

Brand Positioning Strategies and Customer Engagement of Registered Fashion Designing Outlets in Rivers State

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>Organizational health consideration has grown beyond managing the external environment to the calibration of internal mechanism that has direct bearing on customer engagement. Customer engagement in marketing literature is identified as a pivot target of business organizations which consume more than physical resources. Brand positioning strategies in recent time had become a viable tool of customer engagement in the fashion and design industry. However, the industry in Nigeria, particularly, in Rivers State has continued to suffer poor patronage as compare to their foreign counterpart owing to low adoption of positioning strategy. This study investigates the relationship between brand positioning strategies and customer engagement of registered fashion outlets in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study specifically examined the relationship between quality based positioning, functional based positioning, differentiation based positioning, value based positioning and customer commitment and loyalty. The study adopted quantitative research design using a survey method. A total of 309 subjects made of CEOs, managers and employees of fashion design outlets were surveyed through questionnaire administration. Five research questions were posed and nine hypotheses were tested. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation while inferential statistics in the form of Multiple Regression was used to test the stated hypotheses on SPSS version 25. Results from the Multiple Regression analysis reveal a strong significant linear relationship between quality based positioning, functional based positioning, differentiation based positioning, value based positioning and customer commitment. It also revealed a strong significant linear relationship between quality based positioning, functional based positioning, differentiation based positioning, value based positioning and customer loyalty. It was concluded that brand positioning strategies positively influences customer engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers state to a high extent. The study therefore recommends that: fashion practitioners in Rivers State are advice to emphasize and focus on producing unique wears that has touch of quality in order to elicit continuous customer patronage and loyalty. It is also expedient for all fashion houses to re-evaluate their packaging methods since it serves an essential function in projecting brand's image and customer engagement. Fashion dealers should endeavour to practically position their wears so that their products are recognizably different from their competitors and thus elicit increased customer engagement. Dealers of fashion outfit should ensure that their products are value laden in order to provide customer with a strong incentive to make a purchase and remain loyal to their service offering.</i> Keywords: Brand Positioning, Strategies, Customer Engagement, Registered Fashion, Designing Outlets, Rivers State
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Copyright © 2025 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited. Citation: Tom, Charles Miyene. (2025). Brand Positioning Strategies and Customer Engagement of Registered Fashion Designing Outlets in Rivers State. UKR Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (UKRJMS). Volume 1(issue7), 01-36.	

INTRODUCTION

The advent of globalization particularly in the early 1980s which redefined marketing functions and operations resulted to increasing customer demands for local products. This development also brought high competitions among firms and exposes them to both opportunities and challenges in the market, (Ash, 2010) particularly in the fashion design industry. The Nigerian fashion design industry like other industries had grown in size and performance in recent times attracting global concern. Selva (2021) revealed that the fashion design industry in Nigeria has significantly advanced, especially in the course of the last 20 years. It was observed by Kunle (2019) that the textile, apparel, and footwear sector of the industry has average growth of 17% since 2010 and contributes immensely to the general growth of Nigeria economy. This rise has been fuelled by increase in demand and partly by unprecedented initiatives that continue to edge Nigeria into the global fashion consciousness. Events such as Lagos Fashion Week have championed this movement through anticipated annual runway shows and incubator-style techniques used as positioning strategies to grow the brands. These activities by the firm focused achieving competitiveness and customer engagement through brand positioning.

This is because positioning is underpinned by the philosophy of understanding and meeting unique consumer needs. Effective positioning strategies offer the customer benefits tailored to solve a problem related to their needs in a way that is different to competitors (Nyambura, 2012). The value of positioning lies in the link it provides between the analyses of the internal corporate and external competitive environments. This is fundamental to the definitions of strategic marketing which point to the matching of internal resources with environmental opportunities (Pike & Ryan 2004). The importance of brand positioning is further supported by evidence that indicates a positive relationship between company performance (in terms of profitability and/or efficiency) and well-formulated and clearly-defined positioning activities (Porter, 1996). The unique challenge of a positioning strategy, thus, lies in rejuvenating the brand image to make it relevant in an evolving environment, while honoring the brand equity heritage. This has given rise to the adoption of varying brand positioning strategies in marketing literatures by different authors leading to our acceptance of quality based positioning, functional based positioning, differentiation based positioning and value based

positioning since our focus is based on customer engagement.

Quality remains an importance consideration in purchase decision of fashion products since it is used to measure up with cost, thus used as a positioning strategy. Brand quality is complex and multifaceted and defined the ability of a product to meet or exceed customer's expectations (Waters & Waters, 2008). The most common operational definition posits quality as the customer's perception of product and service excellence, (Ling & Shaheen, 2018). Intense global competition in the industry has highlighted the increasing importance of quality as superior quality not only differentiates competitors; but validates the worthiness of a company to compete. Holistic functionality of the internal structure and system of an industry is a determinant of its competitiveness. This implies that brand competitiveness is defined by the functionality of both internal and external structure of an industry, which includes the effectiveness of plant and machinery, system functionality, individual departments, functions, or roles within the company as well as product performance. Functionality remains the ability of an entity to perform a given task hence a functional system is viable to position the fashion industry. Differentiation is another strategy used for brand positioning. This creates a more unique product image so that it becomes more difficult for customers to directly compare brands thereby allowing firms to charge a premium. Brand differentiation has had a long history of being a key focus for successful firms (Davcik & Rundquist, 2012) and is the mechanism by which brands attempt to stand out from others.

As identified as a key element in brand positioning, successful brands constantly measure high on differentiation, while declining brands measure inversely on perceived differentiation, (Aaker, 2003). Differentiation can be created through attributes, psychological or emotional benefits, or through customer experience. It can also be created with a clear brand identity which includes a set of values, brand personality, brand attributes and promises that distinguish the brand from its competitors, (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010). Value has also seen as a factor in brand positioning thus accepted within marketing literatures as a dimension. The term Value Positioning, describes the process of adapting price towards the position a company want their products and services to represent in the market. It is a marketing strategy in which firm attempts to create a "position" for brand in

the minds of target customers that according to the price is consistent to the company's positioning. A different position and a different pricing result in the targeting of a different consumer segment. The brand positioning strategies of a firm is aimed at customer engagement which described the emotional attachment that a customer experience during the repeated and ongoing interactions. Engagement occurs through satisfaction, loyalty and excitement about a brand, (Rohit & Kuldeep, 2016). Organizations who engage customers to the point where they are moved to behavioral change do so by exploring opportunities for emotional connections through ongoing, consistently positive experiences.

The recent global economic crisis which saw the removal of some items from Forex list in Nigeria contributed to an increasing growth of the local industries particularly the fashion design industry. However, this revolution exposed firms in the industry to high competitions as demand for local product increases which explain the reason for the emergence of more firms in the sector. In staying competitive, managerial expertise are needed towards increasing customer engagement. Customer engagement is therefore crucial to the continuous existence of firms in the industry thus attracting more concern in resources and commitment. Customer engagement is used to measure the degree and depth of brand-focused interactions, thus Vivek et al. (2012) discussed it as the intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with an organization's offerings or organizational activities, which either the customer or the organization initiate. Customer engagement in a virtual brand community involves specific interactive experiences between consumers and the brand, and/or other members of the community. In the view of Brodie (2013) customer engagement remains a context dependent, psychological state characterized by fluctuating intensity levels that occur within dynamic, iterative engagement processes. Customer engagement determines organizational performance particularly in the fashion design industry where competition is stiff.

The business of the fashion design in Nigeria particularly in Rivers State is left with no small challenges ranging from limited resources to poor managerial strides which reduce its competitiveness in the global market. This is evident in the absent of local brand in the international sphere despite the availability of digital tools. The Nigerian fashion market is still dominated by foreign brands such as Dior, Prada, Gucci, H&M, Lewis, Nike, Zara, TJ Maxx, Calvin Klein, Donatella Versace, Karl Lagerfeld, Tommy Hilfiger, etc. which challenge the

growth of our local fashion industry. The pace of innovation in the industry is also a call for concern. The recent years had seen massive deployment of digital technology into this industry however these innovations are still unfriendly to the Nigerian market. Gulbash (2020) contends that the new unrest of innovation undermined pretty much every industry, except particularly fashion retail. Since the introduction of the cloud and the web, the fashion industry in other client has adjusted cloud-based programming answers for following supply chains and clients continuously. Gulbash (2020) acknowledge that the fashion industry has turned out to be increasingly focused, particularly for fashion originators and new fashion entrepreneurs. Disappointedly, most fashion firms in Rivers State still **lack** promotional strategies to present the industry competitively. Amidst numerous studies conducted on customer engagement in the fashion design industry, none had modeled a robust and holistic brand positioning strategy that incorporate the **content of** quality, function, differentiation and value which this study sought. This research therefore study brand positioning strategies and customer engagement in registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State. Brand positioning strategy is modeled in this work as a predictor of customer engagement.

Conceptual Framework

This research sought to establish a relationship between Brand Positioning Strategies (BPS) and Customer Engagement (CE) of registered Fashion Design Outlets in Rivers State. The dimensions of Brand Positioning Strategies (BPS) which include: Quality Based Positioning (QBP), Functionality Based Positioning (FBP), Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP) and Price Based Positioning (VBP) are linked to Customer Commitment (CC) and Customer Loyalty (CL) which are the measures of Customer Engagement (CE). These variables are moderated by Organizational Factor (OF) of Managerial Competence, Safety Culture, Communication Pattern and Employee Relation. The linking sought to establish a relationship between the predictor and criterion variables. This demonstration is depicted in the diagram below.

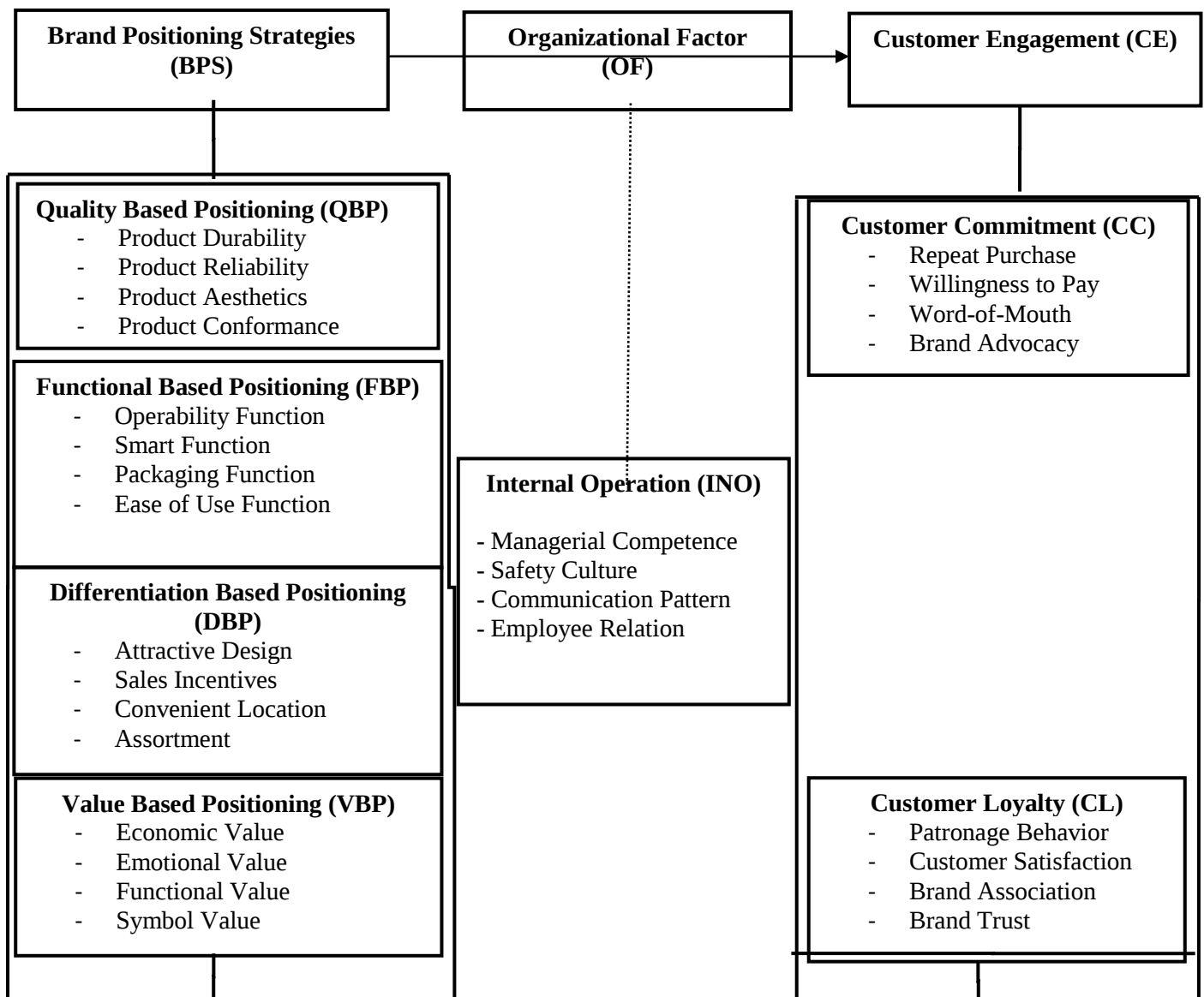


Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing the link between Brand Positioning Strategies and Customer Engagement of Registered Fashion design Outlets.

