

STORE ATTRIBUTES AND CUSTOMER PATRONAGE OF RETAIL OUTLETS IN NIGERIA**Anucha, Victor Chima Ph.D****Department of Marketing, Faculty of Business Studies,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria***Email: anucha.victor@yahoo.com***Abstract**

This study explored store attributes and customer patronage of retail outlets in Nigeria. The study adopted the correlation survey research design where data were collected from customers of some selected retail outlets in Port Harcourt. A sample size of 271 respondents was used for the study. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamene's formula. A structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using percentage and frequency analysis and pie chart, while the hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ). The SPSS 22.0 version was used to correlate the data on the study variables. The findings revealed that there is significant relationship between store cleanliness and customer patronage intention of retail outlets. This study also found a significant relationship between store cleanliness and repeat patronage of retail outlets. This study equally found a significant relationship between store lighting and customer patronage intention of retail outlets. This study also reported a significant relationship between store lighting and customer patronage of retail outlets. Based on these findings, it was concluded that store attributes (cleanliness and lighting) significantly enhance customer patronage of retail outlets in Nigeria. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that supermarket operators in Port Harcourt should design their store with colourful lighting and ensure that their store is clean as it would increase their level of customer patronage.

Keywords: Store attributes, customer patronage, store cleanliness, store lighting, patronage intention, repeat patronage, retail outlets.

Introduction

The retail industry is one of the most competitive industries in Nigeria. The industry is very competitive in view of the large number of retail outlets in the country. Given the large number of retail outlets in Nigeria, many retailers are strategizing to increase the level of customer patronage. Increasing customer patronage is the only way to survive in the midst of competition. Every retailer wants to increase his or her level of customer patronage. When a retailer is able to increase the level of customer patronage, his profit is guaranteed and the business will grow to become a larger entity. It is for this reason that retailers are doing all within their power to increase customer patronage. However, increasing customer patronage depends on the ability of retailers to make their store more attractive to the customers. In order to make the store more attractive to customers and increase the level of customer patronage, retailers must improve their store attributes (Singh, Katiyar, & Verma, 2014).

Store attributes are those physical characteristics of a store that entice a buyer to visit the store for shopping activities (Kotler in Sabrina, 2014). Such attributes comprise of the physical environment and design of the store that produce specific emotional effects on the buyer to make purchases. Store attributes are formed by different components such as cleanliness, scent, lighting, music, colors, temperature, display/layout, etc. A pleasant atmosphere is one of those elements which consumers extremely desire. When a consumer feels satisfied with the attributes (cleanliness, scent, lighting, color, display) of a store, he spends more time in the store, buys more and intends to revisit the store because of its pleasant atmospheric stimulus.

Store attributes cause several reactions on the consumer. It can influence his cognitive replies (upgrade his purchase, expenditures, impulse buying, the desire to spend more time in the shop); it can also have an impact on his affective replies (pleasure, mood, emotion) and cognitive (perceived quality of the service and the value of trade name) (Kotler in Sabrina, 2014). Wakefield & Baker in Hussain & Ali (2015) posit that the probability of customers staying longer in store increases due to atmospheric stimulus. Many people like to do their shopping in a store with pleasant atmosphere. They want to derive some pleasure in the course of doing their shopping. When a store possesses some unique features such as good lighting, music, scent and cleanliness, customers will like to do their shopping in that store. It is like mixing shopping with pleasure.

