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Structure of the Articles

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Imperative Of Store Atmosphere In Building Customer Relationship In Retailing Business

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of store atmosphere on building customer relationship of chosen retail businesses in Lagos state, Nigeria. Quantitative method was used as a research design; the population size was infinite. Survey method through questionnaire was used to gather the primary data; Godden (2004) model sample size was adopted and 246 was determined as sample size, multistage sampling techniques was used in the study. From the 246 copies of the questionnaire that were administered, 150 were finally retrieved and coded for data analysis. Standard multiple regression was adopted to examine the data. Multistage sampling technique which involves using different sample techniques at different stages in selecting sample respondents was also adopted. The analysis of the study was done via SPSS. The implication of the finding is that retail store with beautiful environment both in and out tends to set the mood, character, quality, tone and atmosphere of their business that will have considerable effect in building customer relationship that will attract and sustain the customer patronage for a longer period of time. The study conclude that retail store image and ambience is perhaps one of the most significant factors in drawing and reducing customer defection and also enhancing positive customer relationship. The study recommends that the retail stores practitioners should try as much as possible to emphasise more on ways of improving their 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 to build a lasting and sustaining cordial relationship with their esteem customers. The study's contribution to retailing emphasizes that store atmosphere elements have positive relationship with customer relationship as buyers are now responding to total consumption package which includes services, warranties, packaging and store ambience.

Keywords: Ambient cue, Atmospheric ambience, Customer Relationship Management, Customer Satisfaction, Expectancy Disconfirmation, Store Image.

1. Introduction

Relationship Marketing has been known to be a new paradigm shiftin the development of marketing strategies. Relationship marketing is strategically design to perk up the awareness and understanding towards the technology of information to offer satisfaction for the customers, which includes worldwide integrated excellence management in order to deal with business threats in anenhanced and more aggressive way. The predictable motivation of the relationship marketing perception are the ways of drawing attention, sustaining customer satisfaction, as well as enhancing and building relationships with the customers in order to reduce the rate of customer defection. As evidenced by Chakiso (2015), all relationship marketing variables such as trust, commitment, conflict management, communication, and gratitude have positive and moderate relationship with customers' loyalty which can occur if the service provider is able to build relationship with their valued and esteemed customers.

Nowadays, the retail industry is exceptionally competitive, and retail service providers are relentlessly considering supplementing and

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transforming their stores to look more beautiful and attractive. These strategies have provoked unremitting developments in the sector and the need for an enhanced store atmosphere to reinforce customers' satisfaction.

It will not be an under-statement to say that retail customers want an enjoyable shopping atmospheric experience, which forces retailers to devise innovative designs to make the atmosphere and mood of their stores to be more eye-catching (Mathur & Goswami, 2014). In a study examined by Davis et al., (2022), it was revealed that customers have a considerable task in influencing how retailers develop their shopping atmosphere. These decisions involve and not limited to positioning, standards, and the guiding viewpoint of the store. Through the marketing research and the understanding of consumer needs, retail service providers can build up an environment that the consumer prefers, thereby improving customers' satisfaction and attraction.

The retail environment which consists of display, design and fixtures, smells, store lighting and temperature, music, wall covering and other essentials of store ambience can be used by a retailer to gingerup the customer's buying frame of mind. It is the environment inside the retailer's store that eventually manipulates buyers' behavior and this is the more reason why it is more strategic in nature. These days, the retailers constantly convey consumers' experience throughout the shopping effort. The store environment is planned in order to converse brand personality and put up the image of the service providers in order to create an environment which can be used to differentiate the store from competitors and to arouse the purchasing endeavors of the customers by arousing customers' sense organs (Adebayo, 2023).

Moreover, as put up by Oracle in 2012, research result show that 89 per cent of the customer will defect to competitor's business as result of poor customer relationship stemming from poor retail environment at both internal and external. A further study by Temkin (2017), a foremost customer experience research and consulting firm, found in Jaiswal and Singh (2020) discovered that 22 per cent of the customers reduce and modify their spending habits after a bad customer relationship and around 19 per cent stopped patronizing the retail store where they experience poor retail ambience that could not build relationship and attraction.

