

Pension Service Delivery and Customer Satisfaction of Pension Fund Administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between pension service delivery and customer satisfaction among Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs) in Uyo metropolis. Three dimensions of service delivery, retirement savings account opening, return on investment (ROI), and customer support service, were evaluated against customer satisfaction. A survey research design was employed, targeting active contributors and customers of PFAs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Data were collected from 384 respondents, with the sample size determined using the Topman formula. A 16-item questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale was used, and responses were analyzed using simple linear and multiple regression techniques. Findings revealed significant positive relationships between customer satisfaction and (1) retirement savings account opening, (2) ROI, and (3) customer support service. The study concludes that strengthening service delivery is critical for enhancing contributors' confidence in the pension system. It recommends that PFAs adopt digital platforms for account opening, ensure transparent and regular ROI reporting, and institutionalize customer feedback mechanisms. These measures would not only improve customer satisfaction but also support the broader policy goal of building a sustainable and inclusive pension industry in Nigeria.

Keywords: Pension Service Delivery, Retirement Savings Account, Return On Investment, Customer Support Service, Customer Satisfaction.

Introduction

Recent years have seen increased emphasis on pension fund management in both developed and emerging economies (OECD, 2015). Governments worldwide have prioritized pensions to address privately financed retirement savings for aging populations (Agbaji and Ipigansi, 2018). Numerous countries have implemented contributory pension systems in which employers and employees allocate a percentage of their monthly earnings towards retirement savings accounts that serve as the source of benefits upon retirement (Klumpes and Mason, 2018). In Nigeria, the Pension Reform Act (2004) replaced the pay-as-you-go system with a contributory scheme designed to ensure long-term sustainability of pension obligations. Under this system, Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs) manage individual accounts and provide services such as account establishment, fund investment, benefit disbursement, and customer support.

Given the substantial number of contributors served by PFAs, effective service delivery has become a critical determinant of customer satisfaction. A significant challenge lies in their ability to meet contributors' expectations by delivering high-quality services. Service

delivery refers to the systematic provision of services to customers and the efficient organization of operations to maximize value creation for clients and stakeholders (Dereje, 2017). It involves continuous interaction between providers and customers and is strengthened when standards are applied across business operations and customer interactions (Etuk *et al.*, 2022; Sampson *et al.*, 2022). Effective service delivery therefore has the potential to directly enhance satisfaction among contributors (Madupalli and Poddar, 2014). Customer satisfaction, defined as the outcome of comparing perceived service delivery with expectations (Johnston and Clark, 2018), remains a key indicator of PFA performance.

Despite notable advancements in the Nigerian pension sector, many contributors continue to face challenges such as difficulty accessing account statements, inadequate customer support, and dissatisfaction with investment returns. These challenges influence overall satisfaction and may prompt dissatisfied customers to switch service providers. While studies in developed economies have extensively examined service delivery and satisfaction, fewer empirical studies have explored this relationship within the pension sector of emerging economies. This gap is particularly evident in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, where contributors' experiences remain under-researched. The limited evidence highlights the need for empirical inquiry into how specific service delivery dimensions affect satisfaction in such contexts. Accordingly, this study aims to address the gap by pursuing the following objectives:

- i. to determine the relationship of opening of individual retirement savings account and customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State,
- ii. to ascertain the relationship of fair return on investment to contributors on customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State,
- iii. to examine the relationship of customer support service on customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State,
- iv. investigate the combine relation between opening of individual retirement savings account, fair return on investment to contributors and customer support service on customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Literature Review

Concept of Service Delivery

Services encompass seller efforts to cultivate consumer relationships (Sampson *et al.*, 2022). They are intangible offerings provided by one party to another that may or may not be linked to a tangible product (Voorhess *et al.*, 2021). While Voorhess *et al.* (2021) emphasize the intangible nature of services, Tewodros (2020) views service delivery as a structured and methodical process, where providers must plan and coordinate actions to meet the needs and expectations of clients. These perspectives converge on the idea that effective service delivery requires both technical efficiency and relational engagement.

In the context of pensions, this is especially critical because contributors depend on pension fund administrators not only for financial transactions but also for long-term trust and assurance. When services are poorly structured or inadequately communicated, contributors' confidence declines. Thus, synthesizing across these studies, service delivery in pensions can be seen as both a procedural requirement (ensuring accurate account management) and a relational obligation (ensuring contributors feel supported). Based on this, the study proposes that the quality of service delivery directly influences customer satisfaction with pension fund administrators.

