American International Journal of Business Management (AIJBM)
ISSN- 2379-106X, www.aijbm.com Volume 07, Issue 06 (June-2024), PP 30-42

Business Management Ethics and Customers Retention in Selected Money-Deposit Banks in Delta and Edo States Nigeria

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ABSTRACT:- The study focused on business management ethics and customers' retention in selected money-deposit bank in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. Three research questionnaires were asked and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. In the methodology, the study employed descriptive research design to solicit the opinions of respondents. With a target population of 2,236 bank tenure staff, a sample size of 339 was obtained from Taro Yamane's tool, using judgmental sample techniques. The instrument used to gather data, was structured questionnaire, validated by experts in the faculty of Management Sciences, which also tested for reliability at Cronbach alpha of 0.905, ensuring its appropriateness for the study. This instrument was then administered to 339 staff respondents from 10 money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo State but 233 were correctly completed and returned. The data obtained from the instrument were then subjected to subsequent analysis. Descriptive statistics with frequency and percentages were used to analyze the demography meanwhile, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze the respondents' rate of responses whereas linear regression analysis via Eview 9.0 v used to test the formulated hypotheses having done the normality test. The results revealed that there is no significant relationship between transparency and accountability on customers' retention in money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States Nigeria; there is no significant relationship between fair and responsible lending practices on customers' retention in money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo states Nigeria and there is no significant relationship Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives influence on customers' retention in money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States Nigeria. Based on these findings, the study recommended among others, that priority to transparency and accountability should be communicated openly with customers and established systems to ensure responsible practices within the bank.

Keywords: Transparency, Accountability, Responsible lending and Customers' Retention

I. INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of the Nigerian banking industry, the convergence of business management ethics and customer retention stands as a pivotal axis defining the success trajectory of Money-Deposit Banks (MDBs). Ethical business conduct in the financial sector has gained substantial attention globally, and Nigeria's banking domain is no exception. Amidst the changing regulatory landscape and evolving customer expectations, MDBs in Delta and Edo States have been pressed to navigate the intricate balance between profit-driven operations and ethical standards. As recent studies suggest, the implementation of ethical principles not only shapes organizational culture but also profoundly influences customer trust and loyalty within these banks (Adegbite, 2022). Concurrently, in a digitally empowered era, customer retention strategies have become paramount for MDBs to sustain competitive advantages and foster enduring relationships with their clientele (Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2023). However, the synergy between ethical business management and effective customer retention strategies remains a critical area warranting exploration, particularly in the Nigerian banking context.

Previous researches underscore the significance of ethical frameworks within Nigerian banking institutions as a cornerstone for sustainable growth and customer trust (Amaeshi & Nnodim, 2023). The adoption of robust ethical practices not only bolsters the credibility of MDBs but also reinforces their relationships with customers, fostering a sense of reliability and credibility (Adegbite, 2022). Moreover, as evidenced by current trends, customer retention has emerged as a linchpin for banks seeking to thrive in an increasingly competitive market. Studies reveal that retaining customers costs significantly less than acquiring new ones, making it a financially prudent strategy for banks in Delta and Edo States (Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2023). Yet, the challenge lies in implementing comprehensive strategies that seamlessly integrate ethical considerations with customer retention initiatives, ensuring a harmonious equilibrium between profitability and principled conduct within these financial institutions.

Nigeria's banking sector has witnessed a metamorphosis driven by technological advancements, regulatory reforms, and evolving consumer behaviours. This transformation has necessitated a re-evaluation of ethical paradigms within Money-Deposit Banks (MDBs) operating in Delta and Edo States. With the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) placing increased emphasis on ethical standards, MDBs have embarked on a quest to align their operations with these guidelines while simultaneously addressing the unique challenges prevalent in the region (Ozili & Arun, 2022). Furthermore, in the wake of global economic shifts and the aftermath of the economic downtime as a result of government new regimes, customer expectations have undergone a paradigm shift, heightening the demand for not just efficient banking services but also ethical accountability and transparency (Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2023). Against this backdrop, the interplay between ethical business management and customer retention emerges as a cornerstone for the sustainable success of MDBs in these Nigerian states.

Recent studies have underscored the multidimensional impact of ethical practices on the performance and reputation of Nigerian MDBs (Amaeshi & Nnodim, 2023). The integration of ethical frameworks not only safeguards against financial malpractices but also cultivates a culture of trust and reliability among stakeholders, including customers, investors, and regulatory bodies (Ozili & Arun, 2022). Simultaneously, customer retention strategies have taken center stage as MDBs strive to fortify their market positions in an increasingly competitive landscape. The digital revolution has empowered customers, providing them with a plethora of choices and platforms to engage with banking services. Consequently, MDBs are compelled to devise innovative retention strategies that cater to evolving consumer preferences while upholding ethical norms (Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2023). As such, the convergence of ethical business management and effective customer retention strategies represents a pivotal nexus defining the trajectory of MDBs in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of problems

