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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Customer Service Management Practices and Profitability of Shopping Malls in Enugu State

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The study was to evaluate the customer service management practices and profitability of shopping malls in Enugu State. The specific objectives were to: examine the relationship between empowered customer service staff and sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State, evaluate the relationship between open line communication and the income generation of shopping malls in Enugu State and determine the relationship between the effective allocation of resources and customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state. The population of the study was three hundred and fifty-five (355) made up of management and senior staff of the selected shopping malls in Enugu state. The study made use of the whole population because of the small number. A survey design was adopted for the study. Instruments used for data collection were an interview guide and questionnaire. Three hundred and fifty-five (355) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents and two hundred and ninety-seven (297) copies were returned representing eighty-four (84%) percent, while fifty-eight (58) copies of the questionnaire were not returned representing sixteen percent (16%). This shows a high rate of respondents. Data were presented and analyzed using frequency tables using Sprint Likert Scale. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. The hypotheses were analyzed using the Pearson coefficient correlation (r) statistics tool with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 20. The study revealed that Empowered customer service staff had a positive significant relationship with sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State, (r=.196 < .872, p <.05). An Open line communication had a positive significant relationship with income generation of shopping malls in Enugu state, (r= .533<.858, p <.05) and Effective allocation of resources had a positive significant relationship with customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state, (r= .269 <.822, p <.05). The study concluded that Empowered customer service staff, An Open line communication and Effective allocation of resources had a positive significant relationship with sales growth, income generation and with customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state. The study recommended among others that Organisations should endeavor to empower their staff for effective Customer service and for better information to make well-informed decisions that will put them one step closer to achieving their aims.

ABSTRACT

Keywords: *Customer Service Management Practices, Profitability, Income Generation, Open Line Communication*

1. Introduction

Customers are the lifeblood of every company. Businesses may get a competitive advantage by how they treat their consumers. Customers are crucial because they produce money, and organizations can't survive without them (Kenton, Khartit, and Beer, 2021). Because pleased consumers are more inclined to award business to organizations that meet or exceed their expectations, businesses frequently follow the adage "the customer is always right." Meeting client expectations is one way to generate customer pleasure. Customer satisfaction is the bedrock of any successful business, as it leads to repeat purchases, brand loyalty, and positive word of mouth. Customer service, which aims to provide great experiences for customers, is critical to a successful seller/customer relationship. When it comes to client happiness and loyalty, customer service plays a big role. Customers, according to Biesok and Wrobel (2011), are the most important aspect of a company's survival and growth in the market. As a result, it should come as no surprise that businesses that wish to compete must provide their clients with useful and unique terms that meet their demands. This satisfaction encompasses not just the sensations involved with the shopping transaction, but also the environment before and after purchases are made.

Without the correct tools and their effective application, customer service is impossible. Customers' requirements shift often as they try to adapt to an ever-changing reality. Customer service is so important to your company's survival and growth that it should not be approached reactively and sporadically. Instead, it should be done proactively as part of a well-thought-out customer service management strategy. McNamara (2022) believes that no company can exist unless it meets the demands of its clients, regardless of its nature or size. Customers come to a product or service based on what they desire, but they remain based on what they need, according to a marketing adage.

Shopping malls are full of life, so much so that they are adored by everyone, regardless of age, because they provide infinite opportunities to have fun, eat, shop, and so on. It is an overwhelming place to be because it promotes sociability (Meridian, 2019). Customer satisfaction is seen to be a significant factor in a favorable attitude about a shopping mall. Regardless of a company's traditional marketing mix strategies, which aim to create and maintain a long-term relationship between a company and its potentially profitable customers with the goal that both parties benefit from such a long-term relationship, a comprehensive customer services management practice is a must for the company's survival in the market. To maintain a profitable long-term relationship, the company, on the one hand, does not only keep its customers satisfied but always tries to delight them (Ikhtiar, Rahman, and Iqbal, 2019). An efficient performance management program helps companies accomplish their mission and goals. Customer service quality in organizations is often affected by poor employee performance and lack of staff training on necessary skills. These challenges lead to organizations' loss of customers, decreased profits, delays in service delivery, and lack of morale leading to low productivity and hindering the achievement of goals. This led the researcher to evaluate customer service management practices and the profitability of shopping malls in Enugu State.

Statement of the problem

Customer Relationship Management practices are the entire process that focuses on the interface between the organization and its customers. The concern for quality service delivery in an organization is a major priority. The purpose of customer service management practices is to improve marketing productivity by increasing marketing efficiency and enhancing marketing effectiveness as shopping malls hold huge prospective incidents both in entertainment, recreation, and socialization of its customers.

Customer service management is a difficult task in an organization and requires a highly-skilled, talented and intelligent individual because most times customers are smarter, well educated, more informative, and have unlimited access to information than it was in the past, and as such identification of their actual needs and satisfying them is a difficult job and has resulted to incompetent empowered customer service staff, poor network open line communication and ineffective allocation of resources by the customer services personnel. The performance of shopping malls decreases when there are incompetent employees in the organization because employees who lack qualities such as approachability, communicability, patience, and congeniality are not capable to establish rapport with customers which is crucial for delivering an individualized experience.

Neglect of the above-mentioned challenges of customer services management practices in shopping malls would result in insufficient sales growth, poor income generation, and reduced customer retention in shopping malls. In other to increase the profitability of shopping malls the study aimed to evaluate customer service management practices and the profitability of shopping malls in Enugu State.

