Journal of Business and Economic Policy
UNIZIK Business School, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

UBSJBEP Volume 2 Issue 2
ISSN (Online) 0795 – 7149
https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/index.php/ubsjbep

MARKET KNOWLEDGE AND PERFORMANCE OF HAIRDRESSERS IN UMUAHIA, ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

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CITATION: Dibie, V.M, Ahamefula, C.J. & Okoh, P.O. (2024). Market Knowledge and Performance of Hairdressers in Umuahia, Abia State, Nigeria, *UBS Journal of Business and Economic Policy*, 2(2), 106 - 131.
Paper Type**: Original Research Paper;* ***Correspondence: v.dibie@gmail.com

Abstract
The study examined how market knowledge affects performance of hairdressers in Umuahia, Abia State. Specifically, the study examined the effect of customer complaint management on competitive advantage; the effect of customer taste management on patronage of hairdressers; effect of customized service for customers on sales turnover of hairdressers and examine the effect of customer lifestyle on service delivery of hairdressers. The population for this study covered all owners of the hairdressing salons in Umuahia, Abia State. The sample size 175 respondent was derived statistically by using Taro Yamane formula. Probability random sampling method was adopted to select 175 hairdressers from the population. Both primary data and secondary data were used. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and simple percentage. Hypotheses were tested with simple regression model. Empirical result reveals that customer complaint management has significant effect on competitive advantage of hairdressers. Customer taste management has significant and positive effect on customer patronage. Customized service for customers has positive and significant effect on sales turnover of hairdressers and customer lifestyle has positive and significant effect on service delivery of hairdressers. The study recommended that owners and managers of hairdressers should conduct a marketing research on management techniques related to customers' complaints. This will help owners and managers of hairdressers to understand the major factors leading to customers' complaints.

Key Words: *Hairdressers, Market Knowledge, Performance.*

Introduction
The growing competition within hair salons has necessitated the identification of customer knowledge and relationship marketing as a tool to support competitive strategy. As a result of social and economic development and changing trends, aesthetic levels and consumer expectations are increasing, as per demands and consumption. Particularly, hairstyling has gained attention as it is considered a tool to express an individual's sense of beauty that is easy to style and change (Arash, Hussin & Razak, 2014). In an era when appearance and image are paramount as personal values, it is not surprising that hairstyling is considered important to represent identity as it can create diverse images and emphasize beauty, hence the information about market (customers) need and preferred style is paramount to gain competitive advantage (Lee, 2019).

Market knowledge is the combination of experience, value and insight information which is needed, created and absorbed during the transaction and exchange between the customer and the enterprise. Campbell (2013) defines market knowledge as an organized and structured information about the customer as a result of systematic processing. According to Mitussis (2016), market knowledge is identified as one of the more complex types of knowledge, since market knowledge can be captured from different sources and channels. In most of the service firms like hair dressing, knowledge about market is gained mainly by service supervision, offer management and customer complaint management. Knowledge about the market must be transparent within the business; although its distribution beyond the borders of the business must be controlled, as this type of knowledge can often be directly transformed into competitive advantages. The development of such knowledge is also expensive because knowledge revelation is quite time-consuming (Arash, Hussin & Razak, 2014). Hair services are performed individually and consumers subjectively evaluate the services, being satisfied or unsatisfied. In other words, the same services can be evaluated differently according to the elements and levels involved.

It can be assumed that with an increased consumer appetite for service quality and pressure on the business for increased profit and market share, hair salons would benefit from the application of reliable market knowledge to build a customer base. This assumption relates to the domain of both market knowledge strategies and the services hair salons provide to achieve favourable interaction with customers. With determination, the interactions should enable hair salons to engage, network, and collaborate with customers for improved services. Given the increased competition in this segment, the quality of services becomes indispensable in performing the activities of a beauty salon, thus gaining a lasting relationship with the customer. In addition to bringing confidence and credibility, maintaining this market knowledge quality can also increase market share, as it is common for customers to talk about the establishment with their friends, family, as well as on their social media, making it is necessary to examine how market knowledge affects performance of hairdressers in Umuahia, Abia State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Human services may be difficult to standardize and may vary depending on circumstances, thus a true knowledge of the customers and market is considered very necessary for growth, survival and increase in customer base. As a combination of tangible and intangible services, hair services have been studied under different constructs by several researchers. However, it is undisputed that hair services include material and human aspects as well as hairstyling as a result of treatments. Dissatisfaction occurs when there is a gap between the quality expected and the quality received by consumers for each factor of the service (Gardial, 2019). This causes consumer complaint behaviors, such as negative word of mouth, direct appeal to the service provider, or appeal to public agencies (Kim and Lee, 2015). Still, not all consumers express their dissatisfaction with complaint behaviour; some consumers do nothing about it (Kim, 2013). It implies that there are numerous latent dissatisfactions among consumers.

Consumer complaints should be considered not only as negative indicators but also as a valuable source of information for development, and should be seen as opportunities to improve the quality of services.

Considering the fierce competition in the hair service industry, repurchase is necessary for service providers because it is more profitable to retain customers than to win prospective consumers (Dube, 2019). Moreover, it has been found that consumers with complaint behavior experiences are more likely to make repurchases than those without (Baek and Lee, 2009). Move over, it is necessary to understand how dissatisfaction and complaint behaviour of hair service consumers affect their revisiting intentions and examine what effects such dissatisfaction and complaint behaviour may be heavily on revisiting intentions. Unfortunately, there has been no adequate research on the reasons for dissatisfaction in the hair care business or even suggestions for improvement. Research has been limited to satisfaction with hair services with similar variables (Lee and Kim, 2014). Therefore, systematic approaches to variables related to consumer dissatisfaction and suggestions for differentiated marketing strategies should be made based on the results of these researches. Thus, this study sought to examine how market knowledge affect performance of hairdressers in Umuahia, Abia State.

