# THEMATIC EXPLORATION OF STORE ATMOSPHERIC EFFECT ON CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE-CENTRIC RETAIL BUSINESS

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**Abstract**

This study qualitatively explored the influence of store atmosphere on customer experience in selected retail businesses in Lagos state, Nigeria using thematic analysis. Qualitative method was used as a research design; the population was infinite as the study focused on customers of the 3 selected retail outlets in Lagos state, the study adopts multi-stage sampling technique. Face-to-face interview was used to collect the primary data; four respondents were interviewed for the study. The data was analyzed with Nvivo software version 12. From the outcome of the qualitative analysis, there was significant relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables through the semi-structured interviewed held with the 4 participants. From the interview conducted on the study, the study concluded that basic retail store atmosphere elements have positive relationship with customer experience as the creation of appealing store ambient through using of mood, lighting, clean environment, using of color psychology are essential constituents which supports retail store atmosphere and customer experience and loyalty. The study recommended that retail stores business owners should emphasise more on ways of improving retail store environment as retail store service providers are not competing on product display alone but on the beautification and attractiveness of their store environments at both internal and external.

***Keywords:*** Ambience, Customers' Experience, Customer Loyalty, Customer Satisfaction, Store Atmosphere

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## 1. Introduction

The importance and contribution of retail sector to any nation's economy can never be over emphasised in recent years. Retailing consist all the activities that encompass the process of selling products and services to meet a personal need of the final consumer. The store formats in most of the environments vary, and compete globally. Also, the retail space, that is, the proximate environment that surrounds the retail store always influence the customers' perception of the store in terms of experience that can create loyalty. The retail store atmosphere is a group of cues, messages, and suggestions that communicate to buyers in a silent manner. Retail store designers, planners, and merchandisers shape space, and that space in turn affects the shapes the customer has in terms of behavior for the retail outlet (Chang, 2020)

In service marketing, atmospherics is referred to as stores physical uniqueness that is used to grow the retail image, create a center of attention and retain customers to the store. Store atmosphere is the uncontrollable features of retail space which entice customers to enter the stores, shop and point of sales. The store atmosphere is the drive that causes the consumer assessment in relation to the environment, and some behavioural responses (Turley & Milliman, 2000). Verhoef et al. (2009) contends that retailers around the world have take up the systematic idea of customer experience management, with many absorbing the notion into their mission statements, probing for the

formation of a distinctive customer experience for their customers. They also tip that coming up with a superior customer experience seems to be one of the fundamental objectives in today's retailing environments. In spite of the recognition of the significance of customer experience by firms, Pine and Gilmore (1999) indicated that creating an inimitable customer experience can offer financial worth for the company.

The components of a store atmosphere that can be manipulated to generate certain responses to approach consumers are related to individual perception and sensory factors. For instance, a store can highlight the colors (and lighting), smells, and music (Kotler, 1973; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). Other factors such as textures and flavors are also in the context of the retail atmosphere, although still in need of scientific investigation (Farias et al., 2014).

Several scholars such as Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Schmitt (1999), discovered through their research what is termed "experiential" economics where products are no longer a conclusion in themselves but are artifacts of a larger construct called consumption experience, which is memorable, personal, prolonged and involves many sensations. In the present day, we are experiencing this moment with studies that evidence the experiential aspects of consumption (Pullman & Gross 2004; Hume et al., 2006; Voss, Roth, & Chase, 2008; Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010). In the context of experiential marketing perspective, companies should take advantage of every point of interaction with consumers to create and reinforce this experience, either through sponsorship, merchandising, advertising and, especially, point of sale (Schmitt, 2003; Naylor et al., 2008).

One way to manage customer experience is through the manipulation of store atmosphere. According to Farias et al., (2014) atmosphere in marketing is a term used to describe the conscious design of an area in order to create a desired effect on consumers. The atmospheric characteristics of a store are important because they influence a wide variety of consumer evaluations and behaviors. Furthermore, the store atmosphere is represented psychologically by consumers in terms of two major emotional states-pleasure and arousal-and these two emotional states are significant mediators of intended shopping behaviors within the store. Retail atmospherics is a conscious planning of atmosphere to contribute to buyer's continuous patronage and a perfect planning capable of enhancing retailers' revenue (Richard, Roger & Misheck, 2021).