Source: Akpabio et al. (2020), Bhat et al. (1998), Maina et al. (2016), Aashish (2021), Morgan et al. (1994), Chaudhuri et al. (2001)

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to guide the conduct of this research.

- To what extent does Quality Based Positioning relates with Customer Engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State?
- To what extent does Functional Based Positioning relates with Customer Engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State?
- To what extent does Differentiation Based Positioning relates with Customer Engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State?
- To what extent does Value Based Positioning relates with Customer Engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State?
- To what extent does Organizational Factor influence on the relationship between Brand Positioning Strategies and Customer Engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are tested in this research

Ho₁: Quality Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Commitment of fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Ho₂: Functional Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Commitment of fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Ho₃: Differentiation Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Commitment of fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Ho₄: Value Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Commitment of fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Ho₅: Quality Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Loyalty of fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Ho₆: Functional Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Loyalty in registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Ho₇: Differentiation Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Loyalty in registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Ho₈: Value Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Loyalty in registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Ho₉: Organizational Factor does not influence the relationship between Brand Positioning Strategies and Customer Engagement of registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Brand Position Strategy

Different authors understand brand positioning slightly differently. Literature shows that there is a development in understanding what positioning means for brand management, moving from advertising strategy to core long-term brand strategy determining consumer perception of the brand. The word “positioning” was first used by Ries and Trout in 1969 in an article in Industrial Marketing (Selminaz, 2020) describing a strategy for staking out turf or filling a slot in the mind of target customers. Positioning also mean the act of designing the company’s offering and image to occupy a distinct place in the target market’s mind. This entails selecting and highlighting appropriate product features and focusing on segmentation and image-building (Aaker et al., 1982).

Alfred, et al. (2014) observed positioning to involve systematic process or set of strategic steps adopted by marketers to conspicuously attract attention, catch and seize the eyes, and implant the brand in the minds of buyers and users. This process in itself is a concoction (Edema, 2012) or a mix of flavorings to woo customers. Positioning is the way a company wants customers to perceive, think and feel about its brand versus competitive entries.

Quality Based Positioning

Quality based positioning is the use of quality products and services to create additional value and attractive features to attracting patronage. Quality-based positioning strategy is basically charging more for a commodity, which is intended to create the illusion among consumers that the product is of higher quality than the competition, (Darpan, 2018). Quality positioning is another positioning strategy that has been in operation **since the days of barter**. Marketers often use price/ quality characteristics to position their brands. The quality of a product can be shown through exceptional craftsmanship, small-batch production, high quality materials, and even sustainable practices that make it more expensive to produce. The quality of a service can be shown through evidence of exceptional end results, high ROI, and glowing customer testimonials. Whether it’s a product, service or experience, **the higher the quality the better the brand can use that quality to enhance its reputation**. Although price is an important consideration, the product quality must be comparable to, or even better than, competing brands for the positioning strategy to be effective. Often the price and quality of a product align, certainly in the mind of the consumer, as the high price is often associated with high quality. But positioning a product based on its high quality or ‘luxury’ is different from positioning based on price.

Product Durability

Durability is the ability of a physical product to remain functional, without requiring excessive maintenance or repair, when faced with the challenges of normal operation over its design lifetime, (Cooper, 1994). There are several measures of durability in use, including years of life, hours of use, and number of operational cycles, (Stahel, 2010). Product durability is predicated by good repairability and regenerability in conjunction with maintenance, (Lienig, 2017). Every durable product must be capable of adapting to technical, technological and design developments, (Lienig,

2017). This must be accompanied by a willingness on the part of consumers to forgo having the "very latest" version of a product. Durability remains an important feature of product quality that had received concern in marketing. Quality can be seen in products as anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or need, Kotler and Armstrong (2012), while Aaker (1994), quoted Ehsani (2015), said that "quality of product is the customer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of the product or service, with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives, ". Kotler et al. (2012) assumed that product quality is the characteristic of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy stated or implied customer needs. It is important to note that the durability in quality of the product is not reviewed by the company standpoint it is seen from the perspective of the customer.

Product Reliability

Reliability is defined as the probability that a product, system, or service will perform its intended function adequately for a specified period of time, or will operate in a defined environment without failure. A more appropriate definition of reliability is "the probability that a unit will perform its intended function until a specified point in time under encountered use conditions." The point is that the environment in which a product operates is a critical factor in evaluating a product's reliability. Reliability is quality over time. This implies that good quality is necessary but not sufficient! One major difficulty and major contrast between quality and reliability is that reliability can be assessed directly only after a product has been in the field for some time; accurate reliability prediction presents a number of technical challenges. Meeker et al. (2003) maintain that reliability is the probability that a product or equipment will perform satisfactorily for a given time under normal conditions of use. Reliability is a product capability to fulfill intended tasks for a specified performance period.

Product Aesthetics

The Oxford dictionary defines aesthetics as a set of principles associated with nature and the appreciation of beauty. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language describes aesthetics as "a conception of what is artistically valid or beautiful." According to Bhadauria (2016) aesthetics is the philosophy of beauty. Understandably, aesthetics has been of interest to philosophers, researchers, and scholars for centuries. The ancient philosophers recognized aesthetics to be a

source of sheer joy and pleasure, and aesthetics have been studied in diverse fields, including fine art, psychology, English literature, and marketing. Aesthetic appeal is related to the enthralling, beautiful, and luxurious characteristics of a design, which relates to hedonism. Aesthetics is commonly confused with the appreciation of beauty in the arts; however, the study of aesthetics is far more complex. In the field of consumer behavior, the term aesthetics primarily refers to the form or beauty of things, individuals, or settings. Aesthetic phenomena elicit responses on a continuum, which vary from a simple hedonic reward to intense experiences that are almost spiritual in nature. Indeed, marketing focuses on aesthetics related not only to products but also to how they are promoted and consumed (Venkatesh & Meamber, 2006).

Product Conformance

Conformance is the precision with which the product or service meets the specified standards, (Ling et al., 2018). The dimension of conformance depicts to what extent a product's design and operating characteristics meet established standards. This dimension owes the most to the traditional approaches to quality pioneered by experts. Conformance is essential in quality assurance of a project management plan. Without it, the overall project performance will turn out poorly. By definition, conformance is a concept that delivers the result that falls within the acceptable limit set by the quality requirement. This means that conformance is the ability of the product, service or process to meet the desired specifications indicated by the buyer and customer. The specification is the interpretation of what the customers need thus conformance is perceived as something that is acceptable. All products and services involve specifications of some sort. When products are developed, these specifications are set and a target is set, for instance the materials used or the dimension of the product. Not only the target but also the tolerance (the range of permitted deviation from the target) is defined. Quality of conformance is basically meeting the standards defined in the design phase after the product is manufactured or while the service is delivered. This phase is also concerned about quality control starting from raw material to the finished product.

Functional Based Positioning

Functional based Positioning deals with solving problems, providing benefits and getting a favorable perception from investors, stockholders and consumers. This is used when the brand or products provide

solutions to problems and provide benefits to customers. It focuses on the function, benefit or utility that it gives to the customer. Aaker (1996) in (Usamah et al., 2018) maintains that functional positioning is based on a product attribute which is of functional utility for the consumer. It can also be stated that functional positioning means that the brand satisfies the customer with respect to product performance or functioning (Bhat et al., 1998) cited in (Usamah et al., 2018). For a marketing manager, the objective is to identify functional benefits which are of primary importance for the consumers and that can trigger purchase for that particular brand, (Usamah et al., 2018). Benefits provided by a brand to the audience are a fundamental source of building up brand credibility. These benefits may be of functional or emotional nature, (Karolina et al., 2012). If a brand provides both benefits simultaneously, perception thereof in the target group will be more complete and more comprehensive. The functional benefits of a brand come from unique resources of an administrative unit. For this reason, functional benefits as a reason to believe can be applied to a limited extent.

Operability Function

Operability is the ability to keep a piece of equipment, a system or a whole industrial installation in a safe and reliable functioning condition, according to pre-defined operational requirements. **Operability** defined the capacity and flexibility that a product or process have to achieve a range of operating conditions safely, reliably, profitably and with good dynamic performance and product quality. Operability involves responding to deviations from a base case operation. These can occur due to advantageous situations, such as increased market demands or lower purchase price of an alternative feed material, or due to an undesired situation, such as a decrease in equipment performance or equipment failure. Operability encompasses characteristics that ensure the process has the capacity and flexibility to achieve a range of operating conditions safely, reliably, profitably and with good dynamic performance and product quality. The Operability ensures to keep equipment, a system or a unit and plant in a safe and reliable functioning condition, according to pre-defined operational requirements. **Operability must be considered at the design stage to ensure excellent dynamic operation can be achieved.** Operability is about designing production systems to handle a constant state of partial failure. Operability doesn't stop at design – industrial asset management is a continuous feedback

loop that should feed into future projects. The opportunity to impact maintainability and operability of an asset extends far beyond scoping and design.

Smart Function

Kintzig, Poulain, Privat, and Favenne (2003) define smart object simply as a physical device equipped with a processor, memory, at least one network connection, and various sensors/actuators. Siegmund (2004) adds a specific dimension to this definition and defines a smart product as an “everyday object” consisting both from an everyday thing and information technology that augments it. In general, smart products are products that contain IT in the form of, for example, microchips, software and sensors, and that are therefore able to collect, process, and produce information. Product smartness consists of the dimensions of autonomy, adaptability, reactivity, multifunctionality, ability to cooperate, humanlike interaction, and personality. Rijdsdijk and Hultink (2009) investigated whether these smartness dimensions, with the exception of humanlike interaction and personality, influence innovation attributes such as relative advantage, compatibility, observability, complexity and perceived risk. Higher levels of product smartness generally increased the perceived characteristics that determine an innovation's rate of adoption. Smart products possess one or more of these dimensions to a lesser or higher degree. Therefore, the overall smartness of a product can be conceptualized as the extent to which it possesses these dimensions. Rijdsdijk and Hultink (2002) referred to these abilities collectively as product smartness.

Ease of use Function

Ease of use function is a basic concept that describes how easily users can use a product. This can be explained as the extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use. Dong et al. (2017) present that the concept could be understood as the extent in which whether or not using a specific system is easy. Furthermore, Stocchi et al. (2019) defined it as consumers' feel of effortlessness (and convenience) while using a specific product. keni(2020) posits that ease of use always ranks highly when it comes to what customers want from a product or service. Whether it's something they intend to use in their personal lives, like a mobile phone, or their work lives, like office equipment or business software, simplicity is crucial when attempting to make product or service stand out to potential customers. A study carried

out by [Accenture](#) revealed 33% of consumers cite ease of use as a key factor when buying a smart phone device. The study by Reckon (2017) also shows that ease of use always rated high on our customers' agendas when asked what they look for in a new software product.

Differentiation Based Positioning

Differentiation in business refers to the art of marketing a particular product or service in a way that makes it stand out against other products or services. This involves differentiating it from competitors' products as well as a business's own product/service offerings. Differentiation is often viewed as a necessary condition, to gain competitive advantage over rival firms (Pehrsson, 2009). Differentiation is the practical 'positioning' of products or services so that they are recognizably different from their competitors. Byron et al. (2001) defined differentiated positioning as a strategic option in which head to head competition is avoided by offering unique benefits. Differentiation is the act of designing a set of meaningful differences to distinguish the company's offer from competitors' offers. Differentiation is a business strategy where firms attempt to gain competitive advantage by increasing the perceived value of their products or services relative to the perceived value of other firms' products or services. According to Rahman et al. (2011), differentiation is a business strategy that seeks to build competitive advantage with its product or service by having it "different" from other available competitive products based on features, performance, or other factors not directly related to cost and price. To be effective, the message of differentiation must reach the clients, as the customers' perceptions of the company are important. Dirisu et al. (2013) state that while there are numerous ways to differentiate brands, identifying meaningful product driven differentiators can be especially fruitful in gaining and sustaining a competitive advantage.

Attractive Design

Parameshwaran et al. (2015) regarded design as the overall features of products requested by consumers, which would influence product appearance, features, and problem-solving. Attractive design is a blend with business goals to help brands make consistently successful products. Attractive designs are the features of competing product in the market. Lee (2014) proposed product design as a creative strategy to help an enterprise acquire competitive advantages in the market. In this case, product design is the key success factor in the market that it could not only attract consumer attention,

but could also clearly communicate with consumers to promote product value. Product design is cross-functional, knowledge-intensive work that has become increasingly important in today's fast-paced, globally competitive environment. It is a key strategic activity in many firms because attractive products contribute significantly to sales revenue. Product design is a critical factor in organizational success because it sets the characteristics, features, and performance of the service or good that consumers demand, (Hong et al., 2000). The objective for creating attractive design is to create a good or service with excellent functional utility and sales appeal at an acceptable cost and within a reasonable time. Homburg et al. (2015) stated that product design played an important role in the communication of product use and operation procedure with consumers as it was the mutual arrangement and match of product configuration and elements to enhance the functional and economic pleasure of products.

