EXTERIOR DISPLAY AND AFFECTIVE EVALUATION OF HYPERMARKETS IN THE SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at ascertaining the relationship between Exterior Display and affective evaluation. The geographical scope of the study is South-South Nigeria, with customers as unit of analysis. The population of this study comprised of all customers from four (4) hypermarkets in South-South states of Nigeria, which are: SPAR (Port Harcourt), SPAR (Calabar), Shoprite (Asaba) and Next Cash and Carry (Port Harcourt). Purposive sampling technique was used to select three hundred fifty two (352) respondents from the population of the study. This was achieved using Krejcie and Morgan's sample size determination table (1970). Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC) was used to analyze the multivariate statistics. The concluded that there is significant relationship between exterior display and affective evaluation. Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made: Hypermarket operators in south-south Nigeria should improve their business environment with innovative facilities. So as to influence customers' perception. Operators of hypermarkets should ensure proper exterior displays such as landscaping, window displays, store entrance and aesthetic design of the environment such that it will be appealing to the customers that will enhance patronage by ways of positive perception.

Keywords: Exterior, Display, Affective Evaluation, Customer Response.

INTRODUCTION

The development of retailing with reference to hypermarkets in developed countries such as Australia, Europe and America evolved from traditional markets and fairs from the 1800s (McCann, 2002; Webber, *et al.,* 2003). In the 1870s, retailers in these developed nations were affected strongly by the appearance of department stores, whereby retailers began to manage their stock into departments. This led to the development of multi-storey buildings and it became the typical trend for store-based retailers until the beginning of the 19th century. In modern retailing, the number of shopping centers and hypermarkets has grown and has been paying attention to the perception of customers on retail store ambience.

Exterior displays represent whatever a customer sees outside the interior. This could be a fenced parking space or garage, gardens, architectural designs, armed security, cleanliness of the store environment, landscaping, entry and window display, etc. These attributes give potential customers first information about the store. Some scholars explain exterior display interns of storefront and window display only (Dhove, 2010). A number of factors affect customers level of perception of a retail store. Feng, Chuan, *et al.,* (2008) observed that exterior displays account for the highest level of satisfaction among all other ambience factors. These factors include among others the store appearance, characteristics of the building, store front, entrance, window display, the surrounding area, and parking space (Berman &' Evans, 2005).

Scholars have shown that one important way to develop physical or store-based retailing is to make full use of the ambience innovations such as exterior, interior, store layout and social factors that have a strong influence on customers' perception (Baker, *et al.,* 2002; Liao, *et al.,* 2012; Seok 2009). Seok (2009) further stated that store ambience innovations impacts not only impulse buying but also patronage (Mohan, *et al.,* 2013). Liao, *et al.,* (2012) conducted a study on retail store ambience. Their findings and results revealed that consumers' potential profit and perceived

value were influenced by store environment cues. Other scholars equally reported that store ambience significantly influenced sales and customer satisfaction, thereby, helping stores' growth

and development (Demirgunes, 2014; Turley & Milliman 2000). Ragi and Zainal (2016) posited that perception is a wide imagination that people perceive in their mind and evaluate to be meaningful.

Operational Conceptual Framework

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┌─────────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────────┐
│                     │                    │  AFFECTIVE          │
│  EXTERIOR DISPLAY   │ ─────────────────▶ │  EVALUATION         │
│                     │                    │                     │
└─────────────────────┘                    └─────────────────────┘
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Hypothesis

$H_{o1:}$ There is no significant relationship between exterior displays and affective evaluation of hypermarkets in South-South, Nigeria.

Technological Inclusions and Customers' Response

Technology in the retail industry is marked in a big way with new innovative apps and in-store technologies now available. As society is increasingly becoming ever more demanding, retailers are reacting and investing huge sums of money to stay ahead of consumer trends. Sherman (2012) emphasized that retail forecasting and predicting buyer behaviour are extremely important as retailers are implementing customer analysis to increase their customer relationship management and satisfy customer demands and expectations. Gramigna (2014) explained that mobile technology is leading the way with customers embracing the indeterminable array of apps and gadgets being created to excite their senses once again. Scholars submitted that customer behaviour includes positive responses of customer towards a store environment. Chen and Hsieh (2011) stated that approach or customer behaviour might be borne through positive interaction, impressions, and positive identification towards a store that makes a person want to go back to the store again. It is assumed that technological inclusions in retail business might ignite customer responses.

