



## **INFLUENCE OF BUILDING MARKET RELATIONSHIP ON FMCG REPEAT PURCHASES: A STUDY OF INDIA AND GHANA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In business, relationship matters. As the world spins into the 21st century, dramatic changes are occurring at the marketplace. Relationship building with customers has become a key driver to market share and will have to be integrated into all areas of the business to achieve market objectives. As today's business world is driven by customer demand, success in business is dependent on strong and effective customer relationship building in order to satisfy customer needs and provide a competitive advantage for the business. Today, the competition in most markets especially the FMCG sector has widened the choice of customers forcing significant changes in the way businesses operate. This is partly due to an increase in the rate of globalization: companies are now forced to compete internationally as well as locally. Thus, in order to remain competitive, sustain in the market and deliver satisfaction to customers, marketers must strive to create and build an effective, lasting and long-term market relationship with customers in order to meet their needs and give them satisfaction. This makes a contribution towards the achievement of business' goals. The primary objective of this study was to discover the influence of building market relationship on customer repeat purchases. A sample of 500 respondents consisting of customers and*

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*business managers in the FMCG market in India and Ghana were chosen for the study. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in this study to meet the stated objectives. Responses were analysed with various statistical measures and the interpretations showed a high level of agreement between the independent and dependent variables. The findings from the study indicate that, relationship marketing strategies have a very strong impact on repeat purchases. The study therefore recommends that businesses continuously strengthen, grow and protect the relationship they have with both existing and potential customers in order to sustain customers' interest and desire for its products.*

**Keywords:**

Relationship, Marketing strategies, Repeat purchases, Globalization, Competition.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Relationship marketing strategies, which emphasizes a coordinated effort to develop a long term market relationship with customers in order to understand, meet their needs and exceed their satisfaction expectations, is the philosophy guiding today's successful marketing managers. Presently, relationship building has become critical in view of the stiff competition and the need for retailers and other business managers to gain a stronghold in the heated market environment. Moreover, today, the competition in most industries and markets has widened the choice of customers forcing significant changes in the way businesses operate.

Today, customers have become more knowledgeable and choosy in terms of their needs and wants. They constantly demand goods and services that satisfy their needs as well as value for money. Thus, in order to remain competitive, sustain in the market and deliver satisfaction to customers, marketers must strive to create and build long-term market relationship with customers in order to satisfy their needs, exceed them and achieve business' goals.

Businesses that have achieved greatness and success have one thing in common: they are strongly customer focused and heavily committed to marketing. These companies share a passion for satisfying customer needs in well-defined target markets. They motivate everyone in the organization to help build lasting customer relationships through superior customer value and satisfaction. The 21st century can be termed as a

century of relationship building in the marketplace. Relationship building with customers has become a key driver to market share and will have to be integrated into all areas of the business to achieve organizational objectives. As today's business world is driven by customer demand, success in business is dependent on strong customer relationship building to satisfy customer needs and provide a competitive advantage for the business.

This research, is thus, aimed at providing an examination on how the influence of relationship marketing strategies contribute to driving customers towards making repeat purchases in the FMCG market in both Ghana and India and its reflected results on business performance.

### ❖ **Justification of the Study**

The retail industry, particularly the FMCG sector, has switched into a more competitive market making it difficult to retain customers over the years. This is partly due to an increase in the rate of globalization: companies are now forced to compete internationally as well as locally forcing significant changes in the way businesses operate. Moreover, businesses also face threats from changes in the political, economic, social and technological environment.

In order to meet and the needs and expectations of customers and deliver satisfaction in today's market characterized by high competition, businesses need to enhance their interactions with customers, build effective and lasting market relationship with them and develop promotional techniques for their products to achieve profitability. This makes a contribution towards the business' growth strategy.

