Determinant Of Customers’ Choice Of Retail Outlet In South-East, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
The study examined the determinant of customers’ choice of retail outlet in South-East, Nigeria. Relevant literatures were reviewed. This study was anchored on intrapersonal theories. Survey research design was adopted. The population of study was made up of all customers of the entire retail outlet in South-East of Nigeria (Unknown). Purposive sampling technique as a non-probability sampling was used to obtain a sample size five hundred and seven (507) customers of the retail outlet. Questionnaire was employed as the main instrument of data collection. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were employed in analyzing the data. The study found that Product quality had significant positive influence on customer choice of retail outlet. Ambience had a significant influence on customer choice of retail. Price had significant positive influence on customer choice of retail outlet. The study concludes that product quality, ambience and price, had significant positive effect on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East, Nigeria. The study therefore, recommended that retail outlets should focus on improving quality product to their consumers. They should try to attract new consumers and also retain the existing ones through quality product. Retail outlet should concentrate in offering good background music, lighting and good atmosphere for customers. Ambience had the highest 55% influence on consumer choice in a retail outlet. Pricing policy should be designed in such a way that the price of a product should be a balanced amount between customer affordability and profit generation for the retail outlet. Price is very important for any customer choice of retailers’ outlet.

Keywords: Product Quality, Ambience, Price and Customer Choice

INTRODUCTION
Retailing has become such an intrinsic part of our everyday lives that it is often taken for granted. The nations that have enjoyed the greatest economic and social progress have been those with a strong retail sector. The world over retail business is dominated by small family run chains and regionally targeted retail outlets (Pride, Ferrell, Lukas, Schembri, Niininen and Casidy, 2018). Gradually more and more markets in the Western world are being taken over by billion-dollar multinational conglomerates. The larger retailers have set up huge supply/distribution chains, inventory management systems, financing pacts, and wide scale marketing plans which have allowed them to provide better services at competitive prices by achieving economies of scale (Brennan, Canning and McDowell 2011). Retailing includes every business that sells to consumers. No matter how well a product/service is in terms of production, packaging, promotion and pricing, it will be considered a total failure if the product/service is not made available to consumers. It is distribution that makes it possible for goods/services to be available to consumers. Distribution is therefore, one of the variables that a marketer must consider in drafting a successful marketing programme (Berman 2012). Given its potential in conferring a competitive advantage in the retail outlet, it is hardly surprising that the issues of distribution have remained topical among marketing experts and practitioners. Retailing is a major component of distribution and essential service industry which provides an important service to customers, making products available when and where consumers want them (Berman 2012).
Sometimes a retail outlet street has a partial or full roof to create a more comfortable retail outlet environment – protecting customers from various types of weather conditions such as extreme temperatures, winds or
precipitation. Forms of non-shop retailing include online retailing (a type of electronic-commerce used for business-to-consumer (B2C) transactions) and mail order (Alexander 2016). Jobber (2009) posits that consumer decision-making involves not only the choice of product and brand but also the choice of retail outlet. Extant literature confirms the evolving state of retailing as it can take both retail outlet and non-retail outlet forms. Most retailing is conducted in retail outlets such as supermarkets, department retail outlets and in developing countries, in some traditional open markets. Whatever the form, the customer is called upon to make a choice (Oghojofo, Ladipo and Nwagwu, 2012). There are factors that influence this choice making by customers. The developing nature of retailing and its various forms; and the consequent competitiveness in the sector have always attracted the interest of scholars. Retail choice and patronage are hardly a single factor phenomenon (North and Kotze, 2004). Thus studies on retail outlet and customer choice have been done from various directions. Morschett, Swoboda, and Foscht (2005), Ghosh (1990) studied the effects of retail outlet attributes or retail outlet images which are fundamentally the marketing mix of the retailer, on retail patronage. None had concentrated on the determinant of customers’ choice of retail outlet in South-East making the study unique.