Sales Incentives

One factor that influences product sales is the incentives offered to the potential customers, Kim, 2014). An incentive is something that motivates an individual to perform an action. Gary (2021) defined *sales incentive as money or some other type of reward offered to salespeople for selling a particular amount of goods or services*. The study of incentive structures is central to the study of all economic activities (both in terms of individual decision-making and in terms of cooperation and competition within a larger institutional structure), (Subramanian, 2017). Offering customers additional benefits such as discounts, access to early products, free items, bonuses, discounts, loyalty programs, or special deals is what turns your customer's standard buying experience into something engaging and memorable. Perhaps the most notable incentive in economics is price, (Gary, 2021). Price acts as a signal to suppliers to produce and to consumers to buy. For example, a sale is nothing more than a store providing an incentive to potential customers to buy. The lowering of the price makes the purchase a better idea for some customers; the sale seeks to persuade individuals to change their actions (namely, to buy the product). Similarly, the increase in price acts as an incentive to suppliers to produce more of a good. If suppliers think they can sell their products for more, they will be inclined to produce more.

Convenient Location

Location selection is one of the business decisions that have to be made carefully. Past research has shown that

business location have had relationship with business' success (Alli et al. 1991) cited in Nurul (2004). The location of business is one of the most important variables in determining potential success, (Rick, 2019). Businesses need to establish locations that generate the most customer traffic. The impact of a business location can usually be determined immediately. The location decision of a facility is part of a corporate planning process. Generally, an enterprise initiates the site selection process by forecasting future capacity requirements. Location decision is a well-established research area within Operations Management and is one of the ten major decision areas of operations management. Extant literature demonstrates the relevance of good location to cooperate prosperity (Melo et al., 2009, Drezner & Hamacher, 2004). Location decision involves the establishment of the physical geographical space to build a factory or a business. It is a long-term commitment and of strategic relevance.

Assortment

Business may consist of a number of product lines, which are groups of items featuring similar characteristics, (Chris, 2021). Together, these product lines comprise product mix, which is the total assortment of products offer. Product assortment, also known as product or merchandise mix, is the variety of merchandise that a business offers to customers, (Halley, 2021). In the eyes of a customer, this assortment defines a retailer's image and why they shop there. Product assortment will also determine a company's dependence on particular inventory. A basic assumption concerning the depth of a brand's product assortment is that offering consumers more options is superior to offering fewer options, for the simple reason that a greater variety of options can cater to a wider range of tastes. This basic assumption has been challenged by recent research that has raised doubts about the wisdom of offering consumers many options to choose from (Iyengar & Lepper 2000; Schwartz 2004). For example, Iyengar and Lepper demonstrated that consumers who were presented with a set of 24 jams were significantly less likely to purchase one of these options compared to consumers presented with just six jams. Other researchers (e.g., Dhar 1996) have shown that offering more options can generate decision conflict and preference uncertainty, leading to decision deferral.

Value Based Positioning

The concept of Value bridges marketing and economics into one framework useful for developing strategy and

setting prices. From a marketing standpoint, Value can be defined as the set of benefits perceived by the customer in relation to the price and effort invested in obtaining it, (Thomas, et al., 2002). Value is the worth in monetary terms of the technical, economic, service, and social benefits a customer company receives in exchange for the price it pays for a market offering. Value is the relationship between the sum of all the perceived benefits with the price and effort required to obtain the product. Value is the force that drives sales and market share and provides the customer with a strong incentive to make a purchase. Value is also a way of representing the Value proposition: The firm promises customers a set of benefits at a given price. Value is an orientation model that facilitates understanding the underlying mechanisms at play, and guides towards forging appropriate strategies. Consumers only buy products that have Value for them. Value is aimed directly at customer satisfaction: it is the bull's-eye. Consumers will always want to maximize their gains; this means to obtain the maximum while investing the least. Value expresses a logical relationship between benefits and price; and positioning, although it contains the same elements, simply refers to the image, or perception, of a product, brand or firm.

Economic Value

Sweeney et al. (2001) defined economic value as the utility derived from using a product or service due to the reduction of its perceived costs. Economic value is the value that person places on an economic good based on the benefit that they derive from the good. This is often estimated based on the person's willingness to pay for the good, typically measured in units of currency, (Banton et al., 2020). Economic value accounts for the fact that the value one can capture for commodity attributes of an offer is limited to whatever competitors charge for them, (Maximilian, 2018). **Economic value** is also seen as a calculation of the profits an asset has either produced or may produce in the future. It is a measure of the benefit a product or service provides an economic agent (person or company). Economic value therefore refers to the highest amount a consumer is willing to pay for a product or service in a free market economy, or in a socialist economy how long a person is willing to wait in order to get a government-provided good or service. The economic value to the customer is one of the many pricing architectures a business can use as a pricing strategy, (Banton et al., 2020).

Emotional value

Emotional values (intangible aspects) are the utility derived from the feelings or affective states that a product or service generates, such as enjoyment and elevated moods perceived by the user, (Yang, et al., 2006). Bendixen et al. (2004) defined emotional values as values that evoke positive feelings about the brand and product to motivate purchase. Emotional branding is observed as a brand's strategy that stimulates consumers' affective state, appealing to their feelings with the aim of increasing consumer loyalty toward the brand. Furthermore, we posit emotional branding is an essential strategic practice, especially to fashion brands, in a ruthless retail environment. Retailers employ emotional branding as a way to engage their customers, appealing to their needs, aspirations, dreams, and ego (Acharya, 2018). This branding strategy addresses the growing trend of consumers' seeking emotional relationships with a brand. Although brand technicalities may be unmemorable, consumers do not forget how a brand makes them feel. As opposed to information such as product attributes, features, and facts, personal feelings and experiences better shape consumers' evaluations of brands (Jenkins & Molesworth 2017; Schmitt, 2009; Zukin & Maguire, 2004). Hence, emotional branding seems to be a strategy that creates strong brand attachments between consumers and brands (Akgun et al. 2013). Brand strength is based on more emotional values, and improvements in the buyer-seller relationship, communications and image, are more challenging to accomplish but can also have a more long-term value, (Mudambi, 2002).

Functional value

Functional values are utility derived from using a product or service due to the technical or practical benefits. Functional values are about communicating the functional benefits of the product or brand (Doyle & Stern, 2006), e.g. the products superior performance, lower cost, quality, price or better owing's value (Bergstrom, 2000; Doyle & Stern, 2006). Specifically, brand functional value relates to the ability of a brand to meet consumer's functional needs and wants (Keller, 2001). From this perspective, consumers are viewed as a logical thinker who involved in the reasoning process to purchase the best product out of all alternative products available based on their assessment of functional value. Functional value is often called utilitarian value, is defined as an overall assessment of functional benefits and sacrifices, which combine more cognitive aspects, such as "value for money" (Overby & Lee, 2006).

Delassus and Descotes (2012) argued that functional value are related to the brands performance, for instance how the service or product meets customers' functional needs. Functional value is a strong motivator when purchasing decisions are mainly rational, e.g. in industrial purchasing (Doyle & Stern, 2006; Mudambi, 2002) as well as when the product's functional quality creates reliability, such as health and food products that are related to people's life and health.

Symbolic value

Product symbolism refers to the degree to which a consumer is aware of associations between symbols and a given product. Some researchers contend that symbolic value is subjective value perceived by consumers, more specifically, consumers perceive symbolic value (e.g. prestige and self-expression) by brand consumption. Conversely, others insisted that symbolic value is objective value except functional value (Keller, 1993). People do not only perceive the visual elements of products in terms of their formal or technical properties, but also see them in terms of the symbolic or affective meaning they embody (Van Rompay et al., 2009). Janlert and Stolterman (1997) address that within the field of product semantics, different approaches build on the assumption that certain shapes, patterns and symbols create certain emotions and associations in the beholder. This product experience is influenced by conventions that people hold, which are learned by interacting with others and the environment within a specific culture. Certain signs can create different associations in different cultures. Several authors inform designers about how meanings are embodied in product design (Karjalainen, 2007).

Concept of Customer Engagement

While the notion of 'engagement' in business relationships is not new, significant practitioner interest in the concept has developed in the last decade (e.g. Haven 2007). It is suggested that within interactive, dynamic business environments, customer engagement (CE) represents a strategic imperative for generating enhanced corporate performance, including sales growth (Neff, 2007), superior competitive advantage (Sedley 2008) and profitability (Voyles 2007). The rationale underlying these assertions is that engaged customers play a key role in viral marketing activity by providing referrals and/or recommendations of specific products, services and/or brands to others. Engaged customers can also play an important role in new product/service development (Hoyer et al., 2010; Nambisan et al., 2008;

Kothandaraman et al., 2001), and in co-creating experience and value (Prahalad et al., 2004; Brakus et al., 2009). The term “customer engagement” is often summoned as a catchphrase to mean any number of things from customer satisfaction to repeat buy conduct. Customer engagement is a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g. a brand) in focal service relationships. It is a social psychological process creating a psychological state that motivates a consumer to elicit relationship building consumer behaviors. Alex (2021) defined customer engagement as the ongoing interactions between company and customer, offered by the company, chosen by the customer.

Measures of Customer Engagement

Various researches conducted in marketing research had measured customer engagement differently. In the study by Hellebeek (2011) customer engagement is measured with immersion (perception that time flies in brand interactions), passion (strong, positive affect), and activation (willingness to spend significant time and/or effort interacting with the brand). Similarly, Sashi (2012) uses interaction, satisfaction, retention, loyalty, advocacy and engagement as measure of customer engagement. Doorn et. al. (2010) in their study adopted word-of-mouth (WOM) activity, recommendations, helping different clients, blogging, composing reviews while Bolton (2011) adopted brand equity, quality, satisfaction, trust, loyalty and customer value. Customer engagement in this research is measured with customer engagement using customer commitment and customer loyalty.

Customer Commitment

Commitment is defined as a permanent wish to maintain a relationship (Sosa-Varela et al., 2011). Commitment is implicit or explicit pledge of relational continuity between exchange partners. Commitment involves feeling attached to and intending to ensure the continuity of a relationship with a service provider or a brand. A customer's commitment implies their will to establish a long-term relationship, make certain short-term sacrifices to keep up this relationship, and a feeling of trust towards the stability of the commercial relation. Udorn, Bloom and Zeithaml (1998) defined commitment as an affective attachment and an intention to develop and maintain long-term relationships with exchange partners. According to Anderson, Hakansson, and Johanson (1994), the concept of commitment captures

not only the continuity but also the growth in relationships between exchange partners. Brand commitment is a psychological state that shows positive attitude of consumers toward commercial name and the will to have relationship with a product or service. Salankik defines commitment as connecting people to the personal factors and acts, means when commitment is real; it means that people are responsible for their behavior and acts.

Repeat Purchase

A repeat purchase is the patronage by a consumer of a same-brand product as bought on a previous occasion. It can be described as the placing of order after order by a consumer from the same organization. Repeat purchase can also be seen as the buying of a product or services by a consumer of the same brand. Repeat patronage customers are customers who are satisfied emotionally, intellectually, physically by an organization offering which could be in form of a product which exceeds their expectations. Repeat purchase according to Wirtz and Lwin (2009) is the willingness of an individual to repatronize a services organization. These are purchase that customers make to replace the same items or services they had bought and consumed previously. Repeat purchase is defined by Active Demand (2014) as the purchase by a consumer of a same-brand product as bought on a previous occasion. This is an opportunity for marketers to establish long-term customer, relationships. Repeat purchase is often a measure of loyalty to a brand by consumers, higher repeat purchase value means a well retained, satisfied customer, also higher repeat purchase value drives higher customer value, which means a better top line in the loyalty ladder.

Willingness to Pay

Willingness to pay is defined as the maximum price a buyer accepts to pay for a given quantity of goods or services (Wertenbroch & Skiera, 2002). Willingness to pay is assimilated to the reservation price, or the “floor reservation price” when the latter is conceptualized in terms of margin. Willingness to pay (WTP) is the maximum price at or below which a consumer will definitely buy one unit of a product. This corresponds to the standard economic view of a consumer reservation price. According to the constructive preference view, consumer willingness to pay is a context-sensitive construct; that is, a consumer's willingness to pay for a product depends on the concrete decision context. Accurately gauging consumers' willingness to pay for a

product or service is critical for formulating competitive strategies, conducting value audits, and developing new products, (Anderson, Dipak & Pradeep, 1993). It is also important for implementing various pricing tactics, such as nonlinear pricing, one-to-one pricing, and targeted promotions. There exist many methods to measure willingness to pay, (Breibert, Hahsler, & Reutterer, 2006). They can be differentiated by whether they measure willingness to pay directly or indirectly, and whether they measure a consumer's hypothetical or actual willingness to pay, (Miller, Hofstetter, Krohmer & Zhang, 2011).