Dimensions of Pension Service Delivery

i. Opening of Individual Retirement Savings Account

According to Pencom (2022), pension fund administrators facilitate the creation of retirement savings accounts (RSAs) for employees, who then receive a unique PIN for lifelong account management. The process requires personal data, employment history, valid identification, and proof of address, ensuring contributors' ownership of their accounts. Furthermore, Pencom (2022) highlights that pension fund administrators are responsible for allocating monthly contributions into RSAs, while employers remit deductions to Pension Fund Custodians alongside employees' details (Nkosi, 2019). This structured account-opening process is not merely administrative, it is foundational to customer trust. If contributors face delays, errors, or lack of transparency in opening their accounts, their satisfaction is compromised. Efficient RSA management therefore reflects a core dimension of service delivery in pensions, ensuring contributors perceive value and security in the system. Based on these insights, the study hypothesizes that the smooth opening and management of individual RSAs positively affects customer satisfaction with pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

ii. Fair Return on Investment

ROI is a widely used measure of investment performance, demonstrating the degree to which investments yield profit or loss (Zamfir *et al.*, 2016). While Zamfir *et al.* (2016) discuss ROI in a general corporate finance context, its meaning in pension administration is deeper: contributors' future financial security depends on it. As Ayegbu *et al.* (2020) argue, pension fund administrators' investment strategies directly shape contributors' welfare in retirement. Poorly managed funds jeopardize not only financial returns but also trust in the pension system. Therefore, ROI in pensions is not only an efficiency indicator but also a trust-building mechanism. A fair return assures contributors that their sacrifices during active employment will yield meaningful retirement benefits. Conversely, low or negative returns can breed dissatisfaction and switching behavior. Accordingly, this study hypothesizes that a fair return on investment has a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction in the pension sector in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

iii. Customer Support Service

Customer support extends across pre-, during-, and post-transaction phases (Crittenden, 2020). It seeks to satisfy customers by resolving their concerns efficiently (Qasim and Asadullah, 2021). Prior studies highlight timeliness, professionalism, problem-solving, effective communication, continuous improvement, and personalization as critical attributes of effective support (Qasim and Asadullah, 2021). Grant (2020) also notes that customer service drives satisfaction, loyalty, and competitive advantage, while poor service results in dissatisfaction, negative word-of-mouth, and reputational damage. Although many of these insights emerge from general business and consumer markets (Goffin and New, 2015; Grant, 2020), they are highly relevant to pensions. Pension contributors often need clarity on complex issues like account balances, retirement eligibility, or investment performance. A responsive and empathetic customer support service reassures contributors and strengthens their loyalty to administrators. Synthesizing these insights, this study hypothesizes that effective customer support service positively influences customer satisfaction with pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Concept of Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction represents an individual's holistic evaluation of service consumption relative to expectations (Khadka and Maharjan, 2017). Oliver (2016) asserts that satisfaction arises when service delivery aligns with or surpasses expectations, while Ibojo (2015) emphasizes its dependence on perception, evaluation, and psychological responses. Studies by Usani *et al.* (2021), Sampson *et al.* (2022), and Etuk *et al.* (2022) reinforce that satisfaction is contingent on how well services meet customer needs and expectations. In pensions, satisfaction is particularly sensitive because it involves not only short-term service interactions but also long-term financial security. If contributors perceive that pension fund administrators provide transparent services, fair investment returns, and reliable support, their satisfaction levels rise. Conversely, dissatisfaction can prompt switching behavior and erode trust in the entire pension scheme. This underscores why customer satisfaction is both a key outcome and a measure of the effectiveness of pension service delivery.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that forms the foundation of this study is the Assimilation–Contrast Theory (ACT), which was formulated within the paradigm of post-exposure product performance, drawing from the work of Sherif and Hovland (1961). The assimilation–contrast approach holds that if service performance falls within a customer's acceptable range, even if it does not fully meet expectations, it will be assimilated and considered adequate. However, when performance deviates significantly from expectations, contrast dominates, leading the customer to perceive the disparity as unsatisfactory. The assimilation hypothesis integrates both assimilation and contrast perspectives, establishing a connection between human pleasure and the disparity

between anticipated and actual performance. Customers are inclined to adjust minor inconsistencies between expectations and actual service performance, but only when such disparities are small and manageable.

In this study, three core dimensions of pension service delivery are emphasized: individual Retirement Savings Account (RSA) opening, fair return on investment, and customer support service. The opening and management of retirement savings accounts (RSAs) form a critical foundation for pension service delivery. The efficiency with which pension fund administrators establish and maintain these accounts directly affects contributors' trust and satisfaction. Recent studies highlight that clarity in documentation, ease of account setup, and transparency in account management remain decisive factors in shaping customer experience within the pension sector (Adegbite and Raji, 2021; PENCOM, 2022). Through the lens of the assimilation contrast theory, contributors who experience smooth RSA registration and transparent account management are likely to assimilate these outcomes as consistent with their expectations, thereby reporting satisfaction. On the other hand, when delays or errors occur during registration, such shortcomings may fall outside the acceptable range of expectations, producing a contrast effect that amplifies dissatisfaction (Etuk et al., 2021).

Another essential dimension is the provision of fair returns on investment for contributors. Pension contributors expect that the funds deducted from their salaries and invested by pension fund administrators yield meaningful and sustainable returns. OECD (2020, 2023) underscores that investment returns not only determine the adequacy of retirement benefits but also strongly influence contributors' satisfaction with the pension system. In Nigeria, the performance of pension investments has been under scrutiny due to inflationary pressures and market volatility, raising questions about the ability of administrators to deliver consistent value to contributors (Ogunbiyi and Olowokere, 2021). From the theory perspective, when the returns on investment align with or slightly exceed contributors' expectations, they are assimilated as satisfactory. However, when the returns fall significantly below expectations, especially in contexts of economic hardship, the contrast effect becomes dominant, magnifying perceptions of poor performance and dissatisfaction with the system.