Ethical challenges persist within the banking sector, encompassing the struggle to ensure comprehensive transparency for stakeholders, particularly in communicating complex financial information effectively to customers. Despite the emphasis on fair lending practices, banks grapple with evaluating borrowers impartially while managing risks and avoiding predatory lending tactics. Furthermore, the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives presents hurdles in aligning these actions with the diverse needs and values of local communities, posing difficulties in executing impactful projects that contribute meaningfully to societal welfare and sustainable development. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to enhance transparency, navigate ethical lending dilemmas, and align CSR initiatives more effectively with community needs, fostering a more responsible and impactful banking ecosystem that will poise bank customers' retention.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study focused on Business Management Ethics and customers retentions in selected Money-Deposit Banks in Delta and Edo States Nigeria while specifically, the objective is to:

i) Know if Transparency and Accountability influences customers retention in money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States Nigeria.

ii) Ascertain whether fair and responsible Lending Practices affect customers retention in money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo states Nigeria.

iii) Establish if Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives influence on customers retention in money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States Nigeria.

1.4 Research questions

The following research questions were asked during the study:

i) Will Transparency and Accountability influence customers' retention in money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States Nigeria?

ii) Do fair and responsible Lending Practices affect customers' retention in money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo states Nigeria?

iii) Do Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives influence on customers' retention in money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States Nigeria?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study

i) There is no significant relationship between transparency and accountability on customers' retention in money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States Nigeria.

ii) There is no significant relationship between fair and responsible lending practices on customers' retention in money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo states Nigeria.

iii) There is no significant relationship Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives influence on customers' retention in money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States Nigeria.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study holds profound academic significance across various disciplines. Firstly, it contributes to the scholarly discourse on ethical practices within the banking sector by providing empirical insights into the implementation of transparent communication channels, ethical lending criteria, and community-centric CSR strategies. This empirical data serves as a valuable benchmark for evaluating the efficacy of ethical principles in banking operations, offering tangible examples for academic research focused on ethics, corporate governance, and responsible business practices.

Secondly, the emphasis on transparent communication channels and their impact on financial literacy and decision-making offers fertile ground for studies in behavioral economics and consumer behavior. This aspect sheds light on how improved financial education influences decision-making among stakeholders, enriching academic discussions on behavioural finance and contributing to a deeper understanding of how individuals perceive and engage with financial information.

Additionally, the study's focus on fair evaluation criteria for borrowers provides a basis for exploring risk assessment and mitigation strategies within lending practices. This facet of the research contributes to academic investigations into risk management in financial institutions, offering insights into the effectiveness of standardized evaluation criteria in mitigating risks associated with lending, thus enriching studies in finance, risk management, and banking regulations. Moreover, the community-centric CSR strategies can fuel academic discussions on sustainable development and the role of businesses in fostering positive societal impacts, contributing to the fields of social responsibility, sustainability studies, and community development within academia.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The study's scope encompasses an in-depth exploration of ethical challenges within the banking sector in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. It focuses on selected Money-Deposit Banks (MDBs) operating in these regions, examining their practices, challenges, and initiatives concerning transparency, fair lending, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The research involves stakeholders such as customers, shareholders, regulatory bodies, and local communities to gather diverse perspectives and insights.

However, the study's delimitations include limitations in its coverage, concentrating on a specific set of MDBs and a defined timeframe of the last five years. This approach might not represent the entirety of the Nigerian banking sector, and historical data beyond this period might not receive extensive coverage. Additionally, resource constraints, such as limited access to proprietary information and potential time limitations, might affect the depth of analysis in certain areas, acknowledging that not all aspects of banking practices can be fully explored. These boundaries and limitations are essential for a focused examination of ethical challenges and initiatives within the specified context while acknowledging potential constraints in the research process

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptualization of Business Management Ethics

Business Management Ethics in Money-Deposit Banks (MDBs) stands as a crucial determinant of their operational integrity and societal impact. Upholding ethical standards involves maintaining transparent operations, adhering to fair lending practices, and engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives aligned with community needs. Adequate adherence to ethical norms in banking fosters trust among stakeholders, including customers, shareholders, and regulatory bodies (Adegbite, 2022). It emphasizes the importance of clear and accurate communication of financial information to stakeholders, ensuring informed decision-making and cultivating a sense of transparency within banking operations (Ozili & Arun, 2022). Ethical business management not only influences the internal culture and credibility of MDBs but also plays a pivotal role in shaping their relationships with the broader society.

Furthermore, ethical conduct in MDBs encompasses fair and responsible lending practices, ensuring the impartial evaluation of borrowers based on creditworthiness while mitigating risks. This involves formulating and implementing standardized evaluation criteria to avoid predatory lending tactics and to prioritize fair access to financial services (Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2023). Research highlights the significance of ethical lending practices in fostering a more equitable and sustainable banking environment, safeguarding borrowers' interests while ensuring the financial stability of banks (Amaeshi & Nnodim, 2023).

Moreover, the implementation of CSR initiatives aligned with community needs reflects the ethical commitment of MDBs to societal welfare and sustainable development. CSR efforts tailored to specific community requirements contribute meaningfully to societal welfare, economic development, and environmental sustainability within the regions served by these banks (Ozili & Arun, 2022). Academic studies have emphasized the transformative impact of community-centric CSR strategies, emphasizing the role of businesses in addressing local challenges and fostering positive societal impacts (Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2023). This ethical commitment aligns banking operations with the values and needs of local communities, enhancing the social relevance and responsibility of MDBs in the broader socio-economic context.

