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FEAR APPEAL AND CUSTOMER PATRONAGE OF RETROVIRAL DISTRIBUTING HOSPITALS IN PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT

The study's goal was to look into the affiliation between fear appeal and client patronage in Port Harcourt's retro-viral distribution hospitals. The objectives were to investigate the effect between perceived threats and self-control on customer patronage of retro-viral distributing hospitals in Port Harcourt, and mediated with audience perception on fear appeal and customer patronage of retro-viral distributing hospitals in Port Harcourt. The three major government-operated hospitals constitute the population for the study and customers of the above organizations served as the respondents to the research instrument, which was determined using Freund and William (2009). The analysis was carried out through simple percentages and Simple Regression, and the results illustrated that fear appeal adopted by retro-viral distributing hospitals in Port Harcourt to a large extent influences the measure of customer patronage; that is, perceived threat influences buying intent and repeat buying positively; self-control influences buying intent and repeat buying positively, and threat severity influence buying intent and repeat buying positively. It was suggested that Retro-viral distributing hospitals should learn to use messages that relate to the consumer's goals and interests to convince customers to make purchases or even become loyal customers.



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Introduction

The growth of habitual practices like smoking, drug intake and poor attitude towards medicines have resulted to increasing clamour for organizations to incorporate messages that appeal to defaulters in their advertisements. Also, advances in various social issues have caused business practitioners to review and inculcate fears' appeal in their messages in order to influence certain behaviours (Marlize & Nic, 2010). Generally, fear appeals are goal-oriented; it is geared towards ensuring that people are aware of the benefits and effects of their actions in relation to products' and services' consumption (Xiaoquan, Maria & Tesfa, 2019). There is evidence that advertisements on mass media have proven effectiveness in foiling people from taking or doing these things (smoking and drug taking) that have the potential for untold negative effects (Allen, Duke, Davis, Kim, Nonnemeker & Farrelly, 2015; CDC, 2014; Farrelly, Niederdeppe & Yarsevich, 2003; National Cancer Institute, 2008; Wakefield, Loken & Hornik, 2010). Scholars' believe that fear appeal presented under the appropriate way and situations can be used to influence and motivate change of behaviour (Peters, Ruiters & Koki, 2013; Tannenbaum, Hepler & Zimmerman, 2015). According to the extended parallel success model, which is among the theories on fear appeal states that the effectiveness and success of fear appeal is collectively achieved by message provoked perceptions of threat and efficacy (Witte, 1992)?

Fear appeal is a combination of two words- fear and appeal. The former is used to describe the motive to which advertisement is targeted, whereas, the later is an emotional state characterized by the expectation of pain or high distress which is accompanied by increased autonomic activity mostly involving the nerves of people (Glascoff, 2000; Merriam-Webster, 2002). Fear appeal is comprised of three key notions: fear, threat and perceived efficacy, and they can be direct or indirect. Direct fear appeal dwell on the welfare of the message receivers; whereas, indirect fear appeal pays its attention on stimulating people in aiding others in danger scenarios. According to Abernethy and Wicks (1998), whichever fear appeal that is present, there are three key factors that throw in to its success: (a) design advertisement that can influence changes in the behaviour of individuals, (b) dole out advertisements to the suitable target audience, and (c) employ non-stop communication effort that will result to a desired change.

Fear appeal is a message in an attempt to stir fear in the life of people, with an emphasis on the future damage and consequences that are likely to come upon anyone who refused to adopt the message and recommendations (Malanie, Justin, Rick, Lindsey, Samantha, Kristina & Dolores, 2015). Though, these message are usually found or used in political, public health, as well as advertising programs with the purpose of minimizing risky attitudes, intentions or behaviours; and good number of practitioners (those who use fear appeal) have high hope in the ability of fear appeal to influence the actual audience in the desired outcomes of the message (CDC, 2014; Xu et al, 2015), whereas, some other scholars have paid zero attention to the usage of fear appeal, believing that it is ineffective and counter-productive (Drug Free Action Alliance, 2013; Ruiters et al, 2014).

Customer patronage on the other hand is the reason for several marketing activities; every organization is highly interested in attracting and maintaining those customers that can regularly obtain their brands. The increasing yearnings for sustainable patronage in the environment of today's business are expected to have and think about the satisfaction of their customers as the main point of call (Ogonu & Dida, 2020). Nyakweba, Wosonga and Bosire (2015) take customer patronage to mean to degree to which purchasing units focus purchases over time to a particular product or brand based on positive reinforcement and expressed via repetitive buying behaviour. Customer patronage also involves series of processes customers pass in the selection of a product or brand among other options (Ogonu & Dida, 2020). According to behavioural scientists, customer patronage emanates from a trial that gets reinforced through satisfaction which leads to repeat purchase; whereas cognitive psychologists believe that customer patronage is built through mental processes, which depends on the fact that customers engage in broad problem solving behaviour that involve services (Nyakweba et al., 2015).

