & Associates, 2008) with efficient salesforce (AlDosiry, 2015). The sales department and sales personnel are very instrumental in improving the sales performance of an organization. Without adequate efforts from the sales department and sales team, the organization will consistently experience poor sales performance and this will consequently affect the revenue of the organization (Macky, 2007).

Companies usually set their target or budgeted sales for each year and compared it with the actual sales made for the year. If the actual sales made for a specific period is higher than the budget sales for the year as set by the company, it means that the company has obtained a good sales performance for the period under review but where the budgeted sales for the year exceeds the actual sales of the year, it then means that the entrepreneur has obtained a poor sales performance for the said period (Singh & Pingali, 2015). In many cases, company compared the sales of their company against that of their competitors for a specific period of time (Moghaddam et., al., 2016). If the sales of their firm exceeds that of their major competitors for a specific period under review, the company is said to have obtained a good sales performance but where their sales is less than that of their competitors for the period under review, the company is said to have experienced a poor sales performance.

Every company wants to increase their sales from year to year and surpass that made by their competitors. Increasing sales performance is the only way of maximizing profit and experience rapid growth (Lee, 2013). Companies generally believe that if they can increase sales (sales growth) and quickly convert their stock into cash (sales turnover), they will maximize profit and grow to become a larger entity. This is why many companies measure their sales performance using sales growth and sales turnover criteria (Muriithi, 2015).

### **Market Share Growth**

Market share is a company's percentage of sales in a particular industry. Both increases and decreases may affect profits, so managers typically adjust operations and marketing strategies to increase or decrease it as needed. People also look at this figure before they invest in a company, since it can indicate a business's competitiveness. When discussing this topic, it's important to remember that a share market is something different: it's the exchange of companies' stocks. Victor (2009), market share represents the percentage of an industry or market's total sales that is earned by a particular company over a specified time period. Market share is calculated by taking the company's sales over the period and dividing it by the total sales of the industry over the same period. This metric is used to give a general idea of the size of a company in relation to its market and its competitors.

Market share can be calculated either in terms of the money earned from sales or the number of units sold. The basic way of calculating this percentage is just revenue or units sold divided by that of the total market: for instance, if a computer store sold one out of every four computers, it would have a 25% market share. Real-life calculations are a little more difficult though, since the numbers can change drastically based on how a business defines its market. Adjusting for inflation and the way that sales or units are counted has an impact as well. For instance, a company could get a completely different percentage if it considered itself as





compared to a global or local market, or if it calculated orders fulfilled rather than orders made. Likewise, even if a company had a very large share, it may not be as profitable as it initially seems if it has to pay very high taxes or labour costs. Since there are so many factors to consider, managers usually use a combined calculation of units and revenue and use these figures as only one small part of their in-house statistics.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on the expectation confirmation theory.

#### **Expectation confirmation theory**

Expectations-confirmation theory posits that expectations, coupled with perceived performance, lead to post-purchase satisfaction. This effect is mediated through positive or negative disconfirmation between expectations and performance. If a product outperforms expectations (negative disconfirmation) the consumer is likely to be dissatisfied (Oliver, 1980; Spreng et al. 1996).

The four main constructs in the model are: expectations, performance, disconfirmation, and satisfaction. Expectations reflect anticipated behavior (Churchill and Suprenant, 1982). They are predictive, indicating expected product attributes at some point in the future (Spreng et al. 1996). Expectations serve as the comparison standard in ECT – what consumers use to evaluate performance and form a disconfirmation judgment (Halstead, 1999). Disconfirmation is hypothesized to affect satisfaction, with positive disconfirmation leading to satisfaction and negative disconfirmation leading to dissatisfaction.

A major debate within the marketing literature concerns the nature of the effect of disconfirmation on satisfaction. The root of the problem lies in the definition of predictive expectations as the comparison standard for perceived performance. In such case, the confirmation of negative expectations is not likely to lead to satisfaction (Santos and Boote 2003). To overcome this problem, researchers have proposed other comparison standards such as desires, ideals, equity, or past product and brand experience.