Building a sustainable customer loyalty through service quality and customer satisfaction can also be facilitated through positive customer experience and journey. The concept of customer experience is an important distinctive factor in today's competitive business world (Wereda & Grzybowska, 2016). Creating a strong customer experience is now regarded as a leading management objective in a consumer-centric firm. The increase in focus on customer experience arises because customers now interact with firms through several touch points in multiple channels and media, resulting in more complex customer journeys. There is substantial business value in managing the customer experience effectively. Good customer experience management assists organisation to strengthen brand and store preference through great experiences, increase profit with incremental sales from existing customers and new sales from positive word of mouth, improve customer loyalty and create advocates and testimonials through valued and memorable customer interactions and finally reduce costs by lowering customer's fluctuation.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, due to the intense competition in the retail sector operating in brick-and-mortar, effective, up-to-date store atmospheric ambience breeds positive consumer experience which ultimately guarantees customer loyalty. Many retailing organisations have moved from product-centric to customer-centric marketing with the intention of providing want-satisfying products and services to their esteemed customers. The major key factor in every customer-centric organisation is a better customer satisfaction programms that will guarantee an organizational level of success.

Customers have also experienced problems emanating through poor experiential marketing from delay in transaction notification, stock out, non-availability of staff at service points,

unprofessional conduct or rude behaviors sometimes exhibited by the staff of the service firms, poor standard of records or inability to give proper information needed by the customers, failed promises among others which have really discouraged customers in recommending such a store to friends and associate and likelihood of not patronizing the store again. It is noteworthy to emphasize that shoppers want interaction, memorable experiences, fast and quality service, while they also want to exhibits their senses of sights, smells, tastes and touch.

In addition, one of the important ways to attain competitive advantage is by effectively managing the experience of the customers. In this perspective, customer experience emerges as new phenomenon which also motivated customer to patronize some retail outlets for shopping. Moreover, as discovered by Oracle in the year 2012, study result show that 89 per cent of the customer will defect to competitor's business as result of poor customer experience. Another study by Temkin (2017), a leading customer experience research and consulting firm, cited in Jaiswal and Singh (2020) discovered that 22 per cent of the customers reduce their spending after a bad experience and around 19 per cent stopped patronizing the retail store where they experience poor customer service. This problem is very prominent in Nigeria retail business. These problems ranges from long time waits, an impersonal shopping experience, poor psychological and physical structure of the store, inefficiency in the online to offline transition, lack of communication options and unpleasant or unexciting retail atmosphere has cost most of the retail businesses in Nigeria huge revenue. Taking this into account, this study would also try to examine the important factors that influence customer experience, as customer experience is a strategic issue that needs to be understood by retail service providers in order to improve customer attraction.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Conceptual Review

#### 2.1.1 Retail Store Atmosphere

In marketing expressions, atmospheric is used to express the aspect of designing store or business spaces where customers shop for the purchase of goods and services. The term atmospheric was first developed by Kotler (1973). He explained that customers are not only fascinated in tangibility of the products as it forms a small parts of the total consumption package but debatably believes that buyer respond to what he termed as total consumption package which includes services, warranties, packaging and store ambience as regards where the products and services are sold. In retailing marketing management where store design is one of the most important tasks, architectural aspect which includes and not limited to; interior design, exterior structure and design of window display performs three functions of creating attention, message communication and effect.

In addition, store atmosphere includes both the physical and symbolic elements related to the internal and external facets of a store. The purpose of an atmospheric ambience in retailing is to create an environment in which customers are encouraged to have both emotional and sentimental feelings, increasing their probability to make more shopping and build preference for the store. However, the products also have a great effect on a store atmosphere. A store atmosphere is also used to gain competitive advantage as an integrated marketing communication element for retailers, in addition to one of the most important elements affecting the store choices of customers and their commitment to that store.