Several scholars have conceptualized fear appeal in different ways with varying intents and in different sectors, but most focused on health of advertising audience. For instance Keylene (2012) studied on "improving fear appeal ethics in USA. The study focused on ethical usage of fear appeal, and with the focus of how to enhance ethics of fear appeals. xiaoquan et al. (2019) investigated "fear and humour appeals in the real cost' campaign, evidence of potential effectiveness in message pretesting. This study sought to ascertain how effective fear and

humour appeals especial with the real cost campaign. Angela (2004) studied “fear factor: the impact of fear appeal message on arousal, attitude formation and vaccination intention in bio-terrorism related communication”. Kaftandjiev and Shustova (2018) examined fear appeal in marketing communication of banks and issuance companies in the continuum of dramatic tragic situations- the semiotic perspective. The paper analyzed semiotic standpoint of financial ads and other marketing communications based on fear appeal during an economic crisis. Dharmesh, Khushbu and Devendra (2014) examined impact of fear appeal in advertisement on consumer buying decision. Also Keith (2017) examined appeal to fear in health care appropriate or inappropriate? Angela and Bui (2015) studied fear advertisement influencing consumers to make better health decisions. Among these studies, none of them was centered at studying the impact of fear appeal on the level in which customers can respond to a product or service communication. Therefore, our study is departing from the above studies, by seeking to examine the nexus between fear appeal and customer patronage of retroviral distributing hospitals in Port Harcourt.

Statement of the Problem

Communication has been in existence for ages now; it is used to sell ideas, opinions, suggestions, and etc. In the field of marketing, accounting, in medical practices and for financial services, communication would continue to exist. As an aspect, fear appeals have been employed in various type of marketing communication, for marketing of products services, social causes, and ideas (Kaylene, 2012). In addition, fear appeals are involved to encourage people to help themselves, and for its effectiveness in advancing advertisement interest, involvement recall, and persuasiveness. Despite its intent, fear appeals have witnessed higher criticisms for being unethical, manipulative, and exploitative, for generating negative and unhealthy feedbacks from the audience, as well as exposing audience to offensive images which could be against their will.

In our local parlance, fear appeals in the medical field have continued to grow; its growth is due to the benefits to be achieved by following all the recommendations. For example, people have been appealed to always use condom if they cannot total abstain from sex; others have been urged or warned that smokers are liable to die young. There is growing advise to use face mask in public place, and those who have been appealed to not to drink and drive. Most importantly, there has been appeal on people to regularly check their HIV/AIDS status, and go for retroviral drugs if found positive. Despite these appeals, observation shows that the opposite has remained the case, thereby, resulting to increasing rate of health challenges to all ages of life and this has been a major concern for practitioners’ especially medical-marketing practitioners.

From the foregoing, it is expedient that modalities be redesigned in order to achieve the main purpose of involving fears appeals in marketing communications. Therefore, the problem of the study is to investigate the connection between fear appeals and customer patronage of retroviral distributing hospitals in Port Harcourt.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The ultimate aim of the study is to examine the nexus between fear appeal and customer patronage of retroviral distributing hospital in Port Harcourt. However, the specific objectives are to:

- i. Investigate the relationship between perceived threat and customer patronage of retroviral distributing hospitals in Port Harcourt.
- ii. Evaluate the influence of self-control on customer patronage of retroviral distributing hospitals in Port Harcourt.

Research Hypotheses

In order to better perform the research task the following hypothetical statements have been put forward;

H₀₁: Perceived threat does not significantly impact on buying intent of retro-viral distributing hospitals in Port Harcourt.

H₀₂: Self- control and purchase intent has no significant relationship of retro-viral distributing hospitals in Port Harcourt.

Theoretical Framework

Protection Motivation Theory

The protection motivation theory (PMT) (Roger's, 1975, 1983; Tanner, Hunt, and Eppright, 1991) is borrowed from psychology and has been adapted to predict people's behavioral intentions. The PMT examines the cognitive processes by which fear impacts persuasion. The premise of PMT is that people are motivated to protect themselves from physical, psychological, and social threats. Response to a threat is based on two cognitive processes: (1) threat appraisal (assessment of the individual's personal risk of harm and severity of harm) and (2) coping appraisal (individual's perceptions of the recommended response's efficacy and an assessment of his or her ability to carry out this response). The model focuses on the cognitive/rational reactions or coping responses to fear appeals and points out that "fear may be considered a relational construct, aroused in response to a situation that is judged as dangerous and toward which protective action is taken" (Rogers, 1983). That is, the fearful content of the message motivates the individual to think about ways of protecting himself, and change is not driven by feelings of fearfulness alone (Roser & Thompson, 1995). Accordingly, PMT postulates that a fear/threat appeal initiates two cognitive processes: threat appraisal and coping appraisal wherein four stimulus variables are evaluated: (1) severity of the threat, (2) probability that the event will occur if no adaptive behavior is performed, (3) availability and effectiveness of a coping response that might reduce the threat, and (4) self-efficacy or the individual's perceived ability to carry out the coping behavior. Self-efficacy may be the most important dimension (Leventhal, Watts, and Pagano, 1967). Additionally, Bandura (1977) has proposed that three factors influence one's feeling of self-efficacy: actual experience, vicarious experience, and verbal persuasion. However, ads typically do little to enhance one's self-efficacy (Hunt, Fransway, Reed, Miller, Jones, Swanson, and Yunginger, 1995)