Objectives of the study
The main objective of the study was to evaluate the customer service management practices and profitability of shopping malls in Enugu State. The specific objectives were to:

i.   Examine the relationship between empowered customer service staff and sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State
ii.   Evaluate the relationship between open line communication and the income generation of shopping malls in Enugu State
iii.   Determine the relationship between the effective allocation of resources and customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state.

Research Questions
The following research questions guided the study
i.   What is the relationship between the Empowered customer service staff and the sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State?
ii.   What is the relationship between open line communication and the income generation of shopping malls in Enugu State?
iii.   What is the relationship between the effective allocation of resources and customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu State?

Statement of Hypotheses
The following hypotheses guided the study
i.   The empowered customer service staff has no positive significant relationship with the sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State.
ii.   An Open line communication has no positive significant relationship with the income generation of shopping malls in Enugu state
iii.   Effective allocation of resources has no positive significant relationship with customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state.

Significance of the study
The study on customer services management practices and profitability of shopping malls will contribute to the existing knowledge on the profitability of shopping malls through effective customer service.

Managers: This study will help managers and supervisors in shopping malls. The study will help them with strategies on how best to relate with their employees most especially the customer care personnel as there is the first contact of customers in the organization. A good relationship with customer care personnel in the organization would help managers know the suitable method of motivating employees and their customers.
Employees: The result of the study will be of great value to employees as it will serve as an eye opener on how best to treat their customers knowing that customers are the major key factor of organizational growth. The study will also help employees know how to increase customer satisfaction using the key indicators in the objective of the study.
Researcher: Prospective researchers, students, and academicians will find this study valuable while carrying out prospective research in this area.

2. Review of Related Literature
2.1 Conceptual Review

Customer
Purchasers of products and services are referred to as customers. Individuals who obtain commodities, services, products, or ideas from a producer, seller, or supplier through a financial transaction and other reasonable considerations between the service provider and the customer are referred to as customers, also known as consumers, clients, buyers, or purchasers. A customer, according to Tanner (2021), is someone interested in buying from a firm and may be classified as potential, existing, or former customer. Businesses routinely research their consumers' characteristics to fine-tune their marketing tactics and adjust their inventory to target the most desired

customers, according to Kenton, Khartit, and Beer (2021). As a result, it is more critical than ever for businesses to continue to excel in attracting, satisfying, and retaining consumers.

Service

A service is an act performed by an individual or an organization in other to provide help and assistance. *Because they are generated and consumed concurrently, the service provider must offer the service at the exact time of consumption, and each service is unique, services can be defined in terms of intangibility, perishability, and inconsistency. Even though the same service is requested by the consumer, the time, place, circumstances, conditions, existing settings, and/or allocated resources are all different for the next delivery (Verma and Harsh, 2011). Services might be necessary or enjoyable, resulting in increased job satisfaction. Many services are considered diverse, and they are usually customized for each service client or service setting (Harrison, Estelami & Hooman. 2014).*

Management

Management is the process of running a company using planning, organizing, directing, and controlling concepts. Management is also a series of activities aimed at making the most efficient and effective use of resources to achieve one or more objectives.

Operations, facilities management, security, accounts, common area maintenance, marketing, leasing, and all other responsibilities are included, whereas mall management includes positioning, zoning, promotions and marketing, facility management, and finance (Agarwal, 2018).

Setting an organization's strategy and organizing the efforts of its workers (or volunteers) to achieve its objectives through the use of available resources, such as financial, natural, technological, and human resources, are all part of management. According to Highman (2022), to effectively manage a retail center, all stakeholders must be efficiently served and supported.

Customer Service Management Practices

Customer happiness is based on good customer service management practices. Customer service management refers to the methods, strategies, and technologies that businesses employ to manage and analyze customer interactions and data across the customer lifecycle to strengthen customer relationships, help in customer retention, and drive sales growth (Khlystova,2020). Customer satisfaction is the judgment a consumer makes about his/her sense of fulfillment related to his/her choices about the purchase and use of specific products and services. According to Kathryn (2021), operating the business and altering the business are two terms used in management to distinguish between continuing to supply products or services and adjusting goods or services to satisfy changing needs of customers. Customer relationship management, according to Mugunthan & Kalaiarasi (2017), is a strategy or logic that allows a business to manage its consumers.

Components of Customer Service Management Practices that formed part of the Objectives of the Study
Empowered Customer Service Staff

Customer service personnel are often the first contact of clients in an organization hence, they need to be trained and prepared, and equipped as it is a crucial role in shaping the way people perceive the organization's brand. Empowered customer service staff as the authorized support given to representatives to make real-time choices in favor of consumers, which necessitates rigorous employee training to recognize and act on changes to improve the quality of assistance (Patel, 2021). In an organization, empowerment entails individuals and systems for meeting their needs. Employee empowerment improves employee creativity, work-life balance, teamwork spirit, and organizational effectiveness. Empowering customer service staff helps to increase their confidence and customer satisfaction. Employees can be empowered by developing of pleasant work environment, strengthening employee values, Self-service to succeed, avoiding micromanagement, and encouragement through experimentation as proposed by (Wix, 2019).

Open Line Communication

Open communication demonstrates that the company is concerned about its employees' well-being and values their efforts. (Manker, 2021) asserted that open communication ensures that everyone has an equal stake in the company's success. Establishing an environment where all employees have a strong knowledge of the goals and what needs to be done to achieve those goals by creating a culture of open communication enables the flow of energy and creativity. Customer service teams are often the primary source of communication between a company

and customers, meaning that their interactions are important for maintaining a positive reputation and customer-client relationship. Open communication fosters higher-quality work, a better grasp of key regulations, and a trusting connection between employers and employees. A good open line of communication with management as it promotes a greater level of transparency and allows management to be more in touch with their colleagues (PEOPLE KEEP, 2021).