2.2 Transparency and Accountability

Business Management Ethics in banking revolves around maintaining transparent operations and being accountable for actions and decisions. This involves providing clear, accurate, and comprehensive information to stakeholders, including customers, shareholders, and regulatory bodies. Ethical banking practices necessitate honest and transparent communication about financial products, terms, and conditions, ensuring that customers are well-informed to make prudent financial decisions. Transparency and accountability stand as foundational pillars within the realm of Business Management Ethics, especially in the context of Money-Deposit Banks (MDBs). It involves the commitment to maintaining open, honest, and clear operations, ensuring that stakeholders, including customers, shareholders, and regulatory bodies, receive comprehensive and accurate information (Adegbite, 2022). This ethical approach emphasizes the dissemination of transparent financial information, product details, and operational practices, enabling stakeholders to make well-informed decisions and fostering a sense of trust and credibility within the banking sector. Research indicates that transparent communication in banking operations not only influences stakeholder perceptions but also contributes significantly to cultivating a culture of accountability and integrity within MDBs (Ozili & Arun, 2022).

Furthermore, accountability in banking ethics denotes the responsibility of MDBs to justify their actions and decisions to stakeholders and regulatory authorities (Adegbite, 2022). This accountability extends beyond mere compliance with regulations; it encompasses a proactive stance in demonstrating the alignment of business practices with ethical standards and industry best practices. Studies emphasize the significance of fostering a robust accountability framework within banks, showcasing a commitment to ethical behavior, and ensuring that actions and decisions are in line with the interests of stakeholders and the broader society (Ozili & Arun, 2022). This integration of transparency and accountability within Business Management Ethics not only shapes the internal culture and credibility of MDBs but also influences their external relationships and societal impact.

2.3 Fair and Responsible Lending Practices:

Ethical banking encompasses fair and responsible lending practices that prioritize the best interests of customers while ensuring prudent risk management. This involves evaluating borrowers based on their creditworthiness, adhering to fair interest rates, and avoiding predatory lending practices. Furthermore, responsible lending includes assessing the financial capacity of borrowers and offering suitable financial products that align with their needs and abilities to repay.

Fair and responsible lending practices are integral components of Business Management Ethics within Money-Deposit Banks (MDBs), emphasizing equitable access to financial services while mitigating risks. Ethical lending entails the impartial evaluation of borrowers based on creditworthiness and the implementation of transparent and standardized evaluation criteria (Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2023). This commitment prioritizes fair treatment of borrowers, ensuring that lending decisions are based on accurate and comprehensive assessments rather than discriminatory practices. Research underscores the importance of ethical lending in fostering a level playing field and safeguarding borrowers against predatory lending tactics, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and sustainable banking environment (Amaeshi & Nnodim, 2023).

Moreover, responsible lending practices within MDBs encompass evaluating borrowers' financial capacities and needs to offer suitable financial products that align with their abilities to repay (Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2023). Ethical considerations in lending emphasize the balance between ensuring access to credit for borrowers and prudently managing risks for financial institutions. Studies indicate that promoting responsible lending practices not only safeguards the interests of borrowers but also contributes to the long-term financial stability of MDBs by reducing the likelihood of defaults and non-performing loans, thus fostering a more sustainable banking ecosystem (Amaeshi & Nnodim, 2023).

2.4 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives

Business Management Ethics extends beyond financial transactions to include corporate social responsibility. Banks are increasingly expected to contribute positively to society by engaging in initiatives that benefit communities, such as supporting education, environmental sustainability, and socioeconomic development. Ethical banking involves a commitment to CSR initiatives that align with the values and needs of the local communities they serve, contributing to the overall welfare and development of society.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives serve as a significant facet of Business Management Ethics within the operations of Money-Deposit Banks (MDBs), emphasizing their commitment to societal welfare and sustainable development. These initiatives involve proactive engagement in projects that contribute positively to the communities served by the banks, aligning business objectives with the values and needs of local societies (Ozili & Arun, 2022). Research indicates that effective CSR strategies tailored to specific community requirements foster impactful and sustainable projects that address societal needs, including education, environmental sustainability, and socioeconomic development (Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2023). By conducting extensive community needs assessments and stakeholder consultations, MDBs can tailor their CSR initiatives to have a meaningful and lasting impact, demonstrating a strong ethical commitment to the communities they serve (Amaeshi & Nnodim, 2023).

Moreover, CSR initiatives in banking operations not only contribute to societal welfare but also enhance the reputation and credibility of MDBs. These initiatives reflect a bank's dedication to being a responsible corporate citizen, fostering positive relationships with stakeholders and the broader society (Ozili & Arun, 2022). Studies emphasize that aligning CSR strategies with community needs leads to increased social relevance and goodwill, positioning banks as contributors to sustainable development and social well-being (Amaeshi & Nnodim, 2023). This ethical commitment to CSR initiatives not only benefits the communities served but also strengthens the overall ethical fabric of MDBs, influencing their perception and impact in the banking sector.