Word-of-Mouth

Word of mouth is the process of encouraging organic word of mouth discussion about a product, brand, organization, or event. It is essentially free advertisement from a customer resulting from a positive experience with a brand. Recommendations from non-commercial sources are more authentic and believable to people who are looking for it, than polished statements from advertising and sales promotion which is tailor-made by the brand (Oguru & Dressman, 2019). Word-of-mouth denotes informal communication among consumers about products or communications customer-dominated marketing communication whereby the communicator has no commercial interest. Its nature dictates that potential customers see it positively and is perceived to be credible, trusted than business generated communications, (Oguru & Dressman, 2019). Word-of-mouth communication is influential on customer's behaviour especially on their information search stage, evaluation of alternative solutions, and even on buying decisions.

Brand Advocacy

Brand advocacy is a term used to describe actions taken by people who love your brand and **continuously support your organization** by promoting products and services to new customers and prospects. Brand advocacy is a continuous support for brand by promoting the organization products to new audiences by people who are closest to brands. Brand advocacy is an instrument used by companies to communicate and connect with the community, about how they can increase sales. According to Balmer (2003) brand advocacy play a role in communicating corporate brands to outside audiences. MacInnis and Rao (2002) believe that product sales are increasing with the sale of ad media lines, and most of the ad content focuses on the spokesperson on those ads. Based on the existing theory,

the brand advocacy can be used as a reference for consumer ratings and perceptions of a brand as a whole. The process of marketing a new product or a new brand requires consumer awareness that the brand exists. Here, the task of a brand ambassador is to grow and increase consumer awareness of a brand he/she promotes. There are many product categories and many brands are flooding the market, so that attributes such as quality and value of goods cannot be automatically calculated.

Customer Loyalty

Customer Loyalty can be described as attitudinal loyalty which is customer's positive satisfaction and behavioral loyalty, which means the intention to repurchase products and/or services from consumers. Blomqvist et al, (2000) defined customer loyalty as a customer which over time engage one company to satisfy entirely, or a significant part, of her needs by using the company's products or services. Customer loyalty means that the customer is loyal to the company and only turns to a competitor in exceptional cases. Customer loyalty is defined as repurchase or revisit of a given service or product and emotional commitment to a service or product. This was affirmed by Pi, and Huang (2011) that customer loyalty is a strongly held commitment to purchase or subscribe to a particular product or service again in the future even though there is the influence of the situation and the marketing efforts that could potentially lead to changes in the behavior. Generally speaking, customer loyalty means the intention of repurchasing products and services, and this is the goal of industry.

Patronage Behavior

In the context of marketing, patronage is an exchange process where one receives a service or goods in exchange for money or other considerations. Patronage refers to impulses, desire, and consideration within the consumer which induce the purchase of goods and services from certain outlets or company. Consumer patronage is the degree to which a buying unit concentrates purchases over time to a particular product within a service category; product patronage develops through positive reinforcement and repetition of buying behavior, (Oliver, 1997). Patronage is defined as the degree to which a customer exhibits repeat purchase behaviour from a service provider, possesses a positive, long-lasting attitude and disposition towards a service provider. From the view of Oliver (1999), customer patronage is defined as a deeply held commitment to repurchase a firm's products at the expense of a

competitor's offering. Seock (2009), described patronage as the repeat purchase behaviour at a particular store for either the same products or any other products. This reflects the view of Ogwo and Igwe (2012) that the main reason for establishing a business is to create customers. Consumer patronage is the approval or support provided by customers with respect to a particular brand which delivers the foundation for an established and growing market share. Customer patronage is the purchase of goods and service from a vendor by a customer or a business. The customer purchases and expects to derive benefits or satisfaction from the goods or services as consideration for the exchange for money paid.

Customer Satisfaction

Wadud (2012) defined Customer satisfaction is as emotional response to the experience provided by, (or associated with) particular products or services purchased, retail outlets, or even molar patterns of behaviour, as well as the overall marketplace. Customer satisfaction is an attitude shaped on the basis of experience after clients acquire a product or use a service and pay for them. Satisfaction is an attitude, assessment and emotional response shown by the consumer after the purchase process. It is an indication of being pleased with a product or a service. The definition given by Yap, Ramayah and Shahidan (2012) posited satisfaction as an overall customer attitude towards a service provider. Most frequently customer satisfaction is considered as an important antecedent of customer loyalty. In other words, customer loyalty is calculated as a straight outcome to customer satisfaction.

Brand Association

Brand association is anything in the memory of consumers that is linked to a brand (Aaker, 1991). Any deep-seated cue in customer's mind about a brand; or attributes of a brand that come into consumers mind when the brand is talked about may be regarded as brand association. It relates to implicit and explicit meanings consumers associate with a specific brand name. Brand association is also related to positive or negative information that consumers have in mind about a brand. A set of associations, usually organized in some meaningful way, forms a brand image. Consequently, brand image is costumer's perception about a particular brand as a result of their association with the brand. Brand association acts as an information-collecting tool to execute brand differentiation and brand extension (Aaker, 1991); and is key to developing brand

relationship, because it produces brand loyalty and enhance brand-word of mouth (Mohammad, & Anisa, 2017). Keller (2003) argues that any information that comes across in brand association is connected to the brand name in consumer recall, and reflects the brand's image. Brand association is the platform of brand relationship development which guides brand managers on how to use the sources of brand equity to develop brand relationship with customers (Mohammad, & Anisa, 2017).

Brand Trust

The term trust has a different meaning and different conceptualizations in different disciplines (Santos& Fernandes, 2008). There is a plethora of research on trust in different disciplines. Gundlach and Murphy (1993) say that, "the variable most universally accepted as a basis of any human interaction or exchange is trust". Interpersonal literature considers an emotional point of view (Rempel et al., 1985) and economic literature considers a calculative point of view (Williamson, 1993). Trust is the name of confidence and belief which customer attach with some organization and consider that what he or she aspect that should be delivered (Muhammad, Kashif & Saleem 2012). Trust is defined as a generalized expectancy held by an individual that the word of another can be relied on. Patrick (2002) viewed customer trust as thoughts, feelings, emotions, or behaviours manifested when customers feel that a provider can be relied upon to act in their best interest when they give up direct control. Vithya (2017) defined trust as confidence that one party has on another because of honesty and reliability of the other partner. Trust is the willingness to rely on another party in the phase of risk. This eagerness comes from an understanding of the other part based on past experience. It also raises an expectation that the other party will create a positive outcome, without being affected by the possibility that the effort may cause a negative outcome (Nischay, Chanda, Ankita & Gurvinder, 2015).

Organizational Factor

The term 'organisational factor' encompasses all elements that influenced the way an organisation and everybody within it behave. Bimantoro et al. (2015) posit that organizational factor consists of managerial implication and organizational culture. Managerial implication according to them includes responsibilities in giving appropriate training, giving positive feedbacks appreciating contribution, participation, and the existence of guides on how to use social media tools.

Organizational culture on the other hand focuses on feedbacks and appreciating colleagues' contributions, participations, and collaboration level in and on every business units. Organizational factors adopted in this study include; managerial competence, safety culture, communication pattern and employee relation.

Managerial Competence

Competence has been defined as the ability and willingness to perform a task (Brown, 1993) cited in Liridon et al. (2017). Competency is "an underlying characteristic of a person in that it may be a motive, trait, skill, aspect of one's self-image or social role, or body of knowledge which he or she uses. Competence at individual level is an ability of employees to offer superior performance in tasks. Competency is used as an umbrella term to cover almost anything that might directly or indirectly affect the job performance. Competency is defined by Draganidis & Gregoris, (2006) as a combination of tacit and explicit knowledge, behaviour and skills that gives someone the potential for effectiveness in task performance. Spencer and Spencer (2008) posited that competences refer to the range of skills which helps in satisfactory performance and competencies refer to the behaviour adopted in a competent performance. Henderson (2000) defines competency as a combination of knowledge and skills required to successfully perform an assignment. Its attainment is evidenced by the ability of an individual to gather data, process it into useful information, access it and arrive at an appropriate and useful decision in order to initiate the actions necessary to accomplish the assignment in an acceptable manner.

Safety Culture

Safety culture is the way in which safety is managed in a workplace. It is the collection of the beliefs, perceptions and values that employees share in relation to risks within an organization, such as a workplace or community, (Cox et al., 1991; Rip, 1991). Safety culture is the product of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competencies, and patterns of behaviour that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, an organisation's health and safety management. Organisations with a positive safety culture are characterized by communications founded on mutual trust, by shared perceptions of the importance of safety and by confidence in the efficacy of preventive measures. The concept of 'safety culture' originally arose in connection with major organisational accidents, where it provides a crucial insight into how

multiple organisational barriers against such accidents can be simultaneously ineffective: "With each disaster that occurs our knowledge of the factors which make organisations vulnerable to failures has grown. It has become clear that such vulnerability does not originate from just 'human error', chance environmental factors or technological failures alone. Rather, it is the ingrained organisational policies and standards which have repeatedly been shown to predate the catastrophe, (Gadd et al., 2002).

Communication Pattern

It's no secret that communication is an essential part of every successful organization. Strong communication skills are particularly necessary for business functions, especially in those areas where employees create messages that are shared with a target market, (Anam, 2019). In marketing, business communication is vital for creating effective campaigns, resonating with target audiences and persuading people to make a purchase. It is important to note that communication plays specific roles in each department and it is used to: Inform employees about the benefits of the product and teach them the talking points to use when dealing with customers; Persuade prospects and customers to make a purchase through tailored messaging that resonates with their needs; Motivate team members to hit campaign deadlines to capitalize on market trends and Improve internal marketing processes to increase productivity and efficiency within the department. Internal communication between employees is critical to developing effective marketing strategies. In an organization where the flow of communication is done between or among employees regarding their work shows a form of internal communication has taken place. Internal communication according to Trahan (2008) is operationally stated as the exchange of communication both informal and formal between top hierarchy members and employees within an organization.

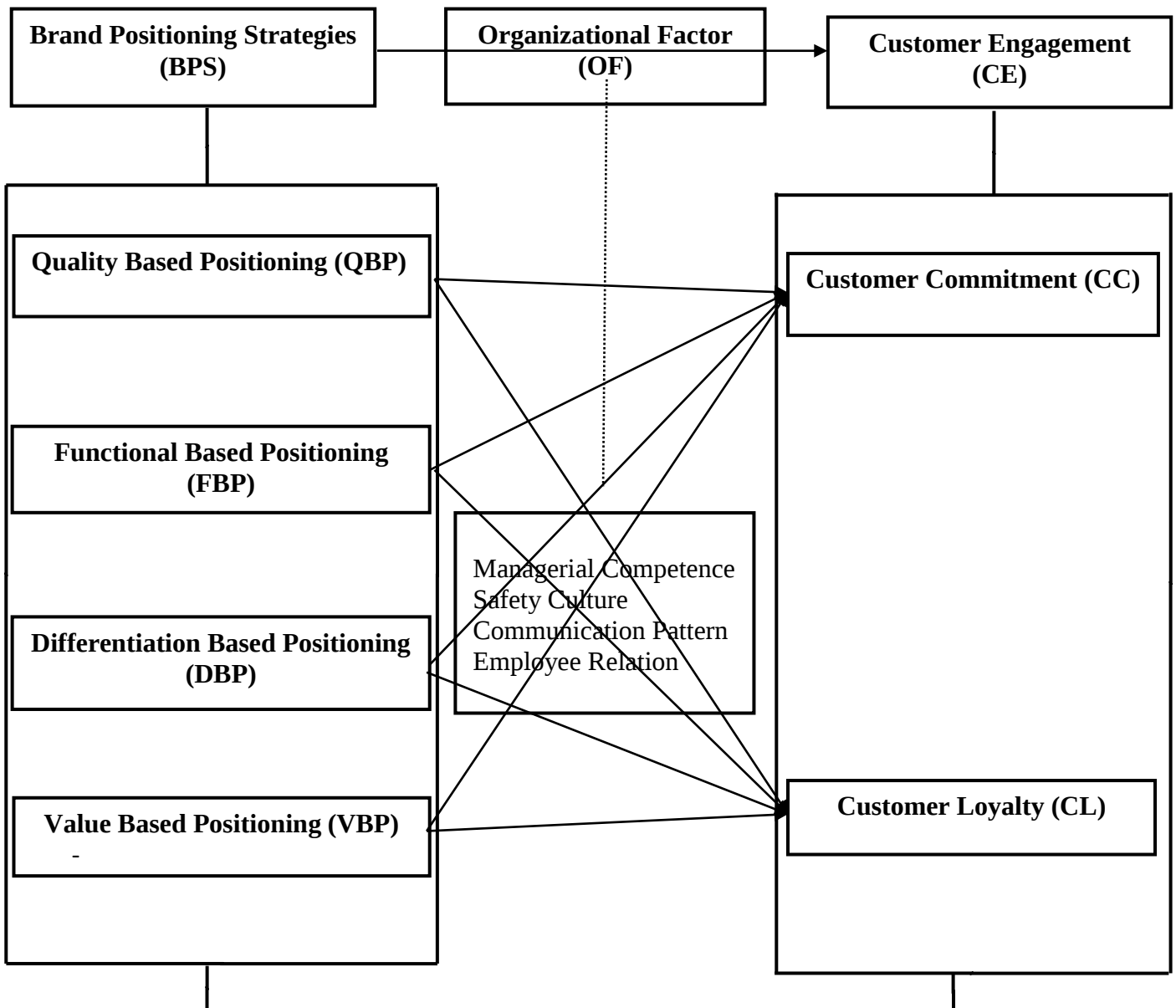
Employee Relation

Employee relations is a study of the rules, regulations and agreements by which employees are managed both as individuals and as a collective group, the priority given to the individual as opposed to the collective relationship varying from company to company depending upon the values of management. Employee relation has become a vital ingredient for enhancing performance and the productivity of an organization. The management and co-ordination of human activities had become the cornerstone for achieving organizational

survival. This achievement facilitates the protection of employees' interest and their welfare for the purpose of avoiding conflictual relations between the employer and the employee, (Mike, 2008). Employee relations focuses on the management of the relationship between the employees and the employers in order to heighten their commitment (Gennard & Judge, 2002), passion, performance (Hameed, 2009), loyalty, productivity (Mike, 2008) and motivation (Crandall & Perrew, 2005). Employee relation largely focuses on the

prevention of conflictual issues and solving problems in the workplace (Cooper & Payne, 2008). Some problems arise in the workplace especially when supervisors correct performances that are below expected results. This is why Human Resource managers should provide disciplinary approaches that are progressive and also ensure that humane procedures are followed while settling disputes and resolving grievances of employees (Harlow & Lawler, 2000).