### ❖ **Research Gap**

The underlying rationale for this study is based on the observation from available literature that, there is limited study in the area with respect to the building of effective market relationship that leads to **repeat purchases and the retention** of customers in the retail industry especially in the FMCG market. Literature available on relationship building mostly focused on the hospitality industry. Thus, it clear that a gap exist in literature which needs to be filled and this study will help come out with effective principles needed to build lasting market relationship in today's retail market.

### ❖ **Research Objectives**

The study addresses the following research objectives;

- ❖ To identify 'relationship marketing' strategies that influence repeat purchases and customer retention in the FMCG market.
- ❖ To find out the key drivers of relationship strategies in the FMCG market.
- ❖ To explain the benefits a business stands to gain as a result of building lasting relationship with its customers.

### ❖ **Significance of the study**

- ❖ This study will provide a market network guide for FMCG businessmen as well as prospective marketers who wish to enter the retail industry.
- ❖ Factors identified influencing market relationship marketing in the FMCG sector will help stakeholders to treat it as a wake-up call and treat them with maximum attention.
- ❖ Findings from this study will also help identify strategic measures in safeguarding repeat purchases and the retention of customers.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Armstrong and Kotler (2014)**, customers who make repeat purchases are the cash cows of the business. They have a positive effect on the business profitability as a result of their continuous purchase and bringing in more potential customers by means of referrals.

**Dutta and Roy (2015)** indicate that, customer demand is highly influenced by relationships. Good relationship with a satisfied customer brings customers closer to the doorstep of the business to make repeat purchase. Market relationship with customers help to reduce defections, they conclude.

**Berry (1983)** reminds marketers that, a sale is not something you pursue, it is something that happens to you while you are immersed in serving your customers and giving value to them through customer intimacy.

**Rand (2015)** makes it known that, superior business relationship strategies results in long term market benefits as existing customers keep coming back. In that regard, sales increase, profits grow, and the business also gains a high market share.

It was found in **Hanson's study (2013)** that, good relationship with a satisfied customer brings customers closer to the doorstep of the business to make repeat purchase. Moreover, they also recommend the business' products to other friends and family members. It was concluded that relationship enhances customer base of the business contributing to competitive edge for the business.

