

Perception of Business Education Lecturers in Colleges of Education on the Influence of Retail Store Location and Design on Impulse Buying Behaviour of Consumers in North-West Nigeria

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Abstract

This study was carried out to determine the perception of Business Education Lecturers in Colleges of Education on the influence of retail store location and design on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers in north-west Nigeria. A survey research design was used for the study. The study was carried out in the North-west zone of Nigeria. The population of the study was 219 Business Education Lecturers in 10 Colleges of Education. The entire population was studied since it was small and manageable. Two research questions were answered and one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance and 202 degrees of freedom. A structured questionnaire was developed to collect data for the study. The questionnaire items were structured on a 5-point Likert scale. A total of 204 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved from the respondents for analysis. The data collected were analyzed using Mean statistic to answer the research questions, while analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that all the items of retail store location and design were accepted by the respondents as having influence on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers. The findings also revealed that there was no significant difference in the Mean responses of Business Education Lecturers with regards to their ranks on the influence on all the retail store items on consumer impulse buying behaviour. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended, among others, that retailers should adopt the retail store variables identified in this study in order to boost their trade and provide a satisfying shopping experience for their customers.

Keywords: Retailing, store location, store design, impulse buying, consumer behaviour.

Introduction

Retailing plays a major role in the distribution of goods and services to the final consumers. Most buying activities for household products are done in retail stores. According to Osuala (1998), retailing includes all the activities in selling of goods and services directly to final consumers for their personal or non business use. McGoldrick (2001) defined retailing as the sale of goods and services in smaller quantities to consumers for their own use. According to McGoldrick, retailing activity takes place both in a store and in non-store outlets.

A retail store is defined by McGoldrick (2001) as a source of supply to end-users, rather than to industrial buyers. Stanton (1981) viewed a retail store as an institution which carries on such activities in the business premises which are directly related to goods and services required by the ultimate consumers for their personal or non-business use. Similarly, James, Walker, and Etzel (1981) described a retail store as a physical site of a retail business where consumer goods are sold. It is different from non-store retail outlets in which retailing occurs through the mail, telephone, vending machines, door-to-door selling, and internet, otherwise called online retailing. Store based retail outlets have characteristics referred to in this study as store variables. The store variables are expected to make the store attractive and present conducive buying environment for the consumer. The store variables include store location store design, merchandise display and assortment, price of the merchandise, customer service, as well as product promotion. This study is focused on the influence of store location and design on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers as perceived by Business Education Lecturers.

The store location is a major element of the retail mix which plays a significant role in meeting consumer's shopping convenience. James, Walker and Etzel (1981) defined a store location as the physical site of a retail business. It is the place where the consumer can easily locate the retailer whenever he needs to buy. The consumer is sure of where to go for his shopping after having identified where a particular retail store is located. The store location also provides the retailer the convenience of displaying and selling his merchandise without having to wander about with them to look for consumers. Consumers are more often disposed to stores that are strategically located with easy accessibility and close proximity to their residence. Consumers look out for location features such as traffic flow and parking lot that provide soothing shopping environment to them. This is why Samson, Little, and Wingate (1982) opined that to facilitate merchandising process and arouse the consumer's curiosity to visit the store, it must be conveniently located near the consumer.

Another feature of a retail store is the store design. The store design gives the store a desirable image and is capable of influencing the consumer to make impulse purchase. McGoldrick (2001) described store

design as representing the general atmosphere of the store, including the visual aspects, the sounds, the scents, and the textures. It also includes adequate fixtures and fittings, good lighting, wall shelves, adequate space, air conditioning, soft music, television set, and sweet fragrance. Good store counters and furniture are considered to be extremely important because they contribute a lot in the visual effect of the store. Consumers generally have the tendency to shop in good looking stores as compared to unattractive ones. Good looking store environment seems to increase consumers' adrenaline and their curiosity to buy more. They derive pleasure buying from stores where they obtain maximum satisfaction. Lewison and Delozier (1988) thus describe these features as attractors and interceptors in the store which can be used to induce buying decision.

Sullivan (2008) discovered that many retailers are conscious of the consumer impulse buying behaviour. Sometimes, consumers are carried away by certain distinguishing and attractive features of the store and they buy things they never planned to buy. Sullivan described this as unplanned or impulse buying and viewed it as an important consumer buying disposition that retailers can exploit to increase sales. Hodge (2004) described unplanned purchase as synonymous with impulse buying. Therefore, the two terms mean the same thing and shall be used interchangeably in this study. According to Hodge, impulse buying is an unplanned purchase made outside the shopping list. Rook (1987) observed that impulse buying occurs when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. Furthermore, Miller (2002) described impulse buying as a situation where most purchase decisions are made in-store without a prior plan before entering the store. Thus, Sullivan (2008) maintained that retailers need to create attractive retail environment to encourage impulse buying behaviour.