Statement of the Problem
Due to the strategic nature of retailing, marketing literature and business experience point to the tendency that the bigger the business, the greater the risk, the keener the competition and the lower the profit margin (Santon, 1998 in Manu and Priyaka2017). Another study (Brand, 1996 in Farias and Aguiar 2014) showed that the great majority of retail outlets are in direct competition with one to twelve other retail outlets in the same trading areas. This has increased competition within the retail industry tremendously and such made, retail outlet loyalty eroded. The increase difficulty of achieving a distinctive retail outlet personality undoubtedly has contributed to this development. The number of shoppers patronizing one outlet exclusively has declined, whereas the number of shoppers patronizing more than one retail outlet has increased (Diálo, Chandon, Cliquet and Philippe 2013). However, in the recent times there seems to be a growing interest in consumer retail outlet preferences in the developing countries of Asia and Africa. For instance, in India, Sinha and Banejee (2004) in a study found that retail outlet convenience and customer services positively influence customer’s supermarket choice, of retail outlet. Joshi and Kulkarni (2012) identified twenty elements of retail outlet atmospherics which were regrouped into five factors viz. Impressive retail outlet interiors and exteriors, Retail outlet Personnel and fellow shoppers, Comfort, Beauty and Aesthetics, Display and creative arrangement of products on shelves and Attractive displays and behavior of the retail outlet personnel. The study brings out the facts that impressive displays, ability to move freely in the retail outlet, quality of the fellow shoppers and well behaved and humble employees significantly contribute to enhancing the retail outlet atmosphere and gives excellent retail outlet experience to the customers translating into more sales and footfalls. Diálo, Chandon, Cliquet and Philippe (2013) identified main influencing factors as retail outlet image, price, and familiarity. Farias and Aguiar (2014) concluded that it is imperative for retailers today to take in account customers holistic experience as a relevant tool to manage the retail operation in a scenario of global competition. Sabrina (2014) focused on the influence of different atmosphere factors of a retail outlet, on consumer behavior and confirmed the impact of factors of environment have on the behavioral and emotional aspects of the subject during his visit on the retail outlet.

Objectives of the Study
The objective of the study is to examine the determinant of customers’ choice of retail outlet in South-East; specific objective are to:
1. Determine the effect of Product Quality on customer’s choice of a retail outlet in South-East.
2. Examine if Ambience influences customer’s choice of retail outlet in South-East.
3. Investigate the effect of Price on customer’s choice of retail outlet in South-East.

Research Questions
The research raised the following questions in line with the objectives to guide this study:
1. To what extent does product quality affect customers’ choice of retail outlet in South-East.
2. To what degree does ambience influences customers’ choice of retail outlet in South-East
3. To what extent does price influence customers choice of retail outlet in South-East?
Hypotheses
The following null hypotheses are formulated to give direction to this study:
H₁: Product quality does not have significant influence on customers’ choice of retail outlet in South-East
H₂: Ambience does not have significant influence on customers’ choice of retail outlet in South-East
H₃: Price does not have significant influence on customers’ choice of retail outlet in South-East

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Conceptual Framework
Retailing
The word 'Retail' is derived from a French word with the prefix re and the verb retailer meaning "to cut again". Evidently, retail trade is one that cuts off smaller portions from large lumps of goods. It is a process through which goods are transported to final consumers. In other words, retailing consists of the activities involved in selling directly to the ultimate consumer for personal, non-business use. It embraces the direct-to-customer sales activities of the producer, whether through his own retail outlets by house-to-house canvassing or by mail-order business. Retailing includes all activities associated with selling of goods and services to ultimate consumers. It involves selling in units and small quantities (Barker, 2001). According to a court decision “a retail sale is a sale made to consumer, rather than to dealer or merchant for resale” (Stanton, 2008). Quantities of goods sold or prices at which they are sold are immaterial in determining whether the sale is at retail, the court stated. A retailer is a merchant middleman who sells primarily to ultimate consumers (Anyanwu, 2005).
Retail refers to the activity of selling goods or services directly to consumers or end-users. (Harper 2008). Some retailers may sell to business customers, and such sales are termed non-retail activity. In some jurisdictions or regions, legal definitions of retail specify that at least 80 percent of sales activity (Pride, Ferrell, Lukas, Schembri, Niininen, and Casidy2018). Retailing often occurs in retail outlets or service establishments, but may also occur through direct selling such as through vending machines, door-to-door sales or electronic channels (Jones, Brian; Shaw, Eric 2006). Although the idea of retail is often associated with the purchase of goods, the term may be applied to service providers that sell to consumers. Retail service providers include retail shop, tourism, insurance, private healthcare, private education, private security firms, legal firms, publishers, public transport and others. For example, a tourism provider might have a retail division that books travel and accommodation for consumers plus a wholesale division that purchases blocks of accommodation, hospitality, transport and sightseeing which are subsequently packaged into a holiday tour for sale to retail travel agents(Jones, Brian; Shaw, Eric 2006).
A retailer is a merchant or occasionally an agent or a business enterprise, whose main business is selling directly to ultimate consumers for non-business use (Pride, Ferrell, Lukas, Schembri, Niininen, and Casidy2018). He performs many marketing activities such as buying, selling, grading, risk-trading, and developing information about customers’ wants. A retailer may sell infrequently to industrial users, but these are wholesale transactions, not retail sales. If over one half of the amount of volume of business comes from sales to ultimate consumers, i.e. sales at retail, he is classified as a retailer. Retailing occurs in all marketing channels for consumer products (Pride, Ferrell, Lukas, Schembri, Niininen, and Casidy2018).