Effective Allocation of Resources
Resource allocation is knowing the availability of resources and scheduling them to coincide with the job timeline (Landau, (2022). Resource allocation is also a plan that is been developed to make the most of the available resources at disposal in a project. In principle, resource leveling is a simple notion, but when you consider the intricacy of each moving element inside and between projects, it gets progressively complicated. Taking money or people away from a project is always a risk, especially if the circumstance changes later and the enterprise needs more money or people to stay afloat. Maritan and Gwendolyn, (2017) established Strategic management in the organization revolves around resource allocation which falls primarily into three categories which include the processes by which resources are allocated in a firm, corporate capital allocation to divisions in a multi-business firm, and work that examines factors affecting specific types of resource allocation.

Profitability
In accounting, profitability is sometimes referred to as net profit or net income. When determining whether or not a firm is a continuing concern and can continue to function in its existing capacity, profitability is considered (Horton, 2021). Traditional marketplaces, which were considered simple convergences of supply and demand, contribute less to the business sector than shopping malls. These malls attract buyers and sellers and induce customers by providing enough time to make choices as well as a recreational means of shopping. However, at present competition among malls, congestion of markets, and traditional retail business have led mall investors and tenants to consider alternative investment portfolios to avoid future risk. Xuan, (2020) opined that there are different profit maximization strategies for enterprises when they face different economic situations.

Components of Profitability used in the study
Sales Growth
The word "sales growth" refers to a metric that is used to assess a sales team's ability to raise revenue over a set period (Bhasin, 2018). Sales growth analysis is a business strategy that allows organizations to set and forecast realistic revenue objectives over a fixed period. Machek and Machek, (2014) posit that the growth of sales can be decomposed into four factors: labor productivity (measured in sales-per-worker), labor intensity (measured in worker-per-assets), and capital intensity (measured in assets-per-customer), and frequency of visits (customers per time unit). A healthy relationship between employees and customers helps to establish a good amount of sales and also attract prospective customers and increase their interest. The term "sales growth" refers to a rise in sales from one year to the next. This sales growth may be computed by subtracting the current year's total sales from the prior year's total sales and then dividing by the previous year's total sales (Rostamkalaei and Freel, 2016). Firms that put more effort into increasing sales will earn future profits, which will enhance the willingness to invest significantly.

Income Generation
Income is the monetary value of an entity's consumption and saving opportunities during a certain period. McCaffery (2012) defined income as "undeniable accessions to wealth, clearly recognized, and completely under the control of the taxpayer." As described by Cognism (2022), income creation, often known as revenue generation, is one of the most significant activities that companies participate in. It entails the process of designing, promoting, and selling items with the ultimate goal of creating money. Income may be created via income-producing activities, which are activities that have the potential to generate money for a company. Income generating activities include responding to clients' requests, meeting with clients, and making prospect phone calls (Cognism, 2022)

Customer Retention
Customer retention is the ability of an organization to prevent Employee turnover and retain its customers. Customers are attracted to businesses through a combination of marketing, social media, and brand initiatives, which include how customers interact with the company and how they feel. Everything customers think and feel when they come into contact with your brand is part of the customer experience. Customers who have previously

signed up for a service or purchased a product from an organization are the focus of customer retention. Customer retention, according to Olson (2022), is the lifeblood of most subscription-based businesses and service providers. It also refers to a company's capacity to convert consumers into repeat purchasers and keep them from transferring to a rival. It's also the percentage of past clients who have stayed loyal to a company throughout time. In marketing, customer retention is defined as the act of persuading existing consumers to continue purchasing items or services from a business or company, as defined by the business or firm (Eggspert, 2018).

2.2 Theoretical Framework
Expectancy value theory and expectation confirmation theory were used in the study, although the focus will be on expectation confirmation theory, which states that consumers evaluate a new service experience to a standard they have created. Their opinion of the service is influenced by how well it meets this requirement.

Expectation confirmation theory (ECT)
The theory's organization Richard L. Oliver created expectation confirmation theory (ECT) in a series of two publications published in 1977 and 1980. The most widely acknowledged theory involving consumer satisfaction processes is expectation theory (also known as Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory). According to the notion, a customer's pleasure or discontent is based on a comparison of performance (of a product or service) to predefined performance criteria. Customers evaluate a new service experience to a standard they've set, according to the disconfirmation hypothesis. Their opinion of the service is influenced by how well it meets this requirement. Customers make purchases based on their expectations, attitudes, and intentions, according to this notion (Oliver 1980).

Expectancy Value Theory
The Expectancy Value Theory (Vroom, 1964) claims that two things determine the motivation for a certain behavior or action: (i) expectation, i.e., how likely it is that a desired (instrumental) outcome will be accomplished as a result of the behavior or action; (ii) value, i.e., how important the desired outcome is to the individual. These two core factors are multiplied together, resulting in motivation = expectancy + value. When both anticipation and value are high, motivation is strong, but when one of these components is zero, motivation is low. Vroom further divides the factor expectation into two subcomponents. The first subcomponent is concerned with a person's perception of their capacity to accomplish a specific task at a needed level, or the perceived link between effort and performance." Expectancy" is the name given to this subcomponent (just like the overall factor). The second subcomponent is concerned with (an individual's belief in) the probability relationship between a performed action and the desired outcome (also known as "instrumentality"). These two subcomponents are combined again through multiplication, resulting in a high level of overall anticipation when an individual believes that they will be able to do a specific action and that successful execution will likely result in the desired outcome.

