Relationship Marketing and Repurchase Intentions of Customers of Fast Food Vendors in Ghana. The Moderating Influence of Perceived Risk

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Abstract

Relationship Marketing (RM) continues to receive greater attention in the contemporary business world. Many research scholars and practitioners widely assume that relationship marketing increases repurchase intentions of customers. However, the present study suggests that the association between relationship marketing and repurchase intention is more complex with the introduction of a moderating variable (perceived risk).The study is to examine the effects of four RM dimensions (trust, empathy, bond, and commitment) on perceived risk and repurchase intentions. The study employed a cross-sectional research design ,cluster sampling technique and structural equations model to analysis the data collected from selected customers of fast food vendors through structured questionnaires. It was found that trust, empathy, bond, and commitment positively and significantly impact on perceived risk and repurchase intention. Thus, RM practices have a significant consequence on perceived risk and repurchase intention.The study suggested that management of fast food vendors must always be sensitive to RM practices to reduce perceived risk of customers by adjusting their services to improve customer experiences and promote lifetime brand loyalty

Keywords: relationship marketing, repurchase intention, perceived risk, and fast-food.

Introduction

The fast-food industry in Ghana, like other countries add to the growth of Gross National Income and provide immense support to the society. The operations of fast-food industrypositively contribute to the supply chain (Allaway, *et al*, 2006; Nimako & Mensah, 2013; Berkowitz, & Davis, 2006) and contribute revenue through taxes (Turley & Milliman, 2000).Relationship marketing concept stipulate that firms need to ensure the satisfaction of their customers and consciously create and maintain mutual beneficial

relationships with customers to ensure repeat purchases and loyalty. Fast food vendors in Ghana must adhere torelationship marketing practices and develop it considerably to increase customer repurchase intention whiles reducing perceived risk.Services that are of no interest to customers must be re -looked at and improve on their relationship with customers to encourage repurchase. One of the determinants of repurchase intentions is relationship marketingpractice (Amoako*et al.*, 2019).Relating cordially with customers influencesre-purchase decisions (Lin &

Lu, 2010) and this should not be retarded by any organisation. Hence, all parties involve at serving customer must get together to influence customer's repurchasing decisions. Many at times, some customers feel as if they are partners of a firm because their needs has been met (Dubihlela & Khosa, 2014). Satisfied customers do not often buy other brands because they experience low perceived risk with the brand they usually buy.T his shows that perceived risk has a relationship with customersrepurchase intentions. Customer repurchasing of a product benefit a firm in many ways including profit (Chari *et al*., 2014). Customer repurchase intentionis important to keep a company growing (Yao et al., 2013).

However, previous studies have contradicting views on relationship marketing and customer repurchases intention. A lot of research scholars claim that relationship marketing has a positive influence on customer repurchase intention (Wang et al., 2016: Tayles et al., 2007). However other researcher'sdisagree that relationship marketing influence customer repurchase intention (Rasa, 2012; Smirnova et al., 2011).The research problem centers on how to examine and get the better of the contradictions of research findings of relationship marketing and customer repurchase intention. In this case, the right marketing relationship practices is needed to improve customer repurchase intention. Hence, the study seeks find out the link between relationship marketing and repurchase intensions using perceived risk as a moderating variable.

Literature has shown that there is a strong correlation between the fast-food industry growth and economic growth (Ali, Wang,& Alvarado, 2019), however, customer's interest in repurchase intentions on fast food vendors is low in Ghana (Sawafteh, 2020). Fast food vendors need attention from academics and industry to strategies to increase repurchase intentions and improve on the knowledge and skills in relationship marketing. It is very essential for marketing researchers to contribute and develop new concepts in the field of marketing psychology. This study strive to add to marketing literature, especially in the area of model expansion. First, the researchers introduced a new variable (perceived risk), which is expected to help improve and appreciation of the intricacies in

relationship marketing and repurchase intentions. The introduction of a new variable also presents a new model for consideration. Low perceived risk among customers stop customers from switching to competitor's products. Second, the study helped to throw more light on the balance theory which has to do with the mid set of customers through psychological marketing studies. Thirdly, the new concept provides the need to create cordial relations with client through the use of bonding, empathy trust, and commitment. These variables in its correct position, reduces perceived risk in the minds of customers.

Theoretical literature review
Relationship marketing is a critical factor in establishing a long-lasting bond with mutual benefits between customers and organisation (Allaway, Gooner, Berkowitz, & Davis, 2006).Many studies have examined relationship marketing among the fast-food industry, (Berkowitz, & Davis, 2006; Anderson and Narus, 1998). This study discussed the relationship marketing practices on perceived risk and repurchase intentions. The dimensions of relationship marketing considered in this study are trust, bond, commitment and empathy.