The main objective of the study was to examine how market knowledge affects performance of hairdressers in Umuahia, Abia State. The specific objectives were to:

1. examine the effect of customer complaint management on competitive advantage;
2. examine the effect of customer taste management on patronage of hairdressers;
3. examine the effect of customized service for customers on sales turnover of hairdressers;
4. examine the effect of customer lifestyle on service delivery of hairdressers.

The following research questions guided the study;

i. how does customer complaint management affect competitive advantage of hairdressers?
ii. how does customer taste management by hairdressers affect customer patronage of hairdressers?
iii. what are the effects of customized service for customers on sales turnover of hairdressers?
iv. how does customer lifestyle affect service delivery of hairdressers?

The following hypotheses guided the study:

H_{o1}: Customer complaint management has no significant effect on competitive advantage of hairdressers

H_{o2}: Customer taste management by hairdressers has no significant effect on customer patronage of hairdressers

H_{o3}: Customized service for customers has no significant effect on sales turnover of hairdressers

H_{o4}: Customer lifestyle has no significant effect on service delivery of hairdressers.

It is expected that results from the study would benefit customers of hairdressing saloons, owners and managers of hairdressing saloons, potential investors in the hair service industry, other researchers and general public and even the government. It is expected that results from the study would help potential customers hair dressing saloons make better decisions with regards to saloons to patronize and styles to make; help owners and managers of hairdressing saloons understand the essence of market knowledge and how to go about it; help potential investors in the hair service industry examine the viability of investing in the industry; help other researchers interested in conducting studies in this area by way of provision of reference materials; help the general public and government to understand the peculiarities in the hair service industry.

Literature Review

Concept of Market Knowledge

Market knowledge is essentially the science of knowing your customers: who they are, what motivates them, what they want, need, love, or hate. It helps businesses know their customers, not just by number, but also understanding their buying patterns and needs. In today's market, businesses cannot successfully sell to customers without first acquiring customer knowledge (Gebert, Geib & Gerold, 2012). Market knowledge refers to understanding customers, their needs, wants and aims. It is essential if a business is to align its processes, products and services to build real customer relationships. It includes intimate and tacit knowledge such as that of key account managers, and distant or analytic knowledge including database information about sales, web-behaviour or other analytical piece of data. Back before the internet, marketers would obtain customer knowledge in person, because nobody was buying products or services over the internet. It was easy to know who was buying the products, because customers had to appear physically to buy, or at least speak to somebody about the product for information to help him make purchase decision (Kim and Lee, 2015).

Market knowledge can be approached from two viewpoints (Kim, 2013). Firstly, organization could say that customer knowledge is the collection of information and viewpoints that an organization has about its customers. Using this definition, the role of market knowledge management is to capture and organize relevant data to be shared and discussed throughout the organization (Mitussis, 2016). This can include sales and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, account reports, which also includes detailed analysis of more quantifiable factors, such as purchasing patterns or contact activities, website and social media behaviour. An alternative definitive of market knowledge is that it is the collection of information and insight that you need to have to build stronger customer relationships. From this point of view, what organizations currently know about customers may not be sufficient. Organizations may need to put in processes and systems to gather more information and data about who customers are, what they do and how they think. Organization may know what the customer spends with them, but may not know what they spend with competitors for instance. For practical purposes, customer knowledge management is more often than not biased towards the collection of easy information you have, rather than useful information you should have. For example, you could go to the extremes of looking for a complete psychographic breakdown of each of your customers individually, but in practice this would be

excessive (Gardial, 2019). The aim of building up a strong body of customer knowledge is to develop and manage customer relationships now and over the longer term. Customer knowledge should be determining what to offer, when to offer it and how much for; and to monitor and influence customer behaviour in the way you market and promote your products. In the long term the company has to design new products, offer new services and compete in new markets.

Market knowledge draws on two converging strands. Firstly, because customer knowledge has a cost, it was normally associated with larger accounts in business-to-business markets where the value of the account is large enough to sustain the cost involved in keeping and analysing the data. Secondly, it draws on data streams and tools from consumer marketing like CRM and database analysis aiming to build 360 degree view of all customers they have, to improve cross-sales and retention (Noronha, 2006). One problem with customer knowledge, is that it can be confused with CRM (customer relationship management) and contact management and analysis system. Although there may be an overlap, we like to see customer knowledge as including a wider variety of less structured information that will help build insight into customer relationship. Ideally, market knowledge should work at both a micro and a macro level (Dude, 2019). It should include information about individuals that help to explain who they are, what they do and what they are looking for, but it should encompass the macro view across the customer database to enable broader analysis of all customers, to allow modelling of behaviour and needs and the implementation of algorithmic systems to tailor products and services to specific customers one-by-one.

A successful customer knowledge programme should include information viewpoints and perspectives on key customers and analytics and trend information across the broad customer base allowing individuals to be targeted for communication and research and burgeoning relationships to be nurtured and grown. It also has to address issues and concerns about privacy and fairness and so recognize that customers are people and not just data subjects. Clarity and transparency in what customer knowledge is held and how it is used can reassure the customer that they are not being manipulated and use of the data is in the customer's best interest. In this regard, managing the use of consumers' knowledge presents the specific tools and techniques of knowledge management used in order to support the exchange of knowledge between a business and its customers, and thereby, allowing the company to make appropriate business and strategic decisions (Kim, 2013). Customer knowledge management (CKM) leads to many improvements in the delivery of new products and services, improving customer service, customer respect, providing customer satisfaction, discovering serious needs of the customer, better response and respect to the costumers and for the organization to increase profit and competitive advantage (Mitussis, 2016).