2.1.4 Operational Framework



Source: Akpabio et al. (2020), Bhat et al. (1998), Maina et al. (2016), Aashish (2021), Morgan et al. (1994), Chaudhuri et al. (2001)

Fig. 2.1: Operational Framework

Relationship between Quality Based Positioning and Customer Engagement

Quality positioning is based on knowing what customers want and their expectations for the actual service or product delivered, i.e. what do customers think the company should do or provide, (Lee et al., 2000). With a specific type of customer engagement tool, firms can accrue and offer quality value to customers (Kaltcheva, Patino, Laric, Pitta, & Imparato, 2014). The study of Darwin, Suwanna, and Theingi (2017) shows that service quality positively affects customer engagement. High levels of satisfaction in service quality affect customer engagement positively, (Saha & Theingi, 2009). Customer's perception of value in product quality determines the level of their engagement. Relationship marketing theory considers perceived value as the main element of long-term relationships that its integration with the customer engagement will create the difference between success and failure of a business (Hollebeek, 2013). Product value is built on quality which serves as an effective tool in promoting customer engagement. Perceived value can be seen as consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product/service based on perceptions of what is received and what is given, thus reflecting a specific rate /trade-off, between perceived quality and price (Sweeney et al., 2001). More importantly, it has revealed across studies that perceived quality is also one of the antecedent factors of Customer Engagement that means the perceived quality has the intention to drive customer engagement, (Brodie et al. 2011).

Relationship between Functionality Based Positioning and Customer Engagement

Functional positioning of product is based on attribute that are functional for consumers. it incorporates functions and features that attend customer needs and solve their problems. It can also be stated that functional positioning of products ensures that brand satisfies the customer with respect to product performance or functioning (Bhat et al., 1998) cited in (Usamah et al., 2018). In marketing practice, the objective is to identify functional benefits which are of primary importance for the consumers and that can trigger purchase for that particular brand, (Usamah et al., 2018). Benefits provided by a brand to the consumers are a fundamental source of building up commitment and loyalty. These benefits may be of functional or emotional in nature, (Karolina et al., 2012). If a brand provides both benefits simultaneously, the perception of customers will be more complete and comprehensive. The functional benefit of

a brand is the effort of the entire organization given each unit and department play their roles effectively with efficient utilization of resources. In product design, functional branding creates or improve products with the aim of enhancing user experience. This involves creating product by applying design with a view to deliver a branded experience to the user. Using functional branding for product positioning enables a company to differentiate itself by positively reinforcing the value of brand through design, (Mohammad, 2018).

Relationship between Differentiation Based Positioning and Customer Engagement

Product differentiation is a competitive business strategy whereby firms attempt to gain a competitive advantage by increasing the perceived value of their products and services relative to the perceived value of other firm's products and services (Rahman, 2011). In responding to the present market which is highly competitive companies are adopting differentiation, (Johnson et al., 2004). Companies have started adding more services ad product lines to their total offerings as part of a differentiation strategy (Gebauer et al., 2010; Neu et al., 2005; Oliva et al., 2003). Differentiation remains competitive where firms gain advantage by increasing perceived value of their products or services relative to the perceived value of other firms' products or services. Companies are redirecting their efforts towards customer centricity and innovativeness, but also from goods to services and more importantly investing in differentiation. Product differentiation strategy can be a tool of competitive advantage which is adopted by organizations in order to provide products that satisfies individual customer's needs. In satisfying individual customer's needs, quality has become a major differentiating factor among products (Shammot, 2011). As a result, customers are willing to pay more for products that cater to their individual size, taste, style, need or expression. Hence, achieving competitive advantage through product differentiation becomes the main focus of today's business. Kotler et al., (2007) posit that differentiation which is based on reliability does not only increase consumers' willingness to pay, but also provide firms with long-term success, since the reputation of the good or service is strengthened.

Relationship between Value Based Positioning and Customer Engagement

Value positioning is an orientation model that facilitates the understanding of the underlying mechanisms at play, and guides towards forging appropriate strategies that

achieve customer loyalty. Value based positioning therefore becomes crucial because consumers only buy products that have value for them. Value based positioning is aimed directly at customer engagement: it is the bull's-eye. Consumers will always want to maximize their gains which done on marketers to use value in positioning their products and services. Value positioning expresses a logical relationship between benefits and price; positioning, although it contains the same elements, simply refers to the image, or perception, of a product, brand or firm. Value based positioning is therefore a marketing output/input ratio which measures the consumer's gain, or "profitability" he obtains from his purchase. This ratio suggests that customer engagement increases when benefits increase or when the price and/or required effort decrease. If the price increases in greater proportion than the benefits offered, then Value decreases and the quantity demanded by the customer segment is reduced. Customer engagement remains unchanged if lower benefits are balanced by lower prices, or if higher benefits are balanced with higher prices.

Theoretical framework

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The study is anchored on The theory of reasoned action (TRA) which is a widely used and strongly supported persuasion theory developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1969 to identify components that predict behavior. The theory derived from previous research in social psychology, persuasion models, and attitude theories proposes a causal model of the cognitive processes leading to behavioral decisions. TRA was developed to explain influences on behaviors that involve conscious decision making. The primary purpose of the TRA is to understand an individual's voluntary behavior by examining the underlying basic motivation to perform an action, (Doswell et al., 2011). The model predicts behavior based on seven causal variables: behavioral intention, attitude, subjective norm, belief strength, evaluation, normative belief, and motivation to comply. According to the theory, intention to perform a certain behavior precedes the actual behavior, (Azjen, et al., 1986). This intention is known as behavioral intention and comes as a result of a belief that performing the behavior will lead to a specific outcome. Behavioral intention is important to the theory because these intentions "are determined by attitudes to behaviors and subjective norms", (Colman, 2015). TRA suggests that stronger intentions lead to increased effort

to perform the behavior, which also increases the likelihood for the behavior to be performed.

Empirical Review

Stanley (2012) carried out a study on the effectiveness of positioning strategies on customer loyalty in Nairobi. The objectives of the study were to establish the effectiveness of positioning strategies on customer loyalty as perceived by the customers as well as find out the challenges the clients face as result of the positioning strategies used by the firm. The research adopted the descriptive survey research design while the sampling design adopted was the quota sampling design. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 100 respondents. All quantitative data was descriptively analyzed using SPSS. The finding reveals an effectiveness of positioning strategies on customer loyalty. The study by Stanley (2012) relates the present study in that it examines positioning strategies on loyalty. The study also adopts descriptive design using questionnaire for data collection. However, data analytical tool used in by Stanley is limited to descriptive statistic against the inferential statistic used in the present study. Also this study was conduct in a different geographical location from the present study.

Bilsen et al. (2015) investigated brand awareness, brand personality, brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction relations in brand positioning strategies in Istanbul. The study adopts descriptive design using questionnaire for data collection from 200 respondents. Data collected was analysed with structural equation modeling which was performed by Lisrel 8.7 statistical program. Finding shows that brand awareness, brand personality, brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction positively relate with brand positioning strategies. The study by Bilsen et al. (2015) relates the present study in that it studied the influence of brand positioning strategies. It also adopts same design using same data collection method. However, data analysis was done using different tool and the studies were conducted in different geographical locations.

Umair et al. (2021) investigated the impact of brand image on customer loyalty with the mediating role of customer satisfaction and brand awareness in Multan city. The study adopts descriptive design using questionnaire for data collection from 300 respondents. Descriptive design was adopted while structured questionnaire adopted for data collection. Data analysis was conducted with Pearson correlation test. The result is based on the statistics test which displays that the

Image of the brand and customer Loyalty is very significant with Customer Satisfaction and Brand Awareness, but Brand Image is insignificant with Brand Awareness. The study by Umair et al. (2021) relates the present study in that it studied customer loyalty using same research design and data collection method. However, the study examined customer loyalty using brand image while the present study used brand positioning strategies. Also, they used different data analysis tool and were conducted in different geographical locations.

Literature gap

Quality based positioning is used to ensure that the product quality is being represented well and that the quality is promised is the same being delivered. Quality can be seen in product durability, product reliability, product aesthetics and product conformance. Functional based Positioning deals with solving problems, providing benefits and getting a favorable perception from investors, stockholders and consumers. Aaker (1996) in (Usamah et al., 2018) maintains that functional positioning is based on a product attribute which is of functional utility for the consumer. It is also stated that functional positioning means that the brand satisfies the customer with respect to product performance or functioning, (Usamah et al., 2018). This is used when the brand or products provide solutions to problems and provide benefits to customers. It focuses on the function, benefit or utility that it gives to the customer. Functional products are effective in operability, smartness, packaging and ease of use.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts correlational survey research design. According to Walters (2017), correlational study is a quantitative method of research in which the researcher has two variables from the same group of participants and tries to determine if there is a relationship between the two variables. The correlational survey design was adopted because the study intends to determine the relationship between brand positioning strategies and customer engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Population of the Study

The population of this study consists of 138 registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State (source: <https://nearme.com.ng/list-of-fashion-designers-in-portharcourt-and-rivers-cities-locate-them/see>

Appendix). The units of analysis were CEOs, managers and employees of fashion design outlets in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Ezejelue and Ogwo cited in Nworlu (2008) stated that there is often no satisfactory generalization on what the appropriate sample size should be. Some authors have suggested that 10% of the population can be used as the sample size, or that a sample should be dependent upon what use is to be made of the findings from the study and how much precision the researcher desire. In selecting the sample size for this study, the researchers applied Krejcie & Mongan (1970) table for sample size determination. 103 fashion design outlets were sampled based on Krejcie & Mongan (1970). A total of 309 subjects made of CEOs, managers and employees in the frame of three (3) respondents from each outlet were surveyed through questionnaire administration.

Method of Data Collection and Instrumentation

The instrument for this study is the questionnaire designed after an extensive literature review. The researcher took cognizance of the research questions as well as the research hypotheses in a manner that enabled the researcher gather as much information as possible from the respondents. Structurally, the questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B) section 'A' elicits personal information such as the respondent's gender, age, occupation, educational qualification, etc, while section 'B' sought information on the study variables. The questionnaire contains 16 item statements for the independent variable, 8 item statements for the dependent variable and 4 item statements for the moderating variable. The questionnaire is composed of close-ended questions and such items is developed on a four point Likert scale ranging from (Very High Extent (VHE) = 4, High Extent (HE) = 3, Low Extent (LE) = 2 and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 making it a total of 10 points divide by 4 = 2.5) used as a benchmark for decision. Responses below 2.5 is considered not significant and rejected, while 2.5 and above is deemed significant and accepted.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument for the study was carefully developed bearing in mind the purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses to be tested. Copies of the instruments were given to two (2) lecturers in marketing department for vetting of the test items in terms of its relevance to subject matter, coverage and content areas,

appropriateness of language usage and clarity of purpose. Their comments and suggestions were incorporated in the final draft of the instrument and later forwarded to the researcher's supervisor for the final correction and validation.

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability refers to the consistency with which the same measurement technique will produce the same results if the same technique were used by another researcher. A

measurement instrument that is reliable will produce the same result if a variable is repeatedly measured under almost identical circumstances. Reliability analysis was performed on the data using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient so as to assess the degree of consistency of the scale, given the nature of responses used to construct the scales. Cronbach alpha was used to test for reliability coefficient. The Cronbach alpha values of 0.70 and above will be accepted to ensure a higher set of reliability amongst the variables.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.880	20

Source: SPSS Output (Based on questionnaires Data 2025)

The degree of consistency of the scale, given the nature of responses used to construct the scales, the Alpha values was 0.880 which is greater than the normal scale of 0.70 which suggest higher set of reliability amongst brand positioning variables hence, the information from table 3 shows that, given the same questions, the results would still be achieved if the questionnaire is redistributed and this is indicating that the reliability of the research instrument and the data drawn was used in the findings.