The concept of relationship marketing
Trust
Mayer et al., (1995)defined trust as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trust or, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party". The trust a customer has in a service provider can lead to repurchase intentions. Hence a positive link between trust and repurchase of products (Churchill, 1999). Trust is the result of security, privacy that prompt a customer's repurchase intentions.

Empathy
Empathy is sharing and understanding someone's behaviour(Ndubisi 2004).he explained that, empathy has do with treating customer the manner at which you will be liked to be treated. At any time we are able to understand the feelings of others empathy is been practised (Clow and Kurtz (2003). Empathy is very needful in solving customer's complaints since it helps sales person to

understand how customers feel and find solution to their problems .Empathy is an additional to trust and confidence of customers and increases their loyalty (Warner, 2009)

Commitment
Commitment refers to as the intentions made towards keeping a relationship with a customer (Abdullah, et.al. 2014). This starts with searching and identifying the wants of customers (Ndubisi, 2007) and meeting this needs to keep the relationship between the customer and the supplier intact. Without commitment, it is very difficult to create a relationship with customers. (White and Yanamandram 2007) .Committed customers find it difficult to transact business with other suppliers. Commitment is a contributing factor to every relationship (Ndubisi, 2007)Commitment can predict purchasing intentions and promotes brand loyalty as well (Rowley, 2005).

Bonding
According to Turner, (1970) bonding originated from psychology and it describes the closeness connection and feelings that result in personal ties. Through bonding, customers get to know their service providers through transactions. But perceived risk and uncertainties and fear reduce or eliminates the interest of relationship and repurchase of products. (Bendapudi and Berry, 1997)

Repurchase intentions
According to Blümelhuber, (2000) repurchase intention is a client's commitment to a specific product or services rendered by an organisation. A repurchase is achieved through managing a relationship a firm has with customers. According to Turley &Milliman (2000) repurchase intention should not be focused only on mere- repeated buying through the use of promotional activities but must create a relationship with their clients to enhance commitments towards their products. Trust, bond empathy and commitment contribute to repurchase intentions. (Hogg,& Penz, 2008)

Perceived Risk: Moderating Effects
Many scholars have explained that there is a substantialconnection between perceived risk and repurchase intentions (Boksberger *et al*.,

2007). Perceived risk started from the 1960s when Bauer (1960) introduced it in marketing. Besides in 1970, Cox's proposed the perceived risk model and how it can be managed by marketing professionals (Stem *et al*., 1977; Taylor, 1974). Since then much explanatory research has been undertaken. There has not been any well-accepted definition however many conceptual approaches have been developed by many scholars such as (Concharet *et al*., 2004; Boksberger *et al*., 2007). Boksberger et al., (2007) defined perceived risk as the insecurity and the adversarial costs related to the purchase of a product. In this view, it can be addressed that perceived risk is a moderator to repurchase intentions of customers.

However, according to the submission of San Martín and Camarero (2009), only a few studies have looked at the moderating role of perceived risk in business environment. Therefore, moderating role of perceived risk linked to repurchase intention in the fast-food industry has not been given full attention. Some studies have analysed the regulating effect of perceived risk on trust and purchase intent or behaviour (Büttnerand Göritz, 2008) on the antecedents of trust (San Martín and Camarero,2009); on the effect of reputation or brand image on the evaluation of a product or a supplier (Gürhan and Batra, 2004or some relationships of the TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) (Feathermanand Fuller, 2002). Ranaweera et al. (2005) point out that very few studies have focused on analysing the possible moderating effects between relationship marketing and repurchase intention. The findings of Ranaweera et al. (2005) suggested that relationship marketing on repurchase intention will be stronger in the case of consumers with a lesser level of perceived risk. Besides, the lower the perceived risk the stronger the trust customers have to repurchasing (Martin and Camarero, 2009).
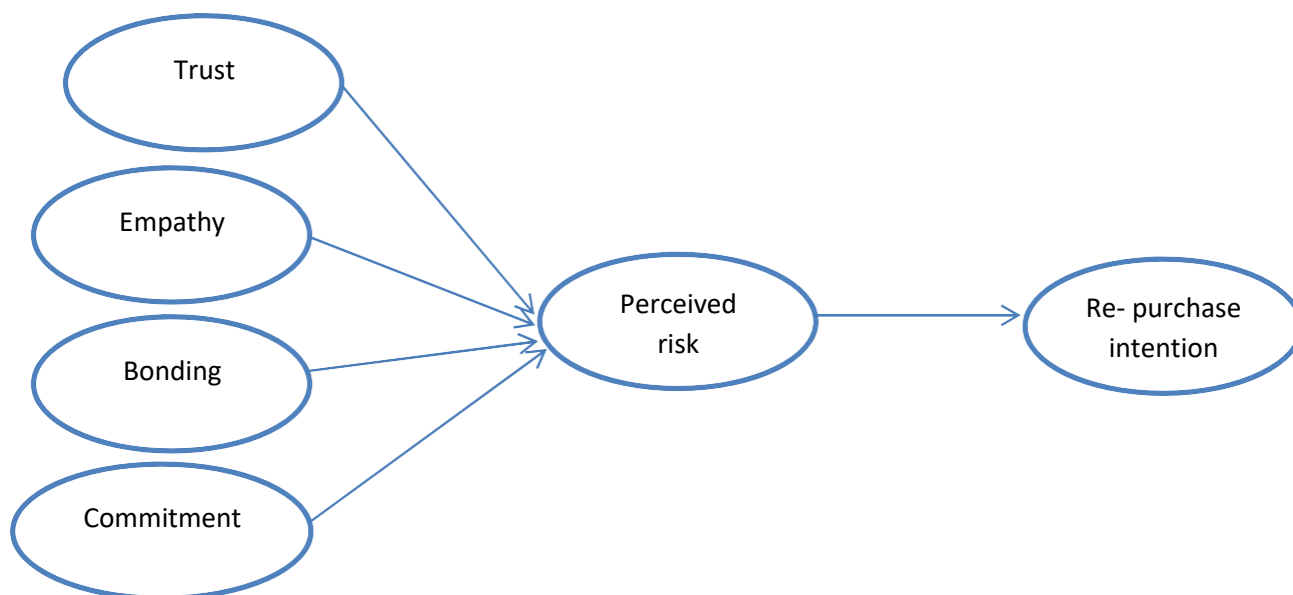
Theoretical framework of the study