Store variables that provide a satisfying and conducive buying experience to the consumer when he enters the store are relevant in helping the retail store satisfy its customers and achieve profitability. It is, however, discovered that the bane of many retail businesses in Nigeria in recent times has been the inability of the retailers to organize their stores with attractive features. Most retail stores in Nigeria appear to lack attractive image and are poorly located. For instance, Ikeazor (2002) and Nwokoye (2004) observed that the roads are rough and stores are poorly located and organized. It is on this premise, therefore, that this study is carried out to determine the perception of Business Education Lecturers in Colleges of Education on how retail store variables can influence impulse buying among consumers in the North-west zone of Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

1. To determine the perception of Business Education Lecturers on the influence of retail store location on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers in North-west zone of Nigeria.
2. To determine the perception of Business Education Lecturers on the influence of retail store design on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers in North-west zone of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What is the perception of Business Education Lecturers on the influence of retail store location on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers in North-west zone of Nigeria?
2. What is the perception of Business Education Lecturers on the influence of retail store design on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers in North-west zone of Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the Mean responses of Business Education Lecturers with respect to their rank on the influence of retail store location and design on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers.

Methodology

A survey design was used for this study with a population of 219 male and female Business Education Lecturers in ten Colleges of Education offering Business Education within North-west zone of Nigeria. The entire population was studied because of its small size. A structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale was used to collect data. A total of 219 copies of the instrument were administered on the respondents, out of which 204 copies were returned correctly filled, thus making 98.2% return rate for data analysis. Data were analysed using Mean statistic to provide answers for the research questions. Any Mean response below 3.00 was regarded as not accepted. Only items that obtained Mean score of 3.00 and above were accepted as having influence on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers. The null hypothesis was tested using Analysis of Variance at .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld at .05 level of significance when p-value was greater than .05 level of significance and rejected when p-value was less than .05 level of significance.

Analysis of Data

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: What is the perception of Business Education Lecturers on the influence of retail store location on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers in North-west zone of Nigeria? The data relevant to this research question were presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Influence of retail store location on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers in North-west zone of Nigeria.
 N = 204

S/N	Item Statements	<u>Mean</u> X	S.D.	Remarks
1.	The location of a retail store determines the frequency of customer traffic and impulse purchase in the store.	4.34	0.66	Accepted
2.	Customers are often influenced by the convenient location of the store to stop by and make impulse purchase.	4.34	0.55	Accepted
3.	Retail stores with special features such as parking space, ease of entry and exit can attract customers to easily stop by and make impulse buying.	4.34	0.69	Accepted
4.	Retail stores located at attractive and conducive environment can influence the consumers' impulse buying decision.	4.37	0.58	Accepted
5.	Stores located at shopping centres are more likely to influence consumers' desire to stop by and make impulse purchase.	4.11	0.75	Accepted
6.	Retail stores located along consumers' regular route to and from office can influence them to stop by and make impulse purchase.	4.34	0.69	Accepted
7.	Consumers are often influenced by stores located near their residence to visit and make impulse purchases.	4.30	0.77	Accepted
8.	Stores whose locations are well planned are likely to influence consumers' desire to visit and make impulse buying.	4.25	0.74	Accepted
9.	Strategically located stores are likely to influence consumers to make unplanned visits and impulse purchases.	4.20	0.76	Accepted
10.	Retail stores located in affluent areas of a city are likely to influence more affluent customers to buy on impulse.	4.22	0.66	Accepted

Grand Mean

4.28

Table 1 above has 10 item statements with their Mean ranging from 4.11 to 4.37. The Mean of each item statement is greater than 3.00, indicating that all the ten items on retail store location were accepted by Business Education Lecturers as influencing consumer impulse buying behaviour. A Grand Mean of 4.28 was obtained in the cluster indicating that all the items in the cluster were accepted as having influence on consumer impulse buying behaviour. The Standard Deviation (S.D.) of the ten items ranged from 0.55 to 0.77, indicating that the respondents were not too far apart in their opinion.