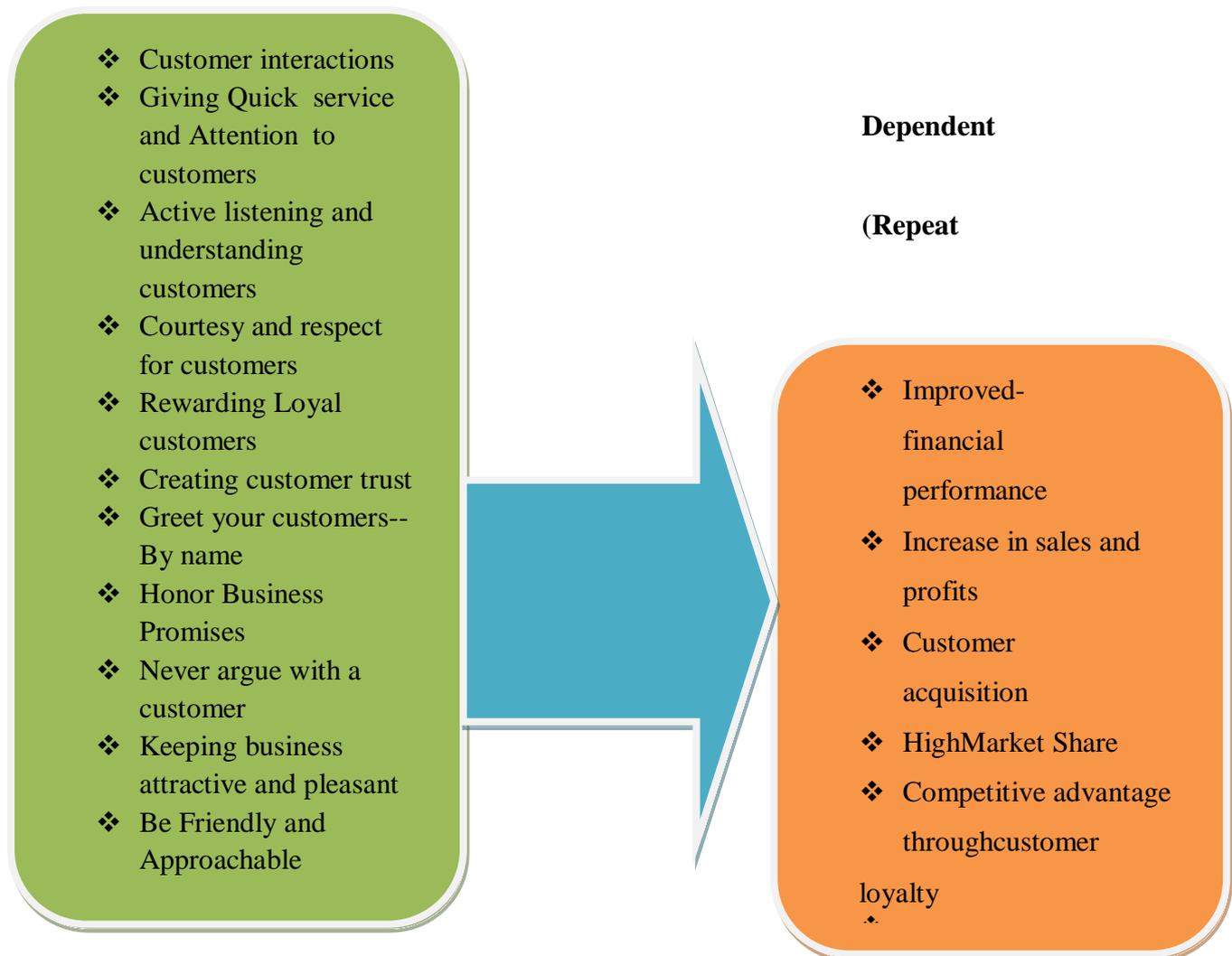
**Peppers and Bob's study in (2016)** also revealed that, rewarding loyal customers, care, interaction, treating customers with courtesy and respect , and friendliness are the base on which market relationships are built. This influences their purchase decisions.

**Sharma and Patterson (2010)** emphasize that, every human transaction is built around relationships. They disclosed that, building market relationship gives business the opportunity of enjoying the long term benefits of customer loyalty. Loyal customers are more attached to the business and make repeat purchase. They are more likely to accept price increases will help expand your business through referrals. The study concluded on the need for every business to connect with its customers.

## ❖ Theoretical Framework

### Independent variables

#### (Market Relationship Strategies)



### Hypotheses of the Study

The following are the hypotheses constructed for the study;

- ❖ **H1:** Customer interaction has a significant influence on repeat purchases.
- ❖ **H2:** Quick service and attention to customers has a significant influence on repeat purchases.
- ❖ **H3:** Active listening and understanding customers has a significant influence on repeat purchases.

- ❖ **H4:** Courtesy and respect for customers has a significant influence on repeat purchases.
- ❖ **H5:** Rewarding loyal customers has a significant influence on repeat purchases.
- ❖ **H6:** Creating customer trust has a significant influence on repeat purchases.
- ❖ **H7:** Greeting customers--By name has a significant influence on repeat purchases.
- ❖ **H8:** Honoring Business Promises has a significant influence on repeat purchases.
- ❖ **H9:** Never arguing with a customer has a significant influence on repeat purchases.
- ❖ **H10:** Keeping business attractive and pleasant has a significant influence on repeat purchases.
- ❖ **H11:** Being Friendly and Approachable has a significant influence on repeat purchases.