Figure 1. Theoretical framework of the study showing the relationship between relationship marketing, perceived risk and re-purchase intentions

Empirical literature review and hypotheses development

Trust and Perceived risk

Perceived risk isdeals with the possible negative effects a customer experience when using a service. It ismade up of uncertainty of an outcome (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003). Theservices of fast food vendor customer can be uncertain; thiscan negatively trigger customers' intent (Lopez-Nicolas & Molina-Castillo, 2008). Besides, Park et al. (2005) revealed a negative association between perceived risk and intent to purchase. Given the lack of customer trust and the perceived risk associated with the serving customers (Yang et al., 2015), one can conclude that perceived risk influences consumer intent to buy from fast food vendor . Risk is also linked with trust (Pavlou et al., 2007). Trust plays a crucial role in fast food vendor industry (Tobbin & Kuwornu, 2011).

Trust deal with customerspositive attitude(Song & Zahedi, 2002), it is likelyto influencethe patronage of fast food vendor services,; equally, lack of trust is likely to adversely affect patronage of fast food vendor services. Customers are rational and want value for their money(Gefen et al. 2003),

According to Chai and Kim (2010) thattrust impactsperceived risk, we also argue that a level of trust of customers is likely to affect perceived riskoffast food vendor. On this basis, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1.Trust has a positive and significant relationship with perceived risk

Empathy and Perceived risk

There is a critical requisite to form a confident empathy towards customers. Empathy is a tool to long term relationship with customers. (Gonzalez et al., 2014; Udayana et al., 2019). Showing empathy whiles providing services affect the perceived risk a customer has towards a product. Empathy deals with readiness to solve the challenges faced by customers whiles serving them. A friendly and sincere attitude is beneficial to customers. Expressing of empathy adds value to the service a firm renders and it alleviate perceived risk tendency customers encounter whiles patronizing fast food vendors. Managers must find a way to handle customers who need much information about their services most particularly first-time customers. Empathy must be express to assist customers to get the right service they need (Dissanayake, 2012:Omneya Mohamed; Moharam & Shawky, 2012:). A satisfied customer will not

switch to competing products since they do not perceive much risk. (Englunda et al., 2020; Porcua et al., 2020).

Therefore, management must spend much time to train employees on how to show empathy to customer since it reduces the perceived risk of customers. This led to:

Hypothesis 2:empathy has a significant positive effect on perceived risk

Commitment and Perceived risk

Fast food vendor operatorsoften keep relationship with customers (Mostert et al., 2017). Such relationship reduces perceived risk and increase commitment level. Commitment does well as both customers and managers of fast food vendors get reciprocally gains. Working on commitment level is a way of maintaining good relations with customers through reduction of perceived risk among customers. Consequently, customers who are committedoften repurchase same brand. Good relationships with customers retained through commitment reduces perceived risk. For customers to reduce their level of perceived risk, managers of fast food vendors must periodical research on the services they provide and commitment level of customers (Debickia et al., 2020). Therefore the researchers formulated the follows hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. Commitment has a connection with perceived risk

Bonding and Perceived risk

The survival of a firm depends on the capability to create bond with customers (Milovanovic et al., 2016). The capability of workers tobond with clients creates repurchase intentions. (Hajli & Lin, 2016). Customer's perceived risk of fast food vendors reduces asneedsand desire of customers are meet (Dubihlela & Khosa, 2014). Satisfied clients always develop bonds with service providers and do not switch to other service providers. Customers of fast food vendors do not easily switch to competing products if they feel satisfied (Poot et al., 2019). Customers create bonds with fast food vendors if get what they want.