Consumer Choice
Consumer choice is very important in marketing of a given product and must be taken into account for any business to succeed. According to Aaker (2001), consumers are indifferent to a brand and they in fact, buy with respect to the features, price and convenience with little concern to the brand name. There is likely little equity. If on the other hand they continue to purchase the brand even in the face of the competitor with superior features, prices and convenience, then substantial value exists in the brands and perhaps in its symbol or slogans. Fredrick (2000) states that making the product available at all times so that the customer has a choice is one of the very important marketing strategies a manufacturer can use and can help achieve unique competitive advantage. To provide satisfaction effectively to the consumers, marketers must understand how all their marketing activities are perceived because perceptions greatly influence consumer choice of a product or service.
When a person has a choice between A or B, or making a purchase or not making a purchase, that person is in a position to make a decision. Thus if there is almost always a choice, then there is always almost an opportunity for consumers to make decisions (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009). Consumer decision making is a process that follows certain steps as discussed below. Consumers may skip or minimize one or more steps in the decision making process depending on the level of involvement, the personal, social and economic significance of the decision. The starting point of a purchase decision is customer need or problem recognition. It occurs whenever we see a significant difference between our current state of affairs and some desired or ideal state (Solomon et al 2010). We realize that to get from here to there we need to solve a problem which may be large or small simple or complex. The decision involved in the development of preference for and choice of an object will vary depending on the complexity of the needs and the alternative means of satisfying them. When the decision process is especially detailed and rigorous, extended problem solving then occurs. Consumers are open to information from various sources and are motivated to undertake the effort required in making "the right choice". The process of analysis and reflection however does not cease after purchase and use (Blackwell, 2009).

Theoretical Framework
This study is anchored on intrapersonal theories. Earlier studies adopted different theories to explain retail patronage behaviour. Bellenger and Moschis (1982) Ben, Oghojafor & Nwagwu 2012) group these theories into intrapersonal or interpersonal theories. Intrapersonal theories highlight the individual’s internal and physical characteristics as the core explanation of patronage behaviour. Intrapersonal theories include personality, motivation, and attitudinal theories. Prior studies for example have investigated the relationship between consumer personality variables and retail outlet loyalty (Lessing & Tollefsoy 1973, Ben et al 2012). In the same vain, a number of studies have investigated patronage motives related to retail outlet selection (Ben et al 2012). Finally, attitudinal theories have been used extensively to explain retail patronage behaviour using concept such as retail outlet image and consumer attitude toward retail outlets. Needs or motive may well determine whether or not a customer will shop in a retail outlet. The strength of the consumer’s motive also appears to be an important positively related element in their pleasure and arousal in the market place and with satisfaction in terms of retail preference. Consumers shop for experiential and emotional reasons as well as for goods, services and information (Loudon & Delia Bitta, 2002).The key motivational theories behind non-product related motivation in retail outlet behaviour lies in motivational theories-of stimulation (environmental attributes), affiliation (social interaction and cognition (learning about new trends and innovations).