Exterior Displays (ED)

Turley and Milliman (2000) opined that store exterior includes exterior signs, exterior display, windows, entrances, height of building, size of building, colour of building, surrounding, stores, lawns and gardens, address and location, architectural design, availability of parking space and exterior walls. Sangvikar, *et al.,* (2012) suggested that retailers usually give customers a special shopping experience that begins with the store exterior environment of the retail store, experience that leads to higher pleasure and arousal and consequently increased purchase intentions. However, Hu and Jasper (2006) viewed store appearance as the total impression a store makes on the minds of its customers. Thus areas built near a store site with a scenic landscape, designed and maintained for the satisfaction of the customers will have a considerable impact on customer satisfaction. The reason is that customer loyalty will be more likely when the customer perceived the appearance of a store to be inviting to them. Delvin, *et al.,* (2003) opined that desirable store appearance facilitated by an effective positioning strategy is an important component of the retail mix and can positively influence store choice. The store front consists of the area that surrounds the entrance. Scholars posits that storefront design should convey the merchandise and the store image and brand since it is the first impression that the customer gets of the store (Gibbs, 2011).

The author further emphasized that colorful lightening can also be used at the entrance to attract customers that are passing by.

Gibbs (2011) argued that a store window display is a useful strategy for selling merchandise, promoting an idea or marketing the store and the window display strategy is designed to mediate

different kinds of messages to the customer, to show seasonal trends or looks, to show how to use or wear specific merchandise to achieve a particular taste or look, or show what the store has available at various price lines. Chaudhary and Jadhav, (2014) Opined that window display create a unique impression on the consumer mind and the basis for store survival.

Affective Evaluation (AE)

Affective evaluation or emotional state is a judgment that shows whether an object is pleasant, attractive, valuable, likeable, or preferable (Russell & Snodgrass, 1987). Mehrabian and Russell (1974) hypothesized that any environment is capable of inducing and producing different emotional states in an individual. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) mentioned three dimensions of emotional state that are developed in an individual 's mind which are pleasure, arousal and dominance, also called the PAD framework. These emotional responses determine the need to remain within or leave a physical environment (Bennett, 2005). These three dimensions commonly represent the organism aspect of the SOR framework. The pleasure aspect determines whether individuals perceive the environment as enjoyable or not enjoyable. The arousal dimension evaluates how much the environment stimulates the individual. However, Palacios, *et al.,* (2016) opined that affective evaluation is a response of a person that includes a feeling and emotion. The scholars further emphasized that affective evaluation in respect of store layout is divided into two parts: the affective evaluation towards the store and affective evaluation towards the merchandise. Similarly, Kumar and Kim, (2014) stated that affective evaluation towards a store is a response from a person when entering a store for comfort, attraction, value, pleasure and likes, while affective evaluation towards merchandise is the response of a person towards the products if there has been physical contact such as excitements. The scholars further stated that affective evaluation will appear when customers find that the atmosphere is interesting, fun, and unique. The dominant element relates to whether individuals feel dominant (in control) or submissive (under control) in the environment (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). However, other researchers opined that the emotion-eliciting qualities of the environment are captured by only two dimensions–pleasure and arousal (Russell & Pratt, 1980; Russell & Snodgrass 1987).

The affective space evoked by the environment was found to be better described by pleasantness and arousal dimensions, whereas dominance was not found to have a predictable or significant effect on behaviour (Russell & Pratt, 1980; Russell, *et al.*, 1981; Ward & Russell, 1981). Russell and Barett (1999) attributed the reason for this to the fact that dominance factor is a cognitive component of affective reactions. Studies in both retail and non-retail environments supported the view that pleasure and arousal dimensions are related to consumers' reactions, but the effect of the dominance dimension is unclear (Russell, 1980; Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000). For example, Donovan and Rossiter (1982) found that shopping behaviours were related only to the pleasure and arousal dimensions in a retail setting. Yalch and Spangenberg (2000) further stated that behaviours associated with dominance are difficult to identify as they reflect only a small influence on behaviour. As a result, the dominance dimension is often not measured as an emotional/affective response (Russell, 1980). Researchers have established the mediating role of pleasantness and arousal in the context of store environments. Donovan and Rossiter (1982) found pleasantness and arousal to have positive effects on intentions to remain in the store and to spend more money. Baker *et al.* (1992) found a positive relationship between the emotional states and intention to purchase. In sum, the literature review suggests that consumer's affective evaluations can be explained in terms of pleasure and arousal dimensions. Furthermore, pleasure and arousal mediate the relationship between the store atmosphere and consumer's response to the store atmosphere.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research employed survey research design. Survey research design is a non-experimental survey design involving a single observation of the sample population with the observations descriptively represented.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised of all customers from four (4) hypermarkets in South-South states of Nigeria, which are: SPAR (Port Harcourt), SPAR (Calabar), Shoprite (Asaba) and Next Cash and Carry (Port Harcourt). Information obtained from the traffic flow device of each of the hypermarkets outlets revealed that over 1000 shoppers were recorded on daily bases. Therefore 1000 active customers were randomly selected from each of the hypermarket making a total target population four thousand (4000).