Market and Customer Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management (KM), involves employees and company networks. The sharing of information held by organisations (intellectual capital) about customers among its employees (Amahalu, Ezechukwu & Okudo, 2022). Products and services are developed without the direct involvement of customers (Gardial, 2019). Customer

Relationship Management (CRM) it focuses on customer database information, aimed at mining and using customer information to benefit long term relationships; sought and retained using loyalty and incentive schemes (Gardial, 2019). Customer Knowledge Management (CKM) focuses on customer creativity and experiences. Objectives: Gaining, sharing, and developing customer insights. Collaboration and joint value creation sought. Performance against competitors, customer success, innovation, growth, and organizational learning are key business drivers (Gardial, 2019). Customer knowledge sharing commonly involves a bi-directional exchange of information. It is also associated with close, or intimate, interactions between the organization and its customers. Within this context an organization customers may include: The intention of such customer interactions is to create improved value for both parties. CKM incorporates the principles of both KM, and CRM, while moving beyond these to seek mutual customer/organization value creation and performance improvements. CKM includes the collection of explicit (quantitative) information about customers and most importantly, tacit (qualitative) knowledge arising from the discovery of customer ideas and experiences. Customer Knowledge is a valuable organizational asset for the following reasons:

It cannot be easily copied by competitors; Customer knowledge can enable the needs of valuable customer groups to be targeted and thereby to differentiate the organization from its competitors. Advantages can be achieved by being the first to market with improved products and services that better serve customer wants, needs and expectations; Organizations can better compete in highly price-sensitive marketplaces by focusing on product and service parameters, customers value most, and eliminating unnecessary features that reduce profit margins; through understanding the patterns of customer demand, inventories may be reduced and redundant capacities eliminated (Gardial, 2019). Various classifications exist: Gebert (2012), classified customer knowledge from an organization's perspective into three types; Knowledge about customers: is gained mainly by service management, offer management, complaint management and, if available, contract management. The main user processes of knowledge regarding the customer are campaign management and service management, because both processes personalize their services based on user criteria. Knowledge about the customer must be transparent within the company; although its distribution beyond the border of the company must be controlled, as this type of knowledge can often be directly transformed into competitive advantages. The development of such knowledge is also expensive, because knowledge revelation is quite time-consuming (Kim and Lee, 2015). Knowledge for customers is mainly developed in processes within the company, for example, the research and development section or a production department. Collecting this knowledge is the responsibility of campaign management. It should be refined according to the customer requirements. It is then disseminated to the other customer relationship management (CRM) processes, mainly: contract management, offer management, and service management. CRM manages knowledge, transparency and dissemination of knowledge for customers. Maintaining the balance between comprehensibility and precision is the main challenge when managing this kind of knowledge (Campbell, 2013). Knowledge from customers: can be obtained in the same ways as knowledge about customers. Capturing knowledge from customers is based on the important fact

that customers who obtain their own expertise when utilizing a service or product can be seen as equal partners. This concept is not regularly understood in the business world and its effects have been poorly researched in academia. The same categorization of customer knowledge has been made by others such as Bueren (2015) and Feng and Tian (2005). In another categorization, customer knowledge is divided into two types, namely: Behavioural (or Quantitative) and Attitudinal (or Qualitative). Behavioral knowledge is easy to acquire and is basically quantitative in nature; that is, containing a customer transactional relations with the company. On the other hand, attitudinal knowledge is difficult to acquire because it deals with a customers' state of mind; but meanwhile it is an important factor for enhancement of customer knowledge because they are directly related to a customer's thoughts and insights.

Services in Beauty Salon

Service companies like salons have a great interaction between employees and customers, this contact can benefit the establishments since with a more trusting relationship customers can feel free to express their perceptions about the service being offered or performed. Bota (2007), in a survey conducted in Rio de Janeiro, identified some factors most relevant to the quality of attendance. These include freedom to be called by name, level of customer attention, comfort and professionalism. Here it is also worth mentioning the importance of meeting deadlines and shorter time in the execution of the service as competitive factors (Juran and Gryna, 2019). A beauty salon is expected to provide personal, respectful and discreet treatment, always in a friendly, committed manner and with the possibility of making new social interactions. It is also expected to find a variety of services to meet all needs in one place. In addition to providing new products and always being aware of industry innovations, such as health care, products for all skin and hair and sustainability (Sebrae, 2019). In the services provided in beauty salons the characteristics of inseparability are evidenced, with the creation and consumption at the same time; the heterogeneity where each service can have a different outcome for each customer, as each skin, hair or nail can react uniquely in contact with the same types of products and the perishability where a customer's loss and downtime directly affects the professional profit.

Customer Knowledge Management and Business Performance

Through increasing the number of competitors, customers have more options (Buckinx and Van den, 2005) and firms are matched with customers' needs and expectations. This attracts more customers and increases their satisfaction level (Das, 2010). One of the effective practices aligned with the changing needs of customers is using and managing customers' knowledge as an important source of tacit knowledge (Feng and Tian, 2005). In fact, to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage in comparison with competitors, not only are continuous observations of customers' perceptions and expectations of delivered products/services required but it is also vital to continuously interact with customers to exploit and apply their tacit knowledge. A successful knowledge partnership with important and valuable customers can strengthen business performance and create an inimitable competitive advantage that is difficult for the competition to duplicate.

Customer knowledge allows firms to identify the unique features of market segments and formulate appropriate strategies for these segments. Therefore, firms that know their customers have better ability to identify opportunities and are more likely to better perform (Tuominen *et al*., 2014). Moreover, the ideas acquired from CKM are more realistic, so they are more easily accepted by customers and market and better satisfy their needs. In fact, having a continuous ability to use and manage customer knowledge is vital for superior performance; therefore, firms need to continuously update their knowledge in accordance with their customers' information (Claycomb *et al*., 2015; Da Silva *et al*., 2012; Tuominen *et al*., 2014). Previously, Yang and Kang (2008) pointed to a direct and positive effect of customer capital on business performance, and Lee (2011) found that customer knowledge has a direct effect on firm performance. Ngo and O'Cass (2012) also explored the indirect effect of customer participation on operational performance. Although the empirical relationships between CKM and business performance have been investigated, only a few studies have considered the direct effects of CKM on business performance.