Furthermore, a store image is about how customers perceive the store, a store atmosphere is about what kind of a message retailing stores aim to give to the target customers. The term store image' was first used at the end of the 1950s. A retail store image is to show what a store means to customers in terms of both functional characteristics and their visual and auditoria psychological attitudes (Burt & Carralero, 2000). All retail stores reflect an image or a personality to their customers. On the other way, the same store may reflect different images to different customer groups. Some highly patronized store may even be regarded as extravagancy, for middle and lower class income groups. In contrary to this, the same retail stores may be regarded by upper class income groups as appropriate, different, prestigious and fashion-conscious. Therefore, the store

image do changes from customers to customers, hence making it a subjective perception rather than an objective one is more relevant to customers' satisfaction. Furthermore, the store image depends on the time the customers spend in a store. From this perspective, Berry (1969) asserts store image as all attitudes developed through the evaluation of store attitudes, cared by the consumers.

Moreover, retail store image could be divided into two components. Demirci (2000) posit this as functional and psychological aspects of a store. The functional perspective of a store involves the overall products displayed in a store, the arrangement of a store, its location, its price-value relation, which can be easily compared by customers. The psychological aspects of a store involve the perceptions of customers, the attitudes of sales persons, their relationship with the customers, response to customer complaint, store decoration and the attractiveness of store ambience. Although a store image is about the perception of the store, a store atmosphere is about what kind of a message retail stores aim to give to their target customers. In lieu of this, it is arguable that store image and store atmosphere are very similar terms in one aspect, and also different on the other hand. A store atmosphere can be described as the combination of such qualifications used to create an image and to maintain this image created, to make it different than other competitors and to attract more customers (Loya, 2002).

Ambient cue places inside the store are also one of the major forces in store atmosphere (Muhammad & Deddy, 2018). However, it focuses on driving human sensory, olfactory, visual, and hearing sense. The air condition inside the store concerns about the quality, temperature, and circulation as this gives customer a comfortable feeling and memorable experience when shopping. Lighting can create different atmospheric ambience. Lighting needs to be regulated by the service providers as it can influence customers' activities inside the store. It happens due to the sensory perception that mainly used in searching and selecting the product (Wanninayake & Randiwel, 2007). It is noted that the color of the light can also create a certain circumstances in customer's mind. While layout, product, and lighting used sight as the main tool, scent factor is the only one that uses the sense of smell. This kind of factor use a pleasant fragrance that creates in store to tempt customers' perception when making the purchase decision (Bharathi & Sudha, 2017).

### 2.1.2 Customers' Experience

Different definitions of customer experience exist in the marketing literature (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). DeKeyser, Lemon, Keiningham and Klaus (2015) describe customer experience as comprised of the cognitive, emotional, physical, sensorial, spiritual, and social elements that mark the customer's director in direct interaction with other market actor(s), in essence, the raw data contained in all direct or indirect interactions that then come together as an overall experience. Similarly, considering technology as an experience, McCarthy and Wright (2004) identify what they call the four threads of experience, ideas that help us to think more clearly about technology as experience: the sensual, the emotional, the compositional, and the spatio-temporal.

The design, delivery, and management of the customer experience can be viewed from multiple contexts: from the firms point of view, with the firm essentially designing and crafting an experience for the customer to receive (Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel, 2002; Stuart & Tax, 2004); from the customer's point of view (Schmitt, 2011); or from a co-creation perspective, in which the customer experience is deemed a culmination of a customer's interaction with other actors in a broader ecosystem, while recognizing the customer's role in the co-construction of the experience (Chandler & Lusch, 2015; DeKeyser, Lemon, et al., 2015; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2003). In general, scholars and practitioners have come to agree that the total customer experience is a multidimensional construct that involves cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social components (Schmitt, 2003; Verhoef, et al., 2016).