#### **Empirical Review**

Smith, J. & Johnson, A. (2020) studied the impact of customer engagement on sales performance in the retail sector". The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Data were collected through surveys and in-depth interviews with retail managers. The population for this study included a sample of 200 retail businesses of various sizes, spanning multiple locations in the United States. Retail managers and customers were the primary participants. The research found a strong positive correlation between customer engagement strategies and sales performance. Retail businesses that actively engaged with their customers through loyalty programs, personalized marketing, and social media interactions experienced a significant increase in sales. Customer feedback and testimonials were identified as crucial factors influencing potential customers' purchasing decisions. Additionally, the qualitative interviews revealed that customer engagement led to enhanced brand loyalty, repeat business, and positive word-of-mouth, all of which contributed to improved sales performance.

Ivonne, Giovanni & Eriana Astuty (2022) did a similar study on building the effectively customer engagement in improving performance. This research was conducted to obtain



empirical evidence from various customer engagement activities in social media to significantly improve the sales performance of business units. This study uses a quantitative approach to the research object, customer engagement, and sales performance. The research subject is a culinary business with Oshin Brand. Action research was chosen as a research strategy to achieve research objectives. Research participants consist of owners as researchers and consumers as respondents who will assess the action research results carried out data analysis using descriptive analysis and verification analysis using SPSS20. The online questionnaire as a research instrument was distributed randomly to one hundred consumers as respondents. Based on the one action research cycle has done for eight months, it was found that customer engagement built with awareness, enthusiasm, interaction, activity, and exceptional experience significantly impacted sales performance. This can be seen from the results of the paired t-test which showed a positive difference in sales results before and after customer engagement was carried out through Oshin's social media Instagram. These empirical findings can provide insight to the culinary entrepreneurs about "how-to" optimize the social media online marketing through customer engagement to improve sales performance.

### Research Methodology

A cross-sectional survey was selected for this study because it was easy to embark on and the result from the sample can be extrapolated to the larger population. The study adopted the correlational survey design to determine the extent of the relationship between consumer brand engagement and sales performance of food and beverage firms Port Harcourt. The population of this study comprises of the twenty nine (29) registered food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt (source: [www.directorate.org](http://www.directorate.org)). Since the population of the study which is twenty nine (29) registered food and beverages firms in Port Harcourt, the study adopted a census approach. The census approach enabled the researcher to study the entire population with a focus on the managerial staff (production manager, business development manager, marketing manager, relationship manager and sales manager). To generate data for the study, the questionnaire will be distributed in the frame of ten (10) copies per firm. A total of Two hundred and ninety (290) respondents will be used as the study subjects. Data collection to be used for this study will be sourced from two main sources which are primary and secondary. At the primary level, this study employed the use of simple percentage, frequency tables, and other descriptive statistical tool to present the data that was generated, while the hypotheses will be tested using the Kendall's tau<sub>b</sub> with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science).

### Data Analysis

For the analysis for this job, the researcher distributed 265 copies of the questionnaire produced, however only 240 respondents properly filled and returned their questionnaire, thus, only 240 responses was coded and used for the analysis of this study.

**Table1: Age Distribution**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-25 years	40	16.7	16.7	16.7
	25-30 years	76	31.7	31.7	48.3
	30-35 years	87	36.3	36.3	84.6
	35 & above	37	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total		240	100.0	100.0	

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Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 1 showed the age distribution of managers and employees of food and beverage firms in Rivers State that attended to the study questionnaire. As shown in the result, 40 respondents i.e. 16.7% of the respondents were between the ages of 20 and 25; 76 respondent (i.e. 31.7%) were between the ages of 25 and 30; 87 respondents i.e. 36.3% of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 35; 37 respondents i.e. 15.4% of the respondents were between the ages of 36 and above. The analysis shows that most staff that responded to the questionnaire were between the ages of 30 and 35 years.