Furthermore, despite the fact that many scholars have conducted different studies on customer relationship as revealed through the empirical evidences. It was clearly observed from the empirical review that no notable work have focused on imperative of store atmosphere in building customer relationship Nigerian retail business as this study intends to do.

2. Conceptual Review

Store Atmosphere

In marketing terms, atmospheric is used to illustrate the part of designing store or commercial spaces where customers visit for

the acquisition of goods and services. The term atmospheric was first developed by Kotler (1973). Levy and Weitz (2001) asserts that the store atmosphere is the conception of a store atmosphere via visual, structuring, light, music and aromas that can create a relaxed purchasing environment so that it can persuade consumers' perceptions and emotions to make purchases. Sopiah (2005) opined that the atmosphere in the store is one and diversefundamentals in the retail marketing variables.

Sezgin and Küçükköylü(2014) overviewed store atmosphere as the broad atmosphere in which all sorts of stimulants are combined such as store adornment, product shapes, packages, the arrangement of products within the store, colors, lighting, aeration, aroma, underground music, the appearances of sales representatives and their attitudes, other customers and any other stimuli affecting the customers in some way. They further asserted that store atmosphere is how a customer discerns the psychological and physical arrangement of the store. There are many fundamentals within the thoughts of customers about the reflection of a store. Among these basics are settlement plan, architectural design, symbols, colors, advertisement and appearance of sales representatives.

Ambient cue that are set up inside the store are also one of the foremost consideration in store atmosphere (Muhammad & Deddy, 2018). However, it centered on driving human sensory, olfactory, visual, and hearing sense. The air condition within the store reflects about the quality, temperature, and circulation as this gives customer a contented sensation and excellent experience when shopping. Lighting can produce diverse atmospheric ambitence. Lighting needs to be synchronized by the service providers as it can affect customers' activities inside the store (Adebayo, 2023). It happens due to the sensory discernment that is 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).

Sezgin and Küçükköylü (2014) conceptualizes store atmosphere as the general atmosphere in which all kinds of stimulants are involved such as store decoration, product shapes, packages, the presentation of products within the store, colors, illumination, ventilation, scent, underground music, the appearances of sales representatives and their attitudes, other customers and any other stimuli affecting the customers in some way. They further described store atmosphere as how a customer perceives the psychological and physical structure of the store. There are many elements within the thoughts of customers about the image of a store. Among these elements are settlement

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plan, architectural design, symbols, colors, advertisement and appearance of sales representatives.

Customer Relationship Management

Customer relations are one of the marketing functions that have the direct touch with the organisation partners. According to Tjiptono (2011),Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a comprehensive procedure in identifying, attracting, differentiating, and retaining customers by blending the company's supply chain to create customer value at every step in the value creation procedure. Vanessa (2007) perceives CRM as a corporate strategy that is adopted to put upcustomers' interest so they do not turn to competitors. In this case, the company comes up with a touch of personalized service by serving customers as kings.

Coehlo and Henseler (2012) conceptualize customer relations as a primary device that is designed to accomplish corporate objectives and expand a long lasting competitive advantage. Customer relationship management (CRM) is a management strategy that unites and configured information technology with marketing to achieve its desired or stated objectives; companies need a customer database that contains comprehensive customer information. In building relationships with customers, the organisation need to treats each of its customers in a different way so that the company would know customer behavior that can determine what approach the company will take in building sustainable and enduring relationships with (Adebayo, 2024).

Customer relationship management is a strategy used to study further about customers' needs, attitudes and behaviors in order to build up stronger attachment and relationships that will pledge repeat purchase from them (Teshita & Gemedi, 2021). CRM has been animportant concept which has engrossed all facets of business endeavor. It has significant and serious involvement in service marketing most especially in retailing marketing. Customer relationship management is based on building a long and enduring relationship with customers through the provision of premium service, efficient customize operations, well-organized delivery of products and services, and instantaneous handling of complaints that would offer solutions to the problems faced by customers (Yang & Peterson, 2004).