In discussing the dimensions of customers' experience, the physical environment is a critical factor which helps to define the nature of social interaction ((Sharma & Rather, 2015). In other words, customers who engage in positive, physical and relational aspects of the customer experience may find themselves in positive emotional, satisfying, and loyal environments (Bitner,

1992). The second dimension is entertainment which is developed when passive absorption is observed by the customer such as watching a theatre performance (Oh, Fiore, & Jeong, 2007). For example, most cruise liners provide a variety of entertainment, such as night shows and performances by comedians, live music bands, and casino-style gaming among others. Hosany and Witham (2010) identified that the most cruise liners provide a variety of entertainment, such as nightly shows, performances by comedians, live music bands, and casino-style gaming among others. The third dimension is education which refers to an experience where the customers actively participate.

In Pine and Gilmore's (1998) framework, an educational experience actively engages the mind and emotion of consumers, intriguing them and appealing to their desire to learn something new. The fourth and the last dimension is escapism. An escapist experience can be defined as the extent to which an individual is completely involved and absorbed in the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Escapist experiences are highly immersive and require active participation. Typical examples include theme parks, adventure lands, simulated destinations, and themed attractions among others in retail stores (Hosany & Witham, 2010).

## 2.2 Theoretical Review

### 2.2.1 Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive dissonance is an uncomfortable feeling caused by holding two contradictory ideas simultaneously. The phenomenon of cognitive dissonance has been quickly adopted by consumer behavior research as it is adhered to exert high exploratory power in explaining the state of discomfort buyers are often in contact with after purchase (Salzberger & Koller, 2010) cited in Jamshed, Sayed and Hafizullahmeen (2021). The theory of cognitive dissonance proposes that people have a motivational drive to reduce dissonance by changing their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, or by justifying or rationalizing them. The phenomenon of cognitive dissonance, originally stated by Festinger in 1957, has been quickly adopted by consumer behavior research, described as a psychologically uncomfortable state that arises from the existence of contradictory (dissonant, non-fitting) relations among cognitive elements (Festinger, 1957) cognitive dissonance revealed high exploratory power in explaining the state of discomfort buyers are often in after they made a purchase.

The justification of this theory according to Festinger (1957) is that a buyer in this situation will endeavor to reassure himself by seeking information in support of his chosen product or service and also by avoiding sources of information which are likely to reduce or contradict his buying confidence and behavior.

### 2.2.2 Expectancy Theory of Customer Satisfaction

The concept of expectancy of customer satisfaction theory may be credited to Howard and Sheth's (1969) definition of satisfaction, which states that satisfaction is a function of the degree of congruency between aspirations and perceived reality of experiences, while its structure was developed in series of two papers by Oliver (1977 & 1980). Expectancy theory argues that satisfaction is related to the size and direction of the disconfirmation experience that occurs as a result of comparing service performance against expectations (Ekinci & Sarakaya, 2004). This shows that consumers purchase goods and services with prepurchase expectations about anticipated performance (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001).

The Expectancy Theory suggested that consumers purchase goods and services with prepurchase expectations about anticipated performance of satisfaction. Expectancy theory believes that customer satisfaction is connected to the size and direction of the disconfirmation experience that occurs as a result of comparing service performance against expectations (Jamshed et al, 2021). The expectation level then becomes a standard to measure against which the product is judged. That is, immediately the product or service has been consumed, results are compared against

expectations. If the outcome is in tandem with the expectation, confirmation occurs. Disconfirmation occurs when there is incongruence between expectations and outcomes.

### 2.2.3 Underpinning Theory: Expectancy Theory of Customer Satisfaction

This study was underpinned by the Expectancy theory of customer satisfaction and supported by the theories of cognitive dissonance and assimilation-contrast. The suitability of the underpinning theory is anchored on the fact that the theory explained the concept of customer satisfaction vividly by explaining the experience that occurs as a result of comparing services performance against expectations. The dominance of this theory amongst other theories of customer satisfaction is as a result of its validity and reliability in assessing customer satisfaction in services industry which are experiential in nature

## 2.3 Empirical Review

Muhammed and Deddy (2018) conducted a research study aims to examine store atmosphere' influence towards customer purchase intention. The objectives of this study are to assess and measure the factors of store atmosphere and how they influence customer purchases intention on Alfamart and Circle K outlets in Bandung district of Indonesia. The study made use of multiple linear regression analysis on SPSS to analyse 314 questionnaire data that were collected in Bandung, Indonesia. The result of the study however shows that in-store, ambient cue, and out-store factor has a significant impact toward customer purchase. These findings offer empirical evidence for both academicals and business practitioners regarding the store atmosphere and its influence towards customer purchase intention.