Several researchers have proposed that an individual is physically motivated to maintain a level of stimulation optimum to that individual. When the level becomes too high or too low, an individual will take action to correct the level. (Loudon and Delia Bitta, 2002), Retail trading areas may arouse or depress a person's activation level. When the retailing area depresses the level of stimulation, corrective action in terms of out retail outlet may result. To enter retailing is easy; to fail is even easier! To survive in retailing, a firm must do a satisfactory job in its primary role -catering to consumers. Rama Subramaniam the former head of retailing area depresses the level of stimulation, corrective action in terms of out retail outlet may result. To enter retailing is easy; to fail is even easier! To survive in retailing, a firm must do a satisfactory job in its primary role -catering to consumers. Rama Subramaniam the former head -of retail segment Spensors described a successful retailer as a "merchant who sells goods that won't come back to customers who will". Of course, a retail firm also must fulfill its other role -serving producers and wholesalers. This dual role is both the justification for retailing and the key to success in retailing.

Empirical Review
A number of studies have been undertaken to ascertain the determinant of customers’ choice of retail outlet. Some of these studies are: Karumba and Ngigi (2018) assessed the factors that customers in Karatina consider when choosing a particular supermarket for purchase of goods and services. Supermarkets have been facing customer loyalty challenge. This make supermarket sub-sector a fundamental area of study with the aim of establishing the real drivers of supermarket choice. Focus was on product and service diversification, operational schedules, promotions and reward schemes and supermarket environment. Stratified random sampling technique was used to pick respondents in the population. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Multinomial logistic regression was used to fit relational models. The study established that special discounts, security, cleanliness, product quality and fast customer service...
influenced the customers’ choice significantly. Free goods, loyalty cards, vouchers, background music, frontage and parking outlet do not significantly affect choice of the supermarkets. The study observes that supermarkets that have high levels of cleanliness, security, variety and quality products, fast customer service and convenient operational schedules attracts the big proportion of customers.

Lubis (2018) evaluated the customer preferences of online retail outlet: demographic factors and online shop application issue. The growth of online market both from sellers and enthusiasts of online retail outlet from year to year continues to increase. Consumer retail outlet preferences are key to successful transactions, both traditionally and online. Sellers need to be aware of their target consumer profile in deciding that sales are developed into the online market and remain within the traditional market. To analyze the customer preferences of online retail outlet, a total of 200 respondents in Medan City, North Sumatera Province, participated in this study. The predictor variables proposed in this study are the demographics and ownership of online retail outlet applications using Descriptive survey research, correlation and regression analysis. The results indicate that online retail outlet decisions are strongly influenced by sex factors, income levels and online retail outlet applications. Factors of everyday life, age and education do not significantly affect retail outlet preferences both online and traditional.

Sehgal and Khanna (2017) examined the factors affecting consumer behavior and preference related to retail outlet at organized retail outlets. In this paper, analysis of the consumer’s preference of the specific attributes of selected 5 major retail brands of Ludhiana is done. Retail retail outlets selected were Big Bazaar, Lifestyle, Westside, Vishal Mega Mart and Globus. Factor analysis has been used in identifying the main factors. The factors include sales assistance, retail outlet ambience, retail outlet attractiveness, retail outlet pricing policy, retail outlet promotion and retail outlet Convenience. Descriptive research design was adopted. descriptive analysis was undertaken and to establish the factors that contribute towards the preference of consumer for retail outlet selection exploratory factor analysis. The findings of this study revealed that there are six key retail outlet selection dimensions that play a crucial role in retail outlet selection. These are Sales assistance, retail outlet ambience, retail outlet attractiveness, retail outlet pricing policy, retail outlet promotion and retail outlet convenience. Among these six factors, sales assistance emerged as the most important factor and retail outlet ambience emerged as the least important factor to consumers. The study also revealed that gender does not have a significant impact in determining choice of retail outlet. The study is not without management implications. In the competitive retailing industry and continued economic pressure of the contemporary marketplace, retail outlet managers should continue to identify influential retail outlet selection dimensions that consumers perceive vital when retail outlet. An understanding of factors that motivate shoppers to select one retail outlet amongst other retail outlets, and the identification of in-retail outlet and out-of-retail outlet activities encourages consumers to stay loyal are critical to the success of retail businesses. Retailers should also acknowledge that there is a rising market with regard to consumers who are more demanding. Therefore, retailers in particular, patronage levels may be enhanced considerably through continuous monitoring and expediting of the retail outlet selection factors identified in this study.