Customer support service is another determinant of satisfaction within pension administration. Effective customer service ensures that contributors can readily access account statements, resolve complaints, and receive accurate information about their entitlements. Scholars consistently link responsive, empathetic, and professional service delivery with higher satisfaction levels in financial services (Akhigbe and Edogiawerie, 2021; Etuk et al., 2022). In the context of pension administration, this interaction becomes even more crucial, given that contributors depend on timely information to make retirement-related decisions. The assimilation, contrast theory offers an explanation here as well: when customer support is timely and professional, it reinforces pre-existing expectations and enhances perceived satisfaction through assimilation. However, when contributors encounter delays, unprofessional conduct, or unresolved complaints, such experiences may

strongly contrast with their expectations, intensifying feelings of dissatisfaction and distrust in the pension system (Sampson *et al.*, 2022).

Empirical Literature

Obi (2022) examined Nigerian savings, investment, and interest rates. The researcher adopted a secondary source of information. To establish long-term relationships between variables, the study used modern econometric methods of co-integration and error correction. The factors were domestic investment, prime lending, maximum lending, monetary policy, and savings. Results reveal that the interest rate affects Nigerian savings and investment. Tewodros (2020) examined customer satisfaction and service delivery. This survey aimed to evaluate customer satisfaction with Addis Ababa Development and Management Office services. Findings showed that customer satisfaction dropped significantly in the survey, indicating low satisfaction. Daddie and Akani (2020) examined service delivery methodologies and Rivers State online store customer loyalty. They found that punctuality and responsiveness positively impact consumer loyalty, as measured by repeat purchases and word-of-mouth recommendations.

Vengai (2020) investigated banking consumer happiness and service delivery. Specifically, this study examined the relationship between service delivery and customer satisfaction. The research shows that commercial bank customer expectations and service perceptions differ. Also, Kibret and Ermias (2018) carried out a study to examine the relationship between service delivery practices and customer satisfaction within the context of microfinance institutions in Gondar. The main objective of this study is to assess the calibre and level of customer contentment pertaining to service delivery procedures inside the branches of Amhara Credit and Saving Institution (ACSI) located in the city of Gondar. The study revealed that a significant proportion of customers express dissatisfaction with the service delivery procedure at ACSI.

Essien (2016) conducted a study to examine the correlation between the provision of effective customer service and the retention of customers. The principal objective of this study was to examine the correlation between the effectiveness of customer service and customer retention, focusing specifically on MTN Nigeria Plc. The findings establish a mathematically significant correlation between the ability to retain customers and the promptness of customer service. Rahhal (2015) examined how service delivery dimensions affect customer satisfaction. An empirical study in Syria assessed mobile phone service quality. The survey found reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles, convenience, complaint management, and network quality.

Adewoye (2013) conducted a study with the aim of examining the impact of mobile banking on service delivery in the context of Nigerian commercial banks. The primary aim of this research was to examine the impact of mobile banking on the provision of services to the commercial banking industry in Nigeria. The results suggest that the adoption of mobile banking has improved the provision of services by banks. In the same vein, Qasim and

Asadullah (2021) investigated the impact of customer support services on the enhancement of relationships within Sweden. The results of the study indicate that inadequate customer support services have a detrimental impact on client retention and can undermine the relationship between service providers and their consumers. Additionally, it generates adverse word-of-mouth, thereby disseminating an unfavourable perception of the company to others.

Based on the review of literature, a conceptual framework is proposed to show the relative influence of pension service delivery (independent variable) and customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators (dependent variable) in Uyo metropolis Akwa Ibom State.