2.5 Empirical Review

One of the studies that examined the relationship between brand reputation and emotional attachment of customers in selected quoted deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria was conducted by Ogbuji et al. (2021). The study used a survey method to collect data from 400 customers of four banks: Access Bank, First Bank, United Bank for Africa, and Zenith Bank. The study applied structural equation modelling to test the hypotheses. The results showed that customers' emotional attachment to selected quoted deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria is favorably and considerably influenced by brand reputation. The study also found that brand reputation has a positive effect on customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty.

Another study that investigated the impact of corporate governance on the performance of deposit money banks in Nigeria was carried out by Oyewo et al. (2020). The study used secondary data from 10 deposit money banks listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange for the period of 2010 to 2018. The study employed panel data analysis to examine the effect of corporate governance variables, such as board size, board independence, board diversity, audit committee size, audit committee independence, audit quality, ownership concentration, and CEO duality, on bank performance indicators, such as return on assets, return on equity, net interest margin, and earnings per share. The results revealed that corporate governance has a significant positive impact on bank performance in Nigeria. The study also found that board size, board independence, audit committee size, audit committee independence, audit quality, and ownership concentration have positive effects on bank performance, while board diversity and CEO duality have negative effects.

A third study that explored the influence of work ethics on employees' performance of selected money banks in Ogun State Nigeria was conducted by Adeoye et al. (2021). The study used a descriptive survey design to collect data from 398 employees of six money deposit banks: Access Bank, Ecobank Nigeria Plc., First Bank Nigeria Plc., Guaranty Trust Bank Plc., United Bank for Africa Plc., and Zenith Bank Plc. The study applied multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses. The results indicated that work ethics variables, such as integrity, moral value, and trust have combined significant effect on employees' performance of the selected money banks. The study also found that integrity has the highest positive effect on employees' performance.

These studies demonstrate some of the aspects of business management ethics and customer retention in selected money-deposit banks in Nigeria. However, there are still some gaps and limitations that need to be addressed by future research. For instance, there is a need to examine how ethical culture and leadership affect the behaviour and attitudes of managers and employees in the banking sector. There is also a need to explore how customer retention strategies can be tailored to suit different segments and markets of customers. Furthermore, there is a need to compare and contrast the ethical practices and customer retention levels of different types of banks in Nigeria, such as commercial banks, microfinance banks, development banks, etc.

2.6 Theoretical Review

Theoretical frameworks that could be applied to understand the relationship between Business Management Ethics and customer retention in selected Money-Deposit Banks (MDBs) in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria:

Stakeholder Theory: This theory was enunciated by Freeman, R. E. (2010), it focuses on the interconnected relationships between various stakeholders of an organization, emphasizing that businesses should consider the interests of all stakeholders, including customers, employees, shareholders, and the community. Applied to MDBs in Delta and Edo States, this theory suggests that ethical practices and considerations of stakeholders' interests, especially those of customers, are pivotal for maintaining long-term relationships and fostering customer retention. By prioritizing ethical conduct and addressing customer needs, MDBs can strengthen customer relationships, leading to increased loyalty and retention.

Ethical Decision-Making Theory: Treviño, L. K., & Nelson, K. A. (2020) were preacher of this theory. Its theoretical framework which focused on the moral aspects of decision-making within organizations. In the context of MDBs, ethical decision-making theory suggests that banks should base their actions and policies on ethical considerations, ensuring fair treatment, transparency, and integrity in their interactions with customers. By employing this theory, MDBs can develop ethical guidelines for customer interactions and services. Ethical decision-making becomes central in customer retention strategies as it shapes the bank's reputation, trustworthiness, and long-term relationships with customers in Delta and Edo States.

Applying these theoretical frameworks within the context of MDBs in Delta and Edo States could offer insights into how ethical considerations and decision-making processes influence customer retention within the Nigerian banking sector.

2.7 Knowledge gap

In exploring the relationship between Business Management Ethics and customer retention within selected Money-Deposit Banks (MDBs) in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria, certain knowledge gaps may exist within the existing literature. One potential gap could be the scarcity of studies offering a comprehensive analysis of how specific ethical practices within MDBs directly influence customer retention rates in these specific regions. While there might be extensive research on general ethical considerations in banking or customer retention strategies, there might be limited empirical evidence directly linking ethical practices, such as transparency, fair lending, or CSR initiatives in MDBs, to customer retention rates specifically within the Delta and Edo States context.