Masinde (2018) examined the factors that influence consumer’s choice of brands in the market. The research adopted a descriptive research design. The target population for this study was all the small-scale consumers’ products in Nairobi region. A sample of 41 stations was drawn from a list obtained from PIEA. Two customers were interviewed from each petrol station. The questionnaire was the principal tool in collecting primary data. The data was analyzed by applying both qualitative and quantitative data. Various factors were identified to influence the consumers’ choice of the brands to purchase. These included price; recommendations from experts and colleagues; quality of service; returns from the business; how often one frequents the petrol station as a customer; authority from the workplace; vehicle manufacturers’ specifications; customers taste and preferences; conformity of equipment ( LPG regulators are specific to gas cylinders of certain brands); ease of availability of substitutes; perceived quality of certain brands as compared to others; and brand loyalty that arises as a result of desire by customers to maintain a record of service for their vehicles. These findings whilst not surprising adds to the knowledge of the buying behaviour of users and extends the work that has previously been undertaken to investigate brand loyalty of consumers. The study recommends various measures towards improvement of quality and pricing of petroleum brands. It is also recommended to researchers that a research to cover the whole country would be essential to give an
indication of whether or not the upcountry populace would display similar trends as Nairobi and its surroundings.

Karumba and Ngigi (2018) examined the factors that customers in Karatina consider when choosing a particular supermarket for purchase of goods and services the study choosing a particular supermarket variable product and service diversification, operational schedules, promotions and reward schemes and supermarket environment. Descriptive and inferential statistics, Multinomial logistic regression were used in testing hypotheses. The study established that special discounts, security, cleanliness, product quality and fast customer service influenced the customers’ choice significantly. Free goods, loyalty cards, vouchers, background music, frontage and parking outlet do not significantly affect choice of the supermarkets. The study observes that supermarkets that have high levels of cleanliness, security, variety and quality products, fast customer service and convenient operational schedules attracts the big proportion of customers.

Polat and Kulter (2017) studied The Factor of retail outlet preferences of consumers: Data were collected from a sample of 800 customers and owners of retail outlet using a close ended questionnaire the data obtained were analyzed using spearman Rank correlation coefficient and regression analysis. The result established that the factor which determine customers’ market and supermarket choices include product diversity, product quality, inner atmosphere and appearance, quick retail outlet facility, attitude and interest of staff and prices of goods.

Yilmaz, Aktas and Celik (2017) studied development of a scale for measuring consumer behavior in retail outlet choice. The descriptive survey method was used for the study while a total of 160 respondents were purposively selected. The t-test statistical analysis was used to test the stated null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The study found location, product, price and quality, physical appearance, attitude of retail outlet staff as important factor shaping customer outlet performances.

Cosmas and Chitando (2019) investigated the role of store location in influencing customers’ store choice. Two outlets that belong to the same supermarket chain were studied. These outlets shared similar management and marketing strategies. A descriptive survey of customers and management was done through the use of questionnaires, interviews and observations as research instruments. It was noted that outlets with better parking space attracted high income earners, whilst proximity to other complimentary outlets increased pedestrian store traffic. Out of ten factors that may influence store choice, seven factors were considered by customers to be pertinent. Of the seven factors, four were store location features, namely travelling time, location convenience, proximity to complimentary outlets and store visibility. This study is very critical to retailing strategists and marketers since location require consideration prior to trading, any error in this regard will now be cast in concrete and it will be expensive to alleviate.