As such, PMT theorizes that a fear appeal will provide an impetus for the individual to assess the severity of the event, probability of the event's occurrence, and belief in the efficacy of the message's recommendations. These three factors arouse "protect motivation" which then provides the incentive for change. (Keller, 1999) Accordingly, PMT does help to explain the boomerang effect. That is, if individuals are threatened but have no effective way to protect themselves, then persuasion and intentions to change behavior are expected to be very low. In this case, the individual will resort to denial, avoidance, and wishful thinking. (Roser and Thompson, 1995)

Tanner, Hunt, and Eppright (1991) have further developed the role of social context on implications of the coping response to a fear or threat communication. The authors note that responses may be due to factors other than the communication itself and emphasize the role of emotion. That is, while Roger (1983) has assumed that coping responses are derived from the fear communication itself, Tanner, Hunt, and Eppright (1991) have added the premise that individuals may have knowledge or prior experience that gives them coping responses.

Literature Review

Concept of Fear Appeal

An appeal is the motive to which an advert is directed. Its purpose is to move the audience toward a goal set by the advertiser. Fear appeals are commonly used in many types of marketing communications, e.g., the marketing of products, services, social causes, and ideas and the basic message is "if you do not buy some particular consequences will occur" (Glascoff, 2000). That is, advertisers invoke fear by identifying the negative results of not using the product or the negative results of engaging in unsafe behavior. In general, however, fear appeals are effective in increasing ad interest, involvement, recall, and persuasiveness (LaTour, Snipes, & Bliss, 2016). "Fear appeals are one of the most frequently used motivators to get people to help themselves" (Bagozzi & Moore, 2019).

LaTour, Snipes, and Bliss, (1996) asserts that fear appeals have grown in popularity because advertisers have found them to increase ad interest and persuasiveness. Evidence also suggests that individuals "better remember

and more frequently recall ads that portray fear than they do warm or upbeat ads or ads with no emotional content” (Snipes, LaTour, & Bliss, 1999).

De Hoog, Stroebe, and de Wit, (2007) broadly defined a fear appeal as any message that establishes the harmful consequences of failing to comply with a promoted recommendation. Typically, these messages are intended to warn individuals of a potential danger, so that they may avoid damaging behaviors or take proactive steps to prevent harms from occurring in the first place. Examples include messages that highlight the dangers of texting while driving, the benefits of safe-sex practices, or the causal relationship between smoking and life expectancy.

The general consensus among researchers is that fear appeals are an effective strategy because they can influence thoughts and behaviors in predictable ways. Fear appeals and their constituent cognitive and emotional features can independently and reliably motivate changes in attitudes, intentions, and behaviors (Witte & Allen, 2000). A number of historically and theoretically important models have been advanced to explain the persuasive effects of fear appeals (Mongeau, 2013), for example the drive model, the parallel response model (Leventhal, 1970), the protection motivation model (Rogers, 1975, 1983), the extended parallel processing model (Witte, 1992), and the stage model (de Hoog, Stroebe, & de Wit, 2005). These models are best reviewed chronologically, as the theoretical specifications within each are largely dependent upon previous theoretical explanations, such that each model incorporates and adapts various characteristics of its theoretical predecessors (Mongeau, 2013). Despite certain similarities, the models advance differing perspectives on fear-appeal processing. Consequently, each model implies various influences with regards to how firms might evaluate and construct effective fear-appeal messages. Thus fear appeals may reveal the specific contributions that each model has made toward understanding the effective application of fear-appeal messages in the media.

Fear appeals are built upon fear. Fear is “an unpleasant emotional state characterized by anticipation of pain or great distress and accompanied by heightened autonomic activity especially involving the nervous system. The state or habit of feeling agitation or dismay; something that is the object of apprehension or alarm (Merriam-Webster, 2002). Fear evolved as a mechanism to protect humans from life-threatening situations. As such, nothing is more important than survival and the evolutionary primacy of the brain's fear circuitry. Matter-of-fact, the brain's fear circuitry is more powerful than the brain's reasoning faculties.