Richard, Roger and Mischeck (2021) conducted a research work to examine the influence of atmospheric store elements on the factors that influence customers` satisfaction. A quantitative, cross-sectional and descriptive study was conducted in four retail outlets in Cape Town, South Africa. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to the retail outlets' customers. A systematic random sample of 388 responses was achieved. The information collected was analyzed using relevant descriptive and inferential statistics. Although small, positive correlations were found between the independent variables (cleanliness, lighting, music, floor adverts, employee efficient service, and employee appearance) and the dependent variables (positive image of store, pleasant mood, time spent in store, intention to revisit store again). As such, the study highlighted the importance of store atmospherics to the factors that encourage customers` satisfaction.

Othman, Shehata, Mahmoud and Mohammed (2016) conducted a study designed to determine the effect of restaurant atmosphere on customer satisfaction in ethnic restaurant in Cairo and Giza. The study aims to assess the effectiveness of the ethnic restaurant atmosphere elements on customer's satisfaction, and to enable ethnic restaurants service providers to better understand customer needs and attitudes towards ethnic restaurants. The data for the research was collected through the using of questionnaire and structured interviews with ethnic restaurants managers. A sum of 600 copies of questionnaires was distributed to five and four-stars ethnic restaurants amounting to 27 restaurants. The results showed the importance of ethnic restaurants atmosphere on customer's satisfaction in these restaurants.

## 3. Methodology

This research work adopted qualitative research method to assess the influence of store atmospheric on customers' experience. Survey method was adopted through a semi-structured interview to enable the researcher to determine the opinions, attitude, and features of target beneficiaries. The population of the study is infinite while the study adopts a multi-stage sampling technique which involves using different sample techniques at different stages in selecting sample respondents in order to simplify the data collected as a result of large geographically spread of data. The number

of 4 customers was interviewed from selected retail stores in Lagos State, Nigeria as the study also used Nvivo software for qualitative analysis.

## 4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Participants' Background Information (Qualitative Interview)

| S/N | Participants' Codes | Location of retail store | Years of Patronage | Date of Interview |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Info 1 | Ikorodu | 6 years | 20th March, 2023 |
| 2. | Info 2 | Ikeja | 4 years | 8th April, 2023 |
| 3. | Info 3 | Victoria Island | 4 years | 15th June, 2023 |
| 4. | Info 4 | Festac | 5 years | 6th July, 2023 |

Source: Researchers field survey, 2023

The quantitative aspect of this study collected information from four informants through a semi-structured interview. The participants are purposely selected based on their years of patronizing the selected retail stores of this research work to provide the relevant information needed for the study.

The first informant is a businessman with a National Diploma and has being patronizing the store for over six years. The second informant is a Civil Engineer with B. Sc in Civil Engineering and has also being patronizing the store for over four years. While the third participant (informant 3), is a pharmacist by profession and has being patronizing the store for over four years as well. The informant 4 who is the fourth participant in the qualitative interview for this research work is a theatre arts practitioner (filmmaker) as she has also being patronizing the store for over five years.

The interviewees (informants/participants) were informed of the study's objectives, methods as well as given the assurance of protecting their respective anonymities and their contributions to the research work that will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Given this, each respondent was identified by code as indicated in table 1.

### 4.1 Qualitative Analysis

*What is the effect of Retail Store Atmosphere on Customers Experience?*

Based on the interview discussions with the participants, relevant retail atmosphere themes and sub-themes that relates to customer experience emerged in (figure 1) as a way through which the service quality can enhance customer loyalty.