Theoretical Review

Expectancy Theory of Customer Satisfaction

The expectancy theory may be flash back to Howard and Sheth's (1973) definition of satisfaction, which assert that satisfaction is a utility of the degree of congruency between aspirations and apparent reality of experiences, while its arrangement was conceptualized in sequence of two papers by Oliver (1977 & 1980). Expectancy theory propone that satisfaction is connected to the size and path of the disconfirmation experience that emanate as a result of distinguishing service performance alongside expectations (Ekinci & Sarakaya, 2004). This reveals that consumers purchase

goods and services with prepurchase expectations about expected performance (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001).

The Theory suggested that consumers acquire goods and services with pre-purchase expectations about anticipated performance of pleasure and satisfaction. The theory believes that customer satisfaction is linked 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 determine 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. A customer is either satisfied or dissatisfied as a result of a positive or negative disparity between expectations and perceptions. Thus, when service performance is superiorto initially expected, there is an optimistic disconfirmation between expectations and performance that results in satisfaction, and when service performance is as expected, there is a confirmation between expectations and perceptions that results in satisfaction. In contrast, when service performance is not as good as expected, there is a negative disconfirmation between expectations and perceptions, which causes dissatisfaction.

The retailing atmosphere plays a crucial role in setting expectations for customers. For example, a high-end boutique with elegant décor and personalized service sets the expectation of luxury and exceptional quality. If the actual experience meets or exceeds these expectations (e.g., high-quality products, attentive service), customers are more likely to be satisfied based on the expectancy theory. In summary, the expectancy theory of customer satisfaction and creating a conducive retailing atmosphere are closely linked through their impact on customer perceptions, emotions, and overall satisfaction levels. Retailers can leverage both concepts to create compelling and satisfying shopping experiences that foster long-term customer loyalty and business success.

Review of Empirical Evidences

Kamang and Gusti (2022) demonstrated through their research work titled the role of positive emotion to increase the effect of store atmosphere and discount on impulse buying, that store atmosphere has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying. The research work sampled 85 respondents and the data was analysed through the using of path analysis via SPSS software. The study also shows that emotions can mediate the effect of store atmosphere and price discounts on impulse buying.

To investigate study on store atmosphere' influence towards customer purchase intention, Muhammed and Deddy (2018) analyzed the

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data of the study with the use of multiple linear regression analysis on SPSS on the 314 questionnaire that were collected. 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 academic and business practitioners regarding the store atmosphere and its influence towards customer purchase intention. In a bid to examine the influence of service quality, corporate image, and customer relationship marketing on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, Karyose et al., (2017) gathered the population of 180 bank customers and analyzed the data received through theStructural Equation Model (SEM).The results of the analysis reveals that service quality, corporate image, and customer relationship marketing has positive influence on customer satisfaction, and service quality, corporate image, customer relationship marketing has significant influence on customer loyalty,in addition to customer satisfaction that also has effects on customer loyalty.

In a study conducted by Teshita and Gemedi (2021) to examine the customers' relationship management practices on customer retention and loyalty, it was revealed that the four customer relationship management dimensions are strongly related and customer relationship management has a significant relationship on customer retention and loyalty of the company. The study makes use of simple random sampling technique. The data were collected through the questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistics methods.

Riaz and Mazhar (2015) conducted a research study on the effect of store atmosphere on customer purchase intention. The objective of the research was to identify the effects of atmosphere on the consumer purchase intention in international retail chain outlets of Karachi, Pakistan. It was the first study conducted to investigate the collective impact of atmospheric variables at one point in a time on purchase intention. The research was causal in nature and the sample of 300 consumers who usually patronized these outlets was taken. The data for the research work was collected through a well-structured questionnaire and also analyzed through regression analysis. Research findings indicate that atmospheric variables such as cleanliness, scent, lighting, and display has a positive influence on consumers' purchase intention; whereas underground music and color have insignificant impact on consumers' purchase intention. In a research work conducted by Albarq (2021) on the effect of Web atmospheric clues on the purchase intention of Jordanian shoppers, it clearly shows that the satisfaction component effectively negotiates the impact of Website clues on the intent of purchase and the purchase intention is a consequent effect of the satisfaction caused by some preliminary factors. The primary data was collected through survey method from the respondent. The data was collected from the

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period of July to January 2020 in the city of Amman. The Structural Equation Modeling method was used to analyze the data with AMOS 22.0 software. The study recommended that Web managers should designate a higher number of resources to the clues that enhance the excitement value of the atmospherics of Web portals.