In general, knowledge from customers creates long-term benefits by developing new ideas and continuously improving products/services; knowledge about customers creates short-term value by improving effectiveness; and knowledge for customers creates short-term value by improving customers' experience and information and increasing a firm's validity (Smith and McKeen, 2015). Using customer knowledge flows to establish a co-creative environment for customer participation and interaction can help firms attain superior performance (Rollins and Halinen, 2015). For this reason, firms must put themselves in customers' mindset and pay attention to their intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, creating a knowledge sharing platform can be useful for providing an interactive environment. This platform allows firms not only to transact business (pay online, place orders) but also share and exchange knowledge (e.g. share good and bad experiences with other customers). Holcim.com is one of the successful firms using a knowledge sharing platform for engaging customers in the firm's process. Holcim's customers say: "we like the firm's knowledge sharing platform, because it listens to what we say and really take our comments very seriously! Another example of a successful firm using CKM is Threadless.com, a T-shirt manufacturer. This firm obtains the graphic designs for its T-shirts from its consumers who submit designs online. The most popular designs that are chosen by the Web site's members are sent into production and sales. In addition, chosen designers receive a monetary award and get to keep the rights to their designs (Beer, 2017; Liu, 2017). This process not only encourages many customers to register on the Web site and share their ideas and designs with the firm but it also helps the firm to create new designs that are accepted by its customers.

Market Knowledge and Service Delivery Hairdressing

According to Hwang and Hwang (2011), hair services can be divided into material services, such as tangibility, accessibility, and cleanness; human services, such as emotional consideration and competence of the staff; and policies, such as store management, reputation, credit card policies, and hairdressing technics. Kim (2014) also suggested that hair services include material aspects, staff, policies, and hairdressing technics. Kim (2010) stated that hair services constitute personal relationship, physical

environment, and cosmetology skills in a study that examines the effects of hair services quality on customer satisfaction. Kim and Kim (2016) considered hair services in the dimensions of technique and technology and discovered that there are three factors of quality: technical, technological, and material. Jin (2010) confirmed that the quality of human and non-human services positively affects customer loyalty, revisiting intentions, and positive word of mouth. In a study analyzing the determinants of male customers' satisfaction with hair salons, the following hair service constructs were identified: environment, friendly staff, customer management, and technique-related services (Jeong, 2011).

The hair service constructs suggested in the aforementioned studies can be summarized into three groups of factors: product services related to hairdressing techniques, human services, and material services. Product services are a result of hair dressing services, while human services concern the services' delivery process, and material services concern the environment in which the services are provided. Lee and Kim (2020) categorized hair services into product services and non-product services. Product services are defined as services that have the function of a product and include cut, perm, coloring, styling, treatment, and shampooing. Non-product services include human and material services, while human services comprise hair care services and non- hair care service. In other words, human services are subdivided into hair care services, associated with hair care technics and emotional services, which integrates friendliness, response, and sympathy. This study divides human services into technical services and responses: friendliness and sincere attitude of employees are defined as human response services; services related to technics and results are defined as hairstyling services; material services comprise physical environments or services including facilities, equipment, tools, interior arrangement, and the atmosphere of the hair salon. Although studies on customer dissatisfaction with hairdressing services have been conducted since Ryu (2015) study, there are very few of them. Most of the studies on hairdressing services do not extend beyond measuring the quality of hairdressing services and identifying their effects on satisfaction. Although some studies since 2010 have investigated dissatisfaction, the number of such studies is extremely small.

Ryu (2015) revealed that there was a high level of dissatisfaction with price, quality, and waiting time when the subjects used hairdressing services. Kim (2009) analyzed the factors in customers' dissatisfaction with hair salons in terms of surrounding environment, hairstyling, customer friendliness, service, internal and external environments, employee image, amenities, and price. Among other hairdressing services, a study on haircut services revealed that dissatisfaction with the service had a significant effect on complaint behavior (Moon, 2014). Noh (2015) categorized hairdressing service dissatisfaction as human response, hairstyling, post-hairdressing service, and complaint. In addition, Lee (2017) classified the customer dissatisfaction perceived by hairstylists as quality, facility, service, hairstyling, and price. Studies on consumer dissatisfaction with hairdressing services have mainly focused on analyzing the frequency or comparison with the average. Various dissatisfaction factors have been used by different researchers. As examined above, most of the factors included tangible material services, employees' interpersonal human response services, or dissatisfaction with the hairstyle

itself as a direct result of hairdressing services. Hence, as stated above, this study intends to examine customer dissatisfaction in three categories: material services, human response services, and hairstyling services.

Complaint Behavior in Hair Services

Consumers revisit the establishments when they are satisfied with the result and the service delivery process but showed negative intentions about revisiting them when not satisfied (Lee *et al*., 2010). Such reactions to dissatisfaction, where consumers realize problems and make decisions about responses, can be considered as complaint behaviors. Consumer complaint behavior is becoming a necessary feedback mechanism in the field of marketing and one of the key elements to be understood in order to prevent sales reduction, unfavorable consumer attitude, and expenses (Nan, 2008). In general, complaint behavior includes behavioral and non-behavioral aspects (Park, 2012). Earlier studies suggested a systematic classification of complaint behavior. Day and Landon (2007) offer a classification of consumer complaint behavior, based on a first distinction between no action and action, which further divides action into private and public action (Singh, 2018; William and Teel, 2013). No action means taking no actions at all; private action means warning friends or talking them out of buying, while public action includes seeking redress directly from the companies, taking legal action to obtain redress, or complaining to business, private, or governmental agencies. As some consumers complain through overt and covert behavior, it is essential to include non-behaviour as an act of protest. This is also necessary to identify the overall composition of consumers' complaints (Han, 2016). Previous researches on complaint behavior of hair service consumers are extremely rare; there has been only one research that classified and discussed complaint behavior (Kim, 2013). The researcher divided complaint behaviors into two categories: active and passive. Behaviors such as demands for redress, legal action, request for refund or exchange, and third-party complaint are categorized as active complaint behaviors, while passive complaint behaviors include no action, stopping buying, or negative word of mouth.