Customer Patronage

Kotler and Keller (2011) highlight the importance of understanding customer patronage and the ways customers choose their products and services can be extremely important for customers as this provides them with competitive edge over its competitors in several aspects. For example, they may use the knowledge obtained through studying the customer buying behaviour to set their strategies towards offering the right products and services to the right audience of customers reflecting their needs and wants effectively and efficiently.

Another valuable argument is provided by Esu and Anyadighibe (2014) on the importance of understanding consumer buying behaviour. Over time, gaining customer patronage has been an underlining issue because most firms fail to strategically win customers. According to the author, better awareness of consumer buying behaviour is a positive contribution to achieving a goal which is increasing customer patronage. The goal of many firms is to increase the patronage concentration ratio of its customers to 100%. Some firms set different patronage concentration targets for various classes of customers. This reflects the fact that some types of customers are more profitable than others.

In addition to efforts of better understanding customer patronage, companies also engage in employing the services of an influencer to influence the consumers' purchasing decision (Gownaris, Dimitriadis, & Stathakopoulos, 2010). However, when they are engaging in such types of activities, they need to consider factors such as the level of the influencer's fan base, ability to attract and influence customers, the audience etc. all of which should be taken into cognizance in order to increase patronage (Ganiyu, Uche, & Elizabeth, 2012).

To sum up all the arguments stated above, it is clear that better understanding the concept of customer patronage through studying and identifying their needs and wants leads to huge long term benefits to businesses (Hair, Black, Babin, & Erson, 2010). However, as stated by Kotler (2005) it is essential to mention that despite the

great efforts to learn and understand the buying behaviour of customers, it is very difficult to identify the exact reasons why a customer prefers one product or service over another one. This is because consumers sometimes make purchasing decisions based on their emotional beliefs which they are not well aware of and often time, they patronize a firm because of the influencers used.

Purchase Intent: Purchase intent is the consumer's willingness or intention to purchase a brand for a long time from same company (Gounaris, Dimitriadis & Stethakopoulos, 2010). Richard & Dubihlela (2014) assert that it is the individual customer's judgment of purchasing a brand that was previously bought from a particular company at a particular place. Hellier, Geursen, Carr and Rickard (2003) defined purchase intent as individual customer's decision about purchasing the goods or services from a company or seller after considering current prevailing situation and circumstance.

According to Richard and Dubihela (2014) opined that when a customer decides to purchase a product for first time serves as a predictive measure of purchase behaviour and the decision to purchase represents the readiness of customer to decide to engage in consistent product consumption. Seiders, Voss, Grewal & Godfrey (2005) assert that purchase intent reflects customer experiences which induces certain behaviour and define satisfaction (Richard & Dubihlela, 2014). Customer satisfaction leads to trust which attract purchase intent (Ganiyu, Uche & Elizabeth, 2013).

Customers act differently depending on how they perceive things; a customer tends to purchase from a firm when they feel satisfied with the particular attributes during their first visit (Ha, John, Janda, & Muthaly, 2009). Although satisfaction with a particular firm appears to be a necessary condition for explaining the intent for visitations, it is not sufficient to explain the phenomenon since many customer reported satisfactory experiences and yet did not return to the same firm. It might also happen that satisfied customer might not return to the same destination because they prefer to discover other firms.

On the other hand, less satisfied customer might have different intent to the same firm and eventually become discouraged. Firm that wants to make a customer loyal should endeavour to treat their customer's right by giving them adequate satisfaction especially in their first visit and this may be used as a strategy to avoid a new decision process for a further destination and reduce the implicit risks of facing another disappointed experience in the future (Ozdemir, & Hewett, 2010).

Similarly, what differentiate first-timers and repeat visitors; have been identified as the kind of benefits sought in the buying process. Benefits items include psychological outcomes such as a desire for variety, relaxation, and well-attended to service (Shim, Eastlick, Lotz, & Warrington, 2001). Understanding benefits sought in a consumptive situation provides insight into the consumer's value system as well as illuminating casual factors behind behaviour.

Fear Appeal and Customer Patronage

The use of fear appeals is common in many types of marketing communications which have influence patronage. Abernethy and Wicks, (2018) opined that with regard to television, fear appeals are perhaps the most common tactic used in public service announcements (PSAs). In these PSAs, threats of physical harm, injury, and death are used more frequently than social threats (Treise, Wolburg, & Otnes, 1999). More recently, fear appeals have been tested in terms of information security behaviors. Fear appeals impact end-user behavior but not uniformly as perceptions of self-efficacy, response efficacy, threat severity, and social influence also impact end users (Johnston & Warkentin, 2010).

Fear can be an effective motivator and in the typical fear appeal context, fright and anxiety in the target audience can result because danger to themselves is perceived by members of the audience and as such can either make or mar patronage (Bagozzi and Moore, 1994). In fact, stronger fear appeals bring about greater attitude, intention, behavior changes and patronage. That is, strong fear appeals are more effective than weak fear appeals (Higbee, 1969). In addition, fear appeals are most effective when they provide high levels of a meaningful threat or important problem and high levels of efficacy or the belief that an individual's change of

behavior will reduce the threat or problem. That is, fear appeals work when you make the customer very afraid and then show him or her how to reduce the fear by doing what you recommend.