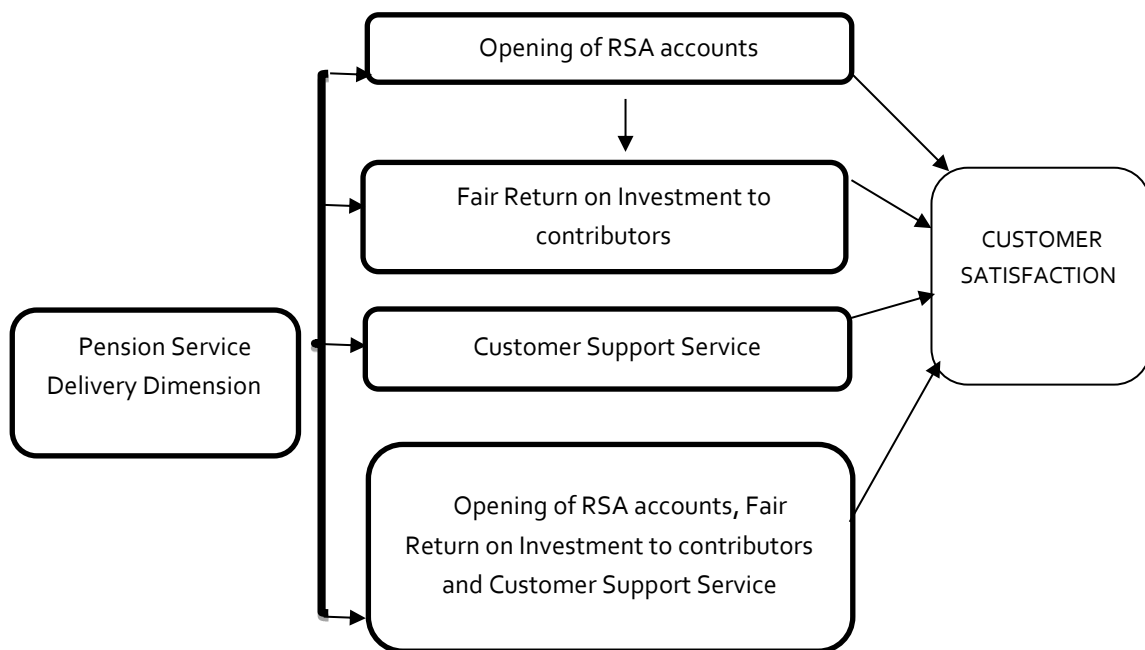


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Pension Service Delivery and Customer Satisfaction
 Source: The Researcher's Construct (2023).

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study in null form:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship of opening of individual Retirement Savings Account and customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship of fair return on investment to contributors on customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship of customer support service and customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

H₀₄: Opening of individual retirement savings account, fair return on investment to contributors and customer support service does not have any collective significant

relationship on customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Methodology

Research design: A survey research design was adopted.

Study area: The study focused on Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State's capital. The focus of this research was on the customers or contributors of pension fund administrators residing in Uyo metropolis.

Population of the study: The study population consisted of contributors to pension fund administrators (PFAs) residing in Uyo metropolis. Although PFAs maintain records of their registered contributors, disaggregated figures for Uyo were not accessible to the researchers. In the absence of an exact sampling frame, we treated the study's population as indeterminate. Therefore, from a statistical perspective, the study's population was considered infinite.

Sample size determination: The Topman formula was applied to determine the sample size for the unknown population. The researchers conducted a pilot study on 50 selected pension fund administrators' customers to determine an appropriate sample size for the study. The strongly agree and agree responses to the questions allowed the researcher to generate values for 'P' (positive). On the other hand, the strongly disagree and disagree responses allowed the researcher to generate values for 'Q' (negative) for the Top-man formula. We applied the formula in Equation 3.1 to determine the sample size.

$$n = \frac{z^2(p \times q)}{e^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size (unknown)

z = standard variant at a given degree of confidence level being 1.96

p = success probability (25/50) = 0.5

q = failure probability (25/50) = 0.5

e = margin of error (0.05)

Thus: $n = \frac{1.96^2 (0.5 \times 0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 (0.25)}{0.0025} = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384.16$$

Sources of Data and Instrumentation: The main research instrument used for this study was a research questionnaire titled "Pension service delivery and customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria". The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A consists of demographic data from respondents, with the goal of identifying the customer's characteristics. Section B was developed through a systematic scale adaptation and validation process. The questionnaire items were drawn

from previously validated scales identified in the literature. Specifically, items for opening individual retirement savings accounts were adapted from Nkosi (2019); items for fair return on investment for contributors were adapted from Onyia *et al.* (2024); and items for customer support service were adapted from Etuk *et al.* (2022). The specific variables and measurement parameters, as well as their empirical sources, are summarised in Table 1.

The items were slightly reworded to reflect the context of pension fund administration in Nigeria. For example, wording such as “financial institution” was replaced with “pension fund administrator” to ensure contextual relevance. To establish content validity, the initial pool of 16 items was subjected to review by two academic experts in marketing and two practitioners in pension administration. These experts evaluated the items for clarity, relevance, and appropriateness. Based on their recommendations, minor modifications were made to simplify the language and remove redundancies. A pilot test was then conducted with 30 contributors who were not included in the main study. Feedback from the pilot led to further refinement, particularly in restructuring negatively worded statements and ensuring that all items aligned with the 5-point Likert scale: strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, strongly disagreed, and disagreed, with values of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively.

Following the pilot study, a reliability test using Cronbach’s alpha was performed, yielding coefficients ranging from 0.642 to 0.726 (see Table 2), all of which exceeded the 0.5 threshold recommended for exploratory studies. This indicated that the items possessed internal consistency. Although this study primarily assessed reliability using Cronbach’s alpha, the adaptation of items from validated instruments, expert reviews, and pilot testing provided sufficient evidence of content and face validity. As with most survey studies, the data relied on self-reported responses using Likert scales. This approach may be subject to common method bias and social desirability effects, which could inflate observed associations between pension service delivery and satisfaction. To mitigate this, items were adapted from validated scales, wording was simplified for clarity, and anonymity was assured to reduce response bias. Nevertheless, this remains a limitation of the study.