Items and variables of all existing researches on consumer dissatisfaction of hair services included no action, private, and public complaint behaviors. In order to conduct an empirical analysis, this study established three dimensions of complaint behaviors: No action, which comprises taking no specific action or complaining; Private complaint behavior, which comprises spreading negative word of mouth to friends; and Public complaint behavior, which comprises seeking redress from the service provider or complaining to public organizations (Han, 2016).

Concepts of Market Knowledge among Hairdressing Salon

In the hairdressing salon, both the customers and the hairdressers normally engage in an intimate discussion because of the hours spend together. In most cases this leads to cordial relationship between the two parties. The following exist between the two parties;

a. Trust

Trust is viewed as an essential ingredient and a mainstay of a successful relationship (Jiun-Sheng & Chung-Yuen, 2011). Sohail (2012) argues that trust is the willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence, and this builds relationships.

b. Complaints handling

According to Komunda, Kibeera, Munyoku and Byyarugaba (2015), customers' complaints are the responses triggered by perceived dissatisfaction due to inadequate integrity, reliability, responsiveness and functionality. Therefore, complaints management must be one of the marketing tools used to bring two parties together to foster relationships.

c. Communication

Anabila, Nartey and Tweneboah-Kodua (2012) argue that communication has a positive effect on customer acquisition and retention, and that the frequency of communication between parties indicates the strength of the relationship, which has a positive effect on customer loyalty.

d. Responsiveness

In the study of Ladhari and Morales (2011) refer to responsiveness as the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Thus, understanding customer requirements and developing the service based on responsive feedback enhances service satisfaction and relationship building.

e. Tangibility

According to Jaya and Manhalingam (2011), tangibles of services are the equipment, signage, appearance of employees and man-made physical environment surrounding the service, which are commonly known as the services cape the aesthetic and visual appeal of the business in the eyes of the customer. The visuals benefit the business by providing what the customers need in the form of service quality and satisfaction.

f. Empathy

Park (2012) argue that empathy is the service dimension that focuses on individualized attention or care, easy access, good communication and customer understanding which leads to relationship building.

Theoretical Framework and Empirical Review

Relational Exchange Theory

This study was underpinned by relational exchange theory, which relates to a long-term relationship between the business and customers. The theory was developed by Jham and Khan (2008). The theory assumes that building relationships requires customer satisfaction as a pre-requisite to meeting customers' expectations. Khan (2012) also states that the continuity of the business relations between the customer and the business is dependent on customer retention. Therefore, the study considers customer satisfaction and retention as critical to relationship building between the customer and the business. Conceptually, it was assumed in this study that the application of RM components such

as trust/confidence, communication, responsiveness, tangibility, complaints handling and empathy (Deng, Wei and Zhang, 2010; Anabila, Narteh and Tweneboah-Kodua, 2012; Rezvani *et al*., 2011; Kassim and Abdulla, 2010; Pournaserani, and Mousavian, 2011) serve as independent variables and could lead to service quality, customer satisfaction and retention as dependent variables for a business to achieve competitiveness and growth. This could make RM theoretically appealing for hair salons.

Empirical Review

The study of Lee and Kim (2020) who carried a study titled "structural modeling of dissatisfaction, complaint behavior, and revisiting intentions in hairdressing services in Korea". This study aims to present a comprehensive model that effectively explains dissatisfaction, complaint behavior, and revisiting intentions of hair service consumers through an empirical analysis. Subjects were Korean female consumers in their 20s to 50s who experienced dissatisfaction with hair services in the salons they visited during the past year. In order to empirically verify the conceptual model, a questionnaire was developed based on previous studies and responses that were collected through an online survey agency. The conceptual model suggested in the theoretical research was analyzed empirically through the structural equation modeling (SEM) test and finally suggested after ordering, eliminating unnecessary paths. The results revealed that, dissatisfaction with the hair service significantly affects the complaint behavior and the revisiting intentions while the complaint behavior has a mediating effect between dissatisfaction and the revisiting intentions. Analysis showed that dissatisfaction with human response services and private complaint behaviors are the factors that most negatively influence revisiting intentions. It was confirmed that businesses should focus on the management of the customer service delivered by the employees and on word of mouth. Public complaint behavior was proven to increase revisiting intentions of consumers, needing more attention. The study recommended that the results of this study will help create differentiated marketing strategies for unsatisfied and complaining consumers.

Nastaran, Reza and Mohammad (2014) conducted a study on effect of customer knowledge management (CKM) on continuous innovation and firm performance in 35 private banks in Guilan (Iran). The major objective was to examine role of CKM in innovation and performance is not well understood. Data have been collected via questionnaires from managers of private banks in Guilan. Feedback was received from 265 managers in 350 distributed questionnaires, and hypotheses were tested using the structural equation modelling. The results of this paper indicate that knowledge from customers has a positive impact on both innovation speed and innovation quality as well as operational and financial performances. Also, our results demonstrate a different effect of knowledge about customer and knowledge for customers on various dimensions of innovation and firm performance. By using customer's knowledge flows, firms will be aware of external environment and new changes in customers' needs and so will be more innovative and perform better. CKM is known as an important system to connecting internal environment to external environment to create novel ideas. The results of this paper shed light on the consequences of CKM on firms and provide support for the importance of CKM to enhance innovation capacity and firm performance. This article is one of the first to find empirical support for the role of CKM within firms and its

importance on innovation capability and firm performance. This study can provide valuable insights and guidance for researchers and managers as well.