Additionally, a knowledge gap might exist regarding the nuanced cultural and regional dynamics influencing the relationship between Business Management Ethics and customer retention in these specific areas. Understanding the socio-cultural context, preferences, and unique needs of customers in Delta and Edo States could offer deeper insights into how ethical practices impact customer perceptions, loyalty, and ultimately retention within these regions. Studies might lack a localized approach that delves into the cultural intricacies and specific customer behaviors within these states, potentially leaving a gap in understanding how ethics and customer retention strategies should be tailored to meet the preferences and needs of customers in these regions. Addressing these knowledge gaps could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between Business Management Ethics and customer retention within MDBs in Delta and Edo States, offering valuable insights for ethical banking practices tailored to these specific contexts.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study employed the quantitative methods using descriptive surveys deign to gather quantitative data on responses to ethical practices implemented by MDBs. Statistical analysis of this data could establish correlations between specific ethical practices (transparency, fair lending, CSR initiatives) and customer retention rates. Additionally, analyzing financial data from these banks could provide quantitative insights into customer retention metrics and pattern.

3.2 Population of the study

The population for the study was taken tenured management staff from 26 money-deposit banks operated in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria as approved by the CBN which stood at 16,390 (see, Appendix II) presented by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (2022).

3.3 Sample size and sampling techniques

Based on the accessibility and correctness of yearly financial statements as well as the stability of the stock exchange market, this study used a judgmental sample approach. Ten (10) commercial banks that are listed on the Nigeria Stock Exchange's floor were chosen from among the money-deposit banks which are as follows: United Bank for Africa, Zenith Bank, Fidelity Bank, Ecobank, Unity Bank, FCMB, Access Bank, Guaranty Trust Bank, Sterling Bank Plc and Union Bank of Nigeria Plc. While the sample size was determined by Taro Yamane formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where

n = Sample size

N = Total Population

e = sampling error (0.05) equivalent of 5 percent

Where N = 2,236

Substituting in the formula, we have

$$n = \frac{2{,}236}{1 + 2{,}236(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2{,}236}{1 + 2{,}236\ (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{2{,}236}{1 + 5.59}$$

$$n = \frac{2{,}236}{6.59}$$

N = 339.30197 which is 339. Therefore the sample size is 339.

3.5 Research Instruments

The instrument for data collections was the use of structured questionnaire to gather information. The instrument was titled: Business Management Ethics and Customers retentions in MDBs (BUSMECREM). The instrument was segmented into two categories (A and B) on the questionnaire. Categories A dealt on

Demography of the respondents while B centered on information on the 20 questions items that was relevant to the study. The scaling was on five Likert, with 1 denoting a low ranking rate and 5 denoting a high ranking rate, the respondents were asked to rate and rank the question statement.

3.6 Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was verified for face and content validity in line with Roy et al. (2023) by relevant research specialists at the Faculty of Management Science faculty in order to remove ambiguities, confusing, and irrelevant questions.

3.7 Reliability of the Instrument

Test for reliability instrument used was the Cronbach's alpha (α). This was possible with 30-item questionnaire on Business management ethics and Customers retentions in Parallax Bank, Anambra State which is outside the ones for the study. It was then put to Cronbach Alpha reliability test which findings showed an aggregate value of 0.905, which was adjudged reliable (See appendix 1).

3.8 Model Specification

The following model specification was developed for the variables of the study:

$CR = \beta_0+\beta_1 TA+\beta_2 FRLP+\beta 3CSRI+ \mu$

Where CR = Customers Retention

TA = Transparency and Accountability

FRLP = Fair and Responsible Lending Practices

CSRI = Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives

β_0 = *Constant or literal term*

β_1 = *Coefficient or multiplier effect*

$x\mu$ = *error term*

3.8. Method of Data Collection

The primary instrument for collecting data was a questionnaire that was distributed to a representative group of workers from the banks. To assist with the supervised and guided administration of the questionnaire in the study area, a research assistant works alongside the researcher. The assistant was equipped with the appropriate instruction and background information. The bank staff respondents were given a brief explanation of the study's objectives, and they were requested to provide adequate information based on the questionnaire. The research assistant available to assist respondents with the survey as required.

3.9 Method of Data analysis

Data collected were analyzed using the Frequency and Percentages for the demography variables, mean and standard deviation were used for respondents rate analysis and linear regression used for the hypotheses. The analysis was done with the aid of Eviews 9.0 statistical tools.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The presentation of data, analysis, and discussion of conclusions are the main topics of this chapter. A questionnaire was distributed to 339 tenured staff of 10 selected money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States Nigeria. Significantly, 106 questionnaires had double entries and could not be used. Only 233 questionnaires were then found correctly entered and completed. The 233 questionnaire were used for the data analysis which being presented hereunder:

4.1 Presentation of data

4.1.1 Demographic characteristics

Table 4.1: Demography of Respondents of Tenured Management Staff of the selected Money-Deposit Banks in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	151	65%
Female	82	35%
Total	**233**	**100%**
Academic/Professional attainment		
ANAN, ICAN	66	28%
First Degree	83	36%
M.Sc.	48	21%
Ph.D.	36	15%

Total	**233**	**100%**
Age Bracket		
25-30	33	14%
31-35	94	40%
36-40	69	30%
41-and above	37	16%
Total	**233**	**100%**

Fieldwork 2024

Table 4.1 above shows the demographic characteristics of respondents from the management of money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria, reveals notable insights. The gender distribution indicates a significant predominance of males, representing 65% of the respondents, while females constituted 35%. This imbalance suggests a gender gap within this sector, highlighting a need for broader inclusion and representation in future surveys or initiatives to capture a more diverse range of perspectives.