Table 1: Variables, Parameters and Empirical Sources

S/N	Variables	Parameters	Empirical Sources
1	Opening of individual retirement savings	The process of opening my retirement savings account. Terms and conditions that apply in opening retirement saving account. Account opening instructions are clear and easy. Role played by staff of the pension fund administrators during account opening.	Nkosi (2019)
2	Fair return on investment to contributors	Timely receipt of Return on Investment was a determining factor to my choice of this pension fund administrator. I am satisfied with the value received from my pension fund administrators as interest.	Onyia <i>et al.</i> (2024).

		I get notification and regular updates on the gains and loss of my investment from my pension fund administrators. I will recommend my pension fund to others based on my experience and overall satisfaction.	
3	Customer support service	My pension fund administrators clarity of communication during our interaction is satisfying. The customer service representative of my pension fund administrators has a good understanding of my issue. The account representatives from my pension fund administrators are helpful and responsive to questions concerning my account. My concerns or issues were resolved in a timely manner.	Etuk <i>et al.</i> (2022)

Source: Researchers' Construction via Literature Review

Reliability of the Instrument: The internal consistency of the research items was evaluated using the Cronbach's alpha statistical approach. Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding 0.5 are seen as indicative of reliability. The coefficients of the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability measure of Variables

S/No.	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha Scale
1	Customer Support Service	4	0.668
2	Fair return on Investment to contributors	4	0.642
3	Opening of Account	4	0.726
4	Satisfaction	4	0.680
	Total	16	0.679

Source: The Researcher's Compilation (2023).

The Cronbach Alpha coefficients were all greater than 0.5, hence all items on the instrument were considered reliable measures of the variables adopted in this study.

Sampling Techniques: Respondents were selected from six major institutions in Uyo where large numbers of PFA contributors were accessible (see Table 3). While the intention was to provide equal participation opportunities, the sampling process was constrained by lack of access to a full contributor list. Consequently, the study employed a combination of convenience sampling approach. This approach allowed practical access to a cross-section of contributors, though it introduces potential sampling bias, which is acknowledged as a limitation.

Table 3: Questionnaire Administration to Contributors at selected Locations within Uyo Metropolis.

S/No.	Location	Quantity Allocated	Percentage of questionnaire allocated
i.	University of Uyo	64	16.6
ii.	University of Uyo Teaching Hospital	64	16.6
iii.	Nigeria Immigration Service	44	11.6
iv.	National Youth Service Corp	44	11.6
v.	Police HQ.	84	21.8
vi.	Nigeria Security Civil Defence Corp	84	21.8
	Grand Total	384	100

Source: The Researcher's Computation (2023).

Method of Data Analysis Techniques: The personal data of respondents was analysed using simple frequency percentages and a frequency distribution table. To determine the extent of the relationship that exists between pension service delivery (X_1 , X_2 , X_3 , and X_4) and customer satisfaction (Y), simple linear regression and multiple regression techniques were used to test the four formulated hypotheses. All hypotheses were evaluated at a significance level of 0.05.

Data Analysis and Findings

From 384 survey questionnaires submitted to Uyo pension fund administrator's customers, 357 were returned as usable and, hence, were used for analysis. Their replies were analysed using SPSS 25.0. Table 4 summarises demographic analysis to identify survey respondents.

Table 4: Demographic Data of the Respondents

Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
<u>Age</u>		
25-29 years	33	9.2
30-39 years	86	24.1
40-49 years	82	23.0
50 years and above	156	43.7
Total	357	100.0
<u>Gender of respondent</u>		
Male	156	43.7
Female	201	56.3
Total	357	100.0
<u>Education of Respondents</u>		
FSLC	63	17.6
O'LEVEL	89	24.9
BSc/HND Or Equivalent	65	18.2

Post Graduate	74	20.7
Others	66	18.5
Total	357	100.0
<u>Duration as Pension Fund</u>		
<u>Customer</u>		
1-5years	148	41.5
6-10years	98	27.5
11-15years	86	24.1
16 years above	25	7.0
Total	357	100.0
<u>Employment sector</u>		
Government Employee	186	52.1
Private Sector employee	69	19.3
Self-Employed	102	28.6
Total	357	100.0

Source: SPSS Output (2023).

The data shows that 156 (43.7%) respondents were 50 or older. With 86 (24.1%) responders between 30-39 years old, 82 (23.2%) between 40-49 years old, and the fewest between 25-29 years old, the results showed 156 (43.7%) male and 201 (56.3%) female respondents. The survey found that 63 (17.6%) respondents were first-school leaving certificate holders, 89 (24.9%) were O' Level holders, and 65 (18.2%) were bachelor's degree holders. However, 74 (20.7%) respondents had postgraduate degrees, and 66 (18.5%) had other degrees not indicated on the survey questionnaire. 186 (52.1%) respondents worked for the federal, state, or municipal government when questioned about employment or retirement. 69 (19.3%) respondents were private sector workers, and 102 (28.6%) were pension fund administrators' self-employed contributions. The majority of 148 respondents (41.5%) had been pension fund administrators' customers for 1 to 5 years, 98 (27.5%) for 6 to 10 years, 86 (24.1%) for 11 to 15 years, and 25 (7%) for 16 years or more. This suggests that a balanced number of men and women contributed to pensions in the survey. The statistics also showed that most contributors were over 50, the retirement age. Based on their schooling, the respondents seemed to understand the questions. Most contributors and beneficiaries were public sector workers, but there were also organised private sector workers and self-employed workers, indicating that the pension fund administrators offered services to all employment sectors.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship of opening of individual Retirement Savings Account on customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 5: Model Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis showing the relationship of opening of individual retirement savings account on customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators

	B ₀	SE	B ₁	t-value	Significant (2 tailed)
Constant	4.948	0.397		12.451	0.000
Independent Variable: Account Opening	0.560	0.034	0.663	16.667	0.000
Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction					
R =	0.663 ^a				
R ² =	0.439				
Adjusted R-Square =	0.437				
Std. Error of estimate =	1.77622				
F-statistics =	277.793				
Probability (Significant p-value) =	0.000 ^b				

**significantly related at 5% ($p < 0.05$). B₁ = unstandardized beta, B₂ = standardized beta, SE = standard error.*

Source: The Researcher's Compilation (2023).

The regression results (Table 5) show that retirement account opening explained 44% of the variance in customer satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.439$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.437$). The model indicates a moderate positive relationship between account opening and customer satisfaction ($R = 0.663$). The ANOVA result confirmed that the model was significant ($F = 277.793$, $p < 0.001$). The regression coefficient for account opening ($\beta = 0.560$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that each unit improvement in account opening is associated with a 0.560 increase in customer satisfaction. The regression equation is therefore: $C_s = 4.948 + 0.560$ (Account Opening). Since the p-value was below 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that opening individual retirement savings accounts significantly increases pension fund administrators' customer satisfaction in Uyo metropolis. While the explanatory power of the model is moderate, caution is required in interpreting the results. The relatively high F-statistic and strong beta may suggest model fit is sensitive to the sample data. Although the risk of overfitting appears minimal given the sample size and simplicity of the model, it remains a limitation of regression analysis based on self-reported survey responses. Future research should validate the model using additional data or alternative estimation techniques to ensure generalizability.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship of fair return on investment to contributors on customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 6: Model Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis showing the relationship of fair return on investment to contributors on customer satisfaction

	B ₀	SE	B ₁	t-value	Significant (2 tailed)
Constant	4.415	0.366		12.075	0.000
Independent Variable: Fair Return on Investment to Contributors	0.614	0.031	0.721	19.619	0.000
Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction					
R =	0.721 ^a				
R ² =	0.520				
Adjusted R-Square =	0.519				
Std. Error of estimate =	1.64261				
F-statistics =	384.917				
Probability (Significant p-value) =	0.000 ^b				

**significantly related at 5% ($p < 0.05$). B₁ = unstandardized beta, B₂ = standardized beta, SE = standard error.*

Source: The Researcher's Compilation (2023).

The regression results (Table 6) show that fair return on investment explained 52% of the variance in customer satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.520$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.519$). The model indicates a strong positive relationship between fair return on investment and customer satisfaction ($R = 0.721$). The ANOVA result confirmed that the model was significant ($F = 384.917$, $p < 0.001$). The regression coefficient for fair return on investment ($\beta = 0.614$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that each unit increase in fair return on investment is associated with a 0.614 increase in customer satisfaction. The regression equation is therefore: $Cs = 4.415 + 0.614$ (Fair Return on Investment). Since the p-value was below 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that fair return on investment significantly increases pension fund administrators' customer satisfaction in Uyo metropolis. Although the explanatory power of the model is relatively high (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.519$), this raises the possibility of model sensitivity to the sample data. While the strong result supports the theoretical link between investment returns and satisfaction, the potential for overfitting remains a limitation in regression studies based on survey data. Further validation using different samples or modeling techniques would strengthen confidence in the generalizability of these findings.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship of customer support service on customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 7: Model Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis showing the relationship of Customer Support Service on Customer Satisfaction

	B ₀	SE	B ₁	t-value	Significant (2 tailed)
Constant	1.585	0.407		3.894	0.000
Independent Variable: Customer Support Service	0.842	0.034	0.793	24.510	0.000
Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction					
R =	0.793 ^a				
R ² =	0.629				
Adjusted R-Square =	0.628				
Std. Error of estimate =	1.44530				
F-statistics =	600.734				
Probability (Significant p-value) =	0.000 ^b				

**significantly related at 5% ($p < 0.05$). B₁ = unstandardized beta, B₂ = standardized beta, SE = standard error.*

Source: The Researcher's Compilation (2023).