Materials and Methods

The study adopted survey research design (exploratory study). This was based on the fact that the study explained investigate how market knowledge is used and what impact it has on hair salon performance. However, information regarding market knowledge provided the basis for the development of the market knowledge model. The study was conducted in Umuahia, Abia State. Umuahia is the capital city of Abia State in Southeastern, Nigeria. Umuahia is located along the rail road that lies between Port Harcourt to its south and Enugu city to its north. Umuahia has a population of 359,230 according to the 2006 Nigerian census. Umuahia's indigenous ethnic group is Igbo. Umuahia comprises two Local Government Areas: Umuahia North and Umuahia South. These Local Governments Areas are also composed of clans such as Umuopara, Ibeku, Olokoro, Ubakala and Ohuhu communities. Umuahia town is traditionally owned by the Ibeku. Umuahia people are predominantly Igbos and are mainly traders and farmers.

The population for this study covered all owners of the hairdressing salons in Umuahia, Abia State. According to Association of Personal Hygiene and Cosmetics Industry cooperative (2019), Umuahia metropolis has about three hundred and twelve (312) registered hair dressers. It was impracticable and uneconomical to obtain data from the entire population. However, the sample size of the study was derived statistically by using Taro Yamane formula as follows:

n =

Where

n = sample size

N = total population of the study,

1 = constant

e = error term

n =

n =

n =

n =

n = 175.28 n ≈ 175

Probability random sampling method was adopted to select 175 hairdressers from the population. Therefore, the sample size of the study comprised 175 (one hundred and seventy-five) hairdressers in Umuahia, Abia Abia State. Structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into sections A and B. The questions were open ended. The section A addressed the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents while section B captured the objectives of the study. In designing the questionnaire, the researcher made use of 5point response scales: Strongly Agreed = (SA), Agreed = (A), Disagree = (D), Strongly Disagree = (SD) and Undecided = (UN); with 5points, 4points, 3units, 2points and 1point. The instrument (questionnaire) was validated by two experts from the Department of Entrepreneurial Studies and one

other Statistics Department. These experts went through the items in the questionnaire and made the necessary corrections.

The test re-test method was employed in determining the reliability of the instrument. The first questionnaire was issued to the respondent, after two weeks interval, another questionnaire with the same content was also issued. Both questionnaire provided the same result, implying that the instrument was reliable. The coefficient of reliability was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha. In course of this study, the primary data and secondary data were used. Primary data are first and raw data and structures that are yet to receive any type of meaningful interpretation; whereas secondary data is information that has already been collected by other researchers and is usually available in published or electronic form. In effect, primary data were sourced through the administration of questionnaire to the respondents. Secondary data were sourced from the published and unpublished journals and internet. Objectives (1, 2, 3 and 4) of the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and simple percentage. Hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 4 were tested with simple linear regression analytical model. The model is specified as follows:

For hypothesis 1: customer complaint management has no significant effect on competitive advantage of hairdressers

$Y = f(X_1)$ ……Eqn 1

$Y=\beta_0+ \beta_1X_1+ ei$… Eqn 2

Where:

Y= competitive advantage of hairdressers: X_1 = customer complaint management

β_0 = Intercept; β_1 = Parameters estimate; ei = error term

For hypothesis 2: customer taste management has no significant effect on customer patronage of hairdressers;

$Y = f(X_1)$ …… Eqn 3

$Y=\beta_0+ \beta_1X_1+ ei$… Eqn 4

Where:

Y= customer patronage of hairdressers; X_1 = customer taste management

β_0 = Intercept; β_1 = Parameter estimate; ei = error term

For hypothesis 3: customized service for customers has no significant effect on sales turnover of hairdressers;

$Y = f(X_1)$ …… Eqn 5

$Y=\beta_0+ \beta_1X_1+ ei$… Eqn 6

Where:

Y= sales turnover of hairdressers; X_1 = customized service for customers

β_0 = Intercept; β_1 = Parameter estimate; ei = error term

For hypothesis 4: customer lifestyle has no significant effect on service delivery of hairdressers;

$Y = f(X_1)$ …… Eqn 7

Journal of Business and Economic Policy
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$Y=\beta_0+ \beta_1X_1+ ei\ldots$ Eqn 8

Where:
Y= service delivery of hairdressers; X_1 = customer lifestyle
β_0 = Intercept; β_1 = Parameter estimate; ei = error term

Results and Discussion

Effect of customer complaint management on competitive advantage

The effect of customer complaint management on competitive advantage is presented in Table 1

Table 1: The effect of customer complaint management on competitive advantage

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	UN	CUM	
1. Understanding and entering into the customers feeling is a basis for competitive advantage.	(660) 132	(136) 34	(12) 4	(8) 4	(1) 1	817	4.66
2. Establishing and maintaining empathetic relationships through effective complain management prompt competitive advantage.	(500) 100	(224) 56	(30) 10	(12) 6	(3) 3	769	4.39
3. Mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises contributes to empathize competitive advantage	(580) 116	(147) 49	(24) 8	(2) 1	(1) 1	754	4.30

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Decision rule: Any mean response ≥ 3.0 was adjudged as strongly agreed, 2.5 -2.99 was adjudged as agree, 2.0-2.49 was adjudged as disagree, 1.5-1.99 was adjudged as strongly disagree while mean response below 1.5 was adjudged as neutral.

Table 1 presents the mean rating of respondents on effect of customer complaint management on competitive advantage in the study area. It was observed from the Table that all the variables considered were significant, implying that the respondents strongly agreed that understanding and entering into the customers feeling is a basis for competitive advantage (= 4.66), establishing and maintaining empathetic relationship through effective complain management leads to competitive advantage (= 4.39) and mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises contributes to empathize competitive advantage (= 4.30) in the study area.