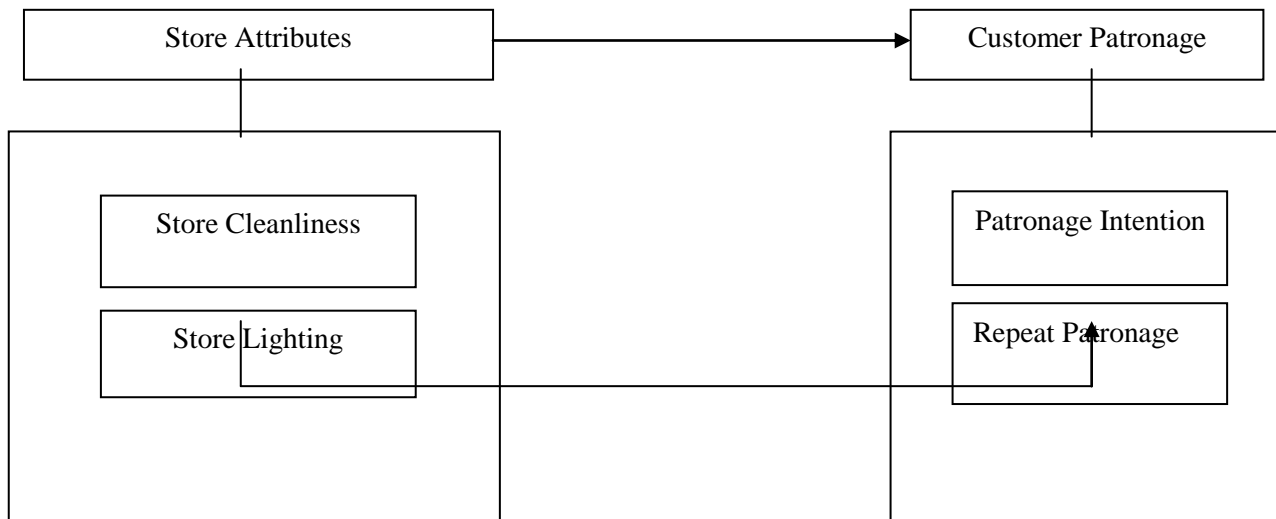
Store attributes can be used as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage. According to Sabrina (2014), store attributes are considered as a tool for increasing the competitiveness of a store. In a highly competitive industry like the retail industry, store attributes are essential in attracting customer to a store. Singh, Katiyar, & Verma (2014) posited that store attributes are seen as a differentiating factor. It distinguished one store from another. Consumers often describe a store in terms of its attribute that distinguished it from others. A pleasant atmosphere has the potentials of increasing the level of consumer patronage of a retail outlet. According to Srinivasan & Srivastava in Hussain & Ali (2015), an attractive and impressive atmosphere of retail chain outlets creates an enjoyable experience among the consumers, which directly affects consumers' purchase intention and their decision making process. Singh, et al (2014) posit that store attributes (including color, lighting, sales personnel, music and so on) form the overall context within which shoppers make decisions of store selection and patronage. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the relationship between store attributes and customer patronage of retail outlets in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The major challenge confronting retailers in Nigeria is how to increase the level of consumer patronage. Retailing businesses are growing at a rapid pace in the country. On a daily basis, new stores are opened both in the rural and urban areas. The growth in retail operations has made the industry more competitive as every retailer now strategizes to attract customers to their store. However, while some retail outlets enjoy large share of customer patronage others do not. A large number of retail outlets have closed down in recent years due to low patronage. The poor level of customer patronage could be linked to their unpleasant store attributes. It is believed that pleasant store attributes can help to increase the level of customer patronage of retail outlets. Although there is no empirical study that justify this claim as most of the studies on store attributes and customer patronage were conducted in the developed countries while empirical studies that examined the relationship between store attributes and customer patronage of retail outlets in developing country like Nigeria are lacking. This has created a vacuum in empirical literature which this study attempts to fill.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is shown in figure 1 below:



Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between store attributes and customer patronage of retail outlets in Port Harcourt. In order to achieve this broad aim, the study intends to attain the following objectives:

1. To determine the relationship between store cleanliness and customer patronage intention of retail outlets.
2. To examine the relationship between store cleanliness and repeat patronage of retail outlets.
3. To ascertain the relationship between store lighting and customer patronage intention of retail outlets.
4. To examine the relationship between store lighting and repeat patronage of retail outlets.