The regression results (Table 7) show that customer support service explained 63% of the variance in customer satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.629$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.628$). The model indicates a strong positive relationship between customer support service and customer satisfaction ($R = 0.793$). The ANOVA result confirmed that the model was significant ($F = 600.734$, $p < 0.001$). The regression coefficient for customer support service ($\beta = 0.842$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that each unit improvement in customer support service is associated with a 0.842 increase in customer satisfaction. The regression equation is therefore: $Cs = 1.585 + 0.842$ (Customer Support Service). Since the p-value was below 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that customer support service significantly improves pension fund administrators' customer satisfaction in Uyo metropolis. The explanatory power of this model is relatively strong (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.628$), which suggests customer support service is a key driver of satisfaction. However, the high R^2 and large beta value may also point to sensitivity of the model to the data used. As with other regression-based findings, there is a risk of overfitting when results are drawn from a single survey dataset. Replication across larger or more diverse samples would be valuable in confirming the stability and generalizability of this relationship.

Hypothesis Four

H₀₄: Opening of individual retirement savings account, fair return on investment to contributors and customer support service does not have any collective significant relationship on customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 8: Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for the combined relationship of Opening of individual Retirement Savings Account, fair return on investment to contributors and customer support service on customer satisfaction

	B ₁	SE	B ₂	t-value	Significant (2 tailed)
Constant	1.361	0.393		3.466	0.001
Opening of Account	0.590	0.053	0.555	11.099	0.000
Fair return on Investment and Customer support service	0.141	0.049	0.165	2.876	0.004
	0.136	0.041	0.161	3.298	0.001
Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction					
R =	0.816				
R ² =	0.666				
Adjusted R-Square =	0.663				
Std. Error of estimate =	1.37425				
F-statistics =	234.702				
Probability (Significant p-value) =	0.000 ^b				

*significantly related at 5% ($p < 0.05$). B₁= unstandardized beta, B₂= standardized beta, SE= standard error.

Source: The Researcher's Compilation (2023).

The multiple regression results (Table 8) show that the three predictors—account opening, fair return on investment, and customer support service—jointly explained 67% of the variance in customer satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.666$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.663$). This indicates that the model had strong explanatory power ($R = 0.816$). The ANOVA confirmed that the model was significant ($F = 234.702$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficients revealed that all three variables had significant positive effects on customer satisfaction: account opening ($\beta = 0.590$, $p < 0.001$), fair return on investment ($\beta = 0.141$, $p = 0.004$), and customer support service ($\beta = 0.136$, $p = 0.001$). This suggests that improvements in any of these service delivery dimensions increase customer satisfaction, holding other factors constant. The resulting regression equation is: $Cs = 1.361 + 0.590(\text{Account Opening}) + 0.141(\text{Fair Return on Investment}) + 0.136(\text{Customer Support Service})$. Since all predictors were significant at $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that pension service delivery dimensions collectively and positively affect customer satisfaction in Uyo metropolis. The model's relatively high explanatory power (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.663$) underscores the importance of these service delivery factors. However, the strong fit also raises the possibility of overfitting, as multiple predictors were entered simultaneously. While the results are consistent with theoretical expectations, caution is advised in generalizing beyond the study sample. Future research

should test the model using larger or more diverse datasets, or apply alternative estimation techniques, to validate its stability and reduce the risk of sample-specific bias.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between pension service delivery and its dimensions (opening of individual retirement savings accounts, fair return on investment to contributors, and customer support service) and customer satisfaction among pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The study tested each formulated hypothesis to explore the relationship between the variables.

The first hypothesis test showed that opening an individual retirement savings account has a significant positive relationship with the customer satisfaction of pension fund administrators in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, with a regression coefficient of $R^2 = 0.439$ and a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. This means that the independent variable, opening an individual retirement savings account, explained about 44% of the variation in pension fund administrators' customer satisfaction. This implies that customers expect the account opening process to be less cumbersome, with favourable terms and conditions, as this first phase of the customer's dealings with the service provider directly shapes satisfaction. This finding corroborates Adewoye (2013), who asserted that transactional convenience, time saved, quick transaction alerts, and saving service costs improve customer relationships and satisfaction. It also aligns with Kibret and Ermias (2018), who recommended that credit and savings institutions must understand customers' preferences to survive in a competitive environment. However, this result also raises questions about how far pension fund administrators in Nigeria align with the provisions of the Pension Reform Act (2014), which emphasizes inclusivity and ease of registration. Instances where contributors report bureaucratic delays in enrollment suggest a potential gap between policy intent and customer experience, an area that deserves further scrutiny.

The second hypothesis showed that fair return on investment to contributors has a significant effect on customer satisfaction in Uyo. The regression coefficient was 0.520, and the p-value was $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that fair return on investment accounted for 52% of the variation in customer satisfaction. This suggests that customers anticipate timely notifications about their account status, are content with the interest they receive, and value regular updates on investment performance. These factors not only influenced satisfaction but also determined whether customers would retain the services of the pension fund administrators. This finding is in tandem with Obi (2022), who found a significant relationship between interest rates and investment, concluding that offering attractive returns is crucial for customer retention. Beyond confirming prior evidence, the finding also reflects the broader Nigerian context where inflationary pressures and fluctuating economic policies directly affect contributors' perceptions of "fairness" in returns. For many contributors, even when returns are technically compliant with regulatory benchmarks, they may still feel inadequate relative to cost-of-living realities—indicating a subtle tension between financial compliance and customer-perceived value.