Perceived Threat and Customer Patronage

As noted by Keller (1999) the perceived threat can be enhanced if the message arouses ‘a level of fear sufficiently intense to constitute a ‘drive state’ and if the recipient’s elaboration of the communicator’s ‘reassuring recommendation’ was accompanied by a reduction in emotional tension. Perceived threat is defined as the extent to which a customer feels or has knowledge about a fear appeal

The drive of perceived threat is based on two assumptions: (a) that when fear is sufficiently intense, it motivates instrumental responding, and (b) that any cognitive or behavioral response that reduces a negative state such as fear is inherently reinforcing. The first assumption is based on the premise that a low level of fear arousal will not sufficiently motivate the recipient to seek a method to reduce the fear (Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 2018). The second assumption suggests that a message containing recommendations on the appropriate cognitive or behavioral responses to reduce fear will be viewed favorably. The first assumption pertains to the relationship between level of fear arousal and persuasion; the second assumption speaks to the order of the health consequences and the recommendations.

Rossiter and Thornton (2004) strongly support the overall level of perceived threat which needs to be measured as well as the fear pattern of an advert. That is, they measured the fear pattern of the advert, based on moment-to-moment ratings of fear-to-relief taken for the ad’s duration (Carver & Scheier, 2002). They found that “a post-exposure overall rating of fear is in fact measuring the maximum level of fear experienced, not the average level, and that this static rating of fear cannot distinguish very different patterns, such as the pattern of rising fear with no relief, the ‘shock’ pattern of sudden fear with no relief (both representing positive punishment), and the classic fear-relief pattern (the drive reduction pattern).

Self-Control and Customer Patronage

Self-control can be defined as the ability to align one’s behavior with personally valued goals and standards in the light of certain kinds of motivational conflicts.

The term “self-control” has been used to refer to the processes by which people adopt goals and standards for how they think, feel, and behave, and by which they monitor and implement behaviors that allow them to meet them (Debus, 2016; Higgins, 2016). Thus understood, self-control requires a variety of different capacities and skills, including the ability to select one’s goals, to find suitable ways of implementing them in the light of environmental constraints, to monitor their implementation, and to evaluate how costly or effective their adoption and implementation is. Self-control belongs to this set of capacities (Fujita, 2011).

Self-control is the ability to adequately resolve (maybe, in some cases, circumvent) certain kinds of motivational conflicts that are part of everyday life. Typically, self-control comes in whenever one feels tempted by something, despite some available alternative evidently being more valuable or better, even by one’s own lights (Fujita, Carnevale, & Trope, 2018).

Some of these conflicts, for example, are of moral or ethical relevance. For instance, you might be committed to being an honest person but sometimes feel tempted to lie to get ahead. Others, however, have no clear moral import. Although there is a tendency to moralize self-control or the lack of it (Mooijman, Meindl, & Graham, 2020; Mooijman et al., 2018; Rozin, 1999), sometimes the alternatives that structure the conflict lack any moral valence. Thus, it might be wise to get out of bed to brush one’s teeth after realizing that one forgot to do it earlier. Yet there is nothing immoral about failing to do it and staying instead in bed.

Self-control is what promotes or hinders and it is of great practical importance which may lead to patronage. Individuals who might be labeled as self-controlled, for instance, have been found to score high on a number of significant life outcomes, including financial prosperity, career success, physical and mental health (Duckworth

& Seligman, 2005; Mischel, Shoda, & Rodriguez, 1989; Moffitt et al., 2011; but see Hofmann et al. 2012, for some complications of this view). Yet, not all ways of promoting and enhancing self-control are created equal.

Empirical Review

Wood and Bakes (2010) this study examined the effect of fear appeal on consumers' patronage of online businesses in Nigeria. The research design in the study was survey design because the study involved direct contact with a cross section of the respondents who shared similar features. The population in the study was thirty top online businesses of where five top management staff members were selected as samples from each of the companies using a structured questionnaire and was analyzed using both mean and standard deviation and the hypotheses were tested using correlation and multiple regression analyses. The study was anchored of cue utilization theory. The finding shows that fear appeal strategy have positive effects on consumers' patronage. All the proxies for fear appeal strategy have a positive effect on consumers' patronage. Therefore, it was recommended that fear appeal should be employed in order to promote their companies image on.

Clam and Staks (2011) examined the influence of fear appeal on customer loyalty in mobile telecommunication industry. Cross-sectional survey design was used, data were collected from 150 respondents with = 14 copies of the returned questionnaires. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (correlation and regression), while hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results show a significant relationship between customer loyalty and direct marketing ($r = .375^{**}$); publicity ($r = .514^{**}$); promotion sales ($r = .470^{**}$) and advertising $r = .562^{**}$) respectively. The multiple regression result shows R^2 value of .483, which means that integrated marketing communication dimensions shows 48.3% variance in customer loyalty.