The hypotheses were further tested using various statistical measures such as Multiple Regression Analysis, Factor Analysis, Chi-Square and Pearson's Correlation Analysis to determine their relationship and level of agreement.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted through a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Both approaches were adopted in carrying out this exploratory study with the help of well-structured and pre-tested Questionnaire to obtain the views of customers on market relationship building. Both closed-ended and open-ended questions were included measured on a five-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 to 5 corresponding to responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were also held with customers and marketers to know their overall opinions on market relationship.

Primary and secondary data sources were collected. The primary data were collected with the use of the structured questionnaires self-administered to the respondents. Secondary data saw the use of articles, journals related to relationship marketing. Stratified sampling technique was adopted to distribute the questionnaire among 400 respondents across major cities in Ghana and India namely; Kumasi, Accra, Koforidua, Chennai, Mumbai, and New Delhi.

Respondents from each city were selected based on their convenient accessibility. All the study modules were checked for reliability and validity with Cronbach's alpha coefficient, calculated in order to assess the internal reliability of all items in the questionnaire. Furthermore, with the help of SPSS version 20 as an analysis tool, the data collected from respondents were statistically analyzed and well interpreted with statistical

measures such as Multiple Regression Analysis, Factor Analysis, Chi-Square and Pearson's Correlation Analysis ensuring that they matched up with the set objectives.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSES

**Table 4.1 Reliability Statistics**

<b>Reliability Statistics</b>		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
.892	.951	55

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to measure the reliability and validity of the questionnaires and the above results obtained. The value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.892 which is very high, thus showing a higher reliability of the instrument used in the study.

This indicates sufficient reliability of the data because it meets the minimum acceptable value of 0.7.

### 4.1 Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression model for the analysis used is as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \dots + \beta_{11} X_{11} \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where, Y is the (dependent variable)  $\alpha$  is Y intercept  $\beta_1-11$  are the regression coefficients

**X1** : Customer Interactions

- X2** :Quick service and Attention to customers
- X3**:Active listening and understanding customers
- X4**:Treating customers with Courtesy and respect
- X5**:Rewarding Loyal customers
- X6** :Creating customer trust
- X7**:Greeting customers-- By name
- X8**:Honoring Business Promises
- X9**: Never argue with a customer
- X10**:Keeping business attractive and pleasant
- X11**:Being Friendly and Approachable

Y (**Repeat purchases**) =  $\beta_1$ Customer Interactions + Quick service and Attention to customers +  $\beta_3$ Active listening and Understanding customers +  $\beta_4$ Treating customers with Courtesy and respect +  $\beta_5$ Rewarding Loyal customers +  $\beta_6$ Creating customer trust+  $\beta_7$ Greeting customers-- By name+  $\beta_8$ Honoring Business Promises+  $\beta_9$ Never argue with a customer+  $\beta_{10}$  Keeping Business Attractive and Pleasant+  $\beta_{11}$ Keeping business attractive and pleasant always..... (2)

The independent and dependent variables were further tested using various statistical measures such as Multiple Regression Analysis, Factor Analysis, Chi-Square and Pearson’s Correlation Analysis to determine their relationship and level of agreement.

**Table 4.2 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.910 <sup>a</sup>	.829	.828	.22775

a.Predictors: (Constant), Customer interaction, Quick service and attention to customers,

Active listening and understanding customers, Treating customers with courtesy and respect, Rewarding loyal customers, Creating customer Trust, Greeting customers by Name, Honoring business Promises, Never argue with customers, Keeping business attractive and Pleasant, Be Friendly and Approachable to customers.