Bonding with customers reduces perceived risk and keep a company growing (Yao et al., 2013).Some of the benefit of bonding to the customer is the reduced cost of the transaction (Morgan, 2000). Once a customer develops bond with the service provider through a close personal relationshipitencourages repurchase.

Some researcher's scholars such as (Tayles et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2016) revealed that bondispositively relatedto perceived risk.However,(Rasa, 2012; Smirnova et al., 2011) stated that bond has no effect on perceived risk.We will unfoldthe controversy link of bonding and perceived risk.

Hypothesis4: Bonding has a connection with perceived risk

Relationship Marketing and Perceived risk and repurchase-intentions.

The relationships with customers of fast food vendors are pivotal issues that require attention (Setia et al., 2013). A successful manager holds good relations with customers. A strong relationship is a profitable venture for the firms. A relationship last longer as both customers and managers of a firm benefit from each other. Customers who enjoy some privilege from fast food vendors turn to repurchase and recommend their services to other customer. Such customers will not buy other products even if they are stimulated by competitors.

The growing competition in the fast food industry prompts firms to be more alert, and it inspire them to reduce perceived risk through improving quality in all aspect .(Tawinunt et al., 2015). All firms in the fast food industry are motivated to increase repurchase intentions since each sale is a crucial sign and a measure of prosperity of a firm. A reciprocally good long-term relationship prevents client fromswitching to other products. Satisfied customers are not easily persuaded by competitors. One of the common ways to evaluate success in marketing is repurchase intention. To attain this, marketing managers of firms must always be sensitive to changes (Li et al., 2021). The changing environment must be well-balanced with the creation of relationship marketing practices to tame perceived risk of customers by adjusting the services provided by the company. This should be done through investment of time into relationship marketing practices to reduce perceived risk and make repurchases intentions. Supported on these statements, the fifth hypothesis is stated, as follows:

H5Perceived risk mediates between relationship marketing and repurchase – intentions.

3. Research Methodology

The study seeks to understand the connection among some selected variables of relationship

marketing mediated by perceived risk on repurchase intention. The major purpose is to study the perceived risk on relationship marketing and repurchase intention. To establish this objective, the study adopted a quantitative research approach. Hypotheses were developed from literature reviewed and structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesis. A cross-sectional survey design was used. The population of the study was fast food customers in Ghana. The reason for selecting fast food companies was due to the many issues related to repurchase intentions in the industry in Ghana. The competition in the sector is fiery which often put pressure on marketing practitioners to increase sales. Therefore, the study seeks to examine the major contributor to repurchase intentions in the fast-food industry in Ghana (Boksberger et al., 2007). Hence the study considered relationship marketing and perceived risk as a contributing factor to repurchase intentions.

Measures

. The main data collection instrument used in the study was questionnaire. Various questions were asked in relations to trust, boding, commitment and empathy. Under the trust, the following questions were asked: I expect a favourable outcome from fast-food vendor, I have the assurance that fast food vendor serves me as they promised, I believe in the honesty of fast food vendors and I believe that fast food vendor will fulfil their functions.

With reference to bonding: fast food vendors regularly check on me, fast food vendors trust me as a friend and partner, fast food vendor values their relationship with me and fast food vendors genuinely respect me.

In connection to commitments, the following questions were asked: fast food vendors regularly make adjustments to meet my needs, fast food vendor provides personalised service to meet my needs and fast food vendor is flexible in serving my needs.

The perceived risk has the following questions: The food does not savour as I thought, I pay a realistic price for the food, my friend's think extremely of me when I buy food from fast food vendors and eating food from fast food creates a risk to my health

In relations to repurchase, the following questions were asked: I have the interest to repurchase food, I will repurchase in the future, I will buy again since it is the best and I

will respond to any offer from the fast-food vendors in Ghana.These issues were rarely examined in theexisting literature, and were merely implicitly noted in some studies:(Featherman & Pavlou, 2003; Milovanovic et al., 2016; Hajli & Lin, 2016). The sample size was arrived at after various studies were put into considerations. In a study conducted by Comrey and Lee (1992) sample size of 300 is satisfactory but sample size of 500 is very good. Therefore, the study used 306 sample sizes. Customers of fast food vendors in Ghana were the population of the study.