The third hypothesis revealed that customer support service significantly influenced satisfaction, with a regression coefficient of $R^2 = 0.629$ and a p-value of $0.000 \leq 0.05$. This implies that effective and clear communication, prompt resolution of complaints, and courteous staff behaviour were major determinants of customer satisfaction and retention. Esteemed pension fund administrators were those who trained staff to be helpful, attentive, and solution-oriented. This finding is in tandem with Essien (2016), who showed that effective communication strongly influences customer retention, concluding that excellent customer service is indispensable in today's market. However, some respondents reported occasional delays and unresponsiveness, suggesting that while customer support is generally valued, gaps in execution can quickly undermine satisfaction. This partly contradicts the uniformly positive associations reported in previous studies and highlights the risk of overgeneralization when discussing service quality in the Nigerian pension sector.

Hypothesis Four results indicated that retirement account opening, fair ROI, and customer support collectively and significantly influenced satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.666$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). This means that the three service delivery dimensions together explained 67% of the variation in customer satisfaction. This suggests that customers' expectations of multiple aspects of service delivery jointly shape satisfaction and advocacy behaviours such as positive recommendations. In other words, ensuring that customers experience efficient account opening, fair returns, and responsive support can build trust and loyalty. This corroborates Kudakwashe (2022), who found that service delivery dimensions were main influencers of satisfaction in the financial industry, and Tewodros (2020), who showed that poor service quality leads to low satisfaction levels. Nonetheless, the finding also underlines the need to contextualize service quality within Nigerian pension regulation. The National Pension Commission (PenCom) has issued service delivery guidelines, but compliance and enforcement remain uneven across administrators, suggesting that the collective impact of service dimensions may be weaker in practice than the statistical results suggest.

Taken together, these findings largely support existing evidence that service quality strongly drives satisfaction. However, unlike some prior studies that report uniform positive associations, this research revealed subtle contradictions, particularly in contributors' dissatisfaction with the adequacy of returns despite technical compliance, and frustrations with occasional lapses in customer support. These nuances indicate that while assimilation-contrast theory explains much of the observed pattern (customers assimilating positive performance when it meets expectations and contrasting sharply when it falls short), the Nigerian context adds an extra layer: regulatory promises and economic conditions set benchmarks against which contributors judge fairness and service quality. Thus, theory should be extended to consider institutional and policy contexts that shape customer expectations beyond individual service encounters.

Conclusion

This study examined the opening of individual retirement savings accounts, fair return on investment to contributors, and customer support service as dimensions of pension service delivery, with findings highlighting customer support service as the strongest driver of customer satisfaction. Effective communication, timely responses, and transparent account management emerged as key expectations of contributors, shaping how satisfied they are with pension fund administrators. The study contributes to pension service delivery research by extending existing knowledge into the Nigerian pension context, showing how service delivery indicators specific to pensions, rather than banking or microfinance alone, influence satisfaction, and reinforcing assimilation-contrast theory by illustrating how service outcomes are judged against customer expectations. For managers, the results provide actionable insights for improving customer experience through simplified account opening procedures, competitive and transparent returns, and well-trained staff capable of handling client issues promptly. At the policy level, the findings underscore the need for regulators such as the National Pension Commission (PenCom) to strengthen customer service standards, enhance disclosure on returns, and enforce responsiveness to complaints as part of compliance requirements. Overall, the study not only confirms that pension service delivery significantly affects satisfaction but also highlights practical, managerial, and policy pathways for improving pension administration and sustaining public trust in the contributory pension scheme.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion and business implications of this research, the following recommendations were made:

- i. To enhance customer satisfaction, pension fund administrators should adopt digital platforms and mobile applications to simplify and speed up the retirement savings account opening process. Transparent communication through regular account updates and responsive customer assistance, such as live chat or dedicated helplines, will further strengthen customer trust and satisfaction.
- ii. Pension fund administrators should sustain fair returns on contributors' funds by providing quarterly performance reports, publishing clear explanations of investment outcomes, and ensuring contributors are promptly notified of changes in portfolio performance. This will enhance transparency and reduce uncertainty among customers.
- iii. Pension fund administrators must continually evaluate and adapt service delivery to technological and demand shifts by integrating automated customer feedback systems, leveraging data analytics to anticipate service needs, and providing staff with ongoing training to match evolving customer expectations.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Some contexts, scopes, and methodologies limited this study. Future research could expand the unit of analysis to include active contributors from federal ministries, departments, and agencies not covered here, as this would provide a more comprehensive picture of pension service delivery. Since this study relied on primary data collected from contributors in Uyo, its findings are not universally applicable, and subsequent studies should consider larger and more diverse samples across multiple states to improve generalizability. Researchers may also adopt the same variables with different statistical tools to investigate outcomes such as customer retention, satisfaction, and loyalty to pension fund administrators or other financial institutions. A qualitative approach could further enrich understanding by capturing contributors' lived experiences and adding more depth to the literature. Additionally, future research may conduct confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to strengthen construct validity, while comparative studies across different pension fund administrators or cross-country analyses would provide useful insights into how regulatory frameworks and cultural contexts influence customer satisfaction in the pension industry.

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