Research Question 2

What is the perception of Business Education Lecturers on the influence of retail store design on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers in North-west zone of Nigeria? The data relevant to this research question were presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2
 Influence of retail store design on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers in North-west zone of Nigeria
 N = 204

S/N	Item Statements	Mean \bar{X}	S.D.	Remarks
1.	Store designs that enhance the presentation of merchandise can influence impulse buying by customers.	4.32	0.52	Accepted
2.	Traffic aisle which allows for free flow of traffic across the display stands and shelves can influence consumers' impulse buying decision.	4.09	0.69	Accepted
3.	Good lighting and ventilation in the retail store cause customers to shop with relaxation and thus influence their impulse buying decision	4.46	0.56	Accepted
4.	Retail store environment that is warmth and comfortable makes customers to stay longer and induces them to buy on impulse.	4.38	0.60	Accepted
5.	A store design such as free-form design that allows customers to browse and wander freely in the store can encourage impulse buying.	4.24	0.75	Accepted
6.	Air-conditioning, visual set, and soft background music in a retail store can encourage customers to stay longer and thus stimulate them to make impulse purchases.	4.40	0.71	Accepted
7.	A store layout with yellow brick road (a leading section through small inexpensive goods to larger expensive goods) can induce impulse purchase by customers.	4.16	0.70	Accepted
8.	A sales-support-services section that provides customer services such as delivery can encourage customers to make impulse purchases.	4.34	0.61	Accepted
9.	The race-track design that allows customers to view all angles of the store encourages impulse buying	4.19	0.71	Accepted
10.	Merchandise sections prominently labeled with clear overhead signs can encourage impulse buying	4.23	0.58	Accepted
11.	Stores with serene shopping environment induce impulse buying by consumers.	4.22	0.66	Accepted
Grand Mean		4.27		

The data presented in Table 2 above revealed that the Mean of all the eleven items ranged from 4.09 to 4.46. The Mean of each of the items was above 3.00 indicating that the respondents perceived the ten items as having influence on consumer impulse buying behaviour. A Grand Mean of 4.27 was obtained in the cluster indicating that all the variables in retail store design were accepted as having influence on consumer impulse buying behaviour. The Standard Deviation of the items ranged from 0.52 to 0.75. This indicated that the respondents were not too far apart in their opinion.

Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the Mean responses of Business Education Lecturers with respect to their rank on the influence of retail store variables on consumer impulse buying behaviour. The data relevant to this hypothesis were presented in Table 3 and 4.

Table 3

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the Mean Responses of Assistant Lecturers, Lecturers III, II, I, Senior Lecturers, Principal Lecturers and Chief Lecturers of Business Education on the Influence of Retail Store Location on consumer Impulse Buying Behaviour

S/N	Item Statement	Sum of Squares	df	p-value (Sig)	Rmk	
1.	The location of a retail store determines the frequency of customer traffic and impulse purchase in the store.	Between= Within= Total 89.980	1.096 88.884 = 203	6 197	0.875	N.S.
2.	Customers are often influenced by the convenient location of the store to stop by and make impulse purchase.	Between= Within= Total 61.662	0.980 60.682 = 203	6 197	0.785	N.S.
3.	Retail stores with special features such as parking space, ease of entry and exit can attract customers to easily stop by and make impulse buying.	Between= Within= Total 97.662	4.763 92.899 = 203	6 197	0.127	N.S.
4.	Retail stores located at attractive and conducive environment can influence the consumers' impulse buying decision.	Between= Within= Total 69.426	1.350 68.076 = 203	6 197	0.689	N.S.
5.	Stores located at shopping centres are more likely to influence consumers' desire to stop by and make impulse purchase.	Between= Within= Total 116.407	5.086 111.321 = 203	6 197	0.180	N.S.
6.	Retail stores located along consumers' regular route to and from office can influence them to stop by and make impulse purchase.	Between= Within= Total 97.980	3.815 94.165 = 203	6 197	0.245	N.S.
7.	Consumers are often influenced by stores located near their residence to visit and make impulse purchases.	Between= Within= Total 120.760	4.284 116.476 = 203	6 197	0.304	N.S.
8.	Stores whose locations are well planned are likely to influence consumers' desire to visit and make impulse buying.	Between= Within= Total 112.250	3.704 108.546 = 203	6 197	0.352	N.S.
9.	Strategically located stores are likely to influence consumers to make unplanned visits and impulse purchases.	Between= Within= Total 120.157	1.598 118.559 = 203	6 197	0.850	N.S.
10.	Retail stores located in affluent areas of a city are likely to influence more affluent customers to buy on impulse.	Between= Within= Total 89.074	2.556 86.518 = 203	6 197	0.447	N.S.
Cluster p-value				0.480		

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Not Significant at $p > 0.05$

As shown in Table 3, all the observed items on retail store location had p-values (sig.) that ranged from 0.127 to 0.875, and 0.48 in the cluster, greater than 0.05 level of significance. The data revealed that there was no significant difference in the Mean responses of the seven groups of respondents on all items of the influence of retail store location on the impulse buying behaviour of consumers. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld for all the items.