3. Methodology

This study adopts quantitative method to assess the effect of store atmosphere on customer relationship management of chosen retail outlets in Lagos state. The population of the study is immeasurable as it focused on the customers of the three major retailing companies (Shoprites, Buyrites and Spar retail outlets) branches situated in Lagos state. In view of the infinite nature of the population, the sample size for this study was considered through Godden (2004) sample size model estimated to be 246.Survey method as a research design was considered through a self-administered questionnaire in order to determine the opinions and position of target audienceon the subject matter. Multistage sampling technique which involves using different sample techniques at different stages in selecting sample respondents was also adopted. The analysis of the study was done via SPSS. The variables used to measure the construct of the study are store layout and store temperature adopted from Adebayo (2023).

4. Findings of the Study

Model for the Hypothesis

The study shows hypothesized model of the relationship and estimates of the parameter values that are used to develop equations. The research work is based on two major constructs, namely store atmosphere, and customer relationship management, that is,

$$Y = f(X)$$

Where Y = customer relationship management.
X = store atmosphere

$$CR = f(SA) \quad \ldots\ldots 3.1$$

$$SA = STL + STE + e \quad \ldots\ldots 3.2$$

Substituting (3.2) into (3.1)

$$CE = f\{STL + STE\} \quad \ldots\ldots 3.3$$

$$CE_i = \alpha + \beta_1 ed_i + \beta_2 rd_i + u_i \quad \ldots\ldots 3.4$$

Where:
CR= CustomersRelationship
SA= Store Atmosphere
STL=Store Layout
STE= Store Temperature
α=Constant term;
β_1= coefficient of the variable
U_i= Error term

Descriptive Statistics of the Research Constructs

Table 1 below presents the mean and standard deviation of the entire variables used in this study. Customer Relations recorded the highest mean (M = 4.035, SD =. 9632) while store layout has the lowest mean (M =3.83, SD = 1.01). Thus, the entire variables means were in the range of high level.

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Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Variables

Constructs	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Customer Relations	150	1.00	5.00	4.0347	.96315
Store Temperature	150	1.00	5.00	4.0107	1.05850
Store Layout	150	1.00	5.00	3.8267	1.00913

Sources: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2: Validity Statistics

Validity Test	KMO	Barlett's Test	Sig.
i. Store Atmosphere	.636	59.565	.000
ii. Customer Relationship	.684	61.342	.000

Source: *Researcher's Fieldwork Compu tation, 2024*

This above table 2 shows the suitability of the data for structure detection. High values (close to 1.0) generally indicate that factor analysis may be useful with the data. If the value is less than 0.50, the results of the factor analysis probably would not be very useful. Since all the values of the Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) are greater than 0.50, this indicates that the result of factor analysis is useful

Table 3: Reliability Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients Table

Variables	Cronbach Alpha Coefficients
i. Store Atmosphere	.743
ii. Customer Relationship	.751

Source: *Researcher's Fieldwork Computation, 2024*

The above table 3 shows that the scales have good internal consistency. By implication, all the scales are reliable.

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Store Atmosphere

The mean and standard deviation indicated in table 4 below show 10 items representing store atmosphere with two dimensions (store layout and store temperature). All the items recorded high levels of mean score. "Store's layout and space for location of clerks and checkout counters attract customers" recorded highest mean score (M = 4.04, SD = 1.146), whereas "Store's space temperature makes customers to stay longer" recorded a lowest mean score of (M = 3.79, SD = 1.329) respectively. This result shows that "Store's layout and space for location of clerks and checkout counters attract customers" is the main characteristic representing the store atmosphere in selected retail store in Lagos Nigeria.