Deka (2019) studied store ambience and consumer choice of retail store format. This study is done to understand firstly the factors influencing the consumer’s desire to shift from traditional store to the modern store formats. Linear multiple regression analysis is used to find the relative weight of the price, quality, store ambience and product availability on influencing consumers for shifting to modern retail stores. The associations between the demographic variables and the desire to shift from traditional stores were also further studied. Store ambience was then further investigated to see its association with the demographic variables. 18 constituents of store ambience were also ranked according to the relative importance assigned by the consumers. The result revealed that store ambience is an important consideration for preferring modern store format. The relationship between the effect of store ambience and the demographic variables is significant. The study was conducted with 177 respondents in the city of Guwahati, Assam.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted survey research design. The study was carried out in South-East. South-East Nigeria. With respect to this work, the researcher made use of primary data. The population of study was made up of all customers of the entire retail outlet in South-East of Nigeria (Unknown). Purposive sampling technique as a non-probability sampling was used as the technique for the research. A sample of five hundred and seven (507) customers of the retail outlet in South-East will be study. The study used structured questionnaire as the research instrument. This study adopted face and content validity. For the purposes of this study; test-retest
reliability will be the main focus. Thus, the study will employed Cronbach’s alpha to verify the internal consistency of each construct in order to achieve reliability.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The analysis of data was performed using SPSS package. This involved descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Multiple regression analysis will be employed to assess the factors influencing customer’s choice of retail outlet customer. P value was considered significant at level 0.05.

**Presentation and Analysis of Data**

In this chapter, the data generated from the questionnaire distributed to the employees of the selected Banks were presented and analyzed. A total of Five hundred and seven (507) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the employees of the selected Banks. A total of four hundred and fifty (450) copies were retrieved from the respondents, out of the Five hundred and seventeen (517). Fifty (50) copies were not properly filled while the remaining seven (7) copies were misplaced by the respondents. This gives a response rate of 87 percent. The analyses were based on the four hundred and fifty relevant copies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Descriptive Characteristics of the Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer’s Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source: SPSS Version 21.0**

The table above shows the summary of statistics used in the analysis. It provides information about the mean and standard deviation of the variables used in the study. The mean value for customer’s choice is 20.33 while the standard deviation is 3.307. Product quality and Ambience recorded a mean value of 17.86 and 18.30 with a standard deviation of 4.245 and 3.952 respectively. Price and Parking Space have mean values of 14.20 and 17.91 with standard deviation of 2.036 and 3.699 respectively. Finally, Location recorded a mean value of 18.25 with a standard deviation of 4.059.

**Correlation Analysis**

Pearson correlation was employed to measure the strength and relationship between independent variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient is a measure of the strength of a linear association between two variables and is denoted by r. Table 2 below shows the summary of correlation coefficient.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Correlation Matrix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PQ Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source: SPSS 21.0**

The table above shows the extent of association between the dependent and independent variables used in the study. Product Quality (PQ) had a correlation coefficient of 0.654 with a probability value of 0.005. This implies that product quality has a positive strong relationship with customer’s choice of a retail outlet (CCRA) in South-East Nigeria. Ambience (AM) had a correlation coefficient of 0.790 with a probability value of 0.001. This implies Ambience has a very strong and positive relationship with customer’s choice of a retail outlet (CCRA) in South-East Nigeria. Price (PR) recorded a correlation coefficient of 0.219 with a
probability value of 0.000. This implies that Price has a positive weak relationship with customer’s choice of a retail outlet (CCRA) in South-East Nigeria

**Multiple Regression Analysis**

Multiple regression result was employed to test the effect of independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables. The result of the multiple regression analysis is presented in the tables below.

**Table 3 Summary of the Regression Result**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
<th>Durbin-Watson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R Square Change</td>
<td>F Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2944</td>
<td>.686</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td>3.185</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>6.151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), PQ, AM, PR,
b. Dependent Variable: CC

Source: SPSS 21.0

Table 4.38 shows that $R^2$ which measures the strength of the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable have the value of 0.686. This implies that 69% of the variation in retail outlet is explained by variations in customer choice (Product Quality, Ambience, Price, Parking Space and Location). This was supported by adjusted $R^2$ of 0.572.

In order to check for auto correlation in the model, Durbin-Watson statistics was employed. Durbin-Watson statistics of 1.875 in table 4.4 shows that the variables in the model are not auto correlated and that the model is reliable for predications.

**Table 4 Analysis of Variance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>312.052</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.410</td>
<td>6.151</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>3307.502</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>10.146</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3619.554</td>
<td>331</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: CC
b. Predictors: (Constant), PQ, AM, PR.

Source: SPSS 21.0

The F-statistics value of 6.151 in table 4.5 with F-statistics probability of 0.000 shows that the independent variables has significant effect on dependent. This shows that product quality, ambience, price, can collectively explain the variations in customers choice of retail outlet in South-East, Nigeria.