Administration of the instrument

Copies of the questionnaire were administered directly to the respondents by the researcher and ten (4) research assistants. Instruction pertaining to the filling of the questionnaire was made simple and easy to understand. The researcher and her assistants identified the study group before administering the instrument. The filled copies of the instrument were collected from the respondents as soon as completed filling. Out of the total number of three hundred and nine (309) instruments distributed, the researcher retrieved a total number of two hundred and ninety-six (296) instruments which represented 96% of the sample size. The returned instruments were used for the analysis of this study.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25. The research questions were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation in the distributive statistics tables. A criterion means of 2.5 was set as a

guideline for accepting and rejecting option. The criterion mean was calculated as follows: $4+3+2+1/4 = 2.5$. Fixing the criterion mean at 2.5 implies that for any item to be accepted, it must score a minimum mean value of 2.5 or above, while anything less than 2.5 was rejected. The formulated hypotheses were tested using the Multiple Regression Analysis with model summary explaining the relationship and determinant percentage of the relationship by the R and R-square respectively. The significance of the variability was tested using the ANOVA and hypotheses acceptance and rejection at 0.05 levels of significant using Coefficients table with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.

Model Specification

According to Freedman (2009), regression analysis is concerned with the study of how one or more variables affect changes in another variable.

The formula for multiple regression: $\psi = a_0 + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + b_4x_4 + e$ (1)

Where: ψ = index of outcome variable

a = constant term for the independent variables

b = index of predictor variable

x = coefficients

e = error level

f = function

To test the hypotheses, this study has two variables, predictor variable; Brand Positioning Strategy (BPS) and

criterion variables; Customer Engagement (CE). The study adopts Quality Based Positioning (QBP), Functional Based Positioning (FBP), Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP) and Value Based Positioning (VBP) as dimensions of the predictor variable while Customer Commitment (CC) and Customer Loyalty (CL) formed the measures of the criterion variable.

Thus, these models are adopted:

The relationship between Brand Positioning Strategies and Customer Engagement:

$$CE = F(BPS) \quad (2)$$

$$CE = a_0 + a_1bps + u_1 \quad (3)$$

First Model: the first model tests the relationship between Quality Based Positioning (QBP), Functional

Based Positioning (FBP), Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP), Value Based Positioning and Customer Commitment (CC).

$$CC = F(QBP, FBP, DBP, VBP) \quad (4)$$

$$CC = B_0 + b_1(QBP)_1 + (FBP)_2 + (DBP)_3 + (VBP)_4 + 0.05 \quad (5)$$

Second Model: the second model tests the relationship between Quality Based Positioning (QBP), Functional Based Positioning (FBP), Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP), Value Based Positioning and Customer Loyalty (CL).

$$CL = f(QBP, FBP, DBP, VBP) \quad (6a)$$

$$CL = C_0 + c_1(QBP)_1 + (FBP)_2 + (DBP)_3 + (VBP)_4 + 0.05 \quad (7b)$$

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 2: Questionnaire Distribution to Respondents and Retrieval

Issued Questionnaire	309	100%
Retrieved/Used	297	96%
Bad/Unused	12	4%

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

Table 2 above shows that two three hundred and nine (309) copies of the questionnaire were distributed among the respondents which consisted of CEOs, managers and employees of fashion design outlets in Rivers State. Two hundred and ninety seven copies which amount to 96% were retrieved and used for the study, while twelve (12) copies which account to 3% of distributed questionnaire went bad or were incorrectly filled.

Data Analysis and Result

This section is dedicated to the analysis of data collected for the purpose of this study, and the interpretation of the various result arrived at from the analysis.

Demographic Analysis

This section presents the demography of the respondents and the selected demography considered in the process of this research include; job position, educational qualification, gender, age bracket and marital status.

Table 3: Job Position

JOB POSITION		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	CEOs	45	15.2	15.2	15.2
	EMPLOYEE	105	35.4	35.4	50.5
	MANAGER	147	49.5	49.5	100.0
	Total	297	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output (Based on questionnaires" Data 2025).

Table 3, above depicts the distribution of questionnaire among job positions; it shows that forty five (45) respondents representing 15.2% are CEOs, one hundred and five (105) respondents representing 35.4% are employees while one hundred and forty seven (147) respondents representing 49.5 % of respondents are managers.

Table 4: Educational Qualifications

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	BSc.	150	50.5	50.5	50.5
	MSC	49	16.5	16.5	67.0
	OND	68	22.9	22.9	89.9
	PhD.	30	10.1	10.1	100.0
	Total	297	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output (Based on questionnaires" Data 2025).

Table 4 above, showed that out of the 297 copies of questionnaire retrieved, B.Sc. holders answered 150 copies which indicate 50.5% of the respondents; M.Sc. holder answered 49 copies which indicate 16.5% of the respondents; OND holder answered 68 copies which represent 22.9% respondents and Ph.D answered 30 copies which indicate 10.1% of the respondents.

Table 5: Gender

GENDER		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	FEMALE	180	60.6	60.6	60.6
	MALE	117	39.4	39.4	100.0
	Total	297	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output (Based on questionnaires" Data 2025).

From table 5 above, it is obvious that out of the 297 copies of questionnaire retrieved, female respondents answered 180 copies which indicates 60.6% of the respondents; while male respondents answered 117 copies which represents 39.4% of the total respondents.

Table 6: Age Bracket

AGE BLACKET		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-30	48	16.2	16.2	16.2
	31-50	132	44.4	44.4	60.6
	51 & ABOVE	117	39.4	39.4	100.0
	Total	297	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output (Based on questionnaires" Data 2025).

From table 6 above, out of the valid 297 copies of questionnaire returned, age bracket within 18-30 answered 48 copies which indicates 16.2% of the respondents; 31-50 answered 132 copies which indicates 44.4% of the respondents whereas 51 and above answered 117 copies which represents 39.4% of respondents.

Table 7: Marital Status

MARITAL STATUS		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DIVORCED	23	7.7	7.7	7.7

MARRIED	182	61.3	61.3	69.0
SINGLE	81	27.3	27.3	96.3
WIDOWED	11	3.7	3.7	100.0
Total	297	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Output (Based on questionnaires" Data 2025).

From table 7 above, it is obvious that out of the valid 297 copies of questionnaire returned, the divorced answered 23 copies which indicates 7.7% of the respondents; married answered 182 copies which indicates 61.3% of the respondents, singled answered 81 copies which indicates 27.3% of the respondents whereas widowed answered 11 copies which represents 3.7% of respondents.

Univariate Analysis

This section primarily concern with the analysis of the univariate variables relating to the respondents' views on the questions contained in the various sections and items on the research instrument.

Table 8: Distribution for indicator of quality based positioning.

Descriptive Statistics

Items		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
QUALITY BASED POSITIONING AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT		297	2.25	4.00	3.6799	.29490	.087
Recognition of durability feature in product design allows for less amendment and maintenance over usage.		297	2	4	3.75	.436	.190
Reliability features in product design which enable products fulfill intended tasks engage customer to use.		297	2	4	3.64	.657	.432
Aesthetic designs features elicit positive responses from customers in their response to sales.		297	2	4	3.73	.541	.293
Conformance techniques meet standards as defined in the design phase of production while the service is delivered to customers.		297	2	4	3.89	.396	.157
Valid N (listwise)		297					

Source: SPSS output (Base on questionnaires' data 2025)

The data in (table 8) illustrate the summary of the statistics for the dimension of the predictor variable "quality based positioning" with summarized values for central tendency based on the responses to the indicators. The analysis revealed that all items in the scale had weighted mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 based on 4-point likert scale adopted. Which indicated that the majority of the respondents affirm to the fact that the quality of products attracts their patronage and thus, were accepted that quality based positioning relates with customer engagement. In summary, with a grand mean of 3.67, the respondents agreed to a high extent that quality based positioning influences customer engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Table 9: Distribution for indicator of Functional based positioning.

Descriptive Statistics							
Items		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
FUNCTIONAL POSITIONING AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	BASED	297	2.75	4.00	3.7759	.33550	.113
Operability ensures the process has the capacity and flexibility to achieve a range of operating conditions safely, reliably, profitably and with good dynamic performance.		297	1	4	3.77	.510	.260
Higher levels of product smartness generally increased perceived characteristics that determine innovation's rate of adoption.		297	2	4	3.80	.427	.182
Packaging serves an essential function in projecting brand's image and delivers on sales.		297	2	4	3.65	.582	.338
Outstanding ease of use can dramatically reduce the amount of resources needed when it comes to offering customers support.		297	3	4	3.88	.321	.103
Valid N (listwise)		297					

Source: SPSS output (Base on questionnaires' data 2025)

The data in (table 9) illustrate the summary of the statistics for the dimension of the predictor variable “functional based positioning” with summarized values for central tendency based on the responses to the indicators. The analysis revealed that all items in the scale had weighted mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 based on 4-point likert scale adopted which indicated that the majority of the respondents affirm to the fact that the function of products attracts high patronage and thus, were accepted that functional based positioning relates with customer engagement. In summary, with a grand mean of 3.77, the respondents agreed that functional based positioning influences customer engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State to a high extent.

Table 10: Distribution for indicator of Differentiation based positioning.

Descriptive Statistics							
Items		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
DIFFERENTIATION POSITIONING AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	BASED	297	2.50	4.00	3.7379	.33898	.115
Attractive design is creative strategy which helps enterprise acquire competitive advantages in the market.		297	2	4	3.60	.675	.456

Additional benefits such as discounts, access to early products, free items, bonuses, or special deals turns customer's standard buying experience into engagement.	297	2	4	3.77	.465	.217
Convenient locations increase market competitiveness, resulting in greater profit, reduced cost, and commit more customers.	297	2	4	3.72	.542	.294
Product assortment offers consumers more superior options in catering for a wider range of tastes.	297	1	4	3.87	.401	.161
Valid N (listwise)	297					

Source: SPSS output (Base on questionnaires' data 2025)

The data in (table 10) illustrate the summary of the statistics for the dimension of the predictor variable “differentiation based positioning” with summarized values for central tendency based on the responses to the indicators. The analysis revealed that all items in the scale had weighted mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 based on 4-point likert scale adopted. Which indicated that the majority of the respondents affirm to the fact that the quality of products attracts their patronage and thus, were accepted that quality based positioning relates with customer engagement. In summary, with a grand mean of 3.73, the respondents agreed that differentiation based positioning influences customer engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State to a high extent.

Table 11: Distribution for indicator of Value Based Positioning

Descriptive Statistics

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
VALUE BASED POSITIONING AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	297	2.75	4.00	3.5330	.30472	.093
Economic attributes of products is used to capture more value than a traditional cost-plus pricing strategy.	297	2	4	3.54	.657	.432
Emotional designs stimulate consumers' affective state, appealing to their feelings and increase loyalty toward brands.	297	2	4	3.63	.541	.293
Design that is based on functional benefits is a strong motivator when purchasing decisions are mainly rational.	297	2	4	3.89	.396	.157
Value remains unchanged if lower benefits are balanced by lower prices, or if higher benefits are balanced with higher prices.	297	2	4	3.67	.626	.392
Valid N (listwise)	297					

Source: SPSS output (Base on questionnaires' data 2021)

The data in (table 11) illustrate the summary of the statistics for the dimension of the predictor variable “Value based positioning” with summarized values for central tendency based on the responses to the indicators. The analysis revealed that all items in the scale had weighted mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 based on 4-point likert scale adopted. Which indicated that the majority of the respondents affirm to the fact that the value of products attracts patronage and thus, were accepted that value based positioning relates with customer engagement. In summary, with a grand mean of 3.53, the respondents agreed that value based positioning influences customer engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State to a high extent.

Table 12: Distribution for indicators of organisational factor

	Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
BRAND POSITIONING STRATEGIES	297	2.83	4.00	3.7678	.23278	.054
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	297	2.50	4.00	3.7439	.27619	.076
ORGANISATIONAL FACTOR	297	2.69	4.00	3.7401	.30988	.096
Valid N (listwise)	297					

Source: SPSS output (Base on questionnaires’ data 2025)

The results from table 12 above shows a mean response of 3.76 for Brand Positioning Strategies, also 3.74 for Customer Engagement and 3.74 for Organisational Factor (managerial competence, safety culture, communication pattern & employee relation) which are all above criterion mean of 2.50 indicating that large percentage of the respondents agreed positively that Organisational Factor’s influence on Brand Positioning Strategies and Customer Engagement is to a high extent. Thus, managerial competence, safety culture, communication pattern and employee relation in an organisation highly influence brand positioning and customer engagement of fashion designing outlets in Rivers State.

Bivariate Analyses

Thus, in determining the respective strength and statistical relationship of the association between these variables, the researchers were guided by the work of Cohen et al. (2007). The coefficient of correlation (effect size), the strength of association and statistically significant decision according to Cohen, et al. (2007) is interpreted below.