Dodokh and Al-Maaitah (2019) studied the impact of advertising appeal on organizational performance in Jordanian Dead Sea cosmetic industry. The study contains three dynamic variables: advertising appeal for marketing, fear appeal for customer's relations and services, and fear appeal for information accessibility on organizational performance in terms of speed, time to market, cost reduction, and innovation in Jordan. Data was obtained from a sample of 169 managers working in 23 different organizations in cosmetic sector. Structural equation modeling was used to test the hypotheses. The results have shown that there is a strong positive impact of using advertising appeal on organizational performance.

Ayoola and Ibrahim (2020) examined the effects of fear appeal on customer satisfaction of selected aviation services in Nigeria. The research design was survey design. The population was 18 domestic airlines and six of them were selected as sample due to the number of active airlines in Nigeria. Data from this study were collected from one hundred (100) customers using questionnaire and analyzed using both descriptive (tables, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (regression analysis). The findings shows that search engine optimization, fear appeal have a positive impact on customer satisfaction in aviation services in Nigeria.

Michael (2017) examined an analysis of the relationship between fear appeal and patronage a strategic perspective: Findings from the banking industry. Hypotheses were analyzed through correlations and multiple-regression statistics were used. The findings from the study support the variables all support the hypotheses. The findings obtained open new horizons in discussions that defend the unification of fear appeal in the banking industry. The study recommends that firms should firms should boost their fear appeal as it fosters patronage.

Organ and Smith (2015) investigated fear appeal and organizational performance of the ports security affairs of the state of NY: The impact of fear appeal. Data was connected via questionnaire. The result revealed that the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 129.091$; $R^2 = .603$; $P = .000$). The R^2 is 0.603, which means that 60.3% of the variation in fear appeal can be explained by organizational performance. The proposed model was adequate as the F-statistic = 129.091 was significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). The findings of the study revealed that there is a relationship between fear appeal and organizational performance. The study recommends that firms should boost their fear appeal as its helps in organizational performance.

Dyne (2010) studied fear appeal and customer loyalty of teachers in government aided secondary schools in Uganda. Data obtained for the study are 336 secondary school teachers who responded to a self-administered

questionnaire. The study used a cross-sectional survey design. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze all the null hypotheses. The results revealed that fear appeal explained 34.0% of the variation (adjusted $R^2 = 0.340$). This means that 66.0% of the variation was a result of factors not considered in the study. The regression model was significant ($F = 44.135$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Fear appeal ($\beta = 0.470$, $p = 0.000 > 0.05$) and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.483$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) had a positive and significant influence. The findings of the study revealed that there is a relationship between fear appeal and customer loyalty. The study recommends that firms should boost their fear appeal encourages loyalty.

Folks and Elk (2015) examined fear appeal and Job Satisfaction: This paper assessed the attitude of workers towards fear appeal and their satisfaction to work. A sample of 127 valid respondents selected from the managerial and non-managerial staff and data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) through descriptive statistics and regression. The findings revealed that fear appeal encourage workers internally; while satisfying customers externally by making them feel like a valued part of an organization. Also, it was indicated that some employees seem to be satisfied and content with their job not because they derive pleasure from the work itself but because there are no other alternatives. It was recommended that manufacturing industry needs to embark on the restructuring of jobs and responsibilities in ways that would facilitate competitive advantage without sacrificing the basic objective of the organization.

Alfred and Marshall (2014) studied the Impact of fear appeal on Employee Performance (Empirical Evidence from Banking Sector of Pakistan).The purpose of this research is to measure the impact of fear appeal on employee performance. A questionnaire was designed to collect the data on the factors related to network and internet reliability. The data was collected from different banks of Pakistan. The data collected were analyzed in SPSS 17.0 Version. Different analytical and descriptive techniques were used to analyze the data. It is proved from correlation analysis that all the independent variables have weak or moderate positive relationship to each other. Regression analysis shows that all the independent variables have insignificant and positive impact on employee performance. Descriptive analysis also reveals that all the independent variables have positive impact on employee performance. ANOVA results reveal that education have not same impact on employee performance. It concluded from different results that fear appeal has positive impact on employee performance.

Chailin (2013) examined the role of fear appeal on performance: a survey of public hospitals in Kenya. The paper attempts to examine the role of fear appeal on performance in public hospitals in Kenya. Data obtained was entered, cleaned and analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software. A total sample of 205 participants was targeted in the study. However, the researcher was able to receive 202 questionnaires from the respondents, giving a response rate of 98.53 percent. The study adopted a descriptive approach based on a correlation design with emphasis on a cross-sectional survey, by considering employee incentives as an independent variable and performance as a dependent variable respectively. The findings revealed that fear appeal played a key role in enhancing performance at both individual and organizational levels, while providing an opportunity for initiatives which are deemed to be instrumental in merging theory and practice in the public health sector.