b. Dependent Variable: Repeat purchases

**Table 4.3**

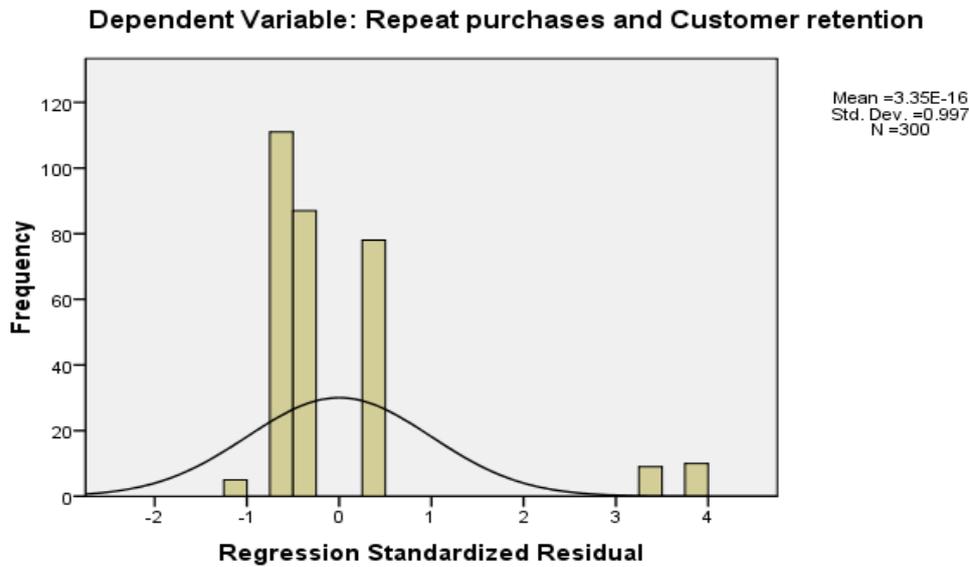
**ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.158	11	3.923	157.174	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	7.189	288	.025		
	Total	50.347	299			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer interaction, Quick service and attention to customers, Active listening and understanding customers, Treating customers with courtesy and respect, Rewarding loyal customers, Creating customer Trust, Greeting customers by Name, Honoring business Promises, Never argue with customers, Keeping business attractive and Pleasant, Be Friendly and Approachable to customers.

b. Dependent Variable: Repeat purchases

## Histogram



**Fig. 4.1**

The Regression coefficient 'R' = 0.910 or 91.0% which means that correlation between the dependent variable and the independent variables is positive. The coefficient of determination 'R<sup>2</sup>' = 0.829 indicating that 82.9% of variation in dependent variable is explained by independent variables. The F-test value of 157.174 is significant because the significance level is = .000 which is less than 0.05.

Hence, null hypotheses will be rejected and alternative hypotheses will be accepted that good business performance which is manifested through repeat purchases is positively correlated with Customer interaction, Quick service and attention to customers, Active listening and understanding customers, Treating customers with courtesy and respect, Rewarding loyal customers, Creating customer Trust, Greeting customers by Name, Honoring business Promises, Never argue with customers, Keeping business attractive and Pleasant, Be Friendly and Approachable to customers. This also indicates that the correlation between dependent variable and independent variables is statistically significant and the regression model is valid.