Table 13: Cohen et al statistical correlation decision scale frame

S/N	Statistical Significance	Association
i.	0.1 – 0.29	Very Weak
ii.	0.3 – 0.49	Weak
iii.	0.5 – 0.69	Moderate
iv.	0.70 – 0.79	Strong
v.	0.80 – 1.00	Very strong

Source: Cohen et al (2025)

Cohen et al (2007) posited that, effect size is an easy way to quantify both relationship and difference between two groups and at the same time to measure the effectiveness and statistical significance. Generally, the decision rule for the acceptance or rejection of hypothetical statements is premised on the adoption of a 0.05 significance threshold due to its 95% test on all hypotheses. Similarly, for the purpose of ease of presentation analysis and interpretation understanding, the researchers proposed hypotheses are thus grouped into:

- (i) Those relating to quality based positioning and customer engagement

- (ii) Those relating to functional based positioning and customer engagement
- (iii) Those relating to differentiation based positioning and customer engagement
- (iv) And those that relate to organisational factor on the relationship between brand positioning and customer engagement.

Decision Rule

If the probability value (PV) in the coefficient table is less than 0.05 alpha level, we Reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternate hypotheses of significant relationship.

If the probability value (PV) is greater than 0.05 alpha level, we accept the null hypothesis of no significant relationship.

The dimensions of Brand Positioning Strategies: Quality Based Positioning (QBP), Functional Based Positioning (FBP), Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP) and Value Based Positioning (VBP) were correlated against Customer Commitment (CC) and Customer Loyalty (CL) which are the measures of Customer Engagement (CE). The correlation aimed at determining the degree of relationship that exists between brand positioning strategies and customer engagement of registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State. The correlation values with their related significant values are shown in the tables below.

First model: $CC = B_0 + b_1(QBP)_1 + (FBP)_2 + (DBP)_3 + (VBP)_4 + 0.05$

Table 14: Regression Model Summary

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.834 ^a	.696	.692	.11314	1.803

a. Predictors: (Constant), VBP, FBP, DBP, QBP

b. Dependent Variable: CC

Source: SPSS output (2025)

The above model summary in table 4.11 produced a correlation coefficient; 'R' of 0.838^a which shows that there is a very strong significant correlation between Quality Based Positioning (QBP), Functional Based Positioning (FBP), Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP), Value Based Positioning (VBP) and Customer Commitment (CC) of registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State. The R² stood at 0.692 which implies that about 69% variation in Customer Commitment (CC) is attributed to changes in the independent variable (Quality Based Positioning, Functional Based Positioning, Differentiation Based Positioning & Value Based Positioning). The standard error is 0.11314, thus, measure of variation of the observation made from the (actual values of Y) around the computed value of Y on the regression line is close to 0 and far from 1. The Durbin-Watson "d" = 1.803, is between the two critical values of $1.5 < d < 2.5$ and therefore we can assume that there is no first order linear auto-correlation in the data. Hence the model is of absolute good fit.

Table 15: ANOVA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.919	4	2.230	174.175	.000 ^b
	Residual	3.892	304	.013		
	Total	12.810	308			

a. Dependent Variable: CC

b. Predictors: (Constant), VBP, FBP, DBP, QBP

Source: SPSS output (2025)

The probability value of 0.000 indicates that the regression relationship was significant in determining how Quality Based Positioning (QBP), Functional Based Positioning (FBP), Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP) and Value Based Positioning (VBP) influence Customer Commitment (CC) of registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State. The F calculated at 5 percent level of significance was 174.175. Since F calculated is greater than the F critical (value = 2.4472), this shows that the overall model was significant.

Table 16: Multiple Regression Analysis on the Dimensions of Brand Positioning Strategies

		Coefficients ^a		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error				
1	(Constant)	.308	.132		2.328	.021
	QBP	.182	.023	.279	7.921	.000
	FBP	.225	.019	.368	11.571	.000
	DBP	.232	.019	.389	12.194	.000
	VBP	.280	.024	.414	11.728	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CC

Source: SPSS output (2025)

Interpretation

The regression equation above has established that taking; Quality Based Positioning (QBP), Functional Based Positioning (FBP), Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP) and Value Based Positioning (VBP) constant at zero, Customer Commitment (CC) will be 0.308. This shows that if all the dimensions of independent variable were held constant, customer commitment will be decreasing.

Hypotheses one to four test the relationship between quality based positioning, functional based positioning, differentiation based positioning, value based positioning and customer commitment.

H₀₁: Quality Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Commitment of registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

The regression result in table 14 shows a model constant (a) value of 0.308 and QBP(bx₁) value of 0.182, indicating that, for every one-unit increase of Quality Based Positioning (QBP) value, the dependent variable Customer Commitment (CC) value will rise by 18%. T-value for QBP(bx₁) produced 7.921, is significant at P value (.000), which is less than the chosen alpha of α (0.05). Hence, hypothesis one is rejected meaning there is a strong significant linear relationship between Quality Based Positioning (QBP) and Customer Commitment (CC) of fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

H₀₂: Functional Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Commitment in registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Also, the regression result in table 14 shows a model constant (a) value of 0.308 and FBP(bx₂) value of 0.225, indicating that, for every one-unit increase of Functional Based Positioning (FBP) value, the dependent variable Customer Commitment (CC) value will rise by 22%. T-value for FBP(bx₂) produced 11.571, is significant at P value (.000), which is less than the chosen alpha of α (0.05). Hence, hypothesis two is rejected meaning there is a strong significant linear relationship between Functional Based Positioning (FBP) and Customer Commitment (CC) of fashion designing outlets in Rivers State.

H₀₃: Differentiation Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Commitment in registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Furthermore, the regression result in table 14 shows a model constant (a) value of 0.308 and DBP(bx₃) value of 0.232, indicating that, for every one-unit increase of Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP) value, the dependent variable Customer Commitment (CC) value will rise by 23%. T-value for DBP(bx₃) produced 12.194, is significant at P value (.000), which is less than the chosen alpha of α (0.05). Hence, hypothesis three is rejected meaning there is a strong significant linear relationship between Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP) and Customer Commitment (CC) of fashion designing outlets in Rivers State.

Ho₄: Value Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Commitment in registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Finally, the regression result in table 14 shows a model constant (a) value of 0.308 and VBP(bx₄) value of 0.280, indicating that, for every one-unit increase of Value Based Positioning (VBP) value, the dependent variable Customer Commitment (CC) value will rise by 28%. T-

value for VBN(bx₄) produced 11.728, is significant at P value (.000), which is less than the chosen alpha of α (0.05). Hence, hypothesis four is rejected meaning there is a strong significant linear relationship between Value Based Positioning (VBP) and Customer Commitment (CC) of fashion designing outlets in Rivers State.

Second model: $CL = C_0 + c_1(QBP)_1 + (FBP)_2 + (DBP)_3 + (VBP)_4 + 0.05$

Table 17: Regression Model Summary

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.880 ^a	.774	.771	.12148	1.274

a. Predictors: (Constant), VBP, DBP, QBP, FBP

b. Dependent Variable: CL

Source: SPSS output (2025)

The above model summary in table 4.15 produced a correlation coefficient; 'R' of 0.880^a which shows that there is a very strong significant correlation between Quality Based Positioning (QBP), Functional Based Positioning (FBP), Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP), Value Based Positioning (VBP) and Customer Loyalty (CL) of registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State. The R² stood at 0.774 which implies that about 77% variation in Customer Loyalty (CL) is attributed to changes in the independent variable (Quality Based Positioning, Functional Based Positioning, Differentiation Based Positioning & Value Based Positioning). The standard error is 0.12148, thus, measure of variation of the observation made from the (actual values of Y) around the computed value of Y on the regression line is close to 0 and far from 1. The Durbin-Watson "d" = 1.274, is between the two critical values of $1.5 < d < 2.5$ and therefore we can assume that there is no first order linear auto-correlation in the data. Hence the model is of absolute good fit.

Table 18: ANOVA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.402	4	3.850	260.929	.000 ^b
	Residual	4.486	304	.015		
	Total	19.888	308			

a. Dependent Variable: CL

b. Predictors: (Constant), VBP, DBP, QBP, FBP

Source: SPSS output (2025)

The probability value of 0.000 indicates that the regression relationship was significant in determining how Quality Based Positioning (QBP), Functional Based Positioning (FBP), Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP) and Value Based Positioning (VBP) influence Customer Loyalty (CL) of registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State. The F calculated at 5 percent level of significance was 260.929. Since F calculated is greater than the F critical (value = 2.4472), this shows that the overall model was significant.

Table 19: Multiple Regression Analysis on the Dimensions of Brand Positioning Strategies

		Coefficients ^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.356	.111		3.222	.001
	QBP	.189	.028	.250	6.825	.000
	FBP	.215	.036	.249	5.924	.000
	DBP	.253	.036	.262	7.029	.000
	VBP	.259	.041	.287	6.358	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CL

Source: SPSS output (2025)

Interpretation

The regression equation above has established that taking; Quality Based Positioning (QBP), Functional Based Positioning (FBP), Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP) and Value Based Positioning (VBP) constant at zero, Customer Loyalty (CL) will be 0.356. This shows that if all the dimensions of independent variable were held constant, customer loyalty will be decreasing.

Hypotheses five to eight test the relationship between quality based positioning, functional based positioning, differentiation based positioning, value based positioning and customer loyalty.

H₀₅: Quality Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Loyalty of registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

The regression result in table 17 shows a model constant (a) value of 0.356 and QBP(cx₁) value of 0.189, indicating that, for every one-unit increase of Quality Based Positioning (QBP) value, the dependent variable Customer Loyalty (CL) value will rise by 19%. T-value for QBP(cx₁) produced 6.825, is significant at P value (.000), which is less than the chosen alpha of α (0.05). Hence, hypothesis five is rejected meaning there is a strong significant linear relationship between Quality Based Positioning (QBP) and Customer Loyalty (CL) of registered fashion designing outlets in Rivers State.

H₀₆: Functional Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Loyalty in registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Also, the regression result in table 17 shows a model constant (a) value of 0.356 and FBP(cx₂) value of 0.215, indicating that, for every one-unit increase of Functional

Based Positioning (FBP) value, the dependent variable Customer Loyalty (CL) value will rise by 22%. T-value for FBP(cx₂) produced 5.924, is significant at P value (.000), which is less than the chosen alpha of α (0.05). Hence, hypothesis six is rejected meaning there is a strong significant linear relationship between Functional Based Positioning (FBP) and Customer Loyalty (CL) of registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

H₀₇: Differentiation Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Loyalty in registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Additionally, the regression result in table 17 shows a model constant (a) value of 0.356 and DBP(cx₃) value of 0.253, indicating that, for every one-unit increase of Differentiation Based Positioning (DBP) value, the dependent variable Customer Loyalty (CL) value will rise by 25%. T-value for DBP(cx₃) produced 7.029, is significant at P value (.000), which is less than the chosen alpha of α (0.05). Hence, hypothesis seven is rejected meaning there is a strong significant linear relationship between Differential Based Positioning (FBP) and Customer Loyalty (CL) of registered fashion designing outlets in Rivers State.

H₀₈: Value Based Positioning does not relate with Customer Loyalty in registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Furthermore, the regression result in table 17 shows a model constant (a) value of 0.356 and VBP(cx₄) value of 0.259, indicating that, for every one-unit increase of Value Based Positioning (VBP) value, the dependent variable Customer Loyalty (CL) value will rise by 26%. T-value for VBP(cx₄) produced 6.358, is significant at P value (.000), which is less than the chosen alpha of α (0.05). Hence, hypothesis eight is rejected meaning there

is a strong significant linear relationship between Value Based Positioning (VBP) and Customer Loyalty (CL) of registered fashion designing outlets in Rivers State.

Multivariate Analysis

Hypothesis was formulated on the moderating effect of organizational factor on the relationship between brand positioning strategies and customer engagement. This is presentation below.

Correlations

Control Variables			BRAND POSITIONING STRATEGIES	CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT
ORGANISATIONAL FACTOR	BRAND POSITIONING STRATEGIES	Correlation	1.000	.450
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000
		Df	0	294
	CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	Correlation	.450	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.
		Df	294	0

(Source: SPSS output)

From the output of the correlation matrix in table 17, Organisational Factor of managerial competence, safety culture, communication pattern and employee relation bears a significant influence on the relationship between brand positioning strategies and customer engagement. This influence on the relationship is weak with a value of 0.450. It means that managerial competence, safety culture, communication pattern and employee relation influence the interplay of brand positioning strategies and customer engagement as shown by the probability level of 0.000 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05, thus leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis nine (9) of no significant influence of organisational factor on the relationship between brand positioning strategies and customer engagement of registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Quality Based Positioning and Customer Engagement

Findings in Table 4 showed minimum; 2.25, maximum; 4.00, std. Deviation; 0.29; Variance 0.087 and individual mean items rating of quality based positioning and customer engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State which is to a high extent given the grand mean of 3.67 above the criterion mean of 2.5 on a 4 point likert scale. The result also indicates a very strong significant

Ho₉: Organizational Factor does not influence on the relationship between Brand Positioning Strategies and Customer Engagement of registered fashion design outlets in Rivers State.