Ibrahim and Juhary (2015) Studied advertising appeal and customer acceptance and its influence on employee Performance: Evidence from Malaysia. This quantitative study investigated the direct effect of advertising appeal on employees' job performance and mediating effect of acceptance at online shopping in Nigeria. Data were collected using self-administered survey questionnaire from convenience-sampled 341 employees of selected online shops. Data analyses were performed using the Statistical Product and Service Solution 21. The results of regression analysis and Sobel's calculation showed that, at the .05 level, there was a significant direct effect of advertising appeal on employees' job performance, and acceptance partially mediated the relationship between advertising appeal and employees' job commitment.

Research Methodology

The study is a descriptive kind of research, which evaluates to nexus between 'fear appeal and customer patronage of retro-viral distributing hospitals in port Harcourt. As a social behaviour based research, it will be adopting a quasi- experimental research design, through a cross- sectional survey. The population of this study

comprises of the three (3) major government hospitals in Rivers state; they are chosen because they are the only channels in Port Harcourt through which government distribute retro-viral drugs in the city and state at large. However, the target population includes patients of these hospital saddled with the responsibility of distributing those drugs see population table below;

Table 1: Table of population

S/N	Description	Locations	Sample size
1	University of Port Harcourt teaching Hospital (UPTH)	Choba, Port Harcourt	58
2	Brait-Waite Memorial Hospital (BMH)	Forces Avenue, Port Harcourt	45
3	Military Hospital	Adjacent Hotel Presidential, Aba Road, Port Harcourt	35
	Total		138

Source: Experts' View, 2021

A probabilistic sampling to determine the sample size and a simple random sampling will be used in reaching out to the respondents. Freund & William (2009) formula was used to determine the infinite population, which amounted to 138 samples. A five point Likert scale was used to design the questionnaire and simple regression was used for analysis.

Results

Data Presentation

Table 2: List of Selected Retro-viral Distributing Hospitals

Names	Administered Questionnaires		
	Distributed Questionnaires	Retrieved Questionnaires	Non-retrieved Questionnaires
University of Port Harcourt teaching Hospital (UPTH)	58	49	9
Brait-Waite Memorial Hospital (BMH)	45	38	7
Military Hospital	35	32	3
Total	138	119	19

The Table above revealed the copies of questionnaires distributed to selected three (3) retro-viral distributing hospitals in Port Harcourt. A total of one hundred and thirty-eight (138) copies of questionnaires were issued out to the three (3) selected retro-viral distributing hospitals. The study achieved a response rate of 86.2% with one hundred and nineteen (119) successful respondents.

Table 3 Showing the Questionnaire Distribution Results

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage %
Distributed	138	100
Retrieved	123	89.1
Not retrieved	15	10.9
Retrieved usable	119	96.7
Retrieved not usable	4	3.3

Table 3 demonstrated the questionnaire distribution and retrieval process for the study. One hundred and thirty-eight (138) copies of questionnaire were distributed of which one hundred and twenty-three (123) copies representing a response rate of 89.1% were retrieved and fifteen (15) which represent 10.9% were not retrieved. Out of the 123 retrieved only 119 which represent 96.7% were usable, and 4 which represent 3.3% were not usable.

Test of Hypotheses

Regression Analysis showing the relationship between Perceived threat and Purchase Intent

Table 4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.868 ^a	.753	.733	18.53901

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Threat

Table 5 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	-4.020	6.076		-.662	.517	-16.786	8.745
	Perceived Threat	1.059	.065	.868	16.257	.000	.922	1.196

a. Dependent Variable: Buying Intent

$$BI = -4.020 + 1.059(PT)$$

Table 6 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90830.692	1	90830.692	264.277	.000 ^b
	Residual	6186.508	118	343.695		
	Total	97017.200	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Buying intent

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived threat

Regression line

$$Y = a + bX$$

$$BI = -4.020 + 1.059(PT)$$

Where:

$$R = 0.868$$

$$R^2 = 0.753$$

$$F_{1, 119} = 264.277$$

$$P\text{-value} = 0.000$$

Decision

The result of the simple regression of the above variables indicated $R = 0.868$, $R^2 = 0.753$ which is equal to 75.3% and this is the explanatory power of the model used for the study. It means that 75.3% variation can be explained by factors within the model used for the study and the remaining 24.7% can only be explained by other external quantitative and qualitative factors. The F-ratio ($F_{1, 119} = 264.277$) showed significant effects in existence and this revealed the appropriateness of the model used for the study. The t-ratio showed significance of perceived threat to the present status of buying intent.