Research Questions

The following research questions are put forward to address the objectives of the study:

1. To what extent does store cleanliness influence customer patronage intention of retail outlets?
2. To what extent does store cleanliness influence repeat patronage of retail outlets?
3. To what extent does store lighting influence customer patronage intention of retail outlets?
4. To what extent does store lighting influence repeat patronage of retail outlets?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to guide this study:

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between store cleanliness and customer patronage intention of retail outlets.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between store cleanliness and repeat patronage of retail outlets.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between store lighting and customer patronage intention of retail outlets.
- Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between store lighting and customer patronage of retail outlets.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Store Attributes

Store attributes can be defined as fantasy environment providing a range of excitement and entertainment: musical, visual and theatrical for today's consumer. Kotler in Hussain & Ali (2015) describes store attributes as the design of retail outlet to produce specific emotional effects on the buyer that enhances his purchasing probability. Store attributes is an important part of the overall merchandising strategy. It has a huge impact on the consumers' emotion and satisfaction. Kotler in Singh, Katiyar & Verma (2014) considered store atmospheric attributes (scent, cleanliness, music, lighting, colour, display) as a competitive tool in attracting and maintaining a specific target market especially where product and price differences are nominal. They are important source of competitive advantage.

The overall attributes of a store can create a favorable consuming context and generate positive perceptive emotions about the store among consumers (Sirgy et al. in Chen & Hsieh, 2011). Silva & Giraldi in Hussain & Ali (2015) opined that an impressive attributes of retail chain outlets enhances the customer satisfaction level and purchase experience. Baker, Grawal & Parasuraman in Hussain & Ali (2015) stated that the probability of customers staying longer in store increases due to atmospheric stimulus. When a consumer feels satisfied from the retail environment of the store, he spends more time in a particular store and buys more because of pleasant environmental stimuli (Bohl, in Hussain & Ali, 2015).

Dimensions of Store Attributes

Available literature has shown that the major store attributes include: cleanliness, scent (fragrance), music, temperature, lighting, colour, and display/layout. However, this study focuses on store cleanliness and store lighting.

Store Cleanliness

Cleanliness refers to the neatness of a store. It is the appearance of the store that showcases how customers feel towards the outlet (Banat & Wandebori, in Hussain & Ali, 2015). Gajanayake *et al*, in Han et al (2011) simply described cleanliness as the appearance of the store. The appearance of a retail store can have a positive or negative influence on customers' perception towards the store (Hussain & Ali, 2015). It affects the store image and creates positive or negative feeling among consumers towards the store (Gajanayake *et al*, in Han *et al*, 2011). Banat & Wandebori, in Hussain & Ali (2015) posited that customers create positive or negative word of mouth about retail chain outlet by looking at the cleanliness. Cleanliness can improve store atmosphere and image. Cleanliness creates a good impression about a store and motivates consumers to patronize the store on a regular basis. It builds good image, enhance consumer preference and repeated patronage. A store that is known for cleanliness does not only attract customers to the store but also encourage customers to stay longer in the store. Cleanliness of the outlets also create an image of comfort and luxury in the customer's mind due to which customers stay for more time in retail chain outlets and make more purchases (Yun & Good, in Hussain & Ali, 2015).

Store Lighting

Lighting is colourful and beautiful way of highlighting products in a store (Hussain & Ali, 2015). It is described as "... the medium of illumination that makes sight possible" (Collins, in Nell, 2013). Lighting creates excitement and has a positive impact on consumer shopping behaviour (Mehrabian & Albert, in Hussain & Ali, 2015). Without the use of proper lighting, colour cannot be as effective as it is intended to be. It is through the use of light that things/objects become visible (Nell, 2013). Many people believe that bright lights allow them to see the merchandises clearly and also some believe that it livens up the store atmosphere (Ruchi *et al*, in Han *et al*, 2011). Most

retail outlets use brighter lighting for their products. The main purpose of using brighter lighting in retail outlets is to grab the customers' attention so that they start purchasing from the outlets due to their comfort (Hussain & Ali, 2015). Vaccaro, *et al*, in Han *et al* (2011) stated that brighter level of lighting is considered as an important issue in retail atmosphere because it enhances positive customer perception. When the store is brighter, customers are more likely to observe and touch the products in the store (Vaccaro *et al*, in Han *et al*, 2011).