Table 19: Partial Correlation Matrix showing the influence of Organisational Factor on the relationship between Brand Positioning Strategies and Customer Engagement of Fashion Design Outlets in Rivers State

linear relationship between quality based positioning and customer commitment; 0.834 (table 5.) with a coefficient of 0.182 & sig. value; $0.000 < 0.05$ as shown in table 4.14; and a very strong significant linear relationship between quality based and customer loyalty; 0.880 (table 15) given a coefficient of 0.189 & sig. value; $0.000 < 0.05$ as shown in table 17. This finding collaborates with Akpabio et al. (2020) who found that Product quality positioning significantly relates with customer satisfaction. Similarly, Keni (2020) revealed that both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of products play a significant and important role in affecting consumers' intention to repurchase. In another study, Darwin, Suwanna, and Theingi (2017) found that service quality positively affects customer engagement. Saha and Theingi (2009) also revealed that high levels of satisfaction in service quality affect customer engagement positively.

Hollebeek and Chen (2014) revealed that perceived quality influence engagement toward a brand. In a similar finding Verma et al. (2012) indicated that the interaction of social and brand values positively have an impact on customer engagement. When analyzing interrelationships among airline passenger loyalty and marketing constructs, Hapsari and Dean (2016) demonstrated that Customer Engagement is influenced by customer perceived quality. Thus, Hitesh (2020)

maintains that one unique way to distinguish a product amongst the competitors would be to narrow the focus to a particular area of expertise and use that as branding strategy in terms of quality positioning. Huff, et al. (1996) argue that reliability is likely to drive overall quality when there is meaningful variation in defects between competing products and customers are able to differentiate the variation. Kaltcheva et al., (2014) posit that with a specific type of customer engagement tool, firms can accrue and offer quality value to customers. The study of Darwin, Suwanna, and Theingi (2017) shows that service quality positively affects customer engagement. This was supported by Park et al. (2010) who maintained that engagement and brand quality displays the direction and level of reputation which the brand is in a consumer's mind.

Hollebeek (2013) maintains that customer's perception of value in product quality determines the level of their engagement. Relationship marketing theory considers perceived value as the main element of long-term relationships that its integration with the customer engagement will create the difference between success and failure of a business. Product value is built on quality which serves as an effective tool in promoting customer engagement. Zeithaml (1988) maintains that perceived value can be seen as consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product/service based on perceptions of what is received and what is given, thus reflecting a specific rate /trade-off, between perceived quality and price. Brodie et al. (2011) insist that it has been, revealed across studies that perceived quality is also one of the antecedent factors of Customer Engagement that means the perceived quality has the intention to drive customer engagement.

Functional Based Positioning and Customer Engagement

Findings in Table 8 shows minimum; 2.75, maximum; 4.00, std. Deviation; 0.33; Variance 0.113 and individual mean items rating of functional based positioning and customer engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State which is to a high extent given the grand mean of 3.77 above the criterion mean of 2.5 on a 4 point likert scale. The result also indicates a very strong significant linear relationship between functional based positioning and customer commitment; 0.834 (table, 12) with a coefficient of 0.225 & sig. value; 0.000<0.05 as shown in table 14; and a very strong significant linear relationship between functional based and customer loyalty; 0.880 (table, 12) given a coefficient of 0.215 & sig. value; 0.000<0.05 as shown in table 17. This finding

supports the study by Mohammad (2018) who revealed that functional branding enables a company to differentiate itself by positively reinforcing the value of its brand through design. Similarly, Töllinen and Karjaluo (2011) revealed that functional positioning increase brand equity and brand loyalty.

Usamah et al. (2018) posit that functional benefits are of primary importance for the consumers and can trigger purchase. According to Usamah et al., (2018) the objective of marketing is to identify functional benefits which are of primary importance for the consumers and that can trigger purchase for that particular brand. Benefits provided by a brand to the consumers are a fundamental source of building up commitment and loyalty. These benefits may be of functional or emotional in nature, (Karolina et al., 2012). Ahmed, Parmar and Amin (2014) noted that packaging function of products is considered as the most important factor that influenced consumer buying behaviour. Hess, Singh, Metcalf and Danes (2014) also revealed that packaging characteristics were indivisible component of the product and important to evaluation of the overall consumption experiences. In another study Shah et al. (2013) revealed that packaging function of product was an important element that influences consumer buying behaviour.

Also, Deliya and Parmar (2012) revealed a significant relationship between packaging function of products and consumer buying behaviour. Also, Jafari, Sharifnia, Salehi and Zahmatkesh (2013) found that package components have different impact during the various processes of consumer behaviour. Gilaninia (2013) also showed that functional product was considered has having a huge impact on customer decision at every stage of its process. Functional positioning is aimed at turning every interaction into a branded experience by ensuring that users receive a positive experience and the interaction conveys the company's brand values. These user experiences appeal to consumers emotionally and have excellent usability and functionality which depends on comprehensive and overall branded experience. As such, it can increase brand equity and brand loyalty (Töllinen et al., 2011).

Differentiation Based Positioning and Customer Engagement

Findings in Table 4 shows minimum; 2.50, maximum; 4.00, std. Deviation; 0.33; Variance 0.115 and individual mean items rating of quality based positioning and customer engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers

State which is to a high extent given the grand mean of 3.73 above the criterion mean of 2.5 on a 4 point likert scale. The result also indicates a very strong significant linear relationship between differentiation based positioning and customer commitment; 0.834 (table, 12) with a coefficient of 0.232 & sig. value; $0.000 < 0.05$ as shown in table 14; and a very strong significant linear relationship between differentiation based and customer loyalty; 0.880 (table, 15) given a coefficient of 0.253 & sig. value; $0.000 < 0.05$ as shown in table 4.17. This finding accepts the study by Anthony (2018) who found that product differentiation had a positive relationship with organizational performance. Also, Kedera et al. (2015) revealed that product differentiation strategies significantly influence firm product performance. In the study by James (2018) it was revealed that differentiation strategy on business performance were significant.

Pehrsson (2009) maintains that differentiation is a necessary condition, to gain competitive advantage over rival firms. Rahman (2011) present that product differentiation is a competitive business strategy whereby firms attempt to gain a competitive advantage by increasing the perceived value of their products and services relative to the perceived value of other firm's products and services. MacMillan and McGrath (1997) recognized that most profitable strategies are built on differentiation: offering customers something they value that competitors don't have. As a differentiation factor, Lee (2014) proposed product design as a creative strategy to help an enterprise acquire competitive advantages in the market. Hernant et al. (2011) assert that differentiation strategies are adopted by organizations to foster sales performance evolve around interplay of various elements of the retail mix. Importantly, Homburg et al. (2015) found that product differentiation played an important role in the communication of product use and operation procedure with consumers as it was the mutual arrangement and match of product configuration and elements to enhance the functional and economic pleasure of products. This was supported by Koufteros et al. (2005) who revealed that differentiation drives organizational success directly and significantly impacts nearly all of the critical determinants for success.

Differentiation remains competitive where firms gain advantage by increasing perceived value of their products or services relative to the perceived value of other firms' products or services. Companies are redirecting their efforts towards customer centricity and innovativeness, but also from goods to services and more importantly investing in differentiation. Shammot (2011)

posits that product differentiation strategy can be a tool of competitive advantage which is adopted by organizations in order to provide products that satisfies individual customer's needs. In satisfying individual customer's needs, quality has become a major differentiating factor among products. As a result, customers are willing to pay more for products that cater to their individual size, taste, style, need or expression. Kotler et al., (2007) posit that differentiation which is based on reliability does not only increase consumers' willingness to pay, but also provide firms with long-term success, since the reputation of the good or service is strengthened. Knox (2000) maintains that if differentiation is successfully applied, brands can reach a higher relative price. Firms try to introduce same features like their competitors if they discover that consumers like some particular feature in the product they sell with an aim of boosting their sales. Kedera et al. (2015) revealed that researchers in strategic management, agree that firms face less competition by differentiating itself from others. Hence, achieving competitive advantage through product differentiation becomes the main focus of today's business..

Value Based Positioning and Customer Engagement

Findings in Table 4. shows minimum; 2.75, maximum; 4.00, std. Deviation; 0.30; Variance 0.093 and individual mean items rating of value based positioning and customer engagement of fashion design outlets in Rivers State which is to a high extent given the grand mean of 3.53 above the criterion mean of 2.5 on a 4 point likert scale. The result also indicates a very strong significant linear relationship between value based positioning and customer commitment; 0.834 (table, 12) with a coefficient of 0.280 & sig. value; $0.000 < 0.05$ as shown in table 14; and a very strong significant linear relationship between value based and customer loyalty; 0.880 (table, 15) given a coefficient of 0.259 & sig. value; $0.000 < 0.05$ as shown in table 17. This finding was supported by the work of Zhen et al., (2019) which revealed that emotional value, environmental value, functional value and economic value significantly relate with customer satisfaction and continuance intention. Similarly Johnston et al. (2005) found that value is the real "engine" for increasing market share.

Banton et al. (2020) posit that the economic value to the customer is one of the many pricing architectures a business can use as a pricing strategy. Maximilian (2018) maintains that economic value accounts for the fact that the value one can capture for commodity attributes of an offer is limited to whatever competitors

charge for them. Sweeney et al. (2001) also revealed that the economic value to the customer process enables businesses to capture more value than a traditional cost-plus pricing strategy while Acharya (2018) insists that retailers employ emotional branding as a way to engage their customers, appealing to their needs, aspirations, dreams, and ego. Akgun et al. (2013) positioned that emotional branding seems to be a strategy that creates strong brand attachments between consumers and brands.

Accordingly, Mudambi (2002) maintains that brand strength is based on more emotional values, and improvements in the buyer-seller relationship, communications and image, are more challenging to accomplish but can also have a more long-term value. Kotler and Armstrong (2008) revealed that value has a significant role in business buying decisions. Similarly, Otley (2016) finds that emotionally connected consumers are 52% more valuable to a brand than those who are just satisfied. Rossiter and Bellman (2012) also found that emotionally attached consumers are a brand's highly profitable market segment. Doyle and Stern (2006) insist that functional value is a strong motivator when purchasing decisions are mainly rational. Mudambi (2002) revealed that product's functional quality creates reliability, such as health and food products that are related to people's life and health. Value induces greater demand thus Johnston et al. (2005) recognize value as the real "engine" for increasing market share. Value based positioning is therefore a marketing output/input ratio which measures the consumer's gain, or "profitability" he obtains from his purchase. This ratio suggests that customer engagement increases when benefits increase or when the price and/or required effort decrease. If the price increases in greater proportion than the benefits offered, then Value decreases and the quantity demanded by the customer segment is reduced.

Positive and Significant Influence of Organizational Factor on the Relationship between Brand Positioning Strategies and Customer Engagement

Findings in Table 11 shows the mean response of brand positioning strategies, 3.76; customer engagement, 3.74 and organizational factor, 3.74 which are above the criterion mean of 2.5 on a 4 point likert scale indicating that organizational factor influence brand positioning strategies and customer engagement to a high extent. The result also indicates that organizational factor bears weak influence on the relationship between brand positioning strategies and customer engagement with a correlation

value of 0.450. This finding supports Sudirman et al. (2021) who found a reciprocal relationship between customer experience and customer engagement. Kennedy et al. (1995) found that safety culture of an organization is a critical influence on human performance in safety-related tasks and hence on the safety performance of the organization. Meyer and Semark (1996) also present that organizations applying several managerial competencies which draw attention to the need to understand how different these competencies are working in organizations, this require to highlight the most effective competency in order to enhance it for a better performance.

Conclusion

The results and findings of this study reveal that there is a positive and significant relationship between brand positioning strategies (quality based positioning, functional based positioning, differentiation based positioning and value based positioning) and customer engagement (customer commitment and customer loyalty). It is established that quality based positioning, functional based positioning, differentiation based positioning and value based positioning influence customer commitment and loyalty of fashion design outlets in Rivers State. The study conclude that brand positioning strategies influence customer engagement as moderated by organizational factors of managerial competence, safety culture, communication pattern and employee relation. This indicates that brand positioning strategies are significant measures of engaging customer in the fashion and design industry in Rivers State. With more precision, the elements of quality, function, differentiation and value are proven more efficient in achieving customer commitment and loyalty. These findings fall within the acceptance of the researchers given the roles played by these variables in various literatures.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study the following recommendations are therefore made:

1. That the fashion design outlets in Rivers State are advice to emphasize and focus on producing unique wears that has touch of quality in order to elicit continuous customer patronage and loyalty.
2. It is also expedient for all fashion houses to re-evaluate their packaging methods since it serves an essential function in projecting brand's image and customer engagement.

3. Fashion dealers should endeavour to practically position their wears so that their products are recognizably different from their competitors and thus elicit increased customer engagement.
4. Dealers of fashion outfit should ensure that their products are value laden in order to provide customer with a strong incentive to make a purchase and remain loyal to their service offering.
5. And that the fashion design outlets in Rivers State should regularly conduct managerial training, provide safe working environment, good communication and improved employee relation to achieve internal stability for high productivity.

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