The beta value is the strength or the extent of contributions to the present position of buying intent. Perceived threat made a beta contribution of 1.059 value. This result has revealed that perceived threat made significant contribution to buying intent. Also, the $p\text{-value} < 0.05$, we therefore reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}) that there is no significant relationship between Perceived threat and buying intent.

Regression Analysis showing the relationship between Self-Control and Buying Intent

Table 7 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.910 ^a	.828	.824	18.34654

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Control

Table 8 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	-4.821	6.047		-.797	.436	-17.524	7.883
	Self-Control	1.070	.065	.910	16.439	.000	.933	1.207

a. Dependent Variable: Buying Intent

BI = -4.821 + 1.070(SC)

Table 9 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90958.483	1	90958.483	270.231	.000 ^b
	Residual	6058.717	118	336.595		
	Total	97017.200	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Buying Intent

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Control

Regression line

Y= a + bX

BI = -4.821 + 1.070(SC)

Where:

R = 0.910

R² = 0.828

F1, 119=270.231

P- value = 0.000

Decision

The result of the simple regression of the above variables indicated R = 0.910, R²=0.828 which is equal to 82.8% and this is the explanatory power of the model used for the study. It means that 82.8% variation can be explained by factors within the model used for the study and the remaining 17.2% can only be explained by other external quantitative and qualitative factors of the model used for the study. The F-ratio (F1, 119=270.231) showed significant effects in existence and this revealed the appropriateness of the model used for the study. The t-ratio showed significant of self-control to the present status of buying intent.

The beta value is the strength or the extent of contributions to the present position of buying intent. Self-control made a beta contribution of 1.070 value. This result has revealed that self-control made significant contribution to buying intent. Also, the p-value<0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis (H₀₃) that there is no significant relationship between self-control and buying intent.

Discussion of Findings

The extent of influence of perceived threat on customer patronage

The hypothesis one (H_{01}) was tested using simple regression analysis. Our analysis showed that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between perceived threat and buying intent ($R= 0.868$ and $R^2=0.753$). This reveals a strong and positive significant relationship between the two variables.

Based on the result of the test of hypotheses one and two (H_{01} and H_{02}), there are positive and strong relationship between perceived threat and customer patronage of retro-viral distributing hospitals in Port Harcourt. The two hypotheses were all rejected because the probability values (p-value) are less than the degree of significance of 0.05. Our findings are in agreement with Ayoola and Ibrahim (2020) study shows that search engine optimization, fear appeal have a positive impact on customer satisfaction in aviation services in Nigeria. Michael (2017) study support the variables all support the hypotheses.

The extent of influence of self-control on customer patronage

Hypothesis three (H_{03}) aimed at examine the significant relationship between self-control and buying intent. The hypothesis was tested using simple regression analysis. The statistical analysis showed that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between the variables ($R= 0.910$ 0.828).

This revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypotheses were accepted that there is relationship between self-control and customer patronage of retro-viral distributing hospital in Port Harcourt. Our findings is in agreement with Chailin (2013) study revealed that self-control played a key role in enhancing performance at both individual and organizational levels, while providing an opportunity for initiatives which are deemed to be instrumental in merging theory and practice in the public health sector. Also, Ibrahim and Juhary (2015) Study revealed a significant direct effect of advertising appeal on employees' job performance, and acceptance partially mediated the relationship between advertising appeal and employees' job commitment. Okwudili, (2015) study showed that higher emotional appeal practices will affect patronage positively and recommends amongst others that Government should motivate their staff more by involving them in self-developmental programs with good appeals etc. that will signify that the organization needs their personal outputs.

Conclusions

This research work examined the effects of several constructs of fear appeal (perceived threat, self-control and threat severity) on customer patronage (buying intent and repeat buying) of retroviral distributing hospital in Port Harcourt, and the outcome is believed to cover the entire retroviral distributing hospital in Port Harcourt. From the findings, fear appeal adopted by retroviral distributing hospital in Port Harcourt to a large extent influences measure of customer patronage; perceived threat influence buying intent and repeat buying positively; self-control influence buying intent and repeat buying positively; and threat severity influence buying intent and repeat buying positively.

The outcome of the analysis therefore reveals that the fear appeal dimensions significantly influence the customer patronage measures, thus it was established that a positive and strong significant relationship exist between the variables. All the null hypotheses formulated were rejected and alternative hypotheses consequently accepted.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were advanced for retro-viral distributing hospital in Port Harcourt for appropriate implementation.

- i. Retro-viral distributing hospitals should put more effort on conveying relevant and factual information about their product in order to influence intent to buy and repeat buying.
- ii. Retro-viral distributing hospitals should learn to use messages that relate to the consumers goals and interests to convince customers to make purchase or even become loyal customers.
- iii. Retro-viral distributing hospitals should always convey or relate the usefulness and function of their products to the consumers so they know what they are purchasing as this will help them make purchase decision.

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