Retail outlets need to ensure that their choice of light used to highlight products is of good colour. When the lighting used in the retail outlets is of good colour, consumers are inclined to touch products to assess quality (Areni & Kim, in Hussain & Ali, 2015). It would also enhance purchase intention and customer loyalty (Hussain & Ali, 2015). Hultén *et al*. in Nell (2013) posited that appropriate lighting has the ability to create an appropriate mood, which in itself attracts and captures the consumer's interest. Stores with proper lighting, music, colour, scent and displays will motivate the customers to visit the store again in the future (Yoo, Park, & MacInnis, in Hussain & Ali, 2015).

Concept of Customer Patronage

Consumer patronage refers to the impulses desire and consideration within the consumer which induce the purchase of goods from certain outlets or company (Ozor, 2002). Burnett, in Andrew, Wesonga, & Everlyne (2015) stated that patronage behavior deals with the process of identifying factors and attributes that consumers use in selecting product/service alternatives. Every consumer has motives or reasons why he or she patronizes a particular store. The reason could be rational or emotional (Chiu & Lin, 2011). When a consumer patronizes a particular retailer or retail outlet without any reasoning, he or she is said to be influenced by emotional buying motives. Those motives include the appearance of the store, display of goods inside the store, recommendations from influencers, prestige, habits and imitation. And when a consumer patronizes a particular retail outlet by considering the possible benefits through logical reasoning then he or she is said to be influenced by rational buying motives. The motives include convenience, low price offered at the shop, availability of credit facilities, salesperson efficiency, reputation of the shop, previous experience in dealing with the same shop or retailer (Chiu & Lin, 2011). Satisfaction is an important predictor of customer patronage (Aziz, in Garga & Bambale, 2016). Improving customer satisfaction is a key to gaining customer patronage (Oliver in Andrew, Wesonga, & Everlyne, 2015). Garga & Bambale (2016) posited that customer satisfaction makes the customers to continue to patronize one service provider or other. Customer satisfaction can help the firm build long and profitable relationships with their customers (Srivastava *et al*, in Garga & Bambale, 2016).

Measures of Customer Patronage

Customer patronage behaviour can be measured using various criteria such as patronage intention, frequency of visits, time spent, number of items bought, satisfaction, and repeat patronage (Ding *et al*, 2015). Pan and Zinkhan in Kumar (2016) recognized two dimensions of consumer patronage behaviour towards an organization: first is company choice (a consumer choice to patronize a particular company) and second is the frequency of visit (how often a consumer patronizes that company). These two dimensions can be summarized as customer patronage intention and repeat patronage. Previous studies used patronage intention and repeat patronage to measure customer patronage behaviour (Jere, *et al*, 2014; Garga and Bambale, 2016; Kumar, 2016). This study will stick to these two measures and relate them to the hospitality industry

Patronage Intention

Customer patronage intention is combination of attitude, normative beliefs and motivations that will influence purchasing behaviour (Burnkrant & Page, in Han *et al*, 2011). Macintosh & Lockshin,

in Han *et al*, (2011) stated that patronage intention in retailing industry is made up of the willingness of customers to shop longer in store, deliver good word-of-mouth of the store, buy more in the future and repurchase. Customer patronage intention is a function of customer satisfaction with the products/service offerings. When a customer is satisfied with the products/services offered by the firm, he is likely to increase his or her patronage intention. Sharma, in Garga & Bambale (2016) stated that satisfied customers tend to use a service more often than those not satisfied, they present a stronger repurchase intention, and they recommend the service to their acquaintances. Henkel et al. in Garga & Bambale (2016) added that satisfied customers in the cellular sector have high future intentions to stay with the company and future repurchase intentions.