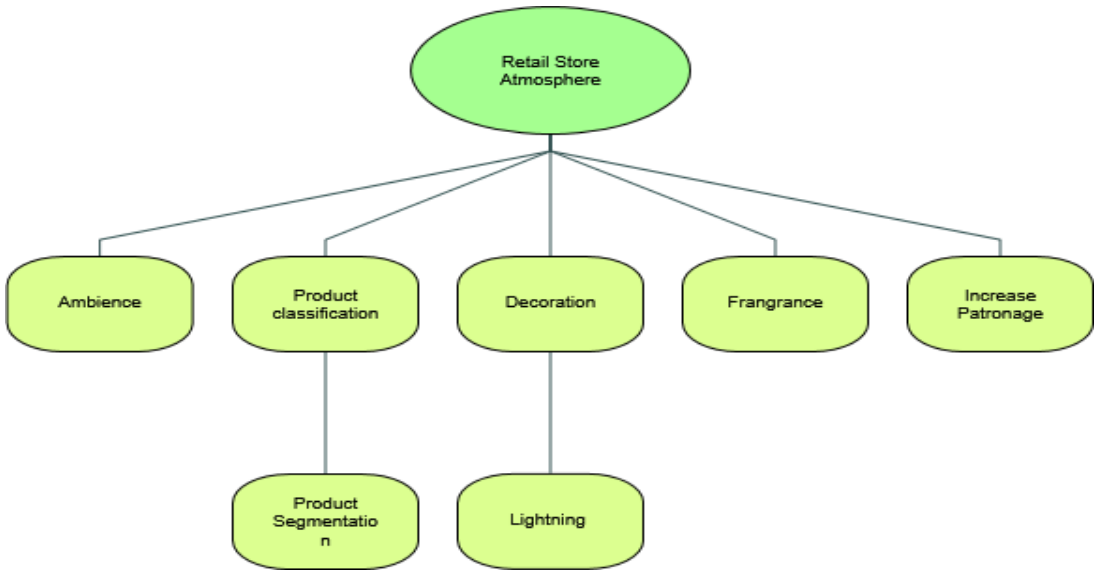



Figure 1: Thematic representation of Retail Store Atmosphere

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023

**4.2 Store Ambience**

This is an environment that is created to fashion out a stimulus among the customer's perceptions and emotions that will affect the purchasing behaviour of the customers. Akram, Khan, Hashim and Rasheed (2016) state that store atmospherics incorporates the elements of the physical nature of the retail outlet, elements designed to create a certain appearance for the outlet. The design and look of the outlet are created to attract and delight customers. Several physical factors incorporate store atmosphere, including color, lighting, music, cleanliness, store and merchandise layout, décor, scent, and temperature.

**4.3 Lightning**

Several literatures indicate that lighting can influence emotions, mood and cognition as well as atmosphere and spatial impressions, although at times the collected findings are inconclusive. The use of light in retail store is always first considered at each stage of a customer journey. Lighting is an important environmental stimulus that affects both an individual's perceptual and psychological responses, as well as changes the appearance and atmosphere of a space (Summers & Hebert, 2001). In a retail environment, lighting facilitates a customer's efficient and pleasant shopping experience while visually showcasing the merchandise and the space (Russell, 2008; Pae, 2009). Successful lighting design not only attracts consumers' attention to the merchandise display in the store, influences their emotions, and increases their satisfaction, but it can also trigger their approach intention and shopping preference and desire (Baker et al., 2002; Steffy, 2002). Successful lighting designs in a retail environment also consider contrast of lighting. Contrast of lighting refers to the relationship of surfaces that are lit (the focus or foreground) to those that are left in comparative darkness that is, the surrounding space or background (Boyce, 2003).

**4.4 Fragrance (Scent Marketing)**

In-Store Fragrance (Ambient Scent Marketing) is the specific use of aromas and fragrances to create and trigger comfortable and interesting retail service. Scent branding is more than just diffusing a pleasant fragrance in a retail environment. It is the art of taking a company's brand identity, marketing messages, targeting audience and matching these with a fragrance that amplifies these branding aspects. Scent marketing revolves around the fact that a human brain is most receptive, and most likely to form, retain, revisit and reinterpret memory, when all five senses are engaged.