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Effect of customer taste management on patronage of hairdressers in the study area
The effect of customer taste management on patronage of hairdressers in the study area is presented in Table 2

Table 2: The effect of customer taste management on patronage of hairdressers in the Study Area

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	UN	CUM	
1. Service rendered by hairdresser that meets the customer taste promote customer patronage	(580) 116	(168) 42	(18) 6	(12) 6	(1) 5	779	4.45
2. Understanding customers desire and making actions towards it helps to impel customer consistent patronage	(690) 138	(116) 29	(12) 4	(6) 3	(1) 1	825	4.71
3. Customers perception and sensitivity significant affects patronage of salons	(485) 97	(244) 61	(30) 10	(10) 5	(2) 2	771	4.40

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Decision rule: Any mean response ≥ 3.0 was adjudged as strongly agreed, 2.5 -2.99 was adjudged as agree, 2.0-2.49 was adjudged as disagree, 1.5-1.99 was adjudged as strongly disagree while mean response below 1.5 was adjudged as neutral.

Table 2 presents the mean rating of respondents on effect of customer taste management on patronage of hairdressers in the study area. It was observed from the Table that all the variables considered were significant, implying that the respondents strongly agreed that Service rendered by hairdresser that meets the customer taste promote customer patronage (= 4.45), understanding customers desire and making actions towards it helps to impel customer consistent patronage (= 4.71) and customers perception and sensitivity significant affects patronage of salons (= 4.40) in the study area.

Effect of customized service for customers on sales turnover of hairdressers in the study area
The effect of customized service for customers on sales turnover of hairdressers in the study area is presented in Table 3

Table 3: The effect of customized service for customers on sales turnover of hairdressers

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	UN	CUM	
1. Offering customized and flexible services to customers is a prerequisite for service responsiveness in hairdressing salons	(470) 94	(177) 59	(36) 12	(16) 8	(2) 2	701	4.77
2. The trait of sincerity and steadfast fixity of hairdressers leads to financial responsiveness by hairdressers	(640) 128	(164) 41	(12) 4	(2) 1	(1) 1	819	4.68

3. Modified services rendered by hairdressers to certain customers affects Sales Turnover of Hairdressers	(590) 118	(192) 48	(18) 6	(4) 2	(1) 1	805	4.60

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Decision rule: Any mean response ≥ 3.0 was adjudged as strongly agreed, 2.5 -2.99 was adjudged as agree, 2.0-2.49 was adjudged as disagree, 1.5-1.99 was adjudged as strongly disagree while mean response below 1.5 was adjudged as neutral.

Table 3 presents the mean rating of respondents on effect of customized service for customers on sales turnover of hairdressers in the study area. It was observed from the Table that all the variables considered were significant, implying that the respondents strongly agreed that offering of customized and flexible services to customers is a prerequisite for service responsiveness in hairdressing salons (= 4.77), the trait of sincerity and steadfast fixity of hairdressers leads to financial responsiveness by hairdressers (= 4.68) and modified services rendered by hairdressers to certain customers affects sales turnover of hairdressers (= 4.60) in the study area.

Effect of customer lifestyle on service delivery of hairdressers in the study area

The effect of customer lifestyle on service delivery of hairdressers in the study area

Table 4: The effect of customer lifestyle on service delivery of hairdressers in the study area

Statements	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**UN**	**CUM**	
1. Roles and status of customers' helps hairdressers to render reliable and quality services	(420) 84	(316) 79	(18) 6	(10) 5	(1) 1	765	4.37
2. A trustful relationship and credit confidence to the customers creates effective service reliability	(540) 108	(204) 51	(24) 8	(12) 6	(2) 2	782	4.47
3. Fulfilling promises and achieving customer satisfaction gives room to service reliability	(550) 110	(192) 48	(42) 14	(4) 2	(1) 1	789	4.50

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Decision rule: Any mean response ≥ 3.0 was adjudged as strongly agreed, 2.5 -2.99 was adjudged as agree, 2.0-2.49 was adjudged as disagree, 1.5-1.99 was adjudged as strongly disagree while mean response below 1.5 was adjudged as neutral.

Table 4 presents the mean rating of respondents on effect of customer lifestyle on service delivery of hairdressers in the study area. It was observed from the Table that all the variables considered were significant, implying that the respondents strongly agreed that roles and status of customers' helps hairdressers to render reliable and quality services (= 4.37), a trustful relationship and credit confidence to the customers creates effective

service reliability (= 4.46) and fulfilling promises and achieving customer satisfaction gives room to service reliability (= 4.50) in the study area.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H_{01}: Customer complaint management has no significant effect on competitive advantage of hairdressers.

In order to analyze the above hypothesis, simple regression analysis of was used and the result is presented in Table 5

Table 5: Simple regression analysis result of the effect of customer complaint management on competitive advantage

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – value
Constant	β_0	0.586	0.209	2.804***
Customer complaint management (X_1)	β_1	0.868	0.056	15.604***
R-Square (R^2)		0.585		
Adjusted R – Square (R^{-2})		0.582		
F – Statistics		243.481		
F – Probability		0.000		

Source: Field Survey 2021, SPSS Version 20 Computation

Decision Rule: If Fcal>Ftab accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis. *** (1%), ** (5%), and * (10%) t-tab = 1.976

The coefficient of customer complaint management (0.868) was positive and significant at 1 percent. This result implies that an increase in customer complaint management results in 0.868 increase in competitive advantage of hairdressers. From the result, the t-calculated value of customer complaint management was 15.604; and the t-tabulated value of 1.976 (at 95% degree of freedom), since the t-calculated value is greater than t-tabulated value in absolute terms, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of alternative, thus customer complaint management has significant effect on competitive advantage of hairdressers.