Repeat Patronage

Repeat patronage is a decision to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product or service in the future (Vargo & Lusch, 2010). Ehrenberg (2008) defined repeat patronage as a customer's decision to buy a product again based on his or her positive past experiences of using the product. The decision to re-patronize a retail outlet is a function of the satisfaction customers derived from their shopping experience. When customers are satisfied with the quality of products sold in a retail outlet, they would probably make repeat patronage in the future. East in Garga & Bambale (2016) argued that customers who are satisfied with a particular offer are more likely to engage in repeat purchase of the same offering but dissatisfied customers, on the other hand, are likely to switch. However, customer satisfaction is not the only criteria for engaging in repeat patronage as some customers engage in repeat patronage to avoid switching costs. Switching costs are the inconvenience, out-of-pocket costs and psychological upsets a customer expects when they change suppliers (Salim & Kitapci, 2013). Switching costs are considered as one of the easiest strategies to increase repeat patronage as it prevents customers from changing to alternative suppliers (Chin, 2014). Jones in Garga & Bambale (2016) stated that increase in switching cost leads to increase in risk and burden of the consumers as well as the high dependency on the service provider. Thus, an increase in switching costs will lead to increase in repeat patronage.

Empirical Review

A number of empirical studies have been conducted on store attributes and customer patronage of retail outlets. For instance, Han, Li, Yen & Fei (2011) empirically investigated the influence of store attributes on customer patronage intention towards clothing stores in Malaysia. They focused on five (5) store atmospheric variables (display and layout, music, lighting, cleanliness and participant factors) and relate each of them to customer patronage intention. The researchers used questionnaire survey to obtain data from 350 people visiting clothing stores in Mid Valley Megamall, Malaysia. The regression analyses were used to analyze the data collected from the questionnaire using SPSS analyses. The result revealed that music, lighting, cleanliness, display and layout are positively and significantly influence customer patronage intention towards clothing stores in Malaysia.

Hussain & Ali (2015) carried out an empirical study on the effects of atmosphere on consumer purchase intention in international retail chain outlets of Karachi, Pakistan. The researchers used a sample of 300 consumers who usually visited these outlets. A structured questionnaire was used for data collected while regression analysis was used for data analysis. The study reported that atmospheric variables such as cleanliness, scent, lighting, and display/layout have a positive influence on consumers' purchase intention; whereas music and color have insignificant impact on consumers' purchase intention. The study also found out that temperature has almost no impact on the purchase intention of the consumers.

In another study conducted by Grewal, et al (2002) on wait expectations, store atmosphere and gender effects on store patronage intentions, it was reported that store atmospheric variables

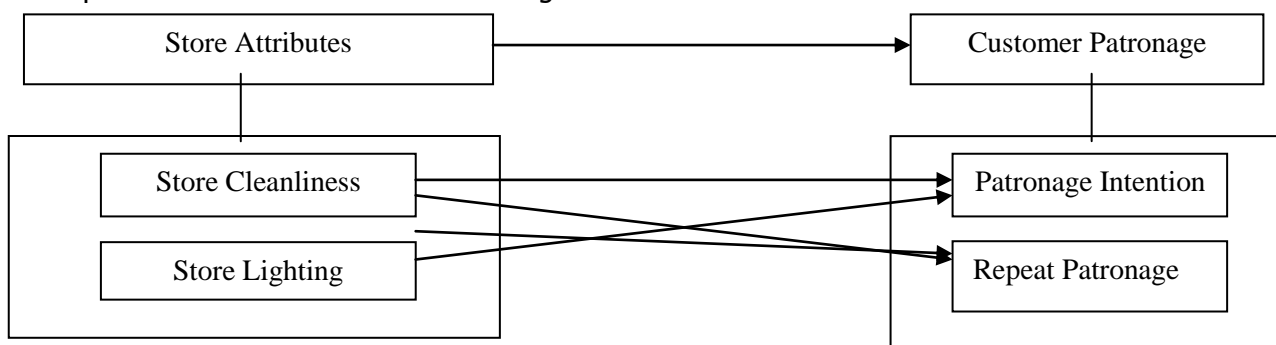
(music, cleanliness and lighting) significantly enhance store patronage intentions. The study conducted by Choudhary (2016) also revealed that store atmospherics (cleanliness, music, lighting, temperature, scent, and display/layout) positively and significantly influence patronage intentions.