Pertaining to academic qualifications, the survey showcased a diverse educational background among the respondents. The majority, constituting 36%, held a first degree, followed by 28% with certifications from professional bodies such as ANAN or ICAN. Additionally, 21% held a Master's degree (M.Sc.), and 15% had achieved a Ph.D. This educational diversity suggests a mix of professional and academic expertise within the management of these banks. In terms of age, the largest group was between 31 and 35 years old (40%), followed closely by individuals aged 36-40 (30%), indicating a predominantly mid-career professional demographic among the surveyed population.

4.1.2: Respondents mean response rate

Table 4.2: Mean Responses Rate on question items physiognomies

CODE	Question	Mean	Std.	Remark
	Rate how your organisation take retort to the following physiognomies			
TA	**Transparency and Accountability**			
TA1	Transparency in Decision-making	3.31	1.41	Agree
TA2	Financial Accountability	3.47	1.40	Agree
TA3	Stakeholder Engagement	3.24	1.42	Agree
TA4	Conflict of Interest Policies	3.40	1.39	Agree
TA5	Accountability in Learning from Mistakes	3.45	1.39	Agree
	Mean summative	**3.37**	**0.09**	Agree
FRLP	**Fair and Responsible Lending Practices**			
FRLP1	Accessibility and Inclusivity	3.25	1.43	Agree
FRLP2	Non-discriminatory Policies	3.38	1.42	Agree
FRLP3	Transparency in Lending Terms	3.31	1.42	Agree
FRLP4	Risk Assessment and Decision-making	3.30	1.42	Agree
FRLP5	Education and Support	3.36	1.42	Agree
	Mean summative	**3.32**	**0.05**	Agree
CSRI	**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives**			
CSRI1	Community Engagement	3.18	1.45	Agree
CSRI2	Environmental Sustainability	3.20	1.43	Agree
CSRI3	Employee Welfare and Development	3.24	1.44	Agree
CSRI4	Ethical Business Practices	3.18	1.46	Agree
CSRI5	Impact Measurement and Reporting	3.23	1.43	Agree

	Mean summative	**3.21**	**0.03**	Agree
CR	**customers' retention**			
CR1	Satisfaction with Services	3.34	1.28	Agree
CR2	Reasons for Continued Engagement	3.34	1.35	Agree
CR3	Feedback and Improvement	3.33	1.35	Agree
CR4	Perceived Value and Benefits	3.47	1.36	Agree
CR5	Communication and Engagement	3.50	1.31	Agree
	Mean summative	**3.40**	**0.08**	Agree

Fieldwork, 2024

Table 4.2 above provides a comprehensive overview of mean response rates, reflecting the perceived organizational practices related to business management ethics and customer retention in selected money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria, categorized across four domains: Transparency and Accountability (TA), Fair and Responsible Lending Practices (FRLP), Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives (CSRI), and Customers' Retention (CR).

Transparency and Accountability (TA): The responses suggest a positive perception regarding the banks' transparency and accountability practices. Notably, aspects such as transparency in decision-making, financial accountability, stakeholder engagement, conflict of interest policies, and accountability in learning from mistakes received mean ratings ranging from 3.31 to 3.45. These scores imply a general consensus among respondents (Agree) about the banks' efforts to maintain transparent practices, involve stakeholders, and handle conflicts ethically.

Fair and Responsible Lending Practices (FRLP): The mean response rates concerning fair and responsible lending practices also reflect a favorable perspective. Items such as accessibility and inclusivity, non-discriminatory policies, transparency in lending terms, risk assessment and decision-making, and education and support received mean ratings between 3.25 to 3.38. These scores signify an overall agreement (Agree) among respondents regarding the banks' practices related to fair and responsible lending.

Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives (CSRI): Regarding Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, respondents indicated positive sentiments. Elements like community engagement, environmental sustainability, employee welfare and development, ethical business practices, and impact measurement and reporting received mean scores ranging from 3.18 to 3.23. These ratings suggest an agreement (Agree) among respondents about the banks' commitment to CSR initiatives and ethical practices.

Customers' Retention (CR): The mean response rates for customer retention aspects, encompassing satisfaction with services, reasons for continued engagement, feedback and improvement, perceived value and benefits, and communication and engagement, ranged between 3.34 to 3.50. These scores indicate a strong consensus (Agree) among respondents regarding the banks' efforts in ensuring customer satisfaction, engagement, and value delivery.

On the aggregate, the consistent "Agree" responses across all domains signify a favorable perception among respondents regarding the practices implemented by the selected money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria, regarding business management ethics and customer retention strategies. These positive ratings suggest a commitment to ethical standards, customer-centric approaches, and responsible banking practices within these financial institutions.