The study adopted a 7- point Likert scale since it allows respondents to make their view. Therefore 500 questionnaires were distributed among customers of food vendors in Ghana. A total of 306 representing 61.2% returned their questionnaires for data analysis. The study used the cluster sampling technique to give every respondent an equal opportunity of being selected. Also, food industry's customers are spread all over Ghana and will be difficult to cover the whole country hence the reason to using of cluster sampling technique (Ul-Hameed, Mohammad, and Shahar, 2018)

The questionnaire wasadministered face to face to customers who visited the vendor for food. The objectives were clearly explained to the respondents before questionnaires were given to them. Names of respondent were not asked for to encourage return rate and confidentiality.

Data Analysis and Findings

The researchers used various steps to analyse the data collected. The very first and foremost step isgrounded on data screening to avoid human-based mistakes. All data were entered into an excel sheet. The researchers examined the data and addressed all errors in the data. This is showed in Table 2.The result shows that all the data entered were in good condition.

From Table 1, the participants consist of 45.1% males and 54.9% females. Besides, 41% of the respondent'sfalls in the ages of 18 and 30 years old, 51% were between 31 and 50 years old and 8 % were above 51 years. A total of 18% participants were customers of Papaya, 16% were customers of KFC, and 58% of respondent buys from SFC and 8% of the respondents were customers of Mayday all in the Greater Accra Region.

Table 1. Sample's Sociology-demographicinformation

Characteristics		Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	45.1
	female	54.9
Age		
18- 30		41.0
31-50		51.0
51 and above		8.0
Fast food vendor		
Papaye		18.0
KFC		16.0
SFC		58.0
Mayday		8.0

Table 2. Data Screening

	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Standard Deviation	Excess Kurtosis	Skewness	Number of Observations Used
BD1	3.917	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.822	0.822	-1.132	306.000
BD2	4.183	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.695	0.695	-0.576	306.000
BD3	4.233	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.716	0.716	-0.946	306.000
BD4	4.217	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.896	0.896	-1.448	306.000
C1	3.933	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.814	0.814	-1.016	306.000
C2	4.200	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.852	0.852	-1.232	306.000
C3	4.250	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.722	0.722	-0.699	306.000
E1	3.833	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.820	0.820	-0.607	306.000
E2	4.000	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.796	0.796	-1.018	306.000
E3	3.933	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.793	0.793	-0.289	306.000
E4	4.167	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.711	0.711	-0.544	306.000
PR1	4.400	5.000	2.000	5.000	0.712	0.712	-1.343	306.000
PR2	4.117	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.838	0.838	-1.272	306.000
PR3	4.583	5.000	2.000	5.000	0.690	0.690	-1.712	306.000
RP1	4.217	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.838	0.838	-0.784	306.000

RP2	4.217	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.798	0.798	-0.621	306.000
RP3	4.300	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.737	0.737	-1.578	306.000
RP4	4.600	5.000	2.000	5.000	0.712	0.712	-2.071	306.000
TD1	3.733	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.873	0.873	-0.983	306.000
TD2	4.067	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.680	0.680	-0.412	306.000
TD3	4.233	4.000	1.000	5.000	0.782	0.782	-1.516	306.000
TD4	4.250	4.000	2.000	5.000	0.722	0.722	-0.699	306.000

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Bonding	0.840	0.851	0.892	0.675
Commitment	0.849	0.859	0.908	0.767
Empathy	0.831	0.844	0.887	0.663
Perceived risk	0.755	0.759	0.859	0.670
Re-purchased intention	0.818	0.822	0.879	0.646
Trust	0.823	0.843	0.881	0.649

The researchers further carried out a factor analysis to examine the reliability and validity of the variables of the study. Four items were measured: Trust dimensions, Bonding dimension, and empathy dimension and repurchase dimension.Three items were used to measure commitment dimension, perceived risk and four items to measure repurchase.

Previous literature by Hair et al., (2017) and Hair et al., (2014) explained that loading of items above 0.7 are accepted though few researchers have accepted loading above 0.5. Table 3 shows that all the items were above 0.7 and are qualified for the study.

The researchers carried out Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) test and Cronbach alpha. Hair, et al (2017) stated that accepted CR and AVE value should be above 0.7 and 0.5 respectively. The tables 3 and 4 shows that the entire variables attained the accepted threshold.