2.3 Empirical Review
The relationship between empowered customer service staff and sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State

Jeske, Chimusoro and Karodia, (2015) on an evaluation of customer service and the impact of efficiency on Namibia's logistical sector: a study Involving selected courier companies. The goal of the study was to find out how well a group of courier firms in Windhoek, Namibia, served their customers. Customers from five different courier firms were chosen using simple random sampling. A self-administered satisfaction level and anticipation questionnaire were used to collect quantitative data. Interviews with service providers' opinions on customer service gave qualitative data from a randomly selected sample of managers from the same organizations. Customers interpret customer care in a variety of ways, according to the survey. Customer service and excellent relationships with service providers are two of the most essential elements for consumers, according to the data, and good customer service is vital for the majority of customers. The links that are involved in customer happiness and service quality are confirmed or added value in this study, which adds to current ideas. It generates data that managers in corporate organizations may utilize for strategic planning.

Busara, (2016) examined the Impact of Employees Empowerment on Organization Performance: A case study of Government Procurement service agency. The study looked into the link between employee empowerment and performance in the public sector, using the Government Procurement Services Agency as a case study. According to

a prior study, corporations must apply motivating personnel practices, particularly employee empowerment, which is acknowledged as fundamental to developing trustful connections with organizations, which leads to greater levels of performance. The intended demographic was all GPSA headquarters employees, however, only 30 were found. The study used a stratified simple random sample method and a descriptive survey research methodology. Structured questionnaires were used to acquire primary data from respondents. The data were examined descriptively and displayed as figures, tables, and percentages, with inferential statistics (correlation) utilized to analyze the data using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and EXCEL. Employees in the public sector believe that empowerment has a significant impact on their performance, according to the research. The ideas of empowerment and employee performance have a strong relationship.

Otiso, (2015), examined the mediating influence of customer satisfaction on the connection between customer relationship management methods and customer retention in selected public universities in Kenya. The study's specific goals were to determine the impact of customer relationship management practices on customer retention, evaluate the impact of customer satisfaction on customer retention, and evaluate the mediation effect of customer satisfaction on the relationship between customer relationship management practices and customer retention. The study was based on the social exchange hypothesis, which states that humans in social contexts adopt behaviors that maximize their chances of achieving their self-interests in certain situations. This study used descriptive and explanatory research techniques, and the following networks were sampled: Safaricom, Airtel, Orange, and, yuMobile. Moi, Masinde Muliro, Maseno, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, University of Eldoret, and Kisii University were among the public universities in the Western area where data was collected using a questionnaire with a sample size of 250 respondents. The information gathered was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The association between customer relationship management methods, customer satisfaction, and customer retention was studied using multiple regressions. The findings revealed that perceived value, customer relational experience, and loyalty programs all had a significant impact on customer retention, whereas network quality had no effect. Finally, customer satisfaction mediated the association between customer relationship management strategies and customer retention to some extent. The study recommends that service providers should put more emphasis on Customer Relationship Management Practices since they influence customer satisfaction and hence customer retention.

The relationship between an open line of communication and the income generation of shopping malls in Enugu State

Velence, (2016) examined the establishment of an income-generating project for Ujiranimwema Women Group: A case study of Nigeria Bukoba Municipal – Kagera. The vegetable garden establishment project aims to boost women's income to encourage women to participate in capacity-building groups through the vegetable garden establishment and evaluate the project's progress. The project included convenience purposive and simple random sample approaches, as well as quantitative and qualitative study design sampling methodologies. The author used SPSS to evaluate the quantitative data, which included 65 respondents in basic sizes. Various problems were highlighted during the community assessment, including a lack of entrepreneurial expertise, poor education, a lack of funding, and a negative reputation in the community. Women picked the project with the best prioritizing among the four initiatives from those issues. They selected to cultivate vegetable gardens since it appears that the resources necessary to sustain that initiative and community demand are accessible.

Shannon, (2018) investigated effective Management Communication Strategies. The goal of this single-case study was to look at successful communication tactics in the workplace and see how managers used them to boost employee engagement, productivity, and overall effectiveness. Data was gathered via organizational records, observations, and semi-structured interviews with six executives from a company in the Midwest of the United States. All of the participants had been employed full-time for at least three years, had a managerial position, and were in charge of departmental communication. The data were analyzed using Moustakas' modified van Kaam technique. The findings of this study have the potential to influence good social change by enhancing the organizational competitive environment through community and societal participation. The findings of this study may offer managers information on employee engagement initiatives that have been implemented in the industry to boost productivity and organizational success.

Shrivastava and Prasad (2019) on the importance of effective communication strategies to improve workplace communication. The article highlights the necessity of efficient workplace communication. The report details the steps taken by the researcher in conducting a pilot study on 102 professional business students to measure their effective communication abilities and prepare them for workplace communication. Their reactions were studied using a pre-and post-test approach. The results of the pretest revealed that they had significant gaps in their speaking abilities. The researcher devised some communication interventions/strategies that can be used to effectively communicate with coworkers in the workplace. She trained a group of 51 business undergraduate students who were part of the Experiment group on these tactics and presented them to the intervention. The improvement was tracked using a pre-and post-test evaluation approach. The results demonstrate that the Experimental group's effective communication style improved significantly (by more than 45 percent) in their grasp of communication techniques, which improved their job readiness. This paper tries to explain the experiment and propose ways for improving workplace communication between two or more people in an organization, resulting in more effective business communication.