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Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Store Atmosphere

Code	Detail	Mean	SD.
Store Layout			
SL1	Customers are attracted to store where the inventories are well arranged through racetrack layout.	4.02	1.144
SL2	Store's layout and space for location of clerks and checkout counters attract customers	4.04	1.146
SL3	Customers increases patronage when store location or other signage are easy to identify	3.97	1.176
SL4	Firm's exceptionally beautiful decoration guarantees customer retention	4.04	1.080
SL5	Rate of customer defection are low when retail service providers were able to provide lighting features	3.98	1.207
Store Temperature			
ST1	Store's space temperature makes customers to stay longer.	3.79	1.329
ST2	Store's ambient temperature influence customer's spending habit	3.84	1.227
ST3	Customer's positive experience increases with conducive store temperature	3.84	1.270
ST4	Store ambient temperature guarantee repeat purchase	3.86	1.280
ST5	Rate of customer defection are low when retailers provides low ambient temperature for their customers	3.81	1.304

Sources: Field Survey, 2024

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Customer Relations

The mean and standard deviation indicated in table 5 below reveal there are five items representing customer relation. All the items recorded high levels of mean score. "Customers' perception of store that celebrate customers on their birthdays and other festive periods build loyalty" recorded highest mean score (M = 4.07, SD = 1.153), whereas "Customers are satisfied when service providers communicate with them through different platforms" recorded a lowest mean score of (M = 4.00, SD = 1.153) respectively. This result shows that "Customers' perception of store that celebrate customers on their birthdays and other festive periods build loyalty" is the main characteristic representing the customer relation in selected retail store in Lagos Nigeria.

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Customer Relations

Code	Detail	Mean	SD
CUR1	Good communication between the service providers and their customers guarantee customer loyalty	4.04	1.134
CUR2	Store that rewards loyal customers enjoys continuous patronage of customers	4.05	1.116
CUR3	Customers are satisfied when service providers communicate with them through different platforms	4.00	1.153
CUR4	Customers build trust in a retail firm that addresses customers' complaint and negative feedback swiftly	4.01	1.156
CUR5	Customers' perception of store that celebrate customers on their birthdays and other festive periods build loyalty	4.07	1.153

Sources: Field Survey, 2024

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Table 6: Normality Test (Skewness and Kurtosis)

Constructs	N	Skewness	Kurtosis
Customer Relations	150	-1.729	1.973
Store Temperature	150	-1.699	1.394
Store Layout	150	-1.227	0.343

Sources: Field Survey, 2024

As asserted by Tabachnich and Fidel (2007), the rule of thumbs for the skewness and kurtosis is within the range of ±2.58. Based on the analysis, the residual appears to be normal and the values of skewness and kurtosis were close to zero (Afifi et al., 2003). Consequently, the normality assumption was not violated (see Table 6 above).

Table 7: Multi-collinearity Test (VIF and Tolerance)

		Collinearity Statistics	
Constructs	**Items**	**Tolerance**	**VIF**
Store Temperature	5	.809	1.237
Store Layout	5	.809	1.237

Sources: Field Survey, 2024

The result in the table 7 above shows the absence of multi-collinearity among the independent variables due to the fact that the VIF values are less than 5 while the tolerance values are more than 0.20. A critical examination of these results indicated that multi-collinearity was not a problem.

Regression Analysis and Test of Hypothesis

Multiple regression analysis was usedto determine the relationship between store atmosphere (store layout and store atmosphere) and customer relationship of selected store-based retail outlets in Lagos state Metropolis

Table 8: Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.726[a]	.582	.471	.84051	1.550

a. Predictors: (Constant), Store Layout, Store Temperature

b. Dependent Variable: Customer Relationship

Sources: Researcher's Survey, 2024

The model summary as indicated in table 4.27above shows that R-Square is 0.582; this implies that 58.2% of variation in the dependent variable (customer relationship) was explained by the store atmospheric variables (store layout and store temperature) while the remaining 41.8% is due to other variables that are not included in the model. This means that the regression (model formulated) is useful for making predictions