List of Hypermarkets in South-South Nigeria

S/N	Name of hypermarkets	Rives State (PH)	Cross River (Calabar)	Delta State (Asaba)	Total
1.	Spar	1000			1000
2.	Spar		1000		1000
3.	Next cash and carry	1000			1000
4.	Shoprite			1000	1000
	Total	2000	1000	1000	4000

Source: Research Desk information from traffic flow device of various hypermarkets used for the study, 2019

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling, since the study was customer-based. Therefore, to determine the sample size of the study Krejcie and Morgan's sample size determination table was applied. Therefore, the sample size of the study was denoted by S=352. The Krejcie and Morgan's sample size calculation was based on P=0.05, where the probability of committing type 1 error is less than (<) 5% or $P < 0.05$. As shown in Appendix III.

Instrument for Data Collection

Instrumentation is the process of creating the instrument. In research, the term instrument means any device that a researcher uses to collect information with regards to conducting a study. Example of instrument include questionnaire and interview schedule.

Method of Data Analysis

This study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data that were generated. This study used Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) as a suitable analytical tool.

Test of Research Hypothesis

H_{01}: There was no significant relationship between exterior displays and affective evaluation of hypermarkets in the study area.

Exterior Displays and Affective Evaluation

Correlations

Variables		Exterior Displays	Affective Evaluation (AE)
Exterior Displays	Pearson Correlation	1	.886[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

	N	341	341
	Pearson Correlation	.886**	1
Affective Evaluation (AE)	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	341	341

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Survey data, 2019

The outcome in the table shows that exterior displays correlates with affective evaluation ($r = 0.886$, $p < 0.001$). This signifies a very high correlation indicating a normal relationship. The relationship that exists between exterior displays and affective evaluation is shown to be significant at 0.01 level of significance. Since an r value that is less than 0.20 ($r < 0.20$) is the yardstick for accepting the null hypotheses and an r value that is greater than or equal to 0.20 ($r \geq 0.20$) is the yardstick for rejecting the null hypotheses, based on these guidelines for accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis as stipulated by Irving (2005) cited in Ahiazu and Asawo (2016), the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis. This was as, the r value obtained from our SPSS computed output was higher than 0.20 i.e. $r = 0.886$ is higher than 0.20. Hence, there is a significant relationship between exterior displays and affective evaluation of hypermarkets in south-south region of Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings
There is a positive relationship between exterior displays and affective evaluation of hypermarkets in south-south, Nigeria.
Null hypothesis one ($H0_1$) was formulated to examine the relationship between exterior displays and affective evaluation. Exterior displays were tested against affective evaluation of hypermarkets in South-South, Nigeria using the Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient analytical tool. The result revealed that exterior displays correlate with affective evaluation, where $r = 0.886$, $p = 0.01$. This signifies a very high correlation among the two variables.
The relationship that exists between exterior displays and affective evaluation therefore significant at 0.01, level of significance. The findings are consistent with Feng et al (2008) which observed that exterior displays account for the highest level of satisfaction among all other ambience factors. Gibbs (2011) posits that exterior displays should carry the factors that will depict the store image, since it is the first expression a customer sees when going into the store.

CONCLUSIONS
The findings of the study were based on the results from the quantitative analyses of the data which was in line with the aim of the study. The major conclusion was derived from how operators of hypermarkets of the retail industry and other relevant stakeholders perceived exterior display innovation and its relationship with customers' perception.:

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the implications of the study outcomes, the following recommendations are made:
1)   Hypermarket operators in south-south Nigeria should improve their business environment with innovative facilities. So as to influence customers' perception.
2)   Operators of hypermarkets should ensure proper exterior displays such as landscaping, window displays, store entrance and aesthetic design of the environment such that it will be appealing to the customers that will enhance patronage by ways of positive perception.

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