**Table 4.4. Factor Analysis**

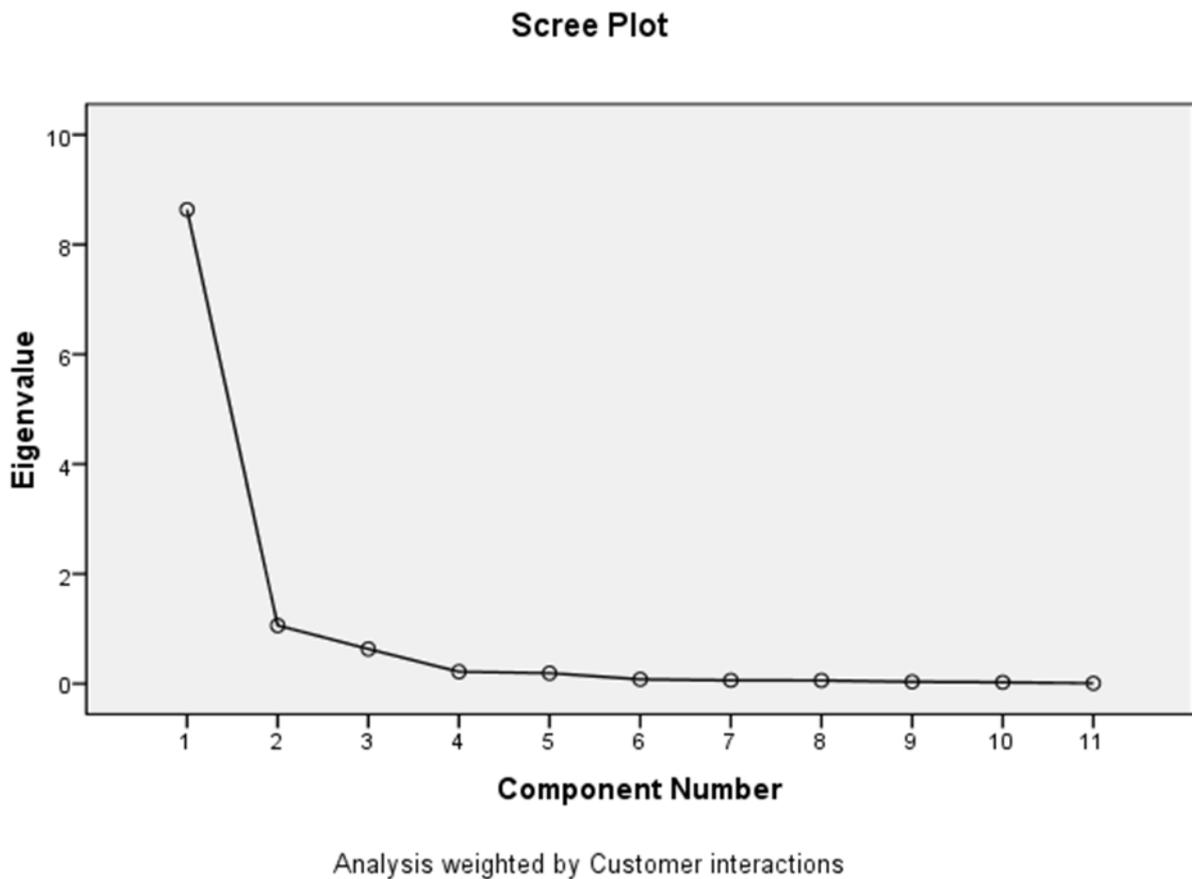
**Total Variance Explained**

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	13.013	81.331	81.331	8.644	54.028	54.028
2	1.170	7.313	88.643	5.539	34.616	88.643
3	.794	4.962	93.606			
4	.294	1.836	95.441			
5	.235	1.468	96.909			
6	.100	.628	97.537			
7	.076	.474	98.011			
8	.066	.409	98.420			
9	.058	.365	98.785			
10	.051	.320	99.106			
11	.048	.894	100.00			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The above table shows the total variance explained. Since the main idea of factor analysis as a statistical tool is to reduce the number of factors, total variance explained presents the percentage of variance attributable to each factor after extraction. From the table, the 11 factors used in the study are reduced and clubbed into 2 depicting that about 88% of variation of the repeat purchases are explained by these 2 key variables ('Customer interactions and Offering valuable products with Quick service').

This is of much significance and helps determine in this direction that customer loyalty and repeat purchases in the FMCG market is influenced by these main variables with the first factor dominating by 81%.



**Fig. 4.2 Scree Plot**

The figure above shows the scree plot of the factor analysis. It shows a graph of the eigenvalues against all the factors used in the study. The scree plot graph is useful for determining how many factors to retain. The point of interest is where the curve starts to flatten. It can be seen from the figure above that the curve begins to flatten between factors 4 and 5 with their eigenvalues more than 1.

It is also observed from the table that the 3<sup>rd</sup> factor '*active listening and understanding customers*' is equally a key factor before the curve flattens. Thus, only factors 1 and 2 with eigenvalues more than 1 have been retained.