Table 4 Factor Loading

	Bonding	Commitment	Empathy	Perceived risk	Re-purchased intention	Trust
BD1	0.830					
BD2	0.845					
BD3	0.788					
BD4	0.821					
C1		0.846				
C2		0.877				
C3		0.903				
E1			0.848			
E2			0.789			
E3			0.782			
E4			0.836			
PR1				0.812		
PR2				0.844		
PR3				0.798		
RP1					0.856	
RP2					0.793	
RP3					0.753	
RP4					0.811	
TD1						0.848
TD2						0.750
TD3						0.808

TD4   0.814

Table 5 Cross Loading

	Bonding	Commitment	Empathy	Perceived risk	Re-purchased intention	Trust
BD1	0.830	0.493	0.610	0.623	0.500	0.634
BD2	0.845	0.336	0.502	0.431	0.404	0.464
BD3	0.788	0.426	0.457	0.483	0.441	0.541
BD4	0.821	0.473	0.514	0.528	0.607	0.546
C1	0.443	0.846	0.529	0.491	0.550	0.668
C2	0.483	0.877	0.522	0.614	0.631	0.669
C3	0.613	0.903	0.602	0.605	0.624	0.814
E1	0.472	0.607	0.848	0.664	0.555	0.634
E2	0.443	0.587	0.789	0.518	0.545	0.569
E3	0.541	0.403	0.782	0.513	0.378	0.443
E4	0.470	0.452	0.836	0.667	0.369	0.538
PR1	0.487	0.557	0.580	0.812	0.271	0.556
PR2	0.478	0.532	0.699	0.844	0.397	0.487

PR3	0.601	0.525	0.525	0.798	0.603	0.552
RP1	0.464	0.595	0.491	0.441	0.856	0.534
RP2	0.298	0.502	0.403	0.342	0.793	0.451
RP3	0.605	0.487	0.459	0.458	0.753	0.504
RP4	0.528	0.622	0.451	0.451	0.811	0.578
TD1	0.676	0.630	0.555	0.580	0.514	0.848
TD2	0.395	0.464	0.414	0.349	0.376	0.750
TD3	0.590	0.560	0.563	0.493	0.527	0.808
TD4	0.478	0.903	0.602	0.605	0.624	0.814

The study analysed the data to test the various hypotheses after reliability and validity test had been conducted. Many scholars such as (Albassami et al., 2019 and Naveed, et al., 2019) recommended the use of the partial least square bootstrapping technique for hypotheses testing. In their various studies they used, p-value, t-value and beta values techniques to test the relationship among variables. This process is shown in Figure 2 and table 6 and table 7
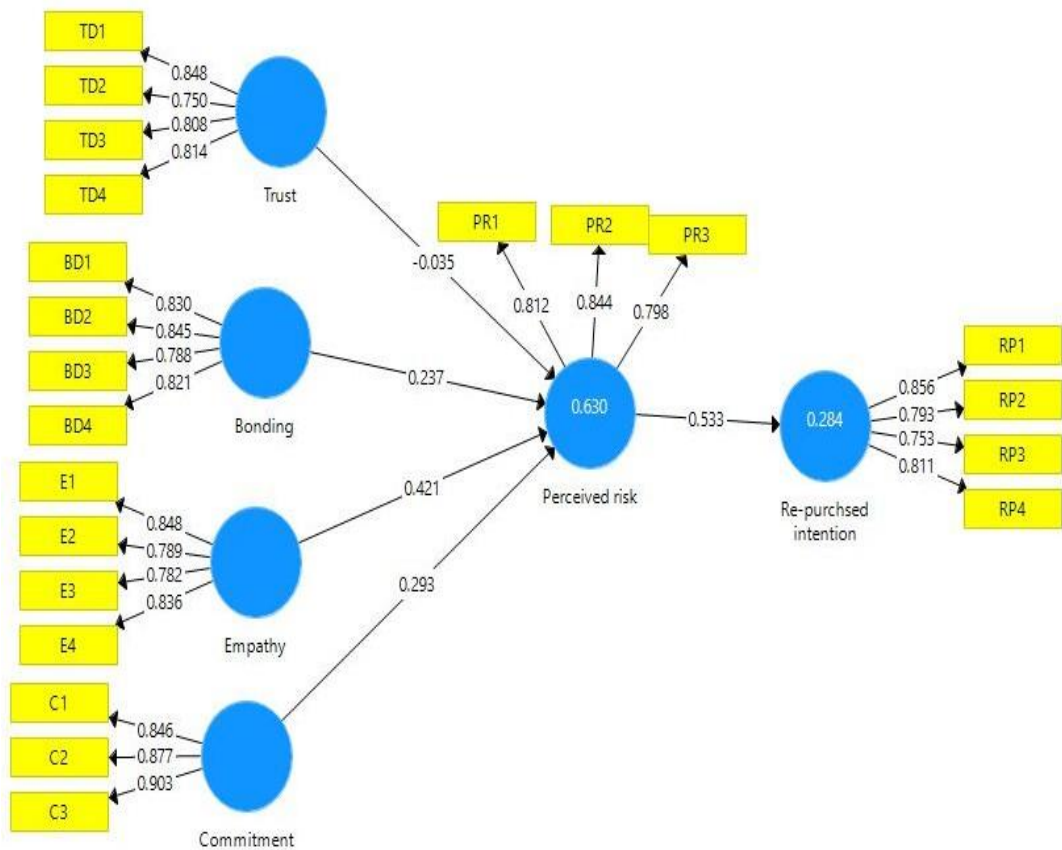
Figure 2. Structural Model