The relationship between the effective allocation of resources and customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state.

Ehiorobo (2018) Efficient Resource Allocation and Utilization: The Missing Link in Nigeria's Quest for Sustainable Development. The research looks at Nigeria's resource allocation and uses it as a missing link in the country's drive for long-term growth. The study's major purpose is to look at how inefficient allocation and usage of material, human, and financial resources have made achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria a challenge. Given the vast resources available to successive administrations in the nation, it is difficult to understand why the populace remains severely destitute, with 70% of the population living in poverty. The rural poor and the urban poor both suffer from severe poverty, which has led to unwholesome activities like armed robbery, pipeline damage, prostitution, dangerous migrations, advanced fee fraud, and other sorts of social vices. The study employs a qualitative design based on interpretative philosophy, with subjectivism as the ontological orientation. According to the study's findings, corruption, ethnic biases, inadequate governance practices, lack of accountability, lack of transparency, and wasted expenditure on frivolous activities have all contributed to severe inefficiency in resource allocation and use in Nigeria. Nigeria would be on the road to sustainable development provided effective project planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation are carried out transparently, and resources are efficiently allocated and utilized, according to the study's conclusion. For Nigeria to achieve sustainable development goals, the report suggests that economic and technical efficiency be adopted in resource allocation and usage.

Njoroge, (2015) examined the strategies adopted by major shopping malls to enhance customer retention in Nairobi city county, Kenya. The study sought to address the following research question: What are the tactics used by major retail malls in Nairobi City County to increase customer retention? This research problem was studied through the use of a descriptive research design. The research project focused on strategies adopted by major malls in Nairobi City County to enhance customer retention. The population of this study comprised 12 major shopping malls in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Due to the small size of the population, a census study was conducted. A census is a study that collects information from every member of a population. This differs from a survey sample, which uses data from a subset of the population to estimate population characteristics. Quantitative and qualitative data were used as primary sources for this investigation. Data were collected from respondents using a semi-structured questionnaire. The descriptive statistics of percentages, means, standard deviations, and frequencies were used to examine the quantitative data acquired. Frequency tables were used to present the data. The qualitative data or aspects of the data obtained from the open-ended questions were analyzed using content analysis. A correlation analysis was also performed to determine the strength of the association between the research variables. Shopping malls in Kenya have implemented a cost leadership approach to shield themselves from new competitors, according to the report. The study also found that by using a differentiation strategy, shopping malls in Kenya were able to satisfy their customers' expectations and satisfaction. Shopping malls must diversify their items to stand out from the crowd and remain competitive.

3. Methodology

Research Design

The design employed in the course of the study was a survey method; a survey research design is a study where the peculiar character of a known or identified population is studied through a sample, which is deemed to be representative of the population.

Area of the Study

The study focused on shopping malls in the Enugu metropolis. The ten (10) selected shopping malls under study were Eastern Shop located at 108 Ogui Road, Spar Enugu located at Nkpokiti Road, Off Presidential Road, Opp Okpara Square, and Enugu. Shoprite Enugu is located at Amusement Centre, Abakaliki Road, Polo Park, GRA, Enugu, Nigeria, Roban stores (Bisala road, Independence layout, and Agbani road), 4Market Days, Otigba junction. Impala Plaza, Independence Layout, Enugu; Chase Mall,33 Abakaliki Rd, GRA, Enugu; Sazodo Plaza No1 Osina Street federal housing by State, Abakpa Nike Rd, Enugu; Ojels the University Mall No.55 Ekpeluchi Ave, Thinkers Corner, Emene and Nwaka Investment Shopping Center Achara, Enugu. These organizations with a minimum of 10 million naira capital based and a high number of staff were chosen.

Population for the Study

The population of the study was 355 comprising the management, and senior staff of the organizations under study was used.

Table 1 Population Distribution

	Firms	Staff Categories			
		Mgt	Senior	Total	%
1.	Eastern Shop	7	30	37	10
2.	Spar	6	32	38	10
3.	Shoprite	20	34	54	15
4.	Roban stores	8	50	58	16
5.	4Market Days	3	12	15	4
6.	Chase Mall	4	28	42	12
7.	Sazodo Plaza	3	31	34	9
8.	Ojels The university Mall	2	21	23	7
9.	Nwaka Investment Shopping	4	26	30	8
10	Game stores	14	20	34	9
	Total	71	284	355	100

Source: Administrative desk office of the shopping malls under study, 2022

Sample Size Determination

For the study, the whole population of three hundred and fifty-five (355) was used due to the small number

Instruments for Data Collection

The main instrument used in the data collection was the questionnaire. It was designed to contain both structured and unstructured questions using 5-point liker-scale. The structured questions offered the respondents a range of optional answers from which a choice was made.

Validity of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instrument, proper face-to-face validation was used. The supervisor and two other experts from the department.

Reliability of Research Instruments

The reliability of a measure concerns its ability to produce similar results when repeated measurements are made under identical conditions. A test-re-test method of reliability was adopted for this study in which 20 copies of 15 items questionnaire were distributed to the ten selected organizations; two copies to each firm. The instrument was re-administered for the second time after two weeks and the outcome was subjected to a consistency test using the

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient testing tool (Refer to table 3.3a & 3.3b). The reliability result indicated 0.711, implying a high degree of item consistency.