4.2 Testing of Hypothesis

In testing the hypothesis, variable normality test was carried out to ensure that the Jarque-Bera requirements were met. Thus the following table shows the normality test conducted:

Table 4.3 Summary of Descriptive Analyses for Normality Test

Date: 12/17/23 Time: 20:13				
Sample: 1 233				
	TA	FRLP	CSRI	CR
Mean	3.374249	3.320172	3.205150	3.397425
Median	3.800000	3.400000	3.000000	4.000000
Maximum	5.000000	5.000000	5.000000	5.000000
Minimum	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
Std. Dev.	1.388756	1.411888	1.436341	1.314964
Skewness	-0.407480	-0.326474	-0.185076	-0.436792
Kurtosis	1.905416	1.809187	1.702489	2.020790
Jarque-Bera	18.07958	17.90583	17.67448	16.71776

Probability	0.000119	0.000129	0.000145	0.000234
Sum	786.2000	773.6000	746.8000	791.6000
Sum Sq. Dev.	447.4455	462.4752	478.6338	401.1585
Observations	233	233	233	233

Fieldwork 2024, Eviews 9.0 Statistical Report.

The normality test results provide valuable insights into the distribution characteristics of responses pertaining to business management ethics and customer retentions within selected money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. Analyzing the descriptive statistics reveals that each domain—Transparency and Accountability (TA), Fair and Responsible Lending Practices (FRLP), Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives (CSRI), and Customers' Retention (CR)—demonstrates a relatively similar trend. The mean scores across all categories range from 3.205 to 3.397, indicating a moderate to high level of agreement among respondents regarding these aspects. However, examining the measures of skewness and kurtosis unveils some deviations from a perfectly normal distribution. The skewness values, ranging from -0.185 to -0.437, suggest slight asymmetry or lack of perfect symmetry in the data distribution, although staying relatively close to a normal distribution. Similarly, the kurtosis values, ranging from 1.702 to 2.021, indicate a moderate level of peakedness or tail-heaviness in the distributions.

Likewise, conducting the Jarque-Bera test confirms these deviations from normality, with statistically significant p-values ($p < 0.001$) for all domains. This suggests that the distributions significantly differ from a normal distribution. The observed deviations from normality might imply that the data distribution for these domains may not strictly adhere to a perfectly symmetric or Gaussian distribution pattern. However, despite these deviations, the means and medians are relatively close, indicating that while the distributions deviate slightly from normality, they still maintain a central tendency. Overall, these results highlight that while the data might not perfectly fit a normal distribution, they exhibit characteristics suggesting a tendency towards agreement among respondents on business management ethics and customer retention in the selected banks and the need for regression analysis.

Table 4.4 Summary of Regression Analyses for The Hypotheses

Dependent Variable: CR				
Method: Least Squares				
Date: 12/17/23 Time: 20:17				
Sample: 1 233				
Included observations: 233				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.242136	0.034233	7.073220	0.0000
TA	0.838640	0.078648	10.66321	0.0000
FRLP	0.116230	0.088046	1.320111	0.1881
CSRI	-0.018843	0.049663	-0.379421	0.7047
R-squared	0.979289	Mean dependent var		3.397425
Adjusted R-squared	0.979017	S.D. dependent var		1.314964
S.E. of regression	0.190477	Akaike info criterion		-0.461549
Sum squared resid	8.308489	Schwarz criterion		-0.402304
Log likelihood	57.77045	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-0.437659
F-statistic	3609.266	Durbin-Watson stat		0.198731
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Fieldwork 2024, Eviews 9.0 Statistical Report.

Table 4.4 shows the regression analysis conducted on business management ethics and customer retentions within selected money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria, reveals significant insights. The model exhibits a high goodness of fit, as indicated by the R-squared value of 0.979, suggesting that approximately 97.9% of the variance in customer retention (CR) can be explained by the independent variables included in the model—Transparency and Accountability (TA), Fair and Responsible Lending Practices (FRLP), and Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives (CSRI).

Each coefficient's interpretation provides valuable understandings into their impact on customer retention. Intercept (C): The intercept of 0.242 implies that when all independent variables (TA, FRLP, CSRI) are zero, there's an expected baseline level of customer retention, indicating that other unaccounted factors contribute to retention beyond these variables. TA (Transparency and Accountability): The coefficient of 0.839 suggests that a one-unit increase in the Transparency and Accountability score is associated with an increase of approximately 0.839 units in customer retention, holding other variables constant. This variable significantly and positively influences customer retention. FRLP (Fair and Responsible Lending Practices**)**: The coefficient of 0.116 indicates a positive relationship with customer retention, although it is not statistically significant at the conventional 5% level (p-value = 0.1881). This suggests that changes in fair and responsible lending practices may not strongly impact customer retention in this model. CSRI (Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives**)**: With a coefficient of -0.019 and a high p-value (0.7047), CSRI appears to have no significant impact on customer retention, as its influence is not statistically supported in this model. The high F-statistic (3609.266) and associated p-value (0.0000) signify overall model significance, confirming that at least one of the independent variables significantly explains the variance in the dependent variable. The regression model might need further refinement or exploration to better understand the role of fair lending practices and corporate social responsibility initiatives in influencing customer retention within these banks.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from the regression analysis on Business Management Ethics and customers' retention in selected money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States Nigeria, considering recent research in the field.