**Table 4.4.3 Communalities**

Component	Initial	Extraction
Customer interactions	1.000	.817
Offering valuable products with Quick service	1.000	.931
Active listening and understanding customers	1.000	.930
Treating customers with courtesy and respect	1.000	.808
Surrounding customers with valuable informations	1.000	.904
Feedback to customer complaints	1.000	.899
Hosting events and Rewarding loyal customers	1.000	.875
After sales services to customers	1.000	.810
Creating a Quality website	1.000	.890
Business being Friendly and Approachable to customers	1.000	.845
Greeting customers by Name	1.000	.817
Creating customer Trust	1.000	.909
Never arguing with Customers	1.000	.938
Asking customers what they Want	1.000	.817
Honouring business Promises to customers	1.000	.913
Keeping business Attractive and Pleasant	1.000	.875

The table above is a table of communalities which shows the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. Communalities show how much variance in the variables has been accounted for by the extracted factors. The extracted values should be more than 0.5 to be considered for further analysis else, these variables are to be removed from further steps in factor analysis.

From the table, 93.8% of the variance in “ Never arguing with customers” is accounted for. Initial values are same showing a higher cohesiveness and strong significance of each variable.

## Correlation

### Correlation: Customer interactions\* Repeat purchases

		Business-customer interactions	Repeat purchases and Customer retention
Business-customer interactions	Pearson Correlation	1	.889**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Repeat purchases and Customer retention	Pearson Correlation	.889**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Correlation: Rewarding loyal customers \* Repeat purchases

		Repeat purchases and Customer retention	Offering valuable products with Quick service
Repeat purchases and Customer retention	Pearson Correlation	1	.788**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Offering valuable products with Quick service	Pearson Correlation	.788**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

	Repeat purchases and Customer retention	Treating customers with courtesy and respect
Repeat purchases and Customer retention	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 .576** .000 300
Treating customers with courtesy and respect	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.576** 1 .000 300

**Correlation: Courtesy and respect for customers\* Repeat purchases**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation: Quick service and Attention to customers \* Repeat purchases**

	Repeat purchases and Customer retention	Offering valuable products with Quick service
Repeat purchases and Customer retention	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 .896** .000 300
Offering valuable products with Quick service	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.896** 1 .000 400

**Correlation: Being Friendly and Approachable to customers \* Repeat purchases**

		Repeat purchases and Customer retention	Offering valuable products with Quick service
Repeat purchases and Customer retention	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 300	.764** .000 300
Offering valuable products with Quick service	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.764** .000 400	1 400

**5.0**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation: Greeting customers by Name \* Repeat purchases**

		Repeat purchases and Customer retention	Offering valuable products with Quick service
Repeat purchases and Customer retention	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 300	.957** .000 300
Offering valuable products with Quick service	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.957** .000 400	1 400

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The tables above represent the correlations between the independent and dependent variables. It depicts the strength and direction of correlation between them.

From the tables, it is evident that all the independent variables have a strong positive relationship with the dependent variable. Further, the relationships among the variables are all significant at a 0.000 level which is less than 0.05.

The Pearson Correlation values among the variables are all Positive, Strong and significant at a 0.000 level.

## **FINDINGS**

The study found that:

- ❖ Building market relationship with customers is directly linked to their loyalty.
- ❖ Effective market relationship with customers contributes to the increase in sales and business profits.
- ❖ Nothing strengthens a relationship more than Appreciation. Businessmen must learn to reward loyal customers in the form of discounts, and gifts.
- ❖ Satisfied customers become “Ambassadors” for the business.
- ❖ Building a lasting relationship with customers takes time and effort and but its benefits are endless.
- ❖ The Retail business, particularly the FMCG market will gel if relationship building with customer is practiced.
- ❖ Businessmen who value market relationship experience unbeatable market performance.
- ❖ Marketers need to have faith and confidence in their loyal customers. However, the loyalty of existing customers should not be taken for granted.
- ❖ Customers are observant and carefully take notice of how they are treated despite spending a short time. They spread every experience accordingly.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **❖ Recommendation to Marketers**

Who controls the market purse is a critical factor. The customer is always Right. Customers will always and forever be the rulers of the market! This fundamental business principle

should be acknowledged. Marketers must understand that the business exist because of customers and that, building a mutual relationship and giving them the best of market experience can change their purchase decisions.