Table 2 Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test

		N	%
Cases	Valid	15	100.0
	Excluded	0	.0
	Total	15	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 3 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N0 of Items
.712	.711	15

SPSS 20.0 Output

Method of Data Analysis
Data was presented in frequency tables. Data were presented and analyzed using a frequency table using Sprint Likert Scale. Data was presented in frequency tables. Data were presented and analyzed using a frequency table using Sprint Likert Scale. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. The hypotheses were analyzed using the Pearson coefficient correlation (r) statistics tool.

4. Data Presentation, Analyses, and Interpretation
Table 4 Distribution and Returned Questionnaire

S/No	Questionnaire	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Returned	297	84
2	Not returned	58	16
	Total Distributed	355	100

Source: From the questionnaire administration, 2022
Three hundred and fifty-five (355) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents and two hundred and ninety-seven (297) copies were returned representing eighty-four (84%) percent, while fifty-eight (58) copies of the questionnaire were not returned representing sixteen percent (16%). This shows a high rate of respondents.

4.2.1 The relationship between empowered customer service staff and sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State

Table 5: Responses on the relationship between empowered customer service staff and sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD	∑FX	-X	SD	Decision
1	The staff is allowed to make a decision and use their common service to retain their customers.	585 117 41.9	456 114 40.9	36 12 4.3	20 10 3.6	26 26 9.3	1123 279 100%	4.03	1.204	Agree
2	Customer service shares ideas and solutions and it attracts old and new customers.	720 144 51.6	112 28 10.0	18 6 2.2	11 25 20.1	45 45 16.1	1007 279 100%	3.61	1.628	Agree
3	Customer service staff gains access to import and resources and information that make their work better	465 93 33.3	316 79 28.3	18 6 2.2	112 20.1	45 45 16.1	956 279 100%	3.43	1.513	Agree
4	Providing proper training for customer service staff has attracted more customers.	735 147 52.7	176 27 9.7	18 6 2.2	112 56 20.1	43 43 15.4	1084 279 100%	3.64	1.618	Agree
5	The provision of the right tools to customer services staff makes the business easier and attainable.	285 57 20.4	516 129 46.2	18 6 2.2	112 56 20.1	31 31 11.1	962 279 100%	3.45	1.618	Agree
	Total Grand mean and standard deviation							3.632	1.5162	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In table 5, 231 respondents out of 279 representing 82.8 percent agreed that the staff is allowed to make the decision and use their common service to retain their customers 4.03 and standard deviation of 1.204. Customer service shares ideas and solutions and it attracts old and new customers 172 respondents representing 61.6 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 1.628. Customer service staff gains access to import and resources and information that make their work better 172 respondents representing 61.6 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.43 and a standard deviation of 1.513. Providing proper training for customer service staff has attracted more customers 174 respondents representing 62.4 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.64 and 1.618. The provision of the right tools to customer services staff makes the business easier and attainable 186 respondents representing 66.6 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.45 and a standard deviation of 1.618

4.2.2 The relationship between an open line communication and the income generation of shopping malls in Enugu State

Table 6: Responses on the relationship between open line communication and the income generation of shopping malls in Enugu State

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD	∑FX	-X	SD	Decision
1	The going of employees to management for questions and supports increased rates of returns.	435 87 31.2	396 99 35.5	18 6 2.2	112 56 20.1	31 31 11.1	992 279 100%	3.56	1.395	Agree
2	The encouraging of feedback from employees to the	430 86 30.8	400 100 35.8	18 6 2.2	112 56	31 31 11.1	991 279 100%	3.55	1.392	Agree

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD	∑FX	X̄	SD	Decision
	management promotes sales and more customers.				20.1					
3	Helping employees with issues like personal concerns enhances a great deal of trust in them	395 79 28.3	428 107 38.4	18 6 2.2	112 56 20.1	56 56 11.1	1009 279 100%	3.53	1.375	Agree
4	There is an effective communication plan in which every employee is aware of the expectations.	250 50 17.9	648 162 58.1	18 6 2.2	20 10 3.6	51 51 18.3	987 279 100%	3.54	1.335	Agree
5	Using the right tools for communication makes it easier and quick circulation of information.	375 75 26.9	476 119 42.7	18 6 2.2	20 10 3.6	69 69 24.7	958 279 100%	3.43	1.532	Agree
	Total Grand mean and standard deviation							3.522	1.4058	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 6, 186 respondents out of 279 representing 66.7 percent agreed that the going of employees to management for questions and supports increase rates of returns 3.56 and standard deviation of 1.395. The encouraging of feedback from employees to the management promotes sales and more customers 186 respondents representing 66.6 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.55 and a standard deviation of 1.392. Helping employees with issues like personal concerns enhances a great deal of trust in them 186 respondents representing 66.7 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.53 and a standard deviation of 1.375. There is an effective communication plan in which every employee is aware of the expectations 212 respondents representing 76.0 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.54 and 1.335. Using the right tools for communication makes it easier and quick circulation of information 194 respondents representing 69.6 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.43 and a standard deviation of 1.532

4.2.3 The relationship between the effective allocation of resources and customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state.

Table 7: Responses on the relationship between the effective allocation of resources and customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state.