The (R^2) coefficient of simple determinations value of 0.585 was observed, implying that, 58.5% of the total variation in dependent variable was explained by changes in the independent variable while 41.5% were unexplained due to error. The R^{-2} adjusted value was 58.2%. The F-statistics value of 243.481 and F-prob. value of 0.000 were observed indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 1% probability level.

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ISSN (Online) 0795 – 7149
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Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: Customer taste management by hairdressers has no significant effect on customer patronage

In order to analyze the above hypothesis, simple regression analysis of was used and the result is presented in Table 6

Table 6: Simple regression analysis result of the effect of customer taste management on patronage of hairdressers

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – value
Constant	β_0	0.374	0.187	1.998**
Customer taste management (X_1)	β_1	0.943	0.048	19.535***
R-Square (R^2)		0.688		
Adjusted R – Square (R^{-2})		0.686		
F – Statistics		381.600		
F – Probability		0.000		

Source: Field Survey 2021, SPSS Version 20 Computation

Decision Rule: If Fcal>Ftab accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis. *** (1%), ** (5%), and * (10%), t-tab = 1.976
The coefficient of customer taste management (0.943) was positive and significant at 1 percent. This result implies that an increase in customer taste management results in 0.943 increase in customer patronage. From the result, the t-calculated value of customer taste management by hairdressers was 19.535; and the t-tabulated value of 1.976 (at 95% degree of freedom), since the t-calculated value is greater than t-tabulated value in absolute terms, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of alternative, thus customer taste management by hairdressers has significant effect on customer patronage of hairdressing saloons.

The (R^2) coefficient of simple determinations value of 0.688 was observed, implying that, 68.8% of the total variation in dependent variable was explained by changes in the independent variable while 31.2% were unexplained due to error. The R^{-2} adjusted value was 68.6%. The F-statistics value of 381.600 and F-prob. value of 0.000 were observed indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 1% probability level.

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Hypothesis Three

H_{03}: Customized service for customers has no significant effect on sales turnover of hairdressers

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In order to analyze the above hypothesis, simple regression analysis

Table 7: Simple regression analysis result of the effect of customized service for customers on sales turnover of hairdressers

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – value
Constant	β_0	0.369	0.148	2.488**
Customized service for customers (X_1)	β_1	0.915	0.036	25.210***
R-Square (R^2)		0.786		
Adjusted R – Square (R^{-2})		0.785		
F – Statistics		635.539		
F – Probability		0.000		

Source: Field Survey 2021, SPSS Version 20 Computation

Decision Rule: If Fcal>Ftab accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis. *** (1%), ** (5%), and * (10%) t-tab = 1.976

The coefficient of customized service for customers (0.915) was positive and significant at 1 percent. This result implies that an increase in customized service for customers results in 0.915 increase in sales turnover of hairdressers. From the result, the t-calculated value of customized service for customers was 25.210; and the t-tabulated value of 1.976 (at 95% degree of freedom), since the t-calculated value is greater than t-tabulated value in absolute terms, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of alternative, thus customized service for customers has significant effect on sales turnover of hairdressers.

The (R^2) coefficient of simple determinations value of 0.786 was observed, implying that, 78.6% of the total variation in dependent variable was explained by changes in the independent variable while 21.4% were unexplained due to error. The R^{-2} adjusted value was 78.5%. The F-statistics value of 635.539 and F-prob. value of 0.000 were observed indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 1% probability level.

Hypothesis Four

H_{04}: Customer lifestyle has no significant effect on service delivery of hairdressers

In order to analyze the above hypothesis, simple regression analysis of was used and the result is presented in Table 8

Table 8: Simple regression analysis result of the effect of customer lifestyle on service delivery of hairdressers

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – value
Constant	β_0	0.318	0.213	1.492
Customer lifestyle (X_1)	β_1	0.932	0.056	16.686***
R-Square (R^2)		0.617		
Adjusted R – Square (R^2)		0.615		
F – Statistics		278.413		

F – Probability	0.000

Source: Field Survey 2**021, SPSS Version 20 Computation**

Decision Rule: If Fcal>Ftab accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis. *** (1%), ** (5%), and * (10%) t-tab = 1.976
The coefficient of customer lifestyle (0.932) was positive and significant at 1 percent. This result implies that an increase in customer lifestyle results in 0.932 increase in service delivery of hairdressers. the t-calculated value of customer lifestyle was 16.686; and the t-tabulated value of 1.976 (at 95% degree of freedom), since the t-calculated value is greater than t-tabulated value in absolute terms, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of alternative, thus customer lifestyle has significant effect on service delivery of hairdressers.

The (R^2) coefficient of simple determinations value of 0.617 was observed, implying that, 61.7% of the total variation in dependent variable was explained by changes in the independent variable while 38.3% were unexplained due to error. The R^{-2} adjusted value was 61.5%. The F-statistics value of 278.413 and F-prob. value of 0.000 were observed indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 1% probability level.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined how market knowledge affects performance of hairdressers in Umuahia, Abia State. Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that customer complaint management has significant effect on competitive advantage of hairdressers. Customer taste management has significant and positive effect on customer patronage. Customized service for customers has positive and significant effect on sales turnover of hairdressers and customer lifestyle has positive and significant effect on service delivery of hairdressers.

The research recommendations are as follows:

1. The owners and managers of hairdressers should conduct a marketing research on management techniques related to customers' complaints. This will help owners and managers of hairdressers to understand the major factors leading to customers' complaints.
2. The study recommended that managers of hair dressing saloon should pursue improvement courses on trending styles of hair, so as to enhance their skills in managing market taste.
3. Hairdressers should understudy the behaviour, attitude, appearance of customers. This will help hairdressers to delivery equitable services to customers in order to avoid dissonance.
4. Managers of hair dressing saloon should improve on their service quality based on market knowledge information so as to improve their performance.

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ISSN (Online) 0795 – 7149
https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/index.php/ubsjbep

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