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Table 9: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.075	2	12.537	16.331	.000[b]
	Residual	*243.848*	*147*	*.706*		
	Total	*226.023*	*149*			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Relationship
b. Predictors: (Constant), Store Layout, Store Temperature
Sources: *Researcher's Survey, 2024*

The table 9 above summarized the results of the analysis of variation in the customer experience with large value of regression sum of squares (23.075) in comparison to the residual sum of squares with value of 243.848. The result indicated that the model fit to explain a lot of the variation in the operation of customer relationship. Thus, the estimated F-value (16.331) as given in the table above with significance value of 0.000, is less than p-value of 0.05 ($p<0.05$). This means that the store atmosphere as a whole can jointly influence change in the customer relationship.

Table 10: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.139	.315		6.781	.000
	Store Temp	.253	.072	.291	3.502	.001
	Store Layout	.192	.076	.210	2.529	.012

a. Dependent Variable: Customer 's Experience
Sources: *Researcher's Survey, 2024*

The dependent variable as shown in the table 4.29 clarifies the influence of store atmosphere variables (store layout and store temperature) on the customer relationship. This was used as a yardstick to examine the influence between the two independent variables. Specifically, Hypothesis H_{1b} predicted that store layoutis positively related to customer relationship. Result indicated that store layout had a significant positively relationship with customer relationship ($\beta = 0.192$, $t = 2.529$, $p = .012$). The result revealed that the store layout will eventually serve as the determinant of customer relationship. Therefore, Hypothesis H_{1b} is supported.

Hypothesis H_{1a} predicted that store temperature is positively related to customer relationship. Result indicated that store temperature had a positive and significant relationship with customer relationship($\beta = 0.253$, $t = 3.502$, $p = .001$). Thus, the Hypothesis H_{1a} is supported at 5% level of significant. The overall summary of this regression analysis result in relations to the coefficient of store atmosphere have significant influence on customer relationship of store-based retail outlets in Lagos state Metropolis in the area of store layout and store atmosphere. This implies that the null hypothesis was rejected, hence, the alternate hypotheses was accepted. Thus, store atmosphere has significant influence on customer

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relationship of store-based retail outlets in Lagos state Metropolis. The result of the above analysis for hypothesis supported the empirical findings of Riaz and Mazhar (2015),Mohammed and Deddy (2018), Richard et al., (2021), where positive correlations were found between the independent variables of store atmosphere (cleanliness, lighting, music, floor adverts, employee efficient service, employee appearance) and the dependent variables of customer satisfaction (positive image of store, pleasant mood, time spent in store, intention to revisit store).

5. Implication of the study

The implication of this finding is that retail store ambience is probably one of the most important factors in attracting and retaining customer and enhancing positive customer experience. In spite of this, retail store with beautiful environment both in and out tends to set the mood, character, quality, tone and atmosphere of their business that will have considerable effect in building customer loyalty. it also shows that basic retail store atmosphere elements have positive relationship with customer experience. Therefore, 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 relationship. This eventually shows that beautifully design of store atmosphere in a way that would arouse all the five sensory organs is a consideration in achieving customer relationship.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that retail store image and ambience is perhaps one of the most significant factors in drawing and reducing customer defection and also enhancing positive customer relationship. In spite of this, creation of appealing store image and ambient through using of mood, lighting, clean environment, using of color psychology are indispensable ingredients which supports customer attraction and loyalty.

The study recommended that retail stores practitioners should try as much as possible to emphasise more on ways of improving their retail store environment as retail store service marketing are not contending or competing on product parade or exhibit alone but on the adornment, beautification and pleasant appearance of their store environments at both interior and outdoor to build a lasting and sustaining cordial relationship with their esteem customers.

7. Limitations of the study

The major limitations experienced in the course of this study are problem in getting access to the respondents in gathering the primary data. The uncooperative attitude of respondents in collecting the questionnaire and even some of those who collected either failed to fill it appropriately or refuse to return the questionnaire when needed for collection. These limitations were partially overcome through the unflinching assistance of the retail store interns who assisted in getting in touch with most of the respondents.

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