The smell of success, for many stores, is now an actual smell. As more retail store introduce odor, the battle for noses is getting intense. This can become highly effective in environments where other sensory triggers, such as the use of lighting, sound and luxurious surroundings combine as brands can establish a longer-lasting emotional connection with consumers (Rama& Edukondala, 2020).

From interviewed informant "1, 2, 3 and 4", basic retail store atmosphere elements are harnessed to positive customer experience. Therefore, creation of appealing store ambient through using of mood, lighting, clean environment, using of color psychology is an essential constituents which supports retail store atmosphere and Customer loyalty. However, the supremacy of store ambience, decoration and fragrance was supported by Info2, Info3 and Info4. This eventually shows beautifully design of store atmosphere in a way that would arouse all the five sensory organs is a consideration in achieving customer loyalty. Moreover, Info2 was of the opinion that the proper arrangements of goods in a gondola do increases his continuous patronage and build customer loyalty. Meanwhile, Info3 and Info4 emphasized the relevance of beautiful scent and fragrances with melodious background music would enhance repeat patronage that would lead to customer loyalty.

As evident from **INFO1**;

"*Having good ambience in a store is an important key in getting the customers coming back for positive experience. For a customer like me, store ambience such as good temperature, store location, beautiful scent or fragrance and orderly arrangement of products according to their categories really defines my perception of the retail store as this will shape my fantastic experience with the store endeavor."*

Supporting **INFO1** expression, **INFO2** assert that;
"*Experiencing good and memorable ambience in the store is another factor that attracts me to the outlet and keeps me coming all the time that I need to shop. Their background music I normally listen to have seriously work on my mood and my emotion. The odor in terms of fragrance also triggers my childhood experience and memories. The combination of all these and other ambience in terms of visual and lighting display with their neat restroom has positively contributed to my experience with the retail outlet.* "

**INFO3** has this to say as well;
"*The physical characteristics of the retail outlet have created an image that really attracted me to the store as this contributed in no small measure to my experience with the retail store. Furthermore, the neat and serene environment, good fragrance, lighting display and store layout with good parking space have really impacted my purchase intention and also create positive customer experience with the retail store."*

From the above responses of the informants', it clearly shows that ambience elements like store fragrance, lighting has significant relationship with customer loyalty, this is because good store ambience acts as a promotion tool used to communicate the store's image. The above assertions can be correlated with the empirical work of Rama and Edukondala (2020) titled Scent marketing – Harnessing the power of scents in stimulating senses of organized retail consumers and employees. The finding of the study shows stores are embracing scent marketing which is one of the elements of retail store atmosphere as a way to create exciting store ambience that will enhance customer attraction and repeat patronage.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

The finding of the study concluded that retail store ambience is probably one of the most important factors in attracting and retaining customer and enhancing positive customer experience. In lieu of this, creation of appealing store ambient through using of mood, lighting, clean environment, using of color psychology are indispensable ingredients which supports retail store atmosphere and customer loyalty.

### 5.2 Recommendation

The study recommended that retail stores practitioners should try as much as possible to emphasise more on ways of improving their retail store environment. Report from the interview conducted shows that creation of appealing store ambient through using of mood, lighting, clean environment, using of color psychology is an essential constituent which supports retail store atmosphere and customer loyalty. Retail store service providers should also make frantic effort in ensuring that their customers have easy access to and fro the retail store by effectively managing the parking lot of their retail store environment.

### 5.3 Policy Implications & Implications

This study bridges the gap in the existing literature by researching into contemporary issues in retailing business. The mixed method used as research instruments in methodology assist in exploring the research questions of the study considering the study which is behavioral in nature. Furthermore, the study also focuses on a developing country with Nigeria as a study country. With extensive review of empirical evidences, it was observed that majority of studies on this aspect are majorly from advanced countries of the world.

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