**Test of Hypotheses**

Three hypotheses formulated in this study were tested using t-statistics and significance value of the individual variables in the regression result. The essence of this is to ascertain how significant are the effect of individual independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables. The summary of the result is presented in the table below.

**Coefficients of the Regression Result**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>22.159</td>
<td>1.757</td>
<td>12.612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product Quality</td>
<td>1.040</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ambience</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>1.108</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Choice

Source: SPSS 21.0

**Hypothesis One**

Ho: Product quality does not have significant influence on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East

$H_1$: Product quality had significant positive influence on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East
Based on the t-statistics of product quality had a value of 2.003 and probability value of .007 in table 4.4.1. Product quality was found to have a significant effect on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. We then conclude that product quality has a significant positive effect on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East at 0.05 significant level.

**Hypothesis Two**
Ho: Ambience does not have significant influence on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East  
H1: Ambience had a significant influence on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East  
Table 4.4.1 shows that ambience had a t-statistics of 2.340 and probability value of .001 which is statistically significant at 5% level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. We then conclude that ambience had a significant positive influence on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East

**Hypothesis Three**
Ho: Price does not have significant positive influence on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East at 0.05 significant level.  
H1: Price had significant positive influence on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East  
From the table 4.6 above, the probability value for price has a t-statistics of 3.580, and probability value of .000 which is less than 0.05 (0.002< .05). We therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude price had significant positive influence on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East at 0.05 significant level.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**
This study examined determinant of customer choice of retail outlet in South-East, Nigeria. The data generated were subjected to descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. It was discovered that product quality has a significant positive influence on customer’s choice of retail outlet. This finding aligns with the study of Paulins 2005; Ciavolino & Dahlgaard 2007; Babakus & Yavas 2008; Cronin & Taylor 2012 Product quality and product features were considered the most important product choice criteria in a study of customer’s choice of retail outlet and had a significant positive relationship with customers’ choice of retail outlet. Yang, Peterson, and Cai, 2013; Clemes, Shu & Gan 2014; posits that there is significant relationship customer choice of retail outlet and product quality. The study also shows that product quality has significant influence on customer choice of retail outlet.

The study further revealed that ambience had a significant positive influence on customers’ choice of retail outlet in South-East. This agrees with the opinion of Zohre & Sreenivasan 2014; Kirkup & Rafiq 2014; Konishi & Sandfort, 2013 there results show a positive and significant relationship between the store atmosphere, service, and music with customers’ behavior and ambience services offered customer choice of retail outlet and responsible for retailer satisfaction towards the retail outlet. The result all so tally with Richardson, Jain & Dick (2016) discovered that the store’s atmosphere significantly enhances the customers’ impression about the store they visit.

The study revealed that Price had a significant positive influence on choice of retail outlet in South-East. This result agrees with Terblanch & Boschoff 2004; Torres 2001: that revealed price was an important criterion considered when choosing a retail outlet. This result also tally with that of Engel, Blackwell, & Minniard 2003; Carpenter and Moore (2006) who affirm pricing, product assortment and variety, merchandise quality, store environment and atmosphere are important factors in determining the choice of consumers retail outlet. The result also agrees with Arshad, Mohamed & Latiff 2006 and Trappey and Lai 2007 affirm that price was mentioned as a reason for consumer’s choice of retail outlets.

**Summary of Findings**
The data generated were analyzed using multiple regression analysis and the following were discovered.  
1. Product quality had significant positive influence on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East.  
2. Ambience had a significant influence on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East  
3. Price had significant positive influence on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East.
CONCLUSION
The study concludes that product quality, ambience, price, had significant positive effect on customer choice of retail outlet in South-East, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:
1. These retail outlets should focus on improving quality product to their consumers. They should try to attract new consumers and also retain the existing ones through quality product.
2. Retail outlet should concentrate in offering good background music, lighting and good atmosphere for customers. Ambience had the highest 55% influence on consumer choice in a retail outlet.
3. Pricing policy should be designed in such a way that the price of a product should be a balanced amount between customer affordability and profit generation for the retail outlet. Price is very important for any customer choice of retailers’ outlet.

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