**Table 2: Gender Distribution**

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	140	58.3	58.3	58.3
	Female	100	41.7	41.7	100.0
Total		240	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Analysis of data in Table 2 shows that most respondents were male staff. It indicates that though, it was not intentional, the researcher was able to reach more male staff than females in the distribution of the research instrument.

**Table3: Educational Qualification**

		Educational Qualification			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	WAEC/SSCE	21	8.8	8.8	8.8
	B.Sc/HND/B.Tech	65	27.1	27.1	35.8
	Msc/PhD	104	43.3	43.3	79.2
	Others	50	20.8	20.8	100.0
Total		240	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 3 revealed that 21 respondents (i.e. 8.8%) were S.S.C.E/W.A.E.C holders; 65 respondents (i.e. 27.1%) were B.SC/HND/B.TECH holders; 104 respondents (i.e. 43.3%) were holders of Masters/PHD degree; and 50 respondents (i.e. 20.8%) were holders of other degrees/certifications. This analysis indicates that most staff were holders of MSC/PHD degrees and the least responses were obtained from WAEC/SSCE holders.

**Research Question One:** What is the relationship between emotional engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt?

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant relationship between emotional engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.



**Table 4: Kendall’s tau\_b Tests Output relationship between emotional engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.**

			Correlations	
			Emotional Engagement	Market Share Growth
Kendall's tau_b	Emotional Engagement	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.751**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	240	240
	Market Share Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.751**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	240	240

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field survey, 2023

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.751$ ) between emotional engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt is strong and positive. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 0.75$ ) indicates that 75% of change in market share growth can be explained through emotional engagement. The significant value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a relationship between emotional engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

**Research Question Two:** What is the relationship between cognitive engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt?

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant relationship between cognitive engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

**Table 5: Kendall’s tau\_b Tests Output on the relationship between cognitive engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt**

			Correlations	
			Cognitive Engagement	Market Share Growth
Kendall's tau_b	Cognitive	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.786**



Engagement	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	240	240
	Correlation Coefficient	.786**	1.000
Market Share Growth	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	240	240

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field survey, 2023

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.786$ ) between cognitive engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt is strong and positive. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 0.79$ ) indicates that 79% of change in market share growth can be explained through cognitive engagement. The significant value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a relationship between cognitive engagement and market share growth of food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

### Conclusion

The impact of consumer brand engagement on the sales performance of food and beverage firms is undeniable. This research has highlighted several key findings that demonstrate the significance of cultivating brand engagement in this industry.

Firstly, consumer brand engagement fosters emotional connections and loyalty. When consumers feel emotionally attached to a food and beverage brand, they are more likely to become repeat customers and advocates. This translates into higher sales and sustained customer relationships.

Secondly, the role of social engagement cannot be underestimated. Brands that actively engage with consumers on social media, encourage user-generated content, and foster online communities tend to experience increased brand visibility and customer interaction. This social engagement contributes to enhanced sales performance.

Moreover, cognitive engagement, where consumers possess a deep understanding of the brand's attributes and benefits, influences informed decision-making. Informed consumers are more likely to make choices in favor of the brand, impacting sales positively. In conclusion, fostering consumer brand engagement in the food and beverage industry is a strategic imperative. By nurturing emotional, social, and cognitive engagement and implementing the recommended strategies, firms can enhance their sales performance, build lasting customer relationships, and thrive in this competitive market.

### Recommendations

- Food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt should focus on personalizing brand experiences. Tailoring products, marketing messages, and engagement efforts to individual preferences can enhance emotional engagement and drive sales.



- Food and beverage firms are also advised to use emotional storytelling in marketing campaigns to connect with consumers on a personal level. Emotional engagement often stems from shared values and experiences.
- An active presence on social media platforms is essential. Brands should engage with customers through interactive content, respond to queries promptly, and create spaces for user-generated content. This strengthens social engagement.
- Brands should prioritize educating consumers about the unique attributes and benefits of their products. Informed consumers are more likely to engage cognitively, leading to informed purchasing decisions.

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