INTERIOR DISPLAY AND CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF HYPERMARKETS IN THE SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

Kalio Imeerani Aseminachin
Department of Marketing, Faculty of Business Studies
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Email:imeeranionyewon@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
The study aimed at ascertaining the relationship between Interior Display and Cognitive 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 interior display and cognitive 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 interior 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: Interior, Display, Cognitive Evaluation, Customer Response,

INTRODUCTION
In the modern society today the retail industry has become more diversified and dynamic. In such an environment, it is not surprising that there is an increasing demand for skills and education (Ihtiyar, *et al.,* 2014; Kumar & Kim 2014; Ogden 2005). It was emphasized by the scholars that the retail industry has become increasingly global in scope through the integration of technology, economic, and demographic changes and innovations. Presently the retail industry is orienting by imbibing the globalization trends leading to so many changes. One important key to success in this era is innovation, (Sangeeta & Chitra, 2011). They further stated that, customers shopping experience for shopping in a particular retail store, which is the major aspect for the store success is influenced by innovation. This is done to enhance customers' satisfaction by adding value to their shopping experience. Cherono (2017) viewed hypermarket ambience as the character and atmospheric environment that is designed to set and appeal to shoppers' mood for a shopping experience to take place. Store ambience is an important variable that enhances customers shopping experience. Interior display is a key strategy employed in a retail store to attract customer attention. Bashar and Aymed (2012) posited that interior displays have positive correlation with impulse buying behaviour of a customer. Stanley (2010) supported the argument in the light of destructiveness. The author emphasized that the outlook of the store portrays the true essence of the brand which distinguishes it from their competitors. The author further posited that store interior should be appealing to customers. This implies that display in an aesthetic manner stimulates the desire to purchase among consumers.

Previous researchers have paid attention to individual factors of ambience, design, and social factors, such as scent, signage or number of employees. Others focused more largely on combining these individual factors. For instance, scent and music (Mattila & Wirtzm 2001), layout and signage (Ang,, et.al., 1997). However, these approaches somewhat lack a comprehensive

framework in order to achieve a detailed understanding of retail ambience innovation on customers' perception. To overcome this lacuna, the researcher decided to investigate the relationship between retail ambience innovation (exterior displays, interior displays, store layout and technological inclusions), and customers' perception (affective evaluation, cognitive evaluation and customers' response) of hypermarkets in South-South, Nigeria.

Operational Conceptual Framework
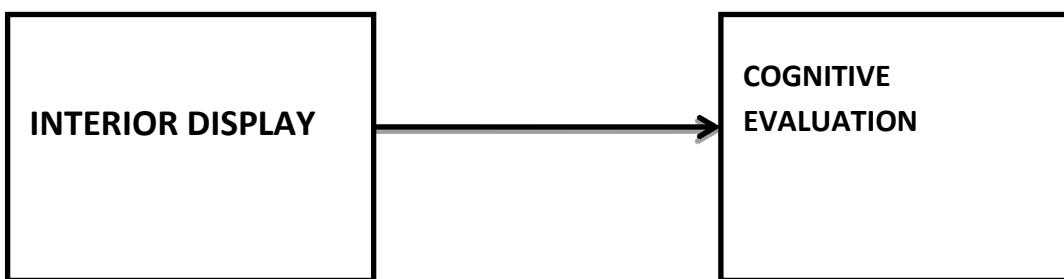
Hypothesis
$H_{o1:}$ There is no significant relationship between interior displays and cognitive evaluation of hypermarkets in South-South, Nigeria.

Technological Inclusions and Affective Evaluation
The increased technological advancement in the 21st century, has influenced the mode of engaging in business due to its expansion in the avenues that business entities can relate with clients. The technological breakthrough has been affected by the diversification of the social media and the initiation of applications that support these provisions (Newnam, 2017). The retail industry utilizing digital platforms to undertake business operations is a business model that could benefit from beacon technology. The modern retail market has been characterized by increased rate of process digitization which infers that internet connectivity is a primary influence on retail business success (Reinartz, 2011). Relating this to the affective evaluation of consumers in retail business, scholars affirmed that retail store represents a brand itself that strengthens the customers' emotional and rational relationships. (Kumar & Kim, 2014). The scholars further stressed that emotional affective process is achieved if the customer feels pleasant and exciting sensation in the store. But what if the customer does not feel exciting sensation in the store, based on the customers' emotional status, then there is a disconnection.