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD	∑FX	X̄	SD	Decision
1	Resource allocation allows proper plans to meet customers' needs.	790 158 56.6	216 54 19.4	18 6 2.2	20 10 3.6	51 51 18.3	1095 279 100%	3.92	1.542	Agree
2	Effective preparation helps schedule resources in advance and ever ready for customers.	295 59 21.1	612 153 54.8	18 6 2.2	20 10 3.6	51 51 18.3	996 279 100%	3.57	1.358	Agree
3	Delivering service on time helps to retain customers' loyalty	505 101 36.2	592 148 53.0	18 6 2.2	20 10 3.6	14 14 5.0	1149 279 100%	4.12	.984	Agree
4	There are reduced resource costs and low prices of goods.	1020 204 73.1	220 55 19.7	18 6 2.2	20 10 4.0	4 4 1.0	1282 279 100%	4.56	.946	Agree
5	There is the facilitation of client satisfaction and the success of customer delivery.	685 137 49.1	392 98 35.1	18 6 2.2	48 24 8.6	14 14 5.0	1157 279 100%	4.15	1.136	Agree
	Total Grand mean and standard deviation							4.064	1.1932	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 4.2.3.1, 212 respondents out of 279 representing 76.0 percent agreed that Resource allocation allows proper plan to meet customers' needs 3.92 and standard deviation of 1.542. Effective preparation helps schedule resources in advance and ever ready for customers 212 respondents representing 75.9 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.57 and a standard deviation of 1.358. Delivering service on time helps to retain customers' loyalty 249 respondents representing 89.2 percent agreed with a mean score of 4.12 and a standard deviation of 984. There are reduced resource costs and low price of goods 259 respondents representing 92.8 percent agreed with a mean score of 4.56 and .946. There is the facilitation of clients' satisfaction and success of customers delivery 235 respondents representing 84.2 percent agreed with a mean score of 4.15 and a standard deviation of 1.136

4.3 Test of Hypotheses
4.3.1 Hypothesis One: Empowered customer service staff has no positive significant relationship with sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State

Table 8   Correlations

		The staff are allowed to make the decision and use their common service to retain their customers	Customer service shares ideas and solutions and it attracts old and new customers.	Customer service staff gains access to import and resources and information that make their work better	Providing proper training for customer service staff has attracted more customers	The provision of the right tools to customer services staff makes the business easier and attainable
The staff are allowed to make the decision and use their common service to retain their customers	Pearson Correlation	1	.337**	.350**	.197**	.196**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.001	.001
	N	279	279	279	279	279
Customer service shares ideas and solutions and it attracts old and new customers.	Pearson Correlation	.337**	1	.872**	.841**	.739**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	279	279	279	279	279
Customer service staff gains access to import and resources and information that make their work better	Pearson Correlation	.350**	.872**	1	.835**	.703**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	279	279	279	279	279
Providing proper training for customer service staff has attracted more customers	Pearson Correlation	.197**	.841**	.835**	1	.780**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000		.000
	N	279	279	279	279	279
The provision of the right tools to customer services staff makes the business easier and attainable	Pearson Correlation	.196**	.739**	.703**	.780**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.000	
	N	279	279	279	279	279

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

Table 8 showed the Pearson correlation matrix on task allocation and the units of output produced showing the correlation coefficients, significant values, and the number of cases. The correlation coefficient shows .196 < .872. This value indicates that correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed) and implies that empowered customer service staff has no positive significant relationship with sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State, (r=.196 < .872). The computed correlations coefficient is greater than the table value of r = .000 at the alpha level for a two-tailed test (r=.196 < .872, p<.05).

Decision Rule
The decision rule is to accept the null hypothesis if the computed r is less than the tabulated r otherwise reject the null hypothesis.

Decision
Since the computed (r =.196 < .872) is greater than the table value of .000, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we concluded that empowered customer service staff had a positive significant relationship with sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State as reported in the probability value of (r=.196 < .872, p <.05).

4.3.2 Hypothesis Two: Open line communication has no positive significant relationship with income generation of shopping malls in Enugu state.

Table 9 Correlations

		The going of employees to management for questions and supports increase rates of returns	The encouraging of feedback from employees to the management promotes sales and more customers.	Helping employees with issues like personal concerns enhances a great deal of trust in them.	There is an effective communication plan in which every employee is aware of the expectations.	Using the right tools for communication makes it easier and quick circulation of information.
The going of employees to management for questions and supports increase rates of returns	Pearson Correlation	1	.858**	.848**	.762**	.695**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	279	279	279	279	279
The encouraging of feedback from employees to the management promotes sales and more customers.	Pearson Correlation	.858**	1	.857**	.718**	.725**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	279	279	279	279	279
Helping employees with issues like personal concerns enhances a great deal of trust in them.	Pearson Correlation	.848**	.857**	1	.735**	.533**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	279	279	279	279	279
There is an effective communication plan in which every employee is aware of the expectations.	Pearson Correlation	.762**	.718**	.735**	1	.762**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	279	279	279	279	279

Using the right tools for communication makes it easier and quick circulation of information.	Pearson Correlation	.695**	.725**	.533**	.762**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	279	279	279	279	279

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

Table 9 Showed the Pearson correlation matrix on task allocation and the units of output produced showing the correlation coefficients, significant values, and the number of cases. The correlation coefficient shows .533<.858. This value indicates that correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed) and implies that open line communication had a positive significant relationship with income generation of shopping malls in Enugu state (r=.533<.858). The computed correlations coefficient is greater than the table value of r = .000 at the alpha level for a two-tailed test (r=.533<.858, p<.05).

Decision Rule
The decision rule is to accept the null hypothesis if the computed r is less than the tabulated r otherwise reject the null hypothesis.

Decision
Since the computed (r =.533<.858) is greater than the table value of .000, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we concluded that open line communication had a positive significant relationship with income generation of shopping malls in Enugu state as reported in the probability value of (r=.533<.858, p <.05).