Transparency and Accountability: The significant relationship between Transparency and Accountability (TA) and customer retention strongly resonates with contemporary studies. This finding corroborates Siddiqui, Arun and Yazdifar (2023) recent research, emphasizing how transparent and accountable practices enhance customer trust and foster long-term relationships. Furthermore, in today's era of increased information accessibility, customers value banks that demonstrate transparency in decision-making, as highlighted in the study of El Hafyan (2022), supporting the positive impact of transparency on customer loyalty. Meanwhile, exploring the complexities of ethical practices in banking might propose different viewpoints regarding the significance of Transparency and Accountability (TA) in customer retention. For instance, scholars like Kartalis, Velentzas and Broni consider the multifaceted nature of trust-building in banking relationships, suggesting that while transparency is crucial, other factors like reliability and competence could play equally vital roles in customer retention strategies (Kartalis, et al., 2021).

Fair and Responsible Lending Practices: The lack of a significant relationship between Fair and Responsible Lending Practices (FRLP) and customer retention in the analysis echoes recent findings that delve into multifaceted factors influencing customer loyalty in the banking sector. Notably, a study by Samarathunga and NMBPK (2023) indicates that while fair lending practices are crucial, elements such as personalized customer service and digital banking experiences might play more pivotal roles in influencing and retaining customers. This aligns with the findings from the regression analysis, suggesting that the impact of fair lending practices on customer retention might be nuanced and influenced by broader service-related factors. Exploring further, researchers like Van and Redda present studies emphasizing the impact of fair lending policies on customer trust and loyalty in the banking sector (Van Deventer & Redda, 2023). While not directly conflicting with the non-significant relationship found in the analysis, their research might highlight the potential influence of fair lending practices on customer perceptions, offering a different perspective.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives:

The non-significant relationship found between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives and customer retention aligns with recent literature that emphasizes the multifaceted nature of CSR impacts in the banking industry. Recent studies, such as the work of Simmons and Yawson (2022), highlight that while CSR initiatives enhance brand image and perception, their direct effect on customer retention might be less pronounced compared to factors like service quality and innovation. This mirrors the regression findings, suggesting that while CSR contributes to brand trust and perception, its direct impact on customer retention might be less influential in comparison to other service-related aspects within the banking sector.

In a nutshell, recent research supports the findings that Transparency and Accountability significantly influence customer retention, while the impact of Fair and Responsible Lending Practices and CSR Initiatives on customer loyalty within the banking sector might be influenced by a multitude of diverse factors, including service quality, personalized experiences, and digital innovations, signalling the complexity of customer retention dynamics in modern banking.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings from the analysis on customer retention within selected money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria, highlight significant relationships and nuances in factors influencing customer loyalty. The following were the summary findings:

The study focused on business Management Ethics and customers retentions in selected money-deposit bank in Delta and Edo States Nigeria. Three questions were asked which leader to the formulation of three hypotheses which were then tested for significances and major findings indicated that:

(a) Transparency and accountability, there exists a substantial and positive correlation between Transparency and Accountability (TA) practices within banks and customer retention. This finding supports the idea that transparent decision-making processes and accountable practices positively impact customer trust and long-term relationships within the banking sector.

(b) Fair and Responsible Lending Practices: The analysis did not establish a statistically significant relationship between Fair and Responsible Lending Practices (FRLP) and customer retention. This suggests that while fair lending practices are essential, other factors beyond lending might have a more substantial influence on customer retention in these banks.

(c) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives: The study did not find a significant relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives and customer retention. This indicates that while CSR contributes to brand perception and trust, its direct impact on retaining customers in these banks might be less influential compared to other service-related factors.

In summary, the analysis underscores the critical role of transparency and accountability in fostering customer retention within the banking sector. Thus, Fair Lending Practices and CSR Initiatives hold significance, their direct influence on customer loyalty in these banks appears less pronounced, suggesting a need for further exploration into various service-related factors influencing customer retention.

5.2 Conclusions

The analysis underscores the significance of Transparency and Accountability in shaping customer retention within money-deposit banks in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. These factors emerged as critical drivers, indicating that transparent decision-making processes and accountable practices strongly influence customer trust and long-term retention. To bolster customer loyalty, banks should prioritize these practices, fostering an environment of transparency in operations and decision-making while ensuring accountability at every level.

However, while Fair Lending Practices and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives hold importance, the analysis suggests their direct impact on customer retention within these banks might be less pronounced. This highlights the complexity of factors influencing customer loyalty, indicating that beyond lending practices and CSR efforts, banks need to focus on other service-related elements such as personalized interactions, service quality, and digital experiences to effectively enhance customer retention strategies. Achieving comprehensive customer-centric approaches that encompass transparency, fair practices, and diverse service-related factors is crucial for banks aiming to excel in retaining customers and fostering lasting relationships within the competitive banking sector.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

i. Prioritize transparency and accountability should be communicated openly with customers and established systems to ensure responsible practices within the bank.

ii. Focus on Superior Service to improve service quality by addressing customer complaints promptly and investing in user-friendly technology.

iii. Embrace Customer-Centric Strategies to develop plans centered on customer needs, gather feedback, and align all bank efforts to enhance customer satisfaction.

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