Interior Displays (ID)
Gibbs (2011) pointed out that a well-planned store interior is capable of attracting and persuading impulse shoppers and also convey the stores brand and the merchandise quality. The author further stated that the essence of interior display is to create products more attractive, visible and motivated to purchase. Solomon, *et al.,* (2010) stressed that using an appropriate interior display, impulse purchases increased by 10 percent. Kerfoot, *et al.,* (2003) stated that there are three types of interior display, which are merchandise, point-of-sale and architectural display. Dhotve (2010) pointed out techniques and factors to be considered when designing a store interior display, such as, colours, temperature, music, and signage, etc.

Aspfors (2010) posited that lighting in the store plays a significant role in the attractiveness of customers to a store and eventual purchase behaviour. The researcher emphasized that stores with brighter lights are more likely to attract more attention them stores with low lights. Olson (2005) also observed that colour and lighting are components of visual merchandising which positively influence consumer psychological behaviour. Park, *et al.,* (2014) equally supported the argument on human resource performance and cognitive interpretation that create desired consumer reaction. Other scholars added background music and lighting as strong instruments in

a store environment that influence consumer's perfections and reactions to a store. Therefore, interior display is one of those marketing tools that trigger unplanned buying among consumers (Chandon, *et al.*, 2009).

Cognitive Evaluation (CE)

Cognitive evaluation is associated with consumer perception process, which originates from information-processing and inference theories (Bettman, 1979; Zeithaml, 1988). Perception is a physiological activity in which sensory stimulation cues are converted into meaningful information (Bettman, 1979). Ambience factors provide some important informational cues, based on which consumers can come to a conclusion about price, product, or service quality in that store (Baker, *et al.*, 2002). For instance, the use of flush carpet in a store design may make consumers infer that the store might charge higher prices and provide higher quality of merchandise and service. This rational inference based on an atmospheric cue is cognitive evaluation.

Empirical studies support the argument that ambience factors influence consumers' cognitive response. Baker, *et al.,* (1994) found that consumers perceive higher merchandise quality and service quality in a prestige-image ambience designed stores than in a discount-image ambient setting. Bitner (1990) found that the appearance of the physical environment can cause consumers to perceive the firm to be responsible for the service failure. For example, when a service failure occurs in an organized environment, consumers might blame the firm less than if the service failure occurs in an unorganized environment. Also, consumers attribute causes of service failure to something unintentional and relatively temporary in an organized environment, while in an unorganized environment consumers expect the problem to occur again. Grewal and Baker (1994) found that consumers perceive the higher price range of a product as more acceptable in a high-social store environment than in a low-social store environment. Therefore, the above studies confirm that atmospheric cues influence consumers' cognitive evaluation.

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.

H_{01}: There was no significant relationship between interior displays and cognitive evaluation of hypermarkets

Interior Displays and Cognitive Evaluation

Correlations

Variables		Interior Displays	Cognitive Evaluation (CE)
Interior Displays	Pearson Correlation	1	.742**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	.742**	341
Cognitive Evaluation (CE)	Pearson Correlation	.000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	341	
	N	341	341

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

Source: Survey data, 2019

The result in table shows that interior displays correlates with cognitive evaluation (r = 0.742, p< 0.001). This signifies a very high correlation indicating a normal relationship. The relationship that exists between interior displays and cognitive 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 benchmark for accepting the null hypotheses and an r value that is greater than or equal to 0.20 (r ≥ 0.20) is the benchmark for rejecting the null hypotheses, based on this guideline for accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis as stipulated 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 = 0.742 is higher than 0.20. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between internal displays and cognitive evaluation of hypermarkets in south-south region of Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

There is no relationship between interior displays and cognitive evaluation.

Null hypothesis two indicates that interior displays do not significantly relate to cognitive evaluation. The result of the findings showed the existence of a strong and significant relationship between interior displays and cognitive evaluation (r = 0.792, p = 0.001). This signifies a very high correlation showing a strong relationship. The findings are in line with Stanley (2010) posits that interior decoration has distinguished values in the mind of customers. This is also in consonance with to the ideas of other scholars by way of cognitive evaluation of

customer perception process which originates from information processing and inference theories (Bettman 1979, Zeithanal 1988).