Sabrina (2014) examined the influence of the store atmosphere on the consumer behaviour. His study focused on the influence of store atmospherics components on behaviour replies (time of presence in the sales outlet, number of purchases articles, upward of buying articles), and emotional replies of consumers. The researcher used 110 clients of the department store U.N.O. for data collection and found that environmental characteristics of the store (ambient elements, design) have a great impact on the actions of the consumers and their feelings.

Singh, Katiyar, & Verma (2014) investigated retail capability in the department stores of the United Nation Organization (UNO). They focused on the impact of store atmospherics and store layout on consumer buying patterns. The quantitative research approach was used to examine whether store atmospherics have any relationship with consumer buying patterns. The study found out that all store atmospheric factors (scent, cleanliness, lighting, temperature, display and layout) have significant impact on customer buying behaviours.

Chen & Hsieh (2011) empirically examined the effect of atmosphere on customer perceptions and customer behavior responses in chain store supermarkets. Their study revealed that store atmospheric factors have significant positive correlation with customer approach behaviours; design factors being the most significant impact among all factors. The study also reported that store atmospheric factors will influence not only customer emotions but also customer cognitive valuations of commodities and services. The researchers explained that customer cognitive valuations and emotional responses will affect customer approach behaviors significantly; while customers' cognitions and emotional responses will moderate the impact of store atmosphere on customer behaviors partially.

The operational framework is shown in figure 2 below:



Methodology

This study employed the correlation survey research design. The target population of this study consisted of customers visiting selected retail outlets in Port Harcourt. A population of 841 customers was intercepted in 25 retail outlets visited in Port Harcourt. A sample size of 271 customers was used for the study. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamene's formula. The random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was structured on a four (4) points rating scale which range from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, to Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents (customers) of the selected retail outlets in Port Harcourt. Two hundred and seventy-one (271) questionnaires were administered to the respondents and 228 copies were collected. The data collected were analyzed

statistically while the hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ). The ρ was computed using a computer software program known as the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22.0.

Empirical Results and Discussion

The data collected on store attributes (store cleanliness and store lighting) were correlated with those obtained on customer patronage (patronage intention and repeat patronage). The SPSS software program was used to correlate the data collected on the study variables. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in the tables below:

Table 1: Result of the correlation analysis between store cleanliness and patronage intention of retail outlets

			Store Cleanliness	Patronage Intention
Spearman's rho	Store Cleanliness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.723*
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	228	228
	Patronage intention	Correlation Coefficient	.723*	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	228	228

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 1 presents the result of the correlation analysis performed between store cleanliness and customer patronage intention of retail outlets. The result shows that store cleanliness is positively correlated to customer patronage intention ($\rho = .723^*$) and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level as indicated by the symbol *. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is significant relationship between store cleanliness and customer patronage intention of retail outlets.

Table 2: Result of the correlation analysis between store cleanliness and repeat patronage

			Store Cleanliness	Repeat Patronage
Spearman's rho	Store Cleanliness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.815*
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.002
		N	228	228
	Repeat Patronage	Correlation Coefficient	.815*	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.002	.
		N	228	228

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 2 shows the result of the correlation analysis carried out between store cleanliness and repeat patronage of retail outlets. The result indicates that store cleanliness has a positive correlation with repeat patronage of retail outlets ($\rho = .815^*$) and the symbol * signifies that this correlation is significant at 0.05 level. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is significant relationship between store cleanliness and repeat patronage of retail outlets.

Table 3: Result of the correlation analysis between store lighting and patronage intention

			Store Lighting	Patronage Intention
Spearman's rho	Store Lighting	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.795*
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.003
		N	228	228
	Patronage Intention	Correlation Coefficient	.795*	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.003	.
		N	228	228

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 3 contains the result of the correlation analysis performed between store lighting and customer patronage intention of retail outlets. The result shows that store lighting is positively correlated to customer patronage intention ($\rho = .835^*$) and this correlation is significant at 95% confidence level. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is significant relationship between store lighting and customer patronage intention of retail outlets.