Table 6. Structural Model (Direct Effect Results)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Bonding -> Perceived risk	0.237	0.225	0.126	1.889	0.000
Commitment -> Perceived risk	0.293	0.328	0.163	1.801	0.000
Empathy -> Perceived risk	0.421	0.401	0.121	3.479	0.001
Trust -> Perceived risk	-0.035	-0.021	0.154	0.228	0.000

In the first hypothesis test (H1: TS-PR), the direct effect was evaluated.Giving to figures 2 and table 6, the hypothesis was supported (H1: β = 0.035, SD = 0.154, t = 0.228, p = 0.000). Moreover, to test the subsequent hypothesis (H2: ET-PR), the direct effect was evaluated. In accordant to figures 2 and table 6, this hypothesis was supported (H2: β = 0.421, SD = 0.154, t = 3.479, p = 0.001).

In the third hypothesis (H3: CT − PR), the direct effect was explained, in reference to figures 2 and table 6, the hypothesis was supported (H3: β = 0.293, SD = 0.154, t = 1.801, p = 0.000).

Besides, the fourth hypothesis (H4: BD-PR), the direct effect was evaluated and according to Figures 2 and table 6, the hypothesis was supported (H4: β = 0.237, SD = 0.126, t = 1.889, p = 0.059).

Table 7 Structural Model (indirect Effect Results)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
RM ->PR -> RI	-0.019	-0.010	0.085	0.221	0.000

In the fifth hypothesis (H5: RM × PR− RI), the moderating effect was explained using the product indicators technique to test this hypothesis, which showed that this hypothesis was also supported positively (H3: β = -0.019,

SD = 0.085, *t* = 0.221, *p* = 0.000). Based on the negative coefficient, we could conclude that increased relationship marketing could lead to more of an effect of perceived risk on repurchase intention. As indicated in table 7.

Table 8. Results of research hypotheses

Hypotheses	path coefficient	SD	T statistics	P value	Decision
(H1: TS-PR)	-0.035	0.154	1.889	0.000	supported
(H2: ET-PR)	0.421	0.121	3.479	0.001	supported
(H3: CT − PR)	0.293	0.163	1.801	0.000	supported
(H4: BD-PR)	0.237	0.126	1.889	0.000	supported
(H5: RM × PR− RI)	-0.019	0.085	0.221	0.000	supported

Note: *t* >1.96 at * *p* <0.05; *t* >2.58 at ** *p* <0.01; *t* >3.29 at *** *p* <0.001; two-tailed test.

Discussion

As explained relationship marketing events help firms to appreciate customer needs, reduce perceived risk and increase repurchase intentions. These actions are very essential to encouraging customers to buy from a firm. These activities include, trust, bond, empathy and commitment which facilitate repurchase intentions. Therefore, the study centred on examining relationship marketing practices on moderating effect of perceived risk on repurchase intentions. All the hypotheses were supported.

In summary, the preceding literature does not distinctly scrutinise these issues; however, some of them are poorly discussed.The link between relationship marketing and repurchase intention in Ghana hospitality industry using trust and ccommitmentt as relationship marketing construct is expressly mentioned by Amoako etal.,(2019). Their study indicate that commitment and trust and are very essential issue in repurchase intentions. Choi et al., (2013) explained that food vendors attempt to reduce perceived risk to attract more demand from client. They illustrated that customers are always sensitive to perceived financial risk and always want to buy food that outweighs the money paid.

Kyung., etal (2021) also explained that previewed risk is stronger among customers with low level of awareness of the food joint and further encouraged food vendors to concentrate more on service quality to reduce their risk perception towards street food. Their approach does not in any way talks about relationship marketing, perceived risk and repurchase intentions instead they emphasized on service quality.Relationship marketing and repurchase intentions of customers of fast food vendors in Ghana,the moderating influence of perceived risk is another theoretical contribution of this research. Li (2015) studied customer repurchase intentions from relationship marketing perspective, but did not consider perceived risk especially on fast foods vendors.

Our findings revealed that Trust, Empathy, Commitment and Bond positively affect perceived risk. There for H1, H2, H3, and H4 were supported.McKnight and Chervany (2002) explained that trust is very vital where customers feel that there is a high possibility of uncertainties and risk. Inconsistencies in transaction leads to great uncertainties which makes trust an important variable. (Chiu, Huang, & Yen, 2010). Their study focused on a specific research question, in which the importance of Trust is investigated.