Table 4

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the Mean Responses of Assistant Lecturers, Lecturers III, II, I, Senior Lecturers, Principal Lecturers and Chief Lecturers of Business Education on the Influence of Retail Store Design on consumer Impulse Buying Behaviour.

S/N	Item Statement	Sum of Squares	df	p-value (Sig)	Rmk
1.	Store designs that enhance the presentation of merchandise can influence impulse buying by customers.	Between= Within= Total = 56.290	1.133 6 55.157 197 = 203	0.671	N.S.
2.	Traffic aisle which allows for free flow of traffic across the display stands and shelves can influence consumers' impulse buying decision.	Between= Within= Total = 97.231	8.139 6 89.092 197 = 203	0.008	S
3.	Good lighting and ventilation in the retail store cause customers to shop with relaxation and thus influence their impulse buying decision	Between= Within= Total = 64.686	3.427 6 61.259 197 = 203	0.094	N.S.
4.	Retail store environment that is warmth and comfortable makes customers to stay longer and induces them to buy on impulse.	Between= Within= Total = 73.936	0.708 6 73.228 197 = 203	0.927	N.S.
5.	A store design such as free-form design that allows customers to browse and wander freely in the store can encourage impulse buying.	Between= Within= Total = 116.706	3.397 6 113.309 197 = 203	0.437	N.S.
6.	Air-conditioning, visual set, and soft background music in a retail store can encourage customers to stay longer and thus stimulate them to make impulse purchases.	Between= Within= Total = 104.838	5.596 6 99.242 197 = 203	0.091	N.S.
7.	A store layout with yellow brick road (a leading section through small inexpensive goods to larger expensive goods) can induce impulse purchase by customers.	Between= Within= Total = 99.662	4.946 6 94.716 197 = 203	0.119	N.S.
8.	A sales-support-services section that provides customer services such as delivery can encourage customers to make impulse purchases.	Between= Within= Total = 75.980	2.871 6 73.110 197 = 203	0.264	N.S.
9.	The race-track design that allows customers to view all angles of the store encourages impulse buying	Between= Within= Total = 103.544	1.156 6 102.388 197 = 203	0.897	N.S.
10.	Merchandise sections prominently labeled with clear overhead signs can encourage impulse buying	Between= Within= Total = 68.172	1.864 6 66.307 197 = 203	0.479	N.S.
11.	Stores with serene shopping environment induce impulse buying by consumers.	Between= Within= Total = 90.510	4.609 6 85.901 197 = 203	0.109	N.S.
Cluster p-value				0.372	
Significant at $p < 0.05$ Not Significant at $p > 0.05$					

Data in Table 4 revealed that there was no significant difference in the Mean responses of the seven groups of respondents on 10 out of the 11 items on retail store design whose p-values (sig.) were greater than 0.05 level of significance. The entire cluster had p-value of 0.37 greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld for 10 of the items. On the contrary, the data revealed that there was significant difference in the Mean responses of the seven groups of respondents on one of the eleven items whose p-value was less than 0.05 significance level. The hypothesis of no significant difference for that item was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Findings related to the research questions showed that the respondents generally accepted all the identified items on store location and design as having influence on consumer impulse buying behaviour. This finding was consistent with the opinion of Levy and Weitz (1998) who agreed that retail store location is an important attribute for consumer's buying decision and the opinion of McGoldrick (2001) who observed that stores with visual features such as fixtures and fittings, lighting, wall shelves, etc are capable of influencing consumer buying behaviour when he visits the store.

Findings related to the null hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents with regard to their rank on the influence of most of the items on the retail store location and design on consumer impulse buying behaviour. The findings were consistent with the opinion of Mason, Mayer and Ezell (1991) and Mowen (1995) who agreed that retail store location with attractive design is capable of influencing the impulse buying behaviour of consumers.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Since the respondent accepted all the items of retail store location as having influence on consumer impulse buying behaviour, it could be concluded that retail store location is vital to the success of a retail business. A conveniently located store is capable of attracting consumers to stop by and make unplanned purchases.
2. The findings of the study revealed that all the items of retail store design are capable of influencing impulse buying. Therefore, it could be concluded that retailers need this variable to induce impulse buying among consumers to improve their retailing.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are, therefore, made in the study:

1. Retailers should endeavour to adopt the variables identified in this study to enable them boost their business and provide a satisfying shopping environment for their customers. Retail stores should be conveniently located with attractive store design.
2. Retailers should avail themselves of training opportunities in retailing and merchandising to sharpen their skills in retail management and customer handling.
3. There is need to include retailing in the newly introduced general course of Entrepreneurship Education in institutions of higher learning so as to equip our young graduates with relevant skills in retailing.

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