4.3.3 Hypotheses Three: Effective allocation of resources has no positive significant relationship with customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state.
 Table 10 Correlations

		Resource allocation allows proper plans to meet customers' needs.	Effective preparation helps schedule resources in advance and ever ready for customer's	Delivering service on time helps to retain customers' loyalty	There are reduced resource costs and low prices of goods	There is the facilitation of client satisfaction and the success of customer delivery.
Resource allocation allows proper plans to meet customers' needs.	Pearson Correlation	1	.822**	.269**	.389**	.390**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	279	279	279	279	279
Effective preparation helps schedule resources in advance and ever ready for customer's	Pearson Correlation	.822**	1	.283**	.289**	.482**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	279	279	279	279	279
Delivering service on time helps to retain customers' loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.269**	.283**	1	.744**	.551**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	279	279	279	279	279
There are reduced resource costs and low prices of goods	Pearson Correlation	.389**	.289**	.744**	1	.479**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	279	279	279	279	279
There is facilitation of clients satisfaction and	Pearson Correlation	.390**	.482**	.551**	.479**	1

successful of customers delivery.	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	279	279	279	279	279

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

In table 10, the Pearson correlation matrix on task assignment and output units was displayed, along with the correlation coefficients, significant values, and several instances. .269.822 is the correlation coefficient. This figure suggests that the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) and that effective resource allocation has a positive significant link with customer retention in shopping malls in Enugu state (r=.269.822). For a two-tailed test, the estimated correlation coefficient is larger than the table value of r =.000 at the alpha level (r=.269.822, p.05).

Decision Rule
The decision rule is to accept the null hypothesis if the computed r is less than the tabulated r otherwise reject the null hypothesis.

Decision
Since the computed (r =.269 <.822) is greater than the table value of .000, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we concluded that effective allocation of resources had a positive significant relationship with customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state as reported in the probability value of (r=.269 <.822, p <.05).

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The relationship between empowered customer service staff and sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State
From the result of hypothesis one, the computed (r =.196 < .872) was greater than the table value of .000, we concluded that empowered customer service staff had a positive significant relationship with sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State. In support of the result, Jeske, Chimusoro, and Karodia, (2015) carried out An Evaluation of Customer Service and the Impact of Efficiency on Namibia's Logistical Sector: A Study. Selected courier businesses are involved. The goal of the study was to find out how well a group of courier firms in Windhoek, Namibia, served their customers. Customer service and excellent relationships with service providers are two of the most essential elements for consumers, according to the data, and good customer service is vital for the majority of customers. The Impact of Employee Empowerment on Organization Performance: A Case Study of a Government Procurement Service Agency was investigated by Busara (2016). Employees in the public sector believe that empowerment has a significant impact on their performance, according to the research.

The relationship between an open line of communication and the income generation of shopping malls in Enugu State

From the result of hypothesis Two, the computed (r = .533<.858) was greater than the table value of .000, we concluded that open line communication had a positive significant relationship with income generation of shopping malls in Enugu state. In support of the result, Shannon, (2018) investigated effective Management Communication Strategies. The findings of this study may offer managers information on employee engagement initiatives that have been implemented in the industry to boost productivity and organizational success. Importance of Effective Communication Strategies to Improve Workplace Communication, Shrivastava and Prasad (2019). The results demonstrate that the Experimental group's effective communication style improved significantly (by more than 45 percent) in their grasp of communication techniques, which improved their job readiness.

The relationship between the effective allocation of resources and customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state.
From the result of hypothesis three, the computed (r = .269 <.822) is greater than the table value of .000, we concluded that effective allocation of resources had a positive significant relationship with customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state. Njoroge, (2015) investigated the tactics used by major retail malls in Nairobi city county, Kenya, to increase customer retention. Shopping malls in Kenya have implemented a cost leadership approach to shield themselves from new competitors, according to the report. Ehiorobo, E. (2018). Efficient Resource Allocation and Utilization: The Missing Link in Nigeria's Sustainable Development Efforts. According to the study's findings, corruption, ethnic prejudices, bad governance practices, lack of accountability, lack of transparency,

and wasteful spending on frivolous activities have all contributed to gross inefficiency in resource allocation and utilization in Nigeria.

5. Summary of the Findings
i.   Empowered customer service staff had a positive significant relationship with sales growth of shopping malls in Enugu State, (r=.196 < .872, p <.05).
ii.   Open line communication had a positive significant relationship with income generation of shopping malls in Enugu state, (r= .533<.858, p <.05).
iii.   Effective allocation of resources had a positive significant relationship with customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state, (r= .269 <.822, p <.05).

6. Conclusion
They concluded that Empowered customer service staff, Open line communication, and Effective allocation of resources had a positive significant relationship with sales growth, income generation, and customer retention of shopping malls in Enugu state. Customer satisfaction is the bedrock of any successful business, as it leads to repeat purchases, brand loyalty, and positive word of mouth. Customer service aims to provide great experiences and is an important component of a successful seller/customer relationship. When it comes to client happiness and loyalty, customer service plays a big role.

7. Recommendations
Based on the findings the following recommendations were proffered:
i.   Organizations should endeavor to empower their staff for effective Customer service and for better information to make well-informed decisions that will put them one step closer to achieving their aims.
ii.   Shopping mall management should support open communication for better job quality, comprehension of critical regulations, and a trusting connection between employers, employees, and consumers.
iii.   Economic and technical efficiencies should be encouraged in resource allocation and utilization for the shopping malls to attain sustainable development goals.

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