Trust plays a crucial role in triggeringperceived risk, and it is empirically supported by and Liu, et al., (2011) and Zhang et al. (2011) Besides, Wang and Kim (2017) affirm the fact that trust in a fast food vendor industry is a significant facilitator toreducing perceived risk,therefore trust is built through believing in the honesty and reliability of a customer (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993).

The study shows a positive relationship between bond and perceived risk. This is supported by (Tayles et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2016), However some researchers scholars reveal that bondinghas no significant positive effect on perceived risk (Rasa, 2012; Smirnova et al., 2011).Satisfied customers develop bonds with service providers and may not switch to other services providers. According to Poot et al., (2019) clientsdo not buy competing products when they are satisfied. Customers create bonds with fast food vendors if they get the what they want. Bonding with customers reduces perceived risk to keep a company in business (Yao et al., 2013)

According to the study Empathy affect perceived risk. This is supported by existing literature that Empathy assist customers to get the right service they needed (Dissanayake, 2012: Omneya Mohamed, Moharam& Shawky, 2012 ;). Clients who get what they want tend to shied of perceived risk and do not buy competing products since they do not perceive much risk.Porcua et al., 2020 :Englunda et al., 2020;). Evidence shows that empathetic concern is an antecedent to perceived risk (Batson et al.,2007). Batson et al. (2007) explian that the involvement of management in finding solutions to customers problem, make customers feel empathetic concern. The effect of empatheticconcern varies depending on how much risk potential the customer associate with the service offered.

According to Batson et al. (1983) of high perceivedrisk distractscustomers from their feelings of empathetic concern.A commitment relationship reduces perceived risk (Vij & Farooq, 2015:Mostert et al., 2017Fourie & Chimusoro, 2018). This long-term relationship reduces perceived risk and increase commitment level. Commitment does well as both customers and managers get reciprocally beneficial gains

In a nutshell, the contribution of the of the present research in adding to knowledge is mainly on the moderating role of perceived risk and how it affects the repurchase intentionand marketing relationship.The result of the analysis showsthat perceived risk moderates relationshipmarketingand repurchase intentions. The increase in relationship marketing activities increases repurchase intentions and lowers the perceived risk associated with purchase intentions.

Managerial implications of the sstudy

The study contributed to literature since the study examined the link between relationship marketing, perceived risk and repurchase have not been well considered by other scholars. The link between this variable was not clear, therefore the study made the link clearer and added to the literature, very particularly about the fast food industry in Ghana. The results of the study added valuable insight into the management of the fast-food industry. The study guides managers to decrease perceived risk to increase repurchase intentions.

The study demonstrated a positive link between bonding, communication, empathy and trust and perceived risk are driver of repurchase intention among fast food customers implies that managers of the sector must use these variables when implementing relationship marketing strategies. With the current fierce competition, in the industry and intricacy of customer behaviour, management in these industries must be well abreast of the changes in the environment to understand what customers really need. Knowledge in perceived risk must influence the appropriate ways of influencing customer repurchase retention.

Relationship marketing practices is the path that keeps firms in the business, this is important to managers to appreciate and appreciate their customers better, to identify the relationship constructs to adopt and the suitable strategies to encourage re-purchase intentions.Improving on bonding, trust, commitment and empathy using skilful employees will grow the company's customer base using word-of-mouth recommendation and referrals from satisfied clients to patronisein the services of the fast food vendors.

6 Conclusions

The study examined relationship marketing and repurchase in the fast-food industry of

Ghana using perceived risk as a moderating variable. Customers of the fast-food vendor industry of Ghana were the population of the study.The study was carried out using statistical tools to analyse the data collected.

The result shows that that bonding, commitments, trust, and empathy have a positive effect on perceived risk. Perceivedrisk has a positive link with purchase intention. Themediating effect of perceived risk and relationship marketing and repurchase is significant.

Therefore, the fast-food industry must put more effort into relationship marketing practices to enhance the repurchase intentions of customers. The customer's perceived risk must be given much attention as well. Arise in perceived risk will lead to a reduction in trust, bond, commitment and empathy among customers. Repurchase intention will increase when perceived risk decreases. Therefore, managers should put in place strategies to reduce the perceived risk among customers.

7. Limitations and Future Research

The work has some limitations which may serve as a lead for the future direction of research. The study is solely based on fast-food industry of Ghana; a developing country which is totally different from the setup of developed countries. Due to this, the result of the study cannot be generalised to the developed countries. Future research should be carried out in developed countries using the same variable. Besides, the relationship marketing variables did not cover other variables such as social bonding, communication and others.

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