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 interior 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)   Managers of hypermarkets should ensure effective interior design, décor, color, signage and proper merchandising. In the same vein, the operators of hypermarkets should ensure effective lighting and background music on the hypermarket floor for memorable shopping experience. There should be friendliness among employees and those that patronize them.

REFERENCES

Ahiauzu, A.I. (2006). *Advanced research methods in management sciences for doctorial students*. (unpublished manuscripts). Faculty of management science, Rivers state university of science and technology, Port Harcourt.

Ang, S. H., Leong, S. M. & Lim, J. (1997). The mediating influence of pleasure and arousal on layout and signage effects: comparing more and less customized retail services. *Journal of retailing and consumer services.* 4(1), 13-24.

Aspfors, E. (2010). Customers' perception of services, store image and product assortment from an interior store perspective. *Journal of Business Economics and Tourism*, 25(7) 10-13.

Baker, J., D. Grewal, & A. Parasuraman. (1994). The influence of store environment on quality inferences and store image. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 22(8),4: 32

Baker, J., Parasuraman, A, Grewal, D. & Voss, G. B. (2002). The influence of multiple store environment cues on perceived merchandise value and patronage intentions. *Journal of Marketing,* 66(2), 120-141.

Battman, J.R. (1979). *An information processing theory of consumer choice.* Reading, MA Addison Wesley Publishing Company.

Bitner, J.J. (1990). Evaluating service encounters: the effects of physical surroundings and employee responses. *Journal of Marketing,* 54(2), 69-82.

Chandon, P., Hutchinson, J.W., Bradlow, E.T. & Young, S.H. (2009). Does in-store marketing work? Effects of the number and position of shelf facings on brand attention and evaluation at the point of purchase, *Journal of marketing* 1(73),1-17

Cherono V. (2017). Influence of supermarket ambience on customer satisfaction among large retail supermarket in Kenya. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management,* 5(11),665-682

Dhove, M. (2010). *Channel management and retail marketing. Mumbai: channel management and retail marketing*.

Gibbs, R. J. (2011). *Principles of urban retail planning and development.* Hoboken, New Jersey: John Willey and Sons, Inc.

Grewal. D. Roggeveen. A. & Runyan. R.C. (2013). Retailing in a connected world. .*Journal of Marketing Management.* 29(3 -4). 263-270.

Ihtiyar, A., Ahmad, F. S. & Osman, M. H. (2014). An integrated framework: Intercultural competence, service quality and customer satisfaction in grocery retailing, *Journal of Social and behavioural sciences* 109 (1), 492-496.

Kumar, A. & Kim, Y. K. (2014). The store-as-a-brand strategy: The effect of store environment. *Journal of retailing and consumer services,* 21(5), 685-695.

Marttila, A.S. & Wirtz. J. (2001). Congniency scent and music as a driver of in-store evaluation and behaviour. *Journal of Retailing* 77(20). 273-289.

Newman, J. (2017). *Modern technologic as a status symbol. What your technology. Device say about you* South university.

Ogden, J. R. (2005). *Retail: Integrated retail management*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, MA.

Olsen, L.L. & Johnson, M.D. (2003). *Service equity. satisfaction and loyalty: from transaction-specific: A behavioural perspective on the consumer.* 2nd edition, Armonk, New York.

Park, C.W. & Young, S.M. (1986). Consumer response to television commercials: The impact of involvement and background music on brand attitude formation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 23(1);11-24

Reinartz W. (2011). Retailing innovations, in a globalizing retail market environment. *Journal of retailing*. 87,53-66

Sangeeta M & Chitra (2011). The store Ambience in modern day, *Global Journal* 11(3),1-7

Solomon, M. R., Bamossi, G., Askegaard, S. & Hogg, M. K. (2010). *Consumer behaviour: 4 European perspective*. Harlow: Financial Times/ Prentice Hall.

Stanley, J. (2010). Displays does the magic: A case where powerful window display creates the footfall. *International Journal of research in marketing*, 2(5), 108-10.

Zeithami, V.A. (1988). Consumer perception of price, quality and value: A means-end model and synthesis of evidence. *Journal of Marketing.* 52(2) 2-22.