#### ❖ **Recommendation to Customers**

It is the business that makes goods and services widely available. Marketers play a vital role in identifying and meeting consumer needs. For customers with clearly defined needs, marketing provides a means of learning about these new products and how to avail them. Business plays a role in managing all consumer expectations and promoting them. Thus, customers must also recognise and appreciate the efforts and sacrifice of businessmen and try to build and protect market relationship.

#### ❖ **Recommendation to Government**

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of July, 2018, India heard good news. The World Bank announced that India beats France to become the 6<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world. According to the World Bank, increase in consumer spending on household goods was the main driver boosting India's GDP and hence contributing to this achievement.

To this effect, Government should have a more strategic intervention in market activities and put successful market policies in place to empower both consumers and marketers in growing the economy.

### **CONCLUSION**

This exclusive study on building market relationship concludes that:

- ❖ Good relationship with a satisfied customer brings customers closer to the doorstep of the business to make repeat purchase. He also recommends the business' products to other friends and family members. This helps to enhance the customer base of the business contributing to an increase in sales, profits and a competitive edge for the business. On the other hand, however, poor market relationship can translate into poor business sales.
- ❖ As a result of differences in opinions and preferences, there will always be market relationship issues. But this shakeup in the marketplace especially, has to be handled in a healthy way.

- ❖ In the interest of business growth, marketers must try to tolerate all customers as it will help to deepen their knowledge and overall market experience.

All the related studies reviewed in this research suggest that building effective market relationship contributes to the loyalty of customer which helps in achieving repeat purchases. This study concludes that building market relationship with customers has a positive impact on repeat purchases as it helps to better understand their needs and expectations. This study, therefore, will be a contribution to the growing body of literature in the area of relationship marketing.

### **Limitations**

Generally, in carrying out any research, there are a number of controllable limitations faced and encountered by the researcher. Some of the limitations associated with this study include the following:

- ❖ In the process of the data collection and gathering, maximum cooperation from the information sources was the major limitation to this research study. Tireless efforts had to be put across to achieve results especially in obtaining the qualitative information in the form of interviews from business managers as most of them appeared busy while others had tight schedules. Effective measures were, however, instituted to overcome these shortfalls which led to the attainment of the desired objectives of the study.
- ❖ This study was specifically focused on the FMCG market and stores within the retail industry. Therefore, evidence from this single sector does not, necessarily, imply that the findings are true for other wider areas within the retail industry. Thus, it would be difficult to generalize some of the study's results in other areas as such online vendors and retail chemists.

### **Future Areas of Research**

Since this research has limitations, a few points that would benefit future research in the area of relationship marketing would be relevant;

- ❖ As stated earlier, since this study focused on only one market within the retail industry, the results, especially those from the FMCG business managers represent their views perspectives possible as a result of experience. Thus,

future research connected to relationship strategies from different areas and sectors within the retail industry would be of interest.

- ❖ In all, eleven (11) relationship marketing strategies influencing customer repeat purchases were considered as independent variables for this study while seven (7) market benefits which results from repeat purchases and retention customer of existing were considered as independent variables. Not all relationship marketing strategies were considered for this study. Thus, future studies and research which will include other relationship factors will be very educative.
  
- ❖ The market environment is full of dynamism. It has gone through many stages and transformations. This is evident from the era of the evolution of marketing down to the development of marketing philosophies. Today, things have changed. Its all about building lasting relationship to satisfy customer needs. As major trends and market forces continue to change the marketing landscape and challenge marketing strategies with new philosophies arising, future researchers must keep themselves abreast with emerging trends in the market.

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