Table 4: Result of the correlation analysis between store lighting and repeat patronage

			Store Lighting	Repeat Patronage
Spearman's rho	Store Lighting	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.830*
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.004
		N	228	228
	Repeat Patronage	Correlation Coefficient	.830*	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.004	.
		N	228	228

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 4 presents the result of the correlation analysis performed between store lighting and repeat patronage of retail outlets. The result shows a positive correlation between store lighting and repeat patronage of retail outlets ($\rho = .830^*$) and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level as indicated by the symbol *. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is significant relationship between store lighting and repeat patronage of retail outlets.

Discussion of Findings

From the result of the analysis carried out, it was discovered that significant relationship exists between store cleanliness and customer patronage intention of retail outlets. This finding was derived from the results of the correlation analysis carried out on the two variables. The result showed that store cleanliness is positively correlated to customer patronage intention and this correlation is significant at 95% confidence level (see table 1). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is significant relationship between store cleanliness and customer patronage intention of retail outlets. This

finding is in line with the research conducted by Han, Li, Yen & Fei (2011) which reported that store cleanliness significantly attracts customers and increase their patronage intention. Hussain & Ali (2015) also agreed with this finding when they stated that a neat store will attract more customers, increase customer traffic as well as boosting customer patronage intention.

It was also discovered that store cleanliness has a significant relationship with repeat patronage of retail outlets. This finding was deduced from the result of the correlation analysis carried out on the two variables. The result of the analysis showed that store cleanliness has a positive correlation with repeat patronage of retail outlets and this correlation is significant at 95% confidence level (see table 2). Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is significant relationship between store cleanliness and repeat patronage of retail outlets. This finding is supported by Grewal, et al (2002) who noted that customers are more likely to make repeated patronage of a store that they perceived to be clean and attractive. Choudhary (2016) also agreed with this finding when they stated that store cleanliness has the potentials of increasing repeated patronage behaviour among customers.

This study equally found a significant relationship between store lighting and customer patronage intention of retail outlets. This finding was obtained from the result of the correlation analysis carried out on the two variables in the third hypothesis. The result showed that store lighting is positively correlated to customer patronage intention and this correlation is significant at 95% confidence level (see table 3). Hence, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is significant relationship between store lighting and customer patronage intention of retail outlets. This finding is supported by Singh, Katiyar, & Verma (2014) whose study reported that store lighting attracts new customers to a store, increase their patronage intention and repeat patronage. Choudhary (2016) also supported this finding when he stated that customers often patronize a store with beautiful lighting and other side attractions.

Finally, it was reported that store lighting has significant relationship with customer patronage of retail outlets. This finding was derived from the result of the correlation analysis carried out on the two variables. The result showed a positive correlation between store lighting and repeat patronage of retail outlets and this correlation is significant at 95% confidence level (see table 4). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is significant relationship between store lighting and repeat patronage of retail outlets. This finding is supported by Singh, Katiyar, & Verma (2014), Chen & Hsieh (2011) and Hussain & Ali (2015).

Conclusions

This paper examined the relationship between store attributes and customer patronage of retail patronage of retail outlets. The empirical results of this study showed that store cleanliness has a significant relationship to customer patronage intention of retail outlets. This study also found a significant relationship between store cleanliness and repeat patronage of retail outlets. This study equally found a significant relationship between store lighting and customer patronage intention of retail outlets. This study also reported a significant relationship between store lighting and customer patronage of retail outlets. Based on these findings, it was concluded that store attributes (cleanliness and lighting) significantly enhance customer patronage of retail outlets in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. That, retailers in Nigeria especially those in Port Harcourt should ensure that their store is clean as it would increase the level of customer patronage.
2. That, retailers in Nigeria should maintain the store to ensure that it is neat and attractive as this would not only increase customer patronage intention but also increase repeat patronage of their store.
3. That, retailers in Nigeria should provide a pleasant scent/fragrance in their store as it would attract more customers and increase the level of customer patronage of their store.
4. That, retailers in Nigeria especially those supermarket operators should use a bright light and colour to decorate their store as it would increase customer patronage intention and repeat patronage of their store.
5. Finally, it is recommended that retailers in Nigeria should provide a cool temperature with fully air-conditioning facilities as it would not only increase customer patronage but also increase repeat patronage behaviour.

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